# A REGION IN TIME: THE UNDERDEVELOPMENT OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY HYDERABAD-KARNATAKA

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*
*in fulfilment of the requirements*
*for the award of the degree of*

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Date: 30 DECEMBER 2019

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled '**A Region in Time: The Under-development of Twentieth-Century Hyderabad-Karnataka**' submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the Degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* is the result of original research and has not been previously submitted for any other degree to this or any other University.

**Swathi Shivanand**

## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.
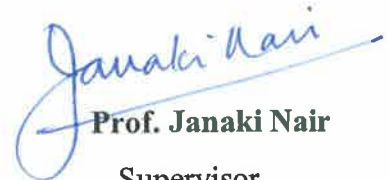
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For

my parents,

Harini and Shivanand

*For the life they made possible*

# Contents

# Figures

# Tables

# Acknowledgements

As I write this, both JNU and India are ablaze with protests against the passage of rules and laws that are designed to keep many kinds of people out of the education system and out of Indian polity. My colleagues on campus have exerted themselves beyond measure for over sixty cold, cold days to ensure that JNU remains as, or rather is refashioned into, a space for creative, radical and empowering possibilities. To these friends and comrades, thank you. The streets and cities of India are agog with slogans and chants that provide succour in these dark, dangerous times. To those holding the torch in these times of media blackouts and police brutalities under electricity blackouts, thank you.

Five years ago, when the Ph.D. started, the world seemed a different place, dark but the dire still under concealment. Through this period of change so rapid that left many of us without words, my supervisor Prof. Janaki Nair has remained incisive and eloquent, both in her academic and popular writings. Her scholarship, commitment to academic rigour and a deep, abiding interest in the contemporary will always stand as a model for emulation for me. For her respect and faith in my scholarship, for her rigorous reading of my chapters and for pushing me to think harder and writer better, I remain grateful.

At JNU, Profs. Neeladri Bhattacharya, Radhika Singha and Dr. Nonica have read various parts of the thesis and asked important and searching questions, only some of which I have been able to address, for now. Prof. Purushottam Bilimale has been exceptionally generous, going out of his way to put me in touch with academics from Karnataka without the slightest bit of hesitation. Prof. Yagati Chinna Rao alerted me to questions of caste and social power in ways that has enriched this thesis, even if they have only been partially engaged with. In the initial days of the Ph.D., Dr. Rajarshi Dasgupta offered time, tea and conversations about my work that made JNU a welcoming space; to him, an abiding thank you. My foray into academics began properly with my alma-mater, the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences,

the hostel administration have made Tapti a welcoming space. To these individuals who make everyday life of a researcher possible, thank you.

Friendships built over the years have carried me through the isolation of the Ph.D. Chris and Madhura opened their homes, hearth and lives for me and allowed me to partake of their beautiful world of felines. Akshi has been a warm presence in my life through Calcutta and Delhi and has helped me stay afloat through personal and political crises. Vidya has brought colour and art to my life (and the bare walls of my hostel room) through gifts and postcards and is a constant reminder of how relationships can be sustained over distances. Cheri has been my "historian friend" as I turned to him often for help with navigating historical scholarship and conceptualising frameworks for chapters, which he offered instantly and generously. Sita made Hyderabad comforting and reassuring with her warmth while her aunt Shantha Sinha and mother Shanthi Jayaram were incredibly generous, opening up their home for me and making my stay a contentedly well-fed one; for such nourishment many thanks. In Bangalore, Soundarya Iyer and I shared many a comforting conversation about the travails of a Ph.D. and she has offered many reading and data suggestions. Sushmita Pati and I share an interest in the urban and she has offered insightful suggestions on parts of this thesis and other work. Vikhar Ahmed Sayeed has been warmly encouraging about this thesis and has provided me with useful material for this work. Ammel, my fellow researcher of Karnataka, has been patient and generous with my small and big questions and kept my work in her mind as she wades through her material. To these people, my heart-felt comradeship.

Geeta has been my friend and comrade for years and I have drawn strength from the principles we share, as we journeyed together through the last four turbulent years in the university and the world outside. Shivangi has taught me to be optimistic and to believe in one's own work, two traits I needed desperately, to get through the Ph.D. These two women have together been my cheerleaders, showering me with love, wine, food and companionship and been committed readers of this work. Urna and Suman have been my fellow feline slaves

# Abbreviations

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| CSL | Central Secretariat Library |
| GOH | Government of Hyderabad |
| HKRDB | Hyderabad-Karnataka Region Development Board |
| HSC | Hyderabad State Congress |
| INC | Indian National Congress |
| ITF | Industrial Trust Fund |
| KPCC | Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee |
| KSA | Karnataka State Archives |
| KSDB | Karnataka Slum Development Board |
| KSL | Karnataka Secretariat Library |
| MIM | Majlis-e-Ittihad-Al-Muslimin |
| MoS | Ministry of States |
| NAI | National Archives of India |
| NMML | Nehru Memorial and Museum Library |
| PWD | Public Works Department |
| RD | Revenue Department |
| TSA | Telangana State Archives |
| TSAL | Telangana State Archives Library |

# Note on Names

1. Hyderabad's official name was Hyderabad-Deccan but this thesis uses the more widely prevalent nomenclature of Hyderabad and refers to the Asaf Jahi state, not the capital city (unless specified).

2. Gulbarga has been renamed Kalaburagi but I retain the older name which are used in both archival sources as well as by people from the region.

3. The term Karnatak was used in reference to Kannada-speaking parts of Bombay Presidency, also called Bombay-Karnatak or Bombay-Karnataka. The term Karnataka refers to the contemporary South Indian Kannada state.

4. The term Karnatic was used for Kannada-speaking parts of Hyderabad State until the late 1940s when the term Hyderabad-Karnataka gained greater currency.

5. Regions have different spellings in different documents, for instance, Marathwada is Marathwara, Telangana is Telingana. Unless in quotations, the former set of spellings have been used through the text in the interest of consistency.

# Introduction

On 17 September 2019, the Government of Karnataka renamed the Hyderabad-Karnataka region as Kalyana-Karnataka.[1] The decision was announced on the day officially commemorated as *Hyderabad-Karnataka Vimochana Divasa* (Hyderabad-Karnataka Liberation Day), which marked the surrender of the Asaf Jahi State to the Indian Union in 1948. Chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa wrote an article in a leading English daily stating that the new name was a 'tribute' to the twelfth century social reformer Basavanna, whose teachings had promoted the Lingayat faith, and the 'great humanists' who had been fostered by the Kalyana kingdom.[2] The chief minister argued that this reform movement had been 'way ahead' of the '18th century French revolution' in propagating the concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity, evidence of which were the 'deliberations on social justice, equality and women's emancipation'.[3] The name Kalyana Karnataka, he hoped, 'would usher in a new chapter of welfare and development in the region'.[4]

Another leading Kannada daily put out a broadcast on its online channel regarding the responses that this move had evoked in the region.[5] Most of those interviewed welcomed the new name, stating that it symbolised a release from the centuries of feudalism, slavery,

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[1] Hyderabad-Karnataka forms the north-east corner of the southern state of Karnataka. Prior to 1956, it was part of the erstwhile Hyderabad state, ruled by the Nizams of the Asaf Jahi dynasty. It is contiguous with the Telangana and the Marathwada regions and shares climatic and soil conditions with them. It is one of five distinctive regions in contemporary Karnataka, the other four being Bombay-Karnataka, Old Mysore State, coastal Karnataka, and Coorg (see Figure 3 for different regions of Karnataka). The three main districts in the region are Bidar, Gulbarga, and Raichur. Koppal was carved out of Raichur district in 1998 and Yadgir district from Gulbarga in 2009 (see Figure .

[2] This move by the ruling party—the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—was seen as an appeasement of the dominant community of Lingayats, who form a strong voter base for the party. For evidence of this support, see Staff Reporter, "Kalyana Karnataka Liberation Day Has Lingayat Seers Backing BSY," *The Hindu*, September 17, 2019, Online edition, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/kalyana-karnataka-liberation-day-has-lingayat-seers-backing-bsy/article29446181.ece.

[3] B.S. Yediyurappa, "Kalyana Karnataka: Harking Back to a Humanist History," *The Hindu*, September 16, 2019, Online edition, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/kalyana-karnataka-harking-back-to-a-humanist-history/article29433502.ece.

[4] ibid

[5] Ganesh Chandanashiva, "Kalyana Karnataka," Online (Prajavani, September 16, 2019), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBPtU1oDYhA.

underdevelopment, and poverty that had been associated with Hyderabad-Karnataka. They also referred to the last Nizam's decision to not accede to India, which had 'delayed' the arrival of independence in the region. In an effort to provide a longer historical lineage to the region, the Vijayanagara empire was also invoked to argue that this land had always belonged to Kannadigas, and that the name Hyderabad-Karnataka did not do justice to the 'Kannada culture' that existed in this region and, in fact, reflected the 'arrogance' of the Nizam dynasty. The few dissenting individuals interviewed for the broadcast castigated both the commemoration of the supposed liberation day as well as the renaming of the region, terming the move as one meant to distract from the real issues of state neglect that the region has been facing for decades. Raghavendra Kushtagi, an activist from Raichur, citing the abysmal level of state support received during the floods that had ravaged parts of the region a month earlier, asked from where the government derived its 'moral courage' to undertake this 'facile' move. The change of name of the region did not evoke much discussion in the media and has generally been accepted without question as a welcome move.

While the move has been touted in some quarters as one that will rid the region of the 'Nizam era taint',[6] a cursory history of the nomenclature Hyderabad-Karnataka reveals a more prosaic origin and a history tied to neighbouring Kannada provinces, particularly Bombay-Karnataka. When the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1920 agreed to the reorganisation of its provincial units on the basis of language, the Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) was formed, separating it from the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. Its jurisdiction extended over the Kannada-speaking areas of the Bombay Presidency. This provided a fillip to the consolidation of Bombay-Karnataka's territorial identity as a predominantly Kannada area, distinguishing it from other linguistic

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[6] Swarajya staff, "'Kalyana Karnataka': How State's Much Neglected Region Has Been Finally Rid Of Its 'Nizam Era' Taint," *Swarajya*, September 18, 2019, Online edition, https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/kalyana-karnataka-how-states-much-neglected-region-has-been-finally-rid-of-its-nizam-era-taint.

areas in the Bombay Presidency. As the demand for the formation of a Karnatak state grew in Bombay-Karnataka, particularly in the 1940s, the KPCC sought to forge alliances with leaders from the Mysore state to realise the formation of a new Kannada state.

Hyderabad-Karnataka, upto this period of the late 1940s, was simply called the Karnatic region by the various actors in Hyderabad state.[7] Only in 1946, after the ban on the Hyderabad State Congress was lifted and the Hyderabad-Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee was formed, did the name come into serious circulation. Outside Hyderabad, the name served to distinguish the region primarily from Bombay-Karnataka.[8] By the 1950s, within Mysorean discourse around states reorganisation in particular, geographical designations of North-, Bombay-, and Hyderabad-Karnataka were used to refer to the different entities seeking to 'join' Mysore. The Fact-Finding Committee set up by the Mysore State under the chairmanship of M. Seshadri to assess the state of development in all Kannada-speaking areas was probably one of the first government reports to use the name Hyderabad-Karnataka.[9] In doing so, it consolidated the use of this name as a governmental category, as against its use until then as a political entity by provincial congress units.

None of this history mattered when the region was renamed as Kalyana Karnataka since the move was premised on a set of assumptions: a) The region was called Hyderabad-Karnataka because it was part of the Muslim state of Hyderabad, ruled by the Nizams; b) This state was feudal, oppressive, and sought to decimate its Hindu population; c) The underdevelopment/backwardness of the region was to be traced to this Muslim association; and d) By changing the name, this 'taint' could thus be erased, and the region could be

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[7] When the Hyderabad State Congress was banned, much of anti-state activities were channelled through provincial conferences – Andhra Mahasabha, Marathwada Parishad and the Karnatak Parishad – established for each of the three regions.
[8] Bombay- and Hyderabad-Karnataka regions are together referred to as North Karnataka.
[9] M Seshadri et al., "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)" (Bangalore: Government of Mysore, October 28, 1954), Mythic Society.

established as a primarily Lingayat region.[10] The lack of public discussions around this renaming also reflects a popular consensus around the tainted nature of the name. The immediate factor for the change of nomenclature, it was stated, was a letter received from forty-one legislators of the region as an instance of the popularity of this demand.

Lines of enquiry

In his statements, the chief minister emphasised the supposed violence of the Razakars prior to the state's accession to the Union, even while maintaining a studied silence regarding the violence unleashed against Muslims in the aftermath of the Indian Union's military operation, euphemistically titled 'Police Action', against Hyderabad state in 1948. This is a dominant tendency within popular historical narratives of the region. Effacement has indeed marked historical narratives written of Hyderabad-Karnataka, as unreconstructed frameworks of 'Muslim oppression' and 'feudalism' have often been deployed to explain away the region's complex past and present underdevelopment. Correcting this historiographical tendency is one of the motivations informing this thesis.

The princely state of Hyderabad has suffered such representational crises at least since the early 1930s and the renaming of the region as Kalyana Karnataka many decades later referenced this purportedly oppressive and communal history of the Asaf Jahi rule. A critical perspective of the events in Hyderabad leading up to its accession in 1948 however are instructive of the ways in which Hindu majoritarian and developmental discourses operated in the early decades of twentieth-century India. Tracking the trajectories and operations of these discourses through the case of Hyderabad is another key impetus for the thesis.

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[10] It is important to place this renaming within the contemporary context of Hindutva politics where Allahabad has been renamed as Prayagraj, Gurgaon as Gurugram, Faizabad as Ayodhya, and the iconic Mughalsarai railway station as Deen Dayal Upadhyay Station, among others. For commentaries on this wave of name changes, see Soutik Biswas, "Is India Waging a 'war' on Islamic Names?," *BBC News*, November 13, 2018, Online edition, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-46191239; Rizwan Ahmad, "Renaming India: Saffronisation of Public Spaces," *Al Jazeera*, October 12, 2018, Online edition, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/renaming-india-saffronisation-public-spaces-181012113039066.html.

This assertion that Hyderabad-Karnataka was tainted because of its connections with the erstwhile Hyderabad state has a longer lineage dating back to the 1950s, when similar arguments about the princely state being an 'unnatural entity' were made while calling for its dissolution. It was also argued that the dissolution was essential to effectuate the linguistic reorganisation of South India, given that the state was host to three distinct linguistic communities of Marathi, Telugu, and Kannada speakers. The histories of Hyderabad and Karnataka are, therefore, interlinked, and this thesis maps this connected history of the internal reorganisation of the southern parts of India's territory.

The events of Police Action and the linguistic reorganisation of South India are key moments in this thesis because they marked the transition of Hyderabad-Karnataka from a princely-autocratic to a democratic regime, and from a multi-lingual to an ostensibly single-language state. This thesis tracks the twin processes of the dissolution of Hyderabad state and the formation of the Kannada state, from the period of the 1930s onwards, by studying the production of a 'communal', 'feudal', and 'oppressive' Muslim state in Hyderabad, as well as the consolidation of its constituent regions of Telangana, Marathwada, and Karnatic as linguistically-defined regions. This latter process eventually resulted in the merger of the three regions with Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, respectively.

Both these processes have had a lasting impact on the spatiality of development in India. Yet the coupling of communalism and linguistic movements with development has remained understudied. Development, understood narrowly as concerned with the economic, is, however, also framed by 'extra-economic' factors. By studying the anti-Asaf Jahi movement in the erstwhile Hyderabad state and its articulation of development through a majoritarian Hindu idiom, and by studying the movement for linguistic reorganisation and its articulation

of a language-territory congruence as a pre-requisite for development, a fuller exposition of these connected processes will be attempted.

These two events may have marked the fates of Hyderabad state, and consequently of Hyderabad-Karnataka. However, equally crucial has been the role of the developmental state in the shaping of the region. This thesis will trace a longer history of state intervention in the region by studying conceptions and activities of welfare/development within the princely and democratic regimes by focussing on the making of the Tungabhadra dam, among other things. In the contemporary moment, within Karnataka, dissensions about unequal development have foregrounded the deliberate neglect of North and Hyderabad-Karnataka by the developmental state, as benefits of progress have been cornered by southern parts, particularly Bangalore. The role of the developmental state through the period of the twentieth century is another major area of enquiry.

Given that historical narratives have shaped the representations of Hyderabad as 'feudal' and 'oppressive' and Hyderabad-Karnataka as underdeveloped, the final area of enquiry will be around the framing and uses of histories in popular and state-led discourses. The thesis will explore how the marking of Hyderabad-Karnataka as 'historically underdeveloped' has allowed the contemporary development regime to perpetuate spatial inequalities, and how mobilisations from this region have deployed histories of state neglect to demand a fair share of the state's resources.

Review of literature

This thesis is a regional history of Hyderabad-Karnataka. What, however, constitutes the remit of regional histories as a genre? By way of definition by limitation, regional histories are not national or local histories, although they are not without reference to the nation or the

local. Regional histories are necessarily connected histories because, as intermediate spaces, regions are host to variety of actors, processes, and movements, and pull together histories of all these elements. In the case of Hyderabad-Karnataka, to chart a political and developmental history of the region, it is essential to situate it within existing literature on the states of Hyderabad, Mysore, and Karnataka.

*Hyderabad-Karnataka and its histories*

There is very little critical scholarship, historical or otherwise, in the Anglophone academia on the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, unlike Marathwada[11] or Telangana[12] (the other two constituent regions of the erstwhile Hyderabad state), which have been studied to some extent. Within scholarship in Kannada, the tendency has been to focus on political movements against the Asaf Jahi state. An oft-cited text is B.C. Mahabaleshwarappa's *Hyderabad-Karnatakadali Rajakiya Chaluvaligalu* (Political movements in Hyderabad-Karnataka), *1948-2000*. In this work, the author follows a familiar nationalistic trajectory in the region through the Razakar movement, the 'freedom movement' against the Nizam, Police Action against Hyderabad state, linguistic reorganisation, and the region's contemporary dissatisfactions. Published first in 1997, the book set itself the task of recounting a 'political' movement, as opposed to the auto/biographical accounts that had come to stand in for the history of the region.[13] The book presents the Asaf Jahi rule, particularly the reign of Nizam Osman Ali Khan, as rife with nepotism, corruption, and mis-

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[11] On Marathwada, see Sulabha Brahme, Kumud Pore, and S.H. Pore, *Regional Planning: A Case Study of Marathwada Region* (Poona: Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, 1975); Jasmine Y Damle, *Beyond Economic Development: A Case Study of Marathwada* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2001); Gopal Guru, "Understanding Violence against Dalits in Marathwada," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 9 (February 26, 1994): 469–72; P.V. Kate, *Marathwada Under the Nizams (1724-1948)* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1987).

[12] The peasant movement in Telangana in the 1950s and the recent movement for a state independent of Andhra have been the subject of many scholarly enquiries. Some of these include Bhangya Bhukya, *History of Modern Telangana* (Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2017); K. Lalita and Vasantha Kannabiran, *We Were Making History: Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle* (London: Zed Books, 1989); Kalpana Kannabiran et al., "On the Telengana Trail," *Economic and Political Weekly* 45, no. 13 (April 27, 2010): 69–82.

[13] B.C. Mahabaleshwarappa, *Hyderabad Karnatakadalli Rajakiya Chaluvaligalu*, Third (Gulbarga: Prasaranga, Gulbarga University, 2004), 5–6.

governance. It claims that the 'people' of the region were fed up with the miseries caused both by the Nizam's and Communist forces and rose unitedly to fight for 'freedom'. In this, they were greatly aided by the Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, and the Hyderabad State Congress (HSC), which sought to integrate the state with India soon after the World War II. In what has now become a popular way of tying the region's history to India, the narrative recounts Hyderabad remaining 'unfree' even after Indian independence and the moment of liberation arriving much later on 17 September 1948. As with many nationalist accounts of Hyderabad, communal violence against Hindus is cited as the reason for the Police Action undertaken by the Indian Union. No mention is made of the violence against Muslims in the aftermath of the Police Action. Within this framework, there are no complexities, as the 'battle' is rendered as one between a malevolent Muslim ruler and a spirited Hindu public.

In contrast to the large corpus of work within which Mahabaleshwarappa's account falls is Amaresh Nugadoni's *Hyderabad Karnataka: Hadu Padu*, which undertakes a comprehensive account of the region from the Mauryan period.[14] Even as he follows the dynasties that ruled the region, Nugadoni is keenly attentive to economic and caste configurations that determined social power in these regimes. In his account of the Rashtrakutas, for instance, Nugadoni argues that this regime saw the rise of the landlords, from the castes of Deshmukh and Sardeshpande among others, as a powerful medium between the ruler and the society, taking over many of the powers of the state even. Unlike in nationalist accounts of dynasties, which focus on conquests and the territorial extent of the dynasties, Nugadoni highlights the economic imperatives of dynastic wars. For instance, in his account of the Badami Chalukyas, he argues that Immadi Pulakeshi's victory over the North Indian king Harshavardhana ensured that the fertile lands between Narmada and Krishna rivers, where paddy and jowar were grown, were under his control. Pulakeshi also fought frequent wars

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[14] Amaresh Nugadoni, *Hyderabad Karnataka: Hadu Padu* (Hampi: Prasaranga, Kannada University, 2003).

with the Pallavas to retain control over the Raichur Doab, the lands of which were considered even more fertile, as numerous food crops and oilseeds were cultivated here. Nugadoni's account of the Asaf Jahi state focuses, among other things, on the social origins of its opponents. While the early revolts against this state in the nineteenth century had been marshalled as evidence by its twentieth century opponents of an always-present dissatisfaction among the populace, Nugadoni points out that these revolts were by zamindars who were threatened by administrative measures that sought to strip them of their inordinate power over villages. In these revolts, it was the lower-class people fighting on behalf of the zamindars who were severely punished and put to death. Nugadoni's account provides a clarified picture of the region and its complexities, without being bound by prejudicial frameworks of a despotic ruler and a subjugated populace that inform many other works in Kannada. Nugadoni's account, however, is an all too rare exception in a landscape of scholarship largely populated by frameworks adhering closely to the hagiographic nationalist paradigm, and within which the Asaf Jahi state is condemned as irredeemably backward.

*Hyderabad and its Representational Crises*

The Hyderabad state was one of the 500-odd princely/native/indirectly-ruled states of colonial India (see Figure 1 for a map of the state). It was ruled by the Nizams of the Asaf Jah dynasty for over two centuries until its accession to the Indian Union in September 1948 turned it into one of the latter's provinces. Hyderabad state was dissolved in 1956 when its three constituent units—the Marathwada, Telangana, and Karnatak regions—were merged with the surrounding states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Mysore, respectively.

It may be fair to say that Hyderabad has received much prejudiced treatment even within academic scholarship. Some scholars attribute this to Nizam Osman Ali Khan's decision to declare independence following British withdrawal, his determined refusal to join the Indian

Union, and the alleged reign of terror unleashed across the territory by the militia army called Razakars, a wing of the radical Islamic organisation Majlis-e-Ittihad-Al-Muslimin (MIM). The counter-factual possibility implied in this speculative strain is that if the Nizam had in fact given up his claims, history may have been kinder and the long, variegated reign of the Nizams may not have been reduced to one of 'oppressive Muslim political dominance'.[15] This is a speculation difficult to substantiate, for the treatment of Hyderabad's history had been long in the making, if one viewed the state from the countryside rather than from its capital (this is one unacknowledged spatial proclivity in much of the existing scholarship on Hyderabad that my work seeks to address).[16] The growing communalisation of the Hindu public, the rise of Hindu organisations such as the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha, the strident anti-Nizam propaganda by the communist movement, and the agitations of the HSC had perhaps irrevocably consolidated the after-life of the Asaf Jahi state even before the violence of 1947-48. In other words, the depictions of the Asaf Jahi state in the rhetoric of these movements of unrest had already created the conditions for its eventual extinction, and later historical representation. Hyderabad has been unable to fully overcome this burden of history.

Declarations of the feudal-autocratic-communal nature of the Hyderabad state are found aplenty in popular discourse and find resonance in much vernacular and regional scholarship. One scholar declares that it was the prevalence of paramountcy instead of representative leadership, the regressive policies of administration, and the suppression of civil liberties that led to the 'continuance of medieval form of government and backwardness'.[17] This statement

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[15] This is a phrase I borrow from Beverley, Eric Lewis, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c 1850-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6.

[16] Benjamin Cohen's work is an exception as it studies the samasthans within Hyderabad state as a way of 'reorient(ing) the view of Hyderabad away from that of Nizams and British' and 'shift(ing) attention outward to the countryside, and downward in the political structure'. Benjamin B. Cohen, *Kingship and Colonialism in India's Deccan, 1850-1948* (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 10.

[17] Y. Vaikuntam, *Studies in Socio-Economic and Political History: Hyderabad State* (Hyderabad: Author, 2004), 5.

is made soon after it is acknowledged that the last Nizam was a 'very good administrator' who constructed reservoirs, developed irrigation, and established industries and banks. Yet another scholar states in no uncertain terms that 'Hyderabad was for all practical purposes an Islamic State'.[18] The wide networks across the Muslim world, including with the Ottoman Caliphate, which Hyderabad had developed as part of its internationalist outlook, are read as a 'bias in favour of Muslim institutions... so heavy and obvious'.[19]

*Figure 1: Map of Hyderabad state, 1909*



*Source: Imperial Gazetteer of India-Hyderabad State, Vol.13, 1909, 304*
*https://dsal.uchicago.edu/maps/gazetteer/images/gazetteer_V13_pg304.jpg*

One practical use of such a consistent representation of the Asaf Jahi state has been its power as an explanatory device for the enduring underdevelopment of Hyderabad's three erstwhile

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[18] T. Uma Joseph, *Accession of Hyderabad: The Inside Story* (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2006), 77.
[19] ibid.

regions: Marathwada, Hyderabad-Karnataka, and Telangana. In one particularly far-fetched claim, G. Thimmaiah argues that the feudal nature of the Nizam state had killed the 'enterprising spirit' of the people of Hyderabad-Karnataka, and thus, development had not taken place. Later in the essay, after claiming that Hyderabad-Karnataka had not faced any discrimination from successive governments, that its leaders had been given ample space in state politics, and that these leaders had in fact done much to bring development work to the region, he patronisingly states, 'The people of the HK region should also own some responsibility for not keeping a watch on how public funds in the name of developmental activities have been spent in the region. The HK region cannot blame the State Government for not giving enough political opportunities for the people of their region. The people of Karnataka gave two opportunities for a person hailing from that region to become the Chief Minister – once in the 1960s and again in the 1990s.'[20]

Many such assertions do not merit scholarly attention, and merely replicate prejudiced frameworks in academic scholarship. But the power of the enduring historical—in this case the 'memory' of underdevelopment—as an explanatory device needs to be contested. The specific focus on Hyderabad-Karnataka region here is an effort to understand its typecasting as 'historically underdeveloped', an oft-cited explanation for the recurring periods of drought, floods and distress migration that marks the region to this day. This project will not only mine these discursive representations to understand their underlying presumptions but will also attempt to narrate a history that is not beholden to sweeping categories of misrule, nostalgia, oppressive dominance, or communal dis/harmony.

Scholarship that challenges such neat binaries does exist and historicises, and repudiates, in part, the popular, contemporary representation of the state. Some of this scholarship is

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[20] G. Thimmaiah, "Regional Development: Some Issues," in *Regional Development: Problems and Policy Measures*, ed. Abdul Aziz and Sudhir Krishna (Bangalore: Institute for Social and Economic Change, 1996), 33.

marked heavily by the sense of loss and nostalgia about Hyderabad's courtly-cosmopolitan culture. Nevertheless, by bringing to the fore some of the complexities of Hyderabad's political existence, it allows us to think of global and national historical processes that had, over the decades, shaped the nature of state in Hyderabad.

*Understanding the Muslim State in Hyderabad*

Eric Lewis Beverley's *Hyderabad, British India and the World – Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c.1850-1950* attempts the ambitious task of studying Hyderabad's history in conjunction with processes in the larger European and Muslim Imperial worlds. Notions of Muslim internationalism and Muslimness are, for Beverley, key to understanding this history. Up until the end of the First World War, Muslim states, against the background of a rising European imperialism, invoked the notion of a global Muslim community to 'advance claims of political solidarity'. Beverley argues that 'Muslim internationalism provided a flexible counter-colonial, and at times anti-colonial, political language that served as a conceptual resource for many of the smaller states below the imperial level'.[21] Thus, even as these states undertook modernizing reforms that borrowed from technologies of the West, they also worked towards emphasising their Muslimness; Beverley argues that this Muslimness is not Islamic in that the former is 'a vision or configuration premised on solidarity between people who happen to be Muslims, but without the necessary presence or consistency of "religious", while the latter has explicit scripturally mediated ethical and legal content'.[22]

Located within this world of Muslim internationalism, Hyderabad, for many decades, had remained a nodal entity that encouraged the circulation of counter-colonial ideas, peoples, and politics, even as it undertook modernist reforms to legitimise its rule within a larger

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[21] Beverley, Eric Lewis, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c 1850-1950*, 45.
[22] ibid, 105.

regime of development instituted by European imperial powers. The inter-war era, when European imperial powers sought to consolidate their boundaries and powers in the backdrop of an increasing number of nationalist movements, led to the severing of Hyderabad's connections with the larger Muslim world, Beverley argues. He terms this as the provincialisation of Muslim politics. For Hyderabad, this meant a curtailment of its international circuits and its repositioning as yet another state with established territorial boundaries. The transformation of the MIM into a radical Islamic organisation and the rise of the Razakars in the last years of Asaf Jahi rule are a culmination of such a provincialisation— from being a Muslim state to an Islamic one. In the MIM's narrative, Hyderabad was reduced to an Islamic state whose boundaries, and dominance, needed to be protected against the threat of Hindu majoritarian rule. This historical transition from Muslim to Islamic in popular representations of the Hyderabad state is one context to my study.

*Revisiting 'Communalism'*

Beverley's work is important as a methodological intervention in scholarship on Hyderabad, for his narrative—he terms it historical ethnography—is crafted using processes and practices at work in the state rather than by emphasising an event-based understanding of the state's history. In a similar vein, Kavita Saraswathi Datla, in her book *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*, focuses on the conditions, practices, and peoples which enabled experiments in secularism in Hyderabad state on the related terrains of language and education. Central to her work is the Osmania University, the first non-English medium university to be established in colonial India. It is pertinent to mention here that the shift in historical representations of the Osmania University is indicative of a larger shift in how the reign of the Nizams has been viewed over the last century or so. When established, the Osmania University received fulsome praise for taking on the colonial educational system

and its denigration of the vernacular by focusing on Urdu as the sole medium of instruction. Rabindranath Tagore, whom Datla quotes, congratulated the state on such a welcome move and stated: '...It is needless to say that your scheme has my fullest approbation, especially as I know that your example will be of great help to those outside your State...'[23] Yet, in the last decades of the Nizam's reign, Osmania University came to be seen as yet another oppressive instance of the regime's effort to Islamise the state. This representational shift, Datla argues, was an instance of the reductive association of Urdu as the language of Muslims that was beginning to occur at a country-wide level. Such an association impacted Hyderabad politics, as anti-Nizam forces used the state's patronage of the university to advance their own claims of how local, vernacular languages and cultures were being dominated in this Islamic state. Datla's work, however, complicates this by-now familiar mode of situating Urdu within communal politics to argue that the language, through Osmania University, was at the heart of an experiment in imagining a secular future for India. This 'national secular culture' was being conceived by intellectuals at the University not simply as the protection of religion but as 'the creation of spaces and institutions... in non-majoritarian terms, drawing from a more capacious set of sources (some of which originated outside the Indian subcontinent), and taking place in a variety of places.'[24]

Datla does not make the explicit distinction between Islamic and Muslimness that Beverley uses to capture the shift in the nature of the state, its meanings, and representations in Hyderabad. Instead, she demonstrates a historical experiment in which the distinction between Islam and Muslim was not as important as what it was to be both Muslim and secular. In contrast to familiar narratives from North India in which a history of Muslim politics is used to explain the Partition, Datla focuses on Muslim intellectuals, the projects of

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[23] Kavita Saraswati Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012), 51.
[24] ibid, 169.

writing histories and translating texts in the Osmania University they were involved in, and their attempts at separating religion from a common secular future for the nation, even while drawing elements from an Islamic past. This is important because it unsettles several notions: that secularism cannot be crafted from an Islamic (or even a Hindu) past, and/or that to be Islamic is to be religious, or even worse, communal. The political-ethical impetus of this experiment conducted in this period of Hyderabad politics, Datla argues, was to resist minoritization, i.e., not only to defend against being politically marginalised, but also to resist the definition of Muslim interests as purely 'Muslim' interests.

Datla's work alerts us to the representational crises suffered by the Hyderabad state in both its pre- and post-independence trajectories. By crafting document-based narratives of incidents otherwise known as communal in popular narratives, Datla shows us the complexities of a political history of languages in a state now relegated to being represented as medieval and communal. One such instance is that of Datla's careful handling of the Vande Mataram movement, a key moment in Hyderabad's history that has been understood as the arrival of the nationalist, democratic movement in the state and the raising of oppressed Hindu voices against a domineering Nizam. Reading the archival material generated by the students and the government, Datla shows up the inadequacies of the dominant perspectives on this event. She argues that even as the movement began in response to the ban on singing Vande Mataram in hostels of the Osmania University, and even as the students claimed it as a Hindu song, the terrain on which this played out was one of secularism and language rather than communalism and suppression of language freedom. In asking that the state respect the 'essential rights to freedom of religion', students were, in fact, asking that the state hold up its duty as the guarantor of religion. By not accepting the Vande Mataram as a Hindu song, the university authorities were defining the elements of Hinduism, what was acceptable in public life, and what was necessarily to be relegated to the private, just as they had done with Islam,

in an effort to work out the secular.[25] As the protest developed, students drew attention to the privileging of Urdu not as an Islamic language, but rather in comparison to the disprivileging of Marathi, Telugu, and Kannada in the public life of the state. In asking for a similar commitment to the vernaculars, they were asking the state to come good on its stated support to all languages in the state. Datla points out that this demand for the vernacular was not meant to supersede or replace Urdu, but as an equivalent privileging of the mother-tongues. In reworking what has been fixed representationally in the history of Hyderabad as a communal endeavour—the founding of Osmania University—Datla allows us to think of Hyderabad's complicated history within its own local politics, and how, when tied with nationalist movement, this history is distorted.

*The nature of the anti-Nizam movement*

In her book *The Passing of Patrimonialism: Politics and Political Culture in Hyderabad 1911-1948,* Margrit Pernau details the history of the last Nizam's rule. In particular, in the chapter 'Political Mobilisation: The Search for a New Basis of Government' she studies the changes in political discourses which challenged the very basis of patrimonial governance in the state.[26] By looking at individuals involved in political mobilisation and their organisational affiliations, she is able to show us the indelibly Hindu character of the anti-Nizam movement. The first such initiative was the Hyderabad Political Conference, which held its first conference in 1923, and had by 1926, begun to hold Nizam Osman Ali Khan responsible for the sorry state of Hindus, the community which formed the 'bed-rock of the state'. It soon acquired a Maratha identity, began to refer to the 'artificial boundaries' of the

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[25] In other words, the university's response, far from being communal, was in keeping with its experiment with secularism that necessitated defining the boundaries of religion, argues Datla.
[26] Pernau defines patrimony as a system in which the ruler is the sole mediator of different segments in the society, inter-group alliances are hardly formed, and the society remains fragmented. In Hyderabad, as mobilisation for representative government gained traction, these segments organised themselves along religious lines, forming the two large blocs of Hindus and Muslims, thus fundamentally altering the relationship of the population with the state and its ruler. See Margrit Pernau, *The Passing of Patrimonialism: Politics and Political Culture in Hyderabad 1911-1948* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 229–30.

state, and elected N.C. Kelkar, previously the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, as its chairman. This was one of many instances of individuals traversing between explicitly Hindu and 'secular' organisations such as the HSC. These multiple affiliations of key individuals make it difficult to draw neat distinctions made between Hindu and secular elements in the nationalist movement in Hyderabad.

Pernau also makes the important argument that the early nationalists in Hyderabad were dissociated from the courtly culture of the capital and drew their cultural markers more from cities such as Poona or Aurangabad. Further, as opposition to the Nizam's rule grew, Telugu and Marathi nationalism used traditional religious idioms to propagate their political message, thus creating a new symbolic repertoire for their politics. Also documenting the rise of the MIM, Pernau shows how the symbol of the Nizam became important for Muslim politics in this period in the fight for the community's dominance in the state. A new articulation of relationship between the king and the ruler is stated in the MIM's motto*: '*We are the king of the Dekkan. HEH's throne and crown are the symbols our political and cultural domination. HEH is the soul of our kingship, and we are the body of this kingship. If he were no more, we would cease to exist, and if we were no more, he would cease to be.'[27] Thus linking the community's fate to the Nizam's and vice-versa, the MIM's leader Bahadur Yar Jung was able to mobilise the fears and insecurities of the Muslim segments of the society. Pernau's work is important in the context of my own work, for it details the rise of the anti-Nizam movement and its discursive implications for the legitimacy of the Hyderabad state.

In *Decline of a Patrimonial Regime: The Telengana Rebellion in India, 1946-51,* Carolyn Elliott talks of the lasting implications of the pro- and anti- Nizam discourses for the political future of the state. Both did want representative government and stood against what they

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[27] ibid, 227.

considered as autocratic policies of the Nizam. For decades the relationship between the Muslim identity of the ruler and the Hindu identity of his subjects had rendered neither ineligible for their roles as ruler and ruled, respectively. But when the MIM argued for the Nizam as a Muslim ruler, the implication was that Muslim rule or dominance was to be asserted. When the anti-Nizam forces foregrounded the Nizam as a Muslim ruler, they did so to assert the illegitimacy of his rule over a largely Hindu populace. In different ways, both forces were arguing for a congruence between the religious identities of the ruler and the ruled. Elliot's article is important for it looks both at influences from outside the state and the dynamics of internal Hyderabadi politics that shaped the outcome of the state. For instance, she looks at the well-documented Mulki-Non Mulki conflict in the state and draws connections to the rise of anti-Nizam movements in the countryside. One of the first movements in the state for representation in government services was the Mulki-Non-mulki conflict, staged between Hyderabadis and Muslims who had come in primarily from North India for employment in the state's administration. Elliot argues that the Mulkis failed to build a broad-based coalition, particularly with the indigenous landed aristocracy; the leaders of the Mulki agitation were not seen as natural allies by the Hindu aristocrats in the latter's times of crisis. Instead, they turned to their caste and linguistic counterparts in British India for mobilising support. This opened them up to cultural and linguistic movements building outside, thus introducing the seeds of anti-Nizam movements in the state. At the same time, it was the inability of the Nizam's regime to modernise effectively—the last Nizam's desperate attempts to maintain the patrimonial system being a primary hindrance—that led to the proliferation of opposing forces. Eliot argues that Hindu populations remained outside of the new institutions created as part of modernisation efforts by the Nizam, and the regime's increasing 'Muslim turn' created unrest in the state leading finally to the end of the regime.[28]

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[28] Carolyn M. Elliott, "Decline of a Patrimonial Regime: The Telengana Rebellion in India, 1946-51," *The*

Elliot's work is important here because it attempts to draw out the connections between structural factors of the economy and political alliances and the increasing mobilisation against the Nizam in the state.

This brief review of scholarship on Hyderabad state serves to place in context some lines of enquiry I will pursue in my thesis. The making of Hyderabad's representational crises is crucial to understand how development, articulated in a majoritarian Hindu idiom, delegitimised the Hyderabad state. Looking at the state's activities and conceptions of its welfare interventions is one way to complicate the arguments about 'feudal' 'misrule' in the state, and the larger representational crises that encumbers its afterlife in Indian political history.

*The Developmental state in Hyderabad*

Only a handful of works engage critically with the developmental activities undertaken by the Hyderabad state, as much of the existing scholarship is geared towards political histories of the state. An exception to this trend is C.V. Subba Rao's *Hyderabad: The Social Context of Industrialisation*, in which the author studies the role of the Hyderabad state in the processes of industrialisation between the years 1875 and 1948. He states: 'In Hyderabad the state played a pioneering role in ownership and financing of industries, in taking diverse technological initiatives and evolving a conception of planned development.' Based on his analysis of funds, grants, and loans offered to enterprises within the corporate and small-scale industrial sectors, Rao states that '…financial aid was granted largely to Mulkis, the domiciles of the state.'[29] Between the years 1939 and 1948, propelled by the demands of World War II, Hyderabad initiated a shift in its industrial concerns from the production of

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*Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (November 1, 1974): 27–47.
[29] C.V. Subba Rao, *Hyderabad: The Social Context of Industrialisation* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007), 45.

agro-based products to chemical and machinery-based products such as machine tools, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, heavy chemicals, plastics and synthetics.

These developments, however, took place within a social framework that continued to be pre-capitalist, argues Rao. Offering a glimpse of Hyderabadi elite in the city and countryside, he says:

> The assorted set of landed aristocrats included Muqasadars, Taluqdars, Jagirdars, Rajas of Samsthanams, Paigah nobles and bankers and traders. Most of them were located in Hyderabad city and some of them were closely aligned with the ruling family and also held Mansabs and administrative posts at different levels of the state apparatus. At the village level, Naibs, Miraisadars, Deshmukhs, Deshpandes and Watandars constituted the landed gentry. Their control over land, law, police and general administration was absolute. Propped up by the state and sanctified by custom, their social power was complete and final.[30]

Within such a social system, any attempts at modernisation were bound to be limited, Rao argues. Unlike in the neighbouring state of Mysore where the British intervened to alter the social structure, it did not do so in Hyderabad leaving the social order fairly autonomous from the colonial system, he states. Given that the state drew its legitimacy from this social order, sharply divided between hereditary elites (from both Hindu and Muslim communities) in positions of power and a vast population subjected to their control, the efforts of the developmental state in Hyderabad to reform, for instance, its agrarian structure were limited. It often sought harmonious resolutions between antagonistic classes, such as that of the landlord and tenant, or the moneylender and indebted peasantry, as I will show in the thesis.

Another crucial point that Rao makes is of the heavy capital investment the state made in these industries, particularly through the establishment of the Industrial Trust Fund (ITF). This trajectory of industrialisation was similar to other princely states such as Mysore, Travancore, and Baroda, and was different from the trajectory in British India because, in the

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[30] ibid, 7.

former, the state not only provided protection to indigenous capital but also built enabling physical and financial infrastructures. Locating Hyderabad within this comparative context of the princely order is also a necessary corrective to studying the state in isolation as a Muslim state, a backward state, or a feudal state.

*The Model-State of Mysore*

It also brings to relief the differential treatment of the princely states within existing historiography, such as of Mysore, which has often been accorded much praise for being a 'model state'. Within historiography on Karnataka, princely Mysore state holds a pre-eminent position, to the neglect of other regions. Just as state discourses on development and progress trace their lineages to the princely state, history-writing too, with its excessive focus on Mysore, reinforces the popular presumption that this state is the predecessor to Karnataka.[31] That Karnataka is an unprecedented territorial formation, despite literary and popular claims to the contrary, rarely, if ever, finds even scholarly mention (see Figure 2 for current administrative divisions of Karnataka). Regions such as Bombay- and Hyderabad-Karnataka, for instance, are rarely studied as historical entities; they are discussed only in the context of the 'unification' movement and of underdevelopment, respectively. If histories are categorised into national and regional histories with the latter said to mimic the former and placed lower down in the hierarchy, this absence of scholarship on the regions of Bombay- and Hyderabad-Karnataka points to the replication of the same hierarchy: princely Mysore's histories have become the Kannada nation's legacy while Bombay- and Hyderabad-Karnataka form the 'hinterland'. The former's hypervisibility in the histories of the Kannada state invisibilises the geo-body of North Karnataka.

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[31] It was called Mysore till 1973

It is this unacknowledged spatial proclivity in historiography on Karnataka that allows for some scholars to claim that the state's putative success in the post-colonial capitalist economy can be directly attributed to the development-oriented princely state. In an edited collection on with Karnataka called *Development in Karnataka: Challenges of Governance, Equity and Empowerment*, the editors propose the term 'Karnataka Model of Development'. This, they argue, is a 'singularly innovative strategy' of pursuing simultaneously technology-led growth and local government reform so as to 'address the challenge of generating growth with equity'. This 'Karnataka model' should really be called 'Mysore model' of development, they state, because it has its origins in the development trajectories pursued by the erstwhile state. The emphasis of this scholarly pride rests on the supposed inspiration that Mysore's experiments with local government reform have provided to India's panchayati raj system.[32]

To be sure, my criticism here is not of the attempt to historically situate Karnataka's development trajectory. It is rather the implication of such historicisation: By rendering Mysore state's ostensible development legacy as the history of Karnataka, it creates an overarching narrative of the Kannada nation in which histories of the other regions are ignored, their 'underdevelopment' localised to their particular histories.

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[32] Krishnaraja Wodeyar's expansion of local self-government in 1902-03 is hailed as the predecessor to the 1983 act on the same issue passed by the Ramakrishna Hegde government. This historical continuity that is forged between the two acts does not take into consideration the significant changes in political and economic regimes that have taken place in the intervening period. Gopal K Kadekodi, Ravi Kanbur, and Vijayendra Rao, "Assessing the 'Karnataka Model of Development,'" in *Development in Karnataka: Challenges of Governance, Equity, and Empowerment*, ed. Gopal K Kadekodi, Ravi Kanbur, and Vijayendra Rao (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2008), 19.

**Figure 2: Map of Karnataka**
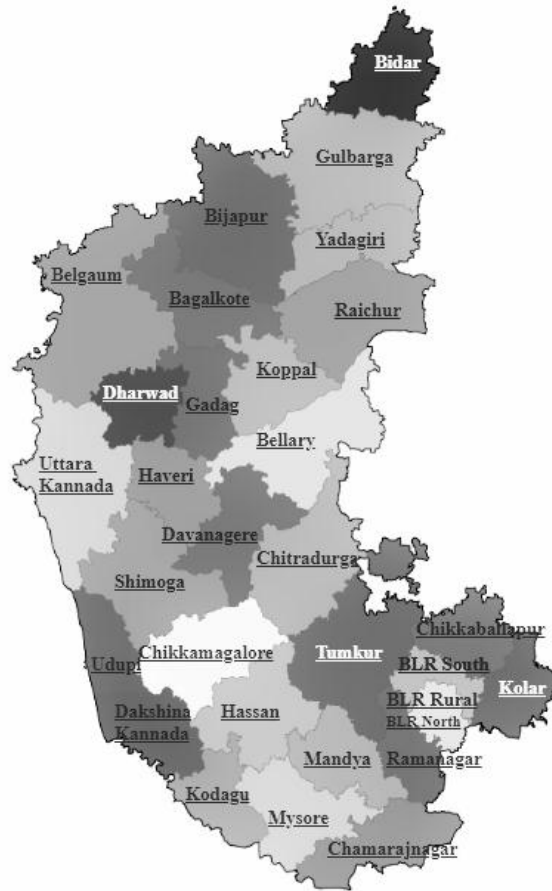


*Source: ENVIS Centre: Karnataka, http://karenvis.nic.in/Content/KarnatakaProfile_7022.aspx*

One thematic pre-occupation within scholarship on the Mysore state has been on the model-state nomenclature attached to it. Model-state was a descriptive term within colonial discourse  bestowed upon states that were 'progressive', i.e. committed to ideas of development and modernity.[33] It also became a term of self-identification for such states as well, as Donald Rudolph Gusatafson points out in his thesis *Mysore 1881-1902: The Making of a Model State.* By studying the career of the first two Dewans of the state – C. Rangacharlu

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[33] Another version of what the model-state originally meant states: 'Politically, the State was a Model of a State in subordinate alliance with the British paramount power and hence popularly known as Model State.' R.J. Rebello, "The Organisation of the Government of Mysore" (Mysore Regional Branch: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1973), 5, Karnataka Secretariat Library.

and Seshadri Iyer – Gustafson shows that Mysore's desire to emulate and surpass the style and substance of British governance and emerge as a 'model state' drove much of its administrative, industrial and social initiatives. He refers to the tightening of administration, the introduction of social reform bills regarding infant marriage, educational initiatives such as schools and colleges for girls, and the attempts at expanding the railway network in the state, among other measures that the native state attempted in pursuance of being a model-state. However, the severe constraints of imperial rule within which the native state worked in, he argues, restricted the reach and efficacy of these reforms.[34]

Nevertheless, the state continued to be referred to as a model-state, along with other princely states such as Travancore, Cochin and Baroda. Much of this had to do with Mysore's vaunted developmental initiatives. In his thesis *Development, Elite Agency and the Politics of Recognition in Mysore State, 1881-1947*, Chandan Gowda calls for paying attention to development not simply as economic development but as one which 'unfolds within a representational space constituted in historically and culturally specific contexts'.[35] He studies the discursive mechanisms underlying the various projects such as the Bhadravati Iron Works and schemes for modernising agriculture undertaken by the Mysore state in its attempt to overcome its self-recognised backwardness vis-a-vis British India—a backwardness believed to be only temporal and not grounded in native abilities, i.e., not racially differentiated. Gowda's point about studying the modes of constitution of representational space is a suggestion I follow as I look into the self-identification of states as developmental and the historical narratives they marshal towards this identification.

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[34] As in much traditional political history, the emphasis on key individuals and their actions in this thesis means that one does not get a sense of the social conditions of the period, except tangentially; for instance, when Gustafson discusses the measures taken to address the plague of 1898-99, he briefly mentions people's opposition to some of the interventionist measures of the state, thus giving us a glimpse of the shaping of life, and death, by the modern state. Donald Gustafson, "1881-1902 The Making of a Model State" (Ph.D Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1969), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

[35] Chandan Gowda, "Development, Elite Agency and the Politics of Recognition in Mysore State, 1881-1947" (Thesis, University of Michigan, 2007), 254, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

*Development and Linguistic Reorganisation*

The model-state of Mysore was the fulcrum around which the opposition to a 'unified' Karnataka revolved. The demand for the state of Karnataka primarily drew on a historio-geographical imagination of a splintered Kannada nation, with its speakers scattered over several administrative regions (see Figure 3 for different regions that were included to form Karnataka). In Mysore though, this sentiment did not find as much currency as it did in the Bombay-Karnataka region. Opposition from the Mysore public to 'unification' with other Kannada-speaking areas lay in the distinctive Mysorean culture that its development trajectory had enabled, which stood to unravel if it was forced to join other territories. For these anti-unification advocates, the report of the Fact-Finding Committee, headed by M. Seshadri, in which economic reasons—converging on the lack of development in these other areas—were laid down for the unviability of a unified Karnataka, which further provided the evidence to oppose the move.[36] The conflict over the formation of the state between princely Mysore and other regions is the subject of C.R. Govindaraju's *Movement for United Karnataka: Cultural Dimensions.* He contends that Mysoreans' strong identification with their state, their preoccupation with caste-based negotiations for state benefits, and the fear of economic repercussions due to inclusion of underdeveloped areas were key reasons for the opposition from among the Mysorean public and lawmakers to unification. Under such circumstances, the movement for a United Karnataka, he emphasizes, was led by leaders from North Karnataka.[37]

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[36] Seshadri et al., "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)."

[37] It is interesting to note that Govindaraju focuses largely on the movement in Kannada-speaking areas of Bombay and Madras presidencies. Hyderabad-Karnataka only appears briefly and that too only after the Nizam had surrendered to the Indian Union and when an assertion is made by public figures from Hyderabad-Karnataka that they would not accept the Mysore King as their Governor. This assertion, he says, threatened to derail the unification movement. C.R. Govindaraju, *Movement for United Karnataka: Cultural Dimensions* (Hampi: Kannada Universiry, 2009).

Yet development itself was the terrain on which the advantages of an *expanded* Mysore[38] state were spelled out by pro-unification advocates, as Janaki Nair points out in her essay *Giving the State a Nation: Revisiting Karnataka's reunification.* Studying official debates between 1953 and 1955, taking place in the backdrop of the movement for linguistic reorganisation, Nair argues that development was referred to in two senses: the 'historical achievements' of Princely Mysore and the 'potentialities for expansion offered by the acquisition of new territories'.[39] Kengal Hanumanthaiah, she points out, highlighted the coastlines, harbours, and cities that Mysore would have access to, the potential hydroelectric sites of rivers and waterfalls that would become available, and the variety of crops that could be used to mitigate food scarcity in Mysore. Nair argues that these debates on the viability of a proposed Karnataka based on the economic value of regions marks a shift from an earlier imagination of the Kannada nation that was premised on historical geography and emphasised the 'wounds' of being scattered over different administrative territories. This shift also reveals the contours of a development regime which emphasizes the worth of regions and peoples on the basis of their potential for capitalist extraction. It is this trajectory of the development regime that will form the focus of my study. Nair's intervention is important for the perspective it foregrounds from within the Mysore state on how Kannada-speaking regions came to be viewed in the new territorial formation. It focuses however on the scene in the Mysore state. Viewed from the perspective of Bombay- or Hyderabad-Karnataka, what did 'unification' mean?

The beginnings of Karnataka's unification story is sometimes dated back to the trials and tribulations of R.H. Deshpande, a deputy inspector at the Education Department in Bombay

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[38] It is pertinent to note that this was seen as an expansion of the existing state rather than the creation of a new state. The new state was also called Mysore, instead of Karnataka, to emphasise the continuities with the predecessor state.
[39] Janaki Nair, "Giving the State a Nation: Revisiting Karnataka's Reunification," in *Reconceptualising the Modern, the Region, and Princely Rule* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2012), 248.

Presidency, who apparently faced discrimination at the hands of a largely Marathi bureaucracy on account of being a Kannadiga. As a response to his own personal circumstances and the larger structural conditions of a disprivileged Kannada language in the Bombay-Karnataka region, Deshpande is said to have started the Karnataka Vidhyavardhaka Sangha in Dharwad. This is the account of the pre-history of the Sangha that author Krishna Shripada Deshpande provides in *The Story of the Karnataka Vidhyavardhaka Sangha: Its contribution to the cause of Kannada and Karnataka; The First Hundred years: 1890-1990.* The Sangha, Deshpande states, was the first organisation to make the demand to bring all Kannada-speaking areas under one administrative unit. As a prelude to this proposed unification, the Sangha also began to celebrate Dasara as the Nada Habba, tracing the lineage of the festival to the time of the Vijaynagara Kings, who apparently 'celebrated Dasara with glory, pomp and pageantry.'[40]

The Sangha's evocation of the Vijayanagara kingdom was hardly unique in this period of the twentieth century, when continuities with pre-colonial political entities were actively forged; in fact, such an immemorial dating of the entity of Karnataka continues to this day. A similar evocation is seen in a collection of writings, titled *Karnataka Ekikaranada Anubhavagalu*, where several contributors evoke a Karnataka that, at one point in history, stretched from the rivers of Cauvery to Godavari but, by the end of the 18th century, had been torn apart and scattered across different administrative units.[41] In such writings, it becomes difficult to delineate the boundary between Karnataka's mythical and historical genealogies. Further, such an evocation allows for the movement to be called 'unification' rather than the creation of an unprecedented political-administrative entity called Karnataka.

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[40] Krishna Shripada Deshpande, *The Story of the Karnataka Vidhyavardhaka Sangha: Its Contribution to the Cause of Kannada and Karnataka; The First Hundred Years: 1890-1990.* (Navodayanagar, Dharwad: Shrihara Prakashana, 2003).

[41] G Venkatasubbiah, ed., *Karnataka Ekikaranada Anubhavagalu* (Bangalore: Sapna Book House, 2007).

*Figure 3: Different regions comprising Karnataka*
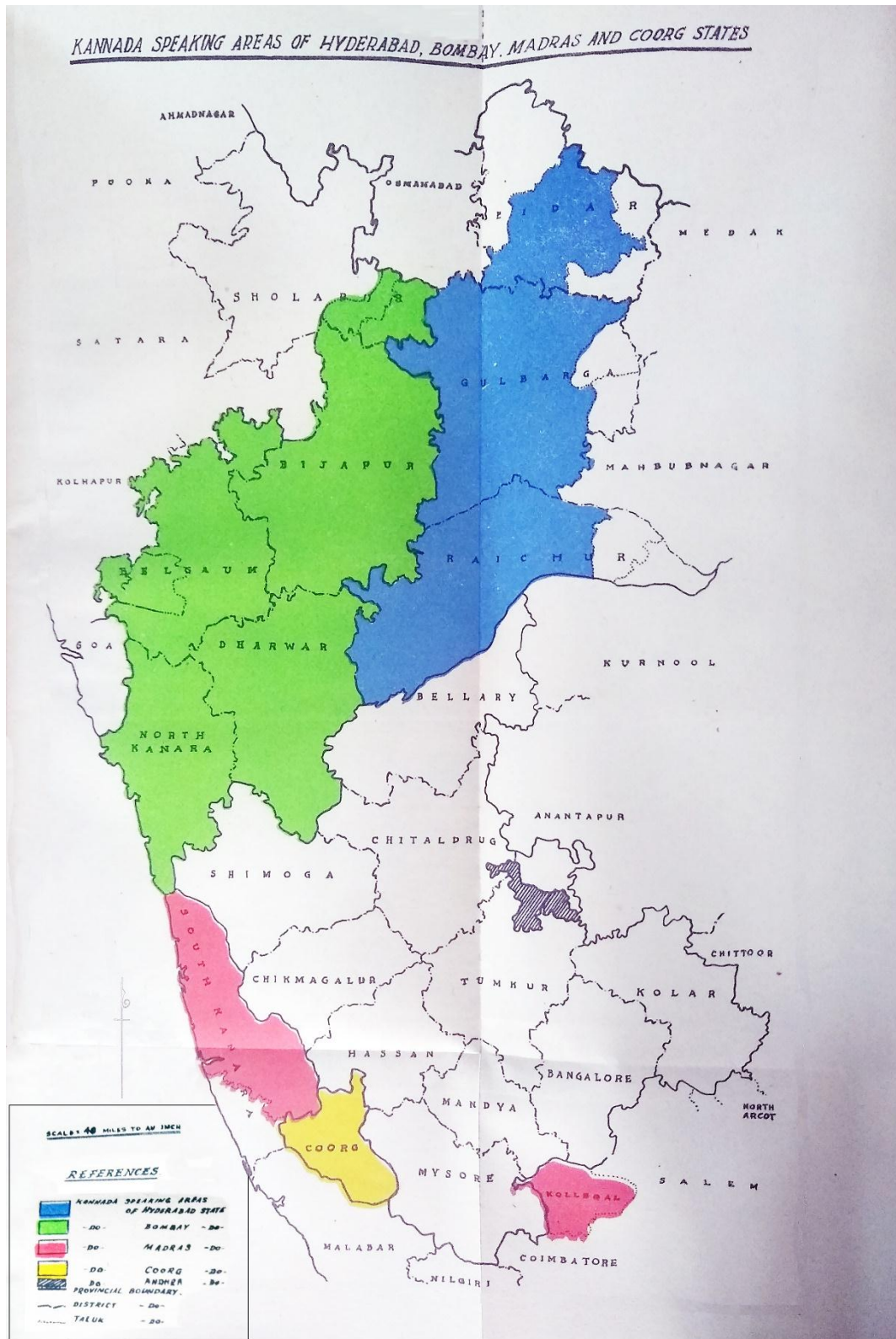


*Source: Seshadri et al., "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)," 12.*

The novelty of the demand for Karnataka lay in the insistence that political and linguistic-cultural boundaries must be congruent for the development of a linguistic community to take place. The rationale for such a demand is seen, for instance, in Deshpande's account of the Sangha: minoritisation of Kannadigas had occurred because they were scattered over several administrations and were thus unfavourably situated within other linguistic regimes to access benefits of development such as infrastructure, education, and employment in government services; Kannadigas' transition to modernity was thus stunted and it was only through the making of a territorial entity called Karnataka that the transition could be effected. The question of how to become modern was central both to the utopia of an imagined Karnataka and for movements for linguistic reorganisation.

*Political Economy, Modernity, or the 'Right Fit'*

One of the most important acts of the newly-independent Indian nation-state was the re-carving of its territory along linguistic-development considerations. 'Unification' movements in the south of India in particular, argued for re-territorialising languages so that native speakers could stake their rightful claim to remake and develop themselves within a territory in which their language had both administrative and emotional currency. Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai, in the introduction to their edited volume *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India,* claim that a focus on language, region, and state in studying reorganisation has meant an inadequate focus on the political economy of the movement. Paying attention to this, they argue, would throw up continuities between the colonial and postcolonial states and how the latter has made no significant effort to alter the spatial patterns of investment. Areas that had benefited from colonial investment, such as

coastal regions, metropolises, and well-irrigated areas, continued to do so after independence, thus exacerbating the unevenness of development.[42]

This, however, is not a new argument. In their 1989 article, researchers Johnson Samuel and M. Lingaraju had proposed that the town-country relationship broken during the colonial rule was not resurrected after independence, and that the 'requirements of a higher rate of domestic capital accumulation' prompted the state to invest in inland cities without seeking to 'affect the hinterland substantially'.[43] In the early years of Karnataka, Bangalore continued to be the site of large-scale investment by both the Indian and Karnataka states, thus making it attractive for migrants of all classes. The increasing primacy of the city led to an increase in migration from neighbouring districts such as Mysore, Kolar, and Dakshin Kannada districts, and much of this movement is attributed to poverty. The authors state, 'The degree of primacy of Bangalore within the state increased from 2.8 to 5.5 with regard to Hubli-Dharwad and from 2.7 to 6.1 with regard to Mysore, thus seriously distorting the rank-size distribution of urban centres. Growing up like a monster, the primate city of Bangalore gobbled up much that was vital for the growth of other towns and cities in the state.'[44]

Political economy approaches apart, modernity, or more precisely, the desire to be modern, provides another understudied perspective on the study of reorganisation. J. Devika's monograph *A People United in Development': Developmentalism in Modern Malayalee Identity* is one of the few texts in this corpus, and it focuses on the desire for, and faith in, development that was expressed by Left leaders around the time of the Aikya Kerala movement in the 1940s. This movement demanded the creation of a Kerala state for the

[42] Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai, *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India*, ed. Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai (Delhi: Routledge, 2011).
[43] Johnson M. Samuel and M. Lingaraju, "Migrants in Bangalore," *Institute for Social and Economic Change*, ISEC Working Paper, 13 (1989): 3–4, http://203.200.22.249:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/2834/1/Migrants_in_Bangalore.pdf.
[44] ibid, 13.

development of the 'Malayalee people'. She demonstrates how, faced with the absence of a coherent 'Malayalee people', unification leaders, particularly those on the Left, transformed it into an ideal to be achieved in the future. The Malayalee people became, in this political vision, a people-to-come at the end of the developmental process to be undertaken within a united Kerala. Thus, not only the economic advancement of the Malayalee people, but also the very creation of a Malayalee identity was contingent on the formation of a separate linguistic unit, which would subsume within it divisive community identities. Within such a state, there was faith that development would work its wonders. Such faith, Devika terms developmentalism. It refers to, she says, '…the faith in the effectiveness of specifically modern interventions in all spheres of life in transforming all the diverse peoples and societies in the image of the industrially advanced, socially rationalized, politically powerful ideal of society rooted in Enlightenment modernity.'[45] Within this framework, caste and community conflicts became a developmental, rather than a political, question. The end-goal of development was considered to be, she argues, the transcendence of these conflicts in order to create a nationalist, internally undifferentiated community of Malayalees.

While Devika's work alerts us to the need to think through the modernity-development combine and a politics of identity that consequently emerges, a reassessment of movements for linguistic reorganisation in the 1950s also calls for paying attention to the contestation around the mode of development in the newly-independent state. A reorganisation of territory along linguistic lines was not merely a politico-cultural demand, as in the case of Karnataka and Kerala, but one that called to question how development was to take place and what elements are crucial to this making. It does not contest the primacy accorded to development; rather it emphasises territorial configuration as necessary to any vision of development.

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[45] J. Devika, "'A People United in Development': Developmentalism in Modern Malayalee Identity," *Centre for Development Studies*, Working Paper, 386 (June 2007), http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/wp386.pdf.

Territory is a useful concept, thus, to think about this major act of spatial reorganisation by the newly independent Indian nation-state, for it allows us to see the intersections of space, affect, and development.

Territory is key to Ranabir Samaddar's understanding of the internal reorganisation of the Indian Union. In his article *Rule, Governmental Rationality and Reorganisation of States,* he defines territory, usefully, as 'the congealed form of the relations existing between resources, available labour mass, borders, the numerical strength of the population and its composition'.[46] He is however hard pressed to apply this understanding of territory to the demand for linguistic reorganisation, preferring to take recourse to a cursory history of 'mass movement' as the basis for actualisation of linguistic divisions. This is probably because he eschews explanations that invoke affective registers of modernity such as a desire to be modern and the imagined geographies of nations that share language and history, among others. Nevertheless, Samaddar's line of argument is productive for this project: he argues that governmental rationality demands the achieving of a fit between the 'right size' and the 'right people'. This has remained the driving force for territorial reorganisation at all scales. 'Right fit' is always guided by the growth and needs of capital, as evidenced by the territorial conflicts over resource-sharing such as the riverine disputes. This governmental rationality replicates the method of partition as a mode of reorganising territory. Such an argumentation allows for the following speculative questions to be raised in the context of this project: has discontent arisen in North Karnataka because it is not a 'right fit'? Considering the varied histories of the regions constituting Karnataka, do they, in fact, make the 'right' territory together? Was the state of Hyderabad, in existence for over two centuries, the 'right fit' that

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[46] Ranabir Samaddar, "Rule, Governmental Rationality and Reorganisation of States," in *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India*, ed. Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai (Delhi: Routledge, 2011), 48–65.

reorganisation undid? These are some questions around territory and development that the thesis raises in the course of its chapters.

*Spatial and Development Histories*

Manu Goswami in her work *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* characterises her efforts in the book as tracing 'a history of the radically relational production of particular spaces... and spatial categories... but also as a spatialised history, that is, one that takes space as well as time seriously'.[47] This is the endeavour in my work as well; I hope to understand the ways in which region and development could be used as conceptual resources in understanding the spatial histories of capitalism.

There are a number of conceptual/methodological interventions Goswami attempts in her book, some of which are relevant to this project. One such is the phenomenon of methodological nationalism, which she defines as, '...entailing the common practice of presupposing, rather than examining, the sociohistorical production of such categories as a national space and national economy and the closely related failure to analyse the specific global field within and against which specific nationalist movements emerged'.[48] As a corrective, Goswami seeks to detail out the specific practices that brought into being categories such as national space and national economy, rather than taking them as already-existing categories to build analysis on. For this, it is not enough to simply track shifts in ideology and subjectivity within individuals or institutions or even to study the structural or ideological moorings of infrastructural transformations and modernising efforts of the

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[47] Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 27.
[48] ibid, 4.

colonial state. She calls for an approach that combines both methodologies, while historicising the conditions of production within global space-time.[49]

Nevertheless, a critique of methodological nationalism is useful for this project to challenge the construction of states as discrete spatial entities within which phenomena operate and are restricted to them. States do have their territorial reach, but borders are porous, and individuals move and network; such porosity and networks create spatial scales (region, for instance) which escape, or modify, restrictions by authorities. For instance, the conflation of Muslim and communal within Hyderabad state took place not only as a result of an alleged Islamisation of the state, but also because of the strong centres of Hindutva thought and institutions emanating from Nagpur, outside the state in Bombay Presidency and Central Provinces. This worked through already existing networks of individuals who travelled between Bombay and Hyderabad for employment, education, or familial purposes.

If Goswami's methodological nationalism alerts us to the use of categories as self-evident, then Sumit Sarkar urges us to locate the category of the nation as it appears in historiography. In his essay *The Many Worlds of Social History*, he argues that the absence of enquiries into 'conditions of production and reception of academic knowledge, its relationship with different kinds of common sense'[50] had resulted in a worrying gap between histories produced and circulated in elite educational spaces on the one hand, and in regional, vernacular institutions and popular domains on the other. While in the former, writing and

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[49] While the global is an important spatial scale for Goswami to overcome methodological nationalism, it is not a scale I intend to engage with in my work. Firstly, this work emphasises regional dynamics that extend through different political-administrative divisions. While a regime of development will necessarily speak to a global scale, it does not entail a methodological impetus to study the global. Secondly, this recent trend within academics to emphasise the global scale of processes replicates the universal-particular framework within which what happens nationally or locally is a particular instantiation of the global-universal, or the 'inherently contradictory' character of capitalism/nationalism/etc. If we were to bypass this framing, could we possibly think of the regional as a scale not to work out the details of the nation or the global, but rather as the appropriate scale at which the conditions of production of categories and spaces could be historically situated?
[50] Sumit Sarkar, "The Many Worlds of Indian History," in *Writing Social History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1.

teaching took place in English, that in regional universities and colleges had shifted to vernacular languages. A paucity of translations between these two domains meant that

> the historical common sense of the bulk of students and teachers is determined much more by textbooks of very poor quality, or media influences. After independence, history, and particularly the narratives of the 'freedom struggle' or the 'national movement', became a major means of legitimising ruling groups in the post-colonial nation-state through claims of continuity with a glorious past… Through the media and the majority of schools, the message that has been constantly broadcast is that history is valuable because it stimulates pride in one's country.[51]

In these forums, conventional nationalist historiography with its unreconstructed frameworks of national pride, dynastic glories, and brave Indians has 'kept on getting reproduced and disseminated, in diluted and crude forms, at other, inferiorised and neglected levels'.[52] Sarkar's insights are useful in this thesis as a large number of regional studies of erstwhile Hyderabad and Mysore states and of Karnataka are informed by such frameworks. To be alert to such historiographical proclivities would mean paying attention to the social, historical, and political contexts of actors and their articulations.

*Region as Conceptual Resource*

Largely deployed in the disciplines of geography and economics, the region as a category of analysis has had a chequered career in history. Always placed in comparison with, and of lesser importance to, the nation, it is only recently that some efforts at recovering the region from such hierarchical confines have begun. Some scholarship tends to avoid hierarchical demarcations between the region and the nation and seeks to focus on the dialogic relationship between the two. Prachi Deshpande, for instance, in her book *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India*, argues for moving beyond the theoretical

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[51] ibid, 3.

[52] ibid, 36. Dissemination of such scholarship has produced a certain kind of common-sense, which is open to being appropriated by right-wing ideologies, Sarkar argues. One of the contexts that informed Sarkar's essay was the Ramjanmabhumi movement and the lack of traction achieved by arguments that leading historians from elite universities had made against the presence of a Ram temple on the disputed site.

framework in which regions are understood as 'local, linguistic flavours', and understanding the relationship between region and nation as an 'evolving process' through which an exploration of the 'many attachments to cultural memories, religion, ethnicity across the subcontinent' could be undertaken.[53] In her essay *Rethinking 'Region': Reflections on History-Writing in Kerala,* J. Devika argues against the treatment of regions within 'a simple model of similitude vs. difference vis-à-vis Indian nation and culture'.[54] She studies how groups marginalised from dominant constructions of regions have challenged narratives that have hailed or condemned Kerala's nonconformity. Feminist histories, for instance, have pointed to how the 'condemnation of matriliny as an uncivilised, indeed, "un-Indian" practice and its ultimate destruction' introduced to Malayalee society 'new forms of patriarchal dominance'.[55] This is a useful insight for this thesis which seeks to privilege articulations from 'backward regions', and within these articulations highlight what is absent and neglected. Reviewing modes of constructing the region in recent scholarship, Devika points to the idea of conflict as the theoretical entry-point to studying the regional, i.e., 'the region should be rethought as an arena of contestation between different groups for control, legitimacy and representation.'[56] Conflicts are central to this thesis, as it highlights the contestation between the Asaf Jahi state and non-state actors from within and outside state borders over the representation of Hyderabad, between proponents and opponents of the linguistic state in princely Mysore, and between the backward regions of North Karnataka and successive state governments.

Some other scholars have emphasised the circulation of cultural and discursive products as forming the porous borders of a region. Speaking of Bombay-Karnataka for instance, Satish

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[53] Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700-1960*, Cultures of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 208.
[54] J. Devika, "Rethinking 'Region': Reflections on History-Writing in Kerala," *Contemporary Perspectives* 2, no. 2 (December 2008): 249.
[55] ibid, 258.
[56] ibid, 261.

Deshpande, in his essay *Globalisation and the Geography of Cultural Regions*, proposes that the four districts of Bijapur, Belgaum, Dharwad, and Uttara Kannada form a cultural region, the most interesting aspect of which is that it is a 'cusp culture'—an overlap zone, or a hybrid (or mixed) cultural space, where the transition from one 'pure' cultural identity to another can take place. Because it straddles the cultural division between 'north' and 'south' India, the Bombay-Karnataka region marks both the southern boundary of northern culture as well as the northern boundary of southern culture.[57] It can be argued that much of the Deccan region, including the erstwhile state of Hyderabad was host to this hybridity as multiple language cultures coexisted in both the capital and the countryside. This 'cusp culture' was castigated as evidence of the artificiality of the state in the period between the 1930s and 1950s, as notions of single-language communities gained currency. Linguistic histories of Hyderabad are not available, but the fact that multiple languages were spoken even within smaller administrative units, particularly in Hyderabad-Karnataka, has not received enough attention in scholarship on states reorganisation (see Figure 4 for a linguistic map of Hyderabad).

Sanjay Palshikar, in his essay *Inhabiting Times and Producing Spaces*, proposes that the region be understood as 'a set of spatial strategies'[58] and 'an activity of domination'[59] in which the 'physical-material and the mental-imaginative aspects of social space' is articulated. He proposes looking at how certain practices of constituting temporality construct a region, and calls for paying attention to the processes of region-making as 'a complex of intellectual and institutional practices'.[60] G. Aloysius, in his monograph *Conceptualising the Region*, argues that the 'speciality' of the term region arises from the fact that it is both 'concrete as well as constructed', i.e., while it refers to a concrete, objectively verifiable, empirical reality, it is also loaded with non-verifiable social imaginaries, which are

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[57] Satish Deshpande, "Globalization and the Geography of Cultural Regions," in *Contemporary India: A Sociological View* (New Delhi: Viking, 2003), 158.
[58] Suhas Palshikar, "Inhabiting Times and Producing Spaces," in *Region, Culture and Politics in India*, ed. Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), 253.
[59] ibid, 254.
[60] ibid, 264.

nonetheless real and influential. Alosyius further points out that the region functions on a principle of differentiation in that a region is placed in context with other regions that are unlike it.[61] Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldaus, in their introduction to an edited volume, quoting a geographer, state that 'region is a perceived segment of time-space continuum differentiated from others on the basis of more defining characteristics'.[62] In these articulations, region emerges as both process and place, as geographical and temporal, and as understood through modes of comparison and differentiation. Region-making, in this case the making of the backwardness of Hyderabad-Karnataka region, is the central aim of this thesis. It allows us, among other things, to think of the making of Karnataka from a discursive region to a territorial state; the valuation of, and investment in, different regions within a 'unified' Karnataka by scholarly and state enterprises; and the spatial networks of migration in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region as it moved from being part of Hyderabad to Karnataka.

*Region and Development*

Histories of development understandably focus on the modern-state and its enterprises, for the latter remains a major instrument and agent of refashioning natural and social worlds. In their essay *Regional Modernities in Stories and Practices of Development*, K. Sivaramakrishnan and Arun Agarwal propose a study of development encounters focusing on the modern state and its projects and policies through a focus on the region, rather than on other spatial formations such as the global and the local. Regions, while possessing a certain 'spatial connotation', can avoid '...attempts at identifying it with a specific scale or geographical size, and focus(es) instead on the need to attend to the social networks and flows that give it particular form and content...'[63] They emphasise the production of regions through 'a reconfiguration of employment patterns, social relationships, cultural identity, and

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[61] G. Aloysius, *Conceptualising the Region* (New Delhi: Critical Quest, 2013), 13.
[62] Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus, "Introduction," in *Region, Culture and Politics in India*, ed. Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), 7.
[63] K. Sivaramakrishnan and Arun Agrawal, "Regional Modernities in Stories and Practices of Development," in *Regional Modernities: The Cultural Politics of Development in India*, ed. K. Sivaramakrishnan and Arun Agarwal (Stanford University Press, 2003), 13.

political allegiance'[64] and propose 'regional modernities' as 'an organising concept to explore the contested histories of development and the shifting links between ideas about development in different locations'.[65]

***Figure 4: Linguistic map of Hyderabad State***
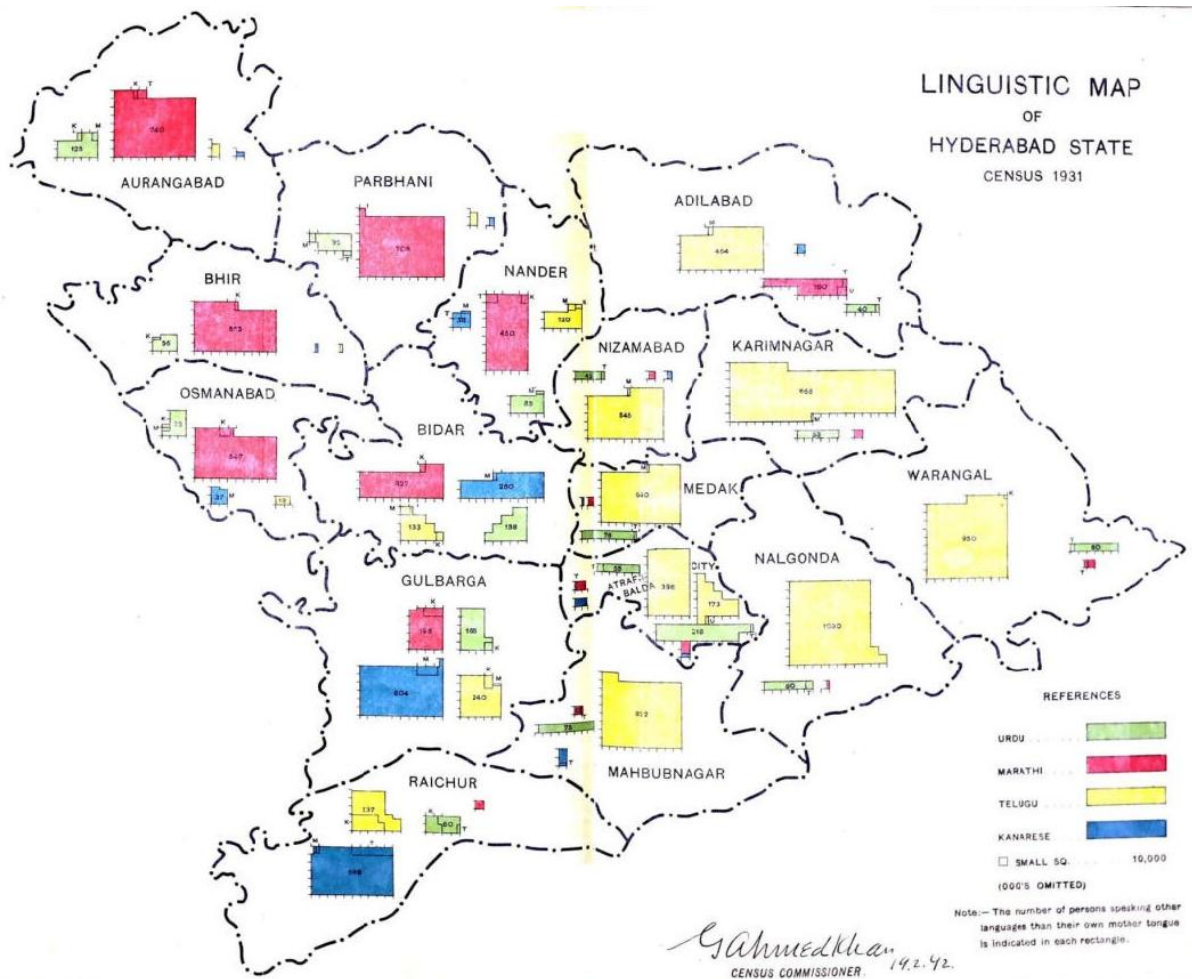


*Source: Gulam Ahmed Khan, "Census of India, 1931 HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," Part I: Report (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1933), 220–21.*

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[64] ibid, 22.
[65] ibid, 24.

> (I)n this pursuit of modernity, development has been the link that provides a common theme and unites programs around economic, political, and cultural reconstructions. Projects of state formation, their links outward to an international political economy, and strategies of localisation in relation to internal actors need insistent attention if we are to understand development – both as performed practice and also as a formation to be interpreted.[66]

Further, they call for unmasking the 'seductive appeal' of development, i.e., the way in which it is 'visualised as a naturalised and common-sense objective, its connections with power hidden, veiled, unknown: what else can one strive for if not to develop?'.[67] Sivaramakrishnan and Agarwal's essay is important for its simultaneous focus on region, modernity, and development, the three pivotal elements in this study, as well as their efforts to conceptualise region.

In their review essay *Reconsidering the Region,* Leah Koskimaki and Carol Upadhya argue that most research on regions has neglected key aspects of 'region-making', for instance, 'the role of provincial economies and small town worlds in the regional imaginary; the development politics, aspirations and conflicts that are reflected in autonomy movements; and the role of multiple publics in building the idea of a regional homeland'.[68] Scholarship on the region, they argue, also needs to pay attention to the ways in which regions are 'mobilised as political territories and reconstituted as cultural spaces of belonging and democracy'.[69] In particular, they call for imbuing works on the region with conceptions of mobility which is 'fundamental to social life rather than exceptional' and of territoriality understood as 'porous, shifting and multi-scalar'.[70] These aspects are useful in the context of this thesis, which, while focused on Hyderabad-Karnataka, seeks to weave in networks of movement of political actors and ordinary individuals; their construction of historical, cultural, and linguistic

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[66] ibid, 6.
[67] ibid, 4.
[68] Leah Koskimaki and Carol Upadhya, "Reconsidering the Region in India: Mobilities, Actors and Development Politics," *Journal of South Asian Development* 12, no. 2 (2017): 3.
[69] ibid, 5.
[70] ibid, 8.

homelands of the Deccan, of Hyderabad, of Karnataka, of *desha*; and the spatial reorganisations that these imaginaries have made possible.

## Note on methodology

The region understood as a dialogic space between different spatial-political entities necessitated methodological innovations, and this is reflected in the diversity of sources marshalled together, and the treatment they have been subjected to in order to write the history of Hyderabad-Karnataka. Apart from traditional archival sources, interviews in the form of oral historical accounts of the period of Police Action, life history accounts of poor migrants from the region in Bangalore, and developmental accounts of state neglect from activists of the region were conducted to offer a fuller view of the region through the period of twentieth century. Interviews were also essential in the case of the region and sections of its peoples who have been poorly documented in archival and scholarly records. Given the concern of the thesis for mapping discursive modalities that have enabled designations of 'backwardness' and 'underdevelopment', these 'sources – oral and written – have been analysed as texts for their representational intents, and not simply for building factual and chronological accounts. Thus, for instance, widely-used terms such as 'feudal', 'medieval', 'Islamic' or 'integration' in the case of Hyderabad and 'unification' and 'dismemberment', in the case of Karnataka are subjected to analyses and not treated as neutral terminologies.

## Outline of chapters

The first chapter focuses on the emerging developmental landscape in Hyderabad state from the 1850s onwards and the geographical discourse that animated the state's efforts. The chapter begins by offering a context of the modernising efforts under Salar Jung I to transform the state's administrative and revenue systems. In this period, the state is also

invested in appropriating its lands as territory by developing a keener understanding of its geography. Through a study of famine and census reports, I show how spaces come to be classified into the Telangana and Marathwada, and intermittently Karnatic (now known as Hyderabad-Karnataka) regions, allowing the state a greater grasp of the diversity of climate, soil, and landscapes available within the territory. I propose the term 'geographical gaze' as a way of seeing, and argue that territorial descriptions were suffused with a picturesque aesthetic that created avenues for state intervention in the form of improvement projects as well as large dam projects. The geographical gaze also rested upon the inhabitants of the region as the reports argue that people are shaped by their geographies. Consequently, changing geographies through development projects would mean a concomitant transformation of the inhabitants as well, and discussions around the Tungabhadra dam provide an instance of the state's imagination of what constitutes irrigated prosperity. The Tungabhadra dam as a project straddles both the Asaf Jahi and Indian Union regimes and, as such, draws in questions of territorial sovereignty, of development as oriented towards protection or profit, and of the role of the state in regulating the 'improved' landscape.

The second chapter changes track to interrogate the designation of backwardness that has been foisted upon Hyderabad-Karnataka in the contemporary period. It does so by tracing the lineage of this designation to the Hyderabad state of the 1930s, when critical commentaries and propaganda against the state begin to increase in circulation both inside and outside Hyderabad. The first section of the chapter analyses these critical publications to argue that in characterising Hyderabad as a feudal and oppressive state the main concern in these texts was the supposed Muslim dominance of the state and its economy. But the constraints faced by the developmental state in Hyderabad were systemic, and not unlike British Indian territories in the matter of agriculture, industry, and education. Given that the state attempted to achieve 'progress' without effecting social transformations at the level of the village, the impact of its

legal and other interventions were limited. In this chapter, I also discuss the spatiality of both favourable and critical discourses about the Asaf Jahi state. The spatial corollary of the former set of discourses was a historical-spatial imagination of the Deccan as a cultural and political region distinct from Delhi/North India. The Asaf Jahi state, although limited territorially to a small extent of the geographical Deccan, considered itself the successor state to both Hindu (such as Kakatiyas) and Muslim dynasties (such as Bahamanis) that preceded it. Ideas and peoples critical of the Asaf Jahi state travelled between centres of nationalist and Hindu thought such as Poona, Sholapur, and Nagpur (places part of the larger Deccan region) to frame the Hyderabad state as an oppressive state. Such discourses only gained in strength by the late 1940s, culminating in a military operation against Hyderabad and its surrender to the Indian Union. The chapter ends by mapping the spatial contours of the violence that spread through the state during and after Police Action.

The third chapter studies the connected histories of the Hyderabad and Karnataka states. Between the years 1948 and 1956, the transformation of Hyderabad into a province of the Indian Union took place. Amidst an atmosphere of terror and dread experienced by Muslims in the state, the Union effected a complete overhaul of the bureaucracy and abolished the jagirdari system. This was also the period in which a more vocal demand for reorganisation of territory along linguistic lines began to emerge, as new political leaders from Hyderabad began to demand the dissolution of the state. In the neighbouring state of Mysore, the issue of merging the state with other Kannada-speaking areas began to be discussed. Opposition to this move centered not only around the uniqueness of Mysorean culture but also on the 'backwardness' of the other Kannada-speaking areas. Interestingly, both proponents and opponents of linguistic reorganisation within Mysore were largely agreed on the point that the other Kannada-speaking areas were, in fact, 'backward'. With the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) recommending the dissolution of Hyderabad and formation of Karnataka,

both Bombay-Karnataka and Hyderabad-Karnataka became part of the linguistic state in which a matrix of administrators, and political leaders from Mysore have dominated state resources, even as these spaces remained designated as backward. This chapter thus provides an account of the processes of the linguistic reorganisation of territory, its developmental promises, and consequences.

The fourth chapter is focussed on the uses of history in consolidating the Kannada nation, following the formation of the linguistic state in 1956. It pays attention to the absences and exclusions within these writings, which I argue, has been modelled on nationalist modes of mobilising history. In the first section, I analyse three such representative texts, including the state gazetteer, to argue that they constructed a historical yet eternal Kannada nation through a narration of dynastic histories. These narratives deploy unreconstructed frameworks of pride about these dynasties and their imperial conquests, pay little attention and care to Muslim dynasties that ruled parts of Karnataka, and valorise the Vijayanagara empire as the last Hindu/Kannada empire. The implicit biases in this genre, which continues to hold sway, form part of the analyses. In the later sections, I study official histories of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, written for the first time, in district gazetteers. These gazetteers pay attention to the specificity of the region's histories, although the focus is on the 'freedom movement' launched against the Asaf Jahi state, by the 'people'. Both Muslim and Dalit histories remain obscured within this framework, and as a corrective, I provide a brief biographical and analytical sketch of one of the region's foremost Dalit leaders, B. Sham Sunder. I also analyse a history-writing initiative from the region that seeks to write an alternative account, in which the Nizams are claimed with pride as their erstwhile rulers and their rule presented as benign. This is done even though the 'liberation movement' seeking accession to the Indian Union is hailed as a unifying force for the region. If this represented a claim on the region's history, the last section studies the deployment of histories, such as that

of Mulki rules, to claim special benefits from the state—a 'special status' incumbent on its backwardness. If the previous chapter focused on how 'historical reasons' are adduced to explain the contemporary underdevelopment of Hyderabad-Karnataka, this chapter cites voices from the region who place the blame squarely on neglect by the state.

The final chapter makes a methodological and conceptual shift away from the spatial location of Hyderabad-Karnataka to Bengaluru, the capital city of Karnataka, as well as away from the archival and documentary sources. It does so to focus on life-histories of migrant-residents of Hyderabad-Karnataka residing in two poor settlements in Bengaluru, their experience of being poor migrants in a global city, the affective spaces of *ooru, desha* and the city that they inhabit, their representations of self and community as well as their claim and repudiation of backwardness, and finally of the ways in which precarity and arduousness of informal labour mark their bodies and selves. The chapter also engages with migration scholarship to argue for a closer attention to the fluidities of migrant lives that can better explain the wide-spread phenomenon of circular migration. Despite the methodological and geographical shift, this chapter also retains a concern for the spatiality of underdevelopment and for analysing representations in texts, oral or written.

## *Chapter I*

## Geographies of development: Reimagining the Raichur Doab, Damming the Tungabhadra

Introduction

In 1883, the English poet Wilfrid Scawan Blunt, a seasoned traveller across various colonies of the British Empire, landed in India to see for himself what changes the imperial rule had effected on the Indian society and economy.[1] He travelled across the length and breadth of the country and was treated to lavish hospitality by members of elite British and native societies. Yet, the lavishness did nothing to mitigate his staunchly anti-imperial stance.[2] In his travel notes, Blunt severely castigated British rule in India, attributing most of the miseries suffered by the Indian people to the unjustly extractive administration of the colonial authorities.

After visiting the native states, Blunt came to believe that the only reason the territories of these states had not been annexed by the British was because they were too poor. He argued that these states had been left with largely unfertile tracts after their productive lands were usurped by the British under one pretext or the other.[3] As evidence, he pointed to the territories of the Nizam, Scindia and Holkar dynasties, which were mostly 'untilled jungle', [4]

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[1] For a detailed exposition on Blunt's involvement in Hyderabad as part of his larger interest in the Muslim world, see Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*, 20–31.

[2] Blunt did not believe that the British administrators were incapable, but that they were driven more by selfish motives of profit than by a need for increasing the prosperity of their Indian subjects. He wrote scathingly: '…I have found, on the one hand, a vast economic disturbance, caused partly by the selfish commercial policy of the English Government, partly by the no less selfish expenditure of the English official class… I have been unable to convince myself that the India of 1885 is not a poorer country, take it altogether, than it was a hundred years ago, when we first began to manage its finances. I believe, in common with all native economists, that its modern system of finance is unsound, that far too large a revenue is raised from the land, and that it is only maintained at its present high figure by drawing on what may be called the capital of the country, namely, the material welfare of the agricultural class—probably, too, the productive power of the soil.' Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India Under Ripon: A Private Diary* (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1909), 305–6.

[3] Blunt was critical of the native states as well, believing that the administration of justice and the call for liberty were of lesser rigour than in British India.

[4] Blunt, *India Under Ripon: A Private Diary*, 301.

bereft of seaports, navigable rivers, and fertile soil. These states, he argued, had been exploited to create competitive economies to trade globally. In the absence of such productive natural resources, he contended, the state of the peasantry under the British and native regimes ought not to be compared. Yet, despite the resource richness of British territory and the concomitant resource poverty of the native states, agriculture and agriculturists were slightly better off in Hyderabad than they were in British Deccan, he observed.[5] Blunt surmised that this could be because, in the native states, the burden of debt among agriculturists was not as oppressive, and traditional systems of control and patronage had not been dismantled in favour of an impersonal bureaucracy, as it had been done in colonial territories. It also helped that, in the native state, the wealth generated within the state borders was spent internally, rather than being ferried off to foreign shores. Native rule had ensured, Blunt claimed, that even '…the great Deccan famine (between 1876-78) was far less severe in the Nizam's than in her Majesty's territory'.[6]

Much scholarship exists that demonstrates the ways in which colonial rule wreaked havoc on Indian economic life, and Blunt's critique is an early version of such analyses. His observations also served as useful reminders of the territorial roots of underdevelopment in the colonial period: that is, the manner in which territories had been carved out had left native states with inadequate natural resources to be harnessed in the service of development. Under such circumstances, it was not only the political and military might of the paramount power, enacted through treaties and conquests, that had forced the native states to submit. Their resource poverty also left them with very little possibility of economic independence. In this rule by geography then, the colonial regime was successful in resource extraction from

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[5] Blunt says: 'I was certainly struck in passing from British Deccan below Raichore into the Nizam's Deccan with certain signs of better condition in the latter. Most of the Nizam's villages contain something in the shape of a stone house belonging to the head man. The flocks of goats, alone found in the Madras Presidency, are replaced by flocks of sheep; and one sees here and there a farmer superintending his labourers on horseback, a sight the British Deccan never shows...'Blunt, 301–2.

[6] ibid, 302.

productive regions on the one hand, while simultaneously commanding loyalty and insurance against any dissent or resistance to its rule from resource-poor native states on the other.[7]

A closer study of the premises of Blunt's critique points us to a less explicit aspect of this rule by geography. His emphasis on the absence in native states of crucial geographical features such as navigable rivers, fertile soil, and ports, among others, operates on the notion of what constitutes an 'ideal territory'. It is a political-spatial unit that possesses abundant natural resources available to be harnessed: rivers that can be dammed and made navigable, fertile soil that can be irrigated and made available for commercial cropping, and global trade routes that can be established through seaports. This unexamined premise of an ideal territory is part of a long historical evolution in economic thought about nature and human intervention. In other words, nature as 'natural resources' is the outcome of a transformation where geographical features have to be made productive to serve the needs of territory and capital. An inquiry into the discursive production of territories will reveal the presence of ideal landscapes and their function as goalposts for political regimes involved in remaking their territory. In other words, states produce descriptions of their territories that highlight the productive potential of the land; these descriptions point to the discursive bases for state intervention into its territory in the form of development projects.

Such discursive histories of territories and the kinds of action/intervention that they generate from political regimes have not often been the focus of academic scholarship. An exception to this is a small but growing field of scholarship that uses cartographic technologies, particularly the map, to explore various representations of territories and the effects of power

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[7] It has been argued that native rulers were key to the sustenance of British rule in India. In the case of Hyderabad, help from the Salar Jung administration during the 1857 Mutiny had allowed the British to quell the rebellion. For a detailed account of this alliance, see Captain Hastings Fraser, *Our Faithful Ally, the Nizam: Being an Historical Sketch of Events Showing the Value of the Nizam's Alliance to the British Government in India, and His Services during the Mutinies* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1865).

that they produce.[8] Allaine Cerwonka, for instance, has argued that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cartography as a 'kind of knowledge production' helped establish the nation-state as a 'hegemonic political entity'. Maps, she states, helped 'create the impression of state boundaries as "natural" givens written in the landscape and reflected in cultural differences between groups of people'.[9] In the case of the Indian subcontinent, such scholarship has focussed on British Indian territory and not native states. In any case, the meagre scholarship that does exist on native states rarely considers the physicality of the territory at hand, or how states viewed and intervened onto their territories. Scholarship has instead focused on policies and negotiations of princely states with the imperial power; it has foregrounded the extractive nature of states' relationship with the imperial power, and the resultant impoverishment of these states; and it has sometimes highlighted the multiple ways in which the former challenged paramountcy.[10] Such works are often comparative in that native states are merely elements used to chart fissures and fractures in colonial power or the latter's overwhelming dominance. To be sure, there is another strand of scholarship that does focus on the nature of rule in the native state itself. It has been argued, variously, that even as economies of princely states were tied to the disadvantageous relationship they shared with the British, development in these states did take place under the sign of the colonial modern. That is, discourses, modalities, and practices of development in native states were greatly influenced by the colonial state's epistemic edifice of modernity. Modernisation of

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[8] See Ian Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory : British Mapping in India, c.1756-1905* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Matthew Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British Empire* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). Winichakul, while situating his study of Siam and the trajectory of Thai nationalism, has contended that histories of national territories, particularly histories of territorial representations, have hardly been written. This is because territoriality is considered as a given fact, '…the most concrete feature, the most solid foundation, literally and connotatively, of nationhood as a whole' (17).

[9] Allaine Cerwonka, *Native to the Nation: Disciplining Landscapes and Bodies in Australia*, Borderlines (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 23.

[10] See Beverley, Eric Lewis, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c 1850-1950*; Bharati Ray, *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy, 1858-1883* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988); Vasant Kumar Bawa, *The Nizam Between Mughals and British: Hyderabad Under Salar Jang I* (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1986).

administration, introduction of railways, and undertaking settlement operations in the rural were some common measures undertaken by most native states in their attempts and desire to be on the right side of 'progress'.[11]

This chapter is informed by such scholarship but will chart a different trajectory by introducing the realm of physical terrain and studying the discursive fields generated around it to understand the production of territory as well as state intervention.[12] It does so with the intention of describing the unfolding of a development regime, restating the importance of geographical knowledge production to practices of development, and examining the ways in which such discourses sought to remake peasant society. In the case of Hyderabad, this involved, among other things, a gradual consolidation of its territory's descriptions and classifications, recreation of histories of famines, studying the physicality of territory through measures such as the assessment of soil and weather conditions and the ways in which these factors shaped inhabitants of these regions.

This chapter studies Hyderabad's efforts at transformation of the Karnatic region through the period of the twentieth century, particularly up to the 1950s. It will identify the changes that were brought about in the landscape and peoples of the Karnatic region, more specifically of the Raichur Doab. It will study changes in the nature of state intervention which shifted from protective to productive over decades and regimes, even as the Doab was networked into serving the needs of capital and nation simultaneously.

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[11] See for instance Gowda, "Development, Elite Agency and the Politics of Recognition in Mysore State, 1881-1947."

[12] Cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove offers a compelling rationale for the study of geographical texts: 'Geographical inscription is simultaneously material and imaginative, shaping landscapes out of the physical earth according to human intentions: both the demands of practical existence and visions of the good life. Geographical representations – in the form of maps, texts, and pictorial images of various kinds – and the look of landscapes themselves are not merely traces or sources, of greater or lesser value for disinterested investigation by geographical science. They are active, constitutive elements in shaping social and spatial practices and the environments we occupy. Reading landscapes on the ground or through images and texts as testimony of human agency is an honourable contribution for cultural geography to make humanities' goals of knowing the world and understanding ourselves: to the examined life.' Denis Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision: Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World*, vol. 12, International Library of Human Geography (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2012), 15.

The Geographical Gaze

'We should recognise that not all land is territory and that a process of appropriation is involved in turning land into territory', contends Ian Barrow. For states, this appropriation involves establishing control over '…people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area'.[13] Establishing control also means having full access to this space at all times—a possession of that space and an unambiguous declaration of that possession—as Barrow argues. One mode of control was cartography, and mapping was essential to this transformation from land to territory for the British. Maps helped provide a sense of overview—a big picture of the terrain—into which the colonial regime could intervene to impose order and control. Maps were also integral to the formation of new ways of knowing, as Thongchai Winichakul argues in his work on Siam (now Thailand). Maps did not only displace indigenous forms of knowing land and representing territory. Rather knowledge about territory itself underwent a fundamental transformation such that '…to know was to know geographically'.[14]

This work of appropriating land as territory and knowing geographically began in Hyderabad from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and marked a process of gradual intensification of state intervention into its territory. I will argue that the appropriation of land through classifications premised on productivity and the types of state intervention necessary to enhance productivity were key to the idea of territory in this native state. This was, of course, an exercise of state power over land. However, in describing the intimate features of its land and classifying them, Hyderabad was also involved in producing a geographical existence of itself. As I will demonstrate, this production of territory was made possible through a specific visual modality, what I call the geographical gaze.

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[13] Robert Sack quoted in Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory : British Mapping in India, c.1756-1905*, 13.

[14] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, 121.

For most of late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the territorial boundaries of Hyderabad were unstable, owing to the native state's debilitating relationship with the British, who were establishing their control over South India during this period. One major drain on the revenues of the state was the Hyderabad Contingent—an army maintained by the British for the 'protection' of the Nizam—which the latter paid for. At one point in the 1830s, this amounted to a burden of Rs 40 lakh annually. Often unable to meet the expense, the Asaf Jahi regime had ended up ceding several prosperous tracts to the colonial power.[15] Scholars have pointed out that the annexation of the cotton-growing province of Berar and the mineral-rich tract of Rayalaseema had financially crippled the state. Moreover, the ceding of the Northern Circars had left the state with no access to a harbour.[16] The Raichur Doab was restored to the Nizam in 1860, after his debt of Rs. 50 lakhs was 'forgiven' for the services rendered during the 1857 Mutiny. However, several entreaties to and negotiations with the British regarding the cotton-growing districts of Berar, right up to the time of Indian independence, were unsuccessful.[17] In the late nineteenth century, with no constant source of revenue, the administration was reportedly in shambles. A report on the 1876-78 famine, for instance, stated that any individual who offered to regularly pay the highest sum to the treasury could be appointed a talukdar by the State. There were, however, no checks and balances on these talukdars in how much they extracted from the raiyat. 'The mode of collection of revenue was barbarous in the extreme', the report said, and claimed that cultivators had emigrated in

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[15] Major Reginald George Burton, *A History of the Hyderabad Contingent* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1905, 1905), 151–64.

[16] Much later, in 1947-48, in his quest for an independent Hyderabad, Nizam Osman Ali Khan even began negotiations with the Portuguese for the purchase of land in Goa so that the state could have access to a port.

[17] V.K. Bawa, pointing to the rich cotton resources and excellent road communications that attracted the British to this province, has detailed the different ways in which the province finally became part of British-ruled Central Provinces. Bawa, *The Nizam Between Mughals and British: Hyderabad Under Salar Jang I*, 138–74.

large numbers and entire districts had become depopulated.[18] 'No class of holders of the soil escaped severe oppression', it added.[19] Diminished thus, the state was reeling under severe financial crises until Mir Turab Ali Khan—widely known as Salar Jung I—took over as the Prime Minister of the State in 1853. He overhauled the entire revenue administration, abolished the contracting-out of revenue collection, appointed salaried officials to curb illegal and heavy revenue extraction, introduced the ryotwari system of land tenure, and reorganised territory into revenue divisions and districts. Following these changes, '…cultivation, which formerly had been distasteful, now became an object of eager speculation. As they began to find they could really reap what they had sown, hope revived, and with hope the kunbis' habits of industry became once more apparent', the report said.[20] These new measures had increased the area of cultivation, quantum of production, rates of productivity, and revenues, it added.[21] Put together, these measures form part of the making of the modern state in Hyderabad.

This transition from a despotic to a modern administration and the crucial role played by Salar Jung I is a familiar narrative within the historiography on Hyderabad. What is not often recognised is that the putative 'despotism of native rule' was a trope often employed by the colonial power to justify the superiority of its own rule as modern. According to this trope,

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[18] The talukdar mostly lived in Hyderabad and had subcontracted the revenue collection to the tehsildar. This agent often developed close relations with the Zamindar, '…and together they literally fleeced the poor raiyat…The system of farming revenues was carried on from one class of functionaries to another, until the whole hierarchy of officials was corrupt and the cultivating classes were made to pay for all.' Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78" (The Exchange Press, Bombay, 1879), 53.

[19] ibid, 55.

[20] ibid.

[21] An article in *The Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* evaluates the progress of the Hyderabad State under the Salar Jung administration, and terms it a 'revolution'. The overall revenue had increased 450 percent after jagirs, inams and tankha taluk lands had been resumed and made part of the Diwani administration, extent of cultivation had expanded and land assessment rates had been increased. Out of 1604 villages that had been deserted, 384 had been repopulated; the population of Diwani districts had increased by 30 percent over the last 20 years; and the area of cultivation in these districts had increased by 100 to 200 percent. Put together, this '…represents a clear gain and increase of the material resources of His Highness' Dominions'. "Sir Salar Jung's Administration," *The Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* III, no. 2 (October 1880): 34–35.

feudalism belonged firmly to the past and should be replaced by forms of governmentality.[22] In the case of Hyderabad, the oppressive nature of revenue collection could very well be attributed to the fact of the state's bankruptcy, resulting from the large costs imposed by the British for the Hyderabad Contingent. Instead, Chandu Lal, the dewan preceding Salar Jung I, has often been solely blamed for the ruinous state of affairs in the territory. Concomitantly, Salar Jung has been hailed as both the saviour and the harbinger of modernity.

Further, Salar Jung I's interventions have been understood largely as political and administrative assertions vis-à-vis the British, particularly his efforts at having Berar restored to Hyderabad. However, the measures undertaken by him and the effects they produced were decidedly territorial as well. The continuous debilitating diplomatic incursions by the British upto the mid-nineteenth century, in the form of acquisition of territories and revenue extraction, had forced the state in Hyderabad to cede power to numerous, disparate local forces in order to meet revenue and defence needs. In this context, the range of spatial interventions deployed by the native state —reorganising territory into divisions and districts, resumption of jagir and inam lands under the Diwani system, effecting changes in agrarian structure to establish ryotwari tenure and the gradual transformation of lands into agricultural tracts—can be read as ways of territorialising land, i.e. bringing it under the centralising ambit of the government.

These interventions by Salar Jung I constituted a rehabilitative effort to protect the state from financial ruin and political oblivion, given the ever-present threat of a British takeover. This period in Hyderabadi history also saw the introduction of 'investigative modalities' such as survey, enumeration, and history-writing which catalysed the creation of a modern

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[22] Thanks to Prof. Neeladri Bhattacharya for alerting me to the representational dynamics of this narrative.

geographical understanding of the Hyderabadi territory.[23] Such an understanding also brought together race and region to present populations as rooted to their geographies, and shaped by climatic and soil conditions. Such representations were made possible through the modalities of survey and classification, which both informed and created spaces for state intervention. These form the focus of this chapter.

*Classifying Land into Regions*

As in other parts of India, surveys of Hyderabad were first initiated by the colonial state from the early years of the nineteenth century. An extensive topographical survey of the territory was undertaken between the years 1816 and 1866, in which nearly one lakh square miles of the country were mapped and geographical 'memoirs' of the different circars[24] were prepared. These memoirs contained descriptions of the landscape including rivers, hills, jungles, soil, minerals, and roads, as well as human activity in terms of crops grown, their marketing, bazaars, cities and towns, architecture, and caste composition. A report by Major W.G. Murray on the Hyderabad Surveys, however, pointed out that, although the surveys were 'ample' for military purposes, they may not be sufficiently accurate for revenue, geological, or engineering purposes.[25] In any case, the surveys were conducted along the then-existing administrative divisions of forty circars; but their detailed descriptions were not aimed at providing an overview of the territory itself.[26]

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[23] Bernard S. Cohn, "Introduction," in *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3–15.

[24] Circar was the modified English term for a revenue district or sarkar under the Mughal empire.

[25] Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, *Hyderabad Affairs*, vol. I: Physical Features and Natural Phenomena (Hyderabad (Deccan): H.H. The Nizam's Government, 1883), 36.

[26] For a description of how such memoirs were used for military conquests in the Deccan, see Nicholas B. Dirks, "Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge, and Colin Mackenzie's Survey of India," in *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, ed. Catherine B. Asher and Thomas R. Metcalf (New Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta: American Institute of Indian Studies, Swadharma Swarajya Sangha and Oxford and IBH Publishing Company, 1994).

By the mid-1850s, the princely state had embarked on a refashioning of Hyderabad to adhere to norms and values of colonial modernity. As such, epistemic control of its territories had become vital. To this end, government reports of the day began to include descriptions of the Nizam's Dominions as evidence of the state's knowledge and mastery over its territories. This format is evident in the famine and census reports under study here. Famines represented both nature's unpredictability as well as the state's inability to control this unpredictability. The reports were an effort to document the ways in which the state could and did offset the devastation of famines. Census reports were aimed at not only presenting facts regarding the dominions but were also meant to express the mastery of the state over its dominions. These two sets of reports, prepared between the 1870s and 1940s by high-ranking Asaf Jahi officers, allow us to map the geographical discourse of the period.

One of the first classifications of Hyderabad's territory appeared in an extensive report prepared by the princely state, on the great Deccan famine of 1876-78. Occurring in the period of Salar Jung I's tenure as Prime Minister, this famine wreaked havoc on large parts of the Indian sub-continent. It was a moment of reckoning for the reforming Hyderabad of the nineteenth century.[27] Having expanded the scope of its action after a large-scale overhaul of its administration, the state made an unprecedented intervention into its territory, organising relief works, setting up poor houses, and granting remissions of land revenue during this famine. Following the completion of famine-related works, the administration sat down to take stock of the famine, its causes, its unfolding, and the success and failure of the relief measures that had been undertaken. The report, prepared by the revenue secretary Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali, discussed in detail the principles underlying the relief works and sought to

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[27] The *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* commended the Hyderabad administration for its handling of the famine of 1876-8. Stating that 'the strength of any administration…is…never really tested except under the pressure of a great calamity', it declared that 'the reformed administration set up in Hydrabad (sic) has passed through this trial with a success which proves that it has taken deep root in the soil, and having stood such a test, we may safely expect that it will outlive all present opposition, and never relapse into the old loose methods of public disorder and private peculation.' "Sir Salar Jung's Administration," 39.

situate the famine in its geographical context. It described the geographical conditions of the country, classified it according to distinctive territorial features, and expounded on the characteristics of people inhabiting these different terrains. This report provides insights not only into how famines were understood, but also how land was sought to be transformed into territory through geographical classification.

In its account of the physical features of the Nizam's dominions, the report termed the territory as 'a hilly and well-watered tract of country', through which the large river systems of the Godavari in the north and the Krishna in the south flowed. Advantage had been taken of the 'undulating character' of the terrain with low valleys and parallel hill ranges to build reservoirs to store water for drier times.[28] This particular technology, however, worked only for the 'granitic country', also known as Telangana, where groups of hill ranges allowed for the construction of reservoirs. This network of tanks kept temperatures low, which aided in precipitation of rain from passing currents. Weather and geological conditions had helped in developing a network of tanks that aided wet cultivation in the region. Building reservoirs did not however work for the 'trap region' of Marathwada, where the soil was unable to retain water in large quantities and bunds breached in the hot seasons. However, the report stated, Marathwada's proximity to the Western coast, a continuous range of hills that helped contain currents, its perennial river sources, and high levels of ground water offset some of its geographical disadvantages. The region was however bereft of forests as well as irrigated areas, it added. Hence, it recommended that irrigation be introduced by constructing wells and masonry tanks to combat the consequences of erratic monsoons.

It was in terms of such geographical conditions of soil, elevation, rivers and the possibilities of harnessing them for agricultural production that Hyderabadi territory was divided into the

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[28] Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78," 33. Mahdi Ali's descriptions of the landscape set the template for later descriptions as well, as we see the exact phrases being repeated in later reports.

regions of Marathwada and Telangana.[29] These territorial descriptions were generated in the context of a devastating famine. Thus, surely enough, they depict a state trying to grapple with geographic and climatic trends in rainfall and differing soil conditions and ways in which the physical terrain could be harnessed to increase agricultural productivity. Such efforts at making land legible through description and classification aid in its appropriation as territory. This exercise of legibility is what I call the geographical gaze—a way of seeing that allowed the state to make sense of the physical characteristics of the lands that it claimed sovereignty over, and to lay claim to it as territory. The gaze is not without an aesthetic tenor. I will argue that the conventions of the picturesque deployed in descriptions of the land transformed the different regions into primitive landscapes that the state could refashion as part of a larger assertion of its modernising ambitions.

*The Picturesque in the Colony*

In her work on colonial Australia, Allaine Cerwonka contextualises the picturesque in Britain as an aesthetic framework that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the socio-political context of the enclosure of the commons and rapid industrialisation. As an 'aesthetic sensibility', it was used to describe '…a wild or natural beauty or mountain scenery…something that is pleasantly unfamiliar, strange or quaint…As a general artistic expression it was developed through landscape paintings that expressed the beauty and melancholy of unaltered landscapes and vistas…the picturesque emphasised preserving older landscapes without dramatic or excessive alteration of their original form.'[30] Thus, the picturesque served as a critique of the changes brought onto the landscape by the enclosure of the commons and of industrialisation, even as it helped the bourgeoisie retain an aesthetic

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[29] The Karnatic appeared as a third category intermittently in these years, often being subsumed into the other two regions, and will be discussed subsequently.

[30] Cerwonka, *Native to the Nation: Disciplining Landscapes and Bodies in Australia*, 60–61.

distance from the rising poverty and degradation of cities, as well as mourn the loss of the countryside.

In the colonies however, the picturesque performed different functions. In the settler colony of Australia, for instance, presenting the continent as unaltered and uninhabited through the mode of picturesque allowed Britain to produce the doctrine of *terra nullius*, i.e. as land not the territory of any sovereign power. This meant writing out the aboriginals from the land as if they did not exist. This 'aesthetic sensibility' of the picturesque, Cerwonka argues, also 'produced the barbarism of Aborigines and the civilisation of Europeans'.[31] Far away from Britain, the framing of Australian land as picturesque, '…helped the isolated settlers anticipate the society that would follow from their presence'.[32] Among other things, it encouraged the adoption of spatial practices such as the proliferation of English cottage gardens in cities and in the arid regions of the countryside. Cerwonka's work alerts us to the discursive reconfiguration of territory, the practices such reconfiguration generated, and the futures it envisioned as part of the workings of the picturesque in colonies.

If the picturesque informed the aesthetics of a settler colony of Australia, its intervention in colonial India was to 'effect a rhetorical transformation of primitive, wild, variegated India through British intervention', argues Pramod K. Nayar in his work on colonial aesthetics.[33] Pointing to the different play of the picturesque in the colony, he further adds: 'Wild, unruly nature could not be truly picturesque in the colonial context: it had to be arranged, harmonised and ordered.'[34] Focussing on Christian missionary texts, he proposes the term 'missionary picturesque' as an ideological perspective that created the space for intervention into Indian society, marked as it was by primitivity and poverty and in need of material and

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[31] ibid, 66.
[32] ibid.
[33] Pramod K. Nayar, "The Missionary Picturesque," in *English Writing and India, 1600-1920: Colonizing Aesthetics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 96.
[34] ibid, 95.

moral improvement.[35] Nayar's analysis is useful in that it points to the coding of primitivity and improvement within the picturesque framework in colonies.

Nicholas B. Dirks also focuses on the picturesque aesthetic in his examination of the 'representational character' of British knowledge-making enterprises about southern India Studying the drawings from the collection put together by Colin Mackenzie, the first Surveyor-General of India, Dirks argues that for the British in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the picturesque conventions seemed abundantly applicable to India, given that Oriental or Hellenic settings were considered as offering ideal pictorial landscapes.[36] Even the military drawings by Mackenzie, Dirks argues, were infused with picturesque conventions, as sites of military conquests were depicted in the 'romanticist genre'. The British in these scenes were shown as 'simultaneously in control of and situated within a lush tropical landscape'.[37]

If colonial representations were suffused with the picturesque in the early period of its rule, and the picturesque, in fact, became one of the technologies of (its) rule, then native states were not far behind in using this aesthetic sensibility in their governmental strategies. Thus, while the imperial power deployed the picturesque to represent colonial India as uncharted territory over which they were expanding their control, native authorities used the artistic conventions of this genre to propagate notions that their territories were beautiful and bounteous and, most importantly, set for productive exploitation. The aesthetic sensibility of the picturesque aided in the production of the discourse of 'ideal territory', as I will demonstrate below.

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[35] This ideological intervention, Nayar argues, comprises three stages: the primitive picturesque in which vast amount of information about India was collected and some aspects coded to reflect its 'primitive, idolatrous and backward' nature; then the 'Christian georgic' design in which the missionary's toils take centre-stage and his work of cultivation, hardship, labour, sacrifice, and harvest is narrated; and finally the moment of 'Concordia discors', where the Indian world is now part of a larger Christian globe.

[36] Dirks, "Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge, and Colin Mackenzie's Survey of India," 217.

[37] ibid, 220.

In the report on the famine of 1921-22, the author Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, while following the basic classification of Marathwada and Telangana regions, was profuse in his descriptions of the territory. Painting a vivid picture of the territory, Bahadur, the Commissioner of Customs and Famine, described Marathwada as possessing '…*rich*, alluvial plains of black cotton soil *punctuated by small trappean hills*, which are the real depositories of this *soft* black and *rich* soil' [emphasis mine].[38] The report described the Telangana country as:

> …*full* of granite hills of *fantastic shapes* with *innumerable pretty and picturesque valleys* between them…The soils produced by the decomposition of these rocks is *sandy and of a pale brown hue*…The *uneven* nature of the landscape, its *unnumerable* (sic) valleys, the peculiarity of the soil which does not absorb moisture readily, all these go to explain the presence of numerous rivers and the abundance of rivulets and small streams [emphasis mine].[39]

The Krishna and Godavari river valleys in this region merited a separate mention with the report describing them as a landscape of sedimentary rocks and dense forests. Although the soils were poorer than in Marathwada, the report stated: 'Nature has taught the sons of the soil the ways and means of utilising these gifts for the improvement of their otherwise poor lands.'[40]

The picturesque conventions used in describing the geographies of Marathwada, Telangana, and Hyderabad state were meant to offer a sense of the richness and wildness of the territories, given that lands possessed by states were inextricably connected to the latter's worth and their potential for capitalist growth. Thus, what for Blunt was 'untilled jungle' of the Nizam's (and Holkar and Scindia dynasties') territories was presented in the famine reports as pleasant landscapes with hardworking, indigenous 'sons of the soil' using primitive

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[38] Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, "Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)" (Secunderabad, 1922), 6.
[39] ibid.
[40] ibid; Ironically, this modality of establishing a terrain of difference meant subsuming the heterogeneity of physical and social spaces within regions, newly classified as Marathwada, Telangana and the Karnatic.

technologies for harnessing nature. As Nayar points out in his work on the picturesque in the colonies, the primitivity of human intervention onto the landscape in fact accentuated its picturesqueness. Similarly, in this famine report, the natural world is presented as benign and teaching 'sons of soil' how to rework the geography for productive ends. The use of the picturesque aesthetic may seem incongruous since much of the report is dedicated to describing the sufferings of famine victims and the government measures undertaken to combat the devastation of these famines. But the picturesque as a way of presenting the natural world of Hyderabad allowed the territory to be treated as a pleasant but inert backdrop, one that did not cause famines but was nevertheless transformed into a bleak countryside during famines. In the report, the only concession to the ill-effects of the geography of the region was the acknowledgement to some extent of the failure of timely rains that caused the droughts. This was a necessary representation because, despite the famines, native authorities were committed to pitching their territories as 'ideal', their lands verdant. Interventions may have been primitive, but the territory still possessed a natural wealth that made it destined for much greater levels of productivity.[41]

This picturesque mode of description flowered fully in the 1941 Census report, with the state posited as 'a polygonal compact block of fertile soil', which had 'the added advantage' of being drained by 'the two great rivers, the Godavari and the Krishna and their tributaries' on all its boundaries. The state, the report declares, 'is a great Doab area between these two rivers'. The Marathwada region is described as composed of 'vast fertile plains of very productive, black and rich soil, retentive of moisture'.[42] In a literary flourish, the undulating character of the region is described thus: '…the elevated tracts have step-like ascents, abrupt

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[41] In the case of this 1921-22 report, such a representation helped its author Bahadur to present the territory as ideal, as well as to focus on the 'mixed blessings of progress' as the primary cause for famines, a point I will address subsequently.

[42] Mazhar Husain, "Census of India 1941: HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," Part I: Report (Hyderabad (Deccan), 1945), 45.

crags and cliffs and detached eminences covered with forest growth which produces a beautiful scenery.'[43] The text described Telangana's landscape as consisting of,

> …solitary, herbless, dome-shaped granite hills, prismatical fractured summits, the feather-bed appearance of masses of rocks and wild and fantastic tors and logan rocks piled in heaps of twos and threes. The surrounding area, clothed with brushwood and dotted with lakes and tanks, presents a much greater variety of scenic aspect than Marathwara.[44]

These territorial descriptions in 1941, framed in a decidedly picturesque framework, were performing another function—that of equivalence. Terming the entire state as a 'block of fertile soil', a 'great Doab area', and as being drained by numerous water sources, the text sought to evoke the alluvial landscapes of the northern plains, particularly the lands drained by the Ganga river system. As in the 1921 famine report, the use of geographical terms such as alluvial, doab, 'vast fertile plains', among others, needs to be read in context of the valorisation of such geographical features within the then contemporary geographical discourse. In British India, it was the *alluvial* plains of the *Doab* districts of the United Provinces, for instance, that were first prepared for exploitation through irrigation measures.[45] This equivalence drawn in territorial descriptions served to render the land as fitting the ideal landscape necessary for agricultural production. Colonisation of land for the purposes of development worked through a combination of practical descriptions of physical features as well as an imaginative equivalence. In the context of a state that was deeply involved in remaking its territory through projects of development, the picturesque aesthetic afforded a landscape that could be imagined as 'ideal territory', i.e. one ready for colonisation.

The focus on territorial descriptions and classifications allows us to study what may be called the geographical gaze, a key visual investigative modality that a state aspiring to be modern

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[43] ibid

[44] ibid

[45] See Elizabeth Whitcombe, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.

and sovereign needed to acquire. This gaze, I argue, surveyed the lands and articulated its visual field in terms of the then-contemporary geographical discourse of the picturesque. This meant emphasising the productivity of land through visual evocations and along tactile registers, even as equivalences were forged between the territory at hand and imagined/ideal landscapes.

*Subjects out of People*

The geographical gaze did not only rest on the lands it surveyed in Hyderabadi territory. Its field of vision also included the people and races that inhabited these lands, and part of the appropriation of land as territory involved also evolving a framework to understand these subjects-in-the-making.

The 1876-78 famine report, which had classified the territory into Marathwada and Telangana regions, also stated that they were home to two distinct ethnic races: the northern half to the Aryans and the southern to the Dravidians. It declared: 'A line thus drawn from the east of Gulbarga and Bidar to the confluence of the Penganga with the Wardha, will separate the Maratha race from the Canarese and Telinga people of the south and east, the land of wheat and cotton from the land of rice and tanks, and the region of overlying rocks from the country of granite and limestone.'[46] Portraying the Marathas as, 'essentially mountaineers, herdsmen, and soldiers – but bad farmers', the report stated that the richness of soil in the Marathwada region meant that its inhabitants could glean a greater yield with less work. Their languorous existence was possibly due to this natural advantage of the terrain, it surmised.

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[46] Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78," 33.

Later famine reports followed a similar classificatory framework that combined region and race. The 1921-22 famine report said of the people of Marathwada: 'The high forehead, the robust build and the light copper colour of the Mahratta Brahmin indicate his relation to the Aryan family.'[47] Like the earlier famine report, the 1921-22 famine report also had a similar description of the Maratha as a hardy character who roamed his territory, as herdsman, mountaineer, horseman possibly, but also as a decidedly 'bad farmer' who 'loves an easy life'. The soil conditions aided this tendency, for the Maratha did not have to work too hard to harvest a good yield; in times of drought, that extra effort to generate income from the land was not taken, leading to a 'bleak and desolate' countryside, claimed the report.[48]

Effusive in its praise of Telangana, the report called the region 'the seat of Andhra greatness' and described its Dravidian inhabitants as having 'low foreheads, wide scalps, slight build, and dark bronze complexion'. Although Telangana had poorer soils than Marathwada, the Telugus— 'sons of the soil' that they were—had invented ways to utilise the region's water wealth to tend to their lands, the report stated. The Telugu, who already strives hard during good weather conditions, exerted himself much more during drought periods and tried different ways to extract some yield from his lands. Yet his stamina for bearing the difficulties of drought was much lesser: 'the malarious (sic) climate of his country, his less nourishing food (rice and kangni), his intemperate habits, which he owes to the abnormal production of every sort of liquor in his country, and to which he usually gets addicted from the very cradle, cannot keep him strong enough to bear the brunt.'[49]

Despite the 'tender care' they required, the Telugus were harder to reach out to during famines through relief camps or works because they did not wish to travel too far from their homes, the report said. 'It is not because he does not care for work, or that he prefers to

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[47] Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, "Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)," 6.
[48] ibid, 6-7.
[49] ibid, 7.

remain idle but because he simply *cannot go* [emphasis original]. It is a sort of will power – a deplorable inertia,' it concluded.[50]

The geographical gaze here in these famine reports surveyed the landscape, its terrain and weather, and argued that these physical features shaped the physical-psychological characteristics of its inhabitants, such that the latter mirrored the character of the country itself. Further, as with physical features that were presented as unchanging, the two races were presented in essentialised terms—the Marathas as bad farmers and the Telugus as frail but hard-working. Encapsulated thus in one static moment, through the erasure of the historical dynamism of these races and the adoption of a geographically deterministic stance, the gaze offered the state a perspective limited enough for intervention to take place.[51]

The aesthetic tenor of these racial descriptions was also decidedly picturesque. David Marshall defines the picturesque as 'a point of view that frames the world and turns nature into a series of *living tableaux*… It begins as an appreciation of natural beauty, but it ends by turning people into figures in a landscape or figures in a painting' [emphasis original].[52] This way of seeing is possible through an 'attitude that seems to depend on distance and separation', he adds. In the case of Hyderabad, by turning the Marathas and Telugus into 'figures in a landscape', the picturesque aesthetic aided in the process of discursively rooting people to their geographies and providing a framework for the state to understand its subjects.

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[50] ibid. While the famine reports attributed the modest success of relief works to the Deccan labourer's 'inability' to leave home, there were more compelling reasons to not migrate, chief of which was the parsimony of the state. In the 1876-8 famine, for instance, the wages offered to workers at a relief work site in East Raichur were so abysmal that there were hardly any takers. The three gangs who did consent to working took the tools from the overseers and simply walked off the site. Even when they came back, they refused to work. In Gulbarga, the task work system was so unviable for the workers that they struck work for nearly 25 days and did not even return when cholera had further exacerbated their misery. They preferred to beg rather than do this work, the famine report of this period noted. Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78," 113–18.

[51] The famine reports were of retrospective nature, trying to draw lessons from the initiatives undertaken by the state during famines. Causes had to be found for why some initiatives did not work and some did. It is to this end that supposed *typical* characteristics of both the Maratha and Telugu were drawn up.

[52] David Marshall, "The Problem of the Picturesque," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Aesthetics and the Disciplines, 35, no. 3 (2002): 414.

Further, by defining people through use of categories such as race and region, the picturesque enabled the state to construct the distance necessary for the creation of *subjects* out of the inhabitants of countryside. These were subjects who were to be subjected to benevolence and paternalist disciplining by the state during the times of famine. For instance, both famine reports stated that, while the state kept itself abreast on the famine situation, it was also keen on keeping its intervention to the minimum possible extent, following the colonial state's directive to ensure too much aid was not given too quickly.[53] This meant keeping expenditure to the minimum on relief works and ensuring the famine-afflicted worked till it was clear that their bodies were absolutely unable to do so. Poor houses were delayed as much as possible because '…the lazy and ill-disposed among the people in want might refuse to go to the works if they could obtain sustenance elsewhere.'[54]

The 1941 census report, with an impulse different from the famine reports, provided other sets of classifications of the population along demographic categories of age, sex, marital status, religion, health, migration, occupation, language, and education among others. Even though, by this time, spatial classifications along the lines of districts and village-city distinctions had become the dominant mode of classification for the state, the initial division into Marathwada, Telangana, and now also Karnatic, was not entirely abandoned. Thus, we have in the census descriptions, 'typical villages' in each of the three regions. A typical Marathwada village, the report said, was located on an 'unculturable and stony land near a nala'; the houses had flat roofs, were of dull khaki colour, and 'not attractive to look'.[55] There was no pattern for the arrangement of houses, no streets or roads to speak of, and cesspools

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[53] For instance, the 1877-78 famine report quoted the British Resident Richard Meade who, in his letter on 13 March 1877 to the Government of India, had said the following about the famine measures undertaken by the state: '…the views and measures of His Highness' Government in connection with the subject under report… since the alarm of the impending scarcity and famine was first raised, have been based on sound and liberal principles, and have been directed with energy and judgement… the able Minister Sir Salar Jung has acted in accordance with the principles enunciated by the British Government.' Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78," 86.
[54] ibid, 95.
[55] Husain, "Census of India 1941: HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," 68.

formed everywhere. The Telangana village, on the other hand, had a 'picturesque appearance' with houses located amidst tamarind, mango, neem, pipal, and other large shady trees. The chauri acted as a resting place for travellers and for village officials to conduct their official work.[56] In the typical Karnatic village, the census stated, the village is located beside a hillock with the houses closed on all sides with a small front door through which animals and humans entered. 'As soon as one enters the front enclosure which is meant for tying the agricultural animals, he finds the air close, stuffy, and malodorous,' the report declared.[57] Unlike in Telangana and Marathwada, the wells were fewer in number in the Karnatic village and, where they did exist, had a greater depth than was common. Water was usually brought in by women from nearby nalas, the report added. In the three regions, the Dhers (synonymous with untouchables) were excluded spatially and communally.

The difference in the attitude of the state in the famine report of 1921-22 and this census report is striking. The former was written with a somewhat indulgent tenor, with descriptions stopping short of classifying the Maratha and Telugu races as inherently flawed for their inability to be productive subjects, during droughts by accessing relief measures provided to them. The poor response to relief works in the state during this famine, the 1921-22 report argued, was because of the Deccan labourer's immense attachment to his home, 'which he regard(ed) with the same zeal and sincerity as his family God'.[58] Based on this claim, the report emphatically declared that famine relief was most successful when it was provided at home. Even as late as the 1920s, there were still sections within the Hyderabad state that sought to mould state intervention to suit the preferences of its two distinctive races rather than berate and seek to transform them into ideal subjects of state munificence.

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[56] ibid, 67.
[57] ibid, 68.
[58] Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, "Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)," 90.

By the 1940s, this strain of thinking had taken a backseat, with the state adopting modern planning practices in its development projects. The unfavourable descriptions of the villages in the census report were necessary, then, to fashion interventions. Rural reconstruction projects were remaking the countryside and 'striking results' had apparently been seen in Nizamabad district, where villages had to be shifted or new ones created in the course of the construction of the Nizamsagar dam. These villages were constructed according to the guidelines of the Town Planning Architect, with model houses constructed for different classes of villagers, which the latter could copy. 'Every new irrigation project similarly is a focus from which spreads ideas of improved housing and better standards of living', the report said.[59] What had begun in the 1870s as a state attempting tentatively to understand its lands had, by the 1940s, reached its full form as a developmental state seeking to mould both its territory and subjects towards productive ends. Irrigation acted as a key conduit through which modernity could be supplied, as it were, as we shall see below in the case of the Raichur Doab and the Tungabhadra dam.

This section has demonstrated the discursive modalities through which lands were appropriated and territories produced in the period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has specifically focussed on the geographical discourse and its aesthetic register of the picturesque to argue that, together, they provided the Hyderabad state with the geographical gaze as a framework for defining territory and people. Through this gaze, the terrain was imagined as ideal for colonisation and equivalences were sought to be forged between vastly different lands through the medium of the picturesque. If terrains were sought to be framed as ideal, the regime's subjects were not quite considered so and presented much scope for intervention, particularly by the 1940s. An enquiry into these discursive modalities in this section has thrown into relief the kind of landscapes imagined to

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[59] Husain, "Census of India 1941: HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," 68.

be ideal and the efforts required to raise existing terrains and people so that they become available for capitalist exploitation.

This section has also traced the gradual establishment of the constituent regions of the Hyderabadi nation, along the lines of Marathwada and Telangana (later also the Karnatic), first as distinct geographical entities. However, in the period from the 1930s onwards, their geographies begin to recede in significance as they become identified more along cultural-linguistic lines. This transition was completed when the state was disintegrated into its linguistic regions to become part of the adjoining new states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.[60] What began as a classificatory mechanism put into place by a state attempting to understand its territory, turned out then to also be the basis for the state's disintegration in 1956.

## The Karnatic and its Development Dilemmas

Dividing Hyderabadi territory along the lines of geography and terrain (Marathwada and Telangana) and racial characteristics of the inhabitants (Aryans vs Dravidians) may have been key for the state to understand its developmental potential. There was, however, a third region as well—the Karnatic—which was linguistically different from the two dominant regions, with its inhabitants speaking the Canarese language[61] (see Figure 5 for map of the different regions). The Karnatic region remained a classificatory anomaly because, even though different parts of this region shared geographical similarities with Marathwada and

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[60] This has been dealt with in Chapter 3.
[61] The 1909 Imperial Gazetteer of the Hyderabad State borrows a history of the Karnatic, compiled by Bishop Caldwell in his Grammar of the Dravidian Languages. In this, it was said that the term Karnata or Karnataka referred to both the Telugu and the Kanarese people, although it was more properly applied to the latter peoples and their languages. Caldwell believed that Karnataka referred to the Dravidian words 'kar' (black) and 'nadu' (country); this 'black country' referred to the black cotton soil of the plateau of the Southern Deccan. The Gazetteer divided the Carnatic geographically into Balaghat (hill country) and the Payanghat (lowlands), and politically into Carnatic Bijapur and Carnatic Hyderabad (established after the Deccan Sultanate came to power). Our concern here is then the Carnatic Hyderabad. Mirza Mehdy Khan, "Hyderabad State," Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1909), 101.

Telangana, distinctions could not be so easily drawn. For one, the race-region complex was disturbed by the Canarese population, who were Dravidian, but resided in Gulbarga and Bidar, tracts which resembled the Marathwada region.

**Figure 5: Regions of Hyderabad state**
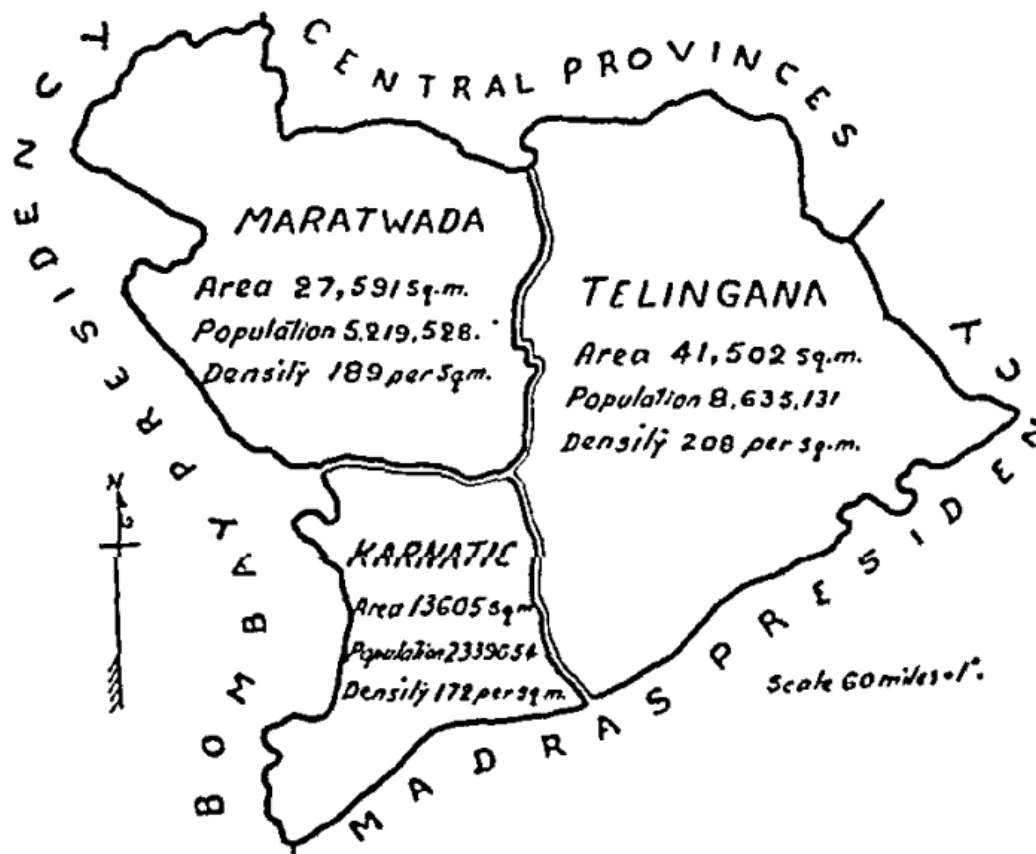


*Source: Mazhar Husain, "Census of India 1941: HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," Part I: Report (Hyderabad (Deccan), 1945), 122.*

The famine reports, discussed earlier, also briefly described the Karnatic region. The 1876-78 famine report stated that the Karnatic, comprising parts of Gulbarga, East and West Raichur, and Shorapur (then districts), was most disadvantaged since it suffered from the unfavourable conditions of both Marathwada and Telangana, but had none of the advantages that these regions possessed.[62] While the western portion of the Karnatic region did have

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[62] Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78," 36–37.

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fertile and absorbent soil, it lacked vegetation and the absence of hills provided no natural barriers to 'retard' monsoon currents, as they did in Marathwada. The southern portion of the region had sandy soil, but its high levels of salinity meant that irrigation was not as viable as it was in Telangana. The rainfall over the Karnatic was uncertain and rarely exceeded two-thirds of the rainfall that Marathwada received.[63] In the 1921-2 report, the Karnatic was only a linguistic region, with no 'peculiar distinguishing features of its own' geographically.[64] The delta portion of the region between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers (the Raichur doab) resembled Telangana, while the rest, such as Osmanabad and Gulbarga, was similar to the Marathwada region in its soil and terrain. This confusion regarding the classification of the region persisted for several decades, with some government reports clubbing the Karnatic with Marathwada and others with Telangana.

In the previous section, I have discussed how classification of territory along geographical lines allowed for the eventual emergence of Marathwada and Telangana as developmental regions. Key to this is the notion of geographical uniformity in each region, i.e., the subsuming of internal differences to present an *overall* picture of the conditions of terrain, soil, and climate. However, in the case of the Karnatic, this geographical coherence was absent, since it resembled both regions in some respects, but also differed from them substantively in terms of rainfall trends, nature of soil, and extent of forest cover. Flagged first as a region with linguistic coherence, it does seem that there existed no unitary developmental identity for the Karnatic within the Hyderabad state (unlike now when it has deemed as backward). As the state's developmental arc increased in intensity in the early decades of the twentieth century, it was specific areas of this 'linguistic' region that received attention. The region had two doab areas, one formed by the confluence of the Bhima and Kagna rivers around Gulbarga and another by the Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers at Raichur.

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[63] ibid

[64] Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, "Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)," 6.

It was the latter, called the Raichur Doab, that began to be primed for productive intervention in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Tungabhadra dam was to be built here to provide irrigation to the parched areas of the Raichur Doab and parts of the Rayalaseema region in neighbouring Madras Presidency.

*The Doab: A productive landscape?*

Medieval historians Richard M. Eaton and Phillip B. Wagoner describe the Raichur Doab as a fertile agricultural and mineral-rich tract, jealously coveted by empires, dynasties, and kingdoms that ruled the Deccan between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries.[65] The Doab was the site of a 'military revolution' in the sixteenth century, Eaton and Wagoner state, when firearms, cannons, and gunpowder were introduced into warfare in the region. Fort architecture itself was transformed to accommodate this new technology and to maintain full control over this fertile tract.

Late twentieth century writings about the tract however present a rather different picture—one of *underdevelopment*, that evocative term which promises to explain much but only really provides for us an already-imagined landscape of poverty and backwardness that can be transposed onto anything deemed underdeveloped. Thus Raichur, along with other constituent spatial units of Hyderabad-Karnataka, are often presented as afflicted with low productivity, their people bent and broken by a low productivity inflicted on them by a feudal and Muslim regime, both interchangeable qualifiers. In a development regime where knowledge and action flows from measurement, Raichur is listed as one of the most backward districts in the country. Within the Karnataka State, the district has some of the

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[65] Most prominently between the Bahamani and Vijaynagara empires. Richard Eaton and Phillip Wagoner, *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites on India's Deccan Plateau, 1300-1600* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 242.

worst human development indicators and languishes at the bottom of different human development indicator rankings and faces systemic political and bureaucratic neglect.[66]

It might be tempting to see this as a story of linear decline and impute much of the blame onto the state. This temptation has indeed been yielded to partially, as several contemporary academic and popular writings on the region have blamed the Muslim regime that governed the region for over a century. In the process, the post-colonial state absolves itself, and is absolved, of any responsibility. As always, history is more complicated than that and the 'geographical anomaly' that Raichur is, plays some role in this as well.

The anomaly, however, is more discursive than physical. Doabs, in colonial geographical discourse, were *supposed* to be rich, fertile areas, much like in the North Western Province (NWP) and in the Punjab. Writing about this tendency to valorise certain agricultural communities and landscapes as ideal, Elizabeth Whitcombe demonstrates how the Jat cultivator in the Doab districts of the NWP had been bestowed with the epithet of being 'The Pillar of the State' for producing fine varieties of commercial and food grain crops, with multiple crops over a single year. That this industriousness was possible because of favourable soil, terrain, and climatic conditions did not seem important enough to acknowledge. Judged against these standards, the Bundelkhand cultivators, Whitcombe says, were seen as 'the epitome of slovenliness', even though the terrain in the region had poor, light soils which allowed for the cultivation only of coarse crops; valuable ones such as sugarcane, indigo and opium were absent. With no irrigation works in the region, none of the so-called 'industrious castes' had taken residence here as well. Whitcombe's comparison of how the Doab districts and the Bundelkhand region were viewed within colonial discourse alerts us to the emphases placed on productivity within the imagination of ideal landscapes.

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[66] I will elaborate on this in chapters 3 and 4.

Landscapes, cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove argues, should be understood as 'a social product, the consequence of a collective transformation of nature'. They represent a 'way of seeing the world' by certain classes and are informed by changing man-environment relations. Landscapes allow us to trace both the cultural and material ways in which capitalist relations are put in place through an examination of attitudes towards land and nature, he contends. While Cosgrove's work studies the English landscape in the period of the transition to industrialisation, his analyses of landscapes as historically contingent imaginations are useful in the context of colonial geographical discourse in the Indian subcontinent as well. Doabs, as I pointed out earlier, represented the ideal agricultural landscape and the farming practices of the Jat farmers of NWP were valorised as that which *ought* to be universal. Lands and peoples that did not fit this ideal could be transformed towards this end; every state wanting to be modern was expected to undertake this endeavour.

The Raichur Doab fell short of the prosperity that other Doab regions had ostensibly achieved; in fact, as a land afflicted by periodic scarcity and famines, it repudiated the equivalence between prosperity and doab regions within colonial geographical discourse. Its physical location between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers had not fortified it against poor, unreliable rainfall, and the region was no exception to the famines that the Deccan had experienced over centuries. Famine reports recount terrible accounts of the distress experienced in the Deccan. The 1792 famine, which is said to have affected the districts of Lingsugur, Shorapur, Raichur, Nagar-Karnaul, and Haidarabad, was apparently called the Doì Baṛa, or the skull famine, because heavy fatalities had left the districts '…dotted all round with human skulls…' Famines of the nineteenth century were so intense that whole villages migrated, parents sold children for a fistful of grains, and thousands perished from

starvation.[67] By the 1930s, Raichur had been declared part of the 'famine zone', an area designated by the state as being regularly affected by scarcity. One survey, conducted as preparation for constructing the Tungabhadra dam, concluded that the tract had been subject to deficient rainfall in eleven out of the twenty years under its study period, that every alternate year had been a scarcity year, and visitations of famine had occurred every ten years.[68] In discussions of the Tungabhadra dam, the Doab was thus marked as a scarcity area. However, it could be made productive and generate agricultural wealth if irrigation was extended to the region.

*Famines and Underdevelopment*

Yet, there was no obvious connection made between famines and a general absence of development, even as late as the 1920s by the state in Hyderabad. That is, visitations of famines were not necessarily seen as due to a lack of prosperity or development in the state. Rather, the understanding was that while scarcity was caused due to aberrations in weather conditions, it developed into famines because of the unintended consequences of developments in infrastructure, agriculture, and trade—in a word, 'progress'. The 1876-78 famine report briefly mentioned that the cause of the famine was scarcity, not only due to crop failure, but also because of exports and rising prices of food grains.[69] But it was the 1921-22 report that displayed a more expansive understanding of the causes of famine and, in fact, placed a large portion of the blame for famines on the expansion of the railways. The report pointed to an increase in the frequency of famines—from once every twenty years in the seventeenth century to once every five to ten years in the nineteenth century—and

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[67]An overview of famines prior to the 1876-78 one is given in Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, "Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78," 6–28.

[68] Jehangir B. Mehta, "Report on the Agricultural Survey - Tungabhadra Project, Raichur District" (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1933), 36.

[69] This was not however acknowledged as a failure of public policy since the emphasis was on adhering to principles of free trade and not interfering with grain trade. The rising prices of food grains were seen as bringing prosperity to some farmers.

attributed this to the increased dependence of people on agriculture as well as the general rise in the prices of foodstuffs. The decay of indigenous industries due to foreign competition had pushed more people towards agriculture. The expansion of railway networks may have opened the state's produce to world markets but had also increased prices within the state. Wider markets also made the prospect of holding onto grains in large granaries for times of scarcity a less attractive proposition. 'In the olden days, and even in the memory of the present generation, a slightly bad season was met by the opening out of existing stores of grain in the country. Princes and Nobles filled their cellars with grain in good season as a precaution against the stress of a contemplated war or an impending famine', the 1921-22 report pointed out.[70] However under these new circumstances, even a mild scarcity of foodstuffs triggered increased prices, and with no networks of patronage and benevolence to offset the troubles, famine conditions were easily created.

The report also identified two related structural factors that exacerbated difficulties during famine periods: the general condition of labour and existing agrarian hierarchy. It classified labourers into four groups: those who were fully dependent on agriculture and worked seven months a year; those who were dependent on non-agricultural professions such as weaving, pottery etc; those who worked as agricultural labourers and performed other menial tasks and were usually from lower castes or were Dalits; and non-agricultural workers such as those working in factories. The common characteristic that all these labouring groups shared, the report claimed, was their 'ignorance' arising from a lack of education, and this ignorance had ensured that their conditions were far worse than their counterparts in British India.[71] Advances in means of communication had put labour markets in Assam or as far as South

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[70] Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, "Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)," 2–3.

[71] Only thirty-three out of 1000 persons in the state were literate; in villages, the ratio was possibly twenty-six per 1000. If a village had a population of about 500, that would mean only about thirteen people were literate. 'Experience tells us that the 13 consist of patwari, police patel, mali patel, village Brahmins and their sons and perhaps one ryot', (ibid, 27).

Africa within the reach of many from North India, the report said. However, for the Deccan labourer, his ignorance had left him with 'neither the will nor the power to migrate'. Faced with this inability and without the means to alleviate their precarious position, the labouring class in the state had no security to protect them against famines.

That most of the labouring population worked in agriculture made the health of this industry vital to livelihoods in, and the economy of, the state. However, the manner in which agriculture was organised had prevented its dependents from acquiring stability and prosperity. The dominance of the moneylender—also called Mahajan or Sahukar here—in agricultural operations had systematically reduced the autonomy of the cultivator and left him dependent on the largesse of this middleman. The cultivators mortgaged their lands to him, borrowed money for bullocks and ploughs and bought seeds from him, their families were supported by him when the harvest was being awaited '…and when at last the crops are ready the waggons (sic) carrying the grain move toward his house'.[72] Interest rates on loans from the Mahajan were so high that the cultivator often ended up paying more in interest than the principal amount borrowed. Land fragmentation had only increased the vice grip of the moneylender on cultivating communities, who were now steeped in debt due to loss of productivity.

The 1921-22 famine report attributed the occurrence of famines in the decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to contemporary developments in infrastructure and agriculture. By doing so, it presented famines as a consequence, albeit unintended, of 'progress'. It astutely pointed out the contradictions arising out of this condition of development: rising prices may have brought about increased profits to food-rich areas, but with no commensurate increase in wages, large parts of the population suffered; export markets for grains may have ushered in the possibility of better prices for Hyderabadi

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[72] ibid

farmers, but this 'increased prosperity' was largely cornered by middlemen; the expansion of railways may have made it easier to reach food to famine-affected areas, but it had also meant the export of grains away from the state in times of dire need. Such an analysis of famine de-emphasised its supposed natural causes of weather and geography and brought focus on the 'mixed blessings' of progress.

However, both famine reports reflected the ambiguity of the times about the nature of development and the directions in which assessments of development must lean. For instance, even as the reports acknowledged the role of rising prices in exacerbating food scarcity, they were loath to suggest that the state intervene to control prices. Principles of free trade were considered sacred and not to be interfered with. A minute issued during the 1877-79 famine by the Prime Minister Salar Jung I stated: 'That no Government officer should, on any account, interfere with the rise of prices of food-grains, for it had been ascertained from past experience that any such interference by officials, instead of lowering the prices, tended not only to raise them, but to place food-grains beyond the reach of the people.' In his minute issued in response to the famine report, Salar Jung I further said that he was,

> ...glad to observe that the principles of free trade, which formed one of the most important features of the Memorandum, were duly acted upon, that exportation of corn by private merchants was not in the smallest degree interfered with, and the rate of food grain was allowed to regulate itself according to the natural course of trade, and without any interference by Government...the relief of famine-stricken people were successfully carried out, and that the absence of interference with private trade did not produce the unsatisfactory results which some people anticipated; whilst in former famines, although the pressure was not so severe, the interference with trade entailed disastrous results.[73]

During the 1921-22 famine, the state set up government stores to control market prices. The Department of Food Control, set up in 1918, received a vote of no-confidence in the 1921-22

[73] Sir Salar Jung Mukhtar Ul Mulk, "Minute by His Excellency Sir Salar Jang Mukhtar-Ul-Mulk, GCSI., on the Report on the History of the Famine Relief in 1286-87," in *Report on the History of the Famine in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions in 1876-77, 1877-78*, by Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali (The Exchange Press, Bombay, 1879), 2.

report, which argued that its establishment had stoked fears among ryots that the state would purchase their food grains at fixed prices. This had led to large-scale export of food grains from the grain-scarce country. 'The advantages reaped from this department are still doubtful. But about the loss no doubt can ever be entertained', the report declared.[74] Such statements point to the larger contradiction at work: while an essential aspect of a developmental state was its interventionist ability, its range and extent of intervention had to be limited enough to not interfere with the market and yet be expansive enough to save whole populations from the long years of famine.

Similarly, while famines were understood within sections of the Hyderabad administration as the result of a complex interaction of various structural and development-related factors, it was hard to shake off the association of famine with backwardness of state and society. Thus, the 1921-22 famine report declared that protecting populations against famines was 'a question of moral and material progress, and owing to the nature of these conditions, moral progress is the pre-essential of the material'. Moral progress included 'a careful fostering of a sense of frugality' among cultivators, so that the power of the moneylender is diminished. It also entailed government intervention to help populations survive famines considering the 'low economic condition of the country'.[75]

This assessment alerts us to two determining elements in a development regime: the state and its subjects. While it was the state's burden to transform landscapes and peoples, subjects needed to be productive agents, embracing the transformation. In the 1930s however, another criterion for assessment of backwardness began to emerge, which had special salience for Hyderabad. Subjects were also to be attentive and watchful and demand that the state perform its developmental duties; an absence of this vocal citizenry reflected poorly on the state of

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[74] Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, "Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)," 58.
[75] ibid, 96.

freedom. This was the assertion made by Indian National Congress leader and Hyderabad native Padmaja Naidu in her report on famine conditions in Raichur and Koppal in the mid-1930s. For Naidu, the lack of outrage among the Hyderabadi public around government inaction in these districts reflected the '…utter lack of a consciousness of its own right and its duty to watch over and protect the welfare of all those whose destiny is bound up with and dependent upon the State…'[76] This was, she said, 'symptomatic of a suppressed people' who had done nothing in the face of the immense suffering that the residents of these famine-affected areas had been going through.

From her tour of the famine-affected areas, Naidu presented a bleak picture of state mismanagement in Raichur and Koppal. She argued that, in the absence of any public pressure, the state had not acted on creating any protection for people in these areas, even though it had been designated as a famine zone. Referring to certain government reports, she claimed that the state of agriculture in Raichur was so miserable that the ryot here lived more on loans than on income from farming, even during seasons of adequate rainfall. Despite such circumstances, 'based on an imaginary conception of the increased prosperity of the rayats of Raichur', the state had increased land settlement rates in a 'very arbitrary' fashion, she claimed.[77] Painting a sorry landscape of Raichur, Naidu stated that the state had made no 'honest attempt' to actualise the Tungabhadra dam; if it did, 'it would change the whole future history of Raichur and the people would have the chance of evolving from a race mentally and physically stunted from constant starvation of body and uncertainty of mind into a people capable of contributing much towards the prosperity of Hyderabad.'[78] Like the famine reports which bound people to their geographies (with the view that people are shaped by the terrain that they inhabit), Naidu's assessment takes the relationship a step further. If

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[76] Padmaja Naidu, "Famine Conditions in Raichur and Kopbal District" (Madras, 1935), 1.
[77] ibid, 20.
[78] ibid, 4-5.

the terrain is harsh and unproductive, it impinges on the productivity of the people not only in terms of their output but also because it leaves bodies and minds stunted. This discourse of body, terrain and productivity continues to be used in the contemporary moment as well to explain the causes and effects of underdevelopment in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region to this day.

*Priming Raichur*

Writings such as Naidu's were crucial to establishing a landscape of poverty and backwardness, which was used by different actors towards their specific ends. The 1930s were a period of growing unrest in Hyderabad with different actors challenging the authority of the state on various grounds, Padmaja Naidu's being one such articulation. Other actors accused the state of religious unfreedom, of Muslim autocracy, and of a general lack of concern towards its non-Urdu speaking subjects.[79] Under these circumstances, one response of the regime in Hyderabad was to undertake development projects that established its credentials as a modern welfare state.

Creating the ground for intervention involved the production of writings that laid out the landscape of backwardness. A booklet titled *Hyderabad Deccan*, issued by the state for the Asia Regional Labour Conference, had this to say about the Raichur Doab:

> Within the basin of the Tungabhadra river lies a large area of country which is subject to the incessant ravages of famine. Raichur district situated between the Doab of Tungabhadra and Krishna is a tract of vast arid lands and poor irrigation. The rainfall is scanty and unevenly distributed. The surface slope of the country is steep and the water-table very low. There is difficulty even for an adequate supply of drinking water and the population of the district is gradually going down.[80]

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[79] This is discussed in great detail in Chapter 2.
[80] HEH The Nizam's Government, "Hyderabad-Deccan" (Hyderabad, 1947), 115–16.

Interventions follow automatically from such an understanding of the terrain, primary among them being the provision of irrigation to combat the aridity, erratic rainfall, and famines, and to stem the tide of out-migration. Such interventions held out the promise of a transformative potential for the cultivator, who had hitherto been besieged by the harsh terrain he had had to endure. This was the framework used even in reports published under the regime of the Indian Union. In one such government report, cultivators in Raichur were viewed pitifully for they have had to rely so heavily '…upon the mercies of nature and so little on the cultivators' contribution that an average cultivator does not work more than half of what an average cultivator of any other district does'.[81] This, the report said, was in contrast to their counterparts at Warangal in Telangana, who worked hard on their wet lands knowing that it would yield them great returns, or the average Marathwada cultivator, who knew he could generate more produce from his dry lands if he worked hard on them. The authors of the report hoped that after the construction of the Tungabhadra dam, 'the picture may probably get reversed and within ten years to come, Raichur cultivator will perhaps be the hardest working and consequently the most prosperous ryot in the State.'[82] Other hopes from the dam included putting an end to the regular exodus from the region to the commercial centres of Bombay and Madras, for income was hard to come by for six to seven months in a year.[83]

Put together, these reasons constituted what was broadly called the protective nature of irrigation projects, i.e. those initiatives which protected a regime's subjects from distress due to regular scarcity. Around the 1920s and 1930s, in colonial India, the protective aspects of

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[81] Hyderabad Land Commission, "First Report of the Hyderabad Land Commission on Delimitation of Local Areas and Determination of Family Holdings" (Hyderabad: Board of Revenue (Land Reforms), 1954), 60.
[82] ibid, 61
[83] It is important to mention here that while the 1921-22 report had lamented the ignorance of the Deccan labourer, which had left him unable to partake in the benefits of migration, this 1954 report worked with the assumption that migration, and distress migration in particular, needed to be stemmed. Although the reports were products of two different political regimes, migration as a phenomenon within a developmental regime is a contested terrain. Migration in general—from the rural to the urban, for education, for employment, for instance—is considered welcome when presented as an expansion of life opportunities and as unwelcome when the implication is that the source region is backward or under distress.

irrigation were considered sufficient rationale for dam-building enterprises to be taken up. This was a shift away from considerations of profit which governed irrigation decisions at least upto the end of nineteenth century. The famine years at the end of the century had turned the tide in favour of perennial irrigation, Neeladri Bhattacharya points out, and calculations over fiscal gains of irrigation became secondary.[84] A report by M. Gopalan, the Special Superintending Engineer in the Hyderabad Government on the Tungabhadra dam, quoted Lord Curzon from his budget speech in 1905, where he had said: 'We shall no longer be able to talk glibly of remunerative programme or lucrative interest on capital outlay, but shall find ourselves dealing with protective works pure and simply where no returns or little return is to be expected…'[85]

In the Karnatic tract to which Raichur belonged, the normal agricultural practice usually involved sowing seeds in August, priming the land for rains in the months between September and December. While the first two of these months were 'sufficiently wet', rains in November and December were erratic and the success of the harvest depended on adequate rainfall in these critical months. 'If this insufficiency is made up from the canal supply, it would not only protect the crops from failing but there would be every possibility of obtaining a richer harvest,' Gopalan predicted.[86]

This consideration of increased productivity, as Gopalan stated, was never far behind considerations of famine protection. A perusal of reports urging administrators to put their weight behind large irrigation schemes almost always promised substantial, sustained returns on these capital-intensive schemes. Gopalan argued that the Tungabhadra dam would increase the market value of the lands as well as the quantum of production from these lands,

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[84] Neeladri Bhattacharya, *The Great Agrarian Conquest: The Colonial Reshaping of a Rural World* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2018).

[85] M. Gopalan, "Report on the Tungabhadra Project" (Hyderabad: Public Works Department, HEH The Nizam's Government, 1934), 73.

[86] ibid, 12.

and the government could benefit from the increased taxes it could levy in view of such increases. He claimed:

> The increase in produce, after the construction of the project, from the irrigation of 6,90,000 acres will be several crores annually. Besides the irrigation aspect of the scheme, electric power will also be available at a cheap cost. With the combination of power and water, there are very great possibilities for the industrial advancement of the country pari passu with agricultural development.[87]

P.G. Krishna, an agricultural chemist who conducted a soil survey of the lands to be irrigated, promised in his report that land values would increase to around Rs. 500 per acre for lands not permanently included in the ayacut and Rs. 2000-3000 for those permanently classed as wet. This was an enormous increase from the average of Rs. fifty per acre that was currently prevalent, and the government could partake in these profits by levying taxes or acquiring about one-third of the command area in lieu of the subsidy provided for land development, Krishna suggested.[88]

The total land development plan of the command area of the Tungabhadra dam on the Hyderabad side presented a picture of bright optimism: two lakh acres of paddy, 24,000 acres of sugarcane, 25,000 acres of fruit farms, 99,000 acres of lightly irrigated seasonal crops, 1.44 lakh acres of kharif cotton, rabi, and seasonal crops, and 93,500 acres under afforestation.[89] For a tract that had for long been designated a famine zone, such prospects of production were far too enticing. This was perhaps one reason that evidence of large-scale protests against the dam is hard to find in the archives. This discursive strategy of contrasting the existing landscape of scarcity against a possible landscape of plenty glossed over the real

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[87] ibid, 75.
[88] P.G. Krishna, 'Note on the problems of irrigation development under the Tungabhadra project', File no PWD-H-8, IB/Dev/23/TBP/51, 1951, Public Works Department (hereafter PWD), Government of Hyderabad (hereafter GoH), Karnataka State Archives (hereafter KSA).
[89] ibid

difficulties of terrain and climate.[90] It highlights again the belief of the developmental state that an ideal landscape of high agricultural productivity could be replicated under any circumstances. Developmental projects such as those of irrigation need not be limited in their ambition to merely warding off scarcities, but could, in fact, expect fantastic returns. However, it needs to be asserted here that the prospects of irrigated wealth were predicted for the region and its inhabitants, and not for abstract entities of profit and nation. In that sense the protective intent of the dam for the region under the Asaf Jahi regime was not subsumed under the greater interest of productivity.

By the early 1950s, when the Indian Union had taken over Hyderabad, no bones were made about the returns expected from the irrigation provided by the dam. In a note discussing the justification for the Tungabhadra irrigation project, it is stated clearly that 'high-class crops' must be encouraged in the irrigated area. Irrigation in the Karnatic tract may not be 'regarded as synonymous with rice cultivation', the note said, and crops for the soils did need to be carefully selected. But cereal or staple crops were not profitable and irrigated water was 'too costly to be profitably applied to them', it argued. High-class crops, presumably rice, sugarcane, and cotton, provided the best returns. 'This is essential, if the object be to get the best return from an irrigation work, and not to treat it merely as a reserve for protection of ordinary crops in seasons unfavourable for agricultural operations', it added.[91] The developmental discourse had shed its hesitation about profits and shifted away from the discourse that informed Hyderabad's (and Madras's)—the two states involved in the construction of the dam—emphases on distress and scarcity that had prompted such a large undertaking. Considerations of profit had not been absent in these articulations, but

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[90] For instance, a report on the Tungabhadra dam confidently declared that the fertility of the Doab was unquestionable. 'Situated as it is between two great rivers, there can be no difficulty in the supply if only proper arrangements are made for suitable schemes, to divert the waters on to the fields.' M. Gopalan, "Report on the Tungabhadra Project," 11.

[91] 'Justification for the proposed scheme of irrigation' in *Development of land under Tungabhadra Project,* File no. RD-H-1, 1949 Revenue Department (hereafter RD), GoH, KSA.

eliminating scarcity in this famine zone was primarily emphasised.[92] By the mid-twentieth century however, scarcity receded as a key impetus, as when Krishnamurthy argued that it would be 'unprofitable', 'loss-making' and 'wasteful' to maintain costly infrastructure for a drought that occurs only once every ten years. This decisive shift towards profit considerations under the Indian Union is a point I will return to subsequently.

*Moulding Nature*

Irrigation in the Deccan had to take into considerations the peculiarities of its terrain and soil, for the Tungabhadra dam project to reach any degree of fruition. Nawab Ali Nawaz Jung Bahadur, Chief Engineer of Hyderabad state, who was attuned to this fact remarked: '…in the wide and sandy rivers of the alluvial plains of Northern India, there is generally seepage back or regeneration for some part of the period from October to February but in the Deccan, where rivers flow in the lowest part of the valleys and the beds are rocky, the engineering of transmission needs great consideration.'[93]

The solution specific to the Deccan had to be canals that were not too long. Further, several small reservoirs needed to be introduced to decrease transmission losses. In his report, Gopalan rued that the Karnatic tract was unlike Telangana, where the land available for irrigation for a project of such magnitude would have been nearly 80 percent of the cultivable area. 'But in Raichur, where the soil is predominantly black cotton, it may not be possible to achieve this high intensity of irrigation', he said. One would have to be satisfied with the irrigation of 20 percent of the command area, the engineer added.[94]

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[92] Admittedly, the savings effected from not having to undertake famine relief works was an attractive proposition as well.
[93] Public Works Department, "The Tungabhadra Project: Correspondence from 1937 to 1944 AD," 1945, 23.
[94] Gopalan, "Report on the Tungabhadra Project," 14.

Apart from the specific nature of irrigation infrastructure, Hyderabad also had to undertake multiple soil surveys to figure out the nature of intervention needed to make its lands conducive to irrigation. The question of irrigation of black soil had been a point of controversy in this period and doubts had been expressed about whether black soil could take the increased water supply. This was a crucial factor for Hyderabad since the total black soil area in the command tract was 64 percent.[95] Gopalan however declared that difficulties were not 'insuperable' and there was evidence from the Nira and Deccan canals in the adjoining Bombay Presidency that irrigation of dry crops in black soil improved their yield.[96] Irrigation of soils that were deep black and saline could be excluded and light irrigation could be provided in areas where the soil was not too heavy.

In his report, the agricultural chemist Krishna graded soils in the irrigable tracts according to their fertility quotient and suggested measures to increase fertility. Grade I soils were classified as 'very poor' in fertility because they were 'lacking' in nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and organic matter. It is important to note, though, that on these supposedly unfertile lands, yellow jowar, bajri, sataria, groundnut, tur, and cotton were grown, raising the question of what apart from the soil's ability to produce crops, constituted fertility.[97] The report further stated that with light irrigation and manure, paddy could be grown on these lands and classified them as 'paddy soils'. Grade II and III soils were clay or clay loams which could be used for baghat (garden) crops such as sugarcane or garden crops, and for kharif or rabi crops respectively. Soils classed as Grade IV were lands unfit for any kind of irrigation. Massive intervention into all grades of soil in the form of fertiliser production and subsidy were proposed, at least in the initial years. 'Twenty thousand (tons) of ammonium sulphate, 40,000 tons of groundnut cake, 4,500 tons of ammophos and 9,000 tons of superphosphate are

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[95] ibid.
[96] ibid, 14.
[97] PG Krishna, 'Note on the problems of irrigation development under the Tungabhadra project', File no PWD-H-8, IB/Dev/23/TBP/51, 1951, PWD, GoH, KSA.

needed for meeting the complete manurial needs of the irrigated crops', Krishna declared.[98] If these fertility requirements were not met, '…efficient production cannot be ensured and human and animal energies would not be utilised most efficiently, and irrigation development would be retarded', he warned.[99] This anxiety over whether irrigation dreams would come true persisted alongside the eagerly promised gains of the Tungabhadra dam. A number of factors had to be aligned, transformed, and introduced for irrigation to be successful and for the landscape of prosperity to be actualised. Thus, several reports of the state, including the soil survey quoted above, were replete with measures that needed to be taken, even before the Tungabhadra waters were to flow through the parched Doab.

Apart from the remaking of the terrain through fertility measures and levelling and bunding of the landscape, this great agricultural enterprise also involved remaking the Raichur ryot. While the reports cited earlier looked upon the region's ryot with sympathetic paternalism for being so bound to the unforgiving terrain, later reports began to target the ryot for his necessary transformation. As the time grew near for irrigated waters to flow through Raichur, bureaucrats began to fear that the ryots might not want the water. Based on the 'bitter' experience with the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal where the ryots had refused irrigation, officials began to wonder if the Raichur ryot would be amenable to all the changes that would accompany this transition from dry to wet farming. In a note on the proposed irrigation policy, the Government of Hyderabad said:

> …it has always been maintained by the Revenue Department that irrigation should be compulsory with which the Irrigation Department agreed… Since the soil in the Tungabhadra are mostly B.C. (black cotton) and dry cultivation is done largely on rain water, the ryots will not take water in good years, and a year of scarcity occurs once in six years. Since dry crops irrigated from tanks and projects yield considerably better yield, an element of pressure is necessary to compel the ryots to take water. In consultation with the Irrigation Department, it should now be declared that irrigation

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[98] ibid.
[99] ibid.

in the Tungabhadra ayacut will be compulsory. This will have a salutary effect in as such as the ryots will be required to prepare their lands for irrigation.[100]

Yet the officialdom seemed to waver between the possibility of a ryot resistant to irrigation and one who would receive it with welcoming arms. 'The black cotton soil ryot, when once he sows the seed, had only to look forward to Providence for timely and adequate rains. When it is precarious, the crop fails and he loses his all. He will not, therefore, hesitate to pay anything for the water made available to him at that moment,' Gopalan argued.[101] It was essential, though, to address the ignorance of the impoverished Raichur ryot and to transform him from a dry-land cultivator to wet-land cultivator; accordingly, a slew of measures were proposed. Demonstration farms were key to this proposed education. For the Raichur ryot, who faced precarious cultivation and erosion of fertile soil regularly, 'a continued practical demonstration of the advantages of levelling, bunding the fields and the judicious application of water' would naturally propel him towards becoming amenable to irrigation.[102]

For Hyderabad, the construction of the Tungabhadra dam was part of a series of measures undertaken under the rubric of modernity. Eliminating famines and scarcity conditions through perennial irrigation was key to this vast enterprise of modernity, but considerations of maximum production were not absent. What I have tried to show is that informing this vision of irrigated development was the desire for an ideal agrarian landscape: sufficiently watered land which received its share of rains unfailingly and which was able to grow remunerative crops such as paddy and sugarcane. Converting famine-afflicted lands to these evergreen productive landscapes also meant a concomitant devaluation of dry lands and the dry crops grown on it; as prosperity unfolds, people will anyway move to rice and wheat

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[100] 'Irrigation Policy' in *Note on Progress of Compensation work under the TB project*, File no. RD-H-1, 16/25/49, 1949, RD, GoH, KSA. If it had been made compulsory in the Kurnool-Cuddapah tract, then the cultivator would not have the option of being 'indolent', Gopalan declared in his report on the Tungabhadra project. Gopalan, "Report on the Tungabhadra Project," 53.
[101] ibid, 58.
[102] ibid, 60.

rather than the inferior crops of jowar and bajra, Gopalan claimed.[103] Within this vision, the geographical specificities of soil, terrain, weather and even the ryot are sought to be transformed to fit the postcard scenes of progress.

## Sovereignty, Development and the Dam

Grand irrigation projects had become the cornerstone of agricultural progress by the turn of the twentieth century in colonial India; perennial irrigation, in particular, was the most favoured mode of water resources development. Neeladri Bhattacharya points out that perennial canals were preferred over inundation canals in the Punjab region because they helped in regulating nature and reshaping the landscape by 'ensur(ing) a stable line of production and a continuous flow of commodities'.[104] Inundation canals, being seasonal, militated against this idea of continuity and 'when the logic of capital gets naturalised, seasonality in general appears intolerable and discontinuities cause worry', Bhattacharya explains. It also greatly helped that large irrigation projects had made good their investment and had begun to generate sustained profits, he points out.

By the 1930s, Hyderabad had begun to partake of this vision of progress that included irrigated development. Studying water resources management in the Asaf Jahi state, Y. Vaikuntam argues that minor irrigation had been a major policy focus, particularly well-sinking projects. A department by that name had even been set up, which deliberated and produced durable but inexpensive well designs and encouraged community management of these wells as part of the overall village reconstruction work.[105] However, the state, encouraged by the colonial government, began to turn towards major irrigation projects from

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[103] ibid, 56.
[104] Bhattacharya, *The Great Agrarian Conquest: The Colonial Reshaping of a Rural World*, 394.
[105] Y. Vaikuntam, *Water Resource Management: Riparian Conflicts, Feudal Chiefs and the Hyderabad State* (Hyderabad: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2009), 68. The implications of community management of a basic infrastructure such as a well within the deeply casteist set-up of the average village is not an aspect Vaikuntam has dwelt on.

the 1920s onwards. Its first major effort had been the construction of the Nizamsagar dam across the river Manjira in the Telangana region, completed in the early 1920s under its Chief Engineer Nawab Ali Nawaz Jung Bahadur. The project had met with some unexpected hurdles. However, these were no deterrent as the Asaf Jahi state began to set itself to the task of harnessing the Tungabhadra. The undertaking in Hyderabad's case was, however, propelled by more than considerations of capital; as we shall see, territorial and economic sovereignty were equally crucial concerns for the princely state in undertaking this joint venture. Surrounded as it was by British territories on all sides and with its inglorious history of ceding territories to the colonial state, the government in Hyderabad was motivated by the issue of protecting its riparian rights. In this section, I will focus on the negotiations between Hyderabad and Madras over the Tungabhadra and the former's attempts to assert its rights over the river; the dam as a stage on which Hyderabad's fight, surrender, and integration into the Indian Union was enacted; and the career of the dam as a profitable entity in independent India.

*Sovereignty and the River*

The rivers Tunga and Bhadra rise in the Western Ghats and merge at Kudli, a village in Shimoga district in Karnataka, to flow as the Tungabhadra into the Telangana state. These are, of course, new political geographies, but prior to the great reorganisation of territory in 1956, the river Tungabhadra flowed from princely Mysore through the Bombay Presidency and then as a boundary river between Raichur in Hyderabad and Bellary in the Madras Presidency. Ancient irrigation channels of minor capacities lay on both sides of the river; the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal lay on the Madras side. Mysore had constructed an anicut on the river Bhadra, exercising its advantage as an upper riparian state. The rest of the river was up

for grabs and this formed the basis for negotiations between Hyderabad and Madras, with Mysore's interests featuring intermittently.

'Though the cat has disappeared, the grin has remained behind,' Nawab Ali Nawaz Jung Bahadur stated in his note on the Tungabhadra dam.[106]Appearing suddenly in a long note regarding Hyderabad's negotiations with Madras, this reference to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* summed up Ali Nawaz's frustrations with Madras' flip-flops over riparian rights. The Nawab had, by then, sat in negotiations and corresponded for nearly twenty years with a Madras government that seemed to him to want more and more of the river Tungabhadra, with no concern for fairness or whether it had the ability to use all that water that it wanted for itself. The incongruous Cheshire Cat reference in the Nawab's note came in relation to Madras' unwillingness to let go of a particularly unviable and expensive project involving the transportation of the Tungabhadra waters to the distant, arid Pennar region, for which the Presidency claimed a disproportionate share in the river. With Hyderabad claiming its share of the waters that ran through its own territory, the Madras Government, the Nawab believed, was finding it difficult to reconcile to this shared proprietorship of the river. The reduced share of the waters meant scaling down the grandeur of its vision of an irrigated development; that must rankle, the Nawab surmised.

Even as Ali Nawaz and his colleagues conducted detailed negotiations with Madras over political and technical matters regarding the construction of the dam, ministers within the Hyderabad Government were unsure if the Tungabhadra project was worth the money and effort it required, even as late as in the year 1938. In a meeting that year, the President of the Nizam's Advisory Council, Akbar Hydari wondered if only the power generation scheme could be taken up for the moment and irrigation channels constructed over time. For Ali Nawaz, who had repeatedly been flagging the need to develop schemes to actually utilise the

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[106] Public Works Department, "The Tungabhadra Project: Correspondence from 1937 to 1944 AD," 24.

waters and not merely exercise barren rights to the river, this must have been exceptionally frustrating. He explained to Hydari that power generation needed a perennial flow, and if that flow was not utilised it would run down to join the Krishna, where it would benefit irrigation in that river's delta. Although it might seem profitable to take up Madras on its offer of Rs. 15 crores for these waters, Ali Nawaz warned that 'we would lose in perpetuity the right to utilise these waters for irrigation in the Raichur Doab', if irrigation infrastructure was not built simultaneously.[107] Faced with this possibility of the loss of riparian rights, Hydari remarked that the two choices Hyderabad faced seemed to be to spend money on a joint reservoir or give up on its rights on the river; he suggested talking to Madras to come up with an arrangement where Hyderabad could go slow on the irrigation and yet not lose its rights.

This concern about the possible loss of riparian rights was further heightened due to an agreement between Madras and Mysore that allowed the latter to construct an anicut over the river Tunga. Moin Nawaz Jung, the External Affairs Minister, dashed off a letter to the Hyderabad Resident, stating that Hyderabad's pre-existing irrigation rights would be affected if the project was sanctioned. Fair-weather water supplies from the river fed the ancient, pre-Moghul channels within its territory, which would most certainly reduce if the anicut was constructed. He asked the Government of India to step in and argued:

> It is not right for any one State to assign on its own authority to another State such rights in the water supplies as may affect the claims of others. The equitable distribution of the waters of the Tungabhadra system as a whole is a matter of great importance to the cultivators of a large area of land in Hyderabad, and Hyderabad cannot view with equanimity such arrangements between the Governments of Madras and Mysore which so adversely affect her rights in the waters of the river.[108]

The situation here presents us with a vital question about the nature of development and its relationship with territorial sovereignty. Certain quarters in Hyderabad were somewhat wary

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[107] ibid, 39.
[108] ibid.

of all the expenditure involved in the construction of the entire irrigation infrastructure required to make the project a successful one. But there was unanimous consensus that there should be no loss of any riparian rights that belonged to the state. These rights might be exercised immediately, or at some point in the future, but they could not be lost to another state. To be sure, this seemed to be the approach of both Madras and Mysore as well, as Ali Nawaz pointed out ruefully in one letter. Possibly tired of the long, fruitless negotiations, he said in a note on 21 July 1937, 'For some time the feeling has been with me that we have all been trying to arrive at a settlement such as will accord with our preconceived notion of rights, and that it is time we made an effort to find out definitely what our actual needs are. There is at present an exaggeration of proposals: the exaggeration may not be intentional, but still it is there.'[109] It is not certain if any such efforts were made to assess the actual needs of each state. However, riparian rights had come to be articulated in the same tenor as territorial integrity (i.e., as that which could not be violated) and state sovereignty (i.e., as absolute right over natural resources without any compulsions on use of said resources). The development question—i.e. addressing irrigation needs for dry lands in the Tungabhadra valley—competed for primacy with the issue of sovereign rights. In any case, this assertion of sovereignty in the case of a river that travelled across multiple political domains was complicated. The geographical fact that it was a rain-fed river whose levels varied according to the monsoons further made dividing riparian rights an important exercise, since it settled matters of sovereignty for all eternity (conventions dictated preference for existing irrigation rights over potential ones). Thus, each state demanded the maximum possible share of the waters, Ali Nawaz rued, without reference to their needs and capacities. The interstate river forced the states involved to come to terms with the limits of their sovereignty and chart out ways for a shared existence.

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[109] ibid, 11.

Hyderabad and Madras finally settled for an apportionment on the basis of a free river rather than a free flow of the river, to which Mysore also acquiesced.[110] This idea of a free river was important, because although the river did not exist freely in real terms, it meant that apportioning could take place as if the river were free from encumbrances of irrigation. Hyderabad's late entry into irrigation, then, would not affect its proprietorial rights over the river. It became essential to build a history to justify this principle of apportionment, a history which laid blame at the doorsteps of the Madras Presidency and the disparities in power relations within a colonial regime. In the 1930s, reports on the Tungabhadra project prepared by Hyderabad began to cite the state's longer interest in harnessing the river waters, which had been thwarted by an unfair Madras. This long history dated back to 1895 when the former Prime Minister Vicar-ul-Umra, on one his tours, apparently moved by the distress of the Raichur ryots, had sanctioned a feasibility study and subsequently a project for providing the region with irrigation. Madras had intervened then and asserted its rights to the river even though it had no plans to harness the waters. It even asked that the Tungabhadra project of 1905 be postponed by 15 to 20 years, 'ignoring the indirect returns that would accrue to the State and the immeasurable protective value that would be afforded to the country, which it is impossible to reckon in terms of money', Gopalan's 1934 report on the dam alleged.[111] The context for this history, it must be stated, was the argument from Madras and the Government of India that Hyderabad's claims were not to be taken seriously since it had not, until then, taken steps to use the river for irrigation.[112] By describing a history in which Hyderabad was

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[110] The fiction of a free river would take into account the total amount of water available at a given location without considering dams, anicuts, canals or any other water storage device built upstream from the location. Free flow of the river was the real amount of water available at the given location after these technologies were taken into account. Apportioning the total amount of water available on the basis of free river allowed late entrants into irrigation schemes downstream from the river to not lose out on their share because they had not used the waters earlier.

[111] Gopalan, "Report on the Tungabhadra Project," 73.

[112] The Chief Secretary of Madras Archibald Campbell, at a conference on the dam between representatives of Madras, Hyderabad, and the Government of India in August 1930, had stated that 'the Hyderabad claim to not less than a half share need not be considered "until it was known whether Hyderabad can utilise all the water to

forced into inaction, it sought to counter this charge of neglect and disinterest in modern progress.

Another point of contention between the two states was Madras' demand that its share of waters should be over and above the waters diverted from the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal. The 1938 settlement between the two states nearly broke down over this demand. Hyderabad cited an old agreement in which the Nizam's Government had granted 'permission' to Madras in 1861 to construct the anicut with the proviso that no objection would be made to drawing water into the Nizam's territory at a later date.[113] Despite this, Madras had objected in 1898 to Hyderabad's efforts to draw off an amount of water equivalent to that which flowed down the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal.[114] Faced with these facts, Madras had to agree to apportioning on the basis of a free flow of river.

Yet the parties were not agreeable to an equal sharing of the waters. Pre-existing rights and disagreement over what the dependable supply of this ghat-fed river was hindered a full settlement. They eventually agreed to Ali Nawaz's proposition for a partial utilisation of the waters so that the project could move ahead jointly. The key terms of agreement were the allotment of 65,000 million cubic feet each to both Madras and Hyderabad, the construction of a joint reservoir at Mallapuram and two canals—the Tungabhadra Right Bank Canal and the Tungabhadra Left Bank Canal—running off from each side to provide irrigation to Bellary on Madras' end and Raichur on Hyderabad's end, respectively.

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which it claims a right" and expressed the hope that the Hyderabad Government would not refuse to allow the Madras Government to use water not required by Hyderabad if the Madras Government can do so.' This was recollected by Nawab Ali Nawaz Jung Bahadur in a note on the Tungabhadra project to the Chief Secretary of Irrigation in the Hyderabad government as part of his arguments to push for immediate utilisation of the Tungabhadra waters. Public Works Department, "The Tungabhadra Project: Correspondence from 1937 to 1944 AD," 12.

[113] Gopalan, "Report on the Tungabhadra Project," 6.

[114] ibid, 3.

*Tungabhadra in Indian Union's Hyderabad*

This site of development was for a brief period the site of a 'war' between the mismatched forces of Hyderabad and the Indian Union. While dominant narratives term this the 'integration' of Hyderabad into the Indian Union, that it was considered a 'war' by those working on the dams is amply clear from their descriptions of the week-long period leading up to Hyderabad's surrender. A group of engineers wrote in their update about the Munirabad camp (located in Koppal district):

> On 13th September 1948, Indian Union troops *occupied* Munirabad station and the PWD Inspection Bungalow and started their *attack* on our Camp…On 16th there was panic in the Camp which was being shelled by mortar guns, bren gun and air bombing and the people started running away from the camp in large numbers. It was a nerve-racking experience and under the stress the only alternative which suggested itself was to return to Hyderabad to save oneself [emphasis mine].[115]

The Hindu assistant engineer of Munirabad, D. Balakrishna Rao however had a different narrative to tell. Describing the events of the 'war', he reported that after Sadiq Ali Khan, the executive engineer of the camp, heard about the entry of Indian Union forces into Munirabad, '…all the Pathans, Razakars, Civic Guards and practically all the Muslim officers and staff were distributed arms and ammunition… All the Hindu officers and staff were at the same time warned to keep in-doors and threatened to be shot down if they were found to convey any information to the Union troops.'[116] This Hindu-Muslim division of loyalties is a remarkable feature of this report.

The attack by the Indian Union forces followed what seemed like a heavy militarisation of the dam sites itself for several months prior to the 'war'. In his letter to the Additional Chief

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[115] Letter from Syed Hasan Ali, Mohd Husain Khan, Mohd Raza Ali, Syed Basheeruddin, Abdul Satter Khan to Chief Engineer, PWD, Irrigation Projects, n.d., in *Conditions of Tungabhadra Camps Immediately after Police Action*, File no. P/41/48-49, 1949, PWD, GoH, KSA.
[116] Letter from D. Balakrishna Rao to Chief Engineer, Irrigation Projects, 4 October 1948, in *Conditions of Tungabhadra Camps Immediately after Police Action*, File no. P/41/48-49, 1949, PWD, GoH, KSA.

Civil Administrator D.R. Pradhan, Vepa Krishnamurthy, Engineer-in-Chief and Secretary of the Public Works Department said:

> There is ample evidence to know that this camp was wholly utilised as intensive training ground for pathans and civic guards for stiff resistance against Indian Union Offensive. All the engineering activities of the camp were subordinated to this objective for the past few months. A lot of project funds have been utilised for this purpose even though shown against as project by several subterfuges.[117]

After the victory of the Indian Union, a low-ranking official who had stayed behind at the Munirabad camp was put in charge by the collector of Bellary, located in Madras Presidency. This official was instructed by the collector that labourers from the dam area should not be allowed to migrate to Hospet or other places in the Indian Union and that those who had already migrated were being sent back. These measures, he was told, were essential to maintain food availability in the province. After proposing some emergency measures to take care of wage payments and fiscal responsibility, the official stated: 'You will also appreciate that they are meant to prevent further distress to persons who have passed through the most trying times and survived the ravages of war.'[118]

There was a great urgency to present an air of normalcy—as if a centuries-old Muslim rule had not just been dislodged, and that there had been no breakdown of law and order in the districts that disproportionately affected Muslims. The Military Governor issued an order that all government personnel were to return to their posts immediately, failing which they would be dismissed from service. For Muslims who were represented heavily in government service and were reportedly being subjected to large-scale violence across the State, returning to their posts would only have exposed them to physical retribution. Yet this was the order given out, and Vepa Krishnamurthy instructed the Chief Engineer in-charge of irrigation projects, JC

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[117] Letter from Vepa Krishnamurthy to D.R. Pradhan, 18 October 1948 in *Conditions of Tungabhadra Camps Immediately after Police Action*, File no. P/41/48-49, 1949, PWD, GoH, KSA.

[118] Letter from Assistant Examiner to Examiner, Tungabhadra Project, Accounts' Office, Munirabad, n.d., in *Conditions of Tungabhadra Camps Immediately after Police Action*, File no. P/41/48-49, 1949, PWD, GoH, KSA.

Hardikar, to ensure that the labour camps were functioning and that work on the dam had restarted. He also asked for a copy of the order issued by Hardikar asking that all personnel return to the camp in order to assess 'how far the ends of discipline have been served by this leniency in allowing them to continue at Hyderabad'.[119]

This attempt at normalcy was at odds with the large-scale devastation that had taken place at the various camps along the dam. At the Rajolibunda Diversion Scheme Camp at Gillesugur, the chaos had resulted in many personnel fleeing to nearby Raichur. When the assistant engineer visited the camp five days later on 22 September 1948, he saw that the camp was in 'utter ruins'. The grain godown and store had been looted; doors, window frames, and furniture had been taken away; the machinery had been damaged beyond repair and office records had been burnt; temporary huts had been dismantled; permanent residences were damaged; and all zinc sheets had been looted. He had also gathered that much of the looted material could possibly be recovered from surrounding villages.[120]

Even as the camps were recovering from the devastation of the 'war', Madras began to hanker for more control of the dam. Casting unkind aspersions against its former colleagues, Madras complained about Hyderabad's wantonly behaviour. It claimed that Hyderabad had forced Madras to make severe concessions when all it wanted was to alleviate distress of its citizens. Further, it stated that Hyderabad had also pushed the use of lime-surkhi mortar down Madras' throat when it was clear that cement was a better material for the construction of the dam. Writing on October 1, 1948, barely two weeks after Hyderabad's surrender, M. Bhaktavatsalam, PWD minister for Madras, claimed that it had great interest in the state of

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[119] Letter from Vepa Krishnamurthy to J.C. Hardikar, 10 October 1948, in *Conditions of Tungabhadra Camps Immediately after Police Action*, File no. P/41/48-49, 1949, PWD, GoH, KSA. The matter of recalling officers to their posts immediately after the Police Action and the consequences of this order for Muslim officials is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

[120] Letter from Assistant Engineer, Canal Division, Rajolibunda Diversion Scheme to District Collector, Raichur, 25 December 1948, in *Conditions of Tungabhadra Camps Immediately after Police Action*, File no. P/41/48-49, 1949, PWD, GoH, KSA.

work on the Hyderabad side because the success of the project was tied up to this progress. Asking for complete control of the project, Bhaktavatsalam said:

> It is very unlikely that even if the Hyderabad Engineer were now to come out of their hiding, they would cooperate with our engineers and take to the work seriously… The gunpowder which they had been persuading us to lend to them for blasting our rocks on the foundation excavation was actually being kept in store by them for throwing destruction on our camp on the appointed day. The prospects of these men working in harmony with ours is extremely remote and our endeavour on this project will be completely wasted if any attempt is made to restore the set-up which existed before the police action.[121]

The Indian Union was more than willing to allow Madras to take full charge of the construction of the dam, as Hyderabad's officialdom lay discredited. But Nawabs Ali Nawaz and Zain Yar Jung, who had just about made the transition from the old to the new regime protested this transfer and argued that this would not make for good press. The Indian Union, already reeling against accusations of treating Hyderabad as a 'conquered territory', was suitably dissuaded and chose to postpone this decision of setting up a unitary agency for the construction of the dam and putting Madras solely in charge.[122] However, this was only a short-lived postponement and Madras eventually took over the construction of the dam. A new addition was made in the form of the Tungabhadra High Level Canal which supplied waters to the Pennar Valley basin, something which Hyderabad, under Ali Nawaz, had opposed decades earlier, because it had meant taking away waters from its subjects in the Raichur Doab.

This change in regime affected the progress of the dam and complaints began to pour in against the new regime's officials over their criminal inefficiency. In 1951, ryots at Koregal,

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[121] Letter from M. Bhaktavatsalam, Minister for PWD, Govt of Madras, 1 Oct 1948 in *Effect of Constitutional Developments in Hyderabad on River Valley Projects Affecting Madras and Hyderabad – Tungabhadra Project – Unified Control over the Construction*, File no. 27-H/48, Hyderabad Branch, Ministry of States (hereafter MoS), National Archives of India (NAI).
[122] Note by VP Menon, 2 November 1948, *Effect of constitutional developments in Hyderabad on River Valley Projects affecting Madras and Hyderabad – Tungabhadra project – unified control over the construction*, File no. 27-H/48, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

Hulgi, and Sivapur villages in Raichur district complained bitterly of neglect by Indian Union authorities that had led to a situation where nearly 1,100 acres of land had to be left fallow. The ancient channels that served water to their fields had fallen into disrepair and repeated petitions by the farmers since 1949 had fallen on deaf ears. The demand for repair of the channels by the ryots not only invoked their collective benefits, but also that the nation stood to benefit from the increased food production, contributing to the Grow More Food campaign and alleviating 'the National Food Crisis'. By 1953, angered by the lack of any response, the ryots wrote to the Superintending Engineer of the Tungabhadra Project in the PWD: '…it is after careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that our economy is being murdered, and we cannot stand the scorched policy. Now we have decided to give you 'This Notice' that we hold you fully responsible of (sic) our losses and you do not blame us of the action we might launch in the near future.'[123]

This charge of ruination singed the Indian Union administration, which had taken over Hyderabad not only citing the breakdown of law and order, but also promising development to this 'backward' state. Correspondence between officials show blame being laid on the 'ill-paid, inefficient, and useless' staff from the old jagir administration, on political leaders who were raking up the issue unnecessarily, and even on ryots whose petitions were apparently only in aid of a sugar factory which had not been receiving enough water since it was located at the tail end of the canal.

Such dismissals of complaints and comments about the inefficiency of the erstwhile Asaf Jahi administration were common among officials of the new regime.[124] After the Police Action in 1948, the administration of the state was taken over by officials imported from neighbouring

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[123] Letter from ryots of wetland area to Superintending Engineer, PWD Reservoir circle, TBP project, n.d., in *The Existing Three Channels of Tungabhadra River, Koppal Taluq, Raichur District*, PWD-H-6, 1950, 525/T, 1950, PWD, GoH, KSA.
[124] This is dealt with elaborately in Chapter 3.

territories of formerly British territories. These officials not only brought with them notions of backwardness of the state but were also adjudicators in the case of Hyderabad's disputes with their home states. The dissolution of the Asaf Jahi regime had consequences for Raichur's gains from the Tungabhadra dam as construction was handed over to Madras, water from the river was transported to the Pennar valley, and the chaos of the change had affected existing canal improvement works necessary to access irrigation. The sole focus on Raichur's welfare and development and on ensuring its rightful share had been possible when the district was part of the Asaf Jahi territory. However, with the dissolution of this sovereign power, and later the dissolution of the state itself, the region's interests were subsumed under the larger interests of the Indian nation and its needs for higher agricultural production.

*Discontents of the Region*

Discontent prevailed in the Karnatic region over the employment of outside labour on construction sites. In a press conference in 1954, the Chief Minister of Hyderabad B. Ramakrishna Rao alleged that work on the dam had been delayed not because of lack of finances, but due to the unavailability of local labour. The *Spectator*, a Hyderabad-based newspaper, agreed with Rao's assessment and stated that unlike Andhra labourers, Karnatak and Marathwada labourers were averse to migration. 'The people's economic condition is far more superior than their Andhra brethren. The cheap labour they cannot afford to accept and they are more attached to their hearths and homes, that they never go out from their villages even, at the point of STARVATION! [emphasis original],' the newspaper said.[125] The report blamed the Karnatak labourers for not taking advantage of the opportunities thrown up by construction of the dam, and the characterisation of the labour force as being strongly averse to migration echoed similar representations made in the famine reports, a point I have

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[125] Keerti, "Karnatak Labour and Tungabhadra Project," *The Spectator*, December 23, 1954, Print edition, sec. Rover's Corner, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library.

discussed earlier in the chapter. Even so, the government could have done more to attract labour locally by constructing approach roads in villages close to construction sites and by offering better living wages, it said. Instead, project authorities have employed contractors from 'the other side' who are not conversant with local conditions and language, the report said.

If there was discontent that local labour had not been employed in the construction of the dam, there was also 'great sorrow' at plans proposed by Indian Union politicians such as C.D. Deshmukh, then Finance Minister, for importing people who 'can inject large capital into agriculture' in the Tungabhadra basin. In a memorandum to Prime Minister Nehru by Raichur MLA L.K. Shroff and others, the signatories stated:

> This move has caused great sorrow and disappointment among the people of Raichur district. It is well known that Raichur people have suffered terribly on account of the famine conditions prevalent for the past many decades…They have begun to feel that after all the promised haven of a prosperous life will not be theirs only but there will be others to share that and probably take a lion's share.[126]

In doing so, the memorandum referenced the protective intent of the Tungabhadra project, which had previously informed the Asaf Jahi state's decision to construct the dam. The dam was meant not only to use the Doab lands for a greater quantum of agricultural production, but also to bring prosperity to the region's inhabitants. However, statements that alluded to the indolence of the Karnatak labourer or the inability of the Karnatak farmer to utilise irrigated waters and advocated the importation of capital and labour from outside the region privileged capitalist extraction and development over the welfare of the region's inhabitants. This approach marked the separation of the region from its inhabitants—the region was

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[126] Our Correspondent, "Tungabhadra Project: Memorandum to Nehru," *The Spectator*, August 7, 1954, Print edition, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library. These conclusions about the region's farmers and labourers as attached to old ways of living—averse to migration and to new methods of farming—have had long lineages, as I have demonstrated in the discussions of the famine reports and in early reports around the Tungabhadra dam.

networked into the needs of capital (greater yield and profits) and nation (greater agricultural production). But its inhabitants were still depicted as shaped by the region's scarcities, which excluded them from partaking in the proposed transformation of the region.

However, even this proposed transformation had been poorly planned and executed, perhaps reflecting the priorities of the new states of Mysore and Andhra Pradesh, the successor states in charge of the dam. A newspaper report in 1958 lambasted the states involved in the construction of the dam for the poor state of readiness to utilise waters.

> The whole of the Tungabhadra project has been a sorry example of planning. So far it has brought benefit to no more than one lakh acres out of the two million acres it was expected to irrigate. The State Governments concerned seem to have realised only now that canals and field channels have to be built simultaneously with the dam if the stored waters are not to go to waste. The pity of it is that even now nothing is being done to speed up the construction of these accessories at Tungabhadra. The whole affair makes nonsense of the repeated official calls for stepping up agricultural production.[127]

The lack of proper planning had also meant that while the main dam had been completed in 1953-54, construction of canals and distributaries, which conveyed the water to fields, had not taken place simultaneously. By December 1958, sections of the main canal on the Left Bank still remained incomplete and, although the dam was meant to irrigate 5,80,000 acres in Raichur, the network of canals and distributaries built till this period could irrigate only 40,000 acres.[128] The project was also beset by problems of slow acquisition of land, poor disbursal rates of compensation for acquired lands, lack of preparation in terms of revenue and soil surveys, non-construction of roads between farms and markets, and the absence of a localisation plan. While the above were essential to advance preparation for any irrigation scheme, localisation was an unprecedented intervention into the landscape and was first

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[127] "Wasted Waters," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 24, 1958, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[128] B.G. Verghese, "Completion of Dam Is Just the Beginning: Some Lessons of Tungabhadra," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 17, 1959, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

introduced with the Tungabhadra dam. Localisation was akin to zoning, in that the state determined which lands were suitable for light and heavy irrigation, for pasture and fuel reserves, what crops were to be grown on which lands, and which lands were suitable for perennial irrigation and which were not. Localisation, irrigation scholar Peter Mollinga argues, is a form of water governance, key to protective irrigation systems where water has to be rationed, i.e., 'water is scarce by design'. This is to ensure that water is available to a larger areal extent and is used to irrigate crops that do not need much water or for irrigation of partial, not full, holdings of farmers.[129]

Although localisation plans were eventually drawn up, the Mysore Government, who had major control over the Left and Right Bank canals from 1956 onwards, withheld the final notification confirming these localisation plans and then decided to scrap them. It allowed anyone who wanted to take water to do so without permit or plan.[130] Mollinga points out that it was only in 1965 that the Mysore (later Karnataka) Irrigation Act was enacted, which made deviation from localisation plans an offence. But deviations had already taken root and the advent of wetland farmers from coastal Andhra into the newly irrigated region as land owners and tenants changed the social and economic setup of the region further. The prospect of irrigated lands had increased the speculative potential of the command area on both sides of the Tungabadra river. Land sales in Bellary had come under the scrutiny of the South Indian Federation of Agricultural Workers' Unions, which found that purchases were being undertaken by those from villages and towns in Guntur district or by merchants and professionals residing locally. These lands were being usurped in the name of account

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[129] Peter Mollinga, *On The Waterfront: Water Distribution, Technology And Agrarian Change In A South Indian Canal Irrigation System* (Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2003), 53.

[130] *Tungabadra High Level Canal,* File no.11/6/56-SR-I, 1956, States Reorganisation-I, Ministry of Home Affairs, NAI.

settlements by creditors or purchased by land speculators from outside the project area.[131] By the 1980s, when Mollinga conducted his fieldwork in the Tungabhadra region in Raichur, he found that large scale concentration of land holdings had taken place near head-end reaches and a greater share of these large holdings were held by migrant farmers from Coastal Andhra.[132]

A 1961 census survey of the Yerdona village in Raichur, which had begun to receive the Tungabhadra waters for irrigation after 1957 provided an illuminating picture of the state of irrigated agriculture in the region. Irrigation, the census monograph claimed, had increased the quantum of agricultural production, although the principles of localisation were rarely followed. Paddy was raised on farms meant for lightly irrigated crops such as jowar, cotton, and groundnut because water had percolated from the nearby farms or the distributaries themselves. Groundnut was grown instead of orchard crops or as a second crop on lands designated as baghat or garden crops. Groundnut and sugarcane were raised on lands designated for paddy because of the good rates they commanded. Second crops were regularly cultivated, although irrigated water was to be used only once every year. 'On account of the stringent food situation, a lenient view is being taken and a second crop allowed,' the monograph justified.[133] Although a sea-change in farming practices had taken place with farmers taking to fertilisers, better seeds, and advanced wetland practices, indebtedness had increased in Yerdona. Expenses had to be incurred on converting dry to wetlands and on wetland cultivation itself, which was significantly more expensive than

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[131] K.G. Sivaswamy, "Land Speculators and Absentee Buyers in the Tungabhadra Project Area: Forms of State Control in Madras and Abroad" (Madras: Servants of India Society, April 16, 1947).

[132] Mollinga, *On The Waterfront: Water Distribution, Technology And Agrarian Change In A South Indian Canal Irrigation System*, 135.

[133] K. Balasubramanyam, "Village Survey Report on Yerdona, Gangavati Taluk, Raichur District," Part VI, Village Survey Monogaphs, No.10 (Delhi: Census of India, 1966), 42.

dryland farming. With rural credit disbursed largely by private moneylenders, irrigation had left the farmer further steeped in debt, the monograph concluded.[134]

This section has tracked the shift in political control of the Tungabhadra dam from Hyderabad to the Indian Union to the civilian government of the state to the Mysore and Andhra Pradesh states, and the consequences these shifts had for the Raichur Doab and its inhabitants. It has shown that the chaos generated by regime change in Hyderabad adversely affected the transition of the Raichur Doab from a dryland to wetland region. The change in regime also meant that the interests of the region's inhabitants did not have the strong advocates that it previously had under the Asaf Jahi state, which had withstood pressure from Madras and Mysore governments in the earlier decades. In the Indian Union period, the region's interests were subordinated to the interests of the nation and of increased production. The construction of key infrastructure such as distributaries and channels had been delayed and supporting institutions such as cooperative credit banks did not appear in a timely fashion. Utilising the irrigated waters needed heavy capital investment and a knowledge of new practices, both of which were not provided to the region's farmers. The arrival then of irrigated waters took place in an unaltered set-up of an already deeply indebted peasantry and the strong control of money-lending communities over all aspects of agricultural production. Further, the new regime's interest in turning the irrigation infrastructure around the Tungabhadra dam from protective to profitable meant that it saw no point in intervening in the large-scale land sales that took place in the region or in enforcing localisation, which would ensure equitable, but not necessarily profitable, use of the waters.

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[134] ibid, 94.

Conclusion

This chapter has traversed a long period from the 1870s to the 1950s, from the making of modern state in the native state of Hyderabad to the rule of the post-colonial Indian state in the region. It has done so in order to demonstrate the emergence of a development regime in the period of the twentieth century and its different careers in colonial and independent India. It has foregrounded the ways in which the geographical gaze as a visual investigative modality had been key to understanding territory in early twentieth century Hyderabad. By looking at the appropriation of land as territory, it has studied the emergence of the regions of Telangana, Marathwada, and the Karnatic, first as geographical regions and then as development regions. Such a classification, I propose, facilitated their eventual transformation into linguistic regions.

The picturesque may have more traction within more explicitly aesthetic analyses, but its connections with geography are undeniable and this chapter has used this framework to establish its utility for the discourse of ideal territory. In the period from the 1920s, this chapter has argued, the native state sought to present its territories as picturesque—verdant nature with primitive technologies deployed to harness its resources; inhabitants classified according to race and regions, whose physical and psychological characteristics were shaped by the region's terrain; and, finally, as territory that was ready for improvement, but was not backward. This, I have argued, constitutes the workings of the picturesque in the native state as opposed to colonies under direct rule and in imperial Britain. As the aesthetic tenor that informed the geographical gaze in Hyderabad, the picturesque enabled equivalences across dissimilar Doab regions.

Shifting focus to the Karnatic region, the chapter focused on the Tungabhadra dam, its career in Asaf Jahi and Indian Union periods. This chapter has studied the life of this dam as an idea

and as a built entity through the discourses of sovereignty, welfare, and productivity within which it was enmeshed in the period between the 1920s and 1950s. It has tracked the shift in the purposes of the dam from being primarily protective to largely productive—a shift, I argue, concomitant with the change in political regimes. This had consequences for the inhabitants of the Raichur Doab region, for the emphasis was only on greater yield and profits accruing from irrigating lands, and not on creating opportunities to ensure 'prosperity' for locals. Such an understanding of region, dissociated from its inhabitants, was deployed to meet the interests of capital and nation. With concentration of land holdings among migrant farmers and the increased indebtedness of local farmers, the inequities of the social structure in the region were further entrenched. The life of the dam thus represents, in some senses, the confusions, the stunted desires, and the colossal failures of the developmental state in effecting transformations in its territory and in the lives of its subject-citizens. It anticipates later chapters which detail the forms of neglect the Karnatic, later known as Hyderabad-Karnataka, has faced as a constituent region of the linguistic state.

## *Chapter II*

## The 'backwardness' of Hyderabad State: Tracing its discursive and spatial histories

Introduction

In 1948, soon after it took over Hyderabad, the Indian Union invited the well-regarded industrialist Kasturbhai Lalbhai to conduct a survey of the industrial landscape of the state. The textile baron studied about forty state-aided industries, as well as policy initiatives of the erstwhile Asaf Jahi state, to recommend ways forward for Hyderabad. Contrary to expectations, Lalbhai praised the Asaf Jahi state's initiatives in promoting industry. He said, 'I have been greatly impressed by the number of industries that have sprung up in the Hyderabad State during the last ten years. This would not have been possible but for the fact that the Industrial Trust Fund (ITF) and the Hyderabad State Government came forward with liberal funds to set up any industry which was sponsored by any entrepreneur.' [1]

This statement recognising initiative and openness to entrepreneurship by the erstwhile Asaf Jahi state—irrespective of religion—probably surprised officials of the new administration, for the putative backwardness and Muslim favouritism of the Asaf Jahi state had become widely accepted as 'truth' in mainstream circles. Lalbhai acknowledged that his findings ran contrary to the opinions of Indian Union officers deputed in Hyderabad who believed that much funds had been wasted away on industrial concerns in the state. But, he said, these industries had already made 'a substantial contribution to the economy of the state', even though some measures were needed to be taken to steer it towards 'sounder footing'. As evidence of the remunerative nature of state's investment in industry, he pointed to how the corpus of the ITF had grown five-fold to about Rs. 500 lakhs within a little over two decades

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[1] Kasturbhai Lalbhai, "Report on the State-owned and State-aided industrial concerns in Hyderabad" (Simla: Government of India Press, 1952), File no. 8(20)-H/50, Hyderabad section, MoS, GoI, NAI.

since its establishment. Given the massive state investment in industrial infrastructure in the decades after independence, the Asaf Jahi state's interventionist and pro-active policies on industries, including the establishment of the ITF, must have struck Lalbhai as of apiece with the then-contemporary expectations on the role of state in aiding industry. He had been particularly impressed with the wide range of industries that had been encouraged in the state, which, he said, had proved their utility during the World War II. Some of these industries, he believed, could become 'key industries' in the future.

Such positive assessments of the erstwhile Asaf Jahi state were rare in this period, as the circulation of rhetoric claiming the Asaf Jahi state as backward and oppressive, was widespread. This chapter explores the variety of idioms of backwardness used to describe the state—feudal, medieval, Islamic—and its supposed effects on the psyche of its inhabitants,[2] during the period of early twentieth century. This effort to establish the oppression and backwardness of the state did not go without challenge and I will also study the particular ways in which the native state's developmental efforts were presented and contextualised within a wider colonial regime.

The industrial initiatives in Hyderabad that had 'greatly impressed' Lalbhai were apiece with the modernising ambitions of most native states of the period; other sectors in which states expended great efforts included agriculture and education. In the case of Hyderabad, its agricultural sector suffered the same problems of indebtedness and landlessness that prevailed in other parts of British India. This was despite a series of legislations that the state adopted to combat these ills. Hyderabad's literacy rates remained abysmal and fared badly compared to other native states, despite large-scale state investment into education. This chapter analyses the systemic constraints on the efforts of the developmental state in Hyderabad.

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[2] See chapter 5 for a greater engagement with this particular aspect of backwardness.

The first two sections of the chapter deal centrally with the question of development in that they explore the production of backwardness of the state, the challenges posed to these discursive efforts, and the restricted efforts of the developmental state in Hyderabad. The final section focuses on the second thematic of the thesis, i.e. spatiality. It studies history-writing initiatives that situated the Hyderabadi nation within the larger Deccan region and allowed the state to establish its historicity by drawing from the legacies of the preceding dynasties. If such history writing efforts sought to create a Deccani past for the Asaf Jahi state, its developmental efforts were in continuation of what it saw as its inherited civilisational trajectory. It is this apparent (unbroken) continuity that ties development and history together and this section explores the ways in which the Deccan is marshalled to address the Asaf Jahi's state civilisational concerns. Even as these efforts to reimagine Hyderabad were afoot, ideas of the backwardness of, and oppression in, Hyderabad state circulated between British Indian and Hyderabadi spaces through networks forged through railways, migration, and linguistic affinities. This chapter explores the contours of these networked spaces whose connections only grew more intense, leading up to the events of the Police Action and its violent aftermath. The chapter concludes with a spatial account of this violence to indicate the implications of the charges of backwardness and oppression on the state's Muslim population.

Finally, a note on the rationale for this chapter. Given that the thesis is centrally concerned with Hyderabad-Karnataka—a constituent entity of erstwhile Hyderabad state—this exercise of focussing on the Asaf Jahi state will foreground an obvious but rarely acknowledged fact in the historiography of Karnataka: the legacies of the Asaf Jahi state—and of British rule in presidencies—are as much a part of Karnataka's histories as are princely Mysore's histories. Scholarship on Karnataka would be well-served when attention is paid to the variegated histories that animate the past of its different constituent regions

Producing Backwardness

In several popular and academic tracts, the Asaf Jahi state is often referred to as backward, medieval, feudal, and Islamic (in a pejorative sense). The regime's misrule, it is said, is the reason for the continuing backwardness of its constituent regions of Marathwada, Telangana and Hyderabad-Karnataka.[3] Such discourses—now part of a historical commonsense—had gained traction in both nationalist and Hindu Right circles from the period of the 1930s, as I will show in the chapter. The regime's surrender in 1948 following Police Action cemented this discourse as it attained greater circulation, with the support of the newly independent Indian state as well. In the following sections, I will highlight the different registers on which backwardness was produced, by analysing publications—produced from the 1930s up to 1948—that were critical of the Asaf Jahi state.

*Evoking Feudalism*

Feudalism understood as an economic system is very different from the idea of feudalism deployed as an evocative category in popular representations. In the case of Hyderabad, the charge of feudalism did not always focus on land tenures that governed agrarian relations in the state, even if it was the appropriate category to classify its agrarian system. While 65 percent of the land was under the control of the state as *Diwani* land, the rest were private holdings—as *Sarf-e-Khas* (the Nizam's land holdings), *paigahs* (held by the highest ranking nobility of the state), and *jagirs* (free grants accorded by the ruler to persons who had rendered appreciable service to the state), among others.[4] In its criticism of the state and its

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[3] Mallikarjun Kharge, one of the most prominent political leaders from the region said, in a press conference, in 2018 that Hyderabad-Karnataka's continuing underdevelopment was to be attributed to the Nizam's oppressive regime. See KN Reddy, 'Nizams Neglected Hyderabad Karnataka Region: Mallikarjun Kharge,' *Deccan Chronicle*, July 30, 2018, Online Edition, https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/300718/nizams-neglected-hyderabad-karnataka-region-mallikarjun-kharge.html.

[4] Ali Mohammed Khusro, *Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad* (Hyderabad: Department of Publication and University Press, Osmania University, 1958), 1–2.

regime as feudal, much popular commentary focused not on the prevalence of the jagirdari system, but rather on the communal distribution of land under this system.

In his monograph on Hyderabad, Balwant Rai Mehta, then-secretary of the All India States' Peoples' Conference (AISPC), wrote in 1938 that the government was 'a compromise between Mohamedan autocracy and Mohamedan oligarchy'.[5] This statement set the tone for an analysis of the economy and state along communal lines, primarily Muslim and Hindu. The argument was primarily based on demographic data: if Hindus constituted 84 percent of the population and Muslims only 10 percent, then the former were entitled to a share of resources, proportionate to their population;[6] in Hyderabad, Muslims were instead favoured. Mehta claimed that while the number of Hindu jagirdars was greater (632) than that of Muslim ones (534), the latter held a greater proportion of lands that yielded incomes over Rs. 5,000 and claimed that 'Hyderabad is the only State in India having such big feudal landlords.'[7] Similarly, in a three-part series in the newspaper Tribune, M.G. Chitnavis of the Hindu Mahasabha produced data of the income slabs of Hindu and Muslim landowners to make the same argument (See Table 1). From this data however, it was neither possible to determine the extent of lands owned by Hindus and Muslims separately, nor did the data allow for a determination of which community of landowners earned more.[8]

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[5] Balwant Rai Mehta, "A Peep into Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the Administration of Nizam's Dominions" (New Delhi: Hindustan Times Press, September 25, 1938), 3, Telangana State Archives Library (hereafter TSA library).
[6] These figures have been drawn from Gulam Ahmed Khan, "Census of India, 1931 HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," Part I: Report (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1933).
[7] ibid, 8.
[8] M.G. Chitnavis, "A Peep into Hyderabad: Being a Collection of Articles Published in the Tribune", (Lahore: Tribune Press, 1939), File no.22, Printed material, M.G. Chitnavis papers, Nehru Memorial and Museum Library (hereafter NMML), 6.

*Table 1: Data regarding land holdings in Hyderabad*

| Annual revenue of jagirs | Hindus | Muslims | Others | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10-500 | 100 | 42 | | 142 |
| 500-1000 | 109 | 42 | | 151 |
| 1000-3000 | 241 | 161 | | 402 |
| 3000-5000 | 65 | 72 | | 137 |
| 5000-6000 | 25 | 22 | | 47 |
| 6000-10000 | 29 | 72 | | 101 |
| 10000-12000 | 10 | 23 | 1 | 34 |
| 12000-25000 | 20 | 55 | | 75 |
| 25000-50000 | 20 | 24 | | 44 |
| 50000-100000 | 6 | 9 | | 15 |
| 100000 and above | 7 | 12 | | 19 |
| | 632 | 534 | | 1167 |

*Source: MG Chitnavis, A Peep into Hyderabad, 1939*

In both these commentaries, the existence of a feudal land tenure system was not questioned; rather, it was the supposed dominance of Muslims in the higher income slabs that was the focus of criticism. Both Mehta's and Chitnavis' writings only foreground a purported communal bias in land-holdings—a factor relevant only to the landed elite in both communities—and did not make efforts to understand the caste-based nature of feudalism or the miseries it inflicted on the small peasant or the landless labourer.[9] This alerts us to a

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[9] The 1921-22 famine report, cited extensively in the previous chapter, pointed out that the work of transplanting, weeding, grass-cutting, and harvesting in the Dominions were performed by the Adi-Hindus such as Dheds, Mahars, Chamhars, Moochis and Mangs, who were often paid in kind for their work. Nawab Mohiuddin Yar Jung Bahadur, 'Famine Report, 1330-1331 (1921-22)' (Secunderabad, 1922). Later in the chapter, I will discuss the hold of village officials such as Patwaris, Patels, Deshpandes (mostly from dominant

particular motivation that underlay these discourses: they did not seek a fundamental overhaul of the economy towards an equitable distribution of resources; rather the correct pattern of distribution was that which favoured Hindu dominance in political and economic affairs. This demand, they said, was not 'communal' but 'democratic', for the consensus was that the majority ought to have sway over the polity. Mehta insisted that his analysis of the state of affairs in Hyderabad along Hindu-Muslim lines was not motivated by communal considerations. It was, rather, due to the 'communal policy of the State, to create a ruling class and the ruled, (that) any political agitation is bound to appear as Hindu agitation, although their demands might be purely national in nature'.[10] He declared that Hindus in the state were 'loyal to the core' but what they wanted was a 'government of the people and for the people under the aegis of the Asaf Jahi dynasty'.[11]

Another publication by the AISPC, which Mehta headed, sought to highlight the 'autocratic' system of government in the state by focussing on Paigha system of land tenure.[12] In a note on the Paighas in Hyderabad, the AISPC stated: 'The subjects are stripped to the bone by the pompous and extravagant Jagirdars. Even the smallest jagirdar tries to line himself up with the other big Jagirdars in pomp, grandeur, and extravagance.'[13] A key complaint in the note was the higher land revenue that Paigha farmers had to pay, compared to their counterparts in the neighbouring Diwani territories. Providing details of the disparity in assessments, the note showed that in some cases, land revenue charged for dry and wetlands in Paigha areas was

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or Brahmin castes) and money-lenders (Marwadis, Kayasths, Lingayats among others) over the village economy.

[10] ibid, 14

[11] ibid. If freedom from British rule was the demand in colonial India, in princely states, the demand was restricted to responsible government without displacing the ruler, until the question of accession to the Indian Union emerged as the dominant question on the eve of Indian independence. For more, see footnote 19.

[12] This focus on the Paigha alone is odd because the state had only three such estates, even if they were large and yielded large revenues. Jagirs covered a much larger areal extent and similar complaints about high assessments and low levels of welfare activity had been made about these areas. One difference was that Paighas belonged to the three highest ranking Muslim noble families, while jagirdars were drawn from both Muslim and Hindu communities.

[13] 'Feudal Oppression in Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the conditions in the Paigha Jagirs of HEH The Nizam', 25 May 1939, File no.64, AISPC papers, NMML, 5-6.

nearly double the assessments in Diwani areas. While remissions were granted frequently in these latter areas during bad harvests, Paigha farmers received no such latitude, the note claimed. Despite high assessments and other arbitrary taxes imposed on people, developmental activities were barely undertaken in the Paighas, the note claimed.

> Nothing is spent on education from the general income in the Paighas…On education they spend only two pies out of the one anna which they collect as Local Fund cess per rupee of the Land revenue. They spend two pies on roads and buildings, two on sanitation and two on medicine. Four pies are spent on police. Spending in such a way quite one third of the total income of Local Fund cannot be found in any other part of the world of today. But after all this is 'Mogalai' and this (Paighas) is the 'Mogalai in Mogalai' – the essence of Mogalai.[14]

Further, alluding to the Muslim bias of the Paigha Amirs, the note claimed: 'Nearly half a lac of rupees out of the public fund are spent by each Paigha on the Ecclesiastical department as grants to Maulavis, Mullas and Masjids. Out of this, some amount say five hundred rupees is spent for Hindus. This very well illustrates the religious bigotry of the Amirs which is the special and unique character of the Hyderabad State.'[15] The Amirs were also described in the note as extravagant, leading lives of debauchery and performing no productive services for the economy. Calling for the takeover of the Paighas by the state administration, the note argued that the Paigha villages were scattered across Diwani territories and were not contiguous, which made administration an expensive affair. Amalgamation of these lands with Diwani territory would also bring relief to the exploited subjects of the jagirs, who were 'seething' with 'discontent', the note added.

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[14] ibid, 14-15. Eric Beverley states that the term Moghlai, used in Hyderabad's case referred not only to the state's lineages with the erstwhile Mughal state but also alluded to a general sense of decay, 'a political disorder more generally' (152). He suggests that the colonial state most probably borrowed it from the Marathas for whom Moghlai signified enemy territory and 'the implicitly chaotic political regime that prevailed there' (149). For the British, Beverley argues, whose territories surrounded the Hyderabad state and with whom it had to encounter limits to its actionable power, the term Moghlai was a stand-in term for 'archaic governance'. This colonial discourse, of course, gained traction, and many more meanings, as it was appropriated by other actors with different motives. Beverley, Eric Lewis, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c 1850-1950*, 152.
[15] ibid, 18.

It is pertinent to mention an important exclusion in the AISPC document. The focus on Paighas and not on Samasthans[16]—both with similar rights and privileges but one belonging to Muslims and the other largely to Hindus—or even jagirs—with both Hindu and Muslim jagirdars—is an exclusion that needs to be noted in the AISPC document. Was it the fact of feudalism in Paigha areas that was the object of criticism and if yes, why were Samasthans and jagirs excluded from this analysis? This, again, highlights the concern with Muslim dominance rather than the existence of feudalism itself.

While this note by the AISPC claimed to discuss how feudalism in the state had thwarted the democratic aspirations of people, it also reflected the organisation's changed attitude towards princely states.[17] The note placed its analysis of Hyderabad in the context of the princely order in India which, it argued, had been sustained primarily for British needs. Princely states were propped up, retained, and sustained because it was not profitable for the British to govern all of Indian territory. However, with a growing nationalist movement, these states had 'become a check on the normal political growth in India, i.e., of "democratic nationalism"'.[18] The note briefly traced the trajectory of nationalist thought about the princely states, from being considered as relics of a period of self-rule to being seen as the 'last refuge' of British imperialists. It was the feudal nature of the princely states that hindered their subjects from raising their voices for freedom, the note argued, even as it admitted that leaders from British India were initially not keen on spreading the freedom movement to the states. Hyderabad belonged to this princely order and this premier state, the note claimed,

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[16] Samasthans were tributary estates, held by Hindu rulers, who claimed that their ancestry predated Asaf Jahi rule. For a detailed engagement with samasthans, see Cohen, *Kingship and Colonialism in India's Deccan, 1850-1948*.

[17] M.S. Aney of the Indian National Congress, in his address to the All India Arya Congress at Sholapur, also argued against princely states who, he said, had taken much longer than British India to introduce modern education and systems of governance. Even when they were introduced, the rulers took 'great care in devitalising them', he said. 'The States are even now the breeding grounds (for) medieval feudalism which is so incompatible with the modern condition of life and modern conception of a civilised state', M.S. Aney, "Hyderabad Administration" (The Sarvadeshik Arya Pritinidhi Sabha, Delhi, August 25, 1938), 8, NMML.

[18] 'Feudal Oppression in Hyderabad (Deccan)', 2.

was 'premier in backwardness, illiteracy, and religious and communal bigotry'.[19] Given that the note presented the state in Hyderabad in such poor light, its final demand that Paighas be taken over and merged into Diwani administration seemed disingenuous—if the state was indeed propping up a feudal set-up and had kept its subjects backward and illiterate, what relief could it provide to its subjects by taking over more lands under its ambit?

The AISPC probably held back from demanding the dissolution of the state since its official policy was to push for responsible government under the aegis of the native ruler.[20] With the advent of independence however, native rule was recast as anachronistic and was meant to give way to the rule of the Indian Union. The Hyderabad Struggle Committee of the Socialist Party issued a booklet in 1948, in the months preceding the Police Action, in which it presented a relentless tirade against the Asaf Jahi state and called for its complete annihilation. In a chapter titled *The Serfs and their Lords*, the booklet called jagirs 'ulcers of feudal reaction' that were 'spread widely over the face of the land'.[21] Like the AISPC note, it focused on the lack of public infrastructure and state spending, the prevalence of bonded labour, and the absence of proper administration in the jagir areas. It also alleged that that the government had been 'following a deliberate policy of developing large agricultural farms under the irrigation projects which are invariably owned and managed by Muslims'.[22] This 'deliberate policy', it said, ensured that lands were snatched away from small cultivators 'who are entirely Hindu and to give them away to a landed aristocracy of Muslims'.[23] It also claimed that the then-Prime Minister Mir Laik Ali and the then-Finance Minister Nawab

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[19] ibid, 5.

[20] The AISPC was a pan-Indian organisation involved in political movements for responsible governments in native states. It supported the INC, which largely functioned in British India, in its campaigns but the latter remained non-committal to states' politics. Only for a brief period between 1938 and 1939, the INC intervened to support political movements for responsible governments in states before stepping back to to re-adopt its policy of non-interference. See Ian Copland, "Congress Paternalism: The 'High Command' and the Struggle for Freedom in Princely India, c.1920-1940.," *Journal of South Asian Studies* 8, no. 1–2 (1985): 121–40.

[21] Hyderabad Struggle Committee Socialist Party, 'The Hyderabad Problem: The Next Step' (Suresh Desai, Secretary, Socialist Party, Bombay, 1948), 47, NMML.

[22] ibid

[23] ibid

Moin Nawaz Jung between them owned 10,000 acres of sugarcane farms, developed under the Nizamsagar irrigation project.[24]

The booklet also argued that the Samasthans and Jagirs which were under the control of Hindus, were bound by the 'feudal relationship between them and the Nizam' and were thus 'useless to the masses in any contest for power'. Such a relationship had demobilised, it claimed, 'a third of the potentially revolutionary class in the State…and (brought) into being a Hindu supplement to his (the Nizam's) Muslim ruling caste'.[25] Further, the feudal set-up of the agrarian sector had prevented the development and consolidation of classes, unlike in the neighbouring districts of Bombay and Madras presidencies. In Hyderabad, differences could only be measured, it said acerbically, by the degree of helplessness that various groups suffered, particularly in the absence of industry.

> In the rest of India it is the constant interaction of ever growing industries on agriculture that is clarifying the classes and dissolving inert ruralism. In Hyderabad the sequestration of industry in the fewest possible number of cases, by the Muslim community has established an irrational hiatus between primary and secondary production.[26]

Terming the economic situation in the state as an anachronism, it called the Hyderabad government 'an isolated gang of feudal fascists trying to escape democracy' and declared that 'self-liquidation' would be its 'logical end'.[27]

In all the publications discussed here, the use of the term feudalism oscillated between the categories of economic and evocative, often tending more towards the latter. The agrarian structure was indeed responsible for the inequities it generated amongst classes but in these publications, it was the specific Muslim dominance of this feudal economy that seemed to be the major concern. While the preponderance of the Muslim jagirdar was repeated often,

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[24] ibid, 48
[25] ibid, 50
[26] ibid
[27] ibid, 51

Hindu jagirdars were treated as mere appendage to their Muslim counterparts and not as disrupting this claim of subjugation of Hindus. Further, in the context of transfer of lands from peasants to money lenders due to rising indebtedness of agricultural families (an issue I deal with later in the chapter), the Socialist Party's booklet's mention of only Pathan and Rohilla money lenders and not Lingayat or Marwari moneylenders exacerbates this suspicion.[28]

The publications under discussion here have two common factors. First, they were all published by organisations outside Hyderabad, highlighting the networks of different ideological intents (Hindu right-wing, Congress, and Socialist) that were involved in the production of backwardness in the state. Second, the publications used the analytical category of feudalism as a socio-cultural term, i.e., by claiming a putative dominance of Muslim community over productive means, they equated class with religion, drawing an image of a vast Hindu peasantry oppressed by a Muslim landlord class. This was far from the reality, as the village economy was riven by a combination of caste and class factors rather than religious interests, a point I will discuss subsequently.

*Perpetuating Medievalism*

The Asaf Jahi state had by the 1940s acquired the status of an anachronism, of being out of step with the times. If the political consensus of the time had settled on democracy as the cor jjj n ngv rect political form, the absence of a representative government in the state and the Nizam's unwillingness to concede on this point were deemed backward. The state was characterised as medieval in that it opposed these modern tenets of democracy; it also harboured 'medieval conditions' amongst its subjects by retaining its feudal structure in land ownership.

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[28] ibid, 48.

If the AISPC note argued for the abolition of jagirs and the establishment of a uniform land revenue system under the control of the state, a memorandum presented to the British Parliamentary Delegation by the Hyderabad State Congress (HSC) sought to highlight the extractive nature of the state. Focusing on the agricultural indebtedness of the peasant family, the memorandum stated that the average net income of a family was only Rs. 28, which was barely enough to make ends meet and pay off debts. 'This is the root cause of his misery, indebtedness and slow transfer of his lands into the hands of the money lender,' it argued.[29] Those living in jagirs faced 'most deplorable' situations and they resembled 'mediaeval conditions'.[30] Across the state, agriculturists suffered, the memorandum claimed, due to high rates of assessments, fragmentation of land, and absence of cheap credit facilities. Efforts by the state to introduce ameliorative legislations were termed 'half-hearted' and co-operative credit societies were deemed a 'failure' because of nepotism and corruption amongst inefficient officials. Asserting that the perception that Hyderabad was an affluent modern state was misplaced, the memorandum argued that the countryside bore the brunt of the state's deliberate negligence: 'The rural life in the State is thus most backward, steeped in appalling poverty and over-awed by the unscrupulous cruelties of the local police and smaller executive officers. A few educated, who are in villages, try to move to urban areas, resulting in keeping the village in almost a mediaeval state.'[31]

In popular commentary, if 'feudal' referred to the structure of the state, medieval referred to the conditions of living it spawned for the people. The usage was loose and ill-defined though, and medieval also stood opposed to modern/democratic. In a White Paper on

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[29] Kashinatharao Vaidya, Syed Siraj-ul-Hasan Tirmizi, M.Narsing Rao, G.Ramachar, 'Memorandum presented to the British Parliamentary Delegation at Hyderabad', 20 January 1946, File no.65 (pt-2), AISPC papers, NMML, 4.

[30] ibid, 3.

[31] ibid, 4. Also referring to the misleading implications of judging the prosperity of Hyderabad by its cities, the White Paper on Hyderabad said: 'The façade of the prosperous looking towns of Hyderabad and Secunderabad with very good roads and buildings serves to screen the appalling poverty of the vast majority of the people, who live in a condition of utter misery and serfdom.' Government of India, 'White Paper on Hyderabad' (Delhi: The Manager of Publications, 1948), 20, Indian Official Documents Section, Central Secretariat Library.

Hyderabad prepared by the Indian Union, the political structure of Hyderabad was defined as 'mediaeval and reactionary'.[32] Referring to the Nizam's annual privy purse of Rs. 50 lakhs, the vast lands under his domain as Sarf-e-Khas, and the 'large sums' his sons and family members received for their maintenance, the White Paper argued that this was only possible because of the feudal system of the state. Written on the eve of the Indian Union's entry into Hyderabad, this document claimed: 'The present Nizam is credited with the belief that he is heir of the Moghul Emperors and with the ambition of attaining unrestricted personal sovereignty. He has, therefore, discountenanced every idea of modern political progress and has succeeded in concentrating all power in himself.'[33]

By 1948, when the White Paper first entered public circulation, the term 'medieval' had squarely become associated with the autocracy of the Asaf Jahi state, its refusal to establish responsible government, and its insistence that Muslims have a larger say in the affairs of the state than the community's population warranted. For instance, in the Legislative Council, the White Paper noted, the 'majority and minority communities are equal in number, on the whole, the minority community has a majority of 10 over the majority community in a House of 132 and are therefore in a permanent majority.'[34] Terming this constitution 'farcical', the document argued, that this had allowed the Nizam's rule to be 'absolute in character'. A decade earlier, Mehta had made similar allegations when he said that because the taluk and district local fund committees consisted of only nominated members who swore allegiance to the state, they were not likely to raise voices in favour of people.[35]

Critics of the state often argued that the absolutist power wielded by the Nizam allowed him to fill up government services with Muslim personnel, keeping the majority community out

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[32] ibid, 19.
[33] ibid.
[34] ibid, 19-20.
[35] Mehta, "A Peep into Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the Administration of Nizam's Dominions", 9-10.

of these positions. Merit was replaced by nepotism, it was claimed. Mehta, in his monograph, presented evidence from the 1931 Census of the numbers of gazetted officers according to their religious affiliations: in 1931, Muslims were in 864 posts while Hindus occupied 248 posts. He argued that 'subtle imperialistic methods are being adopted by the State to give preferential treatment both in theory and in practice to Muslims'.[36]

This characterisation of methods as 'subtle imperialism' had given way to the claim of an oppressive state by 1948, as the White Paper also reproduced similarly disaggregated data to show that the Nizam had created 'a virtual monopoly' to 'crush political awakening'. Stating that Muslims occupied 754 posts while Hindus were in 202 posts, the document argued that 'recruitment to services is not on merits. The representation of the communities in the services is in inverse proportion to their numbers. The representation of the majority population in the key services… is negligible.'[37]

The separation of the judiciary from the executive, which was often touted by the state as a mark of its political maturity, was also criticised. Mehta pointed out that the appointment of judges was undertaken by the Executive Council, the Judicial Member was part of this council, and the Nizam frequently overruled judgements through his firmans. Judicial officers were also largely Muslim, their calibre was 'not on par with their compeers in British India', and their inability to understand the language and customs of the Hindu litigants put the latter at considerable risk, Mehta claimed. This was all part of the policy of the State 'to develop a strong Islamic State in the Deccan', he added.[38]

Allegations were also made that newer avenues of investment in industries were being handed over to Muslim industrialists. In his series of articles, Chitnavis reproduced data

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[36] ibid, 13.
[37] Government of India, 'White Paper on Hyderabad,' 20.
[38] Mehta, "A Peep into Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the Administration of Nizam's Dominions", 11.

about Hindu and Muslim factory owners to claim that of the 239 factories in the state, Hindus owned 158, Muslims owned thirty-eight and others owned forty-three. Although Hindus owned nearly four times more the number of factories than Muslims, Chitnavis argued that ownership was disproportionate to the latter's population. His calculations ran thus: Hindus constituted 84 percent of the population but owned only 67 percent of the factories while Muslims who constituted 10 percent of the population owned 16 percent of the factories. 'The grievance therefore cannot be that of the Muslims but of Hindus,' he concluded.[39] Importantly, the data only showed capital invested in factories by Hindus and Muslims, which did not necessarily translate to ownership, management, and eventual control.

The term medieval stood as an accusation that referred to the presence of an absolutist ruler who exercised overwhelming influence on the economy, created no avenues for political participation, and sought to establish Muslim superiority by reconfiguring economic and political structures. Lucien Benichou, in his work on Hyderabad, has disputed the term 'medieval' attached to the nature of rule in the state. Terming the use 'inappropriate', he argues that while the 'Mughal model' may have been the 'original blueprint for the social and political system of Hyderabad', there had been 'significant social changes' such as a 'general rise of the administrative classes' and a 'decline of the military and Mughal bureaucracy' in the nineteenth century.[40] Hyderabad had not been averse to, or isolated from, tendencies towards bureaucratisation or instituting new systems of governance. A closer look at the specifics of the criticism shows that the invocation of medieval did not dispute the existence of new forms of modern governance. It was rather that these new forms had apparently no

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[39] Chitnavis, "A Peep into Hyderabad: Being a Collection of Articles Published in the Tribune", 7.

[40] Lucien D. Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2000), 13. Karen Leonard, in an essay, traces the differences between the Mughal and the Nizam administrations to the eighteenth century when new political participants entered the system, changes in land revenue administration were effected, and a new nobility which had no previous connection with Mughal rule emerged in the state. See Karen Leonard, 'The Hyderabad Political System and Its Participants,' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30, no. 3 (1971): 569–582.

place for the Hindu majority and that state power was held by Muslims that informed the use of the term medieval, a period associated with Mughal rule. Proportional representation, thus, had become a sign of the modern.

Benichou's work locates Hyderabad within an all-India princely order where it was customary that 'access to high government positions was generally the privilege of the local ruling elite and was more or less closed to those who did not possess the requisite qualifications of "birth" and wealth.'[41] This was the general norm in princely states where upper classes 'jealously guarded' traditions and privileges from which they stood to benefit. Benichou's analysis helps situate the class structure and economic relations engendered within the state in the larger princely order of the period. In doing so, it helps complicate sweeping accusations of nepotism that supposedly benefitted only the Muslims of Hyderabad. In the 1930s and 1940s, however, this sort of contextualisation was not made available to Hyderabad—and it continues to remain unavailable—as the state was repeatedly condemned as a 'diseased limb' of the body politic.[42] Various versions of these descriptions have continued to haunt the state's representation in post-colonial scholarship.

*Muslimisation of State*

Apart from terms such as feudal and medieval used to describe the Asaf Jahi state, the term Muslim/Islamic was used not only to denote the empirical fact that the ruling dynasty belonged to this religion, but also that this contributed to the backwardness of the state. Apart from the charges of Muslimisation of government services and the economy, one key aspect

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[41] ibid, 10.
[42] The phrase 'diseased limb' is part of a title of a booklet 'Hyderabad: Our Diseased Limb'. In this booklet, the author was critical of the Indian Union entering into a Standstill Agreement with Hyderabad and urged the former to press the latter to immediately accede to the Union. Terming Hyderabad as an essential part of India, 'which has now become our diseased limb', Sundaram declared: 'If India has to go through blood, sweat, toil and tears to retain her freedom, the people are ready for the ordeal…'Lanka Sundaram, *Hyderabad: Our Diseased Limb* (New Delhi: Sarvodaya Sahitya Sansad, 1948), 27.

of the anti-state discourses revolved around education, particularly around the medium of instruction.

Widespread consensus existed among nationalists and the Hindu Right who claimed that the abysmal record of literacy, particularly among Hindus, was due to the forced imposition of Urdu in schooling. They argued that this not only discouraged Hindu students from pursuing education, but also secured an advantage to Muslim students whose mother-tongue was Urdu. Hindus were being deliberately kept backward in the state as their mother-tongues of Telugu, Canarese and Marathi languished without state encouragement, it was alleged.

Mehta, in his monograph, argued that the divisions in the economy along communal lines had resulted in the creation of a ruling Muslim elite, sustained and bolstered by the 'unprecedented' advancement of the community in the field of education. If Muslims in British India 'claim(ed) special facilities as a backward community', then the state in Hyderabad must be doing something specifically for the community here for such 'phenomenal progress'.[43] In other words, Mehta was asking why the Muslim community was not 'backward' here when it was in the rest of the country. For Hindus, the lack of education in the vernaculars had led to the 'suppression' of the 'cultural heritage of the great people that have been residing in the country long before the Asaf Jahi dynasty came into being', he claimed.[44] Although Mehta equated the vernacular with the Hindus and Urdu with the Muslims, he contradicted this claim when he said, in the context of the Osmania University, that Urdu was not the mother-tongue even of Muslims living in villages and little towns of the state who spoke the region's vernaculars. Lack of education among the populace, Mehta argued, meant that the 'social ideas of the people there are naturally backward. To believe in the law of karma, or to rely on Providence, naturally becomes a good, mental solace for the

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[43] Mehta, "A Peep into Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the Administration of Nizam's Dominions", 15.
[44] ibid, 16.

exploited, tyrannised, and downtrodden people.'[45] The absence of civil liberties including freedoms to practice religion freely, of the press, and of association further impaired the development of the people of Hyderabad, Mehta concluded.

Chitnavis pointed out that the forced transition to Urdu in secondary schools, after being trained in vernaculars in primary schools, was creating hurdles in continuing education. Students were preferring to study Urdu at the primary stage itself, or were dropping out if trained in the vernacular medium, he alleged. This imposition of Urdu was the reason that literacy among Hindus rose much slower (3.3 percent in 1931) than among Muslims (10.35 percent in 1931).[46] Apart from this 'educational backwardness', the state was also responsible for sidelining the 'religious and cultural rights and interests' of Hindus: while Muslim students were taught the Quran in public schools, Hindu students were not provided similar provisions. Chitnavis also declared that 'from the cultural point of view things are equally bad' and pointed to the disparity in the number of scholars studying Persian (20,353), Arabic (3,061), and Sanskrit (390).[47]

Like Mehta, Chitnavis' emphasis was also on discrediting the state in Hyderabad, rendering it communal for seeking to advance its Muslim subjects or undertaking ventures in things deemed Islamic, such as Urdu in schools and the establishment of the Osmania University. Chitnavis' reading of the data and arguments seems persuasive at first glance, and it did persuade, as this line of argumentation travelled across Hindu and nationalist spaces to establish the 'Islamic' nature of rule in the Asaf Jahi state. In the memorandum by the HSC to British Parliamentarians, the authors accused the state of imposing a 'trilingual tyranny' on its students by forcing them to study Urdu, English, and one of vernaculars. Urdu was given 'unnecessary importance', even though it was the 'least spoken language' in the state, only

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[45] ibid, 24
[46] Chitnavis, "A Peep into Hyderabad: Being a Collection of Articles Published in the Tribune", 5.
[47] ibid.

because it was the ruler's language, they argued.[48] In a publication titled *Education in Hyderabad,* A.K. Waghmare compared literacy rates in Hyderabad with other princely states such as Travancore, Baroda, Cochin, and Mysore and the presidency areas of Bombay, Madras, and Central Provinces and Berar, all of which had performed better. Holding up Travancore as a particularly shining example of a progressive state, Waghmare argued that its success in education could be attributed to the fact that the medium of instruction was in the mother-tongue of the student. 'Travancore therefore, can produce able teachers who can enthuse interest in the students, lessen their strain and make their education easy and interesting; while Hyderabad cannot do so.'[49] Waghmare also used data from various censuses to point out the inequalities between Hindus and Muslims, in female education, and in the declining student numbers from primary school upwards. The conclusion he drew from these figures—admittedly abysmal—was that the forced imposition of Urdu as a medium of instruction and the absence of mother-tongue instruction had resulted in such backward conditions.

However, for someone who drew so heavily from the censuses, Waghmare chose to omit the reason provided by the census writers themselves for the fall in literacy rates. The 1931 census pointed to the phenomenon of lapsing into illiteracy, especially among people after the age group of 15-20 years and said: 'Once a boy leaves the institution and goes to share with his father the toil of earning daily bread for the family he has no opportunities for keeping up even the elementary knowledge which he acquired at school.'[50] Classifying literacy data along age groups, the 1941 census report claimed that that the opening of new vistas other than agriculture had provided the conditions for retaining literacy. The rise in number of

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[48] Vaidya et al, 'Memorandum to the British Parliamentary Delegation', 18

[49] A.K. Waghmare, "Education in Hyderabad: An account of the lavish expenditure of the State Finances in the name of Education and the appalling ignorance and illiteracy of the vast masses of Hyderabad"(Poona: Aryabhushan Press, 1948), File no.69 (pt-I), AISPC papers, NMML, 5.

[50] Gulam Ahmed Khan, 'Census of India, 1931 HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State),' Part I: Report (Hyderabad, 1933), 200.

literates in the age group of 15-20 was heartening, it said, because if people retained literacy at this age, they are less likely to lapse, 'sufficient interest being created at this age to encourage pupils to keep up their knowledge and maintain their literacy'.[51] The absence of an enabling environment to retain literacy then seems to be key to understanding the stagnant figures in the state, a reasoning that hardly found any mention in publications that were critical of the state.[52] None of the criticisms of this imposition of Urdu offered any alternative to what the state should have done: Should it have discarded Urdu as official language? If so, what language should have replaced Urdu? If Urdu was the official language, would not offering education in the language aid its subjects in conducting his business with the state? None of these questions were even raised as easy equations were drawn: Urdu=Muslim and Vernacular=Hindu.

Another cause for low literacy rates, according to critics, was state regulation of education. Mehta argued that given the poor state of literacy in the state, the government should have supported private efforts to establish schools. Instead, the new rules put in place required that prior permission be obtained before private agencies opened schools.[53] Mehta seemed to believe that this 'assumption of monopoly of the state in education' was condemnable, although he praised the efforts undertaken by the 'enlightened states' of Mysore, Travancore, and Baroda in furthering literacy in their respective states. It seemed then that it was the fact of the Muslim state intervening to control and regulate private education that offended Mehta. For Chitnavis, this regulation most affected Hindus. Referring to the circular by the Education Department which sought to regulate private enterprise in school education by

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[51] Mazhar Husain, 'Census of India 1941: HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State),' Part I: Report (Hyderabad (Deccan), 1945), 244.
[52] Benichou points out that it was not for a lack of state investment that such poor rates prevailed in the dominions. In fact, the state doled out more generous aids to educational institutions than anywhere else in India, had far less fees than in neighbouring states and gave out a wide range of concessions to students. Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948.*
[53] Mehta, "A Peep into Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the Administration of Nizam's Dominions", 20.

making prior permission from the government mandatory, Chitnavis alleged that this had resulted in reduction in number of schools from 4053 in 1924 to 1044 in 1935-6. 'It is an undeniable fact that practically all these closed schools were being run by the non-Muslims more especially the Hindus,' he claimed.[54]

Waghmare also raised the matter of private enterprise in education. Travancore's higher school-going population figures, he stated, was due to the state's encouragement of private efforts, particularly through grants-in-aid to these institutions. But in Hyderabad, '…the Government for some unknown purpose feels essential to retain its strangle hold on education at any cost… It has been a systematic policy of the department of education to place every possible obstacle in the path of private school seeking recognition and financial aid', he alleged.[55] The Census report of 1941, however, presented the shutdown of private primary schools as inevitable because public schools were increasing their 'efficiency'; the former needed to provide matching quality of education and measure up to the standards set by the Education department. When they did, the census report claimed, they were given grants-in-aid and later converted into Local Fund Schools.

If the Asaf Jahi state 'kept' its Hindu subjects backward by impeding access to education, critics alleged, it also privileged its Muslim subjects by granting them greater religious and civil liberties than to the former. This was the principal criticism emanating from the Arya Samaj in Hyderabad and the pivot around which it organised the 1938 Satyagraha. This criticism was shared also by the Hindu Mahasabha and the HSC, although the interests of three organisations, it was claimed, differed from each other. Chitnavis described the three 'movements' that were operating in the state thus:

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[54] Chitnavis, "A Peep into Hyderabad: Being a Collection of Articles Published in the Tribune", 6.
[55] Waghmare, "Education in Hyderabad: An account of the lavish expenditure of the State Finances in the name of Education and the appalling ignorance and illiteracy of the vast masses of Hyderabad", 6.

> First is the movement for popular control in administration and for constitutional reforms. This movement which is at present in a state of abeyance was being carried on under the aegis of Hyderabad State Congress. Second movement is for proper representation of different communities in the State service and administration of the country. This movement is being carried on by the Hindus of the State and is receiving support from the Hindu Maha Sabha agitation. Third movement is for the religious and cultural rights of the people carried on by the Arya Samaj.[56]

M.S. Aney, in his presidential address to the All India Aryan Congress in Sholapur, described the Arya Samaj movement in the state as 'an effective antidote against Tabligh and other conversion propaganda carried on by the Mohmedens through open or secret agencies'.[57] Providing an overview of the state of affairs in Hyderabad, Aney traversed a similar terrain as his compatriots and pointed to the dominance of Muslims in government services, the absence of a responsible government in the state, the imposition of Urdu, and the absence of mother-tongue instruction in schools. His conclusions about the implications of such moves by the state presented a decidedly more feverish picture of Muslim hegemony. He claimed that the pro-Muslim bent of the state was instilling in the Muslim population a sense of superiority over their Hindu brethren, as if they were the ruling class and Islam the state religion. The Nizam was looked upon as the Sovereign not just of Hyderabad, but of an 'Islamic State in India'. Young Muslims from the state compared the capital to Baghdad, Aney claimed, while Muslim teachers in school and Muslim officials in jails were converting students and prisoners, respectively, to Islam.[58] Apart from these measures, Hindus in the state also suffered religious disabilities as restrictions were placed on public celebrations of their festivals, Arya Samaj leaders from outside the state were often externed, and public meetings to spread the message of Arya Samaj were banned, he added. Thus, Aney

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[56] Chitnavis, "A Peep into Hyderabad: Being a Collection of Articles Published in the Tribune", 7-8.
[57] Aney, "Hyderabad Administration," 37–38.
[58] Mehta had similar allegations to make: 'The Hindu lad is a cursed fellow! He is decried and discouraged at every stage and is made to feel that he belongs to a conquered race! Even a paltry fellow like the office peon can kick a Hindu student and such action goes unheeded completely simply on the score of his being a follower of Islam! The Muslim teacher in his own arrogance deprecates Hindu deities and religious dogmas and is not afraid of pulling down 'Lingkar' the sacred emblem of the Lingayats. Mehta, "A Peep into Hyderabad (Deccan): A Survey of the Administration of Nizam's Dominions", 19-20.

concluded, he was 'deeply pained to observe that the State of Hyderabad ruled no doubt by an enlightened Ruler like HEH The Nizam and advised by an Executive Council with a liberal Statesman of great reputation like Sir Akbar Hydari as its President, is found to be hopelessly indifferent and criminally negligent to the rights of the subjects…'[59]

Aney's comments in which Muslim subjects were soldered together with the state and its ruler was new even for the anti-state discourse of the period of the 1930s. His assertion—that ordinary Muslims were consumed by feelings of superiority—solidified into a notion of a 'fascist minority' in subsequent years.[60] This was to have major consequences for Muslim life in post-accession Hyderabad, a matter that will be dealt with in the next chapter of the thesis.

In this survey of anti-state literature, what becomes clear is that non-state actors with varying ideologies such as the Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, outfits of the Congress such as the HSC and the AISPC, and the Socialist Party chose similar terms of articulation. Backwardness was seemingly presented through the prevalence of feudalism, as a medieval functioning of the state, and the suppression of vernacular cultures and languages. But in each of these concerns, it was the dominance of the Muslim minority in the affairs of the state that was the mainstay of criticism. The call for representative government and proportional representation in state and economy was presented not only as modern and democratic, but also as just and proper. That it could translate to a dominance of Hindus in all sectors of the state and economy, the possibilities it harboured of democracy collapsing into

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[59] Aney, 'Hyderabad Administration,' 12.

[60] This term was used by the Indian Union in its White Paper on the state. See Government of India, 'White Paper on Hyderabad,' 3. Given that this was the period of the rise of Nazism/Fascism, these terms were also often used to describe the Nizam's regime. In his pamphlet on Muslim Nazism, author V. Moni accused the Muslim League led by Jinnah of creating another Pakistan in Hyderabad, of trying to foist Muslim rule over India even as Hindus watched it quietly. At one point in the pamphlet, he said: '…Hindus are pouring out of Hyderabad and Muslims pouring in, while Jinnah's infernal plans are running to schedule and a handful of men offer Satyagraha in that vast land. I am just one like you all and have been expecting day by day to hear the call of our leaders for organised aid to the people of Hyderabad against Nazi Muslim machinery. Nothing has come. So let us, brothers and do our duty like decent human beings… We have to shape ourselves into a hammer and dash to pieces that diamond point of League leadership that has started to carve out a Nazi-Muslim pattern on our beloved country.' See V. Moni, 'The Menace of Muslim Nazism in Hyderabad' (Calicut: Ramakrishna Printing Press, October 4 1947), File no.25, Writings by others, B.S. Moonje papers, NMML, 4.

majoritarianism, and the questions it raised about the place of Muslim minority in a democratic system did not figure as concerns in the publications of these organisations.

*Challenging, Contextualising Backwardness*

In this period between the 1930s and the 1940s, independent and state-sponsored publications that offered different perspectives on the state were also in circulation. While some publications sought to counter the charges of backwardness, supposed Muslim dominance, and an economic favouritism biased towards Muslims, others focused on presenting the developmental initiatives of the state as part of a larger effort to present the state as modern. A few others sought to contextualise Hyderabad within the hierarchies of a colonial regime and the implications of such a position.

Writing to counter an Arya Samaj publication titled *The Bhaganagar Struggle*, a Bombay-based author Abdus Salam used data, like Chitnavis and Mehta had done, to point to Hindu dominance of occupations in the state. 'For centuries, very much to the detriment of the community, Muslims have been content with Government service, be it of the lowest kind, leaving the various other fields of economic enterprise to the exclusive exploitation of the Hindus,' Salam claimed [61] (See Table 2).

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[61] Abdus Salam, *The How, Why and Wherefor of the Hyderabad Struggle* (Bombay: Kaiser-e-Hind Press, 1941), 137–38. Lucien Benichou's work on Hyderabad also disputes this claim of Muslim dominance of the state and economy in Hyderabad. Arguing that Hindus 'dominated the State economy', Benichou points out that this community dominated all agrarian classes in the state as well in rural economy, was 'strongly represented' in well off sections in urban areas, and 'vastly outnumbered' all communities even at lower socio-economic levels. Muslims may have 'retained their privileged position in the State' since the time Muslim rule began in the Deccan but, Benichou argues, not all Muslims were wealthy and in fact were largely to be found at lower socio-economic levels. Even among the 'wealthy classes' such as large landowners, bankers and financiers, public administrators and army and police cadres, Muslims were largely in the last two categories, i.e. in state services. Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948*, 15.

*Table 2: Distribution of occupations among Hindus and Muslims in Hyderabad*

| Description | % of Hindus | % of Muslims |
|---|---|---|
| Production of raw material | 87 | 7 |
| Industry | 92 | 5 |
| Transport | 79 | 12 |
| Trade | 85 | 13 |
| Public Force | 74 | 22 |
| Public Administration | 65 | 32 |
| Professions and Liberal Arts | 71 | 23 |
| Domestic services | 68 | 25 |
| Insufficiently described occupations | 84 | 10 |

*Source: Abdus Salam, Abdus Salam, The How, Why and Wherefor of the Hyderabad Struggle (Bombay: Kaiser-e-Hind Press, 1941), 131.*

He also argued that the speeches, writings, and activities of Arya Samaj and Hindu Sabha leaders clearly showed that the aim was to achieve 'the political domination of the higher class Hindus'.[62] Claiming that the two organisations were only driven by capitalist interests and not keen on establishing a rule of the masses, he said: 'As things stand today, the top-class Hindus have got almost everything they want. Almost all the commercial and business concerns are in the hands of the Hindus. All the State and private contractors are Hindus. The business of moneylending is in the hands of the Hindus. And the masses, Hindus and Muslims alike, are in the grip of the money-lenders.'[63]

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[62] ibid, 35. Benichou contends that the economic structure of the state remained largely static and a division of labour between Hindu and Muslim communities had 'evolved over the centuries' and 'eliminated economic competition and friction between the communities.'[62] Hindus rarely exhibited interest in the state civil services, since for the wealthier among them, it was 'far more profitable to follow their father's occupation in agriculture, trade or money-lending than to take up comparatively poorly-paid government employment' Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948*, 17.

[63] ibid, 36. The 1931 census noted that Brahmanic Hindus (a census category comprising Adi-Hindus, Aryas and Brahmos) constituted 84 percent of the total money-lenders in the state, although the profession of money-

Salam also pointed out that the class differences among Muslims were stark. Unlike Hindus who had a large well-to-do middle class, Muslims were divided into two categories of 'the rich few and the poor many'.[64] Even big Muslim jagirdars were under debt and it was only the small number of government officials from the community who were doing reasonably well. Political reforms that Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha were demanding was only to ensure that they would come to power and 'perpetuate the exploitation of the poor by the moneylenders', he alleged.[65]

If Salam's work took on the charge of Muslim dominance to prove the fallacies in this set of arguments, a special issue issued by the Information Bureau presented a picture of feverish developmental activity in the state. In his article in the special issue, G.D. Mehkeri placed special emphasis on 'improvement' projects that were being undertaken in agriculture. Since oilseeds and cotton were the primary cash crops in the state, agricultural research was focused on evolving genetically better seeds for these crops. To break the 'citadel of prejudice and ignorance' and 'the hand of the crust of conservatism', the agriculture department conducted practical demonstrations on the cultivator's farm, government farms, and during jathras and urses.[66] On the matter of agricultural indebtedness, for which the government had come under heavy criticism, the author argued that it was comparable, lower even, than neighbouring territories. Quoting a review article that analysed the findings of the economic investigations into rural areas, Mehkeri presented the following excerpt:

> …the situation in Hyderabad state on this very important point of burden of debt would appear to be better than those in the adjoining districts of Bombay Presidency. With regard to the rate of interest the general result of the Hyderabad investigation

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lending was not restricted to any one caste or religion, Khan, "Census of India, 1931 HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," 158–59.

[64] Salam, *The How, Why and Wherefor of the Hyderabad Struggle*, 35.

[65] ibid, 37

[66] G.D. Mehkeri, "Agricultural and Industrial Development in Hyderabad," in *Hyderabad Special Number* (Hyderabad: Hyderabad Information Bureau, 1933).

shows the maximum to be 24 percent, which is low compared to the rates usually charged in other parts of India (12 to 75 percent, and an average of 20 percent).[67]

Despite this modestly positive review, the article went on to state, '…His Exalted Highness lost no time after the completion of exhaustive enquiry in the matter, in promulgating a Regulation for the relief of indebted agriculturists and the prevention of usury in the State… with a view to protect the innocent raiyat from the clutches of rapacious moneylenders.'[68]

State-sponsored publications of this period accorded a prime place to Nizam Osman Ali Khan, as the 'maker of modern Hyderabad', whose special attention to his subjects had resulted in state intervention in public infrastructure and uplift, they claimed. The special issue also had an article titled *Hyderabad and its ruler,* in which author S.A. Vaidyanathan listed the achievements of all 'nation-building' departments and attributed it to Osman Ali Khan, his 'quickening impulse' and 'warm interest in the welfare of his subjects'. The author claimed that the ongoing world-wide depression had not affected the state because of prudent fiscal measures undertaken by the finance department, particularly the departmentalisation of finance. This system allowed for better planning of projects and expenses among departments based on revenues predicted for them. Initiatives in education (particularly the Osmania University), industry, and public health, among others, were also mentioned. 'Thanks to the keen interest evinced by His Exalted Highness the Nizam, Hyderabad had come to be rightly regarded as the model state in India and the various improvements effected by the ruler in all the departments amply illustrate the statesmanship and the breadth of vision of the ruler,' Vaidyanathan concluded.[69]

Groups such as the Osmania Engineering Graduates' Association also sought to present a picture of a state engaged in undertaking major developmental projects. In  a pamphlet on the

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[67] ibid, 47.
[68] ibid.
[69] S.A. Vaidyanathan, 'Hyderabad and Its Ruler,' in *Hyderabad Special Number* (Hyderabad: Hyderabad Information Bureau, 1933), 9.

role played by engineers in the development of Hyderabad, the association credited these professionals with working hard to 'improve the lot of their fellow beings, to bring peace and prosperity to the State and to add to it revenue'.[70] It spoke of infrastructure-building to which they had contributed, such as highways, bridges, irrigation projects, railways, and airfields. Further, with their involvement in the construction of Osmania hospital and the High Court, as well as the housing schemes for the poor and middle classes in Hyderabad city, engineers had contributed to the cultural and civilizational progress of the country, the pamphlet claimed.

Part of the motivation in producing the pamphlet was to emphasise the abilities of engineers, given that they were Osmania University graduates who were competing with those from outside the state for jobs.

> In the beginning the products of this college had to face every difficulty. As is the case with every industry which in its infancy has to find a market for its product until it establishes the quality and merit of the products, so also, the products of this home college had to prove their calibre and quality…They tried every channel they could get into and established their cadre…The Public Works Department and the Local Self Government and the district works are being manned in responsible positions by Osmania Graduates and they have in every way proved that they are not inferior to their colleagues from outside.[71]

This pamphlet was a product of a larger movement in the state that tried to argue for an allocation of state resources and opportunities based not on religion, but rather on nativity. It is in this context that the pamphlet presented the engineering developments of the Hyderabad state as achievements of native engineering graduates comparable to those of 'outsiders'. The *Mulki* movement, as it was called, emerged to counter the influx and growing power of migrants from British India, particularly graduates from Aligarh Muslim University, who had

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[70] The Osmania Engineering Graduates' Association, 'Development of Hyderabad (The Part Played by Engineers),' 1938, 1, TSAL.
[71] ibid, 12.

entrenched themselves in the state's bureaucracy.[72] With the expansion of the bureaucratic machinery and the state's developmental agenda, educated middle-class Hyderabadis—both Muslim and Hindu—began to seek entry into political and executive positions in the state, i.e., into the developmental landscape unfolding in the territory. The movement coalesced around the Asaf Jahi state, vouched loyalty to the dynasty, and sought to create conditions that allowed for a greater claim of Hyderabadis on the state machinery.

The Nizam's Subjects' League, established in 1934, was one such organisation which combined analyses of the socio-economic conditions of the state with a demand for greater space for *Mulkis*. Syed Abid Hasan, one of the signatories of the League, authored a note in which he offered an elaborate explanation of the creed of the organisation and presented a bleak picture of the state's economy. Speaking of the need for economic regeneration based on industrialisation, Hasan focussed on the widespread indebtedness of different classes of Hyderabadi society. The Jagirdari class, which normally should be well-off, was steeped in debt alongside the poor peasant; the middle-classes were suffering because government employment had been captured by non-Mulkis and the rate of unemployment in the state was so vast that 42 percent of men and 64 percent of women had no means of livelihood and were dependents. The moneylenders, mostly from the Rajputana and Marwar, had been engaged in this 'blood-sucking business' and village officers such as Patwaris, Patels, Deshpandes, and Deshmukhs were 'to a large extent responsible for the misery of the agriculturists'.[73]

Even as Hasan blamed corruption in the Cooperative Department and the inefficiency of the Agriculture department, he argued that historical factors of colonial extraction and the resultant depletion of the state were primary reasons for the state's poverty. Denial of the use of the port at Masulipatnam, imposition of tariffs on imports and exports between the

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[72] On its contemporary articulations in the post-state reorganisation context, see Chapter 4.
[73] Syed Abid Hasan, *Whither Hyderabad?: A Brief Study of Some of the Outstanding Problems of the Premier Indian State* (Madras: BN Press, 1935), 79.

dominions and British India, refusal to allow the state to expand its railway, postal, and telegraph networks, and hurdles in undertaking irrigation works were some of the ways in which the state had been impoverished, he pointed out. The inability of the state to offer tariff protection to its emerging industries had stifled industrial growth, and the government should ensure that its economy does not remain backward 'just to oblige her allies', Hasan argued.[74] He urged the Department of Commerce and Industries to take a pro-Mulki approach in its policies and said, 'The Mulki movement does not merely mean that service alone should be reserved for Mulkis. But it also means that Mulki industries should thrive and nothing that we can manufacture or provide locally should be imported from outside the Dominions.'[75]

Hasan's critical analysis, however, needs to be seen in the larger context of the aims and objects that the League set out for itself, primary among which was its commitment to the maintenance of the sovereignty of Hyderabad and the perpetuation of the Asaf Jahi dynasty. Even as it declared that it would strive for a constitutional form of government, albeit under the aegis of the Nizam, it also said that it would fight for the 'preservation of aristocracy, the Samistans and Jagirs as historical and cultural entities'. Their esteemed position in the state, however, meant that they should 'value the higher ideals of service and sacrifice'.[76] The *Mulki* movement, with its pro-dynastic preferences and succinct critiques of the structural disadvantages of the state's relationship with the colonial power, sought to shift the focus of criticism away from the supposed communal nature of the Hyderabad state to a more systemic analysis of the state's poor development. Any progress, it argued, was despite the hurdles placed by the colonial power, the entrenched power relations at the village level, and the capture of bureaucratic power by non-Mulkis. The *Mulki* movement did not quite acquire

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[74] ibid, 88.
[75] ibid.
[76] 'The Nizam's Subjects' League: Its aims, objects and creed', File no .64, AISPC papers, NMML.

the strength and popularity that it should have, particularly in the districts.[77] But through its assessment of the developmental conditions, constraints and possibilities of the Hyderabad state, it offered a perspective, radically different from the nationalist and Hindu Right ones, on the backwardness of the premier Indian state.

## Developmental State in Hyderabad

In his work on the developmental state in princely Mysore, Chandan Gowda argues that social science scholarship has either presumed that that the developmental state was a 'political entity committed to fostering economic growth' or has focused on the 'social trajectories of the discourses and technologies of development'. They have not, he claims, addressed questions of historicity: 'Under what historical conditions did "development" become an attractive option for states? How do the state actors conceive "backwardness" and "development" while elaborating policy?'[78] For Gowda, a developmental state is one that 'organises its self-identity around the concept of development'; whether this is symbolic or reflected in its actions is immaterial to its classification as a developmental state. As an instance of what activities this self-identification supports, Gowda focuses on the Bhadravati Iron Works, which received unstinted support from Mysore, despite being consistently unviable and opposed by the Government of India. This support was based on two presumptions: the idea of a production-centric model of the economy in which producing steel was considered a marker of industrial development, and the symbolic, pedagogic value the state imagined the venture could have for its subjects. The developmental state is thus

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[77] For an analysis of the Mulki movement, see Elliott, "Decline of a Patrimonial Regime: The Telengana Rebellion in India, 1946-51"; Karen Leonard, "Hyderabad – The Mulki-Non Mulki Conflict," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power – Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, ed. Robin Jeffrey (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 65–106.

[78] Chandan Gowda, ''Advance Mysore!': The Cultural Logic of a Developmental State,' *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 29 (July 17, 2010): 88.

characterised by the strong interventionist role it assumes for itself in bringing its subjects and territories into capitalist modernity.

Paying attention to the 'cultural logics' of developmental states, as Gowda terms them, is useful to understand the ways in which princely states tried to balance tradition and modernity, the former represented by customs of patronage and the latter by visible infrastructure (such as dams) and large industries. In the case of Hyderabad too, the state believed in its ability to bring progress to its peoples and undertook several measures to become modernised; it also made sure to represent its progress to the wider world.

Given that the bulk of criticism of the Asaf Jahi state focused on Muslim favouritism in the sectors of industry, agriculture, and education and blamed this for the backwardness of the state, this section will focus on these sectors, but with the aim of engaging with the systemic constraints affecting these sectors. By paying attention to the ways in which the state understood, framed, and acted to address these constraints, I will argue that the developmental state in Hyderabad sought to retain existing social structures even as it tried to advance towards capitalist modernity.

*Industrial Geographies*

For the Asaf Jahi state, the establishment of the ITF in 1929—which Lalbhai was to hail as a progressive measure—was a 'landmark' moment in its industrial history.[79] A souvenir booklet on Hyderabad, prepared for the Asian Regional Labour Conference in 1947, stated that the institution was meant to arrest the state's industrial decline and effectuate the general industrial policy of the state of encouraging modern factories as well as cottage industries. The booklet claimed that the ITF had been successful in implementing the policy as a number of large factories had been started, while cottage industries had been 'saved from

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[79] HEH The Nizam's Government, "Hyderabad-Deccan," 90.

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extinction'.[80] But with the advent of the World War II and the demands it placed on the state, it was clear within a few months, that the state's industrial growth had been far from adequate ('utter backwardness of Hyderabad in the matter of industries', the booklet said).[81] The state needed to develop its industrial potentialities rapidly and the focus of the intervention was to be on heavy chemicals, glassware, glucose, starch, casein, and plastics. A Scientific and Industrial Research Board was also established to recommend industries to be promoted, which could draw on local raw materials. Industrial laboratories were also started to coordinate research in the state. This policy decision seemed to have worked to some extent for, by 1948, when the regime surrendered to the Indian Union, there were a number of industries that were flourishing in the state. Some key industries included the Singareni Collieries Company in Warangal and Tandur, Sirpur Paper Mills at Kagaznagar, Hyderabad Gold Mines Company in Raichur, Nizam Sugar Factory in Nizamabad, Hyderabad Allwyn Metal Works at Sanatnagar in Hyderabad, Azam Jahi and Osman Shahi Mills in Warangal and Nanded, Hyderabad Construction Company in Hyderabad, and the Vazir Sultan Tobacco Company at Azamabad in Hyderabad.

However, it is to be noted that most of these state-aided industries were concentrated in Telangana. In Marathwada and Karnatic, primary industrial activity revolved around cotton textiles, which was also the state's most important product. Hundreds of cotton ginning and pressing factories were functional in these areas, but most were of a seasonal character. According to the 1941 Census report, there were 482 cotton ginning and pressing factories, out of which only sixty-one were located in Telangana and the rest spread over the cotton-growing tracts of Marathwada and Karnatic.[82] Twenty-three textile mills were functioning in the state in 1941, located mostly in Hyderabad city. Of the six large mills, one mill each was

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[80] ibid.

[81] ibid, 91

[82] Compiled from Husain, 'Census of India 1941: HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State),' 177.

located in Aurangabad, Gulbarga, Nanded, and Warangal.[83] By 1951 however, the balance seemed to have shifted—atleast in terms of cotton textile workers—in Telangana's favour with about 68.7 percent workers housed in the districts of Karimnagar, Warangal, and Nalgonda. Marathwada and Karnatic put together had more workers in the ginning and pressing factories but Telangana's districts housed the most number of workers in cotton spinning, sizing, and weaving.[84] The only other important industry in the Karnatic was the Shahabad Cement Factory in Gulbarga district which produced the famous Charminar cement. This was supplied to the railways and exported principally to Bombay, Poona, and the Southern Mahratta country. The geography of industrial spread in Hyderabad was clearly uneven—some districts benefitted much more from state largesse than others. But this uneven landscape was no different from the state of industry in other princely states or British Indian territory.

C.V. Subba Rao, studying the process of industrialisation between the years 1875 and 1948, offered the same conclusion in his review of industrial activity in the state when he said that industry in Hyderabad was 'no less backward than industry in British India'.[85] He locates the state within the princely context of the period and points out that this pattern of state intervention in industrialisation was similar to other princely states such as Mysore, Travancore, and Baroda. Unlike in British India, in princely states, the state not only provided protection to indigenous capital but also built enabling physical and financial infrastructures. Rao argues that the Asaf Jahi state had played a 'pioneering role' in encouraging technology, providing finance, and owning and managing industries in the state. This was undertaken under the rubric of 'planned development', Rao observes, and involved funding both

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[83] ibid, 176
[84] Compiled from C.K. Murthy, "Census of India, 1951: Hyderabad," Part II-B-Tables (Hyderabad (Deccan), 1953), 315.
[85] Rao, *Hyderabad: The Social Context of Industrialisation*, 120.

corporate and small-scale industrial sectors.[86] He identifies three stages in the evolution of industrial policy and state intervention in Hyderabad: the first was between the years 1870 and 1919, when key infrastructural developments including laying railway lines, expansion of commercial crop cultivation, and the proliferation of agro-based industries such as cotton ginning and pressing mills and rice and flour mills were undertaken; in the second phase between 1919 and 1939, the state created the legal, bureaucratic, technical, and financial infrastructure necessary for industrial development such as the ITF, the Commerce and Industries Department, and laws such as the Factories and Boiler Inspection Act; and in the third phase between 1939 and 1948, the state attempted to make structural changes by shifting focus away from agro-based industries to others, even as it tried to frame its interventions along the lines of planned development. Propelled by the demands of World War II, Hyderabad initiated production in chemical and machinery-based products such as machine tools, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, heavy chemicals, plastics, and synthetics. Through a combination of monopoly (of transport and energy sectors), encouragement of technology that used local resources, and financial support for private initiatives, the state managed to steer the economy towards industrial growth.

But this steering was ridden with obstacles. Rao argues that the state was bound to defend the interests of its feudal aristocracy from whom the former derived its strength. The agrarian nature of society not only constrained the demand for industrial products but also sustained precapitalist forms of surplus extraction. 'The business climate was derived from the feudal social order and the political structure based on it. In the context of a resolute defence of the old order what appears to be a modernist approach loses its meaning. Thus the process of industrialisation in a feudal social order loses its progressive connotations', Rao concluded.[87]

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[86] ibid, 37.
[87] ibid, 188.

However persuasive such conclusions on state-society relations maybe, Hyderabad, like other states of its time, could not have been an agent of radical change, unless it was incumbent for its survival. Given this, it is productive to understand in what particular ways did a princely state such as Hyderabad deal with the conflicts arising from having to retain its feudal heritage (i.e. existing power relations of caste and class) and yet aspire to advance towards a liberal, developmental state.

*Remaking Agrarian Relations*

In 1937, the Hyderabad government asked its revenue department to enquire into the state of agricultural indebtedness in its dominions. S.M. Barucha, the additional revenue secretary, surveyed 312 villages located on Diwani land to propose measures to reduce the incidence of debt among agricultural classes. The study estimated that agricultural families bore an average debt of Rs. 390, with the total debt in the countryside estimated at around Rs. 65 crores.[88] Rates of interests for loans were highest in Marathwada region (including the Karnatic areas) where dryland cultivation prevailed, with moneylenders charging rates of interest as high as 21 percent. Despite the high incidence of agricultural debt, Barucha argued that the landed cultivator was essentially solvent because the value of land was very high, about 26 times the revenue assessment.[89] However, this land value was not of much consequence as illiterate peasants caught in the vice-like grip of the moneylender had been losing lands to the non-agricultural classes. Barucha estimated that, in the surveyed villages, nearly one lakh acres of land had passed out of the hands of cultivators, who had been reduced to *kowldars* (tenants). In the entire state, it was likely that nearly one-third of cultivated land had passed out of the hands of owner-cultivators. Barucha surmised that this interest in land had grown among moneylenders and professional classes due to a gradual

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[88] S.M. Barucha, "Agricultural Indebtedness in HEH The Nizam's Dominions" (Hyderabad: HEH The Nizam's Government, 1937), 17, TSA.
[89] ibid, 14.

increase in the value of land, following the introduction of survey and settlement operations. This exercise, which had begun in the mid-nineteenth century, secured clear titles and tenures to cultivators and accorded unrestricted rights to transfer lands, he argued.

The right to sell was being widely misused as moneylenders had begun to take over large swathes of land in exchange for settlement of their loans to agriculturists. The moneylender—a category that encompassed Banias (Marwardis, Lingayats, Komtis), Pathan, and Rohilla communities—'represented the richest single class in the state and he contributes little to the exchequer of the State', Barucha claimed.[90] Based on accounts heard from ryots, he described how moneylenders cheated agriculturists of their holdings by getting them to sign on two sets of documents—a sale deed and an agreement to work as *kowldar*—while illiterate agriculturists believed they were only signing a mortgage deed. Interest on loans was often calculated without reference to previously agreed upon rates, and this ensured that the agriculturist was never able to repay the loan. Barucha also described specific practices such as Vishwas Kharidi,[91] Laoni[92], Lagwad[93], prevalent largely in Marathwada, which determined the nature of transaction between the moneylender and the debtor.[94] In many places, the moneylender was also the village middleman and shopkeeper who ensured ryots sold their produce to him and bought their necessities from his shop. In these ways and more, the moneylender ruled the village and its economy.

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[90] ibid, 19

[91] This is where the agriculturist executed a sale deed of his land in favour of the moneylender, trusting the oral agreement that the latter would return the land when the loan is repaid. Agriculturists believed it to be a mortgage but often the moneylender would not return the land, especially if its quality was good. It was prevalent mostly in Marathwada.

[92] In this mode, the cultivator promised to pay back the loan in kind at the time of harvest. But the produce that he made over to the moneylender was to be valued at less than the market value by 15 to 40 percent. It was prevalent mostly in Marathwada.

[93] In this mode, the moneylender would advance loans for weeding in the cultivation season, before sowing. Interest was charged monthly and the rates were as high as two percent per month. If the loan was not repaid in a few months' time at the time of harvest, compound interest would become applicable.

[94] The 1931 census noted that nearly seventy-one percent of the moneylenders in the state were in Marathwada. Since the region was more prosperous than Telangana, borrowing is greater here, the census noted. Khan, "Census of India, 1931 HEH The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State)," 158.

The ways in which these power relations impacted possibilities of justice in the countryside was amply demonstrated in the instances Barucha recorded in the appendix to the report. In several of them, village officers such as Patels and Patwaris were involved in grabbing lands. Sowcars had formed cartels through which they divided villages amongst each other so that the debtor could not avail of loans anywhere else except from one sowcar. If the agriculturist wanted to pay by cash rather than kind at the time of return, he often had to pay a higher amount of interest. Moneylenders, in connivance with government officials, often tampered with grain measures, to the extent that they could be forty to fifty percent in excess of the legal measures. Rohilla moneylenders, who primarily lent to the landless labouring classes in both rural and urban areas, often charged an annual interest rate even if they lent loans for a few weeks or months. The report narrated an instance of one Ganpat Rao, a small pattedar, who borrowed Rs.sixteen from Osman Khan Rohilla, and was asked to pay Rs.700 by the second year. When Rao refused to pay, he was forced to sign a document on the basis of which Osman Khan went to court, which ordered that Rao pay back the entire amount of Rs.700 in instalments. Barucha was told that Rohilla men were feared because of their tendency to use violence, which meant that evidence against them could not be gathered easily.

Many such instances cited in the appendix to the report clearly point to collusion between village officials and moneylenders, allowing them to retain and exercise caste-class power in the countryside. Despite providing this complex picture of the vicious cycle of indebtedness, in his conclusions, Barucha essentially blamed the indebted ryot for the situation. It was the profligate nature of his spending, particularly for 'unproductive' purposes such as weddings and for avoidable daily expenses such as drinking, that had led him to his current situation of landlessness, he concluded. Any measure at eliminating debt needed to ensure that the agriculturist did not borrow money and part with land. In the eventuality that he did need to

borrow, it should only be for economic purposes that yields returns. With the burden of debt vested with the agriculturist, Barucha declared that 'real salvation will come when agriculturists come to understand the value of thrift and temperance through mass education.'[95] With the problem whittled down to a behavioural issue, Barucha ignored the systemic problems of power-relations within the village, where caste and state power combined to create stifling conditions of credit for agriculturists.

Despite the unscrupulous practices of moneylenders, Barucha chose to exonerate them when he argued that their interests were legitimate and needed to be protected. In times of famine and agricultural distress, the moneylender, he said, stood between the ryot and death and this fact ought to be recognised. Since the cooperative movement and rural credit institutions were not widely prevalent, the moneylender did hold an important position. Barucha's proposal of starting debt conciliation boards where consensus could be reached on reducing debts was thus a compromise between the needs of the indebted and the importance of the moneylender. For instance, Barucha agreed that moneylenders were ready to forego parts of their debt because they had already managed to extract interest from their debtors; yet, he still insisted that moneylenders needed to be given their due despite their oppressive extractive tactics. Laws to regulate moneylending would be futile, Barucha argued, because moneylenders often devised ways to bypass the rules; negotiations for reducing loans and ensuring the agriculturist never went back to the moneylender were the only viable ways forward.

Barucha proposed that the state could invest in measures such as establishment of debt conciliation boards and cooperative societies that would attend to immediate and long term credit requirements, undertake consolidation of fragmented holdings and extension of cottage industries, regulate weights and measures and lending practices of moneylenders, and place

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[95] ibid, 30.

restrictions on land alienation. Put together, these proposed measures were meant to reduce the incidence of debt among agriculturists. But by evading power relations that pitted the caste-class interests of powerful moneylenders and village officials against illiterate agriculturists and landless labourers, these measures were bound to fail.

Barucha's recommendations led to the passage of the Moneylenders' Regulation and the Debt Conciliation Regulation later that year in 1937. The first law, applicable across the dominions and for all communities of moneylenders, capped the maximum rate of interest at nine percent per year for secured loans and twelve percent per year for unsecured loans; it forbade interest charged at compound rates as well as forcing debtors to pay any expenses the moneylender incurred in extracting his loans, and mandated that moneylenders register and obtain licenses to carry on with the business of lending. The second law allowed for the establishment of debt conciliation boards where indebted agriculturists and their moneylenders could arrive at a consensus on a reduced debt that could be paid by the former. Debt could only be collected through the produce of the agriculturist's land and not by taking over the land. This provision was to be read in conjunction with the Hyderabad Land Alienation Regulation of 1933 which was extended to the entire state in 1937.[96] This regulation was meant to strike a balance between the antagonistic interests of the agriculturists and moneylenders such that the former did not lose his lands and the latter was allowed to continue with his 'legitimate business of moneylending'.[97]

However, later investigations revealed that even agriculturists were involved in moneylending in villages and since the regulation allowed for land transfers between members of protected classes, land alienation still continued. A press communique stated:

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[96] It was earlier restricted to only Osmanabad and Aurangabad districts where large-scale land transfers had been taking place.
[97] The Information Bureau, Hyderabad, 'The Land Alienation Regulation of 1343 Fasli, 26/6/1938,' in *A Selection of Press Notes and Communiques* (The Information Bureau, HEH The Nizam's Government, 1942), 128.

It is discovered that big landlords who are in protected class frequently buy out small agriculturists and cultivators of the same class or group after lending them money at usurious rates of interests. Some of these petty agriculturists and cultivators have become *Asami-Shikmis* (tenants-at-will) or tenants of land which was originally their proprietary land, others have become landless labourers. In order to safeguard against these dangers, the big landlord i.e. paying over Rs.500 assessment, will no longer belong to the protected classes…[98]

This move created such a backlash against the government that it was forced to issue a public statement that the exclusion of big landlords was meant to prevent the creation of a class of agriculturist moneylenders 'who will prove more harmful to the petty agriculturist than the non-agriculturist money lenders in as much as being agriculturists, while lending money to their neighbours their eye is on their land'.[99] To the criticism that the rural credit market was being restricted, the communique offered a paternalistic rationale:

Government are of the opinion that this curtailment of credit will do much good in the end to the agriculturist by making him stand more upon his own legs and by compelling him to adjust his expenses according to his income, and ceasing to regard debt as an inevitable evil…It is on the growth of a changed attitude towards debt on the part of the cultivator that his ultimate salvation really lies.[100]

Citing the success of the regulation in Osmanabad and Aurangabad where land transfers had fallen and financial credit had still not taken a hit, the communique further said, 'the ryot can become self-supporting only if the temptation to get loans whenever he likes, is removed from his simple mind.'[101] The burden and responsibility of debt was, in the final analysis, thus laid on the individual agriculturist rather than on systemic conditions of poor credit systems, absence of insurance against crop failures, and lack of land reforms. This way of seeing the agriculturist also meant treating him as only an economic agent rather than as social beings who participated in the moral economy of the village.

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[98] ibid, 129

[99] The Information Bureau, Hyderabad, 'Land Alienation Regulation Provisions Explained, 28/7/1938,' in *A Selection of Press Notes and Communiques* (The Information Bureau, HEH The Nizam's Government, 1942), 133.

[100] ibid, 134-5.

[101] ibid, 135

In 1940, the government appointed another committee to study the possibility of introducing a tenancy legislation in the dominions. In Hyderabad, the tenancy question had another dimension with the 'difficult question about alienated villages, where even hereditary cultivators were sometimes considered tenants-at-will' needing consideration.[102] Survey and settlement operations had not taken place in about 1,200 of the jagir villages; it was necessary then, the Revenue Department felt, to settle 'the question of status, rights, and liabilities of cultivators' in these areas.[103] The committee found that oral agreements on *kowls* (tenures) were far more numerous than written ones, that the duration of the *kowls* never exceeded more than two to three years, and that dry crop land was hardly ever manured because it was expensive and neither the *kowldar* nor the *pattedar* (owner) had any incentive to invest in them. The committee concluded that the reason for short leases of land was because the pattedar did not want to create semi-permanent or permanent tenancy rights for the kowldar. 'He clings to the land, as possession and ownership of land give prestige and power in the village; almost everywhere wealth and power of an agriculturist are measured in terms of acres of land and the number of cattle', the report declared.[104] Lands given out on rent makes the 'pattedars and owners of the land lazy and inefficient', it added.[105]

The committee found that in most of the forty-two villages it surveyed, village officers had acquired large acres of land as pattedars and also functioned as moneylenders which gave them greater access to acquiring land. Most of the officers were *deshpandiyas* (belonging to the Brahmin caste and whose traditional duties included keeping accounts of land revenue) who owned lands in more than one village. As absentee landlords, they hired *gumashtas* or officiators to oversee tenancies, while some of them even practised as pleaders in courts. The

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[102] Revenue Department, HEH Nizam's Government, 'Report of the Tenancy Committee' (Hyderabad: HEH The Nizam's Government, 1940), 1, British Library.
[103] ibid
[104] ibid, 6
[105] ibid, 7.

154

committee stated that this stranglehold of the village officers on the rural economy could be broken only when village officers were made transferable and the undue advantage they gained from inheriting their *watans* (posts) was eliminated.[106]

In the case of alienated villages or jagirs, the committee found that jagirdars manipulated records during settlement operations and entered hereditary owners as tenants-at-will and themselves as landowners. 'There being no supervision or scrutiny by government officers of the village papers of alienated villages, it can easily be imagined that an unscrupulous agent of a holder of alienated village could manipulate the registers placed before survey officers,' the report said.[107] In alienated villages, the committee found, jagirdars often took *nazaranas* (tribute) to grant pattedari rights, for individuals to inherit their own family property or to sell and mortgage their own lands. *Nazaranas* were a frequent source of debt for agriculturists because they needed to borrow this money and invariably did so at high rates of interest.

The state also recognised that jagirs had become little islands of authority as it had ceded too much power to jagirdars, and these areas had been out of its developmental ambit. The government often issued reminders stating that jagirdars were not property owners and they were simply grantees of land revenue, existing at the pleasure of the Nizam. Yet it was loath to exercise greater control over these private enclaves. For instance, during bad harvests in May 1934, the Nizam granted remissions to suffering farmers in the Diwani areas and called upon jagirdars to do the same. While some obliged, many did not. The Nizam then had to give an explicit order to the errant jagirdars to grant remissions.[108]

In Diwani villages, where the Hyderabad Land Revenue Act was in force, the Asami-Shikmidars (tenants at will) remained without effective protection of the law. The act allowed

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[106] ibid, 7-8.
[107] ibid, 10.
[108] The Information Bureau, "Ruler's Solicitude for Jagir Ryots," in *A Selection of Press Notes and Communiques* (The Information Bureau, HEH The Nizam's Government, 1942), 142–43.

for tenants to claim protection from eviction only if they could prove that they had been in continuous possession of their cultivated lands for twelve years or more. However, since lease agreements were, more often than not, oral and not offered for more than a year or two, this provision could almost never be used by the Asami-Shikmidars. This uncertainty over tenure of cultivation had affected agricultural productivity severely and the tenancy committee argued that '…if early steps for giving adequate relief to this class are not taken no improvements in land can be effected, rack-renting will not be stopped as pressure on the land grows every year and the condition of tenancy will further deteriorate.'[109] The committee recommended adopting a tenancy legislation that could benefit the Asami-Shikmidars, whose numbers were as high as 40 percent of cultivating owners. The Bombay Tenancy Act was 'the best model' for the state to adopt, not only because land revenue systems in the two regions were similar but also because 'it is a just and mild enough measure which makes an attempt to hold the scales even between the landlord and the tenant by safeguarding the legitimate rights of both.'[110] Any new legislation in this regard should 'harmonise' and not 'widen the gulf' between the landlord and the tenant, the report argued.

Strangely though, the draft bill proposed by the committee only reduced the duration of cultivation from twelve to six years for an Asami-Shikmi to claim protection. Given that the report had conceded that agreements were oral and for not more than a year, it is not clear how this measure was envisaged as a protective one. It did make it mandatory that lease agreements be given out for not less than ten years at a time. However, since agreements were most often oral, implementing this provision was difficult. The committee recommended that the same protective measures should be applied to tenants in alienated villages as well, with the added proviso that settlement operations must be completed forthwith in all these villages and care must be taken to ensure that this process did not lead

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[109] ibid, 24
[110] ibid

to loss of land rights for hereditary cultivators. The Hyderabad government accepted all the recommendations of the committee and passed the Hyderabad Asami Shikmis Act in 1944. Years later, when the Agrarian Reforms Committee presented its report on the state of agriculture in 1949, it acknowledged that the step was an 'important move in the right direction'. But it also said: 'The subsequent history of the Asami Shikmis Act shows that the high intentions were defeated by the intransigence of the landlords, the ignorance of tenants and the failure of the Government to implement its provisions.'[111] The Act ended up affecting tenants adversely in some cases with long-standing tenants evicted, leases given out only for a year and landlords claiming increasing acres of land for personal cultivation. The absence of an implementation machinery was a key reason for the act's failure, the reforms committee said. Laws such as the Asami Shikmis Act, Moneylenders Act, and the Debt Conciliation Act, it concluded, were 'tragedies of good intentions miscarried'.[112]

This brief overview of the Asaf Jahi state's engagement with agriculture is clear evidence of a regime invested in modernising agriculture and consolidating agricultural productivity. By the 1940s, the state was aware that the related problems of absentee landlordism, uncertainty of tenures for tenants, increasing indebtedness, fragmentation of holdings, and large-scale transfers of lands had together created a countryside that was being impoverished. It even recognised, to a limited extent, the hold of caste-class power relations that dominated agriculture with village officers and landlords (often the same, and also belonging to Brahmin and dominant castes) lording over Dalits and tribals (most often landless tenants).

While systemic causes of low agricultural productivity were identified correctly, the state chose to focus on individual factors, such as the agriculturists' extravagant tendencies, as primary causes for indebtedness. While individual farmers were to learn to be thrifty, the

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[111] N.Madhava Rau et al., 'Report of the Agrarian Reforms Committee' (Hyderabad, 1949), 111.
[112] ibid, 199.

slew of legislations introduced were supposed to create imperatives for lawful behaviour by landlords and moneylenders. Its desire to maintain harmony even while legislating on these issues meant that landlords and moneylenders were not held to account and their rights for oppressive extraction were considered legitimate and equal to the livelihood rights of tenants, small farmers, and landless labourers.

*Languages of Education*

The range of charges of communalism and backwardness made against the state in Hyderabad also focused on its educational policies and systems. In particular, its implementation of the policy regarding medium of instruction was most scrutinised. The state, acknowledging the plurality of languages spoken in its dominions, had decreed that it would provide primary education in the dominant vernacular language of the area where each school was located. In doing so, it confronted the larger colonial thrust towards mass education in English, as well as accepting the conventional wisdom that teaching offered in a student's mother-tongue would be the most effective way of imparting education. Schools were, then, meant to offer Telugu, Marathi, Kannada, and Urdu as mediums of instruction. In reality, as it panned out, Urdu medium schools were more numerous than any other vernacular school, sparking charges of Muslim favoritism. Further, because options for secondary and university education were mostly in Urdu, non-native speakers either dropped out of school or preferred to study in Urdu primary schools to ensure smooth continuity. When confronted with its non-fulfilment of duties, the state often pleaded helplessness, citing absence of trained teachers and the financial drain of running parallel classes in Urdu and English from secondary stage upwards. The establishment of Osmania University with Urdu as the medium of instruction was also seen in some quarters as further evidence of state's bias against its majority subjects.

Yet, the state's educational initiatives need greater treatment than simply being assessed for a putative communal approach. They offer insights into its modernising ambitions and the centrality of education to this enterprise. Akbar Hydari, who guided the state for decades as the President of the Executive Council, set the agenda for education and the shape it needed to take for decades to come. The Committee for Reorganisation of Education in the Hyderabad State, comprising A.H. Mackenzie, the pro-vice chancellor of the Osmania University, and Fazl Muhammad Khan, Director of Public Instruction, drew inspiration from Hydari's convocation address at the Punjab University a decade before, when it set out its inquiry in its 1936 report. In that speech, Hydari had focused on tailoring the education system to meet the country's needs, rather than generating an endless stream of degree holders.

> …as India stands to-day, her need is for trained agriculturists rather than government clerks; for trained businessmen rather than clerks; trained engineers, doctors, manufacturers, artists, craftsmen, blacksmiths, weavers, potters, almost anything rather than clerks, because already the supply of trained, or at any rate qualified, clerks is enormously in excess of the demand; while the productive work of the country is largely in untrained and therefore relatively inefficient hands. And let it be remembered that it is not to the interests of a State or nation to be constantly increasing the number of officials, and thus to be forever complicating its administrative machinery and increasing the cost of mere administration.[113]

His proposal for restructuring the system included making each of the three stages of education—primary, secondary (including middle and high), and university—self-sufficient, such that if a student left after each of these stages, he could find employment in a field commensurate with his education. The primary stage, renamed Essential Course, would consist of subjects of 'primary importance – subjects, the knowledge of which is useful to every citizen of the state'.[114] This, Hydari said, would require expanding the breadth of what

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[113] Akbar Hydari quoted in A.H. Mackenzie and Fazl Muhammad Khan, "Report of the Sub-Committee for Reorganisation of Education in the Hyderabad State - Appendices" (Hyderabad-Deccan: Government Central Press, 1936), 36.
[114] ibid, 39.

is taught in primary schools to include even those subjects otherwise taught in middle and high schools. Education at this stage, Hydari proposed, must also include practical training in 'agriculture, gardening, cottage industries (if they are in the districts), arts and crafts (if they are in the city)'.[115] This would constitute a complete education for those wishing to enter the workforce after this stage, he stated. If the student displayed aptitude and desire for further study, then he could join the vocational high school, which could train him in the arts, engineering, medical sciences, law, and in government services. Each of these courses needed to be tailored so that it could produce qualified individuals who could find employment at the lower end of their expertise domains and could do so without spending too much time and money on education. At the final stage of the university, only those students 'who long really and truly for the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, a class which is essential to the very life of the university' should be admitted, Hydari said.[116]

The reorganisation committee took some of his suggestions and recommended that practical courses in industrial, commercial and agricultural courses should be started at the higher secondary stage, should students choose to pursue vocational education. Efforts of the state must be directed towards preparing courses that can offer such training. Exams at the end of the ninth and twelfth year of education could determine which students were allowed to move onto the next stage. Finally, dividing schools into urban and rural, the committee recommended that English should be made mandatory in the former and optional in the rural. Both types of schools should have a common curriculum in Indian languages, history, geography, and mathematics as well as compulsory manual training, it said. Agriculture could be substituted with manual training in rural schools.

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[115] ibid.
[116] ibid, 42.

With regard to the medium of instruction, the committee recommended that multiple languages should be used to teach in primary schools. From the secondary stage onwards, Urdu should be the medium, and English was to be allowed only in particular cases. Oddly enough, the committee did not dwell on the difficulties that students could face once they pass the primary stage having studied in the vernacular languages of Telugu, Marathi, and Kannada. That this restricted opportunities for pursuing education for those not well-versed in Urdu, a large number of whom were first-generation learners and thus inhabited spaces of illiteracy, was not acknowledged. That it provided students with an Urdu-speaking background (which did not necessarily translate to only Muslim students) an advantage over other students was also not given consideration. Thus, although primary education was made universally free, the number of primary schools rapidly expanded, and the state spent crores of rupees on education annually, literacy rates hardly improved.

The reorganization schema reflected a particular worldview regarding education: that its pursuit was meant to increase efficiency and productivity of individuals and thus contribute to the revenue and needs of the nation. To this end, it believed students could be neatly divided into those fit to pursue vocational and literary studies. Education here was not envisaged as offering to its participants any form of upward mobility in terms of moving out of traditional occupations, of the oppressive village for lower castes, or even for better incomes. Even with the slow transformation of the economy towards commercial and industrial sectors, education's purpose was to train individuals to fit these new jobs, requiring varying degrees of skills, but mostly at the lower end of the scale. Only a select few were meant to study further to acquire higher skills or 'pursue knowledge'. Given the highly stratified nature of society in the state, the caste-class matrix that defined this opportunity was not acknowledged. Further, although the state recognised the lapse into illiteracy, it refused to take into account that economic and social conditions in the countryside also needed to be

161

transformed enough to make literacy a mandatory skill to navigate life. The tightly controlled social structure of the village was rarely subject to scrutiny. The only concession to socio-historical oppression was in the case of the depressed classes, for whom the state began special schools and hostels as well as a Rs. one crore fund that could offer financial aid to pursue education.

This particular way of analysing the world, i.e., from a top-down perspective, where individuals were understood as subjects that ought to be modernised for the sake of the nation's progress, is characteristic of the epistemic edifice of the developmental state of the period. In this schema, education was meant to raise people out of illiteracy so that they could behave as better economic agents, even as they remained in traditional occupations and spaces.[117] Late into the 1940s, the Hyderabad state's educational policies were not driven so much by communal compulsions of maintaining Muslim superiority as by the highly interventionist role it assumed for itself in matters of its subjects' welfare. However, questions of entry and access to and continuance in education, which were also questions of social power, were sought to be solved through technocratic schemes and big-ticket projects.

Osmania University is a case in point. As the first university to undertake all teaching in a vernacular, in this case Urdu, its establishment drew accolades from across the country. The university's translation bureau which was involved in the preparation of teaching and reading materials in sciences and arts into Urdu was a remarkable enterprise, as Kavita Datla has shown in her work. By paying special attention to the Muslim intellectuals at the helm of

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[117] This was a long-standing strand of thinking among the bureaucratic elite of the state, for an earlier report on education in the 1920s had pitched for a full-fledged focus on agriculture and manual labour: 'It is desirable, therefore, that from the very start all boys should receive some form of manual training which shall, if possibly, give them some bias towards their hereditary mode of life, and that, if possible even the literary instruction which they receive should be such as to retain and increase their interest in the same direction. It follows that since agriculture is the vocation of the vast majority of the inhabitants of the State, the curriculum of the primary schools in rural areas should be so devised as to encourage them to return from schools to their parents' occupation.' Quoted in Mackenzie and Khan, "Report of the Sub-Committee for Reorganisation of Education in the Hyderabad State - Appendices," 8.

Osmania University and the ideals and desires they sought to actualise through it, Datla persuasively argues that the effort was to create an Urdu that could be central to a secular future for India.[118]

The representational benefits for the state from the establishment of the Osmania University are also worth examining. In an advertising supplement to the periodical *Great Britain and the East,* the state was presented as 'Progressive Hyderabad' and its major achievements in the fields of education, industry, agriculture, and other fields were prominently highlighted. The Osmania University was one such showcase piece, with the claim being made that neighbouring territories were attempting to follow the example of this institution. 'The university buildings are fast nearing completion, and the buildings already completed harmoniously blend the ease of modernity with the art of the past. The university library contains 39,528 volumes. The translation bureau has coined 40,273 technical words and has completed the translation of 276 volumes from other languages', it said.[119] These were noteworthy achievements indeed and the establishment of the university remains a novel experiment in rethinking vernacular education. The Osmania University was meant to represent an indigenous modernity that a native state had set underway, allowing it to claim the status of a modern and progressive state. Yet, despite the very generous grants that the university received, it was unable to effect any real change in a caste-class stratified society, for entry to this place was dependent on an individual's social capital. The social structures within the state thus restricted the university's potential as an agent of mass change.

In this section, I have presented the ways in which the Asaf Jahi state understood the systemic problems within its territory and have analysed the solutions that it proposed to deal with them. I have argued that the reasons for its failure to address the problems did not lie in

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[118] Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*.
[119] 'Hyderabad State,' *Great Britain and the East*, October 28, 1937, Supplement edition, 4.

its communal predilections; rather it was the specific inability of the developmental state, committed to technocratic solutions, to acknowledge and address power relations that operated at the level of the society. Promoting industrial advancement without attention to geographies of development, seeking solutions to agricultural problems of indebtedness through behavioural and legislative changes, and finally investing in education without substantially addressing questions of access or social capital undercut the state's efforts at effecting transformations of its subjects and territory.

## Spaces of imagination, movement, and violence

Paying attention to the discursive efforts by advocates and critics of Hyderabad bring to focus the spatial imaginations and relationships that informed these efforts. State discourses focused on the creation of a geo-body of a Hyderabadi nation, which was in turn embedded within the larger Deccan region. If the developmental efforts of the state sought a transformation of its subjects and regions towards modernity, its counterpart in cultural modalities were history-writing efforts that attempted to yoke the Asaf Jahi state into the civilizational histories of the Deccan region. Both sought to create an unbroken, singular histories of the state.

Anti-state discourses of the Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, and the HSC worked to create a unified Hindu public in the state linked to the imagined Hindu nation. In this effort, vernacular identities of the regions of Marathwada (including the Karnatic) and Telangana were crucial mobilisational factors. The period from the 1930s in the history of Hyderabad witnessed a clash of ideas around the Hyderabadi nation, particularly on questions of whether the state could even claim nationhood and if its subjects felt a belonging to this nation. It is pertinent to mention that the idea of a Hyderabad nation as distinct from the Indian nation was not articulated explicitly till at least 1947 when the question of princely states and their

accession emerged due to Britain's imminent departure. Until then, even though there was an acknowledgement of a relationship between Hyderabad and India, the exact nature of this relationship remained amorphous.

*The Imagined Space of the Deccan*

'Cultural logics' of developmental states are host also to spatial imaginations of the nations. Drawing on histories to establish long lineages for themselves has been a mode of nation-making for states, and in the case of Hyderabad, these efforts were directed at situating the Asaf Jahi state within the larger region of the Deccan. Although the territorial extent of the Asaf Jahi state was circumscribed to a small portion of the Deccan, the state was considered to be the inheritor of the legacy of the Deccan, both by itself and by others such as K.M. Panikkar. In 1936, Panikkar, who was then the Foreign Minister of Patiala state, wrote that Hyderabad represented 'the continuity of the national tradition of the Moghuls, involving as it does a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim culture.' It was the space where a Deccan nationalism, which could form the nucleus of the union between the South and the North, could grow. Further, 'with ample resources and a large area and a unified system of Government', Hyderabad, Panikkar said, could be the site where plans for India's 'economic regeneration' could be worked out.[120] Panikkar also stated that the 'true mission' of Hyderabad, which it had inherited from the Mughal empire, was to create a model for national unity. If the state could unite the Andhras, the Marathas and the rest of the cultural units of the Dominions, it stood to achieve what only the Mughals before them had managed to forge, i.e. a non-communal state and a common Indian culture. Unless this 'Deccan synthesis which unites the mind of the South and the North (was) evolved', India's unity itself would be impossible as

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[120] 'True Mission of Hyderabad: Link between North and South,' *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 1, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

the two parts would remain distinct, he said.[121] The sustainability of the unity of India as a nation itself was premised, for Panikkar, on the role played by the state in Hyderabad in encouraging a syncretic culture.

For the Asaf Jahi state in the 1940s, a growing confidence about its importance in the Indian polity formed a key context for its exploration of the Deccan. In his presidential address to the Deccan History section of the Indian History Congress in 1941, Nawab Ali Yawar Jung Bahadur, constitutional affairs secretary in Hyderabad government, provided some chronological snippets from Deccan's history. He started with the Andhras, who, he said, came from a tribe living in the region in about 500 BC. 'While professing Brahmenism (sic), the Andhras were more than tolerant towards Buddhists. Villages and lands were granted for their maintenance and along with the Brahmanic worship of Shiva, the air of the Deccan was filled with chants of groups of Buddhists inhabiting the caves which overlooked the lonely, wooded gorges like those below Ellora today', he said.[122] The next key moment in the Deccan was the reign of the Rashtrakutas, which also marked the beginning of the history of Muslims in the Deccan. Arab traders with interests in commerce and trade in the eighth and ninth centuries found encouragement and patronage with the Rashtrakutas.[123] This was four centuries before the 'Khilji invasion'. Situating the history of Muslims in the Deccan in the reign of the Rashtrakutas was meant to dispel the notion that Muslims had arrived in the Deccan as foreign invaders. It also foregrounded an economic (rather than political) history in which Muslims participated actively in shaping the social and economic life of the region as well as a productive relationship between a Hindu dynasty and Muslim traders.

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[121] ibid.

[122] Nawab Ali Yawar Jung Bahadur, 'Presidential Address (Deccan History),' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 5 (1941): 551.

[123] In history writing efforts promoted by the state, the Rashtrakutas were highly regarded. A booklet produced in 1945 had this to say: 'Politically, the first place of honour can be assigned to Rashtrakuta imperialism as Deccani power for its penetration into the heart of India and for influencing the politics of Northern India.' HEH The Nizam's Government, "Hyderabad-Deccan" (Hyderabad, 1947), 16

A key aspect of Ali Yawar's narrative was the intricate relationship between Deccan and Delhi, a relationship of both conquest and contribution. For instance, although the rise of the Bahamani dynasty meant that 'Deccan was lost to Delhi for three centuries and a half', Ali Yawar stated, Bahamanis and subsequent dynasties were 'great lovers of art and architecture' and their courts 'fountains of scholarly patronage'.[124] During Aurangzeb's rule, Aurangabad was transformed into a garden city, a centre of cultural activity (producing the first poets of the Urdu language Vali and Siraj) and, a hub for new industries such as cloth made of gold and embroidered silk. By highlighting such instances, Ali Yawar's account emphasised the ways in which Deccani culture had been enriched from its contacts with Delhi.

Turning his attention to the Asaf Jahi dynasty, he argued that despite wars and fights over succession, the rulers always concerned themselves with administration.

> The system of administration itself was from the time of the first Asaf Jah based upon a degree of toleration which left the management of land revenue and finance in the hands of Hindu nobles. Vast grants were made and so much did Hindus identify themselves with the new rulers that they took pride in being called Asaf Jahis. One of our unique features is the existence in many towns and villages of mosques and temples adjacent to each other and of over a hundred Muslim institutions at least which are managed by Hindus who receive grants.[125]

Given that this speech was delivered in 1942, Ali Yawar was possibly responding to the charges of communalism made against the state by presenting this picture of harmony between the two major religions of the state and the dominant position of Hindus in the economy.[126] Centuries of living together amicably had created 'common objects of pride' in

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[124] The Bahamanis were also accorded importance in the region's history as the first nationalists of Deccan. Their ancestors arrived in the Deccan as Muhammad Tughlaq's centurian nobels and were posted in charge of revenue collection and law and order. Within half a century of their stay in the Deccan, they 'identified themselves completely with the local traditions and developed a high sense of patriotism in their new home.' This was the first articulation of the Deccani sentiment/nationalism and it was this binding factor that led them to fight off the fierce onslaught of the Delhi imperialists and eventually establish the Bahamani kingdom. ibid, 19.

[125] Nawab Ali Yawar Jung Bahadur, 'Presidential Address (Deccan History),' 554.

[126] In some publications, the harmonious relationship between Hindus and Muslims in the Deccan was dated back to the Bahamanis. 'The local Hindu population was so much reconciled to the new Government that they

mythology, literature, architecture and culture. This heritage 'belongs to one and all of us equally', he said, and was the basis for Mulki or Deccani sentiment. This sentiment was 'a quality, something more than mere local patriotism, of state consciousness which, far more than in any other Indian state, you will find influencing our thoughts and ambitions'.[127] In Ali Yawar's articulations, the Asaf Jahi state considered itself the successor of Deccan dynasties, not in terms of physical territory, but to the ideas, cultures, and sentiments that flowered in the region.

By 1945, a Deccan History Association had been formed in the state with the aim of encouraging research into the region's history and culture and to act as a platform to bring together individual research being conducted on the region. One of the activities of the association was to hold a biennial conference, in which papers from three periods—ancient (upto 1294), medieval (1294-1724), and modern (1724 onwards) were to be presented. Speaking at the inauguration of the first conference organised to deliberate on different aspects of the history of the region, Ali Yawar clarified that a study of the Deccan was not a means to 'encourage parochialism or to forget our sense of proportion or perspective'. The region may have had its peculiarities and its varieties, its chief characteristics may have been its 'separateness in the midst of geographical unity, isolation in the midst of invasion'. But the purpose of studying the Deccan was to allow for a 'proper, deeper integration of the history of the Deccan with the history of India'.[128] Nawab Mahdi Yar Jung, former education Member in the government, argued in his speech that the region's geographical position justified its claim of being the core of India, and 'it was thus only natural that it should have

regarded the kingdom as their own and never lagged behind in sharing the responsibilities of Government side by side with their Mussalman brethren. Some of the important departments like Revenue and Accountancy were left entire in charge of the Hindus. These were the enduring qualities which won for the Bahmani constitution a permanent place in the Deccani culture. It survived even the extinction of Bahamanides and guided the later kingdoms, founded by the Mohammadans as well as the Maharathas. HEH The Nizam's Government, "Hyderabad-Deccan," 19.
[127] Nawab Ali Yawar Jung Bahadur, 'Presidential Address (Deccan History),' 556.
[128] 'Proceedings of the Deccan History Conference: First (Hyderabad) Session' (HEH Nizam's Government, 1945), 63, Telangana State Archives Library (TSAL).

become the home of many races in early, medieval, and modern times.'[129] The Nizam, in his message to the conference, stated that the history of the Deccan was a miniature version of the history of India and that studies of the region should move beyond mapping the rise and fall of dynasties to studying 'the life of the people at different epochs'.[130] Imagined thus as a social and cultural space, the Deccan region was seen as hosting a rich civilisation, far exceeding the limits of understanding provided through dynastic histories. The Asaf Jahi state was, by implication, not simply a state but an integral part of this civilisation. History-writing efforts of the period, promoted by the state, sought to foreground the Deccan as a spatial and historical entity, distinct from the North and integral to Indian history.[131] Through the establishment of an unbroken chronology and by emphasising a distinctive culture emerging from this long history, the attempt was to create a sense of belonging, identification, and even nationalism, whose locus was the Deccan and the Hyderabadi nation.

*Hyderabad and the Hindu Nation*

These efforts at creating a distinct space of the Hyderabadi nation encountered challenges in two ways: the discursive claims that Hyderabad was an integral *and* subordinate entity in the Indian (Hindu) nation and the long-standing networks of relationships that people within the state had with those outside, particularly in other areas of the Deccan. These relationships acted counter to the aggregating impulses of the Hyderabadi nation and instead pulled it away

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[129] ibid, 56.

[130] ibid, 55.

[131] Datla, in her work, focuses on history-writing projects undertaken in the Osmania University around Islam and India. Through a study of Tarikh-I Hind and Tarikh-I Islam, she argues that authors of these texts 'attempted to create novel narratives of their own past that both engaged and criticised the scholarship being produced in Europe and, in the case of the history of India, explicitly engaged historical writing and nationalist imaginaries in other Indian vernaculars.' Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*, 83. Datla also listed some of the distinctive aspects of the four-volume History of India, authored by Sayyid Hashmi Faridabadi: 1. Studying India's history itself was problematic because 'the subcontinent lacked a cohesive and continuous political history (99); 2. A study of the history of the country should begin from south India for it 'might retrieve the foundational elements of the Indian past' (100); 3. India's history was 'one of the arrival and sedimentation of foreign peoples, Dravidians and Aryans, North and South Indians, Hindus and Muslims – all had their origins elsewhere' (101)

towards their vernacular counterparts outside the territory of the Asaf Jahi state, i.e., Marathwada and the Karnatic towards Maharashtra and Telangana towards Andhra.

Anti-state discourses from the period of the 1930s were often dismissed by the government as the work of outsiders and one that had no traction with Hyderabadis themselves. In the case of the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha, two organisations that worked closely together in the case of Hyderabad and raised strongly the matter of 'Hindu subjugation' in the state, this conclusion was true to some extent. Units of the Hindu Mahasabha in Poona and Sholapur in Bombay Presidency and Nagpur in the Central Provinces were actively involved in the 'Bhaganagar struggle', as they termed it.[132] During the 1938 Satyagraha, the Mahasabha's branches started the Bhaganagar Nishastra Pratikar Mandal to coordinate the 'civil resistance movement' in the state. Batches of volunteers, also called civil resisters, were sent from these cities regularly into Hyderabad to offer satyagraha. The Hindu Mahasabha documents give the impression of a large number of motivated Hindus from across the country travelling to Hyderabad for the rights of their co-religionists.[133] Writing in *The Hindu Outlook,* V.D. Savarkar, the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, alleged that the Nizam state was determined to destroy Hindus as a religious, cultural, and political entity and turn the whole state Muslim. Drawing a supposedly common picture of the state of affairs in Hyderabad, he said: '…every dawning day brought news of Moslem riots, assaults, looting of Hindu bazars, murders of Hindu leaders, dishonouring, kidnapping, harassing of Hindu women, forced conversion of hundreds of Hindus to Islam. The whole atmosphere was rent with the shrieks of the tyrannized Hindus in the Moslem State.'[134]

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[132] Among Hindu Right circles, it was believed that Hyderabad was called Bhaganagar until the Qutub Shahi dynasty took over the region.

[133] In a letter to M.G. Chitnavis, V.D. Savarkar wrote appreciatively of the large numbers of volunteers that the Nagpur centre had been sending to continue the Satyagraha in the state. He claimed that the movement had generated enough traction to have volunteers mobilised from as far as Delhi, Agra, Behar and Sind. V.D. Savarkar to M.G. Chitnavis, n.d., File no. 73 (J), M.G. Chitnavis papers, NMML.

[134] V.D. Savarkar, 'The Hindu Civil Disobedience Movement in Nizam State: A Summary of Events that led to it', The Hindu Outlook, 30 November 1938, S.No.18, Printed Material, M.G. Chitnavis Papers, NMML.

The Arya Samaj also propagated similar sentiments against the state and Muslims, across the country. The main centre for its agitation was Sholapur on the borders of the state and a key publication was the *Vaidik Sandesh*, also published in Sholapur, which carried extensive material against Muslims, atrocities against Aryas, and the cowardice of the Hyderabad Hindus. Vindictive speeches by preachers were recorded by the Hyderabad government to prove the communal nature of the Arya Samaj. One such speech by an Arya Samajist preacher called for the molestation of Muslim women as retaliation for what supposedly happened with Hindu women. This unnamed preacher also stated, 'Nizam's state should not exist in India. There should be Hindu Raj in India. There cannot be a Muslim King. We should collect subscriptions, be united, and carry on propaganda against the Muslims. We have to secure the throne of the Nizam within six months.'[135]

Manu Bhagavan, in analysing the intellectual self-construction of the Hindu Right, argues that the writings of its leaders in the period of the 1930s and 1940s sought to link Hindu populations, of Kashmir and Hyderabad in particular, 'bringing them together to create a grand, Hindu public space'.[136] This motivation was evident in the 1938 satyagraha campaign pursued by the Mahasabha.[137] This 'civil resistance movement' was productive, for it furthered the movement of creating a pan-Indian Hindu public. Commenting on 'how much good' the satyagraha campaign had done to the 'Hindu Sanghatan movement', Savarkar said in a letter to Chitnavis,

> I am convinced that of all items of practical, active and fighting programmes, none could have been better advised than the Nizam civil resistance movement – neither the repeal of Arms Act nor National militia. They too will come up in their relative

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[135] The speech was delivered by a Baldeo, an Arya Samajist speaker on 29 March 1938. 'Selections from Arya Samajist Speeches and Preachings', Annexure I in *Arya Samaj in Hyderabad*, S. No.18, Printed Material, M.G. Chitnavis Papers, NMML.

[136] Manu Bhagavan, 'Princely States and the Hindu Imaginary: Exploring the Cartography of Hindu Nationalism in Colonial India,' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 3 (August 2008): 893.

[137] On this satyagraha, see Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948*, 55–87.

sequence. But the Nizam Civil Resistance movement launched by us was rightly given the first place by the Hindu Mahasabha as a fighting programme.[138]

The Hyderabad agitation was thus drawn into the larger Hindu Right movement taking place across India, even as the take-over of the state was cast as integral to the reclamation of Hindu self-respect. The Hindu Right was successful to the extent that it sharply divided the two communities, rendering the possibility of a Hyderabadi nation, over time, defunct.

Even the HSC was not immune to the influences of the Hindu Right and the close collusion of the HSC with communal Hindu organisations had been the subject of Padmaja Naidu's letter to Gandhi in 1938. In this letter, Naidu was uniformly critical of both Hindu and Muslim communal organisations, the State Government, and the HSC. Of the last, Naidu stated that the men at the helm of the organisation had been conducting themselves irresponsibly without paying attention to the 'delicate relations' between Hindus and Muslims; that this 'carelessness' had alienated Muslims and the Depressed Classes in the State; and finally that the 'original founders' of the HSC were all men with open association with communal or largely Hindu organisations. Naidu declared: '…even if such an organisation cannot be proved to be communal in the Government's sense of the word, meaning that it is deliberately shutting out other communists and is working against them, it does still remain communal in my sense of the word so long as it does not believe it is necessary to make every effort possible to win at least the trust if not active co-operation of other communities.'[139] Upon receiving such reports, the INC, under Gandhi's directions, announced an unconditional suspension of "anti-Hyderabad activities" in December 1938.[140]

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[138] Savarkar to Chitnavis, n.d., M.G. Chitnavis papers.
[139] Padmaja Naidu to Gandhi, 25 November 1938, File no.1, Subject files, Padmaja Naidu Papers, NMML.
[140] According to Benichou, this announcement possibly followed reports from the British resident at Hyderabad and Padmaja Naidu and interventions by industrialist G.D. Birla and MIM leader Bahadur Yar Jung. The INC, he argues, feared that the agitation 'could rapidly become communally rather than politically based.' Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948*, 68.

Other efforts were also made to counter this propaganda of alienating Hindu subjects from the state. The most important line of attack was to establish the organisations as flagrantly communal and much energy was directed towards this endeavour and the trope of the outsider was crucial to delegitimise the anti-state propaganda. Both people and organisations indulging in such propaganda, it was argued, came from outside the state and had no traction within the state itself. Referring to the 1938 Satyagraha, Abdus Salam in *The Hyderabad Struggle* asked why funds had to be raised in British India and volunteers transported from Punjab, UP, Central Provinces, Karnatak and Maharashtra.

> What did the 'oppressed' and 'repressed' Hindus of the State do for themselves? It was strange indeed that a community, more than twelve million strong, said to be groaning under religious, civil, economic and other disabilities, could contain itself and look passively on as disinterested spectators, while its 'sympathisers' were raising a hornet's nest in its midst![141]

The British Indian press was also held to be a major player in fanning propaganda against the state. In his letter in the Bombay Sentinel, C. Rama Rao stated that Hindus in Hyderabad were being misled by communalists from British India.

> From British India they start newspapers and do all sorts of malicious propaganda against the Government. Quite recently some two Arya Samajists made very inflammatory speeches which hurt very much the religious susceptibilities of Muslims. This is what is going on Hyderabad these days, and they are not doing anything new – except what their brethren had done in British India.[142]

If Rao blamed communalists from British India, Salam alleged that the 'insidious propaganda' of the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha had been supported by editorial commentaries of the nationalist press and Indian Congress leaders, outside of the state, who were influenced by the anti-state propaganda. Some like Mohammed Siddeek, a journalist, even reached out to Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru to clear the air and provide a 'true' picture

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[141] Salam, *The How, Why and Wherefor of the Hyderabad Struggle*, 135.
[142] C. Rama Rao, 'Hindus and Hyderabad', Letter to Bombay Sentinel, Annexure VII in *Arya Samaj in Hyderabad*, S. No.18, Printed Material, M.G. Chitnavis Papers, NMML.

of the efforts undertaken by nationalists in the state to counter the process of communalisation.

In a letter to Gandhi, Siddeek stated that the former had been 'carried away' by the anti-state propaganda and his statements in the *Harijan* had weakened 'the hands of those of us, both Hindus and Muslims, who are trying to create a common political platform for all classes and creeds.'[143] Stating that it was inevitable that Hyderabad and India would both have the same kind of constitution in the near future, Siddeek asserted that the two key questions that remained to be answered included the position of the Muslim minority under the future regime and the methods of attaining the goal of constitution. Siddeek argued that the 'problem of Hyderabad Hindus' was psychological because they did not have the status or prestige reserved for officialdom. 'The rich Hindu merchants, landlords, sahukars and lawyers naturally resent this state of affairs. They know that a change in the form of Government alone would give them what they want. Hence the several movements,' he said. Although Hyderabad Muslims too suffered from a psychological complex of considering themselves the ruling race, Siddeek claimed, the intelligentsia from this community had reconciled themselves to the ideal of responsible Government. They only wanted assurance that in subsequent plans for the future, they would be 'weighed instead of being counted'.

*Networks and Movements*

In 1938, the year when the Hyderabad Satyagraha was being planned and executed, *Samyukta Karnataka,* a Kannada newspaper based in Hubli in neighbouring Bombay Presidency, published articles regularly highlighting the purportedly oppressed state of the Hyderabadi Hindus. In one such article, the newspaper reported the resolution passed by an organisation called Veerashaiva Bandhugalu, which condemned the atrocities committed by Muslims of

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[143] Mohammad Siddeek, 'A Letter to Mahatma Gandhi on the communal problem in Hyderabad State', 23 September 1938, File no.64, AISPC Papers, NMML.

Hyderabad state against Hindus. The resolution reportedly stated that idols of Basaveshwara, Veerabhadra, Sharanabasappa, and Rama had been broken by Muslims and called upon the Nizam to deal with these crimes without prejudice.[144] Similar reports were also published, which claimed that Hindu idols had been desecrated in Kalyana, Mahagaon, Humnabad and Gulbarga. The Veerashaiva Taruna Sangha in a resolution claimed that Veerashaivas in particular had been subject to severe oppression by Muslims in these places, and called upon the followers of this religion to organise themselves and take action against such crimes.[145]

Such cross-border reportage from the vernacular press was increasingly becoming common in this period, as peoples, places, and institutions from outside Hyderabad were being drawn into creating linkages with their linguistic counterparts. The vernacular became the site and mode of action for both the Hindu Right organisations as well as the HSC in Hyderabad. Both were able to generate support because those hailing from Marathwada (including Karnatic) and Telangana had longstanding networks with their co-linguists from neighbouring areas outside the state. Marathwada and Karnatic were influenced by the neighbouring cities of Pune, Sholapur, and the Karnatak regions in Bombay Presidency and Nagpur in the Central Provinces. Telangana drew its agitational content and fervour from the neighbouring Andhra region in the Madras Presidency. While these networks between the regions and the contiguous areas outside the state had existed for decades, perhaps even centuries, the political agitation that travelled into the state solidified the linguistic identity of the regions of Marathwada, Karnatic, and Telangana.[146]

Although a significant section of the agitation against the state was generated outside its borders, it did receive support among sections of Hyderabad's inhabitants who were drawn to

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[144] "Nizam Rajyadali Hindugala Golu," *Samyukta Karnataka*, July 20, 1938, Print edition, KSA.
[145] "Hyderabad Seemeyalli Musalman Atyacharagalu," *Samyukta Karnataka*, July 25, 1938, Print edition, KSA.
[146] In the previous chapter, I have argued that these regions emerged first as geographical and then as developmental entities in the state.

agitational politics, and specifically to the HSC. Careers of some prominent individuals of the state show the easy movement between different spaces of the larger Deccan region that was undertaken as part of upper-caste, upper-class lives. The life and career trajectory of D.G. Bindu, a founder-member and the president of HSC between the years 1950 and 1952, is a useful example. In an oral history interview conducted by the NMML, Bindu recounted his early life and his entry into politics. Born in Nanded district in Marathwada, Bindu's father was an Ayurvedic doctor. He recounted his move to Poona for high school and said that he wasz initially motivated to shift there because most of his companions were headed there. Poona, Bindu said, 'was very good for me for my inner development' for here he was introduced to political ideas of British India.[147] Swept up by the ferment of the times, he attended political meetings, read papers and was influenced by the writings of nationalist thinkers. Later he moved to Hyderabad, studied law and began his practice under senior lawyer Keshav Rao, a well-known constitutional reformist of the time.

While talking about Keshav Rao's connections with Gulbarga, Bindu mentioned that the city was 'on the main line (the south-east division of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway) between Bombay and Madras, and people in Gulbarga, Aurangabad, and Warangal used to get outside news very soon. Since Bombay and Poona were the centres of events, they naturally influenced the life in Gulbarga.'[148] Communication facilities such as railways clearly played a role not only in connecting spaces but also in the transmission of ideas. This role of infrastructure and the state spaces that were created as a result of this infrastructure has not been the focus of study in terms of the political activity it engendered in India, let alone Hyderabad. Ganesh festivals, celebrated from around 1916-7, also seemed to bring people together, and creating a sense of public.[149] Bindu recalled that with help from jagirdars

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[147] D.G. Bindu, Oral History Transcripts, April 28, 1977, NMML.
[148] ibid
[149] ibid

and nawabs, the festival was celebrated grandly in the state with the occasion acting '…as a sort of an open university for all the people to hear the speeches on various subjects and educate themselves politically.' These festivals, he added, provided the occasion for people from Poona, Bombay, Nagpur and some other places to speak in the state.

Bindu later went onto establish the Maharashtra Parishad, along the lines of the Andhra Mahasabha. In his interview, Bindu said that he had been disheartened by the lack of mobilisation within Hyderabad. One key factor, he argued, had been the presence of the jagirdari system, which had '…made the life of the people here very subservient and… had crushed their spirit. They were not assertive. They could not by themselves stand up and say, "Well, this is in our interest and this must be done." That spirit was lacking.'[150] The Parishad, Bindu said, '…gave an opportunity for our village and district people to come together and to voice their feelings. At least, they could communicate with each other on various topics. They could discuss various things even privately. That was something which was helpful for public life.'[151]

Bindu claimed that these regional organisations such as the Maharashtra Parishad (also called Marathwada Conference) became immediately popular 'because people felt one with it' and felt energised by the conference. Raising consciousness about the nature of democracy and what responsible government entailed were key objectives of the Parishad; they however also interceded on behalf of people with the state to address the former's grievances as well. The World War II, Bindu stated, provided a fillip to the activities of grievance redressal particularly because disaffection in villages grew due to the scarcity of, and compulsory levy on, grains. The Maharashtra Parishad and its counterparts in Karnataka and Telangana continued the work that the HSC had meant to do but could not because it had been banned

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[150] ibid
[151] ibid

till 1946. Once the ban was lifted, members moved en masse to form the HSC, and the conferences became the provincial congress committees.

This account of Bindu's career shows the manner in which vernacular identities were mobilised to create political forces such as the Parishads. It also shows the ways in which such identities created vernacular universes that allowed people to traverse across political borders, bringing back ideas and discourses that could strike at a state's foundations. The HSC, in its demands for constitutional reforms, responsible government, civil liberties, integration with the Indian Union and finally the state's disintegration, was sustained by these cross-border associations as well as regional-vernacular identities. These networks were crucial in the final months of the erstwhile Asaf Jahi state as they worked to create an impression of complete breakdown of law and order, facilitating the military operation of the Police Action in 1948.

Once Nizam Osman Ali Khan refused to accede to the Indian Union and declared his state's independence, the HSC began to up its ante for Hyderabad's unconditional accession to the Union. Negotiations between the state and the Indian Union led to a stand-still agreement. Meanwhile, camps were established all along the borders of Hyderabad state from where attacks were launched against the railways, police stations, telegraph and postal offices among others. This was part of a three-stage plan to paralyse the state, a letter to INC President Pattabhi Sitaramayya from a few members of the Hyderabad State Congress confirmed.[152] The first stage was satyagraha and civil disobedience, the second was to refuse to pay levies and taxes, cut toddy trees and break forest laws and generally cause economic damage to the Nizam State Government. The third stage involved the creation of 'border incidents', 'indulging in acts of sabotage, destruction of means of communications,

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[152] Letter from 28 members of the All Hyderabad Congress Committee to the President of Indian National Congress, 11 November 1948, File no.71, AISPC papers, NMML.

demolition of customs and police choukies etc.'[153] Meetings were held on the borders of the state at Sholapur, Ahmednagar, Jamkhed, Chikhodi, Hospet, and Gajendra Gad in support of Hyderabad joining the Indian Union. Apart from its offices in Bombay, Bezwada, Manmad, and Gadag, the HSC opened offices at various places along the border in order to mobilise the Hindu residents of these areas in support of the agitation against Hyderabad state. From these offices, it issued daily and weekly updates of 'atrocities' committed by the Razakars and Asaf Jahi military, and the 'brave' responses by ordinary villagers.

Recounting this period in an interview with the author, Manikappa Patil of Gulbarga city, who participated in the resistance against the Asaf Jahi state, said that from his border camp at Sindagi in Bijapur district, members would go to villages where Hindus were 'terrorised', provide 'protection' and ask them not to abandon their villages. 'Of course, we have attacked the Muslims. Muslims beat us and we beat them, we threw them out of their houses,' Patil said.[154] When the Indian Army was preparing to enter the state, the camp leader Sharangouda Inamdar discussed operational plans on entry points in the state (see Figure 6), suggesting that they could conduct a coordinated attack on the state, he claimed. Later, recalling how he began this journey, Patil said that as a student at Nutan Vidyalaya, one of the premier educational institutions in Gulbarga, he, along with others, were trained in attacking and defending in case 'Muslims attacked them'. This training used to take place after school hours in the parade grounds in the city and a student leader, Purushottam Reddy, used to lead it, he said. The immediate impetus for such mobilisation began after a public meeting by Pandit Narendra of Arya Samaj was shut down midway by the district police and force used to disperse the crowds, Patil recalled. Public life in Gulbarga city was also saturated with

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[153] ibid.
[154] Interview with Manikappa Patil, 11 March 2016, Gulbarga city.

threats of violence as the slogan 'Bomman ko maro, Bania ko looto' (Kill the Brahmin, loot the Bania) apparently played continuously on loudspeakers, Patil alleged.[155]

***Figure 6: Map showing different points through which the Indian Army entered Hyderabad during Police Action***
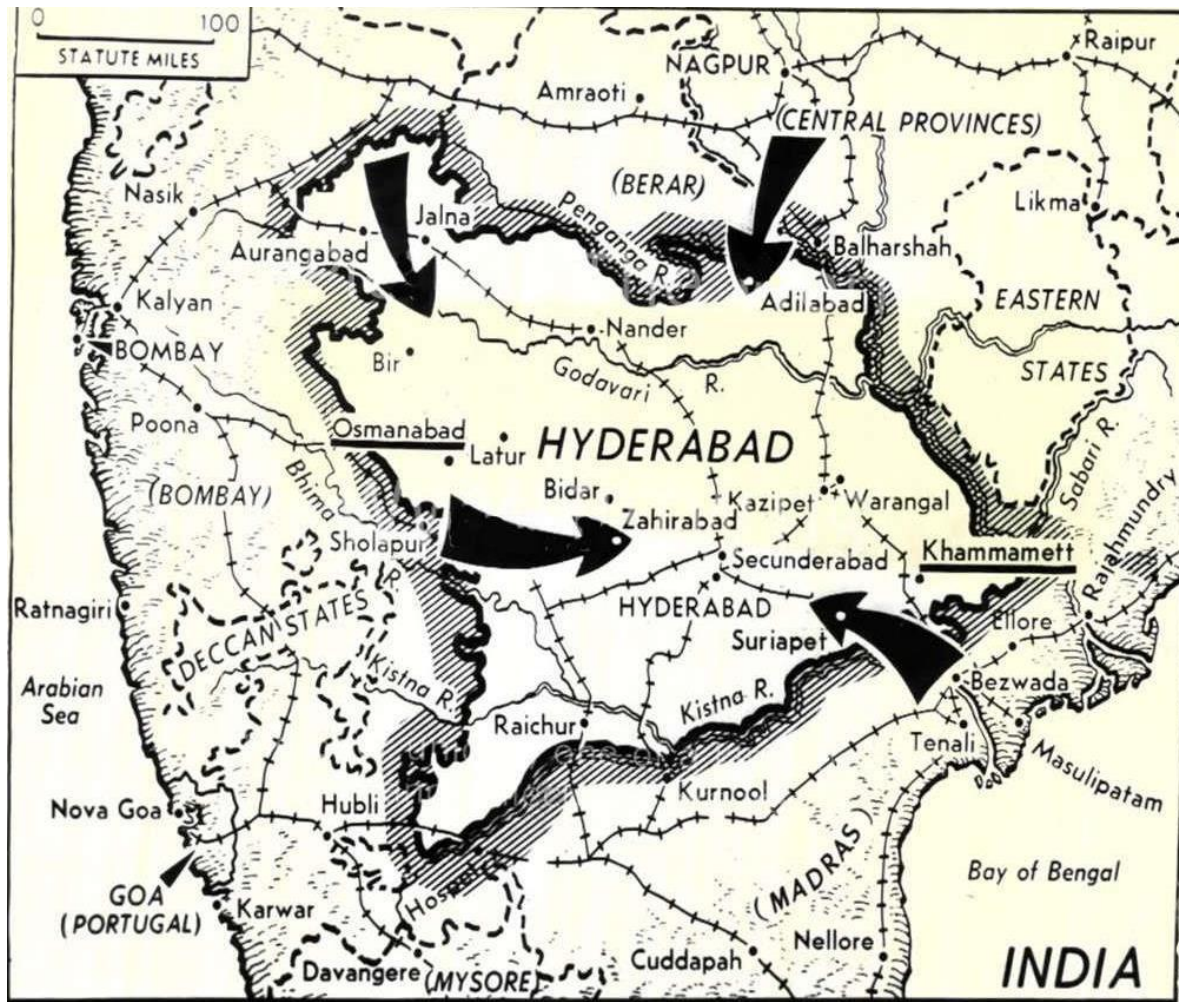


*Source: Image from Chicago Sun Times, accessed at*
*http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/modern/maps1947/maps1947.html*

It may never be possible to accurately state the extent of violence in the months preceding Police Action for accounts of this period by both warring sides are saturated with prejudice. But the Pandit Sundarlal Committee, appointed by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to look into anti-Muslim violence post the Police Action, believed that Razakar atrocities

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[155] Patil confirmed that in that period in Gulbarga Banias included Lingayats as well.

appeared in an 'exaggerated form' in sections of Indian and foreign press. The committee also stated that the Razakar atrocities '…chiefly consisted of levying monthly amounts on every town and village' and where this was given without resistance, 'there was generally no further trouble.'[156] This corrective is important because it was the complete 'collapse of law and order in the state' that the Indian Union claimed as the reason for its military operation. The White Paper on Hyderabad also claimed that there had been widespread emigration from villages in the dominions to Indian provinces, that hundreds of persons had been killed and wounded, systematic disarming of the majority community had been taking place, large tracts of land were lying fallow and Razakars were seen returning to Hyderabad city with truck-loads of loot.[157] A vivid landscape of violence and misery of the Hindu community was thus created, laying the foundation for military action.

On the post-Police Action violence, the Sundarlal committee report stated that at least 27,000 to 40,000 people were killed during and after the police action across the state. Even as it expressed caution in providing estimation of fatalities, the report was unequivocal in stating 'without any exaggeration that in a greater part of the state, the entire Muslim economic life has been smashed.'[158] It referred to its visits to previously rich business centres which housed a large number of Kucchi and other Muslim merchants and industrialists, and declared that they had 'all been practically finished'. Common Muslims had fared worse, the report said. 'At least tens of thousands have been rendered penniless. Thousands of homes are lying roofless with their doors broken and all belongings gone… we are sure that the total property looted or destroyed in the state must be calculated in tens of crores,' the report concluded.[159]

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[156] Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, and Maulana Abdulla Misri, "Detailed Report of Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdulla Misri on the Aftermath of the Police Action (Military Invasion) by the Indian Army of the Hyderabad State in September 1948.," Pandit Sundarlal Papers, 1948, NMML.

[157] Government of India, 'White Paper on Hyderabad.'

[158] Sundarlal, Ghaffar, and Misri, "Detailed Report of Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdulla Misri on the Aftermath of the Police Action (Military Invasion) by the Indian Army of the Hyderabad State in September 1948."

[159] ibid

This scale of violence had only been made worse by the fact that some of the violence had reportedly been perpetrated by sections of Indian Army as well as district congressmen. The policies of the Military administration, most important being one that had led to retrenchment of hundreds of Muslims from state services, had further exacerbated the miseries of the Muslim community, the report said.[160]

The report, submitted a few months after the Police Action, also pointed to the geographical specificities of the violence.[161] The epicentre of this violence, the report stated, were the adjoining districts of Osmanabad, Nander, Gulbarga, and Bidar, where about 18,000 people were said to have lost their lives. At Latur town in Osmanabad, which was home to rich Kachhi Muslims as also of Kasim Razvi, the leader of the MIM, the death toll was around 1,000. 'The killings continued for over twenty days. Out of a population of about ten thousand Muslims there we found barely three thousand still in town', the report said.[162] In the entire district, anywhere between 5,500 and 10,000 Muslims had been killed, the report said. In the districts of Gulbarga and Bidar, around 5,000 to 8,000 Muslims and in Nander, between 2,000 and 4,000 Muslims had been killed (for images of destruction, see Figures 7 and 8).[163] The report explained the heavy concentration of fatalities in these districts in terms of vindictive violence: 'It must be remembered that the four worst affected districts, namely Osmanabad, Gulbarga, Bidar and Nanded were also the great stronghold of the Razakars.'[164]

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[160] This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

[161] The Sundarlal committee report is extremely important for it is possibly the only government estimation of the extent of post-Police Action violence.

[162] Sundarlal, Ghaffar, and Misri, "Detailed Report of Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdulla Misri on the Aftermath of the Police Action (Military Invasion) by the Indian Army of the Hyderabad State in September 1948."

[163] In Aurangabad, Bir (both Marathwada districts), Nalgunda and Medak (Telangana districts), the fatalities amounted to atleast 5000, the report estimated.

[164] Sundarlal, Ghaffar, and Misri, "Detailed Report of Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdulla Misri on the Aftermath of the Police Action (Military Invasion) by the Indian Army of the Hyderabad State in September 1948."

**Figure 7: Remains of Muslims burnt alive in Gogi village in Shahpur, Gulbarga**
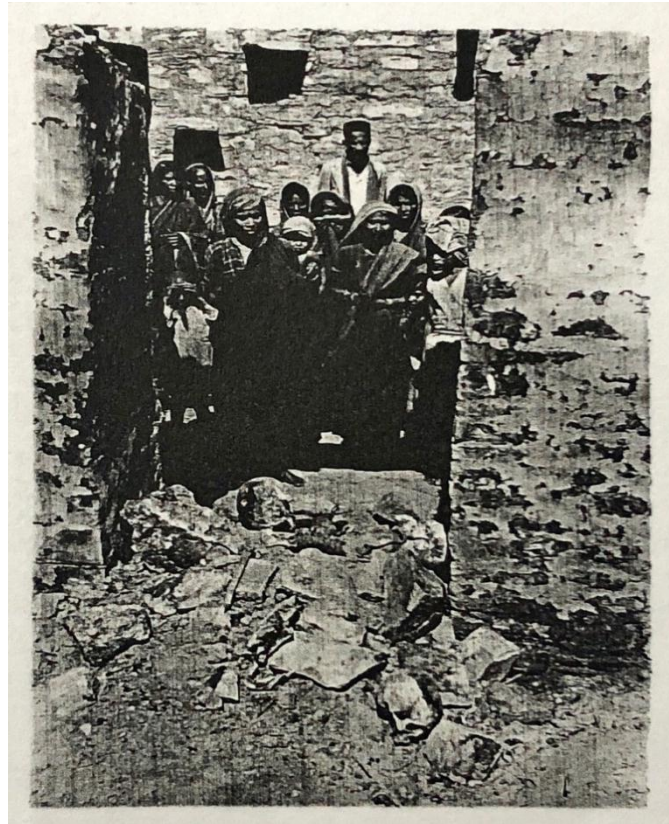


*Source: File no.12, Sundarlal papers, NMML*

**Figure 8: Copies of the Quran torn to pieces in Gogi, Shahpur taluk, Gulbarga**



*Source: File no.12, Sundarlal papers, NMML*

This account foregrounds the spatiality of violence that gripped Hyderabad in 1947-8. It was only inevitable that borders were the site of resistance against the regime for the state was surrounded by the territories of the Indian Union on all sides. This geographical fact restricted the possibilities of a larger imagined Deccan region of the early 1940s. It also made the demand for an independent state impossible to obtain (for the Nizam) or concede (by the Indian Union). The post-police action violence that spread through the districts of Marathwada and Karnatic may have been because they were 'Razakar strongholds' but also because these districts were in close proximity to centres of Hindu and nationalist thought. The long-standing networks of education, employment, familial connections, as exemplified in Bindu's account, had already laid the ground for amplifying these vernacular associations to carry out violence within the state.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed centrally on the Asaf Jahi state in the decades of 1930s and 1940s to provide a political and developmental context of the region of Hyderabad-Karnataka. By analysing discourses of development and by paying attention to the actors in this field, I have traced the lineages of contemporary articulations on the backwardness of the region. These lineages have their origins in the majoritarian discourses of the Hindu Right as well as the nationalist movement. But the backwardness of the region at the time of its integration into the Indian Union also had to do with the inability of the Asaf Jahi state to introduce radical changes to upturn a feudal society as well the state's subordinate position within the colonial order. In this period, the state assumed the mantle of a developmental state and tried to reorganise the economy through large scale interventions of the infrastructural and legal kind. But its failure lay in trying to sidestep the power relations that held village society in particular together as an exploitative unit.

A key moment in the history of Hyderabad-Karnataka is its accession to the Indian Union as yet another (backward) region. This is, of course, part of the larger history of the Asaf Jahi state's surrender to the Union. Having discussed the communal-developmental discourses of the 1930s and 1940s, I have studied the spatial possibilities and consequences that were determined by these discourses. The Asaf Jahi state may have grown in confidence after the wide appreciation it received for the help it offered the colonial powers during the World War II; its articulations of its own importance through its history-writing efforts around the Deccan were one off-shoot as were. Yet it was also the period when it was faced with the onslaught of bad publicity regarding its supposed communal outlook. By focusing on the geographies of movement of leaders who travelled between India and Hyderabad, this chapter has studied the historical and infrastructural networks in the Deccan that worked counter to the efforts to create a Hyderabadi nation. Central to this was the transformation of the developmental regions of Telangana, Marathwada, and Karnatic into linguistic regions, leading eventually to the dismemberment of the Hyderabadi nation. Recasting the history of this period in this fashion then allows us to understand the different possibilities that were cut short when the Indian Union took over the state and transformed Hyderabad into one of its provinces.

## *Chapter III*

## Is Development Possible Only in the Linguistic State? Remaking Hyderabad in Karnataka

Introduction

> In Hyderabad today, out of the ashes of feudalism, a new, secular, democratic state is being born. At dawn on September 13, 1948—a day that will live in history—the Government of India moved Indian forces into Hyderabad State in response to the call of the people. They found a population stricken by fear and a State empty of all beneficent activity. Six months later, the State is pulsating with new life, and its 170 lakhs of inhabitants are breathing the air of freedom and confidence. They are well on the way to the fulfilment of their declared desire – the establishment of democratic government leading to a popular decision on the future of the State, and the progressive elimination of political and economic autocracy.[1]

This ebullient description of the state of affairs in post-accession Hyderabad-Deccan by the new regime sought to paint a picture of communal harmony and a productive citizenry furiously engaged in nation-building. Describing the takeover of the state by the Indian Union as a 'bloodless revolution', the publication claimed that the new government was set on 'revitalising' the bureaucracy, which despite its 'façade of modernity was essentially part of a medieval, autocratic system'. The civil department, it claimed, 'had been softened and emasculated by a leisured mode of work'. Reforms that the new regime had introduced included speeding up work, trimming the numbers in bureaucracy, rationalising the inflated army and police forces, setting right a deficit budget, and dealing with 'communist terror'. Since the government was committed to 'bring prosperity to *all* classes of the people in Hyderabad' [emphasis original], it initiated the abolition of the jagirdari system, with the first act being the take-over of Nizam Osman Ali Khan's *Sarf-e-Khas* lands. 'The psychological effect of the Head of the State realising, as he himself put it, that "times had changed," giving

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[1] Binod.U Rao, *Hyderabad Reborn: First Six Months of Freedom (September 18, 1948-March 17, 1949)* (Hyderabad: Director of Information, Hyderabad, 1949), 13.

up a revenue of three crores of rupees, and taking a lead in the liquidation of feudalism, was immense', the publication claimed.[2]

This self-congratulatory publication came in the wake of a growing criticism by Muslim organisations of the military government, installed in 1948, for not providing the community with a sense of security. Meanwhile, non-Muslim groups lamented the fact that the military government had not moved towards representative democracy. Given Hyderabad's special circumstances, the discourse of development could not merely contain references to the building of infrastructure and agrarian reforms and had to include the introduction of representative institutions. It is in this context that the publication, downplaying the significance of the term military affixed to its government, stated, 'The only thing "military" about it was that it had a soldier at its head, but neither he nor the soldiers under him were in Hyderabad as conquerors; they were here rather as deliverers and, as anybody will tell, the "Military Government" was associated with none of the rigours of military rule.'[3]

As the years passed, reports of continuing distress of the Muslim community remained a sensitive issue for successive governments. But it was the language of development that the state sought to emphasise, such that by the end of eight years of 'freedom' the Muslim question in Hyderabad no longer had much political relevance. In 1956, the civilian government released another publication detailing its achievements, but had very little to say about communal relations in the state, preferring to focus on the 'nation-building' activities underway. It covered everything from state-sponsored farmers' training classes to land reforms to reviving old and establishing new industries. Given that the state's elected representatives had decided on the disintegration of the state along linguistic lines, the publication declared that this was not really a 'parting' but a joining together in a 'greater

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[2] ibid, 22.
[3] ibid.

partnership' to 'realise the oneness of India in spirit and in life'. If linguistic reorganisation was the way forward for development, the people of Hyderabad 'will joyfully cooperate, although they will always carry with them a lasting family feeling for their brethren across the border', the publication declared.[4]

Although the publication chose to present the dismantling of Hyderabad in a cheerful manner, the debates preceding it were far more heated. Proponents of dismantling the state declared it an 'unnatural entity' because it had three distinct linguistic communities and called for its dissolution. Those supporting the continuance of the state argued that it was the composite nature of Hyderabad that made it worth retaining as a model of Indian unity. In the neighbouring state of Mysore, similar arguments were being made for retaining the state as is, for it was also a composite state, comprising different linguistic communities, and had achieved much progress. Proponents of the linguistic state, however, argued in favour of the merger of Mysore as part of the larger process of 'unifying' a 'dismembered' Kannada nation. The possibilities for capitalist expansion that the Karnatak areas could offer to Mysore played no small part in convincing opponents of the possibilities of a Kannada state. It is pertinent to point here that, while the composite nature of Mysore did not render the state unnatural and was accepted even by proponents of the linguistic state as part of Mysore's heritage, Hyderabad's multi-lingual character was disparaged and became the stated reason for its dismantling. Although they were connected to each other, the debates around Hyderabad and Karnataka were conducted without much reference to each other. Studying both these debates together will help explore the connected ideas of (under)development, statehood, and linguistic uniformity that animated the great rearrangement of the Indian territory in the South.

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[4] Department of Information and Public Relations, *Eight Years of Freedom in Hyderabad* (Hyderabad: Department of Information and Public Relations, 1956).

This chapter engages with the early years of post-colonial India in general, and states reorganisation in particular (see Figure 9 for map depicting reorganisation). Scholarship on states reorganisation is sparse[5] and one consequence of this absence has been that the political rhetoric around reorganisation has continued to hold salience over critical analyses of this massive exercise of internal reorganisation of territory. In the case of Hyderabad, the argument that its dismantling was necessary for linguistic reorganisation has been accepted uncritically, while in Karnataka, the dominant framework of 'dismemberment' and 'unification' has informed much scholarship about the state.[6]

This has precluded analyses that situate linguistic reorganisation within its contemporary historical context, particularly of Partition of the subcontinent, also an act of territorial reorganisation based on the principles of homogeneity and contiguity. Given that states reorganisation on linguistic lines took place within a decade of the Partition of the subcontinent, Partition was relevant both as an event and as a logic. In an article comparing the demands for Pakistan and Samyukta Maharashtra, Oliver Godsmark argues that the emergence of these two movements represented the 'materialisation of the province as a scale of increased political significance in South Asia during the late colonial period'. The inter-war period, he states, enabled the emergence of British Indian provinces as 'semi-autonomous spaces with some limited forms of political responsibility'. Within these provinces, different communities could compete amongst themselves for state resources and representation. However, with the advent of a democratic logic of 'one man one vote', Godsmark argues, minority communities—be they Kannadigas in Bombay Presidency, Marathas set against Brahmins, or Muslims against Hindus—realised that they could secure

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[5] Some exceptions include Sarangi and Pai, *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India*; Sudha Pai and Avinash Kumar, *Revisiting 1956 : B.R. Ambedkar and States Reorganisation* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies; Orient Blackswan, 2014).
[6] For more on this, see chapter 4.

political power in constituencies where they had a demographic majority.[7] 'From this position, it was a small step to demanding provincial reorganisation along linguistic lines,' he claims. Godsmark usefully delineates the transition in

**Figure 9: Map showing boundaries of states before and after reorganisation in 1956 and after**

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[7] Oliver Godsmark, "Searching for Synergies, Making Majorities: The Demands for Pakistan and Maharashtra," *Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019): 115–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1554733.

demands made by minority communities (linguistic and religious) from political representation to territorial autonomy.

This chapter, however, looks at the period after this transition, when linguistic reorganisation had gained much traction among political leaders in the south, and it was the limits of this principle of homogeneity that was under discussion (and not the merits of this partitioning principle). In the context of the thesis, this chapter traces several trajectories that are crucial to understanding the contemporary nomenclature of Hyderabad-Karnataka as underdeveloped: the remaking of the state of Hyderabad through violence, bureaucratic transformation, the reorganisation of land tenure relations, the creation of the Kannada state and the persisting use of the narrative of 'historical backwardness'.

Resolving the Hyderabad Question

> In the long and eventful history of the Deccan such chances have been very rare where any power could have easily taken possession of this land, but this achievement was in the lot of Sardar Patel only, who subdued a grand and historic State like the Asafia kingdom merely by his diplomacy within the twinkling of the eye… Now that Sardar Patel intends visiting Hyderabad we congratulate him on behalf of a class which has reached the lowest abyss of defeat… It is an old saying that everything is valid in love and war. The propaganda that was being carried on against the Hyderabad Government and also the Muslims of Hyderabad by the press in India or outside India before 15th August 1947 was merely aimed at enabling the Hindu political class of Hyderabad to attain all that which they could not secure by an understanding on moral basis… The responsibility for the propaganda which was carried on against Hyderabad after the 15th August 1947 cannot be placed merely on the Hindu political class of Hyderabad. The interests of the powerful neighbours of Hyderabad lay only in this that the Hyderabad Government should be vilified to such an extent as to justify the action of 13th Sept 1948. Accordingly, the universal notoriety given to the word Razakar was the outcome of this propaganda only. There the matter ended, but the calamity which exists is that the officers brought to Hyderabad from the Indian Union are in fact under the notion that the Muslims of Hyderabad are so cruel that they are inimical towards the Hindu religion, culture and the Hindu citizens of Hyderabad…

If the object was to put an end to the political supremacy of the Muslims in the Deccan, it has been thoroughly achieved, but we are at a loss to understand as to what benefit our Hindu brethren will gain by the ruin of the Muslims of Deccan from economic point of view also. Despite due deliberation, we are at a loss to understand so far, as to why it was considered necessary to eject the Muslim 'pattadars' from their 'patta' lands, eradicate the trade of Muslim merchants, plunder the Muslim gentry of their property by driving them out of their houses, for the attainment of political power. If Sardar Patel were to give due consideration, he will certainly realise that the destruction of Muslims in the Deccan will badly affect the Hindu merchants and industrialists directly… We know that Sardar Patel has a big heart. Where he is harsh in opposition, he has big heart infused with love as a conqueror. Therefore, we request him to try to understand the position of the Muslims of Deccan and give them an opportunity to live an honourable and prosperous life…

In this leaderette, we have directly addressed Sardar Patel and addressed him on behalf of a community which is now in a life and death struggle…A defeated nation is addressing its conqueror and no undue demand is being made. We hope that this leaderette of ours will be free from censorship by the police or the Press Committee and will be despatched to that great personality who has been addressed.[8]

This poignant editorial addressed to Patel, the then-deputy prime minister and home minister, who was set to visit the state in February 1949, was translated from an Urdu weekly published in Hyderabad city.[9] The editorial referenced the dire conditions of Muslim middle-class in the state, many of whom had been dismissed from government service, had enquires thrust upon them and had been left rudderless in the transition from the Asaf Jahi to the Indian Union regime. Particularly noteworthy is the use of terms such as 'defeated nation' and 'conqueror', thus framing the India-Hyderabad encounter within the structure of a war. Doing so made it incumbent on the victor to treat the defeated with a certain amount of

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[8] Translation of a cutting from the Mamlekat weekly of Hyderabad in *Hyderabad Affair; Communal situation in the State; Military Governor's report on the alleged massacres of Muslims and desecration of mosques*, 20 February 1949, File no. 112-H/48- Vol II, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GOI, NAI.

[9] Following accession, the home department prepared weekly reports comprising summaries of the news and opinion material appearing in the Urdu Press in the state, to gauge the 'attitude' of this press. By April 1952, the newspapers had been grouped into the following broad categories: communal and pro-communist papers, the nationalist papers, pro-Pakistan papers and the pro-Mahasabhaite papers. See 'Fortnightly review of the Urdu Press in Hyderabad', File no.17(8)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

respect and moral uprightness, as is expected in the aftermath of a war. This framework was rejected, or rather, not even acknowledged by the Union, which treated this as a culmination of the desires of the 'people' and hence already morally right.[10] The question of fair treatment, in this approach, did not arise at all as India had merely taken that which belonged to it and which the 'people' had demanded. This also foreclosed possibilities for an acknowledgement of any continuing and large-scale violence taking place after integration. Acknowledging violence would disturb the notion that this was a peaceful takeover, that India and Hindus were secular and that the state had full control over its territory.

In the previous chapter, I had discussed the concentration of violence along border areas and districts in the aftermath of the police action. This section explores the atmosphere of dread and terror—a different kind of violence—that ruled the lives of Muslim communities in the state. Their troubles were further compounded by governmental initiatives that refashioned the bureaucracy and reconfigured land relations—two aspects that emblematised its feudal, Muslim regime—between the years of 1948 and 1952.[11] Prior to the Police Action, the Hyderabad question could be resolved only through the merger of the state with the Indian Union; after accession, the demand by new political leaders across the ideological spectrum was for a complete dismantling of the state.

*'Khauff ka Mahaul'*[12]*: Muslims in the Aftermath of Accession*

In September 1952, a group of Muslim 'businessmen and other respectable persons' from Aland taluk in Gulbarga wrote a petition to the Home Minister of the Government of Hyderabad seeking his 'just and sympathetic action' in a case that had come to be known as

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[10] For a complex discussion of this aspect, see Omar Khalidi, "The Rise and Fall of a Muslim Militia: The Rizakars of Hyderabad, 1940-1950," *Journal of the Henry Martyn Institute*, June 2002, 3–26.

[11] This is a particularly understudied period in Hyderabad-Deccan's history. One of the few exceptions is Taylor Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[12] This phrase can be translated to mean an atmosphere of fear and dread.

the Aland Murder Case. Writing on behalf of himself and his co-accused, Abdur Rahman narrated their tale of woe that began in October 1948, when thirty-six persons were arrested on charges of murder. During the period of investigation and trial, they remained incarcerated. The Special Court of Gulbarga and Osmanabad finally acquitted thirteen and convicted twenty-three for various crimes, while discharging all of the accused on charges of murder. The convicted appealed against the judgement and the government appealed against acquittal in the High Court. The order of the High Court stunned all the thirty-six accused as the judge ordered a retrial of the case, holding the establishment of the special courts in which they were tried as contrary to Article 14 of the Constitution of India. This order converted them back to being accused again.

The four years that the accused had spent in jail awaiting the completion of the trial and the appeal, wrote Rahman, had financially devastated them, and their families were now 'facing starvation'. In his appeal to the Home Minister, he cited the new regime's policy of 'Forgive and Forget' with respect to Muslims as well as the decision of the government to withdraw cases against Razakars if the offences had not been heinous. Rahman, asking to be relieved of their charges, pleaded: 'For this act of justice and sympathy we shall all remain grateful to you and pray for your long life and prosperity.'[13]

Supplications such as these were plenty in this period, as incarceration, or the threat of it, was a shared experience of many Muslim communities in the state after Police Action.[14] Both elite and ordinary Muslims were charged with offences, allegedly committed under the previous regime, resulting in flight from homes to escape incarceration. For instance, in Aland taluk, from where Abdur Rahman wrote his letter, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema claimed that nearly 500

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[13] Letter by Abdur Rahman and others to Home Minister, GoH, 11 September 1952, in *Communal disturbances at Aland and Yadgir (Gulbarga district) in 1950 – withdrawal of criminal proceedings and cancellation of fines imposed in certain cases*, File no.SPL/RIT/3/52, Home Department, GoH, KSA.

[14] Apart from affected individuals, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema was a key petitioner on behalf of Muslims.

families had fled to Bombay due to fear of retaliation, arrests, and pending warrants.[15] In her article on this period, Taylor Sherman points out that as the Indian military entered the state, it imprisoned nearly 17,000 people, a large number on mere suspicion alone. In the first six months of their rule, faced with the problem of overcrowded jails and lack of evidence, the military government released about 11,000 Muslims.[16] However, even two years later, imprisonment of large numbers of people was still a concern important enough for Jawaharlal Nehru, the then-Prime Minister, to write to Sardar Patel:

> I confess that I have long felt that we have kept many of the people far too long in prison or detention… I know that thousands of people arrested previously have been subsequently screened and discharged although even that took a great deal of time. Still numbers of them remain in detention... To keep persons in detention or prison awaiting trial for years is not pleasant to contemplate. Whenever I have gone to Europe, this matter has been raised by all kinds of odd persons, sometimes unconnected with politics… The fact of long detention in prison is itself very important. It means a long sentence already undergone in circumstances which are sometimes worse than prison sentences whose duration is known. There is no doubt some people in Hyderabad are opposed to such a policy. But it seems to be unbecoming for the Government of India to appear to be so ungenerous and revengeful. This certainly has had a bad effect abroad.[17]

Patel vehemently countered these allegations of long detentions and blamed it on the lack of reliable investigative machinery in the state. He also stated that Muslims had fled the state '…either due to the fear of reprisals as their past activities in their home villages/towns had not been healthy or to the fact that they are earning better in the city which has the added

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[15] Office Note by Home Secretary Nagendra Bahadur, in *Communal disturbances at Aland and Yadgir (Gulbarga district) in 1950 – withdrawal of criminal proceedings and cancellation of fines imposed in certain cases*, File no. SPL/RIT/3/52, Home Department, GoH, KSA.

[16] Taylor C. Sherman, "The Integration of the Princely State of Hyderabad and the Making of the Postcolonial State in India, 1948–56," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 44, no. 4 (2007): 489–516, https://doi.org/10.1177/001946460704400404.

[17] Jawaharlal Nehru to Vallabhai Patel, 23 June 1950, in *Reports regarding the annual Jamiat-ul-Ulema conference at Hyderabad-Deccan,* File no.1(15)-H-51, 1951 (Secret), Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI. The question of the imprisonment of Razakars was doggedly pursued by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with various levels of Indian government. ICRC repeatedly asked the Indian Government to treat Razakars as prisoners of war as, under the Geneva convention of 1929, to which India was a signatory, volunteer militia and armies fell in this category. This encounter has been documented in Khalidi, "The Rise and Fall of a Muslim Militia: The Rizakars of Hyderabad, 1940-1950."

advantage of a good rationing system'.[18] Patel's assertion of Muslim guilt and retaliatory violence was commonplace among official and political circles whenever questions about inadequate rehabilitation, mass exodus, or the continuing instability of the law and order situation were raised. In effect, officials framed violence against Muslims as natural and inevitable.[19] Even this rationale was offered only on occasions when they accepted that violence had indeed taken place. For instance, responding to allegations that there had been a large-scale exodus of Muslims to Sholapur in neighbouring British Presidency—a concern that Jawaharlal Nehru had expressed—the Military Governor J.N. Chaudhuri wrote to A.V. Pai, Nehru's principal private secretary, that the Prime Minister had been 'completely misinformed' and that 'the figure of 4,000 to 5,000 Muslims is completely and utterly incorrect.' Chaudhuri was willing to concede that 'some families may have gone' but once the rehabilitation process was started by the government, about thirty to forty families returned. Although he stated that these families went back to Sholapur upon 'finding conditions not to their liking', he refused to accept that a general atmosphere of fear of violence prevailed in the state.[20]

Yet such reports kept pouring in from different corners of the state. Fareed Mirza, an ex-government official who had publicly signed a statement asking Hyderabad to join the Indian Union, was distraught at the condition of Muslims in the districts. In his account of that period, Mirza wrote:

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[18] Vallabhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru, 26 October 1950 in *Reports regarding the annual Jamiat-ul-Ulema conference at Hyderabad-Deccan,* File no.1(15)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[19] The Sundarlal Committee which toured Hyderabad in the months immediately after the Police Action and reported of large-scale violence against Muslims, also shared the same logic of retaliatory violence. When widows they met on their tours cried to them about how the men of their families had been murdered, they 'tried to console them by telling them that the responsibility for all their misfortunes lay upon the shoulders of those of their co-religionists who had established a reign of terror for the Hindus'. Sundarlal, Ghaffar, and Misri, "Detailed Report of Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdulla Misri on the Aftermath of the Police Action (Military Invasion) by the Indian Army of the Hyderabad State in September 1948."

[20] Letter from J. N. Chaudhuri to A. V. Pai, 3 June 1949, in *Matters concerning Muslims in Hyderabad in General allegations of discrimination etc*, File no.1(44)-H/49, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

> We were very much hampered in our task of taking Muslims to their villages on account of Gundas being still active and the police making indiscriminate arrests of Muslims on the plea of the crimes committed by them during the Razakar regime…At one stage, in order to get a Muslim arrested, it was enough to allege that he was a Razakar. The propaganda against the Razakars was so severe that the Army and the police which came from outside the State sincerely believed that every Razakar specially from the Marathwada districts was guilty of rape or loot or arson. Such an impression had its effect.[21]

As Muslim communities across the state struggled to survive the regime change, the atmosphere of dread and terror in the state prevented them from offering and accessing assistance: there were many lawyers who refused to fight cases on behalf of the Razakars.[22] In my interview with him, Abdul Rahim Arzoo (now deceased), a former Gulbarga-based lawyer and a witness to the period, recollected how allegations of being Razakars or having affinities with the previous regime were made against ordinary Muslims and Muslim officials of the erstwhile regime.[23] This was done, he asserted, for vindictive reasons and/or to usurp properties by rendering Muslim families incapable of protecting their possessions, trapped as they were in legal hassles. Caught in this legal quagmire, many Muslims and their families had to fight for months or years before they were acquitted, and that only if they were able to afford, or manage to find, a lawyer to fight their case. Recollecting how many lawyers of the period refused to fight such cases, fearing that they may be branded as communal, Arzoo narrated his experience of fighting such a case:

> After I had returned to Gulbarga upon finishing my law degree, the wife and children of a man accused of being a Razakar came to me, requesting me to fight their case. I told them that I am a new lawyer and I could end up harming their case. Still they insisted because they did not have much options. When I started the trial, believe me, even my Muslim friends – forget the Hindu ones – would see me and walk away in the opposite direction. This was the climate of terror and dread then…When I filed the vakalatnama in the case, the Munsiff Magistrate called me to his room and told me

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[21] Fareed Mirza, *Pre and Post Police Action Days in Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt and Did* (Paramount Press, 1976), 39.
[22] Khalidi also mentions this fact in his article *The Rise and Fall of a Muslim Militia,* 2002.
[23] Interview with Abdul Rahim Arzoo, 17 September 2017, Gulbarga city.

'I consider you as my younger brother. Do not fight this case. You are a talented lawyer. You will be branded as communal.[24]

Arzoo refused the advice and went on to fight the case; he also took on similar cases in Chincholi, Osmanabad, and Poona among others, driven by a sense of lawyerly duty, as he characterised it. He also contested the Lok Sabha elections in 1957, against the advice of family, well-wishers, and Hyderabad State Congress workers. 'I had no greed. I knew I would not win. But I wanted to educate people (about the importance of opposition in a democracy). My other aim was to put an end to this fear and dread that had grown within Muslims and ensure that it does not get passed on to the next generation,' Arzoo explained.

His memories are confirmed by a 1951 report of the Rehabilitation Committee appointed by the Hyderabad Government, which toured Osmanabad district, one that had been badly affected by violence. The report stated that, while local officials attempted to give the committee an 'impression that peaceful conditions prevailed', the latter found that fear and insecurity was preventing Muslim men from returning to their villages, who instead preferred to stay on in taluk or district headquarters. Their inability to reclaim their lands and houses due to fear of harassment and/or their poverty was yet another reason for not returning to the villages, the report said.[25] The committee detailed instances of Muslims being unable to offer prayers in mosques, of repeated desecration of a mosque, of a widow's dead body having to be buried under police protection because some locals wanted her to be cremated, of Muslim widows in villages refusing to admit that they were widows for fear of reprisals by patels and patwaris, and of Muslims being unable to wear the fez without running the risk of being attacked (see Figures 10 and 11). This 'khauff ka mahaul', as Arzoo had termed it, was likely the case in other districts as well.

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[24] Interview with Abdul Rahim Arzoo, 17 September 2017, Gulbarga city.
[25] 'Report of the Rehabilitation Committee appointed by the Government of Hyderabad', June 25, 1951, in *Two notes prepared by Hyderabad Govt. on (1) Rehabilitation of refugees (Muslims & Non- Muslims) after Police Action. (2) Endowments,* File no.17(1)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, NAI.

***Figure 10: Muslim women converted and tattooed during Police Action violence in Gulbarga***

In these testing times for Hyderabad Muslims, community organisations began to urge their brethren to accept the changed realities, post-Partition and post-Hyderabad accession. The Hyderabad Muslim Convention, in its meeting in May 1949, urged Muslims to steer clear of alliances with any political parties: '…the Muslim convention has reached the conclusion that in their present uneasy state of mind born of loss of life and property, and of increasing unemployment, and with the naked truth staring in the face, that they need the active sympathy of every party in the stupendous task of their relief and rehabilitation.'[26] Laying out a roadmap for future Muslim politics, the Convention, which had been established only four months earlier, suggested that demands must be framed 'essentially in terms of their economic security'. It urged the community to look inwards, create opportunities for

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[26] 'Resolution of the Hyderabad Muslim Convention' in *Matters concerning Muslims in Hyderabad in General allegations of discrimination etc*, 14 May 1949, File no. 1(44)-H/49, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

economic self-sufficiency, consolidate their material and social resources, and 'purge' elements from the community that come in the way of this integration.[27]

***Figure 11: Nandi placed over Muslim chilla near mosque in Kalyani, Bidar***
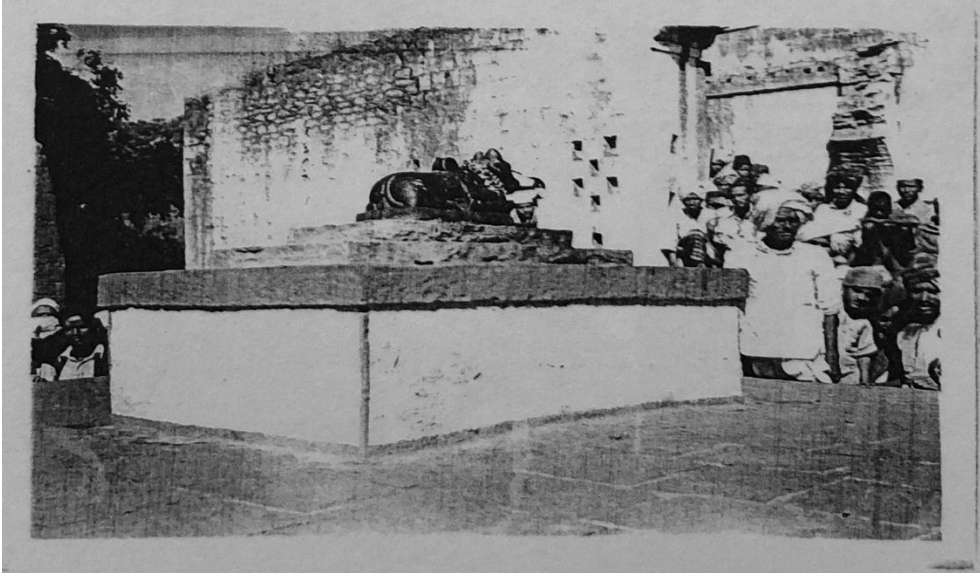


*Source: File no.12, Sundarlal papers, NMML*

It was not possible however to keep the state out of their rehabilitation. Hence, Muslim leaders and organisations repeatedly urged the Indian and Hyderabad governments to acknowledge the scale of intervention required, and to formulate schemes accordingly. This was a difficult matter with officials across the board systemically underplaying the extent of violence and suffering. Officials were reluctant to acknowledge the violence, as is well documented: Less well known was the fact that the lowest level of officers, especially in villages adopted the insidious strategy of providing misinformation and holding back vital information. The report of the Rehabilitation Committee is revealing in this aspect. It found, for instance, that it was difficult to ascertain precisely the numbers of people affected as village officials such as patels and patwaris, in many cases, pleaded ignorance, showed

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[27] ibid.

reluctance, or even provided false information. This was especially the case with the numbers of widows and orphans.

> At Kerali and Ter, the Patel and Patwari told us that the local Muslims had all migrated but later on we heard horrible tales from other sources. Again at Ugni the Patwari pleaded ignorance of the number of Muslim widows, while at Hungerga wrong figures were given, and the Committee had to make further inquiries to get at the truth. At Moram the list supplied to us gave the figures as less than 300 which turned out to be the number of houses in which widows live and not the number of widows.[28]

This extract from the report clearly shows the complicity of village authorities in the large-scale violence that took place in the aftermath of the Police Action and/or their role in covering up the violence. Given that most widows were agricultural labourers, the class difference alone would have made it hard for them to stand up to the authority of the Hindu male village officers. The report stated that widows of former peasant proprietors had also been reduced to labouring because they had no male members left to undertake cultivation, or because their lands had been forcibly taken over. The widows complained to the committee that since they had no bargaining power, they were underpaid. The committee proposed that these women be trained and engaged in cottage industries. To deal with their allegations of forced takeover of land and houses, the committee merely suggested setting up a tribunal to settle the matters.[29]

It was perhaps taking into account this atmosphere of terror and dread that had gripped Muslim communities, and the fact that schemes had to be implemented by village officials who had been directly involved in the violence, that the Jamiat and other Muslim

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[28] 'Report of the Rehabilitation Committee appointed by the Government of Hyderabad', June 25, 1951, in *Two notes prepared by Hyderabad Govt. on (1) Rehabilitation of refugees (Muslims & Non- Muslims) after Police Action. (2) Endowments,* File no.17(1)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, NAI.

[29] The Hyderabad Relief Committee, headed by Mulla Abdul Basith, wrote in a memorandum to Nehru that these measures to establish spinning centres for widows had failed because the period of training had been inadequate and no provision for capital and marketing had been made. These measures had not allowed women to become self-supporting, the committee said. 'Memorandum by the Hyderabad Relief Committee', addressed to Nehru, n.d., in *Two notes prepared by Hyderabad Govt. on (1) Rehabilitation of refugees (Muslims & Non-Muslims) after Police Action. (2) Endowments,* File no.17(1)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, NAI.

organisations repeatedly pressed for inclusion of community members in rehabilitation work undertaken by the state. In its annual conference in 1951, the Jamiat passed a resolution in which it 'painfully' noted that the 'work of Rehabilitation which was undertaken in Hyderabad has been left unfinished and incomplete' and that 'Muslim sufferers are still homeless and leading a very miserable life'. It asked that the homeless be resettled in their homes and their lands be restored to them so that they could rebuild their lives.[30] In 1953, pleading to the Government of India to not be a 'mute spectator to this kind of genoside (sic) as it were', the Jamiat proposed the enactment of a bill that would allow for restoration of properties of displaced persons.[31] From a survey of 2,200 villages across the state, the Jamiat found that the greatest number of losses of movable and immovable properties had taken place in Nanded, Nalgonda, and Bidar.[32]

On the restoration of properties—both private and community—the government dithered. In a file relating to communal disturbances in Aland and Yadgir, an official noted that restoration of properties was difficult, and any action taken to this effect could reignite communal tensions.[33] Since maintaining peace was the primary aim of governance in this period, any action that would exacerbate matters was sought to be quickly disposed, without consideration to whether it was fair or not. In community-owned lands in particular, when local Hindus sought to use the site, previously used by Muslims, to build a temple, school or hospital, officials took inordinately long to address objections put forward by the latter.

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[30] 'Complete proceedings of the 17th Annual Conference of the Central Jamiat-ul-Ulema-Hind', 27-29 April, 1951, Hyderabad City, File no. 1(15)-H-51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[31] 'Memorandum on behalf of Jamiatul Ulama Hyderabad State', presented on 4 October 1953 to Kailash Nath Katju, Home and States Minister, File no.1(6)-H/53, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[32] 'Appendix A' in *Memorandum on behalf of Jamiatul Ulama Hyderabad State*, presented on 4 October 1953 to Kailash Nath Katju, Home and States Minister, File no.1(6)-H/53, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[33] File notings in Communal disturbances at Aland and Yadgir (Gulbarga district) in 1950 – withdrawal of criminal proceedings and cancellation of fines imposed in certain cases, File no. SPL/RIT/3/52, Home Department, GoH, KSA.

At Shorapur in Gulbarga district, the Jamiat brought to the government's attention in 1951 the construction of a platform, possibly to build a temple, on the same site where a 'historical mosque' and the shops and reading room attached to it once stood, before being destroyed during the Police Action. To the Jamiat's demand in 1951 that the mosque—'a popular, beloved and self-supporting place of the Muslims'—be restored to the community and funds be provided for its reconstruction, various officials at the Ministry of States and the Hyderabad Government agreed that this was an impossible demand. One senior official even wrote that in most places where a Hindu shrine was sought to be installed in place of Muslim ones, 'it was discovered by personal visits that such places were almost invariably old Hindu shrines converted into places of Muslim worship.' If the government were to accede to Jamiat's demands, it would trigger communal tension. So, it was best to let matters rest as they were, he said.[34] This was an oft-quoted rationale for inaction in many cases of demolition, destruction, and dispossession of Muslim communal properties that were brought to government attention.

Subsequently, a statue of the recently deceased Sardar Patel was erected amidst much fanfare at the same site by local Arya Samaj and Congress leaders. This was despite the government's orders that no activity should take place on the site. The matter began to be taken much more seriously when the demolition of the mosque began to be discussed on radio stations in Pakistan and publications in West Bengal, as an instance of political and official complicity in anti-Muslim actions in the state. Nehru took an interest in the matter, triggering cascading reactions among political and official chains downwards. In his letter to the Chief Minister of Hyderabad B. Ramakrishna Rao, Nehru, referring to a visit by the Jamiat which had apprised him of the Shorapur incident said:

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[34] Letter from L.G. Rajwade, Chief Secretary of General Admin department, May 26 1951, in *Representations from the Jamiat Ulema and others regarding the grievances of Muslims in the Hyderabad State,* File no 1(7)-H-1951, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, NAI.

Some of the people who came to see me in Hyderabad…told me something which surprised me greatly. They said that at Shorapur in District Gulbarga, Sardar Patel's bust had been put inside the chief mosque on the 21st October 1953. It is still there and in a sense it is worshipped or flowers put before it. Also there are many other mosques which had been converted for other uses and sometimes are being used as temples.[35]

However, the matter dragged on until 1955 at least, when negotiations at arriving at a settlement failed. Despite the District Collector's repeated recommendations that the statue be shifted to a new place, no action was taken. The Jamiat in this case issued a fatwa to local Muslims not to concede the space declaring that the latter had no right over endowment property.

This instance at Shorapur was a fairly commonplace pattern of bureaucratic modes of dispensing decisions: deny the matter, delay till the matter became difficult to reverse, and try to settle matters through negotiations, as if both parties were equally powerful. Official efforts in this period were also primarily directed towards maintaining 'communal harmony', even if it meant condoning previous crimes, not executing punishment, or maintaining status-quo on disputed sites. In Aland and Yadgir—both places where post-police action violence had been severe and Muslims had fled their homes in large numbers—local Hindu communities had been held responsible for violence and asked to pay the expenses of the establishment of a punitive police. However, four years later in 1952, the fines had not been collected at Aland and were finally waived. At Yadgir, officials noted that both Hindu and Muslim communities had asked for the money to be used for the construction of a maternity hospital.[36]

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[35] Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to B. Ramakrishna Rao, January 5 1954 in *Communal Incidents in Gulbarga District: Alleged demolition of a mosque at Shorapur*, File no. SPL/RC/1951, Home Department, GoH, KSA.
[36] ibid. In his note available in this file, the Home Secretary Nagendra Bahadur also recommended that in these districts where Hindus and Muslims had been sentenced for crimes of less serious nature, the cases could be dropped, or the remaining term of their imprisonment condoned.

While the Jamiat adopted a strong stance with regard to the mosque in Shorapur, it otherwise adopted a conciliatory and pragmatic approach in its demands to the Indian Union regarding restoration of properties or providing alternate sites for rehabilitation. In their memorandum to Kailash Nath Katju, the then Home and States Minister, the Jamiat wrote: '…people who had been deprived of their landed property in the districts of Osmanabad and Gulbarga and other districts need not necessarily be rehabilitated in their former homes or lands, in case they do not feel secure, or in case our non-Muslim brethren are not in a mood to give up their wrongful possessions. It was the God's wish and we have no ill-will against them.' It asked that they be provided accommodation in vacant plots in other districts such as Warangal, Adilabad, and Raichur.[37]

Very little scholarship exists on Hyderabad in these years between 1948 and 1956 in the Anglophone academia; where it does exist, the focus remains on the extent of physical violence faced by Muslims in the state. However, as this section demonstrates, the atmosphere of fear and dread that followed the Police Action equally marked the experience of being Muslim in post-accession Hyderabad. It will be near impossible to quantify the extent of material and emotional losses suffered by Muslim communities in this period, the ways in which this *khauff ka mahaul* reconfigured social relations in villages to the advantage of dominant communities and the dispossession of Muslim communities. But by detailing some of the ways in which social control was exercised by a combination of official and community powers, this section offers some insights into the consolidation of majoritarian politics due to bureaucratic (in)action in the early post-colonial years.

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[37] 'Memorandum on behalf of Jamiatul Ulama Hyderabad State', presented on 4 October 1953 to Kailash Nath Katju, Home and States Minister, File no.1(6)-H/53, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

Even as social control was exercised at the levels of villages and neighbourhoods, the new regime began the process of 'correcting' the disproportionate representation of Muslims in the services. The military and the civilian governments were under great pressure to do so at the earliest, given that this was one of the major points of campaign against the Asaf Jahi state. L.C. Jain, chief secretary of the state, wrote to the Ministry of States that a policy regarding communal proportion in services needed to be formulated at the earliest. Non-Muslim opinion inside and outside the state, he said, had been demanding a 'very radical and rapid change in the proportion of Muslims' and had begun to claim that unless this was undertaken, 'the Military Government will have failed in its duty and mission…'[38] In the absence of a policy, senior officers were accelerating promotions to non-Muslims, he said, as a means of 'rectifying a gross injustice which has been done to non-Muslims in the past in this State'. Jain proposed that the proportion of Muslims be reduced to fifty percent by March 1949. This can be done by compulsorily retiring Muslims with more than twenty-five years and less than five years of service as well as by offering financial incentives for retirement for others. To improve the 'efficiency' of the services,[39] he suggested that non-Muslims also be removed, but only if they were found to be grossly incompetent; in cases where these persons had been treated unfairly under the past regime, their promotions could be accelerated.

The Hyderabad Government under the Chaudhuri decided that communal considerations shall 'entirely be disregarded' for promotion and only seniority and efficiency would be

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[38] Note by L.C. Jain, Chief Secretary, in *Policy regarding recruitment, communal proportion, composition etc of civil and military services of Hyderabad*, November 7 1948, File no.10 (38)-H/49, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[39] Although the primary imperative was to 'correct' the disproportion in the services, officials often used the trope of improving efficiency since, it was often argued, Hyderabad's erstwhile regime had a bloated bureaucracy operating on nepotistic lines. See, for instance, Rao, *Hyderabad Reborn: First Six Months of Freedom (September 18, 1948-March 17, 1949)*; 'Hyderabad Chief Minister's memorandum indicating broad lines of policy followed by Hyderabad Government from December 1949 to December 1950', File no.1(45)-H/50, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

considered. This was meant to be a change in policy from the older regime which only considered Muslims for the services. The new government was also bound to follow the Pay and Service Commission's recommendations that recruitment be undertaken only on the basis of competitive tests and merit. However, 'in the absence of the possibility of introducing competitive tests immediately', L.C. Jain wrote, 'it seems necessary to prescribe definite communal proportions for cases of direct recruitment.'[40] Since the Muslim population formed 12.8 percent of the total, recruitment should not be more than 12.5 percent; for Harijans, 12.5 percent was reserved, but no maximum limit was set on how many could be recruited. This, in effect, nullified the first part of the order that communal considerations will 'entirely be disregarded'.

The Urdu press paid close attention to these changes and accused the Indian Union of behaving as a conqueror and treating Muslims as the enemy. A review of the Urdu press quoted the newspaper *Milap* in its edition on April 26, 1951 had observed that 'Union officers considered themselves to be "conquerors" and came to Hyderabad to enjoy the "honeymoon" of their employment'.[41] This belief was shared by other vernacular papers as well. An editorial published on 25 October 1950 in *Janashakti*, a Telugu communist newspaper, claimed that officers from the Indian Union lacked the 'necessary liberalism'. For them, 'Hyderabad was a conquered land. They were heroes who came with trumpets of victory and the people of Hyderabad were subject vassals.'[42]

Apart from pointing out how retrenchment was causing massive unemployment amongst an already besieged community, the Urdu press also regularly highlighted the ongoing violence against the Muslim community—desecration of properties, conversion of sacred sites such as

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[40] Letter by LC Jain, Chief Secretary to all civil administrators, secretaries and heads of departments, 6 January 1949, File no. 124, Political Department, GoH, TSA.
[41] *Fortnightly review of the Urdu Press in Hyderabad,* File no.17(8)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[42] Extract from Today's Press at a Glance, 5th October 1950, in *Fortnightly review of the Urdu Press in Hyderabad,* File no.17(8)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

mosques and dargahs into temples, and takeover of private and communal properties—under the new regime. For instance, the retrenchment of Muslims across the state caused such a sense of angry despair that an editorial in Hamdam, accusing the Hyderabad administration for exposing Muslims 'to severe pangs of hunger', observed: 'if it is taken for granted that the Muslims have no right to continue any longer in the Deccan, it is better that mass action by opening fire against them is resorted to by the Government so as to relieve them of their constant oppression.'[43] Such reportage pierced the benevolent self-image that was so dear to the Indian Union of those years, and it is no wonder that this section of the press was under especial scrutiny.[44]

Most of these charges were dismissed or not acknowledged by the government, which conveniently branded these newspapers as 'communal'. Yet the thinking within the government was far more direct about the unsuitability of Muslim personnel. In a long report to the Ministry of States, M.K. Vellodi, chief minister appointed to head the civilian government post December 1949, stated unambiguously:

> The policy of the present government of Hyderabad is not anti-Muslim, but no non-Muslim member of the Hyderabad Government and particularly no Minister representing the Congress believes it is safe to appoint Muslim officers to key positions in the State. Behind every desire to be as considerate and sympathetic as possible to the Muslim community there is the lurking fear and suspicion in the minds of the majority community that members of the Muslim community, who in the past had been responsible for the effective suppression of the majority community, may if they were entrusted with power, use it against the interests both of the majority community and of the State in general. The fact that this suspicion or fear may largely be the result of a morbid mentality does not render it any less real.[45]

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[43] Attitude of the local Urdu press for the fortnight ending January 2 1951 in *Periodical review of the Urdu Press of Hyderabad*, File no.19 (78)-H/50, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[44] The government seriously considered acting against the 'offending editors' of these publications but was restrained from doing so because of Supreme Court verdicts that forbade action against the press. Officials from the MoS suggested the use of Preventive Detention Act but warned that this may generate public backlash against the government. See 'Fortnightly review of the Urdu Press in Hyderabad', File no.17(8)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[45] 'Hyderabad Chief Minister's memorandum indicating broad lines of policy followed by Hyderabad Government from December 1949 to December 1950', File no.1(45)-H/50, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

Regarding the retrenchment of Muslim personnel, Vellodi contested the claims of large-scale and communal retrenchment and argued that compulsory retirement had been enforced only in cases of incompetence or communal behaviour, of which there had been plenty. He claimed that the services displayed an 'appallingly low level of efficiency' as appointments had primarily been based on nepotistic connections during the Asaf Jahi period.

Vellodi was clearly being economical with his facts given that he did not acknowledge the retrenchment of a significant number of Muslims in the immediate months post the Police Action.[46] The Military government, eager to present a picture of normalcy and a state free from violence, had issued an order that officials who had been absent from their posts in the districts should resume duties by October 31, less than thirty days after the Police Action. This order was issued despite the fact that during the takeover of the state by the Military, Muslim government employees had been at the receiving end of much violence; most had fled their posts, taking refuge in places such as Hyderabad city. It did not take into consideration the fact that a climate of terror and dread still gripped Muslim communities across the state.

In a representation made to the Military administration, the Jamiat had asked that the former take into consideration the factors that had hindered Muslims from resuming their duties and extend the deadline of October 31. It stated that the general condition in the districts were not at all safe for Muslim officers, many of whom had to face aggression and even death threats when they tried to return to their posts. Those who managed to reach their posts had not been allowed to take charge on the said date. Many had remained under detention, in hospitals under treatment, or had been hiding in places where information about the deadline did not

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[46] The Jamiat claimed that apart from retrenchment, the transfers of Muslim officials to far-flung areas was curbing their morale. Muslim labourers in factories such as Sirpur Mills and others were being laid off in large numbers by new Managing Agents and their staff who had been appointed to manage state-led industries. See 'Memorandum on behalf of Jamiatul Ulama Hyderabad State', presented on 4 October 1953 to Kailash Nath Katju, Home and States Minister, File no.1(6)-H/53, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

reach them. Conceding that the number of Muslims employed in government services under the previous regime was indeed 'beyond their proportion and this proportion has…to be brought to a moderate level', the Jamiat asked that the government introduce changes gradually and take into consideration the difficulties faced by 'a helpless section of subjects'. This, it said, 'is a minimum demand that can be requested of a democratic and secular state'.[47] The resolution further noted that violence against Muslims had not come to an end, despite official efforts and speeches urging communal harmony by political leaders. This only went to show that no 'effective and efficient measures' had been undertaken to stop this violence. It stated, 'as the present govt has made an extensive search for the miscreants of the last regime, if the same policy should be adopted to punish the leaders of miscreants of the present regime, then, in our opinion, such punishment would create a very good moral and reformatory effect on others and peace can be maintained in the State…'[48]

One of the key modes of punishing 'the miscreants of the last regime' was to institute departmental enquiries against bureaucrats. The military dispensation promulgated the Public Servants (Departmental Enquiry) Regulation, 1358F which accorded to the military governor the power to constitute a committee to conduct enquiries against public servants if allegations of inefficiency, misconduct or improper conduct were made. The procedure for the enquiry was controversial: it was not incumbent on the board to summon or examine any witness that the defendant wanted to produce in his favour; if they did, they were not bound to record the witness at length; the defendant was not allowed the services of a lawyer; the past record and 'general reputation' of a public servant was considered 'relevant evidence'. Further, once the board prepared a report and passed it on to the military governor, his order was final and could not be challenged in court. However, any action taken against the public servant in

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[47] Resolutions passed at a meeting of the advisory committee of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema Hyderabad in *Matters concerning Muslims in Hyderabad in General, Allegations of discrimination etc*, 10 June 1949, File no. 1(44)-H/49, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[48] ibid.

these tribunals did not shield him from the initiation of any proceedings against him in the courts. If, however, the public servant sought to initiate legal proceedings against the enquiry board members or the governor for any losses incurred from the action taken under this regulation, he could not do so because the order provided blanket security to the board members and governor from such proceedings.[49] Such an ordinance that bypassed judicial norms of right to defence and appeal, and placed defendants under the mercy of unaccountable enquiry boards, must have added to the general atmosphere of persecution that Muslim communities felt at this time. A right to appeal was later conceded.

Even when Muslims were retained in the administration, it is quite likely that their opinions were viewed with great suspicion, especially if this was contrary to what Indian Union officers wanted. This was exemplified in the case of Nawab Zain Yar Jung, previously the Minister for Public Works and Commerce and Industries in the Nizam's government, who joined the military administration in 1948. When the Madras government began to demand that the entire construction of the Tungabhadra dam be handed over to it so that 'unified control' could be exercised, Zain Yar Jung opposed the proposal. He argued this would work against the military government which was already facing accusations of being conqueror-like, if it handed over control. V.P. Menon, secretary in the Ministry of States, after a meeting in which it was decided to let Madras takeover the dam, said:

> The Hyderabad Government and the Madras Government came to an arrangement under which two Chief Engineers would be in charge of the project. Now if we upset that agreement and introduce a unitary control against the express views of Zain Yar Jung in his capacity as Minister in Charge of PWD, the opinion in Hyderabad would be that the Government of India have ignored the interests of Hyderabad. This charge I do not want to be levelled against the Government of India at present. We need not revoke the decision taken at the meeting this morning, but we need only suspend it for the time being. In other words, let the present arrangement continue for three or four

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[49] *Public Servants (Departmental Enquiry) Regulation, 1358 Fasli, No.(XI) of 1358F*, order signed by JN Chaudhuri, Military Governor, in Gazette Orders, 1948-49, Home department, TSA.

months. Thereafter, when Mr. Khosla [A. N. Khosla was chairman of the Central Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation Commission] visits that place and makes a recommendation that unitary control should be introduced, the States Ministry on behalf of Hyderabad will certainly implement that decision. This gives Zain Yar Jung a chance to save his own face.[50]

In the aftermath of Partition and of the surrender of the Asaf Jahi state, Muslims in the state in general and Muslim officials in particular were regarded as disloyal to India.[51] While in the rest of India, Muslims were seen with suspicion and were repeatedly called upon to prove their loyalty to India, here in Hyderabad, among Indian Union officers, there was no doubt that Muslims were communal, and could not be trusted. Any complaints, criticisms, and agitations emanating from them were dismissed as the frustrations of a community that had lost its political supremacy. Under these circumstances, Muslim strategies revolved around challenging the state to live up to its secular and democratic claims, to urge the state to recognise the community as victims of communalism and to seek patronage based on their minority status. In the immediate years after Police Action, Muslims remained isolated from much of the processes of new state formation in Hyderabad-Deccan, reduced to a powerless minority.

If there was consensus among non-Muslim official and political circles on the need to reduce Muslim representation in services, the question of transferring 'imported officers' out of Hyderabad was a near universal demand, with even Muslim actors also supporting it. When the military government took over the administration of the state in September 1948, Vellodi claimed that 158 officers were imported from Bombay, Madras, and Madhya Pradesh to serve as collectors, superintendents of police, and subordinate officers.[52] The Report of the

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[50] Note by V.P. Menon, 2 November 1948, *Effect of constitutional developments in Hyderabad on River Valley Projects affecting Madras and Hyderabad – Tungabhadra project – unified control over the construction*, File no. 27-H/48, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[51] This question is explored in the context of Partition in Gyanendra Pandey, "Can A Muslim Be An Indian?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 4 (October 1999): 608–29.
[52] M.K. Vellodi in *Hyderabad Chief Minister's memorandum indicating broad lines of policy followed by Hyderabad Government from December 1949 to December 1950.* However, a military government publication

Economy Committee, headed by A.D. Gorwala, tasked with making recommendations for reorganising administrative machinery, found that opinion within the state was that imported officers had been behaving as if they were '…part of a conquering army holding an occupied country, and they make no effort to disguise their contempt, however well merited occasionally, for the local officials and respectable people whom they come into contact…'[53]

Nehru, who occasionally wrote notes of caution to the Hyderabad government, complained to the Ministry of States that he had heard reports of large-scale changes in the administration and that relatives of nationalist Muslim leaders such as Zakir Hussain and M.A. Ansari had been removed from services. On the matter of officers imported from neighbouring provinces, Nehru stated: 'Many of them are very junior and now they have to face delicate and novel situations for which they have no experience. It is always dangerous when a sense of unrestricted power comes to a young and inexperienced officer. From the information received by me, this power has not been rightly used often enough.'[54] The deputation of junior officers affected the maintenance of law and order in the state even as late as 1952. The Rehabilitation committee, on its tour of Osmanabad, found that the administration of tehsils was hindered by the fact that 'young officers, who had only been probationers until recently, had been put in charge of sensitive districts'. Although it made no allegations against them, the committee recommended that experienced Tahsildars, who could instil a sense of security in the population, be appointed.[55]

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stated that 234 Indian Union officers were brought over to man the administration. See Rao, *Hyderabad Reborn: First Six Months of Freedom (September 18, 1948-March 17, 1949)*, 16.

[53] Report of the Economy Committee, Government Press, Hyderabad Deccan in *Progress reports on the implementation of recommendations made by the Hyderabad Economy Committee*, File no F4 (25)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[54] Note by Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 November 1948, in *Hyderabad Affairs; Communal situation in the State; Military Governor's report on the alleged massacres of Muslims and desecration of mosques*, File no.112-H/48-Vol II, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[55] Report of the Rehabilitation Committee appointed by the Government of Hyderabad, June 25, 1951 in *Two notes prepared by Hyderabad Govt. on (1) Rehabilitation of refugees (Muslims & Non- Muslims) after Police Action. (2) Endowments,* File no.17(1)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, NAI.

In these years, the superimposition of Indian Union officers onto the existing setup in Hyderabad led to what was called the Dual Administration. With the military takeover of Hyderabad, civil administrators from the Indian Union took over control of the districts from the taluqdar. By 1950, the district administration was manned by a civil administrator, deputy civil administrator, and assistant civil administrator on the one hand, and a taluqdar, a second taluqdar, and a number of tahsildars on the other hand. Within the police, the officer ranks were primarily occupied by Indian Union officers, while district superintendents from the old regime functioned as additional superintendents.[56] Admitting that corruption had indeed been an issue within the new Hyderabad administration, the chief minister Vellodi nevertheless claimed that his 'own guess' was that many of these charges were 'founded on strong prejudice' and was the result of 'the prejudice of the still existing nationalist feeling of Hyderabad'. He said that the civil services were yet to be properly organised since many of the old regime's officers had migrated to Pakistan. The state 'suffers from dual administration', Vellodi argued, which was 'a legacy of police action days'. The redundancy of dual administration was being rectified but the 'trouble' was that 'the first taluqdar is in many cases a Muslim, and the Muslim government has lost face and therefore has less authority among the people.'[57]

This deputation of Indian Union officers re-ignited the debate in the state on the place of non-Mulkis, an issue which had lineages dating back to the late 19th century, when north Indian Muslim officials began to be appointed in the modernising administration under Salar Jung I.[58] The Urdu press, in particular, repeatedly raised the issue of non-Mulkis being appointed

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[56] Report of the Economy Committee, Government Press, Hyderabad Deccan in *Progress reports on the implementation of recommendations made by the Hyderabad Economy Committee*, File no F4 (25)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[57] Shakuntala Srinagesh, "Hyderabad Administration Still In The Making: Mr. Vellodi's Reply to Charges of Corruption," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, June 30, 1950, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[58] The categories of Mulki and non-Mulki began to appear on the Hyderabadi political scene as a result of an increasing take-over of the administration by Urdu-speaking North Indians since mid-19th century. The Mulkis

in Hyderabad and widely publicised the reported comments of Congress leader Padmaja Naidu that Union officers in Hyderabad were 'corrupt, incompetent, arrogant, and communal minded'. The April 15, 1951 review of the Urdu press compiled by the state government noted that Naidu's comments had 'created a great stir' and found overwhelming support within the local press. Even the usual pro-government papers had agreed with her on the inefficiency and arrogance of union officers (although they disagreed with Naidu's characterisation of them as communal; they were provincial minded, the newspaper *Milap* argued). The Iqdam reportedly stated that it was better to have local Hindus rule the state rather than Hindus from outside the state.[59] The issue of non-Mulkis in state employment had become a burning political issue, and by 1951, even Congress leaders were intervening to hasten the process of repatriation of non-Mulki officers to their parent states. In a note to the Ministry of States, B. Ramakrishna Rao, Minister for Revenue and Education, wrote that dual administration had been causing dissatisfaction among local officials, resulting in inefficiency and entailing an additional expenditure of at least Rs. 40 lakhs.[60] Large-scale protests spread across the state by 1952 against the continued presence of 'outsiders' at all levels of government in the State. Urdu newspapers reported that the Mulki agitation was due to a 'wholesale influx of outsiders to subordinate posts, like typists, clerks etc contributing to

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represented the indigenous elite, composed of both Hindus and Muslims and this political unit was unlike other outfits in the state which were divided along communal lines. By the 1920s, this influx of non-Mulkis had caused significant social unrest. In an interview to the *Times of India* in 1934, Syed Abid Hasan, a leading figure of the Mulki movement in Hyderabad State, stated that the movement, a 'purely' Hyderabadi one, 'was designed to fight and counteract outside influences in the State'. Pointing to the growing influence of communal events in British India over Hyderabadi politics as one such instance, Hasan said, 'The policy of the State is practically controlled from outside. The administrative machinery is in hands of outsiders, and, what is more, outside (non-Mulki) interests get preference over Mulki interests in almost every aspect of the State's activities.' "Protecting Interests of 'Mulkis': Hyderabad Movement Explained," *The Times of India*, November 3, 1934, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

In 1919, Nizam Osman Ali Khan issued a firman in which he reserved a large proportion of government appointments to the state's residents. These rules were however not implemented strictly, leading to the stirrings of the Mulki movement in the 1920s. The rules were again confirmed by the Nizam in the early months of 1948.

[59] Attitude of the Urdu local press for the fortnight ending April 15, 1951 in *Fortnightly review of the Urdu Press in Hyderabad*, File no. 17(8)-H/51, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[60] Note by B .Ramakrishna Rao, Minister for Revenue and Education, 1950 in *The so-called Dual Administration in the Hyderabad State*, File no. 1(9)-H, 1951, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

the rampant unemployment in Hyderabad.'[61] What had initially been Muslim discontent at their large-scale eviction from services expanded to include students who were protesting the current policies of recruitment that favoured 'outsiders' as well as the lack of employment opportunities in the state. The widespread agitation against the government included demands for repatriation of all 'outside officials', a guarantee that all educated and qualified Mulkis will be absorbed into state services, and strict enforcement of Mulki rules.[62] The slogan 'Hyderabad for Hyderabadis' that the protestors began to use during this agitation rendered the situation more difficult, given that this slogan was first used in the 1930s in Asaf Jahi Hyderabad to assert its autonomy, which was said to be under threat from non-Mulki administrators who did not have the state's interests at heart. With the Indian Union claiming for itself the mandate of the 'people', this slogan invoked memories of the separatist Nizam state and contained the implicit premise that the Indian Union was the 'outsider'. It also led to worries that the state had not yet been properly integrated into the Union. The state administration promptly initiated inquiries to find out if former Razakars had been involved in this 'anti-national' agitation and sought to dismiss the agitation as being conducted by 'misled' students.[63]

The period between the years 1948 and 1952 saw a fundamental restructuring of the state through an overhaul of its administrators. From purging Muslims out of the services through various means to deputing officers from neighbouring states to supersede the existing ones, the union government unleashed a bureaucratic takeover of the state in these years. The integration of the state into the Indian Union was not an event that occurred with the

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[61] Fortnightly review of the Urdu Press in Hyderabad, File no.17(6)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[62] ibid.
[63] Senior leaders from the ruling Congress party alleged that students were being used as "pawns" and that Razakars took a lead in the agitation. The police denied these allegations and said that the agitation was 'entirely non-communal in character'. See "Review of Four Years of Democracy in State: Nation Building and Executive Reforms," *The Times of India*, September 17, 1952, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

surrender of the Asaf Jahi regime; rather, that was the beginning of the process of integration, culminating eventually in the annihilation of its political existence in 1956.

*Abolishing Feudalism*

The Indian Union believed that it entered Hyderabad with widespread recognition among the residents of the state of its 'natural' legitimacy.[64] To retain this legitimacy, it needed to undertake immediate changes that would establish the essential difference between the ostensibly democratic power that it was and the feudal regime it was replacing. If reducing the proportion of Muslims in government services was meant to demonstrate its intention of correcting the Islamic misrule of the previous regime, the abolition of feudalism was meant to pull Hyderabad out of medievalism into a modern future.[65] In the anti-state propaganda that had been in circulation inside and outside the Asaf Jahi state for decades prior to the Police Action, feudalism was embodied by the Nizam himself—who owned a quarter of the state's lands as *Sarf-e-Khas*—and to a lesser extent in the debauched and exploitative figure of the jagirdar.[66] The Military Governor Chaudhuri, in the run-up to the abolition, said as much when he declared: 'We all agree that the jagirdari system is feudal and as such has no place in the modern world. I have read comments in the American press on the taking over of the sarf-i-khas and they all made the point that the anachronism cannot continue.'[67] Further, to a question on why peasants' representatives were not taken on board in the new administration

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[64] In an interview, Chaudhuri stated that the entry of the military put an end to the violence in the state almost immediately. The reasons for this, he said, were: 'Firstly, the Hyderabadi, Hindu or Muslim, was not a turbulent person. Secondly, they had a wholesome respect for, and confidence in the Government India had installed, and thirdly, they must have had enough of strife.' Interview with Joyanto Nath Chaudhuri, recorded by Shri B. R. Nanda, March 23, 1973, 39, Oral History Project, NMML.

[65] It has been argued previously that the long duration of fourteen months for which the military government ruled the state was to crush the communist movement in the state, which had a strong base in Telangana. The active approach towards land and agrarian reforms was also undertaken to stem support among the peasantry for communists, who had by then undertaken forcible distribution of land. See Sherman, "The Integration of the Princely State of Hyderabad and the Making of the Postcolonial State in India, 1948–56.".

[66] For a discussion on the critiques of feudalism in Hyderabad among critics of the states, see chapter 2.

[67] Special Correspondent, "Hyderabad Jagir Regulation: Publication Expected within Fortnight," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 4, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

proposed in jagirs, Chaudhuri said that it was considered, 'but I do not think the peasantry could get better representatives than ourselves.'[68] The Indian Union thus assumed to itself the roles of both the bearer of modernity and the patron of the masses. Yet it bears reminding here that the explicit interest of the new regime in the land question was to curb the growing militant communist movement in the state, particularly in parts of Telangana.[69]

In its efforts to mobilise public support for this move, the Union was supported by some of the samasthan holders such as that of Wanaparthy Samasthan's Rameshwar Rao, who said that jagirdars needed to realise that 'the times are moving fast' and claimed that most were happy with the constructive proposals put forward by the government.[70] There was support from the English press as well who argued that the condition of the jagir estates had always been so 'deplorable' as to elicit comment from the Nizam himself. Quoting a 1942 firman of the Nizam, the *Times of India* said:

> The jagirdars are indebted and many evils have sprung up in their system. But no other reason can be assigned to this state of affairs than the fact that the jagirdars do not stay in their estates and administer them personally… and in their extravagance and desire for pomp and show, never take care and exceed their income… Within the short time at their disposal, this body must reform itself before ever they are overtaken by conditions uncongenial to them and they lose their golden chance.[71]

With the arrival of the new regime, the fate of the jagirdari system had been sealed given that it was the most visible representation of feudalism. Public perception in favour of its

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[68] ibid.

[69] A note of the Ministry of Finance regarding compensation to Jagirdars stated as much when it said regarding the abolition: 'Apart from doing away with a relic of the feudal system in the State there are also political advantages to be derived from meeting to some extent the simmering discontent of the agricultural population by this measure of reform.' See Notes by Ministry of Finance, n.d., in *Hyderabad Jagirs (Commutation) Regulations – Payment of Compensation*, File no. 10(5)-H/50, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI. See also footnote 61.

[70] Special Correspondent, "Hyderabad 'Samasthans' And 'Jagirs' To Be Abolished: Military Governor's Scheme," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 18, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[71] Special Correspondent, "Feudal Hyderabad-II: Deplorable Condition of Estates," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 22, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

abolition had been well laid out by the time the regulation was formally announced.[72] From September 15, 1949 onwards, the Indian Union began the take-over of all forms of jagirs—paigahs, samasthans, inams, ilaqas, and ordinary jagirs. On this day, ceremonies marking the takeover of the jagirs were held at various samasthans, including at the Wanaparthy Samasthan, whose ruler Rameshwar Rao handed over his office seals and treasury keys to the Military Governor, thus ending the 440-year rule of his dynasty.[73] The process of take-over of the jagir areas continued till May 6 the next year. At the end of it, the new regime had taken over land that accounted for 35.7 percent of the state, 34 percent of the total villages, and about 30 percent of the state's population in all.[74]

The *Times of India* claimed that 'the five million peasants living in jagir areas… are hailing the change with great joy'[75], the abolition of jagirs was 'the biggest and most important item on the programme of agrarian reforms' and 'spelt the doom of the ancient feudal system in Hyderabad',[76] and 'completes the process of emancipation of the peasants of Hyderabad area from feudal landlordism'.[77] The jagirdars protested that the regulation had been uncalled for, that no similar measure had taken place anywhere else in the Indian Union, that the military government was only a caretaker one, and that the proper jurisdiction belonged to the soon-

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[72] Legal challenges to the Hyderabad (Abolition of Jagirs) Regulation and the Jagirs Commutation Regulation were pending in the court and were finally disposed of in 1954. A division bench of the Hyderabad High Court ruled that the petitioners' contention, that their fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution had been infringed upon and the lack of a prescribed principle for compensation violated Article 31, did not stand scrutiny. The regulations were enacted by an authority and at a time when no limitations were placed on its exercise of power and had taken effect before the Indian Constitution came into force."Hyderabad Jagir Abolition Act: Held Valid by High Court," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, April 2, 1954, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[73] Correspondent, "End of Feudalism: Government Assume Charge of Jagirs," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, September 23, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[74] Khusro, *Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad*, 1–2.

[75] Correspondent, "Stormy Elections: Relief to Ryots in Jagir Areas," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 4, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[76] Correspondent, "End of Feudalism: Government Assume Charge of Jagirs."

[77] Correspondent, "Hyderabad Government To Take Over Jagirs: Regulation Promulgated, Historic Reform," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, August 15, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

to-be-established Constituent Assembly. The Jagirdars' Association also warned that the dispossession of jagirdars would create economic chaos across the state.[78]

While the abolition of the jagirs was a unilateral decision taken by the new government, its execution involved negotiations with a variety of stakeholders. What the Indian Union had lumped together as the jagirdari system were actually several very different arrangements of authority that had existed within the state for centuries (See Table 3).

These authorities began separate negotiations with the new regime, asking to be treated with due recognition to their histories. Twelve of the fourteen samasthan rulers—all Hindu—of Gadwal, Wanaparthy, Jataprole, Amarchinta, Palavanha, Domakonda, Gopalpet, Anegondi, Dubbak, Pappannapet, Gurgunta, and Sirnapalli, in their memorial to the military governor, wrote that their status was different from that of jagirdars and asked that, 'as long as the rights called Deshmukhi and Deshpandigiri are in force in this State, that may be continued in favour of the memorialists and be not regarded as having been abolished by the coming into operation of this scheme.'[79] They asked to be treated as rulers and accordingly be granted privy purses in perpetuity, rather than as jagirdars, who would receive compensation only for their lifetime. They drew upon the historicity of their rule arguing that samasthans predated the Asaf Jahi dynasty, and some like Gadwal and Wanaparthy traced their existence to the time of the Vijayanagar kingdom.

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[78] ibid.

[79] Memorial addressed to Military Governor, 26 February 1949, in *Representations etc received in connection with the proposed jagirdari legislation in the Hyderabad State*, File no 1(2)-H/49, Vol II, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

*Table 3: Area and number of villages*

|   | Type of land authority | Area in sq.miles | No. of villages |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sarf-e-Khas | 5682 | 1374 |
| 2 | Paigahs | 4352 | 1194 |
| 3 | Samasthans | 5030 | 497 |
| 4 | Ilaqas | 2836 | 1243 |
| 5 | Jagirs | 11619 | 3122 |
|   | Total | 29519 | 7430 |

*Source: Ali Mohammad Khusro, Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad, 1958*

The makhtadars also used a similar argument of antique origins to distinguish themselves from jagirdars; they also claimed that they had increased the extent of cultivable land by reclaiming forest land and increasing sources of irrigation. Given that most makhtadars had a fixed revenue that they paid to the state no matter the extent of their profits or losses, it was argued that this was in effect 'a permanent settlement' between the two parties. Further, Makhtadars held smaller holdings and belonged to the 'middle class' unlike the jagirdars, and so 'deserved greater sympathy and concession'. Exemption from income tax and land revenue on personal lands were some of the demands the makhtadars put forward to the new regime.[80] By presenting themselves as landlords who had been invested in improvement and increased productivity, the makhtadars were asking to not be treated as if they were feudal rent seekers. Instead, they asserted, their contributions should be acknowledged and their place in the agrarian structure should be secured.

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[80] Letter from Makhtadars to Military Governor, 28 February 1949, in *Representations etc received in connection with the proposed jagirdari legislation in the Hyderabad State*, File no 1(2)-H/49, Vol II, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

The jagirdars, through their association, chose to foreground, among other things, the 'non-communal attitude and policy of the class of Jagirdars'. 'If there has been any selfless effort and untiring action in the matter of maintaining communal toleration and communal sympathy as well as Hindu-Muslim unity amongst the various classes of subjects of this Government it was only on the part of the Jagirdars', the Hyderabad Jagirdars' Association wrote in a letter to the Chief Civil Administrator.[81] The letter stated that the 'propaganda' that cultivators were deprived of the fruits of their labour and of land in jagirs were based 'on incorrect conjectures', and that cultivators enjoyed the same rights as their counterparts in Diwani (government) areas. In another memorandum to the government, Sir Sultan Ahmad, writing on behalf of the Majlis Jagirdaran, acquiesced to the need for abolition, and stated: '…we are prepared not to insist on continuing any system which may be as a matter of general policy considered as antiquated or as misfit in the new setup of democracy in the country.'[82] But, he reminded the government, those who are to be affected by this legislation should be provided the opportunity to 'play their part in the social enterprise and not be treated as castaways, and be a burden on the society and the administration'.[83]

Justifying the large retinue of dependents and their collective lifestyles, Ahmed claimed that this was necessary because 'they were obliged to maintain a different and higher standard of living'. It was not possible, he added, for them to 'break away from old traditions and responsibilities and level down their standard of living and status in society' by turning away their dependents. Challenging the reading that a jagirdar's right over revenue collection was only restricted to his lifetime, he said that such an interpretation was 'wholly erroneous and in

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[81] Letter to D. S. Bakhle, Chief Civil Administrator, *Jagirdari problem* (booklet published by Hyderabad Jagirdars' Association), n.d., in *Memorandum submitted by the Majlis Jagirdaran, Hyderabad*, File no. 10(4)-H, 1951, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[82] 'Memorandum by Sir Sultan Ahmed for the Mujlis Jagirdaran' n.d. in *Memorandum submitted by the Majlis Jagirdaran, Hyderabad*, File no.10(4)-H, 1951, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[83] ibid.

complete defiance of the terms of the sanad and also against practically the uniform practice, custom and usage of the last two hundred years'.[84]

In these ways and more, the different centres of power, which the Asaf Jahi state had allowed to flourish in its dominions, negotiated with the new regime. Recognizing that their existence was considered anachronistic—especially given that the Nizam himself had surrendered his lands—they sought remedies and compensations that took into account the legality, historicity, and social and economic importance of their tenures.

Yet, this move to abolish the jagirdari system was not as far-reaching as it was made out to be, at least in terms of increased production. This had to do with the specific legal status of the jagirs within Hyderabad-Deccan, which was different from jagirs elsewhere in the country. Here the jagirdars were not owners of land but were primarily revenue collectors. By abolishing the jagirdari system, the new regime was simply replacing one set of individuals with its own employees to perform the function of revenue collection. In that sense, it did not transform land relations fundamentally, since it left the 'primary relationship' between the cultivator and the landlord unchanged.[85]

The real import of the abolition lay in the social and cultural changes it could potentially have effected at the level of the village. With the erasure of the institution of the jagirdar as a source of power, the variety of extractions in cash and kind that was demanded from the villager ceased to potentially exist (no village-level evidence exists to substantiate this—upper-caste village officials and landlords and moneylenders who had been known to extract unpaid labour and illegal payments could very well have continued these practices). Further, given that a large number of jagirs were vested with welfare and administrative functions such as police, judiciary, education, and health among others, the abolition meant that the

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[84] ibid.

[85] Khusro, *Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad*, 16.

state was now fully responsible for executing these functions as well. Consolidation of these functions within the ambit of the state was useful because jagirs, often scattered across the territory and not contiguous to each other, could not often be administratively efficient.

A report on the effects of jagirdari abolition and other land reforms in the state, undertaken at the Osmania University five years after the abolition—and possibly the only one undertaken to examine the effects of this move—found that about 42 percent of its respondents felt more secure about the possession of their lands, 27 percent felt that they would invest more in improving productivity due to this increased security, and 75 percent felt that educational facilities had improved because of a rise in number of schools as well as in the quality of teaching staff. However, although the report presented the facts in such a way to emphasise the positive psychological effects of the abolition, it is pertinent to note that 58 percent did not feel any increased security and 73 percent did not feel this had materially or psychologically affected their capacity to invest more in land.[86]

Investigators also found a 'marked tendency' among families in former jagir areas to leave their homes, such that there was nearly an 8.6 percent reduction in families in the sampled villages. Apart from familial exodus, investigators also found temporary and permanent migration of individuals from these areas. They attributed this to a 'decline in employment opportunities' following the abolition of the large establishments that jagirdars had maintained. Findings from the research project also indicated that no significant change in the pattern of land holdings had been effected in the wake of the abolition, with proportion of cultivation between owners and lessees remaining at 83 and 17 percent of farmed areas. Where it had made a difference, the report argued, was in the marked improvement and

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[86] ibid, 142-3. The report also stated: 'Only 10 percent of the interviewees felt that the abolition of jagirdari was disadvantageous while the rest either maintained that there was not much of a change or that the situation had changed for the better.' This phraseology is in itself odd given that it did not state what percentage of respondents felt that jagirdari abolition had worked out well for them.

increase in administrative efficiency and 'nation-building' activities. Medical and educational facilities had improved and widening the ambit of the agricultural department had increased provision of loans, seeds, implements, and fertilisers marginally, the report noted.

The abolition of the jagirdari system was necessary for the new regime to publicly declare its stance against feudalism—and it successfully did so. But the elimination of this class from land tenure arrangements in the state did not completely dislodge feudalism, which was rooted primarily in oppressive landlord-tenant relations, and was prevalent both in Diwani and Jagir areas.[87] The Indian Union realised the need to address this problem to effectively counter the popularity of the communist movement in parts of Telangana, which also threatened to spread to the Karnatak areas. It set up the Agrarian Reforms Committee to examine the question of ceilings on agricultural holdings, recommend measures to address uneconomic holdings, and secure tenancy rights. It found that there existed a consensus among the Hyderabadi public that tenancy should be abolished entirely, landlords be allowed to retain only as much land as they could personally cultivate, and the rest be distributed among tenants.[88] The committee's recommendations led to the enactment of the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1950 (amended later in 1954). Although this was hailed as a landmark achievement, it was arguably in continuation of the efforts undertaken by the Asaf Jahi state to reform land relations in the state with, for instance, the Asami Shikmi Act of 1945.[89]

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[87] In jagir areas, the jagirdar was the equivalent of the upper-caste, upper-class, and often absentee, landlords of the Diwani areas. In many instances, jagirdars, or their agents, acted as owners of all the land in their jagirs and manipulated land records – also under their control – to designate hereditary cultivators as tenants. This state of affairs was exacerbated by the lack of survey and settlement operations in some of the jagir areas, which allowed for easy manipulation. The Asaf Jahi state often intervened to state that the jagirdar had ownership rights only over *seri* lands (lands handed over for personal cultivation of the jagirdar) and the cultivator in jagir areas had the same rights as those in Diwani areas.

[88] It cited responses from the Agriculturists' Association, Wanaparthy Samasthan's ruler Rameswar Rao, large landholders and the HSC as evidence of this consensus.

[89] For more on this issue, see chapter 2.

From this predecessor law, the 1950 Act retained the provision requiring six years of continuous cultivation for a tenant to claim protection from eviction. It also introduced the concept of an economic holding—a minimum extent of land that could allow the cultivator to maintain his average family of five in reasonable comfort. It set a ceiling on the maximum land that could be owned by a single person, limiting it to five times the size of an economic holding. In later amendments, various other concepts—such as family and basic holdings— were introduced as a way of setting ceilings on the extent of land held by individuals. The Act enabled six lakh tenants, cultivating nearly a quarter of the total agricultural land in the state, to receive protection from eviction. However, widespread evictions were being reported from various districts, forcing the government to promulgate the Hyderabad Prevention of Evictions Ordinance.

The tenancy Act elicited protests from the Agriculturists' association on the matter of prescribing ceilings, and the low prices at which landlords were mandated to sell to protected tenants. The Association argued that in many areas, survey and settlement operations had not been completed or had been done 30 to 40 years before. To fix prices based on the extant assessment, therefore, was unfair to the landlords. It alleged that, 'the reforms proposed seem to indicate that one class of people i.e. the tenants who have already been given sufficient safeguards are being favoured at the expense of another class, i.e. landholder who has already given up much of his holdings and have to give up more as and when the 1950 Act is implemented in full.'[90] Further, it stated that it would come in the way of production efficiencies, demotivating the enterprising farmer and resulting in decreased yields. Fixing a fair compensation model would be near impossible because it would be too much of a financial burden if compensation had to take into account land speculation; to limit

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[90] Summary of Memorandum by the Hyderabad Agriculturists' Association, in *Swamy Ramanand Thirtha's note on the land problem in the Hyderabad State and proposals regarding amendments to the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural land, Act, 1950 and a bill to amend to the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands, Act, 1950*, File no. 10(4)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

compensation would be unconstitutional. It cited the recommendations of the Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition Committee and the Planning Commission against prescribing ceilings because they could disrupt the agricultural economy.

In response, officials argued that these claims were frequently made against any kind of land reforms or nationalisation of industries, and the political situation involving communist troubles required urgent action from the government. Yet there was the apprehension that these reforms may affect agricultural yield. A note from the Ministry of States sought to remind the Hyderabad Government: 'The urgent necessity for ensuring better and increased food production which is the crying need of the country should not be lost sight of in the enthusiasm for the ideal approach to the land problem.'[91]

The Osmania University report on the effects of jagirdari abolition and land reforms found that only 45 percent of the protected tenants created in 1951 continued to enjoy their protected status in 1954; 22 percent had been illegally evicted and 17 percent had voluntarily surrendered. The last category of voluntary surrenders, the report noted, are 'very often a subtle form of illegal evictions and only a proportion of these surrenders is genuine'.[92] This situation was exacerbated by the fact that neither the police nor revenue officials intervened on behalf of the tenants at the time of evictions, a matter serious enough for Chief Minister B. Ramakrishna Rao to explicitly order both sets of officials to help the tenant who was being evicted.[93] The First Hyderabad Land Commission also found that tenurial practices were being continued on customary terms rather than according to statutes: tenancies were still on

[91] Note from the Ministry of States, *Swamy Ramanand Thirtha's note on the land problem in the Hyderabad State and proposals regarding amendments to the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural land, Act, 1950 and a bill to amend to the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands, Act, 1950*, File no. 10(4)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.
[92] Khusro, *Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad*, 169.
[93] 'Ordinance to stop illegal evictions to be in a week's time: Chief Minister's Announcement', 29 July 1952, Daily News, Newspaper cuttings, in *Swamy Ramanand Thirtha's note on the land problem in the Hyderabad State and proposals regarding amendments to the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural land, Act, 1950 and a bill to amend to the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands, Act, 1950*, File no. 10(4)-H/52, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

annual terms and on payment of market or customary rents.[94] In his review of the Osmania University report, A.N. Seth pointed out that while the fate of protected tenants were recorded through purchases, evictions, or surrenders, there was no clear indication of what happened to ordinary tenants upon the passage of the act.[95] He also argued that the Act initially allowed for a maximum of 10 economic holdings—100 acres of wet land and 1000 acres of dry land—which left tenants with a very small share of the land to take over from the landlord. The government reduced the maximum limit to five economic holdings, but that did not trigger many purchases from the tenants either, he said. Given that a large number of evictions took place in the first year of the Act and the promulgation of the ordinance halting evictions came about in August 1952, lapsed in January 1953, and was finally incorporated as an amendment in 1954, the law had remained largely powerless in the face of social resistance by vested landlord interests.

The Osmania University research report stated that the implementation of the tenancy legislation was better in Telangana and in the Diwani areas than in Karnatak, Marathwada, and ex-jagir areas where the 'degree of consciousness among the tenantry' was low. While smaller tenants were evicted more often, larger tenants had been able to purchase the lands they had been cultivating, the report said. The total cultivated area in the former jagir areas had risen by 10 percent with owner cultivated-areas increasing by 14 percent and tenant-cultivated areas decreasing by 9 percent. In the Diwani areas, the total cultivated area increased only by 2 percent, the owner-cultivated area by 11 percent, while tenant-cultivated area decreased by 26 percent. The report presented the decrease in tenant cultivation as a success and in keeping with the intention of the tenancy legislation to increase peasant proprietorship. However, this could very well have been the result of landlords resuming their land for personal cultivation to escape the provisions of the tenancy act.

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[94] Hyderabad Land Commission, "First Report of the Hyderabad Land Commission on Delimitation of Local Areas and Determination of Family Holdings," 14.
[95] A.N. Seth, "Book Review: Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad," *Indian Economic Review* 4, no. 2 (August 1958): 97–101.

In the case of Hyderabad, the Indian Union had set itself the tasks, even before entering the Dominions, of abolishing all instances of feudalism. It achieved instant success with the jagirdari abolition, given that there was no question of separate regimes of minor sovereignties at a time of the mighty sovereignty of the Indian Union. The jagirdars served no purpose in the new regime and their elimination was going to only bring accolades rather than brickbats. The matter of land reforms, in particular tenancy legislations, however cut at the heart of feudalism, not just in the state but across the Indian Union. This was a task that the Indian Union performed haltingly in Hyderabad, as it did elsewhere in the country—given that there was apprehension about hurting food production, opposition from powerful sectional interests at the village level, and the desire to effect tenancy reforms without affecting the abilities of the large landholders to pursue capitalist growth. In this, the Indian Union was similar to the Asaf Jahi regime which sought to transform the agricultural landscape by treating landlords and tenants not as antagonistic classes, but as classes with same interests.

*Hyderabad, 'A Babel of Tongues'*

Even as the Indian Union continued its process of altering the fundamental structures of state in Hyderabad, demands for linguistic reorganisation of territory were fast gaining traction in South India. Demands for separate Kannada, Marathi, and Telugu-speaking states wove in seamlessly with the demands for the disintegration of Hyderabad (see Figure 12 for a linguistic division of Hyderabad state). The demands for linguistic states had origins unconnected to Hyderabad—Kannada speakers from the Bombay Presidency wanted a separate state to shake off Marathi hegemony and Telugu-speakers from the Madras Presidency sought to form Andhra state to escape the dominance of Tamil speakers. With the demise of the Asaf Jahi state however, the disintegration of Hyderabad-Deccan came to be

pitched as essential to the linguistic reorganisation of South India.[96] From within the state, the demand to dissolve the state focused on the need to ensure that a secessionist state does not continue to exist, for it could become a nucleus around which dissent could potentially gather. Political parties across the ideological spectrum—Communist, Socialist, Hindu, Scheduled Caste and Hyderabad State Congress—were in support of the dismemberment, even if they disagreed on when it should take place.

A few days after Hyderabad's accession into the Indian Union, Sir R.P. Paranjpye, former vice-chancellor of Bombay and Lucknow universities and a former legislator in the Bombay Legislative Council, called for directing attention to the 'final settlement of the Hyderabad question'.[97] By this, he meant not only the administrative integration of the state into the Indian Union, but also the mergers of the three linguistic units of Telangana, Marathwada, and Karnatak into their contiguous areas. 'Naturally, this solution means the disappearance of Hyderabad State in its present form, but it will disappear only to add fresh strength to three new provinces in whose future it can take legitimate pride,' he said.

In what had become common to arguments in favour of linguistic reorganisation in that period, Paranjpye argued that the current distribution of territories had been 'historical accidents without much regard to the natural, cultural, economic, or linguistic affinities of their different parts'. They had managed to survive because of British support, but as political power came to be devolved more onto people, 'mutual jealousies began to raise its (sic) head and the work of administration tended to be more and more difficult.' Given that development projects began to be based on electoral prospects, Paranjpye argued, the agitation for separate provinces gained strength. 'Its sponsors firmly believe that such partial

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[96] Writing during the time of SRC deliberations, G.V. Hallikeri, a strong advocate of the formation of Karnataka state, declared that the SRC would have failed in its mission if it did not recommend the disintegration of Hyderabad-Deccan. 'The problem of South India', he said, 'will only be solved' with the state's dissolution. Special Correspondent, "'No Truncated Karnatak State': GV Hallikeri's Demand," *The Spectator*, July 15, 1954, Print edition, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library.

[97] R.P. Paranjpye, "Integration of Hyderabad with Indian Dominion: Plea for Division of State into Linguistic Areas," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, September 25, 1948, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

freedom will strengthen the whole body politic, just as the vigour of the whole human body is made up of the combined vigour of its several parts', he said.

*Figure 12: Linguistic divisions in Hyderabad state*
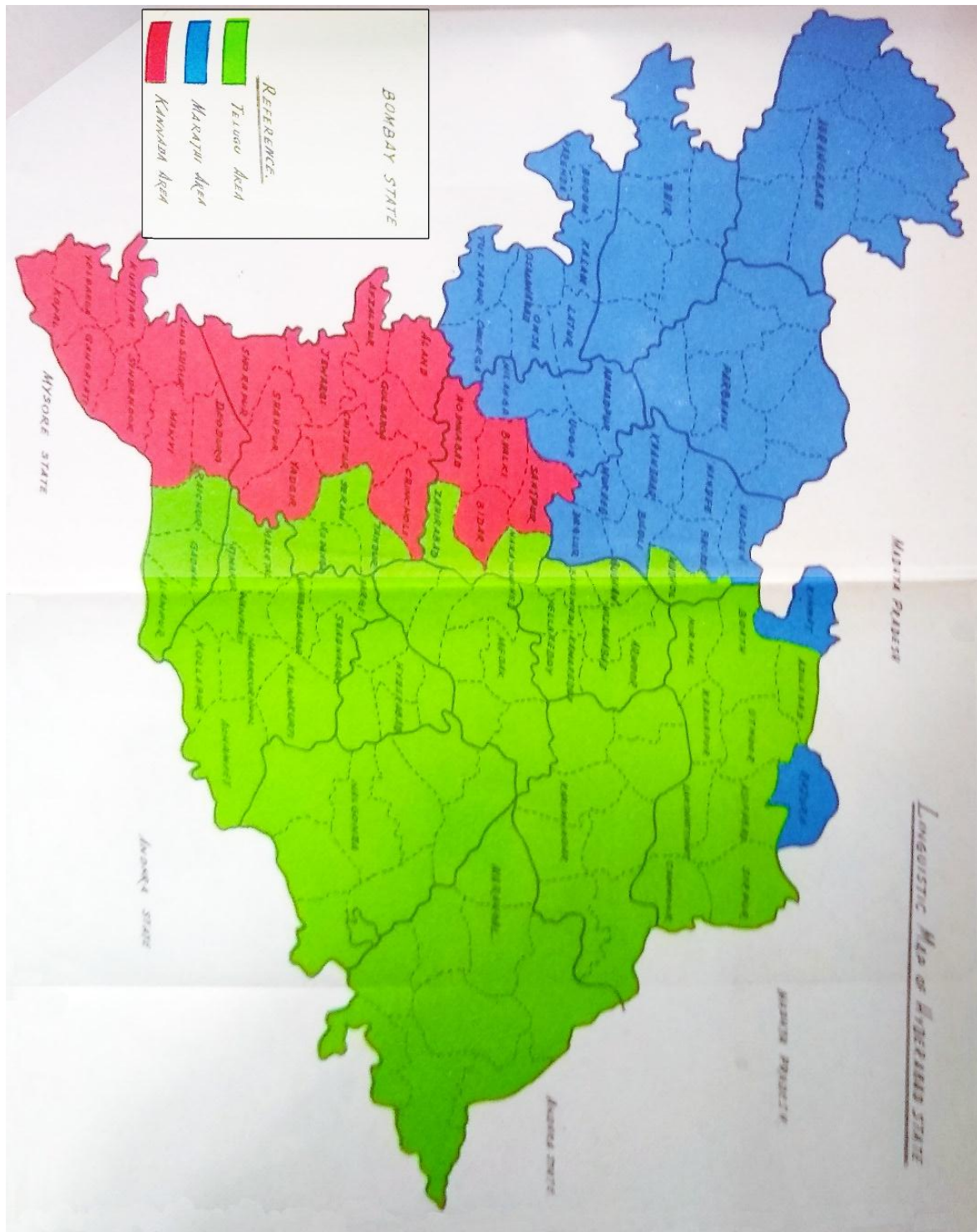


*Source: Seshadri et al., "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation),"1.*

It was also argued that linguistic reorganisation was a natural corollary to the freedom movement. Speaking during the debate on the Andhra State Bill in the Lok Sabha, the Congress Member of Parliament from Bombay N.V. Gadgil sought to remind his party of the promise of dividing the country along linguistic lines when he said: 'If during the struggle for freedom this cry for linguistic provinces was a rallying point to get the support of all it is a great necessity today when we are trying to turn freedom into an instrument of prosperity and progress.' [98] He added that it would be a 'great tragedy' if people were asked to continue to live in existing provincial arrangements.

If this were one set of 'national' reasons for which Hyderabad needed to be disintegrated, another set of arguments focused on the recent history of the state and the secessionist tendencies that it had displayed. The Arya Samaj, one of the key political actors in the state, recommended the immediate dissolution of the state. D. Manick Rao, an advocate from Raichur and an Arya Samajist, writing in the Hyderabad-based weekly *The Spectator*, said: 'Geographically, Hyderabad is a pincer thrust in the heart of three well-defined lingual areas. Historically, Hyderabad is a residuary power left after the liquidation of Maratha and Vijayanagar dynasties. In recent history this state has been an apology for different paramount powers from the French down to the present regime. There have been sustained efforts to create a sense of extreme political exclusiveness among people here by a wrong indexing of historical events.'[99] Rao's statements conformed to the then-popular understanding of Muslim assertion in Hyderabad as arising out of a misplaced sense of superiority, of being a conquering race. Responding to criticisms that such demands for disintegration were communal or anti-Muslim, V.G. Deshpande, secretary of the All Indian

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[98] "Mr. NV Gadgil Urges Disintegration of Hyderabad: Debate on Andhra Bill in the House of People," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, August 19, 1953, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[99] D.Manick Rao, "No Love for Mysore If Greater Karnatak Means Loyalties to Lalit Mahal," *The Spectator*, July 1, 1954, Print edition, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library.

Hindu Mahasabha, said that the demand was not communal, rather it was 'to crush communalism in the state'. 'As long as Hyderabad was allowed separate existence… the communally fanatic conception of independent Hyderabad would remain', he claimed.[100]

That the Nizam had maintained relations with Pakistan in his brief tenure of independence, and that several of the leading members of the state had migrated to Pakistan after Police Action, seemed to have rendered the state suspect even after its integration into the Indian Union. The fear of lurking Pakistan connections also hung in the air.[101] An editorial in *The Spectator* expressed this fear when it said: 'Hyderabad still continues to be a breeding home for communal trouble. The hoisting of the Pakistan flag in various places in Hyderabad state is a fresh eruption of the festering disease of communalism which was curbed by the Police Action but not destroyed.'[102] According to the editorial, the Razakars were part of this 'festering disease'; given that loyalty could not be expected of them, they should be 'found out' before they come together to attack the 'very foundations of harmony and order'. A correspondent of the *Economic Weekly* (later the *Economic and Political Weekly*) said that the hoisting of Pakistan flags on Independence Day in a number of places across the state was 'only a symptom of a deep-rooted malaise in the body politic of this troubled State. It is a reminder—if one were needed—that things have not changed over much since the Police Action and that Hyderabad Muslims have not yet reconciled themselves to the integration of

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[100] Staff Correspondent, "Hyderabad State's Future: View of Mahasabha Leader," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 24, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[101] Vellodi wrote in his note to the Ministry of States that Muslims in Hyderabad had close connections with Pakistan because their family members continued to reside there. He said: 'The view of those who are in Pakistan must naturally colour the views of those who are in Hyderabad; and therefore so long as the relations between the two countries continue to be what they are, so long must one be careful in extending the scope of Muslim engagement.' See 'Hyderabad Chief Minister's memorandum indicating broad lines of policy followed by Hyderabad Government from December 1949 to December 1950', File no. 1(45)-H/50, Hyderabad Branch, MoS, GoI, NAI.

[102] "A Timely Warning: Editorial," *The Spectator*, September 9, 1954, Print edition, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library.

the State in a democratic India.'[103] The author cast aspersions on the loyalties of Communists and Muslims, both of whom apparently owed allegiances to foreign flags. Criticising the Indian Government's stated commitment to secularism, the correspondent stated that this was not needed for a 'community which claims to be a separate nation merely by virtue of its religion'. The government had retained committed Razakars in its services and supported the continuance of Hyderabad as a unit with a misplaced concern for preserving Deccani culture, the editorial stated.

Arguments against the retention of Hyderabad-Deccan as a territorial unit often veered towards a dislike towards the Nizam himself. Yeshwant Rao Joshi of the Hindu Mahasabha, in a 1954 session of the organisation, declared: 'The man who heaped injustice after injustice on the Hindus should not remain as our head.' Dismantling Hyderabad would remove, he said, the 'great impediment in the formation of linguistic states'.[104] The All-India Linguistic States Conference also pitched in by announcing the launch of a nationwide agitation not only for the dissolution of Hyderabad state, but also for the deposition of the Nizam.[105] Congress leader Gadgil stated: 'The present Nizam is morally and constitutionally responsible for all the atrocities done by the Razakars. You have given assurances to the people of Hyderabad that they will be given an opportunity to decide their political set-up. You must fulfil that promise.'[106] Diwan Raghavendra Rao, speaking on the Andhra state bill in the Lok Sabha declared the Nizam as 'the greatest danger with his cliques and groups' and that the state needed to be dissolved for the sake of India's stability.[107] Sentiments against the Nizam as Rajpramukh were intense enough for seventy MLAs from opposition parties such

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[103] Hyderabad Correspondent, "Hyderabad: Editorial," *Economic and Political Weekly* 6, no. 35 (August 28, 1954): 934–35.
[104] "Division of Hyderabad: Leader's Demand," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 8, 1954, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[105] "Disintegration Of Hyderabad: Agitation to Be Launched," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, April 20, 1954, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[106] "Mr. NV Gadgil Urges Disintegration of Hyderabad: Debate on Andhra Bill in the House of People."
[107] "Need for Dismemberment of Hyderabad Stressed: Unanimous View of MPs from State," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, August 20, 1953, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

as the People's Democratic Front, Socialist Party, and Workers and Peasants Party, along with independents, to boycott the Nizam's address as Rajpramukh to the newly formed Legislative Assembly in 1952.[108]

The socialist leader V.D. Deshpande, focusing on the incompatibility of the three linguistic regions of the state with each other, argued that the only commonality had been 'the alien ruler who suppressed and oppressed them, now and then adopting the policy of "divide and rule" and trying to impose his feudal, so-called Deccani culture on them.'[109] Claiming that the three regions had more affinities with their linguistic counterparts outside the state, Deshpande said that the Asaf Jahi rule had 'spelt disaster for their social, cultural and educational development, and for three hundred years they were groaning under the agony'. The business of administration had also become inefficient because an officer needed to be conversant with at least six languages to able to govern the whole state. Legislators were unable to understand each other, and the assembly had become 'a babel of tongues', he said. Making his case further, he argued that the regions differed geographically and economically as well, with Marathwada being a region of black soil and cotton, and Telangana a land of rice. The former needed to be integrated with the industrial areas of Bombay and Sholapur to develop its textile mills, while the latter's mineral and forest resources and hydroelectric potential lay unexploited because it was 'cut-off from the delta area of the Andhra'. Of the Karnatak area, he said, it was the 'worst sufferer' and could only become prosperous if it joined in with a separate Kannada state. The existence of the state was hindering the 'organic development' of the respective regions, he declared.

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[108] "70 MLAs Walk Out Of Assembly: Opposition to Nizam," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 24, 1952, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[109] V.D. Deshpande, "Disintegration of Hyderabad: Reasons for Demand," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, June 22, 1953, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

The issue of the state's disintegration in particular and linguistic reorganisation in general became contentious, especially since the central government started to express reservations regarding this move. In the case of Hyderabad, the foremost opponent of disintegration was Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who believed such a move would upset the whole structure of South India, and could take years to settle down. 'I think it will be extremely undesirable, unfortunate and injurious for Hyderabad to be disintegrated now,' he said.[110] His opposition caused rethinking within the HSC, with some earlier proponents of disintegration such as Chief Minister B. Ramakrishna Rao calling for caution. The *Times of India* reported that public opinion seemed to be veering in favour of retaining Hyderabad, as it was a 'viable, economic, administrative and cultural entity with a historical role to play in the comity of the States of the Indian Union.' It reported the Chief Minister claiming that it was only a majority of the vocal sections of the public who were in favour of disintegration and that the general masses had no opinion about it 'as long as they got enough grub'.[111]

Those who supported the retention of Hyderabad argued that its break-up would be a 'calamity'.[112] The retired Chief Justice of the Hyderabad High Court R.S. Naik was said to have told the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) that 'Hyderabad…represents in miniature the rich cultural synthesis and intermingling, so characteristic of Indian culture as a whole.' Urging for it to be retained as 'a model for other areas to imitate', he stated that multi-lingual states could promote 'real unity'.[113] Naik was one of the 12 eminent signatories of a joint statement opposing disintegration, along with K.N. Waghray, retired Director-General of Medical Services, and Vasudev Rao, editor of the Urdu daily *Musheer-e-Deccan*.

[110] "'Disintegration of Hyderabad Is Not Advisable as yet': Mr. Nehru Rejects Plea for Gorkha State," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, July 8, 1952, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[111] "Disintegration of Hyderabad: 'Masses Not Concerned,'" *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, September 3, 1954, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[112] Correspondent, "Disintegration, a Calamity: RS Naik Urges Postponement," *The Spectator*, July 22, 1954, Print edition, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library.
[113] ibid

In it they argued, 'There was common culture, as a result of mutual suffering, and adjustment made for centuries past, despite the fact three different languages were spoken by the people. To destroy such a consummation of unity and harmony meant nothing else than destroying Indian culture and it meant that they did not attach, in any real sense, any importance to their own culture,' they said. If the Rajpramukh was a source of hostility, he could very well be removed, the statement said.[114]

As the possibility of the disintegration of Hyderabad began to gather more steam, especially with the arrival of the SRC to Hyderabad city, opponents of the idea also began to group together to argue for retaining the state. To some surprise, Pandit Narendra, a former Arya Samajist and a Congress MLA, rubbished the claim that the people of Hyderabad vehemently supported the idea of disintegration. He said that the linguistic principle, when applied without qualifications, would open up the space for a large number of linguistic groups to claim their own homelands. The argument that Hyderabad was an unnatural unit because of the existence of three languages was also a spurious one and by that logic India could also be deemed unnatural since about 52 languages were spoken in it, he countered. The fear that Hyderabad left intact would harm the security of India was also unfounded because the Nizam now held a constitutional position and was no longer a threat, he said.[115]

The SRC report unanimously recommended the disintegration of the state and the merger of its constituent linguistic units of Marathwada and Karnatak with their adjoining areas. In doing so, it was paying heed, it said, to the 'overwhelming' and 'insistent' public sentiment put forward by political parties of all hues that the state be immediately dissolved. It also

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[114] "Disintegration of State Opposed: Leaders' Stand," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, December 31, 1953, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India, https://search.proquest.com/docview/739315144?accountid=142596.
[115] The Times of India News Service, "Clamour for Breaking up of State: Herculean Task Faces Commission," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 24, 1954, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

referenced arguments made before it that Hyderabad had no experience of democratic governance, unlike the neighbouring units of Bombay, Madras, and Madhya Pradesh, and that its progress would remain retarded unless its component regions were attached to the more advanced units. It dismissed arguments which had claimed that the area had been integrated since the time of the Bahmani kings 600 years ago, and had developed common geo-political features. Instead, it argued that it had been 'substantially united' only under the Asaf Jahi dynasty. The Deccani culture it had supposedly fostered had been only 'imposed from above'. Further, no common pattern of living existed outside Hyderabad and a few other towns. 'The geopolitical argument and the consequent claim to unity will, therefore, be seen to have no substance,' it said.[116] Stating that not dissolving Hyderabad would impede reorganisation in the south, the report concluded: 'As we assess political trends in the State, we are left in no doubt that if it is maintained as one administrative entity it will not acquire that minimum measure of internal cohesion which is necessary for smooth and efficient administration.'[117]

The final report of the SRC left many sections unhappy. While those asking for the disintegration of Hyderabad welcomed the recommendation to dissolve the state, they were unhappy that the linguistic principle had not been applied in the case of Maharashtra (the SRC had recommended a bilingual Bombay state) and Andhra (keeping Telangana as a residuary state). The People's Democratic Front stated that its demands for disintegration did not arise merely to 'destroy autocracy', but also to merge with linguistic counterparts across the border so as to 'build up homogenous, strong democratic States'. Those who had been in

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[116] S. Fazl Ali, H.N. Kunzru, and K.M. Panikkar, "Report of the States Reorganisation Commission" (New Delhi: Government of India, September 30, 1955), 102.
[117] ibid, 103.

favour of retaining the state asked how a bilingual Bombay state had been considered advantageous and not a trilingual state such as Hyderabad.[118]

Criticising the SRC report, an author who went by the pseudonym 'A Mulki' pointed out that the commission had provided no evidence of this 'overwhelming' support among the general public for disintegration. 'The opinions of fickle-minded leaders cannot be taken as representing those of the people', the author stated. Further, given that people had suffered under the new dispensation when Indian Union officers had 'descended' on Hyderabad as 'a biblical plague of locusts', the author claimed that the Hyderabadi public may not be keen on dissolution. On the argument of better development prospects, the author argued that the case for retaining the state had been strong since the three linguistic areas were backward compared to their contiguous areas in Bombay, Andhra, and Karnatak. 'These areas will soon become the colonies, an oyster to be pearled at will of the absorbing states, and have the privilege of being exploited by people speaking their own language…'[119] While appreciating the SRC for retaining Telangana as a separate state, the author despaired that, '…in the process it has thrown the people of Marathawada, Gulbarga and Raichur to the wolves.'[120]

Raghu Jagirdar, a Rajya Sabha MP from Gulbarga, argued that the SRC had not made any 'genuine case for disintegration' and had rather 'helped in sacrificing a composite State at the altar of linguism, i.e. casteism'.[121] Accusing the SRC of not studying the Hyderabad case at length, Jagirdar described the state as 'a sort of border State' where bilingualism prevailed to

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[118] The Times of India News Service, "Majority in Favour of Breaking up of State: Dissatisfaction over Territory Adjustments," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, October 20, 1955, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[119] A Mulki, "Thoughts on Attenuation of Hyderabad: Views on States Reorganisation-III," *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 44 (October 29, 1955): 1281–82. The author reserved special criticism for Andhra leaders who were demanding the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and argued that only Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha stood in support of Hyderabadis during the Nizam's rule. Andhra leaders, in fact, did not support Telugu students during their protests at Osmania University and instead maintained close relations with the Nizam's government, even receiving a grant from them, the author asserted.

[120] ibid.

[121] Raghu Jagirdar, "Views on States Reorganisation- V- Why Not Retain Hyderabad," *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 45 (November 5, 1955).

a significant extent. 'The extent of bilinguism in the whole state is 14.2 percent. It ranges from 13 to 18 percent in Marathwada, 13 to 21 percent in Telangana and 17 to 22 percent in Karnatak; and in Hyderabad district it is 20 percent. At least a population of 2653228 are bilingual who speak another Indian language besides their mother-tongue,' he argued.

Further taking on the SRC for its conclusions that the state was an artificial unit and not based on 'a free association of the people', Jagirdar asked: 'Where and when was that "free association" ever thought of before the advent of the British?'[122] Criticising the SRC for creating new dependencies, he said that the people of Aurangabad, Golkonda, Bidar, and Gulbarga had lived a common or 'substantially united' life for over six centuries and had not been dependent on Bombay and Poona, Kurnool, or Mysore. 'The people of these areas have lived and suffered together in the past during great upheavals; and they naturally feel that just when freedom has come, they are being dismembered and deprived of the joys of a "substantially united" life in their joint march to freedom', he said.[123]

Jagirdar also pointed out several instances in which the SRC had not adhered to its own principles of linguistic homogeneity when deciding on similar issues. For instance, the commission had taken into consideration the apprehensions of the people of Telangana that they may be lorded over by coastal leaders of Andhra and had accordingly recommended its retention as a separate state for a few years. But it rode roughshod over similar apprehensions expressed by people of the Marathwada and Karnatak regions, Jagirdar claimed. Expressing apprehensions that the benefits of the under-construction Tungabhadra dam might be diverted away from Raichur in the new Karnataka state, he said that the SRC should have allowed for the dam to be developed by the same administration that had planned the project so that the benefits of this project could have been channelled to Hyderabad State and its Kannada areas.

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[122] ibid.
[123] ibid.

Further, if Bidar, which belonged to the Karnatak region, had been included in the residuary Hyderabad state, citing affinity with Hyderabad and remoteness from Bangalore and Mysore, Gulbarga and Raichur could also have been included in the residuary state, given that the same reasons are valid in this case as well.[124]

These apprehensions and criticisms notwithstanding, Hyderabad ceased to exist from November 1, 1956. Its constituent regions were merged with the neighbouring linguistic provinces to become part of the states of Maharashtra, Andhra, and Mysore. What started with the accession of the Asaf Jahi state in 1948—some would say even earlier in the 1930s, when dissensions against the state began—culminated in its dissolution in 1956. This moment of simultaneous disintegration and integration, and the trajectory this took in the case of the Karnatak region of the erstwhile Hyderabad-Deccan state forms the rest of the chapter.

This section has traced some of the fundamental changes that took place in Hyderabad state in the short period between the years 1948 and 1956. The period after Police Action was one of terror and dread for Muslim communities in the state  and it is against this background of a complete loss of state support and security that the Indian Union government chose to initiate moves to reduce Muslim representation in government services and abolish the jagirdari system. Bereft of any political muster and deemed as eternal defaulters on national loyalty, Muslims of Hyderabad-Deccan were reduced to being mere petitioners for state munificence and protection. Even as their place in the political sphere disappeared, new actors with abundant legitimacy as representing majority constituencies stepped in to take over the destiny of the state. This is evident in the primacy gained for the political articulations of leaders from various organisations such as the Hyderabad State Congress, Communists, and Socialists in the matter of the state's continued existence. This chronology is important to trace for it forms the pre-history of the contemporary states of Maharashtra, Telangana (and

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[124] ibid.

Andhra Pradesh), and Karnataka. If caste-based political calculations now inform electoral politics in these regions, it would serve us well to remember that a few decades ago, political alignments were vastly different, and the problems of underdevelopment had found linguistic solutions.

Creating the Kannada nation

On the eve of the SRC's visit to Hyderabad-Deccan, S. Nijalingappa, a prominent Lingayat leader from Mysore, wrote a public letter to his Kannada counterparts from the former state. In it, he urged them to make it clear to the SRC that it was their 'desire' and their 'uncompromising demand' that the Hyderabad State should be 'disintegrated into its three linguistic components'. He said, 'I am particularly anxious, as you know, that the three Karnataka districts – Bidar, Raichur and Gulbarga – should be taken away from Hyderabad and added onto Mysore to form Karnataka State.' If they did not do so, Karnataka—'their cherished goal'—could take years before it was realised, Nijalingappa cautioned.

Whether it was a 'cherished' desire of the people of Hyderabad-Karnataka is difficult to judge, given that the unification movement had not had much traction in these parts till even as late as 1954. It may have been because the political future of the state of Hyderabad itself was undecided or it could have been that the advantages of a Kannada nation were not particularly evident in these parts. The tepid reception to the idea of a Kannada nation among some vocal sections of the Mysorean public might perhaps have tempered the response to the 'unification movement' underway in the Kannada parts of the Deccan region. This is not to say that a separate Kannada identity was not being formed within Hyderabad state—that would have been hard to resist given that the demands for a linguistic Andhra state had saturated the public sphere, particularly in the South. Within the Hyderabad State Congress for instance, Telugu leaders had begun to form a 'bloc' to lobby for Telangana's merger with

Andhra. Following them, Kannada leaders also apparently undertook moves to form a Karnatak bloc. A newspaper report on this move quoted the leaders as stating that they needed to protect their interests, given that they were the smallest linguistic group numerically (apart from Urdu speakers).[125] What these interests were the report did not specify. However, it did say that these leaders were aligning themselves with the cause of a United Karnatak.

It was these leaders who had begun to articulate the interests of the Kannada parts of Hyderabad state that Nijalingappa possibly sought to address in his letter, asking them to make a case for a united Karnataka before the SRC. The Congress veteran must have been aware of the prevailing apprehensions that joining in with Mysore could mean that their interests would not receive their due. Allaying such fears, he offered the assurance that Hyderabad Kannadigas would get 'top priority' in all schemes, especially since their areas were backward.

> Without adversely affecting the progress of the more advanced areas like Mangalore district and Coorg and to some extent Mysore and Bombay-Karnataka, it is essential that backward areas should receive first consideration. Hyderabad-Karnataka areas, so far as agriculture is concerned, are not so backward. The areas being rich, irrigation projects if undertaken would mean a definite advantage to the entire state. The whole of Hyderabad except the Hyderabad city is totally backward industrially and therefore it is but necessary that its natural resources and human potential should be fully utilised to make Hyderabad-Karnataka areas progressive and contented. When I express this sentiment towards Hyderabad-Karnataka areas I do so with full responsibility and I can assure you that this is the feeling of a large enlightened section in other Kannada areas. The Hyderabad Kannadigas need entertain no anxiety about their interests not being looked after.[126]

The express purpose of Nijalingappa's letter may have been to assure attention and priority to Hyderabad Kannadigas, but the letter is important for it also provides indications of a 'truth'

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[125] Special Correspondent, "Forming Linguistic Political 'Blocs': Leaders' Move in Hyderabad," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 5, 1949, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[126] Hubli Correspondent, "Unification of Karnatak: Nijalingappa's Assurance," *The Spectator*, July 8, 1954, Print edition, Swami Ramanand Tirth Memorial Trust Library.

that was being consolidated within the emerging Kannada nation at this point—the consensus around the underdevelopment of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region and the concomitant developed status of coastal and southern, Mysorean parts of the new state. Importantly, any development that was to take place in these areas had to be undertaken without affecting the availability of resources and activities in the 'developed' areas. The proposed constituent regions began to be understood and planned for in the new state within the limits of this framework. This section will trace and interrogate this discourse of development that informed the emerging Kannada nation and the particular consequences it has held for Hyderabad-Karnataka.

*Karnataka as Ideal Territory*

Current scholarship on Karnataka has focused largely on the affective dimensions of the demand for a 'unified' Karnataka: the dismemberment of the nation, sometimes dated to the fall of the Vijayanagara empire, sometimes to the fall of Tipu Sultan; the consequent scattering of the Kannada peoples across various administrations; the neglect and ignominy of being linguistic minorities without any political clout.[127] Lost in this excessive focus is an attention to the changing contours of the territory of proposed Karnataka through the first half of twentieth century. For instance, while the idea of Karnataka first originated in the Kannada-speaking parts of Bombay Presidency, it is not sufficiently emphasised that the merger with Mysore was not considered integral to the creation of this linguistic province, even as late as 1948. In its memorandums regarding the financial viability of the proposed Karnatak province to the Linguistic Provinces Commission, the Mangalore-based All Karnataka Unification Sangha included only the Kannada-speaking districts from Bombay and Madras Presidencies, Coorg, and the merged Karnatak states such as Jamakhandi and

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[127] For more on this, please see chapter 4.

Mudhol among others in its calculations regarding the wealth of the proposed province.[128] In a joint statement by the Karnatak Unification Sabha and the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee, the contours of the proposed province did not include even the smaller Kannada princely states and was restricted to the Kannada-speaking districts from Bombay and Madras Presidencies, and Coorg. To be sure, the joint statement did speak of the larger Karnataka country that included Mysore and the Kannada-speaking parts of the Nizam's dominions (See Figure 13 for the geographical contours of the imagined Kannada province). But it was clear that the formation of Karnatak could not be incumbent on Mysore's agreement for a merger or a decision on the fate of Hyderabad state. The Karnatak province, it said, must be formed immediately. The statement claimed:

> The formation of a Karnatak province…will greatly facilitate the solution of the States problem as well. In fact, it constitutes the first concrete step in the attainment of the final objective of an All Karnatak province. When the proposed province comes into existence, it will be easy for people of that province to come to some arrangement with the States, under which the latter will merge themselves into the All-Karnatak province of the future…As regards Mysore, it may be possible in the near future to mutually agree to such an arrangement. It is even suggested in certain quarters that immediately after the establishment of full responsible government in Mysore, a scheme may be drawn up under which the Mysore State and the Karnatak province…may be enabled to merge themselves into one another and thus together constitute a greater administrative unit…[129]

Proponents of this smaller version of Karnataka, formed out of the Kannada-speaking areas in British India, were keen to show that even this proposed province fulfilled the requisites for a modern state. They focussed not just on evidence of neglect but also on the 'untapped' wealth of the Kannada parts. In making the case for uniting these areas under one state, the arguments put forth in the submissions of the All Karnataka Unification Sangha drew

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[128] *Karnataka Economics (Including Mineral Resources and Industry* (Mangalore: The All Karnataka Unification Sangha, 1948).

[129] The Karnatak Unification Sabha and The Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee, "Linguistic Provinces and the Karnatak Problem," September 1947, 39–40, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics Digital library, http://hdl.handle.net/10973/29503.

material from various related quarters: territorial (Kannada-speaking areas were located at the tail end of different provinces and hence neglected); administrative (the benefits of being under a single administration was seen in the advances made by Mysore); geological

*Figure 13: Contours of the imagined Kannada province*
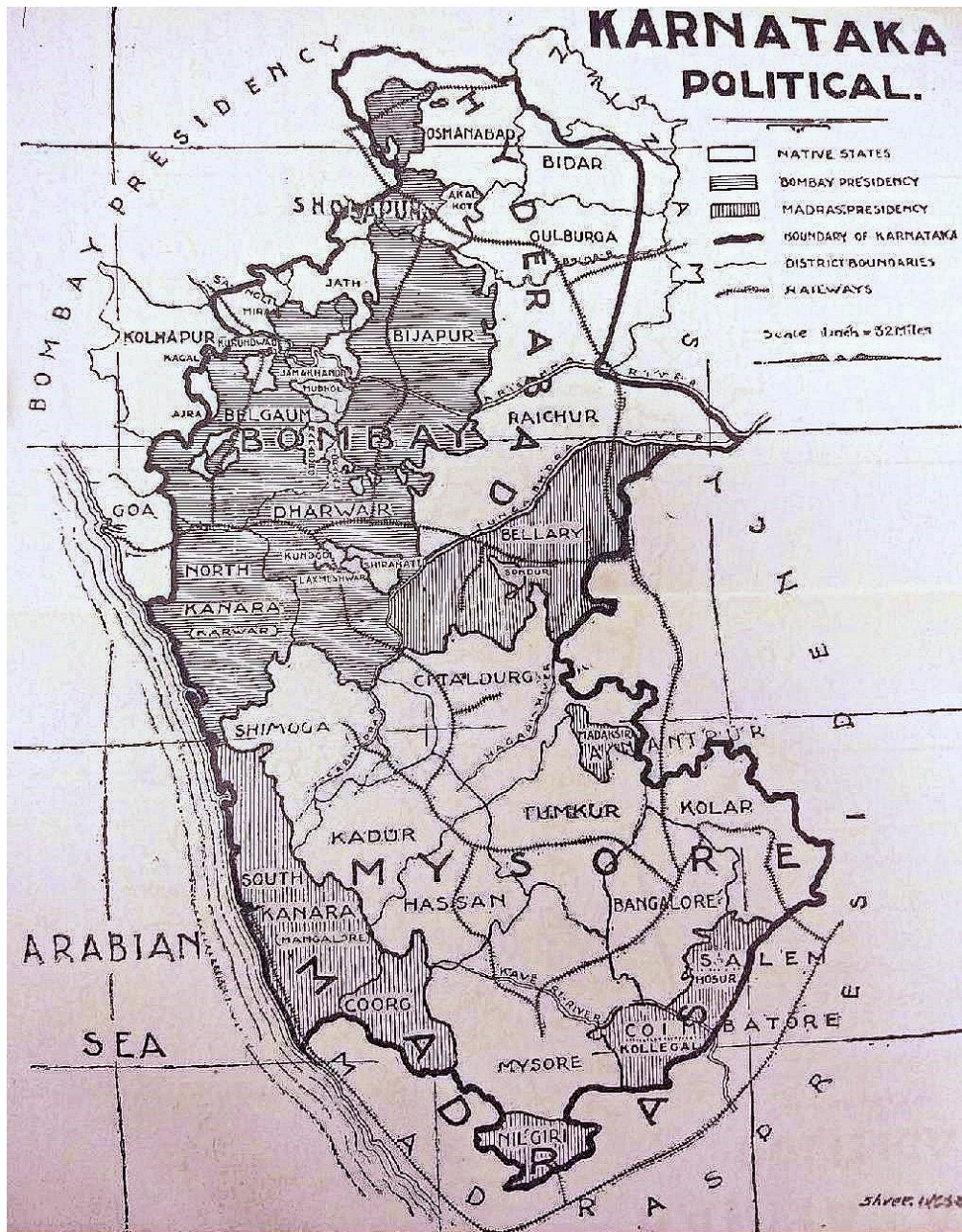


*Source: The Karnataka Unification Association, "A Case for Karnataka's Unification", 1931*

(these areas were home to some of the most important minerals in the world, which could be exploited properly only under focused administration; and industrial (much of the 'potential' of these parts had remained unutilised and it was essential for the industrial development of the nation that this state of affairs be rectified).

In such petitions, Karnataka was presented as an ideal territory, one that was ready to be a state in its own right—after all, the Kannada nation had always existed and now there was proof that it had enough wealth to merit a separate economic and administrative existence. In their publication, the Karnatak Unification Sabha and the KPCC described the larger Kannada country as having three distinct natural regions: the western coastal region called Karavali, the central forest belt called Malnad, and the eastern plateau known as Bayaluseeme or Maidan. The proposed province was to be a smaller version of this and was to extend over 31,109 square miles and have a population of over sixty-seven lakhs. In terms of areal extent and population, the state was comparable to Mysore, was bigger than the North-West Frontier Province, and was more populated than Sind. Comparisons were made with foreign territories such as Norway and Sweden, among others, to argue that 'the proposed province will not be inadequately small either in area or population.'[130]

The Kannada state would also be compact, except for the Nilgiris which was 'only 50 miles' from the rest of the province. Examples of non-contiguous areas within other provinces, such as the Gujarat districts and the rest of Bombay province, were cited to argue that 'the proposed province of Karnatak will be much more compact than some existing provinces.'[131] A survey of districts was also provided to emphasise the extent of agricultural production, the additional prosperity irrigation development could bring, and the natural resources under its jurisdiction. Financially, the territory would be a self-supporting unit, the publication argued,

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[130] ibid
[131] ibid

since current calculations of income and expenditure of the districts proposed to be included had yielded a modest surplus, something that even an existing province such as Orissa could not claim. In any case, even if the province's financial self-sufficiency was doubted, this was not reason enough to deny the demand for a separate state, the publication claimed. The linguistic Kannada nation had all the makings of an ideal territory—natural wealth, linguistic homogeneity, and a people who wanted to be united. All it needed was a state of its own.

In making the case for a separate state, the publication drew comparison with Mysore and the administration's encouragement of industrial growth in its territory. The Karnatak districts had remained backward despite an abundance of resources while Mysore with similar physical resources had progressed because it had a 'separate administration properly to look after its interest in the industrial field'. Given that the Karnatak areas had only a 'few big capitalists', the role of the state was pre-eminent, the publication argued. Pointing to Mysore, which had supported industrial activity through financial assistance—by becoming shareholders in some concerns and by undertaking risky ventures that private capitalists would be averse to—the publication argued that a similar approach would be necessary in Karnataka's case as well. 'The Government of India, who in our opinion, recognise this responsibility, would do well immediately to form Karnatak into a separate province, so that it may develop industrially under the fostering care of a Government which will be run by the people of the region themselves', the publication argued.[132]

The demand for Karnataka acquired political traction when supporters undertook mobilisation within the Indian National Congress (INC), along with other advocates of linguistic states, and ensured that the principle of linguistic reorganisation was accepted in the 1920s. The KPCC then came into being as an entity separate from the Bombay Provincial

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[132] The Karnatak Unification Sabha and The Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee, "Linguistic Provinces and the Karnatak Problem," 62.

Congress Committee, and its jurisdiction extended over Kannada parts of British India. Along with other organisations such as the Kannada Sahitya Parishat and the Vidhyavardhaka Sangha, the KPCC kept the demand for Karnataka alive in political and public spheres.

However, as the demand for Karnataka underwent a territorial expansion to include Mysore and the Kannada-speaking parts of Hyderabad state in the 1950s, the consensus that the smaller version of Karnataka was a self-sufficient and viable entity began to disintegrate. Mysorean opposition to becoming part of a larger entity called Karnataka was, in particular, responsible for this breakdown as this set of voices insisted that North Karnataka (and this included Hyderabad-Karnataka as well) was underdeveloped, backward, and would hinder their (Mysore's) progress. The Fact-Finding Committee set up by the Mysore Government in 1953 conducted a survey of the state of development in the Kannada parts of Bombay, Madras, and Hyderabad-Deccan states, and of Coorg. While the committee refused to comment on the viability of Mysore 'taking on the burden' of the new areas (a sentiment all too common in Mysore), its conclusions regarding various development indicators of these areas added strength to those opposing Mysore's merger with other Kannada areas.

A few examples from the report are in order here. Paying attention to the road network in Bombay-Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka, the committee calculated that the road mileage in the former was 21.6 miles and in the latter 8.6 miles. To reach the 'Mysore standard' of 36.7 miles for every 100 sq. miles, 3,245 miles of roads at the cost of 486 lakhs needed to be built in Bombay-Karnataka, and 5069 miles costing 760 lakhs needed to be built in Hyderabad-Karnataka.[133] In the matter of public health, to reach the 'Mysore standard', this report concluded that medical facilities will need to be expanded two-fold in the Bombay and Madras portions and four-fold in Hyderabad-Karnataka.[134] No 'Mysorean standard' was

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[133] Seshadri et al., "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)," 47.
[134] ibid, 61

applied when it came to an assessment of per-capita acreage of agricultural land—Hyderabad-Karnataka had 2.1 acres per person and Bombay-Karnataka had 1.6 acres per person, while Mysore stood at 0.9 acres per person. In the matter of revenue expenditure, the Kannada districts of Hyderabad-Deccan had shown surpluses of over 100 lakhs consistently between the years 1950 and 1953. But given the increase in expenses on 'nation-building activities', as well as on the completion of Tungabhadra dam, the report concluded that the Centre would have 'to give substantial financial assistance to enable the new state to build its future'.[135] Further, the committee pointed out that the formation of Karnataka would raise the problem of linguistic minorities, who would form a substantial part of the population across the new state. This, in effect, dented the principle of homogeneity that informed the demand for linguistic state. 'It appears to us that over-emphasis of linguistic considerations raises more problems than it solves', it said.[136]

In existing scholarship, the Fact-Finding Committee report, also known as the Seshadri Committee report, has been used widely, but uncritically, for the data it presented. No critical scrutiny of the report in terms of the data it has used and the premises informing the report has yet been undertaken. As such, the dominance of the Mysorean perspective regarding the new areas has not been acknowledged adequately. The backwardness of the Bombay-Karnataka districts with regard to industry and communication networks had been acknowledged by proponents of Karnataka decades earlier and had been presented as evidence of its neglect; the fact-finding report merely offered numbers to this acknowledgment. Further, although the 'Mysore standard'—a self-aggrandising term, but an expected one given Mysore's pride in its 'model-state' status—was set as an aspirational standard for other areas, it is to be noted that these were average figures. Averages mask the fact of unevenness of development and it is important to ask what the Mysore standard would

[135] ibid, 136.
[136] Seshadri et al., "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)," 19.

have been if the state's important urban centres such as Bangalore were removed from the calculation of these averages. After all, Bombay-Karnataka and Hyderabad-Karnataka were being assessed without relation to their capital cities. Finally, the fact of differences across development indicators—that Hyderabad-Karnataka was agriculturally richer and Bombay Karnataka had much better educational indices than Mysore, and that there was no uniform backwardness—needs also to be acknowledged. In any case, the report was widely considered to have provided sufficient data to not proceed with the formation of a Karnataka that would include Mysore in it. Mysore did not deserve or need to take on these backward areas and witness the decimation of the progress it had achieved or the Mysorean culture it had nourished, opponents argued.

The strength of this discourse of the backwardness of the Karnatak parts unsettled the earlier consensus on its self-sufficiency and viability to such an extent that the SRC report stated: 'It is no longer assumed, as it was, for instance, assumed in the Nehru Committee's report, that the Karnataka areas outside Mysore will be financially self-sufficient, or that they will have a surplus of revenue over expenditure.'[137] It however dismissed these concerns of deficits as 'problems of transition' and argued that focused development plans and expenditure could help easily tide over these temporary issues. This shift in discourse around the Karnatak province as a neglected but self-sufficient entity to a poor and underdeveloped one was primarily the result of Mysorean insistence on its own developed status and the 'burden' that it would have to bear to take on these backward areas and raise it upto the 'Mysorean standard'. It is pertinent to mention here that this notion of Mysore's developed status and Karnatak's backward status were shared widely by most supporters and opponents of the linguistic state.

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[137] Ali, Kunzru, and Panikkar, "Report of the States Reorganisation Commission," 90.

If the creation of the Andhra state had galvanised other linguistic movements, the SRC report of 1955 marked the successful culmination of the idea of 'one language, one state'. The writers of the report argued that they were driven by considerations other than linguistic—such as economic viability and geographical contiguity—but it was clear that the principle of linguistic homogeneity had been broadly conceded to by the commission. In Mysore, from the moment the SRC report, which recommended the formation of Karnataka, was made public, it was clear that any opposition to the idea was now futile. The debate on Mysore's merger/expansion with other Kannada-speaking areas started with the debate on the Andhra State Bill in 1953, continued through the debate on the Fact Finding Committee report and the SRC report (both in 1955), and finally ended with the discussions of the SRC Bill in 1956. Throughout, Mysore's legislators were divided between either opposing the formation of a Karnataka state and calling for two Kannada states, or supporting the creation of a united Karnataka. While the question of the formation of the state was still open during discussions around the Fact-Finding committee report in 1953, the range of possibilities was mostly closed off by the time of the SRC report two years later. 'United' Karnataka was firmly on the anvil, especially since the then-Chief Minister Kengal Hanumanthaiah and sections of the Mysore Congress and the INC were committed to creating the new state. Further, the Parliament was to be the decision-making authority and state legislatures were merely meant to send their views to the Centre.

Janaki Nair argues that the period between 1949 and 1955 in Mysore witnessed a shift in the discourse on 'unification', away from 'linguistic states to developmental strategies and their outcomes', 'from the cultural basis for imagining the nation to the realm of the economy'.[138]

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[138] Nair, "Giving the State a Nation: Revisiting Karnataka's Reunification," 258.

If opponents of 'unification' argued for the preservation of the 'model-state' of Mysore, those in favour claimed that Mysore's economic development would only benefit from 'unification', thus making development the grounds on which the viability of the proposed linguistic state was to be determined. This discourse of development, Nair argues, served to displace the question of caste (Would the proposed new state lead to Lingayat hegemony? Would it exacerbate conflict between Vokkaligas and Lingayats?) and foreground that of the economy, 'particularly the process of accumulation without risking radical social change'.[139] Nair's article is important for it brings to light the developmental discourse of these years and moves away from the focus on caste-communal considerations as well as affective arguments of 'dismemberment' and 'unification' that inform existing scholarship on linguistic reorganisation in Karnataka.

Following in this strain of scholarship, this section will look at the contending logics of under/development that legislators gave voice to in the Mysore assembly both in favour and in opposition to the merger of Mysore with other Kannada-speaking parts. It draws from the debates in the Mysore Legislative Assembly and Council on the Fact-Finding Committee and the SRC reports in 1955 and the SRC Bill in 1956. In these discussions, legislators cast the question of development as not only determined by numbers, but also by discourse, i.e., it mattered how development was understood and not only whether areas and peoples were developed.

Speaking during the discussions around the Fact-Finding Committee report in the Legislative Assembly in 1953, H.M. Chennabasappa pointed out that both advocates and opponents of Karnataka's 'unification' used numbers extensively to support their arguments. 'But should we decide on this question (of unification) on the basis of numbers that show how many hospitals are there, how many veterinary hospitals are there, the extent of roads, the number

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[139] ibid, 249.

of schools etc (in areas outside Mysore)?' he asked.[140] Recalling the accession of Hyderabad-Deccan to the Indian Union in 1948, Chennabasappa pointed out that the only reason that Police Action had been undertaken was because an independent Hyderabad state would be a hindrance to India. The Indian Union did not count the number of schools and colleges in the state at this juncture and did not consider whether conditions of development were good or bad in that state. Only India's well-being mattered, he said, urging his fellow legislators to decide on the question of reorganisation along these lines.

Chennabasappa's arguments were part of a larger effort to cast the demand for linguistic reorganisation as a national question and not merely a regional question. This was in response to opponents of linguistic states who argued that this principle of linguistic homogeneity could threaten national integrity as sub-nationalities can grow to threaten loyalties towards the Indian nation; this was not something that India could afford when it was gripped by food crises, communal tension, and widespread poverty. In response, supporters of linguistic homogeneity argued that linguistic states were, in fact, meant to aid in the development of the country. If democratic participation was essential for the development of peoples, then administration should take place in the language of the people, they argued. Chennabasappa's argument that reorganisation of territory should not consider the current state of development of areas as a criterion for inclusion or exclusion from a proposed unit, but rather should operate based on the well-being of the nation, thus hoped to posit the nation as the primary consideration. Supporters of Karnataka also argued that backwardness of areas should not be a consideration because the central government was committed to the uplift of such areas. They expressed confidence that the centre would provide grants to the new state for undertaking development projects in backward areas.

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[140] H.M. Chennabasappa, 'Discussion on Fact Finding Committee report' (hereafter FFC report), Mysore Legislative Assembly Debates (hereafter MLAD), Vol XII, No.46, April 1955, 2526.

If Chennabasappa spoke in terms of a larger national interest that should inform the debates on reorganisation and of the paternal responsibility of the central government in developing underdeveloped areas, others insisted on the principle of homogeneity as a necessary precondition for development. J. Mohammad Imam argued that multi-lingual provinces had caused much discord among peoples in these units, and homogenous units were the way to ensure that discord caused by contradictory opinions and heterogeneity can be put to rest. 'When reorganisation takes place, discord will disappear because there will be homogeneity and one kind of language and culture and the entire province will have similar opportunities to develop', he said.[141] By this logic, differences—of language, of culture—were to be eliminated as much as possible and new provinces formed along this principle of linguistic homogeneity. The demand for linguistic reorganisation thus followed the same logic of Partition, in insisting that bi-lingual or multi-lingual spaces can be oppressive and would not allow for linguistic minorities to flourish in democratic spaces. If Partition of the Indian subcontinent was premised on the notion that Hindus and Muslims were separate nations who could not co-exist in one state, movements for linguistic reorganisation were similarly based on the idea that language constituted a fundamental and insuperable difference and divided people into distinct nationalities. These movements did not challenge the supremacy of the Indian nation. However, in their demand for homogeneity as a partitioning principle for reorganising territory internally, they insisted that different linguistic communities had the right to have their own patches of territories within the Indian nation.[142]

Some legislators apprehended these similarities between Partition of the sub-continent and the demand for linguistic reorganisation and feared that this could lead to partition-like consequences. Mulka Govinda Reddy, for instance, expressed apprehension that language

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[141] J. Mohammad Imam, 'States Reorganisation Bill, 1956' (hereafter SRC Bill), MLAD, Vol XIV, 31 March 1956, 1405.

[142] Thanks to Dr. Prachi Deshpande for drawing my attention to Partition as a method of reorganisation.

fanaticism would lead to a partition-like scenario and cited an instance that purportedly took place at Mysore University, where an assistant professor, immediately after the publication of the SRC report, began to canvas for the removal of non-Kannadigas from the university. As during Partition, forming homogenous linguistic units could lead to other linguistic communities being forced to migrate out of their homes, Reddy predicted.[143] Similarly, Sydney A. Thomas, expressing apprehension about linguistic fanaticism taking hold over the country, said,

> Each State would become politically water-tight and only regional languages would be allowed to flourish. What would happen to the minorities then I do not know. Even in a composite state like Mysore we do not have any more Telugu schools being opened even when there is a demand for it…I understand that in Andhra no Tamil schools have been opened for the last two years. So, we find that each State would become a water-tight enclave not only linguistically but also politically.[144]

For H. K. Veeranna Gowda, this emphasis on linguistic homogeneity was premised on the false belief that only Kannadigas felt any attachment to Mysore. 'It is not that only Kannada-speaking people are ours. Even those speaking Telugu and other languages are ours as well. When this is the situation, fighting for this or that piece of land is not appropriate,' he argued.[145]

If the pitfalls of linguistic homogeneity constituted one strand of opposition to the merger of Mysore with Karnatak parts, another questioned the very notion that language could be the basis for homogeneity. History and progress were important factors that moulded the traditions of a people, these voices argued while opposing the merger of Mysore with other Kannada-speaking areas. A. G. Ramachandra Rao, in his speech in the assembly, highlighted the various kinds of differences amongst the Kannada-speaking parts to argue that language

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[143] Mulka Govinda Reddy, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 2 April 1956, 1469.
[144] Sydney A. Thomas, 'Special Resolution on States Reorganisation' (hereafter Special Resolution), MLAD, Vol XIV, 31 March 1956, 1579.
[145] H.K. Veeranna Gowda, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 2 April 1956, 1443.

as a uniting factor was a rather feeble argument. In response to the claim that Karnataka was 'dismembered', Rao argued that there was never a period in history when Karnataka was united. He said: 'In the North Karnataka, there were Chalukya people, Rashtrakuta people, Kalyana people… In the South Karnataka there were Gangas, Kadambas, Hoysalas and Yadavas. The North Karnataka looked towards North and North-east. The South Karnataka looked to the South and South-east and there was no Karnataka kingdom comprising the entire area.'[146] Further, Rao pointed to the 'experiment of Bellary' where, despite the passage of two years, laws and taxes had not been made uniform. With the prospect of four areas with different administrations joining together, this problem would only be further exacerbated. '…these four units with different administrative systems and practices, with different local laws, different methods of taxation, and different services are to be brought under one fold of United Karnataka,' he said.[147] While conceding that harmonisation of practices and laws could take place, Rao cautioned that it could take about 50 years or so to achieve full integration; in the meantime, people of all areas were bound to suffer. Echoing similar views a year later, during the discussion of the SRC Bill, 1956, Veeranna Gowda pointed to not only differences in administrative and legal practices, but also the different cultural universes inhabited by Kannada-speaking provinces. 'Those coming from other parts (outside Mysore) have temperaments, dialects, rituals, beliefs and practices that are different from us. Achieving equality between these two parts which are asymmetrically placed against each other will take years, will be difficult. Until then, we (Mysoreans) will suffer.'[148] Gowda thus contested the argument that language and culture were commensurate and instead proposed that cultural universes were shaped by more than language.

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[146] A.G. Ramachandra Rao, 'Discussion on States Reorganisation Commission report' (hereafter SRC report), MLAD, Vol XIII, No.14, 17 November 1955, 877.
[147] ibid, 878.
[148] H.K. Veeranna Gowda, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 2 April 1956, 1443.

If legislators opposed the merger of Mysore with other Kannada-speaking areas on the question of homogeneity, they also deployed the governmental logic of rationalisation to advance their case. Both Rao and Gowda did contest the historical and the cultural arguments put forward for the formation of Karnataka in those terms. But they also relied on the insuperability of differences in the stages of development, which would make governance difficult and retard progress within Mysore state. Those who used this logic spoke in terms of the size and compactness of Mysore, which had made the state a viable economic unit. Rao, criticising the SRC report for recommending states with varying sizes and populations, argued that the proposed reorganisation would lead to the creation of unwieldy units. He said,

> If big States meant greater work, greater prosperity, greater enthusiasm of the people, certainly Mysore would not have been called the model State but UP [Uttar Pradesh] would have been called so! It is because of its compactness which is one of the characteristics, one of the main reasons that is responsible for initiative, enterprise, and achievement of Mysore... It is the big State which has not been able to do what these small States are doing… There is violation on both sides, namely, the absence of optimum limit as well as the lack of uniformity in the formation of the State system. Therefore I say, the proposals of the Commission are not acceptable, particularly because Mysore with a sizeable population and as a unit is developing quite well.[149]

Rao's insistence that small states were the ideal for reorganising territory was countered by arguments that referred to Mysore's capacity for efficient governance. U.M. Madappa, for instance, cited the industrial advancement of Mysore to argue that this had been made possible due to good administrators. 'If we can govern this well because of skilled administrators, why are we shying away from taking on more responsibility and stating that we cannot govern? There are no such cowards among Kannadigas!' declared Madappa.[150] If opponents argued that Mysore's merger with other Kannada-speaking parts would create units that were too big to govern efficiently, supporters such as Madappa used the famed

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[149] A. G. Ramachandra Rao, SRC report, MLAD, Vol XIII, No.14, 17 November 1955, 876.
[150] U. M. Madappa, FFC report, MLAD, Vol XII, No.46, 2647.

efficiency of Mysore's administration to claim that this was model was scalable to larger units.

Interestingly, many who opposed Mysore's merger into Karnataka because it would lead to large ungovernable units went onto, in 1956, support the formation of Dakshina Pradesh, a mega territorial unit whose proposed boundaries varied between: 1) one multi-lingual territory with all South Indian states put together and a zonal council overseeing it; 2) few multi-lingual states such as Madras and Kerala on the one hand, and Andhra and Mysore on the other; or Madras and Andhra, and Kerala and Mysore or Mysore, Madras, and Travancore-Cochin.[151] For some legislators like Veeranna Gowda, forming Dakshina Pradesh could keep inter-state disputes over riverine issues such as water consumption and electricity generation, among others, at bay. Mulka Govinda Reddy called for the formation of bilingual states—particularly one comprising of all Telugu and Kannada speaking peoples—as a way out of the problems plaguing the two neighbouring states of Andhra and Mysore. He cited the 500-mile border between the two states, the numerous river-valley projects that have to be taken up by both states, and the 'injustice' done to Telugus in Mysore and to those in Bellary as reasons to form such a state.[152] H.C. Linga Reddy invoked the example of Vijayanagar, a bi-lingual State with both Telugu and Kannada speakers, and stated that forming a similar state now could be a way to revive the ancient kingdom.

> Thereby we will be not only solving the problem of linguistic minorities which will be certainly considerable if there is to be only one State based on one language, but Bellary and Tungabhadra problem which has proved to be a formidable obstacle in the formation of States will be removed and the Palar dispute can easily be eliminated and these two States can merge with each other and they can get on quite happily.

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[151] Other proposed combinations included merging Karnataka, Tamil Nad and Kerala, Madras and Travancore-Cochin or Mysore and Travancore-Cochin. See The Times of India News Service, "Creation of Dakshina Prant Likely," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 5, 1956, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[152] Mulka Govinda Reddy, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 2 April 1956, 1470.

From the point of view of social and economic planning also, if there were to be big States, they would be conducive to the welfare and prosperity of any State.[153]

Devaraj Urs had also insisted previously on small states as the ideal for territorial reorganisation, and Mysore as the model along which Indian territory should be redistributed. He argued that since the retention of Mysore was no longer a possibility, the way forward should be bigger and bilingual states. Strongly opposing the formation of unilingual states, Urs argued that, in this period of economic and social advancement when large development projects were being undertaken, big states were essential.[154]

If proponents of Dakshina Pradesh highlighted the geographical advantages of this linguistically composite unit, its opponents emphasised the administrative difficulties of governing a multi-lingual unit and the behemoth that it could grow into threatening national integrity. 'Supposing a State consisting of Mysore, Kerala and Madras is formed, there will be three different languages with divergent customs, with different culture. What should be the language of the State? We Mysoreans want Kannada; Kerala people want Malayalam; Madras people Tamil. Which language should be official language?' Mohammad Imam said.[155] Further, Dakshina Pradesh posed a threat to national security and unity, he said, if it emerged as a strong bloc and became the site on which anti-Aryan feelings grew.[156] It needed to be put off until the conditions were right, proposed Gopala Gowda. Only when the 'people' were possessed of the same nationalistic spirit, when it is seen that the 'people' shared fraternal feelings for each other, when they gain proficiency in two languages', we can think of forming bilingual provinces, he said.[157]

[153] H. C. Linga Reddy, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 3 April 1956, 1524.
[154] D. Devaraj Urs, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 2 April 1956, 1464.
[155] J. Mohamed Imam, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 4 April 1956, 1575.
[156] ibid, 1576.
[157] S. Gopala Gowda, SRC Bill, MLAD, Vol XIV, 2 April 1956, 1454.

It was around the 'good' of the nation that the formation of Dakshina Pradesh and its various possible territorial versions began to gain ground around 1955. It was ardently supported by Jawaharlal Nehru and a few others such as C. Rajagopalchari as well.[158] Those enthusiastic about the proposal argued that such a territorial formation would stem linguistic fanaticism, prevent the balkanisation of the South, foster a 'true sense of unity', and even act as a strong counter to the possible dominance of the North Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh.[159] Nehru, it was said, argued along these lines, citing the importance of multi-lingual states for preserving and promoting national integration. The chief ministers of the southern states involved were less than warm to the idea when Nehru proposed it in his talks with them, insisting that this would not find favour with the people. However, as an outcome of these efforts, Mysore's chief minister Hanumanthaiah was persuaded to propose and pass a resolution in the assembly that read as follows: 'That this Assembly is of the opinion that in the circumstances existing in India, for the rapid development of various areas and for ensuring unity and security of India, it is desirable, wherever and whenever feasible, to form bilingual states with regional Council for each linguistic area.'[160] Proposing this resolution, Hanumanthaiah called for the formation of a Dakshina Pradesh as a way of thwarting the 'political inferiority' that South Indian states would be condemned to in the face of the largeness of North Indian states. 'We cannot allow the love of our respective languages to dominate our minds and allow political inferiority to perpetuate itself so far as Mysore state is concerned,' he argued.[161]

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[158] According to a newspaper report from the period, the proposal was first mooted by V.K. Krishna Menon to Kamaraj Nadar, chief minister of Madras and K. Hanumanthaiah, chief minister of Mysore who had apparently enthusiastically welcomed the idea. The Times of India News Service, "'CR' Deplores Defeatist Attitude of Government: Dakshina Pradesh Plan," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 22, 1956, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[159] See The Times of India News Service, "Congressmen Support Dakshina Pradesh: Reds to Launch Drive against Move," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, January 28, 1956, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[160] Speaker, Special Resolution, MLAD, Vol XIV, 4 April 1956, 1587.

[161] Hanumanthaiah, Special Resolution, MLAD, Vol XIV, 4 April 1956, 1569.

The chief minister's position with regard to Mysore's merger with Karnataka remained ambiguous, and the bases of his support for the formation of Karnataka, with Mysore merged into this unit, were not discernible. Although this reorganisation had been widely viewed as following the linguistic principle of homogeneity, Hanumanthaiah insisted that this was not a linguistic state. 'We have not accepted in this House the ideology of a purely linguistic State. If we call this State Karnataka State, whatever may be the psychological satisfaction to one section of the people, the other section will feel thus: we people who speak Telugu are out of place; we people who speak Tamil are out of place. It is that psychology that ought to be prevented,' he said.[162]

For those who insisted on differences between Kannadigas and other linguistic groups, he urged them to adopt an expansive and inclusive notion of Indian citizenship and embrace all regional groups as their own.[163] For those who pointed to differences between people from North and South Karnataka, Hanumathaiah invoked the event and logic of Partition and said: 'Those from North and South Karnataka cannot keep saying that we are different – this being the way that Pakistan and Hindustan were torn apart – and build a Chinese wall between each other.'[164] Further, he added that it was upto Mysoreans to ensure the feelings of anger and apprehension that people from North Karnataka may be nursing are assuaged so that the new state could be host to harmonious lives.

What was consistent however was Hanumanthaiah's strenuous insistence that the composite character of princely Mysore be retained. He declared that the presence of various linguistic

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[162] K. Hanumanthaiah, SRC report, Mysore Legislative Council Debates (hereafter MLCD), Vol VII, 30 November 1955, 778.
[163] Hanumanthaiah argued that if Kannadigas of Dharwad, Bombay, Hyderabad, Kodagu, Dakshina Kannada were Indian citizens, those from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra were also equally so. Denying entry into territorial units to the latter group of citizens merely due to linguistic differences, Hanumathaiya said, violated the *sadbhavana* (true principles) of Indian citizenship. Hanumanthaiah, Special Resolution, MLAD, Vol XIV, 31 March 1956, 1393.
[164] ibid, 1395.

groups—primarily Kannadiga, Telugu, and Tamil—living and working together for the progress of the state represented Mysore's true character.

> I have often said that we in Mysore state have the happy heritage of a composite character, not only in the social fabric but also in the governmental structure. We have made no distinction between the Telugu-speaking man, the Kannada-speaking man and the Tamil-speaking man. For several centuries irrespective of the language we speak, we have lived like brothers and have worked for the prosperity of the State… This is a great achievement of the Mysore State, and this achievement, as I have often said will stand the State in good stead should any crisis be brought about by linguistic fanaticism.[165]

Hanumanthaiah was the foremost proponent of this composite logic of diversity that informed the reorganisation debates. Even though the to-be-formed Karnataka was widely seen as a linguistic state, he contested the homogeneity implicit in the move and believed that a composite state could still be formed out of it. While others like Devaraj Urs had cited the composite principle and argued against the merger of Mysore with Karnataka, for Hanumanthaiah, his support for both linguistic and composite principles of reorganisation worked out pragmatically. He could deploy the linguistic principle and argue for Bidar's inclusion and cite the composite principle and claim Kolar for the Kannada state. This is not to suggest any duplicity on Hanumanthaiah's part, for he indeed seemed to be horrified at instances of linguistic chauvinism. In his speeches in the assembly, he repeatedly expressed horror at slogans hailing Mother Karnataka and worried that this kind of linguistic fanaticism would overtake the reverence necessary for Mother India. Such sentiments seemed to have bolstered his commitment to a composite culture, and to Mysore's composite culture, in particular. As a symbolic gesture of continuing with Mysore's heritage, as he put it, he pushed for retaining the name Mysore for the new state as well. This was to be a reminder to the people of the new state that differences need not only divide but can also be the bases for collective living.

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[165] K. Hanumanthaiah, SRC report, MLCD, Vol VII, 30 November 1955, 776-7.

Yet the hierarchy of differences and the patronising attitude of many Mysore legislators towards Karnatak areas were hard to overcome. For instance, urging those from North Karnataka who were demanding that the new state be named Karnataka, Hanumanthaiah stated that Mysore had 'compromised with the idea of taking in nearly 90 lakhs of people into one administrative unit with ours'.[166] Hanumanthaiah's framing of Mysore as a predecessor to the new Kannada state was a viewpoint shared by many of his colleagues in the assembly. Speaker after speaker framed the reorganisation of territory as other parts joining Mysore, leading to Mysore's expansion rather than as the formation of an unprecedent territorial unit based solely on language. Given that the governmental logic of rationalisation was geared towards efficiency for the purposes of capitalist expansion, arguments in support of Mysore's merger with other Kannada-speaking parts often revealed a colonising attitude about the latter. Hanumanthaiah, in his speech in the assembly on the SRC report, in fact claimed that if the Bijapur Sultans had earlier captured some of Mysore's territories and extended their rule over Bangalore, 'now the Bangalore Sultanate will extend to Bijapur'.[167] Such grandiose statements prompted Urs to intervene and ask if Hanumanthaiah was 'arguing to build a new dynasty of Mysore'.[168]

A.N. Rama Rao went a step further to argue that Mysore was only 'getting back' what it had lost after Tipu Sultan's fall. Echoing Hanumanthaiah's views, he said: '…Dewans after Dewans tried to get parts of Mysore which were lost after the fall of Tippu… We could not get a single harbour. Now Raidurg, Bellary, Madakshira, Kollegal, Mangalore and some other parts which were lost after the fall of Tippu are to be restored to Mysore.'[169] The formation of Karnataka was thus seen by some legislators such as Rama Rao as the

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[166] ibid, 779.
[167] K. Hanumanthaiah, SRC report, MLAD, Vol XIII, No.14, 16 November 1955, 791.
[168] D. Devaraj Urs, SRC report, MLAD, Vol XIII, No.14, 16 November 1955, 791.
[169] A.N. Rama Rao, 'States Reorganisation Commission Report' (hereafter SRC report), MLCD, Vol VII, 30 November 1955, 785-6.

restoration of Mysore's former glory; it is from this viewpoint that this process of reorganisation of territories (prantha punarvingadane) was termed as 'unification' (ekikarana). Like Madappa, Rama Rao also claimed that Mysore's tradition of administrative efficiency deserved to be extended to the new areas,

> We in Mysore have built up a tradition of our own; we have a culture of our own, we have a language of our own, which is Kannada language, spoken of by others there and yet the Kannada language of the Mysore State is certainly better than the Kannada spoken by the northern Karnataka people...We are endowed with, we have inherited all these high qualities and they have played a great part in our lived in moulding our character, in moulding our fine arts. But what is with us should be shared by our brethren. We would like to educate them, we would like to take them into our fold… let us not be selfish; supposing we have got a decrepit brother or one who has become dumb or deaf or blind, what do we do with him? Do we throw him out of our house? We would very much try to help him as much as we can. We do not send him out of the house. So also, we will try to educate our brethren, correct them and help them as best as we can, to see that they become as refined as we are.[170]

Rama Rao also claimed that people from Karnatak parts have understood that Mysore had reached 'a sort of level where we feel we have got almost what we want'.[171] Mysore youth, educated and trained in arts, crafts, and sciences, could now go out to these areas and not only find employment, but also work at developing these areas. From this colonising perspective, the Kannada-speaking parts held out immense possibilities for capitalist expansion for Mysore and opened employment opportunities for Mysore's youth. For the people of these territories, this take-over of their areas by Mysore held out opportunities to be civilised through education and acculturation.

Such hubris did not go without contestation. Legislators who both opposed and supported Mysore's merger with other Kannada-speaking areas cited the underdevelopment of Mysore to advance their arguments. M. P. Govindagowda, who opposed the formation of the state,

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[170] ibid, 787.
[171] ibid, 788.

argued in 1955 that the merger of Mysore would affect backward areas within the existing state.

> If we take the case of Malnad, which is about 160-170 miles from Bangalore, those of us from the region have often said, 'We should be helped. Malnad should be developed' and our cries have not been heeded. The SRC claims that Malnad will develop if Karnataka is formed. But I say that Malnad will be destroyed because development benefits will not go to backward areas in Mysore but to that of the new areas.[172]

Given that the Karnatak parts were more backward than even Malnad, it was only natural and just that resources should be earmarked for these areas. But this would deprive Malnad of the resources it required, Govindagowda claimed.

U. M. Madappa, supporting the formation of Mysore with Karnataka, had spoken of Mysore's capacity to govern. However, in response to arguments that the Karnatak areas were backward, Madappa reminded Mysorean legislators that underdeveloped areas existed even within their state, and cited Chamarajanagar as one such example. Referring to the Fact-Finding Committee report's use of veterinary hospitals as a development indicator, he pointed out that Chamarajanagar too had only two veterinary hospitals for 1.4 lakh animals[173]. Even as the deficits of the Karnatak parts were talked about, Madappa stated that Mysore's deficit stood at Rs. 4.5 crores indicating that the former areas probably had better budgetary planning than Mysore. Capital expenditure in these areas were higher than in Mysore and the latter only stood to gain when these capital assets, including dams on the Tungabhadra, Ghataprabha and Malaprabha, were transferred to it.[174] Arguments about Mysore's exemplary progress had to be tempered with such realities, he argued.

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[172] M.P. Govindagowda, SRC report, MLCD, Vol VII, 19 November 1955, 665.
[173] U. M. Madappa, FFC report, MLAD, Vol XII, No.46, 2647.
[174] ibid, 2646-7.

G. Veerappa argued that claims of underdevelopment could not simply be made using isolated statistics but had to be bolstered by reference to real contexts. The Fact-Finding Committee might have pointed to inadequate hospitals and road length in the Kannada-speaking parts of Bombay, Hyderabad, and Madras but these assessments had to be undertaken based on the particular needs of those areas rather than some pre-set standards, he said. Further, citing the revenue generated by the Kannada-speaking parts, Veerappa claimed that Mysore would receive nearly four crores only from Nippani in Belgaum, and the regulated markets of Gulbarga and Raichur alone netted more income than the combined income of all the regulated markets of Mysore state. They may have been neglected on account of being linguistic minorities in their states, but could by no means be called backward or not be eligible to join Mysore, Veerappa reasoned.[175] B. Madhavachar also stated that Raichur and Gulbarga were agriculturally rich areas and their grain production could easily solve Mysore's long-standing food deficit.[176] H. Siddaveerappa sought to remind the Assembly that 'Raichur and Gulbarga are the granaries of Hyderabad State' and recalled how, during periods of food scarcity, he had imported 'substantial foodgrains' from these districts.[177]

These discussions charted a specific set of salient arguments: while conceding that Mysore had achieved progress in some respects, they did not deny that the state also had backward areas, deficit indicators, and could do with improvement. These arguments did not share the hubris of the aggrandising thrust articulated by some legislators who viewed the 'newly-added' territories as ripe for exploitation, even as their people were denigrated as backward. Rather, they acknowledged that both Mysore and Karnatak had achieved some measure of progress, although in different sectors, and that neglect by the state did not add up to a

[175] G. Veerappa, SRC report, MLCD, Vol VII, 19 November 1955, 826.
[176] B. Madhavachar, SRC report, MLAD, Vol XIII, No.15, 18 November 1955, 916.
[177] H. Siddaveerappa, SRC report, MLAD, Vol XIII, No.15, 18 November 1955, 937.

backward people. In later renditions of the reorganisation story, these perspectives, which held possibilities for mutual respect and equitable distribution of resources and development efforts, have been suppressed or made irrelevant.

*The Career of the Kannada State*

In his interview with H.S. Gopal Rao, the author of *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, V.P. Deulgaonkar, who had been an active participant in the movement against the Asaf Jahi state, recollected an encounter after 'unification' involving a District and Sessions Court Judge. The Judge, after his speech at a school in Gulbarga, asked his audience if they understood what he had just said. 'I got very angry. I asked him if he thought we don't know Kannada. Then there were such feelings. We used to often get mocked,' Deulgaonkar recalled. He also stated that people from other parts of Karnataka used to look down upon those from Hyderabad-Karnataka because the latter were considered backward and could not even properly speak Kannada. This had pained people in the region so much that many had begun to state that they would have been better off, had they remained in Hyderabad state, he added.[178]

Deulgaonkar's memories accord with Mysorean apprehensions regarding the formation of Karnataka: These attitudes were not missed by those from other parts of Karnatak, some of whom called for forming a Kannada state even without Mysore. In a perceptive comment on the ways in which formation of the Karnataka state was being articulated—i.e. with Mysore as nucleus, and other parts 'merging' with Mysore to form an 'expanded' Mysore state— Manick Rao, the lawyer from Raichur, stated:

> Merger must be ruled out. As far as Karnatak area of the state is concerned, there
> seems to be nervous approach to the objectives… We want to be part of a healthy and

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[178] Interview with V.P. Deulgaonkar in HS Gopal Rao, *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, Eighth edition (Bangalore: Navakarnataka Publications, 2014), 363.

strong Karnatak comprising all its component parts resulting in the absorption of Mysore in that bigger Karnatak. We want to play an honourable part in building a province long cherished and to the formation of which we have a historic and political right. It should be clear that shrinkage of Hyderabad cannot mean expansion of another state which cannot be a whole Karnatak in conception or formation.[179]

Manick Rao's argument that the proposed state of Karnataka was neither an expansion nor a merger into Mysore was a necessary corrective to articulations from Mysore which focused on the gains it would receive from what it considered to be its territorial expansion. In Manick Rao's vision of the new state, people from all Kannada-speaking parts were equal stakeholders in the new state and Karnataka was not the result of a 'shrinkage' or 'expansion' of territory.

However, these visionary articulations had to contend with pragmatic concerns of stemming opposition and hostility, particularly from Mysore. As part of these placating measures, Haumanthaiah called upon retaining the name Mysore for the new state, most certainly to establish some sort of symbolic continuity with the erstwhile princely state. Others insisted on retaining the Mysore King as the Governor. For those in Hyderabad-Karnataka who had felt a great sense of achievement at having ended Asaf Jahi rule, the continuance of a King even as only a constitutional head was unacceptable. Manick Rao summed up these sentiments when he said: 'If disintegration were to result in shifting our loyalties from King Kothi to Lalit Mahal in Mysore, then it is not a consummation to be wished for. We have no love for Mysore.'[180] This was a common sentiment among political leaders of the region, whose submission to the SRC stated that the proposed Karnataka state (which included Mysore as well) should be without a Rajpramukh.[181] Mysore, however, had its way as the King went onto become the Governor of the new state.

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[179] Rao, "No Love for Mysore If Greater Karnatak Means Loyalties to Lalit Mahal."
[180] ibid
[181] Cited in Govindaraju, *Movement for United Karnataka: Cultural Dimensions*, 65–66. The leaders included Janardhan Rao Desai, G.S. Melkote, Y.Virupakshappa, Srinivas Rao Ekilekhar, S. Rudrappa, Vimalabhai, Raghu Jagirdar and Krishnacharya Joshi.

That the Hyderabad-Karnataka region was considered simply to be two districts that were to be included in the new Kannada state—and not a region with its distinct histories—was evident from the SRC report. When made public in 1955, the report discussed Mysore and Hyderabad one after the other, yet there seemed to be very little discussion about the areas that were to be transferred from the latter to the former.[182] Raichur and Gulbarga were transferred to Mysore, and Bidar was retained with the residuary Hyderabad state (see Figures 14 and 15 for linguistic maps of the two districts). Some explanation is offered for this move of retaining Bidar in the report. The SRC stated that Bidar was a 'multilingual district', had close administrative links with Hyderabad, roads and railways from the district were oriented towards Hyderabad city, and the Kannada and Marathi areas were situated at a great distance from Bangalore and Bombay (see Figure 16 for linguistic map of the district). Raichur and Gulbarga were not subject to any discussion in the report, as these districts were lost amidst questions of whether Mysore state should be retained as a separate unit or be merged with the Karnatak areas on the one hand, and of whether Hyderabad state should be retained or dissolved on the other.

Mysore state, which voted in favour of the report, also passed proposals for amendments to the SRC report on territorial changes. One of the proposed amendments was to have four taluks of Bidar—Bidar, Bhalki, Humnabad and Aurad—be included in the proposed Kannada state. Hanumanthaiah, while proposing these amendments claimed that people of these taluks had made representations to his government expressing their desire to join their Kannada brethren. The SRC Bill conceded this demand and four taluks of Bidar were included within the new Kannada state. On November 1, 1956, Mysore state came into being as a linguistic unit of the Indian Union.

Territorial reorganisation involves not only redrawing boundaries, but also significant administrative changes. The new state makes its presence felt, takes over the reins, so to

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[182] Ali, Kunzru, and Panikkar, "Report of the States Reorganisation Commission," 108–9.

speak, by installing its personnel and changing modes of governance, among other measures. When in 1948 the Indian Union took over Hyderabad-Deccan, it displaced most of the personnel of the erstwhile regime from decision-making posts, a move that was accepted as advisable and inevitable. Any dissensions were considered anti-national or disloyal. When the matter of the formation of the new Kannada state came up—a move that had been hailed as a necessary corollary to achieving independence from colonial powers—dissensions over the sharing of state power also began to emerge. The inter-state ministerial committee which had been set up to effectuate the integration of the different Kannada regions into one state had chosen officers from Mysore for most of the senior posts of secretaries and divisional commissioners. This move caused dissatisfaction and criticism from Congressmen outside Mysore because they saw this as a bid to retain the princely state's administrative set-up entirely, offering no space for ICS and IAS officers from outside the erstwhile state. Given that one of the consistent grievances of advocates of Karnataka from the Kannada parts of Bombay Presidency was the lack of its people in the administration, this must have felt like yet another betrayal. The decision not to increase pay scales for officers of the new state and to retain Mysore's payment structure (which was among the lowest in the country), it was believed, also had kept officers from opting for the state.[183]

Fourteen months after its formation, problems of integration were still simmering. The opinion among those from Karnatak areas was that the old Mysore administration was not capable of handling the task of integration and made them feel like unwelcome 'outsiders' who were being forced to fit into 'an inferior and outmoded administrative machinery'. For old Mysore officers, those from the Karnatak areas were 'regarded as "intruders" disturbing their status, power and prestige'.[184]

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[183] The Times of India News Service, "Mr. Nijalingappa Likely to Be Chief Minister: Selection of Officers Provokes Criticism," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, October 1, 1956, Online edition, sec. 6, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India, https://search.proquest.com/docview/518230033?accountid=142596.
[184] The Times of India News Service, "Integration Is Still Major Problem: Administration Proves Unequal to Task," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, January 11, 1958, Online edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

**Figure 14: Linguistic map of Gulbarga district**
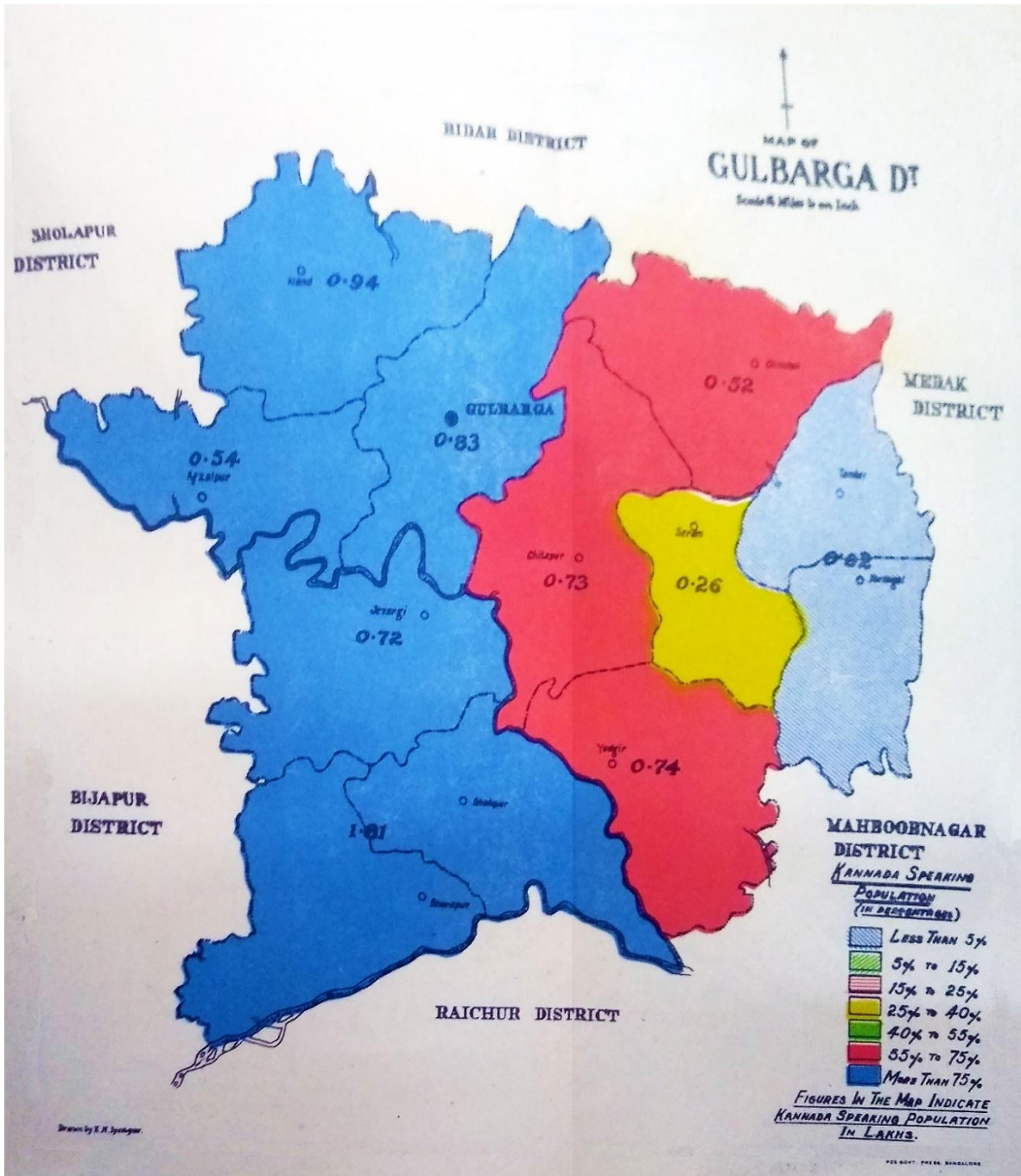
***Figure 15: Linguistic map of Raichur district***
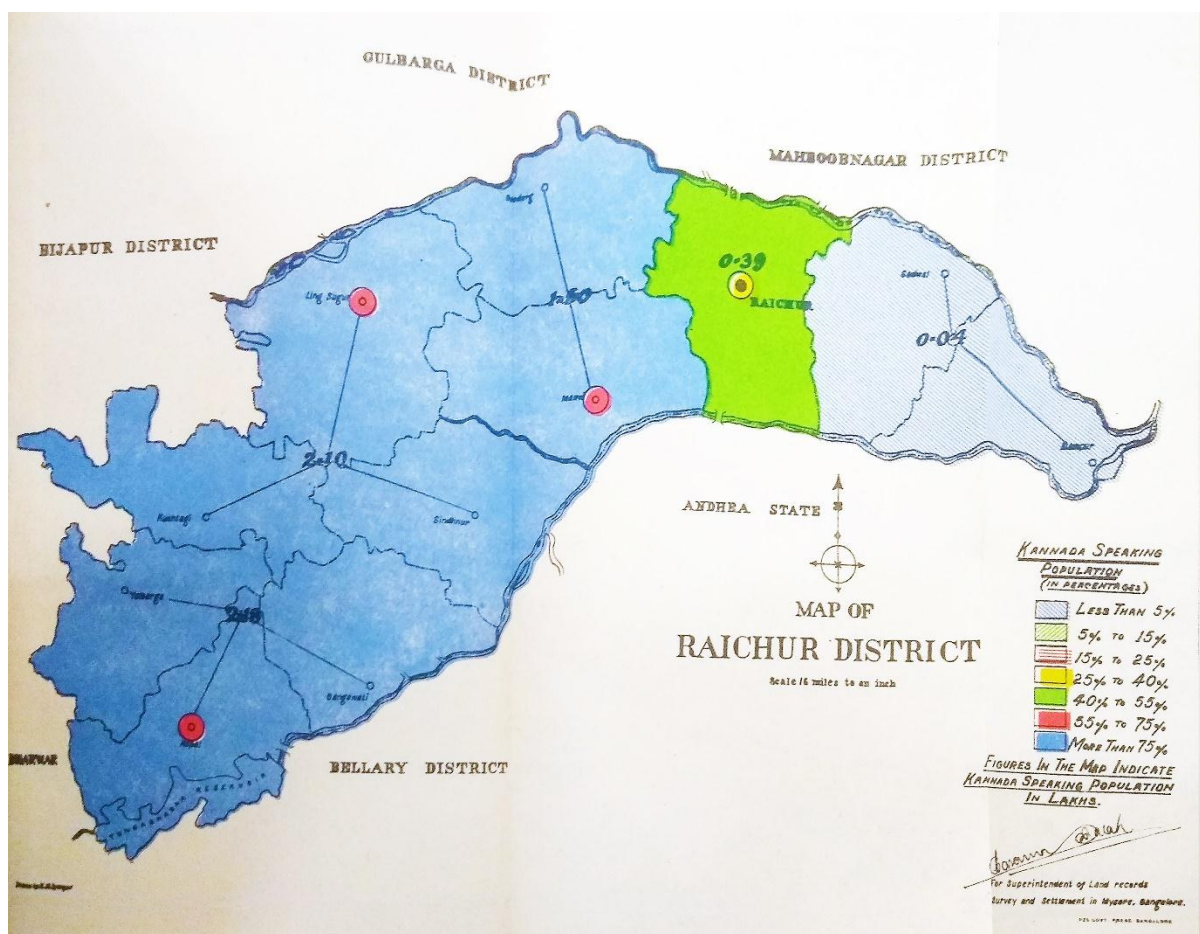


*Source: Seshadri et al, "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)", 4*

*Figure 16: Linguistic map of Bidar district*
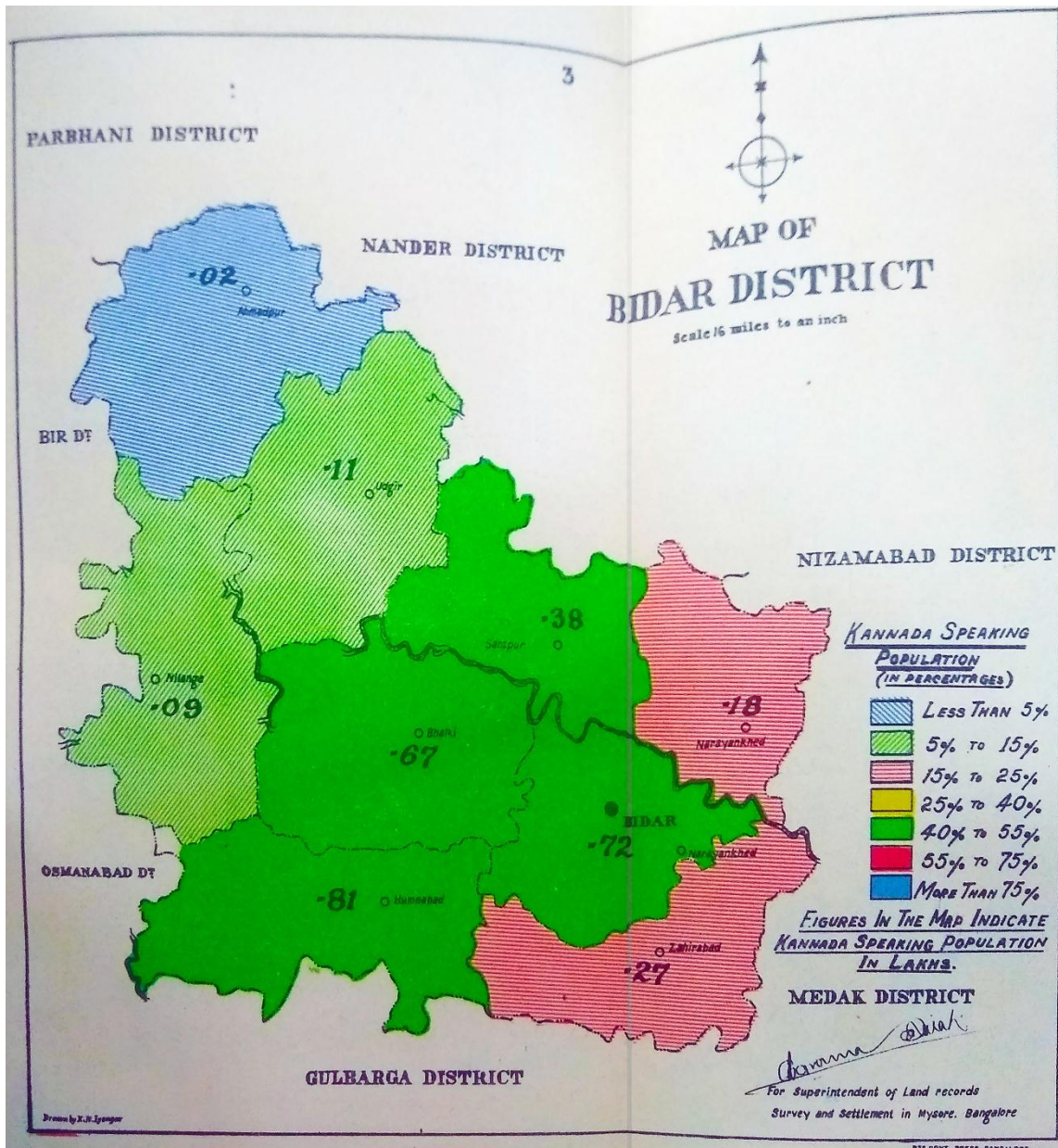
*Source: Seshadri et al, "Report of the Fact-Finding Committee (States Reorganisation)", 3*

These administrative tussles and the unresolved issue of seniority among officials created such dissatisfaction that nearly all senior officials from Bombay-Karnataka apparently asked to be 'repatriated' to Bombay state. By the 1980s, questions about inadequate representation of people from regions other than Mysore began to be raised in the legislative assembly. A committee constituted to look into this matter found that recruitments were indeed

disproportionately in favour of those from 'old Mysore areas', i.e., the erstwhile princely state, and particularly Bangalore district. The districts of Bidar, Belgaum, Bijapur, Kodagu, Dharwar, Gulbarga, Uttara Kannada, Raichur, and Dakshina Kannada were not 'adequately represented' in Groups A, B, and C of the state government services. However, the committee attributed this 'imbalance' to 'historical reasons', and not to a tendency that began with state reorganisation. It stated: 'The Committee are of the opinion that the area of the state which is commonly known as old Hyderabad area is educationally backward and as such people of that area are not adequately represented in services of the state government and the state public undertakings.'[185]

'Historical reasons' accounted for the backwardness of North- and Hyderabad-Karnataka in the much-cited report of the High-Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances (HPC FRRI). It stated:

> If a State is carved out of areas taken from different adjoining States all of which are at various levels of development, the newly formed State cannot expect to have inherited a balanced economy. This is the story of the imbalances in the State of Karnataka. The *newly-added areas* had for historical reasons suffered in socio-economic development having been treated as peripheral regions of the pre-Independence Presidency States, while Mysore-Karnataka had achieved a relatively better development due to historical reasons[186] [emphasis mine].

The report adopted the taluk as a unit of analysis and eschewed the use of terms such as Hyderabad-Karnataka, Bombay-Karnataka, Kodagu, Madras-Karnataka, and Mysore-Karnataka. It justified this move by stating that regions on the whole were neither uniformly

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[185] S.S. Kadapatti et al., "Committee to Examine the Regional Imbalance in Recruitments" (Bangalore: Karnataka Legislature Secretariat, April 23, 1987), 6, Karnataka Legislative Assembly Library. Razak Ustad, an activist from the region, states that this absence of people in state services has meant that the state machinery in the capital city of Bangalore had no interest in the state of affairs in the region. 'The state secretariat should belong to the entire state. But the people there are from other regions. So, none of our work actually gets done in Bangalore,' he says. Those deputed from other regions to serve in these parts are rarely motivated to work and live here, Ustad says, citing an instance of one government college principal who was posted at Raichur but spent most of the week in Bangalore, citing 'meetings'. Interview with Razak Ustad, Raichur city, 19 November 2017.
[186] High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances, "Report of the High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances" (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 2002), 897.

developed nor backward and interventions had to be based on micro units for redressal of disparities. 'Further, it is feared that such regional demarcation, if continued, would perpetuate emotional differences among the Kannada-speaking people,' it added.[187]

The report argued that the state had made substantial investments in North Karnataka, particularly in the matter of irrigation to harness the region's water resources, but this had not been 'properly appreciated'. This feeling had persisted, it said, despite improvements in per-capita income, infrastructure, and irrigation facilities, and was perhaps 'accentuated' by some policies of the central and state governments regarding the location of industries, institutions, and organisations and appointments to boards, corporations, and committees. The report also blamed the increased population growth rates in North Karnataka for 'acting as a drag on the growth rate as well as the overall development impact'.[188]

The report, however, did undertake an analysis of the growth trajectories of the different districts of the state between the years 1960 and 1999 according to some development indicators. All these indicators showed the worsening or stagnant position of districts from North-Karnataka and Hyderabad-Karnataka between these years and dramatic improvements in the position of Bangalore district [189] (see Tables 4 and 5). These drastic differences in income generation between the broad regions of North and South Karnataka has meant that two-thirds of the state income is now generated from districts of the latter region. The report also found that Hyderabad-Karnataka was poorly represented in government services, with recruits from the region accounting for only 12 percent of gazetted posts and eight percent of non-gazetted posts. Bangalore division, on the other hand, accounted for 47 and 45 percent of

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[187] ibid, 901.
[188] ibid, 6.
[189] Given that the massive investment into Bangalore has been a subject of much criticism by development analysts as well as from political and social activists from North- and Hyderabad-Karnataka, I have chosen to highlight rankings of Bangalore district to substantiate my argument of discrimination.

gazetted and non-gazetted posts.[190] These are only some of the many indicators taken into account by the high-power committee to assess the developmental—including economic, political, bureaucratic and social factors—trajectories of the different regions of the state.

*Table 4: Ranking of select districts on per-capita income and HDI*

| District | Per-capita income | | | | HDI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1970-71 | 1980-81 | 1993-94 | 1997-98 | 1991 | 1998 |
| Bidar | 17 | 15 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 18 |
| Gulbarga | 11 | 13 | 17 | 17 | 19 | 19 |
| Raichur | 7 | 11 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 |
| Bangalore | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

*Source: Report of the High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances*

*Table 5: Ranking of select districts on composite development index*

| District | 1960-61 | 1971-72 | 1976-77 | 1998-99 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bidar | 17 | 14 | 15 | 19 |
| Gulbarga | 19 | 19 | 19 | 20 |
| Raichur | 18 | 17 | 18 | 16 |
| Bangalore | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

*Source: Report of the High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances*

Yet, the discursive career of the Kannada state continues to be beholden to the story of 'historical reasons' for the underdevelopment of the 'newly added areas' and the developed status of areas of erstwhile Mysore. This has come at the cost of a sustained analysis—or even an acknowledgement—of the skewed policies and directions of successive state

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[190] High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances, "Report of the High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances," 677.

governments, which perpetuated the poverty of the Hyderabad-Karnataka and North Karnataka regions. Given that the high-power committee report was made public in 2002—nearly 46 years after reorganisation took place—and still continued to blame population growth rates and the under-appreciation of state investment in the region, the strength of the discourse of historical backwardness evidently reigns supreme. Meanwhile, the structural, political, and historical determinants of the underdevelopment of Hyderabad-Karnataka and North Karnataka continue to remain obscured.

## Conclusion

Situated in the early years of postcolonial India, this chapter studies the simultaneous disintegration and creation of states in the southern parts of the country as part of the process of an internal reorganisation of territory. In doing so, it has foregrounded the importance of spatiality and territoriality in political visions, discourses, and actions in this period. It brings together the histories of the two neighbouring states of Hyderabad and Mysore, as well as the Karnatak region, to demonstrate the intertwined histories of these political and territorial units and their continuing legacies in the contemporary period.

The chapter first focused on the processes of remaking the Hyderabad-Deccan after its accession to the Indian Union. This remaking involved dislodging Muslim communities from the political arena and relegating them to a minority status through fear of reprisals and dread, repopulating the bureaucracy with numbers that mirrored the demographics of the state, the partial abolition of feudalism through the restricted means of dissolving the jagirdari system, and, finally, the disintegration of the state along linguistic lines. Through this detailed study, the chapter has demonstrated the deep-set antipathy harboured by officers of the Indian Union and politicians against the Asaf Jahi state, and Muslim communities in general, in post-accession Hyderabad. It has argued that the disintegration of the state had to do equally,

if not more, with the fact that a Muslim state with a prior claim for independence could not persist as an integrated unit in independent India.

As the SRC report of 1955 acceded to the demands of dissolving the 'unnatural entity' of Hyderabad, it transferred parts of the Karnatak region to the new Kannada state whose formation it recommended. In the next section, the chapter focused on the demand for a Kannada state by its earliest proponents and their framing of the province as an ideal territory available for modern governance and capitalist exploitation. As the limits of the proposed Kannada state expanded to include the erstwhile princely Mysore, this consensus around Karnataka as an ideal territory disintegrated. The chapter explored this breakdown, the transformation of Karnatak into the category of an underdeveloped North Karnataka (encompassing Hyderabad-Karnataka as well), and the part played in this by Mysorean discourses of progress and backwardness. Finally, the chapter focused briefly on the career of the Kannada state, the dominance of Mysore within this new state, and the resultant neglect of the 'newly added areas'.

## Chapter IV

## The Deployment of Historical Narratives in the Making of 'Karnataka'

Introduction

In the months of July and August 2018, Karnataka was besieged with vociferous protests by groups from its northern parts, demanding the creation of a separate state.[1] The immediate trigger for these protests was the low budgetary allocation to, and developmental programmes for North Karnataka in the state's annual budget.[2] Adding salt to their wounds, Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy was reported to have said that even if a separate state was conceded, North Karnataka would not be able to muster enough revenues to govern itself. Bangalore, he said, generates the most amount of revenue and it is this that gets distributed among the less prosperous areas.[3] In response, groups from the region pointed to the long history of neglect that North Karnataka had faced from successive governments which have ruled the reorganised Karnataka state for over sixty years now. Despite being resource-rich, poverty has been pervasive in the region, they argued, because the state has bestowed on Bangalore a disproportionate amount of attention and resources.[4] Underdevelopment was not the result of innate physical characteristics of the region but was because of an active and deliberate neglect from the state. A state-wide bundh was called; however, the momentum fizzled out soon, as political parties across the spectrum worked to stem these separatist tendencies.

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[1] North Karnataka is now used as a term to collectively refer to both the regions of Bombay Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka.

[2] On media coverage of these protests, see Jyotsna Raman, "All You Need to Know about Calls for a Separate North Karnataka State," *The Newsminute*, July 26, 2018, https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/all-you-need-know-about-calls-separate-north-karnataka-state-85466.; Mohan K Das, "North Karnataka: Will It Be a Separate State?," *Deccan Herald*, July 31, 2018, https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/perspective/north-karnataka-separate-state-684638.html.

[3] Raman, "All You Need to Know about Calls for a Separate North Karnataka State.'"

[4] ibid

Amidst these protests, Vaijnath Patil, a long-time political leader from Hyderabad-Karnataka, remarked that if Hyderabad-Karnataka were to become part of a separate state, they would be lorded over by leaders from Bombay-Karnataka. Hyderabad-Karnataka needed separate statehood, he argued.[5] Although Patil's demands did not gain traction, they are worth paying attention to for they throw into relief, and refute, some of the dominant premises that underlie the spatial unit called North Karnataka: 1) The historical regions that comprise North Karnataka have separate developmental and cultural histories, at least since the late 18th century, and cannot be lumped together; 2) In its earlier version, this term referred only to Bombay-Karnataka, but has now been conflated to include Hyderabad-Karnataka and reflects the state's blindness to this historical fact; 3) Patil's remarks anticipated difficulties that the proposed state of North Karnataka could face in delivering its developmental promises if these separate histories were not recognised.

The claims for a separate state have drawn on a long history of neglect of both North- and Hyderabad-Karnataka regions from the state. These recent protests from the two regions reveal that the tightly-woven historical narratives that had undergirded the movement for unified Karnataka since at least the late nineteenth century are now unravelling. These narratives had forcefully argued for the creation of Karnataka and had deployed history to great effect, focusing on the 'geographical wounds' that the Kannada peoples had suffered as a result of their dispersal across different administrations. To assuage some of the concerns from princely Mysore about merging with the 'backward' regions of Bombay- and Hyderabad-Karnataka, the rich developmental prospects these regions had to offer were presented as incentives.[6] The protests of 2018, however, indicate that, for those from North-

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[5] K. N. Reddy, "Nizams Neglected Hyderabad Karnataka Region: Mallikarjun Kharge," *Deccan Chronicle*, July 30, 2018, https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/300718/nizams-neglected-hyderabad-karnataka-region-mallikarjun-kharge.html.
[6] This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

and Hyderabad-Karnataka, the linguistic state form as a solution had failed; a new state, united by a history of neglect and underdevelopment, was a possible solution.

This chapter privileges the perspective that articulations from North/Hyderabad-Karnataka present: that being part of the linguistic state of Karnataka had not brought them the promised benefits of development; that while they may have suffered neglect under pre-independent regimes, the situation had not improved at all since they came together in reorganised Karnataka. In the case of Hyderabad-Karnataka, this state of neglect had impacted the evolution of distinct identities. Some of this has been explored in the previous chapter, which studied how the identity of 'underdeveloped region' was consolidated within Mysore in the case of North/Hyderabad-Karnataka, and became administrative common-sense when the new state came into being. In this chapter, I argue that the dominance of Mysore within the new state has been sustained by histories of the Kannada nation marked by absences and exclusions, which do not take into account the varied histories of its different regions.

This chapter studies the trajectory of this historical narrative of 'unification' following its successful culmination in the year 1956, when the linguistic state was formed. I begin by providing a brief overview of the dominant historical scholarship, i.e. nationalist historiography, produced from the 1950s onwards in India, which influenced history-writing initiatives in Karnataka. I will specifically look at the production of regions and regional texts within this historiographical framework and the replication of the trope of a unified nation within regional contexts. In the second section, I will study three popular or state-sponsored texts on Karnataka's histories and will pay attention to their thematic concerns to demonstrate the emphases and exclusions that have gone into the making of the Kannada nation. In the third section, I focus on Hyderabad-Karnataka, largely absent from these state-wide narratives, and discuss the historical narratives that do exist, the absences that mark these

narratives, and a history-writing initiative that hopes to correct these shortcomings. These agential acts of claiming a distinct historical identity need to be located within rumblings of dissension that the region has been host to regarding its underdeveloped status. If, as I demonstrated in the last chapter, 'historical reasons' have often been cited to explain the backwardness of Hyderabad-Karnataka, reliance on a different set of 'historical reasons' and on post-reorganisation neglect by the state are deployed to demand 'special' status. The last section discusses this claim to 'underdevelopment' made within the region to access greater shares of state resources.

## Producing Nationalist Historiography

In his presidential address to the Indian History Congress in 1960, K.N. Dutt described the 1950s as a period of intense historical activity in the country.[7] With the state providing encouragement in the form of funds, opening up archival resources, and initiating history-writing projects, experiments with different kinds of methods, sources, and perspectives were being undertaken. In particular, the Compilation of a History of the Freedom Movement in India and the rewriting of state and district gazetteers had sparked off renewed interest in scouring archival records. Dutt pointed out that boards and committees had been set up in different states to collect materials regarding the freedom movement; regional and state histories of the freedom movement were being encouraged, and had even been published in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. The 1857 Centenary celebrations conducted with 'official patronage', Dutt said, had also generated much critical analyses of older writings on the revolt and 'new findings and new interpretation of facts' had emerged from this engagement.[8] All of this constituted for Dutt a 'remarkable development'

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[7] K.N. Dutt, "Presidential Address," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 23, no. Part-II (1960): 3–13.
[8] ibid, 6. Archival sources such as secret political reports and dossiers, proceedings of political bodies and revolutionary associations, proscribed and political propaganda literature had also become accessible to historians soon after independence. Documents on anti-state activities that had been criminalised by the colonial

where the 'History of India' was being re-written 'by her own historians and from the Indian standpoint'.[9] It is this fresh perspective that had led to a re-examination of the events of 1857 and its elevation from being a mere 'Sepoy Mutiny' to 'the Great National Revolt against British rule in India', he argued.[10]

Dutt's address in the year 1960 was describing the conditions of production, as well as the thematic concerns, of scholarship that we now classify as nationalist historiography.[11] The moment of the establishment of the independent nation-state, its support for historical research, and the 'spirit' of this research written from '*the* Indian' standpoint constituted some of the determining conditions of this historiography in the post-colonial period. The association of eminent scholars with these state-sponsored historical projects lent an air of objectivity and rigour. While later historians have critically examined the many shortcomings of nationalist historiography, it was the dominant framework (and continues to be so in many spaces) within which histories were written from the period of the 1950s.[12] It informed the production of regional histories as well, and in this section, I will study how regions were conceived and produced within this historiographical framework and how they informed the production of state and district gazetteers.

*Regions in Nationalist Historiography*

If the primary intention of nationalist historiography was to produce a unitary 'History of India', regional histories were also driven by a similar motivation of producing the nation.[13]

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regime such as treason, insurrection, and political violence, were being studied with renewed interest to write the prehistory of the freedom struggle, Dutt said.

[9] ibid, 5.

[10] ibid, 7-8.

[11] While Dutt's speech presented an overview of the political histories being written in the period, an equally important strain of this scholarship was establishing the economic exploitation of the nation during the colonial period.

[12] See Sarkar, "The Many Worlds of Indian History."

[13] To be sure, in regional histories, it was not only the history of the Indian nation that was attempted. Such histories sought to chart the lineages of regional nations (such as the Kannada nation).

Although Dutt had claimed that tireless efforts were being undertaken to provide comprehensive histories of different regions, he was quick to offer a caveat: 'Not that this process is likely to lead to a neglect of the whole for the part, to an under-estimation of the History of India as such and over-estimation of regional history.'[14] In fact, if these efforts were undertaken 'scientifically', regional histories could immensely enrich the History of India, he added. The caveat obviously reflects the concern that the nation cannot be overwhelmed by the variety (or contradictions) of its regions.

Speaking of his own location as a historian of Assam—a place that he described as 'the backwaters of the great Indian historical stream'—Dutt described the efforts of contemporary scholarship to highlight Assam's 'contributions to the history and civilisation of India'.[15] Civilisations had evolved on 'the mighty Brahmaputra' as it did on Ganga and Indus rivers; Assam had not been insulated from the political currents that besieged the rest of India periodically and the 'all-embracing impact of the Indo-Aryan culture' had shaped Assam's polity substantially.[16] 'The fundamental unity of India in the midst of great apparent diversity is as much vouchsafed by Assam in the extreme north-east corner of India as by Cape Comorin in the south and Kashmir in the north,' Dutt declared.[17] Although the British could be commended for their dedication towards maintaining records and integrating this frontier region with the rest of India, Dutt claimed that revolts in Assam were the result of 'bad faith on part of the British'.[18]

This brief excerpt indicates Dutt's anxious efforts to forge Assam as an essential part of India. The region maybe in the 'backwaters' but the template of history seen in India (the North Indian references are too abundant to ignore), Dutt is at pains to show, unfolded in

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[14] Dutt, "Presidential Address," 5.
[15] ibid, 10.
[16] ibid, 11.
[17] ibid.
[18] ibid, 13.

Assam as well. His speech also makes clear that regional histories were conceived as instantiations of the national story of 'unity in diversity'. This contributions-approach to the study of regions focused intensely on political struggle against the British and reconfigured rebellions and resistances against the colonial state as part of a freedom movement that had always existed. This was an essential and implicit premise of such scholarship which was invested in legitimising the postcolonial nation-state.[19] It required imputing intentions of anti-colonial struggle to actors who may not have had such motivations, erasing specificities of local struggles that may not have been about the nation, and co-opting them into a broader struggle against the British. The Indian story 'of a basically united people' was built through the reiteration of this template in regional histories.

*Creating authoritative texts*

The new nation's investment in history has been well-documented.[20] State patronage of history saw the production of texts which were essentially compilations of contemporary historical research. These texts acquired the status of reference books and continue to still have long lives as secondary literature within academic and popular histories. One such genre produced with the backing of the authority of the state is the gazetteer. If regional histories were designed to mimic national histories, the state and district gazetteers were meant to be textual products that would perform the function of integrating the different spatial units into a nation.

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[19] It also perhaps explains why much of the scholarship focused on British Indian territories rather than the princely states because the frameworks within which to treat the latter had not been evolved. The tempo and tenor of the freedom movement differed to some extent in princely states where the principal adversary was the Maharaja/Nawab/Prince; political action was geared towards responsible government rather than complete abdication of the throne. Yet within nationalist historiography these movements were also subsumed under the rubric of the larger nationalist struggle and studied accordingly.

[20] See for instance Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-Colonial India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004); Sarkar, "The Many Worlds of Indian History."

Gazetteers began their career as products of the vast enterprise of knowledge production initiated by the colonial state.[21] Imperial gazetteers, as they were officially called, were geographical indexes meant to provide officials with comprehensive knowledge of their administrative domains. Covering various fields such as history, geography, geology, society, and economy, among others, gazetteers comprised succinct summaries of data generated across various disciplinary enterprises. In the colonial period, gazetteers were produced for administrative-political units such as presidencies, states, and sometimes districts. The last category was largely available for districts which were in British India.

In July 1955, the independent Indian state ordered the revision of existing district gazetteers and the production of new ones where none existed. State gazetteers were also to be updated or produced anew. Dutt believed gazetteer writing to be an 'exciting experience' because it not only used documentary evidence, but also brought together 'personal experience and instinctive understanding'.[22] He claimed that 'the spirit of new research' that framed the writing of gazetteers had allowed 'the possibility of greater detachment' resulting in conclusions at variance with British writers who had been 'imbued with an imperial outlook'.[23] In an essay, P.C. Roy Chaudhary, the scholar-administrator in-charge of gazetteer production in Bihar, elaborated on the needs of the nation that were being served through gazetteers: 'Old Imperial preferences have faded away. A different generation of administrators has to be catered for. A new economic and social awakening was evident. National integration had to be achieved.'[24] From being merely a resource for administrators,

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[21] For an excellent overview of gazetteer production in colonial India, see P.C. Roy Chaudhary, "The Story of the Gazetteer," *India International Centre Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (October 1975): 259–65. For an overview of written instruments of colonial control such as records and reports, see Richard Saumarez Smith, "Rule-by-Records and Rule-by-Reports: Complementary Aspects of the British Imperial Rule of Law," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1985): 153–76.
[22] Dutt, "Presidential Address," 13.
[23] ibid, 9.
[24] Chaudhary, "The Story of the Gazetteer," 263.

gazetteers were now vested with the task of producing the nation.[25] Although Indian scholars were part of this project, the authority of this text lay in the fact that the state was the official author of these texts. Gazetteers thus represented the efforts of a nation narrating its own story, even as it claimed objectivity and scientific rigour for these texts.

Through district gazetteers, the district was elevated from being merely a spatial-administrative unit to an arena where the new nation's histories had taken place. The format and thematic interests of the gazetteer were designed to provide historicity to the district—while it recorded changes over time in social and economic structures, as it had in the colonial period, the overwhelming focus on the district's participation in the 'freedom struggle' rendered the district a vital part of the nation. Chaudhary, who oversaw the production of gazetteers for sixteen of Bihar's seventeen districts, stated: 'The task is that of bringing out the personality of the district and its link with the state and the country through the gazetteer… It is a monumental task and the need for the gazetteer will increase with the passage of time.'[26] The relationship of the district to the nation was to be covered through themes such as the former's 'particular contribution to the freedom struggle, political parties, elections and their impact on the district'.[27] Chaudhary believed that the writing should be shorn of 'hyperbole', historical references needed to be 'objective', chapters needed 'factual treatment', and that naming personalities was to be shunned unless 'a sense of historicity demand(ed) it'.[28] This, it was expected, would result in the production of gazetteers which would be authoritative because they were neutral and not ideologically inclined.

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[25] Chaudhary pointed out that the district gazetteer had to be a text of interest to '…the administrator, the traveller who has little more than fleeting interest in the country, the public servant, the social worker, the scholar and also the man on the street.' ibid, 259.
[26] ibid, 260
[27] ibid, 259.
[28] ibid, 259-60.

As it turned out, the production of district gazetteers took over two decades, and the uniformity that they were meant to have, for instance in terms of writing formats, did not quite come to fruition.[29] Written within the broad rubric of conventional nationalist historiography, these gazetteers were imbued with many of the unexamined premises of such scholarship. For instance, its historical narratives lend themselves to the perpetuation of a communal common-sense, as well as the continuous, unbroken existence of the nation, as we shall see in the next section.[30] Produced for spatial-political units of states and districts, gazetteers seem to have bypassed scholarly scrutiny as products of nationalist historiography and have largely remained as reference texts for ascertaining facts and figures. Their salience as authoritative texts, however, allows us to examine the making of a historical commonsense about the nation; in our case, the Kannada nation.

Texts for the Kannada Nation

Historical commonsense within nationalist historiography presumes the existence of the nation as a self-evident category, leaving it unexamined and obscuring the processes of the

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[29] In 1973, the Public Accounts Committee criticised the central gazetteers unit for 'woefully' failing in the task of production of central gazetteers and coordinating gazetteer production by state units. The Times of India, "PAC Strictures on Delay by Gazetteer Unit," *The Times of India*, April 25, 1973, Historical Newspapers. Writing in the *Times of India*, Chaudhary was caustic about the 'bureaucratic incompetence' that had come to plague the gazetteer units in the states and at the centre. He attacked the lack of historical competence among editors in the central gazetteer unit who, according to him, were making untenable assertions, delaying the publication of state gazetteers by providing faulty comments and were simply offering insignificant comments and changes in punctuations. P.C. Roy Chaudhary, "Going Easy on the Gazetteers," *Times of India*, January 7, 1975, Historical Newspapers edition.

[30] Later scholars such as Sumit Sarkar have argued that many unexamined premises and methodologies from an earlier period continued to plague postcolonial nationalist historiography. One was the absence of an engagement with the social, a realm that presented 'intractable material' for the seamless narratives that were sought to be produced by such scholarship. Sarkar argues that the dominance of the 'nationalist paradigm' in historiography regarding colonial India had resulted in the 'subordination of the social by the political or economic' (39). Political and economic developments offered historians the option of constructing 'straight-forward anti-colonial narratives', while the realm of the social constituted by 'internal tensions', for instance lower-caste protests against upper-caste led nationalist movements, disrupted the desire to construct the 'saga of a basically united people' (ibid). One strain of nationalist historiography, which had begun in early decades of the twentieth century, focused on state-oriented histories particularly of the ancient Indian period. Such scholarship charted dynastic histories with 'an uncritical preference for alleged periods of imperial unity', and elevated small wars of Rajputs, Marathas, and Sikhs with Muslim rulers to the status of 'national struggles' (31). Sarkar, "The Many Worlds of Indian History."

289

production of the category nation through time.[31] Gazetteers were central to this enterprise in independent India and in this section, I will look at the Karnataka State Gazetteer, first published in 1980. Alongside, I will also analyse two other texts—an edited volume *Karnataka through the Ages: From Pre-historic times to the Day of the Independence of India* (1968) and a popular Kannada book *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa* (The History of Karnataka's Unification, 1996)—to demonstrate thematic continuities within texts of the nationalist historiography genre, published across decades. These continuities attest to the remarkable resilience of the genre in the writing of popular and academic histories.

The state gazetteer was published in two volumes, after the publication of most of the district gazetteers. The chief editor of Karnataka's gazetteer was the historian Suryanath Kamath, its editorial committee included other well-known scholars from the state, and the different sections in the gazetteers were authored by 'experts' in various fields. The Indian National Congress leader R.R. Diwakar's edited volume *Karnataka through the Ages* is a collection of essays written by scholars and experts on the 'history' of Karnataka, and was perhaps the first English-language text of its kind written with the full support of the then-state government. Both these texts cover the ancient, medieval, and modern periods, and end with the achievement of Indian independence. H.S. Gopal Rao's *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa* is possibly the first full-length book (in English or Kannada) to study the Kannada nation through the centuries upto its putative culmination in the linguistic state. Its popularity is attested to by the fact that it has had over eight reprints and has attained the status of a textbook in the study of Karnataka's 'unification'. Through an analysis of these texts, I will demonstrate how certain modes of thinking that framed nationalist historiography of the Indian Union were borrowed here to create the idea of a historical yet timeless Kannada

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[31] Manu Goswami calls these tendencies within scholarship as 'methodological nationalism'. See Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space*. For a brief engagement with this concept, please see Introduction.

nation. The specific ways in which histories were narrated had enduring resonances and the elision of certain figures and events has been central to the creation of this seamless narrative of an always-existing Karnataka.

*The region within the nation*

When Diwakar, the former president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) and an important leader from North Karnataka, decided to take on the task of putting together a volume on the history of Karnataka,[32] he was supported by the then-state government, which not only provided funds but also constituted an editorial committee comprising scholars and administrators.[33] Commending the volume, the then-Chief Minister S. Nijalingappa said in his 'message' published in the book: 'I am proud to say that this is one of the most impressive and informative books I have come across (on) Karnataka… Karnataka's history, its achievements, its literature, arts, science, politics and, in fact, its activities are a glorious chapter in India's history.'[34] That one of the key objectives of the volume was to emphasise the symbiotic relationship between Karnataka and India is clear when Diwakar states: 'This monograph is expected to help every Karnataki to know himself and link himself up with India; similarly it is expected to make everyone in India to feel how akin a Karnataki is to himself. We are all organic parts of one whole, namely Bharata-Varsha, the land and the people, from the Himalayas down to the South seas.'[35] Both Karnataka and India had had mixed fortunes over the previous two millenia, but had managed to retain, unbroken, their cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as their distinct individualities,

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[32] Diwakar had spearheaded a similar initiative when he was the governor of Bihar, which had resulted in the publication of a volume titled *Bihar through the Ages*.
[33] The editorial committee consisted of RR Diwakar, who was the vice-chancellor of both Mysore and Karnatak Universities, S.C. Nandimath, M.V. Krishna Rao, M. Seshadri, Narsinga Rao Manvi and K.V. Puttappa, and K.Guru Dutt (Retired Director of Public Instruction) and H. Deveerappa (Director, Mysore Oriental Library).
[34] R.R. Diwakar, *Karnataka Through the Ages: From Prehistoric Times to the Day of the Independence of India* (Bangalore: Literary and Cultural Development Department, Govt. of Mysore, 1968).
[35] ibid, 971.

Diwakar claimed.[36] Histories of both the Kannada and Indian nations mirror each other in this framework. More accurately, modes of representation of the nation in such scholarship deploy a set of themes or follow a basic template that is replicated for histories across different spaces.

One such theme is that of an eternal nation which has existed through time. Diwakar states, 'India has called herself Bharata-Varsha and described it as the whole land from the Himalayas to the southern seas. From the days of the ancient Greeks, down the centuries, all have recognised India as a single country with a number of common cultural traits.'[37] After having claimed for India a historical unity that has survived centuries of very different political regimes, Diwakar presents the country's contemporary composition—a federation consisting of various states—as having contributed to the great Indian culture and history. In claiming 'contribution', Diwakar is able to lend historicity to the states, most of which at the time had only been a decade or so old. Further, when he claims that 'each state can discover their own life and achievement' through India's history, he establishes both a hierarchy between the centre and the states as well as an inextricable link between their pasts and futures.[38] With specific reference to Karnataka, Diwakar positioned the state as a link between the north and the south. By 'avoiding rigidity or dogmatism', he states, Karnataka has displayed 'commendable tolerance to the many faiths and creeds which met on its soil'.[39]

Such unsubstantiated comments could have been dismissed as hyperbole. Yet, what lends them authority are extra-textual elements such as the authors' stature, the claim that the volumes are products of scholarly research, the work's sponsorship by the state, and its use as reference text for subsequent research. Intra-textual elements also bolster the credibility of

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[36] ibid, xxi
[37] ibid, 968.
[38] ibid
[39] ibid, 969.

these assertions of nationalist pride, for these comments appear between narrations of historical events or at the beginning or the end of a volume and appear as obvious deductions. These are key characteristics of nationalist historiography that have the dual effect of making the nation appear historical as well as timeless, i.e., as if the nation has always existed and dynastic histories are evidence of its long past.

*Establishing the historicity of the Kannada nation*

Histories of Karnataka, written according to the conventions of this genre, follow similar modes of articulating the Kannada nation. In his oft-cited work *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa,* Rao also works with the premise of a historical Karnataka that can be concretely mapped, right from pre-historic times. Drawing upon archaeological research, Rao claims that civilisations have thrived for centuries on the banks of Karnataka's rivers such as Krishna, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Bheema, Tungabhadra, and Cauvery, and refers to stone age relics found in the districts of Gulbarga, Vijapura, and Ballari as evidence that people have lived in Karnataka for around fifty lakh years. 'These people, who lived in different parts of Karnataka, achieving progress in their life, creating their own special culture – it is no exaggeration to call these pre-historic people as Kannadigas,' he says.[40] Rao thus imprints even stone age dwellers of the region with an uninterrupted Kannada lineage. Creating such a long history has the effect of historically dating Karnataka's trajectory and not merely stating that it has existed since time immemorial.

For a work whose primary premise is that the present state of Karnataka is a result of 'unification' after being 'dismembered', rather than of 'territorial reorganisation', it becomes important to narrativise history to make this assertion. Rao does so by devoting considerable attention to charting monarchic-political histories of the region, albeit through an

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[40] Rao, *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, 3.

anachronistic Kannadiga lens. The effort to present a history of unification is dated back to the ancient period. Rao claims that the Kadambas were the 'first Kannadigas' to have ruled Karnataka and Mayuravarma, the 'great king' of this dynasty, displayed valour, prowess and self-respect—all inherent tendencies of Kannadigas—and earned great admiration for Karnataka, even if he was unable to unify all Kannada people. Rao credits the Badami Chalukyas with beginning the process of bringing all Kannadigas under one rule, and bringing 'glory to Kannada' through their imperial achievements.[41] This process of 'unification' was successfully completed by the Rashtrakutas, another Kannadiga dynasty, which extended the geographical limits of the Kannada nation upto Malwa in the north, Kanchi and Thanjavur in the south, Warangal and Kadapa in the east, and the Arabian sea in the west. 'The three units – Kannada, Kannadiga and Karnataka – were able to finally receive the dignity and honour in the time of the Rashtrakutas', Rao claims.[42] The impulse of unification, one that only has a 19th century origin in parts of Bombay presidency, is dated back to the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas, as if these ancient dynasties were propelled by the motivation to create the Kannada nation, as it exists today.

A noteworthy aspect of Rao's book is the spatial correlation that he often makes between current districts and the territorial extent of different dynasties. For instance, the territory of Kadambas is described as comprising the current districts of Belagavi, Uttara Kannada, Shivamogga, Chitradurga, and Ballari. This has the effect of drawing in the contemporary state and its spatial divisions into the long history of dynasties. The evocation of natural features, particularly rivers, is also remarkable. The territorial extent of Karnataka is often described as extending from rivers Narmada to Cauvery, and the Tungabhadra is signalled as the dividing line between the two Karnatakas, split due to political ambitions of dynasties. After detailing the unity and disintegration of Karnataka through the ancient period, Rao

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[41] Rao, 9.
[42] ibid, 14.

laments that 'we have no choice but to accept that traditional rivalry between Hoysalas and Seunas was the reason that Karnataka was broken up.'[43] Even in the time of the Vijayanagara kings, it is not a 'secret matter' that Muslim dynasties ruled in the northern and eastern parts, and that over the subsequent centuries, the chasm between the two Karnatakas only grew. 'We had to wait till the 19th century to begin the resolution of these differences', Rao states.[44]

*Narratives of Pride*

Despite this lament about political ambitions leading to the splintering of Karnataka, there exists in Rao's writing an implicit tension about imperial dynasties. These dynasties are claimed as Kannadiga dynasties, their imperial ambitions are embraced as the glorious history of the Kannada people and nation—this is despite their ambitions coming in the way of territorial unity. Explicit pride about expansionist activities of these rulers is evident, as this is read as testimony to the might of the Kannada nation. This is the note on which the Karnataka State Gazetteer, published a decade before Rao's book, begins. In his introduction, Suryanath Kamath, the chief editor, credits Pulikeshi II, the Badami Chalukya ruler, with unifying Karnataka for the first time. Clubbing together the Badami Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, and the Kalyana Chalukyas into one 'empire', Kamath asserts that the empire ruled

> for nearly five centuries, and being at the centre of the Indian sub-continent, this Karnataka-based empire could influence Indian history and culture in more than one way… Arab visitor Sulaiman (851 AD) calls this empire as one of the four great empires of the world. The Rashtrakutas who succeeded the Badami Chalukyas levied tribute on the rulers of Kannauj successively in the so-called 'Age of Imperial Kannauj' and this term employed to describe the post-Harsha period of Indian history, is in fact a misnomer, and the period must rather be called the 'Age of Imperial

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[43] ibid, 21.
[44] ibid

Karnataka'. This was an age when calling oneself as a 'Karnata' was a matter of pride…[45]

Working within the genre of nationalist historiography, the sections on history in the gazetteer are tinged with narratives of pride about these ancient ancestors, who, it is claimed, 'laid firm foundations for administration in Karnataka'.[46] In his essay on Kannada nationalism, D.R. Nagaraj reminds us of the attractions of imperialism for nationalists: 'Note that those who are in the womb of an alien empire continue to entertain a deep attraction towards their own past empires. All the Indian nationalists, perhaps with the sole exception of Gandhi, were enamoured of strong imperial nationalism. Even for Kannada nationalism, this notion of empire was the basic fountain of inspiration.'[47] This fascination with the imperial perhaps explains why, in all three texts under consideration, histories of Karnataka are coterminus with dynastic histories, special emphases is placed on the victories of rulers, and their military might is measured by the geographical extent of the territory under their rule.

Crucial to this narrative of pride was the assertion that these rulers were, in fact, Kannadigas. It was not enough that their territories comprised the geographical space of Karnataka. Their rule had to be imbued with a history of the ascent of Kannada identity as well. Thus, in several essays in the three texts under consideration, it is repeatedly asserted that the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, and the later Vijaynagara rulers did not have linguistic-regional origins in Marathi or Telugu areas, but were instead located squarely within Karnataka. In the gazetteer, for instance, it is argued that the Rashtrakutas were from Latur, a Kannada area (now in Maharashtra); that their names were 'all of Kannada origin'; and that Kannada was used extensively in records. 'From all these arguments now it has become very clear that the Rashtrakutas were a Kannada-speaking people hailing from Karnataka itself' and were not

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[45] Suryanath Kamath, ed., *Karnataka State Gazetteer*, vol. 1 (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 1983), vi–vii.
[46] ibid, 236
[47] D.R. Nagaraj, "The Forms of Kannada Nationalism," in *Listening to the Loom: Essays on Literature, Politics and Violence*, ed. Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012), 221–22.

from 'Maharashtra area or of the Telugu area or a part of the Rajput clan,' the gazetteer argues.[48]

However, it was the Kannada origins of the Vijayanagara kingdom that was most crucial for nationalist authors to establish. The end of this empire, it was commonly believed, had led to the great dismemberment of the Kannada nation, made only worse when the British took over administration of the country. For a 'unified' Karnataka then, Vijayanagara had to be invoked to suggest that the formation of Karnataka was, in fact, the recreation of a glorious past under this empire. However, to do so, it was necessary to counter the claim by Andhra scholars that the kingdom was part of the history of the Telugu people. In *Karnataka after the Ages,* the essay by P.B. Desai on the origins of the founders of the dynasty offers a brief summary of Telugu sources on the origins of founders Harihara and Bukka. In these sources, the duo are described as officers in the Kakatiya court, who also served the Delhi sultan in his court, when the former kingdom was annexed. After serving for some time as the sultan's governors in the south, they left to form the kingdom of Vijayanagar. The essay declares: 'Scholars competent to judge the relative merits of historical sources will be easily convinced that this account is more or less a legend, at best a floating tradition recorded in literature…'[49] If Harihara and Bukka were indeed immigrants from Andhra, this would have been recorded, argues Desai. Instead, the inscriptions from the period of the early Vijayanagara kings speak of "antagonism" between them and Andhra rulers. The essay does not clarify why this antagonism would refute the claim of their Andhra origins.

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[48] Kamath, *Karnataka State Gazetteer,* 1:238.
[49] P.B. Desai, "Rise and Growth of Vijayanagar," in *Karnataka Through the Ages: From Prehistoric Times to the Day of the Independence of India*, ed. RR Diwakar (Bangalore: Literary and Cultural Development Department, Govt. of Mysore, 1968), 530.

The essay goes on to assert that 'enough evidence' exists to 'establish the Karnataka origin and Kannada affinity of the founders of Vijayanagar'.[50] This evidence points to the Vijayanagar kingdom being the natural successor of the Hoysalas as the founders rose to power from within the Hoysala regime. This transfer of power took place 'without clash or conflict'.[51] Finally, the new rulers followed the administrative and political framework of the Hoysalas, as well as continuing with the worship of tutelary deities. 'Thus there is not a single piece of evidence which would separate them from the Kannada country or people,' the essay claims.[52] Dismissing the claim to Telugu origins was a concern even two decades later for the gazetteer writers, who also privilege the conclusions of Kannada scholars over those of Telugu scholars. The gazetteer claims that Harihara and Bukka 'were certainly not under the control of the Kakatiyas' (which would link them with the Andhra/Telugu desa). Rather, it is 'more likely, although evidence for it is yet to be found,' that they were officers within the Hoysala regime.[53]

An exclusivist claim of a Kannada lineage for ancient and medieval kings obscures the multi-lingual character of pre-modern periods even as it dates the modern political claim of monolinguistic identity back to these periods. Studying the historiographical tendency within Andhra histories of treating dynastic territories and linguistic regions as coextensive, Lisa Mitchell argues that 'many regions and dynasties today claimed by historians of Andhra as evidence of a continuous lineage of a Telugu linguistic people were, in fact, quite multilingual.'[54] She cites the example of Krishnadevaraya (ruler of the Vijayanagara kingdom) who 'patronised poets who composed in Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit and Tamil, and ruled territory that now lies in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu' to

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[50] ibid
[51] ibid, 533.
[52] ibid.
[53] Kamath, *Karnataka State Gazetteer*, 1:279.
[54] Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue*, Contemporary Indian Studies (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 41.

demonstrate the anachronism of linguistic nationalist claims made through dynastic histories.[55] Within this universe of nationalist claims, the presence of a Kannada dynasty presumes the existence of a Kannada people wedded to their language as a marker of identity, which supposedly superseded other communal-affective ties of religion, cult, and trade, among others. For a state such as Karnataka that was formed despite misgivings and oppositions from its various constituent regions, such historical narratives offered a sense of past unity (even if the present did not).

*Staging the Hindu-Muslim encounter*

The Vijayanagara kingdom occupies a central place in the historiography of Karnataka for it links the state to the history of the Indian nation, particularly the latter's pre-colonial past. Conventional Indian historiography views the medieval period in terms of a Hindu-Muslim encounter, mapping onto binaries of original inhabitant-invader categories. The history of the Vijayanagara kingdom, and its many encounters with the Bahamani empire and the Deccan Sultanate, has been recounted in nationalist historiography as Hindu resistance against the tyranny of Muslim onslaught.[56] Within this framework, the understanding of a Kannadiga kingdom that had bravely challenged Muslim forces of the period performs a narrative of pride.

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[55] ibid.

[56] In this debate about the origins of the founders of the Vijayanagara kingdom, one possibility that has been put forward by historians is that Harihara and Bukka, when under the service of the Delhi Sultan, had converted to Islam. After their return to the South as the Sultan's governors, and later, the establishment of the Vijayanagara kingdom, they converted back to Hinduism. The *gazetteer* dismisses this possibility as 'fabricated statements' and argues that if '…Harihara had been an opportunist apostate from Islam, he would never have been accepted by the then orthodox Hindu society' (Kamath, *Karnataka State Gazetteer*, 1:279.) *Karnataka through the Ages* is more vociferous and states, 'The theory of conversion is gratuitous one and has absolutely no basis in facts and it is no use citing evidence of Muslim authorities in support of this. Conversion was a favourite theme with the Muslim authors of those days, who took every opportunity to emphasise the superiority of their creed…apart from the tainted statements of alien historiographers, no impartial and unprejudiced testimony outside the Muslim circle can be adduced to substantiate the theory of the conversion of the founders of Vijayangara' (Diwakar, *Karnataka Through the Ages: From Prehistoric Times to the Day of the Independence of India*, 530.)

Historians working against such historiographic tendencies have argued for a far more nuanced approach to studying the past. Mark Lycett and Kathleen Morrison argue in their article, examining patterns of destruction of Vijayanagara city, that staging of the encounter between Vijayanagara and the Deccan Sultanate as a Hindu-Muslim one has only been made possible by 'both recent historiographic tradition and popular imagination stressing the essential religious identity of both the Vijayanagara polity and the Deccan Sultanates.'[57] In their book, Richard Eaton and Phillip B. Wagoner insist that this period be studied in 'broadly literary-cultural terms… in terms of an encounter between civilisations defined by Sanskrit or Persian literary traditions.'[58] For Eaton and Wagoner, this represents 'a more nuanced, and more accurate, approach to India's pre-modern history than the conventional framework of an enduring and generally hostile confrontation between two allegedly homogenous and unchanging religious communities.'[59] In the face of such 'energetic scholarly challenges to the communal stereotype', some of which demonstrated Vijayanagara's cosmopolitanism, Lycett and Morrison argue, a slight modification has been undertaken by conventional historiographers 'to suggest that its cosmopolitanism represented a sort of island of tolerance in a sea of (Muslim) bigotry and danger.'[60]

In all the three texts under consideration, this religious identity of the warring factions is greatly emphasised, even as the Vijayanagara kings are characterised as benign. In *Karnataka through the Ages,* the 'Muslim invasion' is described as 'an avalanche carrying everything before it', with both the people and their rulers being completely taken aback by the force of its impact.

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[57] Mark.T Lycett and Kathleen.D Morrison, "The 'Fall' of Vijayanagara Reconsidered: Political Destruction and Historical Construction in South Indian History," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 56, no. 3 (2013): 438.
[58] Eaton and Wagoner, *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites on India's Deccan Plateau, 1300-1600*, xxii.
[59] ibid, xxiii.
[60] Lycett and Morrison, "The 'Fall' of Vijayanagara Reconsidered: Political Destruction and Historical Construction in South Indian History," 438.

> Whatever was sacred by them now suffered desecration. It was the assault of an alien and unfriendly culture…When the effect of the initial shock were over, there was created in the minds of the people and of their political leaders a deep apprehension that this new menace, if left unchecked, would altogether destroy their cherished values in life. This apprehension, which was universally felt, led to efforts to rally together such political forces as were available in South India and build up a kingdom which would be a bulwark against northern invaders. This led to the founding of the Vijayanagar empire.[61]

Similarly, in *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa,* the initial success of the 'Muslim invasion' is attributed to the weakness of the existing kingdoms of South India, whose strength had depleted because of wars they had waged against each other. After witnessing the inhuman killings that the invaders undertook of anyone who opposed them, the author claims, these kings were humbled and decided to come together to throw off the yoke of the Delhi Sultan.[62] Although the *Karnataka State Gazetteer* sticks to the same story about the origins of the kingdom, it makes a brief acknowledgement of the non-religious character of the warfare between the kingdom and the Muslim rulers of the Deccan. The gazetteer attributes the 'basis of all conflicts that followed between the two powers' to their desire to gain control of the Raichur Doab. However, it soon returns to the dominant script when it says: 'But it was also given religious covering and this was indeed a serious matter of concern for the Vijayanagara rulers. The Bahamani Sultans were not only interested in political power, but also showed undue interest in the spread of Islam. Religion followed the sword.'[63]

On the Vijayanagara kings, Rao commends them for ruling for about 220 years, and, in the process, protecting the pride and honour of Vishala Karnataka, a realm that extended across all of South India. This was the last time that any dynasty ruled this vast realm, he adds. Evidence of the multi-lingual character of the Vijayanagar court and polity is converted to fit into the narrative of the generosity of this Kannadiga dynasty. The kings patronised Kannada

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[61] Diwakar, *Karnataka Through the Ages: From Prehistoric Times to the Day of the Independence of India*, 527–28.
[62] Rao, *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, 21.
[63] Kamath, *Karnataka State Gazetteer*, 1:282.

literature, art, and culture, but also extended the same patronage to Telugu, Sanskrit, and Tamil, 'without any discrimination', Rao states.[64]

The tropes in accounts of Indian and Kannada historiographies are similar—Muslim onslaught, destruction of 'cherished values', and Hindu 'bulwark' against the invaders. Just as such national accounts equate Indian with Hindu, the use of such tropes within Kannada historiographies perform the function of implicitly inscribing an essentially Hindu religious identity to the Kannada language, people, and nation. This was, of course, not a new phenomenon in Kannada or Karnataka scholarship. In an article, V.B. Tharakeshwar analyses the nationalist discourse in Karnataka to find multiple others, constructed on the basis of contingent political realities: for Bombay-Karnataka and Mysore writers, it was the Marathis and Tamilians, respectively, with whom they competed for state resources. But there was also a widely-shared discourse of the Muslim Other, he argues, visible in writings of Kannada writers such as B.M. Srikantia, who viewed the British as an ally in throwing off Muslim domination.[65] D.R. Nagaraj studies the writings of Alur Venkatrao and Chidanandamurthy and finds that these famous litterateurs, whose works have focused on foregrounding Kannada nationalism, do not discuss the contribution of non-Hindu communities to Kannada culture. Venkatrao, who was spearheading the unification movement from Bombay Karnataka in the early part of the 20th century, conceived of an 'organic relationship' between Kannada and Hindu nationalism, even as he was aware of its potentially turning into 'dangerous territory'.[66] In Chidanandamurthy's works, however, fear and anxiety of a dominated Kannada forms the basis of his nationalism. The Hindu identity of Kannada and Karnataka is evident in Chidanandamurthy's historical narration when he ends the state's

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[64] Rao, *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, 26.

[65] V.B. Tharakeshwar, "Competing Imaginations: Language and Anti-Colonial Nationalism in India," in *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India*, ed. Asha Sarangi (Delhi: Routledge, 2011), 190–207.

[66] Nagaraj, "The Forms of Kannada Nationalism," 224.

history at the medieval period when Vijayanagara loses its battle against the Deccan Sultanate. The 'destruction of the Vijayanagar empire' for Chidanandamurthy, Nagaraj argues, 'constitutes the joint demise of both Hindutva and Kannadaness'.[67]

*Narrating Muslim histories*

The Muslim Other has thus been a consistent presence, implicitly or explicitly, in Karnataka historiography, and the texts under consideration in this chapter are part of this genre. Given the irrefutable fact of long centuries of Muslim rule in the South, particularly in the Deccan, how do these texts address or narrativise this discomforting rule? One way is, of course, to term it as invasion, as I have already described before. But given that their contribution to architecture and culture has been enduringly visible and their rule centuries long, some engagement becomes incumbent. In all three texts, the Bahamani and the Deccan Sultanate rulers are introduced first as opponents of the Vijayanagara kingdom. A separate consideration of the six dynasties does take place, but the treatment is cursory and not commensurate with the treatment received by their counterparts on the other side of the Raichur Doab. The *Karnataka State Gazetteer*, for instance, offers a history of Muslim rule in the Deccan in a mere eleven pages and deals only with the Bahamani kingdom and the Adil Shahi dynasty based in Bijapur; the Barid Shahis of Bidar or the other Deccan Sultanate rulers are barely mentioned. This treatment is in contrast to the twenty-nine pages set aside for Vijayanagara; this is so even though the period of their rule was coextensive with the rule of the three dynasties—Sangama, Tuluva and Aravidu—of the Vijayanagara kingdom, between the years of 1347 and 1538 AD.

Given that the two sets of opponents were often at war with each other over the Raichur Doab region, many accounts of these episodes exist. However, in the *Karnataka State Gazetteer*

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[67] ibid, 225.

and *Karnataka through the Ages*, these accounts are sifted through on the basis of the religion of the account-writers, with Muslim sources dismissed as being 'untrustworthy'. Accounts by Ferishta, termed as 'a partisan court historian' at the Bijapur court whose main purpose was 'obviously to glorify his masters', are cast aside as 'often exaggerated and highly coloured'.[68] The modern historian is asked to 'proceed cautiously' in arriving at conclusions because 'Hindu sources are not explicit and furnish scanty information'.[69] Interestingly, the Muslim sources appear trustworthy if they speak well of Vijayanagara, as when it is claimed that the kingdom was a 'mighty and resourceful state' that was 'far superior in power, wealth, and extent of territory to the Bahamani Sultans', something 'even Ferishta himself admits'.[70] In the gazetteer as well, the distinction between accounts of Muslim historians and chroniclers and Hindu Kaifiyats is drawn to cast aspersions on the authenticity of the former.

Cast as a foil to the Vijyanagara rulers, the Muslim kings are important in the historiography presented in these texts in as much as they highlight the benign character of the former. For instance, although Krishnadevaraya from the Vijayanagara rulers was an 'unsurpassed military genius' who was 'Napoleanic in brilliance', apparently 'territorial aggrandizement was not at all the objective of Krishnadevaraya'.[71] On the other hand, it was the 'expansionist activities' of the Bahamani sultans in the Andhra region and in the Raichur doab that the Vijayanagara kings were forced to 'resist' and 'retaliate' against.[72] In the brief treatment that the Bahamani empire receives, Mohammad Gawan's story is narrated in some detail to highlight the debauchery and the impulsiveness of the sultan who ordered Gawan's execution following court intrigue.[73] M. Seshadri, writing of Gawan in *Karnataka through the Ages,*

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[68] Desai, "Rise and Growth of Vijayanagar," 535.
[69] ibid
[70] ibid
[71] ibid, 546.
[72] Ibid, 535.
[73] Gawan was a popular prime minister of the Bahamani kingdom from 1466 AD to 1481 AD when he was killed on the orders of the Bahamani king Mohammad III for treason. His death occurred against the backdrop of the political rivalries between old nobility of the Deccanis and the ascendant group of Afaqis who hailed from

describes him as 'incorruptible' and having 'a lofty conception of morality in an age when the grossest vices were condoned or connived at'.[74] Citing a historian named Ishwari Prasad, Seshadri writes that Gawan's tenure is 'refreshing' because it allows us 'to turn from the scenes of violence and bloodshed and drunken revelry of the Bidar court'. Yet, for all that, Gawan's 'versatility of mind would not rise above the narrow orthodoxy of his age', the author notes.[75] Such a characterisation represents another form of alienation of the Muslim ruling elite from the story of Karnataka. Apart from emphasising their origins in different parts of West Asia, in such historiography, the Muslim elite are represented as pleasure-seeking individuals, in whose courts debauchery reigned supreme. This is in contrast to the 'Kannada' dynasties who practiced toleration in religious matters, accorded equal rights to minority communities and encouraged 'Indian' tradition—a 'catholic' outlook that was in tune with the imagined attributes of the space of Karnataka.

For Gopal Rao, the focus in providing an account of Muslim rule is to assess their impact on Karnataka. He commends the Bahamanis for their impressive architecture and their patronage of literature, but believes that even in Bijapur, Bidar, and Gulbarga where Kannadigas dominated, Urdu had begun to marginalise them by 1437 AD. People, however, made considerable efforts to save their language and culture especially in the villages, even as cities grew closer to Urdu language and Muslim culture, Rao states. A particularly long-lasting effect of the Muslim rule in the Kannada-speaking areas of Deccan was the rising influence of the Marathi speakers. They gained in military strength and were recruited into administration especially during the Adil Shahi rule, when several Maratha chiefs were designated as administrators. To be sure, Rao points out that the Seunas of Devagiri, the

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outside the Deccan. Gawan was an Afaqi and originally hailed from Persia. For a longer exposition on him, see Haroon Khan Sherwani, *Mahmud Gawan: The Great Bahamani Wazir* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1941).

[74] M. Seshadri, "Rise and Growth of Vijayanagar," in *Karnataka Through the Ages: From Prehistoric Times to the Day of the Independence of India*, ed. RR Diwakar (Bangalore: Literary and Cultural Development Department, Govt. of Mysore, 1968), 571.

[75] ibid

'Kannada' contemporaries of the Sultanate, had also encouraged Marathi literature and culture in that period and the number of Marathis on the northern side of the Bheema river consequently increased. Rao however reconciles this contradiction by pointing out that 'like Karnataka's other royal households, they encouraged and patronised their subjects' language'.[76] Unlike the other two texts, Rao offers greater treatment to the kingdoms of the ancient period and not as much to the Vijayanagara kingdom, although he adheres to the given format of the 'glory' of this 'Hindu' rule. Given that much of the nineteenth century struggle in Bombay-Karnataka was against the Marathi stronghold of state administration and public culture, Rao's focus on the entry of Marathis during the Adil Shahi period is crucial. It establishes the consequences of Muslim rule on the 'unity' of Karnataka, thereby offering the implicit message that the disintegration of the state was the result of these inadvertent consequences of Muslim rule and began much before the British entered the picture.

*Constructing the 'unwavering demand'*[77]

It was in the nineteenth century that efforts at 'unification' began, asserts Rao, who presents a detailed picture of the events leading up to the reorganisation of territory in *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*. The term unification, used in most scholarship on Karnataka, presents the formation of the state as a natural consequence of history, i.e., having been dispersed across different administrations, it is only just that the linguistic state be formed, unifying Kannada-speaking individuals under one administration (natural justice). Such a claim obscures the fact that the formation of the state on a linguistic basis was an unprecedented territorial event,

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[76] Rao, *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, 36.
[77] This section draws only from Rao's Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa because the other two texts do not deal at any length with the formation of the linguistic state and end at Indian independence.

i.e., with no prior basis in ancient or medieval histories, that there had been no Karnataka before its formation in 1956.[78]

Having built up to the period of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the demand for a united Karnataka began to gain traction, Rao claims that this demand was unanimous and cut across caste, class, religious interests. Hence, although he mentions that, in 1937, the Muslim League and B.R. Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party did not support the resolution for separate provinces tabled in the Bombay Assembly, Rao repeatedly asserts that 'people' supported the demand for a linguistic reorganisation of territory, that Mahatma Gandhi had expressed his 'affection' for the demand, and that the Nehru committee had also stated its support to the demand in its 1928 report.[79] The opposition by the Muslim League and Independent Labour Party, which alerts us to the caste and religious division on the issue of linguistic reorganisation, is glossed over to construct an undifferentiated, supportive 'public'.[80] Similarly, M. Visvesvaraya, the famous Dewan of Mysore, is presented as an advocate of unification and his establishment of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat is understood to be the product of his foresight in bringing Kannadigas together. However, both Visvesvaraya and Mirza Ismail, another well-regarded dewan, opposed the merger of Mysore with Karnatak, and provided evidence against it to the Fazl Ali Commission, a fact that Rao himself mentions. It hurt the sentiment of Kannadigas, he says briefly, before returning to the script of an unwavering demand for the linguistic state.[81]

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[78] This argument had been made by opponents of the linguistic state in the debates in Mysore Assembly. For more on this, please see Chapter 3.

[79] ibid, 103. The Nehru Committee headed by Motilal Nehru had argued in favour of linguistic provinces, even though it advocated for English as a medium of transaction and the propagation of Hindi as a common language across the country.

[80] In his speech in the Bombay Assembly, on 4 April 1938, Ambedkar had argued against a separate Karnatak province on the following grounds: the financial unviability of the province, the lack of merit in the arguments that Kannadigas were discriminated against or under-represented in state machinery and the hegemony of Lingayats in the proposed province which would leave minorities at the mercy of the majority. See B.R. Ambedkar, "On Creation of a Separate Karnatak Province," in *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : Writings and Speeches*, Second, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014), 188–96.

[81] ibid, 223.

This construction of a homogenous Kannadiga public is possible because of the archival material Rao uses for his narrative. He focuses on the articulations for Karnataka made in political events, resolutions passed at literary and political conferences, or submissions to enquiry commissions to assert that the demand for Karnataka was overwhelming. Such a purposive selection of archival material seems to focused towards proving the assertion rather than the material lending itself to an argument. To be sure, Rao does mention that Alur Venkata Rao, the Kannada leader from Bombay-Karnataka, organised Nadahabbas, Vidyaranya Utsava, Vijayanagara Utsava, and Basaveshwara Utsava among several others, to mobilise nationalist sentiments. But there are no details available on how they were received, how often they were conducted, or how these celebrations were organised. This elision of details about the social or cultural from Rao's narrative is particularly stark when the caste-class composition of organisations that supported unification is examined. The Lingayat-Veerashaiva Mahasabhas, Kodagu's zamindars, and the Karnataka Chamber of Commerce are some of the organisations he cites as supporters of "unification".[82] Would the narrative of 'unification' be different if these divisions were acknowledged?

Rao also presents evidence for support for reorganisation largely from Bombay-Karnataka, but generalises the support as arising from all of the constituent regions of Karnataka. This is particularly the case with Hyderabad-Karnataka, whose histories are reduced to mere mentions of individuals involved in demanding a separate linguistic state. The author seems unable to reconcile the fact of low mobilisation from the region around the demand for Karnataka—which he attributes to the absence of representative freedoms under princely regimes—with his need to assert that people were keen on being united in both British and Hyderabad-Karnataka. Mysore presented a complicated picture, with strong opposition among certain sections to the idea of the state's merger with other Kannada-speaking areas.

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[82] ibid, 90.

Rao resolves this dissonance by arguing that because Mysore was ruled by a Kannada king and Kannadigas lived in their linguistic homeland, politicians and leaders did not yet have love for their counterparts in other parts; it was only a matter of time before they came around to it.[83]

Mysore's acquiescence and support to the movement for Karnataka was crucial not only because it was deemed to be highly developed or was the sole Kannadiga kingdom. In the three texts under study, Mysore consistently represents a truncated version of Karnataka, with the ruling Wodeyar dynasty being considered the successor state for all the Hindu-Kannadiga kingdoms, including Vijayanagara. It is in this crucial sense that the areas comprising Mysore state began to be considered the nucleus around which Karnataka was to be formed. If the previous chapter demonstrated how the characterisation of these regions as underdeveloped led to their marginalisation within political and administrative realms, this chapter has focused on how historical narratives through the decades have invisibilised the constituent regions of the state. Bombay-Karnataka's histories are condensed to the 'struggle' of Kannada speakers against Marathi dominance, while Hyderabad-Karnataka's histories are reduced to Urdu and Muslim dominance under a feudal Muslim king. Finally, Coorg and other smaller kingdoms that went on to constitute Karnataka are hardly mentioned.

In studying the narrativisation of history in three texts representative of nationalist historiography, I have presented an analysis of how Karnataka is constructed post-facto, i.e. after its constitution as a separate linguistic state. These narratives have continuities with pre-reorganisation narratives and no claim is made to the contrary here. Instead, the focus has been on contextualising these texts within the nationalist historiography genre, tracing some of the underlying premises such as a latent anti-Muslim bias and a presumed Hindu identity for the linguistic state, and being attentive to the textual strategies of historicising the eternal

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[83] ibid, 131.

nation. As histories authorised by the nation-state, these narratives gain circulatory potential and enshrine themselves as historical memories. But if these histories generalise the Kannada nation without paying attention to the different histories of the constituent regions, do they impact a region's self-perception and its sense of history? Does this determine the direction of state policies and attitudes and impact the region's development prospects? These questions, in the context of Hyderabad-Karnataka, will animate the rest of the chapter.

## Writing the histories of Hyderabad-Karnataka

Official histories of Hyderabad-Karnataka were written for the first time between the 1960s and 1970s as part of the nation-wide project of producing district gazetteers.[84] As detailed in the preceding sections of this chapter, these gazetteers were informed by the need to connect the district to the larger story of the Indian nation. Similarly, most histories of the region written in the vernacular, i.e. Kannada, also focus on the ways in which 'people' ostensibly rose up against the tyranny of the Asaf Jahi state and fought for freedom.[85] Given that many events of the nationalist movement did not resonate in this region which was under princely rule, the narrative of a repressive Muslim state brought down by the 'people' became crucial to link the region to the nation.

*The National story in the Region*

It is for this reason that the Nizams of Hyderabad appear prominently in the modern history sections of the gazetteers of the districts of Gulbarga (1966), Raichur (1970), and Bidar (1977). Following the integration of the state into the Indian Union after Police Action in September 1948, narratives by critics of the Asaf Jahi state have become enshrined as official history. A key feature of this dominant opposition narrative was an 'unflinching support' of

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[84] There were no district gazetteers published in the colonial period in Hyderabad state, except for that of Aurangabad district.

[85] See for instance, Mahabaleshwarappa, *Hyderabad Karnatakadalli Rajakiya Chaluvaligalu*.

the Hyderabadi public towards integration with the Indian Union. Anti-Nizam factions argued, and quite successfully considering the wide currency of this argument, that the ruler was not representative of the people's aspirations, that the 'people' were keen on joining the Indian Union and it was only the Nizams who came in the way of the fulfilment of these desires. Further, the Asaf Jahi dynasty is presented as a weak power that managed to survive only because of its anti-people alliance with the British. In the Bidar gazetteer, a dynastic history of the Asaf Jahis is narrated, and special attention is paid to the ways in which the Nizams allowed for the British to gain more control over the Deccan through treaties and conquests. In this reading of the relationship between the two powers, the British and the Nizams often assisted each other in suppressing rebellions, the most important instance of this being the valuable support rendered by the latter during the 1857 uprisings.[86] The gazetteer mentions several individuals who, heroically though vainly, rebelled against the British in this period. In the Gulbarga gazetteer, the British are blamed for the oppressive situation in the state because, even as they helped the Nizams with 'quelling disturbances in the state', they adopted a 'policy of non-interference' with regard to introducing administrative reforms. This had the effect of frustrating the 'aspirations of the people', it added.[87]

This dependent relationship of the Asaf Jahi state on the colonial power is portrayed as yet another instance of the former's alienation from the Hyderabadi public. The gazetteers of Gulbarga and Raichur have identical paragraphs in which a distinction is drawn between the ruler and his subjects; in doing so, these subjects were drawn into the imagined community of Indians of British India who were fighting for freedom. The Gulbarga gazetteer states:

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[86] K. Abhishankar, ed., *Gazetteer of India: Bidar District, Karnataka State* (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 1977), 93–94.

[87] B.N. Sri Sathyan, ed., *Mysore State Gazetteer: Gulbarga District* (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 1966), 57.

Until recently, it was the general belief that Hyderabad and its rulers were the bulwark of strength to the British Empire and that the first war of Indian independence failed because of the great help rendered to the English by the late Salar Jung representing the Hyderabad Government. But now it has become clear that it was not the people of the state, but the ruler alone that formed the main source of strength to the British… There is enough evidence to show that there were many patriots, both among the commoner and the zamindars, who thought and acted wholly in consonance with the spirit of the freedom struggle.[88]

The gazetteer offers no evidence for this assertion, only claiming that there is 'enough evidence' to show that 'the flames of the freedom struggle that were raging elsewhere in the country in the 19th century' were present here as well.[89] The gazetteers thus construct a Hyderabadi public that had always been anti-Nizam, anti-British, and pro-India and the Police Action as an event welcomed by all.[90] The Raichur gazetteer mentions that the district and the town went through 'great anxiety' because they housed a 'large Razakar population' and that 'soon after the arrival of the civil team on 18 September 1948, normal conditions were restored in the larger part of the district.'[91] The Bidar gazetteer claims that when the Nizam decided to not join the Indian Union, claiming that the departure of the British entitled him to independence, and declared the Indian Union flag 'foreign', people were 'shocked'. 'Hundreds of people hoisted the national flag, took out processions, held demonstrations and offered satyagrahas… There was a mass struggle against which the Nizam's Government unleashed a reign of terror,' the gazetteer states.[92]

If the Asaf Jahi state is presented as self-serving, the Indian Union receives glowing commendations as a powerful but patient state, which was forced into undertaking military action due to violence unleashed against people in Hyderabad. In this narrative, the Nizam's

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[88] ibid. It is useful to recollect what Amaresh Nugadoni points out about revolts by zamindars. For this, see pages 18-19 of this thesis and Amaresh Nugadoni, *Hyderabad Karnataka: Hadu Padu* (Hampi: Prasaranga, Kannada University, 2003).

[89] ibid.

[90] This narrative of the widespread acceptance of the Police Action can be traced back to the period of Indian Union's rule in the years between 1948 and 1952. For more on this, please see chapter 2.

[91] K. Abhishankar, ed., *Gazetteer of India: Raichur District, Mysore State* (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 1970), 85.

[92] Abhishankar, *Gazetteer of India: Bidar District, Karnataka State*, 93.

refusal to accede to the Indian Union had forced all people in the state to begin agitations. But the rise of an 'injurious militant organisation', the Razakars, led to the spread of 'terror throughout the state'. Following a year of such violence, the gazetteer states, 'the Government of India could no longer sit silent'. [93] After negotiations failed, the Indian Union was forced to undertake the Police Action in which 'the Union forces pierced Hyderabad State at several points', ultimately leading to the Nizam's surrender. The Indian Union, the victor of this war, is presented in these narratives as being just, seeking non-violent resolutions, and finally having no choice but to resort to arms because 'the Razakars even committed aggression' against the Union.[94] The similarities between the presentation of Hindu kings of the past (presented in the previous section) and the Indian Union are striking.

Given that the gazetteers followed the basic template of nationalist historiography, they accord great importance to the 'freedom movement' and the Indian National Congress (INC). Thus, all three gazetteers present a picture of a district/region enthusiastically engaged in the 'freedom struggle'. The Gulbarga gazetteer talks of how 'the desire of the people of the Hyderabad-Karnataka area to fight for the country's freedom was intensified' when the 1924 Belgaum Congress was held under the presidentship of M.K. Gandhi, and of how the non-cooperation struggle also 'had an effect on the people'.[95] How the desire was 'intensified' or what kinds of 'effects' the nationalist movement had are left unsaid. More importantly, the HSC was formed only in 1938, and with no Congress organisation on the ground, it is unlikely that Hyderabad had much truck with the nationalist movement operational in British India. The HSC was also banned in 1938, and the Gulbarga gazetteer states, 'the earnest

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[93] Sathyan, *Mysore State Gazetteer: Gulbarga District*, 56.
[94] ibid, 57.
[95] ibid, 58.

attempts of the Congress leaders at bringing the Hyderabad Government to reason… ended in failure.'[96]

This version of the freedom struggle has only gained in importance over the decades, as the second edition of the Gulbarga gazetteer, published in 2004, devotes considerable attention to the opposition to the Asaf Jahi state, deemed to be 'a stronghold of British imperialists' and 'a centre for Islamic feudal dispensation'.[97] The Asaf Jahi dynasty, which ruled for over two centuries (1724-1948), is given a quick two-page recap, less space than what the minor kingdom of the Nayakas of Surpur receives. The gazetteer then quickly jumps to detailing 'the movement for independence'.[98] Special attention is paid to the 1938 Satyagraha. While the gazetteer leads the reader to believe that only the HSC had called for the Satyagraha, the reality was far more complex. Lucien D. Benichou has shown that there were two Satyagrahas that were being planned, one by the HSC and the other jointly by the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha both to be held on 24 October 1938. Benichou argues that it is 'difficult to affirm collusion between the two blocks', but indicates that there may have been a tacit understanding between the parties.[99] Remarkably, the gazetteer provides the reader with the impression that the HSC, Arya Samaj, and the Hindu Mahasabha worked in tandem to undertake the Satyagraha: 'The nature of the Satyagraha Movement which they had been contemplating was made known to the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha in advance. The entire Arya Samaj organisation jumped into this struggle… The Satyagraha Movement in Hyderabad received recognition and support from various parts of the country.'[100] This

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[96] ibid.
[97] H. Chittaranjan, *Karnataka State Gazetteer: Gulbarga District (Kalaburagi District)*, Revised edition (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 2004), 71.
[98] In what seems to be a rather erratic compilation of sources, this section introduces memories of one HSC leader Janardhana Rao Desai, who claimed that in Gulbarga during the 1921-2 riots, there were attempts to pull down temples, including the Sharana Basaveshwara shrine in the city. It was only because of the publicity he gave to these attempts that the incident did not take place. This is not corroborated by any evidence in the gazetteer. However, by quoting this statement, it is given the authoritative status of truth.
[99] Benichou, *From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948*, 63.
[100] ibid, 73.

acknowledgment is possible because the gazetteer presents the Arya Samaj as a 'powerful nationalist organisation that strove hard to bring about social unity among different castes', and one that had become 'a chief platform of the agitation for securing equal religious rights to all.'[101] Even as the HSC's president Swami Ramanand Tirth receives greater space than in the previous edition, his commendation of the Arya Samaj for 'providing leadership' to Hindus who wanted to challenge their 'suppression' in the State is used to bolster the Arya Samaj's prestige.[102] That Gandhi directed the HSC to formally withdraw from the satyagraha due to concerns that the agitation had turned communal because of the involvement of Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha's is also not mentioned in the gazetteer.[103]

*Historical Inaccuracies and Crucial Absences*

If the Arya Samaj and the HSC receive favourable treatment, Muslim opposition to these organisations is presented without historical care in the 2004 gazetteer. For instance, it is stated that the MIM was started in 1940 by 'a fundamentalist Muslim and a journalist' Mahamed Siddique. The MIM, in fact, began in 1927, but became important only around 1938 when Bahadur Yar Jung, a jagirdar, took over its presidentship and began to advocate organising Muslim communities for political purposes. The gazetteer also claims that it was led by a 'fanatic Muslim' Kasim Razvi, who actually came into prominence only after Jung's death in 1944. In another section, the gazetteer states:

> Ittehad-ul-Mujslimeen (sic), an organisation of fanatical Muslims, was mainly responsible for the widespread acts of brutalities perpetrated in the Hyderabad State from the midnight of August 15, 1947. This organisation had been founded in 1940 by Kasim Razvi, a well-known lawyer of Latur and Mahammad Siddique, editor of a newspaper named "Raihanmaye Deccan"… Bahadur Yar Jung (Bahadur Khan), the

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[101] ibid, 72
[102] ibid.
[103] ibid, 68.

President of Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen was directing its activities and making provocative speeches to stir up communal passion.[104]

This excerpt is riddled with chronological inaccuracies (for instance, Jung was dead by 1944), and erases the history and workings of the MIM in the prior two decades, focusing only on its activities during 1947-48, when it fought to retain the autonomy of the Hyderabad state. The bias in this narrative is evident when speeches by Muslim leaders are presented as having incited 'communal passions' but speeches by Arya Samaj leaders are considered to have invoked 'nationalist sentiments'.

None of the four district gazetteers under consideration acknowledge the massive violence against Muslims in the post-Police Action period. This is despite the fact that Gulbarga and Bidar had been two of four districts (others being Osmanabad and Nanded) where the destruction of Muslim economic life had been nearly complete. Further, Urdu newspapers of the period were agog with different kinds of physical and structural violence that Muslims had faced in this period. Even if the argument were to be made that no scholarship around the post-Police Action violence was available during the writing of the first three gazetteers, it does not hold water for the 2004 Gulbarga gazetteer. If this gazetteer can introduce 'memories' of 'freedom fighters' as a historical source, interviews with Muslim eyewitnesses of the period could have been conducted to provide for a comprehensive account. The absence of such citations in the gazetteers raises questions about the kind of sources these texts have relied on to write the histories of this contested region.

Strains of a general pro-Hindu approach that marked the state gazetteer, discussed in the previous section, is visible in these gazetteers as well. For instance, the Raichur gazetteer accords considerable space to discussing the Bahamani kingdom, declaring that a majority of the rulers were 'drunkards surrounded by informers and self-seekers'. Life in the Raichur

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[104] Chittaranjan, *Karnataka State Gazetteer: Gulbarga District (Kalaburagi District)*, 79.

doab during Bahamani rule was 'hard and precarious', and the area witnessed 'sickening horrors' due to frequent wars with Vijayanagara.[105] The Asaf Jahi rule, in contrast, is not dwelt on much except to assert the distance between the ruler and the people, the presence of nationalist movement, and the anxieties caused due to violence from Razakars. In the Bidar gazetteer, the valorisation of the Vijayanagara kingdom is an implicit premise. Its establishment is declared as 'a most momentous historical event (that) took place in the Deccan', and whose primary purpose was to 'prevent the conquest of South India by aliens'.[106] This short declaration is provided as an introduction to the Bahamani kingdom, which is subsequently dealt with at length, for this dynasty ruled Bidar for centuries. The Asaf Jahi period is more detailed in this gazetteer than in the Gulbarga and Raichur editions, although a large part of the history deals with the district's relationship with the nation through the 'freedom struggle' and the HSC's activities in the state.

*Forgotten and Neglected Dalit Histories*

If Muslim histories of the modern period were treated as consisting of a chronology of 'fanatic', 'fundamentalist' rulers and a righteous opposition to the Asaf Jahi state, then caste histories are completely absent from the district gazetteers. Given that they are part of the genre of nationalist historiography, acknowledging caste, or the 'intractable' social as Sarkar puts it, was outside their epistemic ambit. This genre has as one of its key premises the unity of the nation (Indian or linguistic), and caste was seen as divisive for it split the 'people' up according to their social origins. Such histories also raised the possibility that the 'freedom movement' or the 'unification movement' were caste-specific demands or at least not 'universal' as the genre presented them to be.[107]

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[105] Abhishankar, *Gazetteer of India: Raichur District, Mysore State*, 64.
[106] Chittaranjan, *Karnataka State Gazetteer: Gulbarga District (Kalaburagi District)*, 79.
[107] Writing about the absence of Dalit histories in historical scholarship from India, Yagati Chinna Rao argues, 'Indian historians, by and large, do not acknowledge the positive role of Dalits either in their own movements or

It is no surprise then that district gazetteers do not acknowledge the separate histories of Dalit communities even though key political actors in the Asaf Jahi state were Dalits[108] and Hyderabad-Karnataka has been host to strong Dalit assertions in the post-reorganisation period. The revised edition of the Gulbarga gazetteer, published in 2004, is remiss in not acknowledging the histories and leaders of this vast community (about 24 percent of the state's scheduled caste population live in Hyderabad-Karnataka), particularly because the district had been witness to militant Dalit assertions from the 1980s onwards when the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (DSS) began its work in the region. The DSS sought to change traditional practices such as *Bettale seve* and the *Devadasi* system, overthrow the feudal system and practices of bonded labour, and undertake redistribution of land. The other arc of its activities was around instilling dignity through the celebration of Ambedkar Jayanti and propagating ideas of consonance between the twelfth century saint Basavanna and Ambedkar. The DSS had been active till as recently as the late 1990s, but apart from a few lines under the broad topic of Dalit-Bandaya literature, the organisation's work is largely ignored in the gazetteer. Its predecessor, the Bhim Sena, and the sena's iconic leader B. Sham Sunder do not even find a mention.

Given that Dalit histories are absent in the gazetteers, how is this absence to be noted? It would not suffice to merely state the absence, but also requires elaborating on the content and

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in anticolonial struggles.' Yagati Chinna Rao, *Dalits' Struggle for Identity: Andhra and Hyderabad 1900-1950* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2003), 8.

[108] In his work on the Dalit movement in Telangana and Coastal Andhra, Chinna Rao traces Dalit assertions in Hyderabad state to the establishment of the Jagan Mitra Mandal Dalit started by Dalit leader Bhagya Reddy in 1906. The organisation sought to raise 'social consciousness' among Dalits, including circulating historical narratives that represented Dalits as the original inhabitants of the country, while others were invaders. Even as the movement grew in the subsequent decades, organisationally, it split into several factions and was thus not able to gain political strength. See Rao, *Dalits' Struggle for Identity: Andhra and Hyderabad 1900-1950*. Simon Charsley in his article analysing Dalit leadership in the state presents a complex picture of the factionalism that beset the Dalit movement in Hyderabad. It was not merely personal competition among leaders. The movement split along substantive questions of which Dalit caste should be mobilised by which organisation, whether Dalits belonged to the Hindu religion or not, and finally, differences between older and younger leaders over new forms of organisation and ideology that the latter, influenced significantly by B.R. Ambedkar, tried to bring into Dalit mobilisation. See Simon Charsley, "Evaluating Dalit Leadership: PR Venkatswamy and the Hyderabad Example," *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 52 (December 28, 2002): 5237–43.

nature of this absence. The trajectory of the Dalit movement in Hyderabad-Karnataka during the Asaf Jahi reign is unclear but possibly has linkages with the movement started in the capital city of Hyderabad. However, this remains undocumented to date. Recent scholarly efforts from the region that focus on Dalit histories have begun to reconstruct the past through a focus on Sham Sunder, Bhim Sena's founder.[109] This represents an effort on part of scholars from within the Hyderabad-Karnataka to expand the region's corpus of historical actors, which otherwise has been limited to the oppressive Asaf Jahi state and the 'people's' movement against it.[110]

In this section, I will study briefly the political work and thought of Sham Sunder, whose influence prevailed over Hyderabad-Karnataka and parts of Marathwada (Nanded and Aurangabad).[111] If this chapter has till now shown that within nationalist historiography, the freedom movement has been presented as an instance of an always-already united people and the region as yet another platform where the nation's glorious histories unfolded, this section presents an alternative mode of framing regional histories. By focussing on Sham Sunder, I illustrate the ways in which the region could interrupt the nation and ask searching questions of the historical narratives built around the latter. This is a necessary corrective to state-sponsored histories of the region that eliminate from its consideration persons who have raised difficult questions on the nation's treatment of its historically oppressed peoples. The angularity of Sham Sunder's critique and vision, emerging from the vantage point of a

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[109] Among the recent publications are Jagannath Sindhe, *Dalit Chintaka: B.Shyamasundara* (Gulbarga: Pallavi Prakshana, 2005); H.T. Pote and Jagannath Sindhe, *B. Shyamasundara* (Gulbarga: Prasaranga, Gulbarga University, 2005). The B. Shyamsundar Memorial Society's Samantara Publications has produced collected volumes of Sham Sunder's speeches and writings as part of its effort to create awareness about the region's most famous Dalit leader. Some of their publications include B. Sham Sunder, "Plight of Scheduled Caste and Tribes in India: Petition to the Lok Sabha," in *Collected Works of B.Shyam Sunder*, ed. H.Shreyesker, vol. 1 (Hyderabad: Samantara Publications, 2015), 45–61; B. Shyam Sunder, *They Burn* (Hyderabad: Samantara Publications, 2000). Sunder's own publishing house, the Mool Bharat Book Trust, based in Hyderabad also published his writings during his time.

[110] I have not yet found evidence of a similar resurgence in recovering Muslim histories of the region.

[111] This exclusive focus on Sham Sunder in lieu of a history of Dalit communities in Hyderabad-Karnataka is due to the paucity of sources for both this region and Dalits in this region

minority perspective, has relegated him to the forgotten corners of the histories of both the nation and the region. This section explores the ways in which articulations of historical oppression, efforts at radical political action of self-reliance and visionary proposals calling for creation of regions in ways that were alive to the political needs of multiple minorities constituted the core of Sham Sunder's work.

Sham Sunder was part of the younger crop of Dalit leaders in the erstwhile Hyderabad state, who rose to prominence for his close association with the last Nizam, Osman Ali Khan. He is said to have prevailed upon the Nizam to start a trust fund of one crore rupees, which was used to build welfare hostels and schools (called Madrasa-e-Pushtakoon) for the depressed classes. In a rally organised for the landless members of the depressed classes in Hyderabad city, Sham Sunder is said to have called on them to encroach upon government land—an encroachment that the Nizam later regularised. He was awarded the Khusroo-e-Deccan, the highest civilian honour accorded by the Asaf Jahi state. Sham Sunder was part of the delegation that went to the United Nations to put forward a case for the sovereignty of Hyderabad, which it was argued, was being violated by the Indian Union. During the course of the Police Action, Sham Sunder was kept under house-arrest in Pune for his stated support of the Nizam. After accession, he went on to contest state elections in Hyderabad city, and later from Bhalki in Bidar, successfully.

For Sham Sunder, historical consciousness was an important tool in overcoming oppression faced by Mool Bharatis. The choice of the term Mool Bharatis was itself part of his effort to stress that scheduled castes and tribes were the original inhabitants of the country. This truth, Sham Sundar argued, had been suppressed in histories of the nation written either by nationalist historians or those of the Hindu Right. In his essay titled *A Word with Mool Bharatis,* he offers a succinct summary of the Mool Bharatis' history:

Friends, let me tell you frankly that the Caste Hindu historians and leaders have given us a totally false impression and are making false claims. It is they who suppressed our history, ruined our culture, denied to us the light of knowledge, drove us into jungles, usurped our lands, deprived us of our wealth, dislocated our economy, killed our wise and holy men, slaughtered our valiant youths, corrupted our rising generation and eventually, with the force of arms, succeeded in creating terror, despondency and frustration among our young men. This, in a nut-shell, is a brief synopsis of our history during the last three thousand years. Things have not improved much, though we are supposed to be free.[112]

When Sham Sunder states that independence from the colonial power had not materially changed the Mool Bharatis' lives, he raises the question of whether freedom from British imperialism, celebrated in nationalist thought, had the same meaning and impact on all peoples in a caste-ridden society. He also narrates several events key to nationalist history, with a radically different perspective. For instance, the advent of British rule, Sham Sunder says, opened up some avenues for economic advancement for the scheduled castes. However, the 'most outstanding event of this period was the realisation by the caste Hindus of the importance of number in a democratic regime.'[113] To co-opt Mool Bharatis in this changed reality, caste Hindus such as Tilak, Ranade, Gokhale, Dr. Moonje and Gandhi started the 'so-called movements for the removal of untouchability and temple entry…'[114] Sham Sunder calls on Mool Bharatis to 'declare the fundamental and historical truth' that they are not Hindus and to be alert to being used by Hindus to establish a 'Hindu Raj in India in the name of Secular Socialist Democracy'. Urging Mool Bharatis to discard internal caste divisions along the lines of Chamar, Balmiki, Madiga, and Mala, among others, and unite under the banner of Mool Bharatis, Sham Sunder asks the educated youth to know their history. 'Only then will you be able to make History,' he says.[115]

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[112] B. Sham Sunder, "A Word with Mool Bharatis," in *Bhim Sena: Vade-Mecum for Mool Bharatis* (Hyderabad: Mool Bharat Book Trust, 1968), 8.
[113] ibid, 12.
[114] ibid.
[115] ibid, 15.

Such articulations inspired a younger generation of political leaders in Hyderabad-Karnataka. V.T. Rajshekar Shetty, in his essay on Sham Sunder, lists B. Basavalingappa, Mallikarjun Kharge, and Dharam Singh, important leaders in Karnataka politics, as among his 'most trusted lieutenants'.[116] In an interview, the late H. Shreyesker, president of the Mool Bharati B. Shyam Sunder Memorial Society, and a long-time associate of Sham Sunder, remembered him as a leader who worked both at the local and the national levels, who tried to effect a transformation of Dalit selves through the awakening of a historical consciousness, as well as by radically altering the nature of their relationship with society and politics. Shreyesker also recalled the immense joy the former felt at listening to an educated man from their community talk fearlessly about 'our' issues, such as the inferiority complex that Dalits suffered from because of centuries of oppression and the extremely subservient behaviour they displayed when faced with upper-caste demands. Describing their travels to the villages with Sham Sunder, Shreyesker said,

> When we travelled with him to the villages, he would tell us that the reason people are like this is because they do not have education. He would sit around with people and tell them not to drink alcohol because it dimmed their self-awareness and shut out thoughts on why their situation was so bad… he would say you sit at home and pray to this and that God, there is no profit in doing this and you are not going to improve your life this way. You will end up spending a lot of time and money on going to a *jathra* here and there…stop doing all this…If you have to see some progress in your life, you should send your children to school…It will also help you get historical awareness…'

Since people practised untouchability even amongst Dalit communities, Sham Sunder urged them to get rid of this practice. 'He told them if you are my people, you cannot do this,' Shreyesker recalls. Sham Sunder's speeches were said to be fiery and provocative and Shreyesker remembers them as such: 'His speeches were very clear. There were no lies and

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[116] V.T. Rajshekar Shetty, "Shyam Sunder - Father of India's Dalit Movement," in *Dalit Movement in Karnataka* (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1978), 1–19.

there was no attempt to cheat us. He used to find out what had really happened and tell the people this truth.'[117]

Sham Sunder's travels to Dalit settlements and the awareness of the oppressive realities of Dalit lives in villages prompted him to start the Bhim Sena. The sena was to take an aggressive approach to atrocities against Dalits since they could rely on no political parties to come to their aid. On the abjuring of the creed of non-violence by Bhim Sena, Shreyesker said, 'Gandhi had said that if someone hits you, give him your other cheek… Sham Sunder told us that the first time a man hits you, it's the man's fault. If you get hit the second time, it's your fault. He asked us to hit back.'

The Bhim Sena was inaugurated in Gulbarga in 1968 as a 'self-defence movement based on the natural instinct of self-preservation', with the slogan 'We are not Hindus'.[118] Pitching itself against the Shiv Sena that had begun to make a mark in Maharashtra in the same period, Sham Sunder clarifies: 'It is not parochial, communal, or linguistic like some other senas… Its main plank is that we do not consider India as a country belonging only to caste Hindus; it belongs to all its inhabitants.'[119] This self-defence army was to work towards three main goals: creating Dalit-only settlements by having caste Hindus vacate thirty percent of compact and contiguous villages in every taluk; having B.R. Ambedkar's Peoples' Education Society run the future Ambedkar University where young Mool Bharatis (his preferred term for Dalits) could study; and finally securing Dalits' 'birth right' to select representatives from their own communities.[120] The Bhim Sena was part of Sham Sunder's efforts to shrug off the centuries of passivity of scheduled castes and actively, even aggressively, confront the casteism of Hindu society. In his outline of the kind of action that Bhim Sena activists were

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[117] Interview with H.Shreyesker, Gulbarga city, 18 September 2017.
[118] B. Sham Sunder, "The Why and How of Bhim Sena," in *Vade-Mecum for Mool Bharatis* (Hyderabad: Mool Bharat Book Trust, 1968), 21.
[119] ibid, 21-2.
[120] ibid, 31.

called upon to undertake, Sham Sunder emphasised organising relief works for those scheduled caste communities facing economic sanctions or physical assaults in their villages, building district-wise intelligence networks to access any plans hatched against them, conducting adult education tours where census and election processes would be explained and numbers mobilised to their advantage, carrying cameras to collect evidence in case it was needed for legal defence as well as for publicity, and learning how to put out fires since this was a common method used to destroy Dalit assets.[121]

One of the most publicised actions of the Bhim Sena was when its members attacked the house of a Congress MLA, Subash Patil, in Gulbarga for murdering a Dalit woman Ningamma who worked at his village home in Kamalapur. The death took place on November 13, 1974 and was passed off as suicide initially but upon pressure from Bhim Sena volunteers, the body was exhumed for a post-mortem and the cause of death was ascertained as strangulation. A news report from the period reported that on December 15, 1974, a 'mob of 1000 Harijans' who were mostly students 'surrounded his house here, subjected it to a barrage of stones and then broke in and seized the MLA and his father'.[122] Shetty, in his essay, recounting the incident states, 'Rarely does one hear of a ruling party MLA, hailing from a rich landlord class, being dragged out of his house and beaten up in broad daylight… The Bhim Sena did just this and proved to the world how furious the untouchables could turn when they were hurt.'[123]

Scattered news reports from that period indicate that units of the Bhim Sena had begun as far away as Pune and Nagpur. That the Bhim Sena's aggressive approach had rattled the establishment was clear when S. Nijalingappa, former chief minister of Karnataka and the

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[121] See Sunder, "The Why and How of Bhim Sena."
[122] The Times of India News Service, "Alleged Attack on MLA by Harijans," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, December 15, 1974, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[123] Shetty, "Shyam Sunder - Father of India's Dalit Movement," 4.

Congress party president, likened it to the Shiv Sena and asked that all such senas be 'banned in national interest'.[124] The then-chief minister of Mysore state Veerendra Patil also echoed the same views, and said that, if necessary, a constitutional amendment should be brought in to ensure that the only sena that functioned would be the armed forces.[125] The Bhim Sena movement was short-lived and dissipated soon after Sham Sunder's sudden death in 1975. Shetty claims that the Bhim Sena '…virtually created a revolution in the minds of the Dalits to whom it gave new courage and confidence to fight back against caste Hindu fascist tendencies.'[126]

If Bhim Sena represented Sham Sunder's intervention in the everyday lives of Dalits in Hyderabad-Karnataka and elsewhere, his political thought was focussed on the importance of spatiality in the political future of minorities. Since much of the new nation's future was being determined by electoral politics, Sham Sunder argued, the manner in which constituencies had been delimited by the Election Commission of India had given caste Hindus a 'deciding vote in every constituency in all parts of India'.[127] Thus, in a convention he organised in Lucknow in 1968 which was attended by several prominent minority leaders, including E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (Periyar), Sham Sunder called for the creation of six new states to satisfy the 'suppressed and the oppressed' minorities. These were Pachmi Pradesh (consisting of the Meerut and Rohillakand divisions and the contiguous districts of Aligarh and Rampur, where Muslims, Scheduled Castes, and Christians would be dominant), Purbi Pradesh (comprising Purnea, Bhagalpur, and Santhal Parganas, where Muslims and Scheduled Castes were a sizeable number), Malabar (for Muslims), Kakshni Pradesh (a long stretch from Goa to the southern tip of India where Christians, Scheduled Castes, and

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[124] The Times of India News Service, "Nijalingappa Wants Judicial Probe into Bombay Riots," *The Times of India*, February 23, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[125] The Times of India News Service, "All Senas Must Be Banned, Says Mysore CM," *The Times of India*, February 26, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.
[126] Shetty, "Shyam Sunder - Father of India's Dalit Movement," 19.
[127] Sunder, "The Why and How of Bhim Sena," 31.

Muslims lived), Telangana (with sizeable numbers of Muslims and Scheduled Castes, with Hyderabad as the capital) and Mool Bharathi Pradesh (consisting of the Hazaribagh and Ranchi districts and the contiguous areas of Chota Nagpur, Chattisgarh, and Bastar, where Scheduled Castes and tribes formed a substantial majority).[128] For Sham Sunder, these new states, in which minorities would numerically be in the majority, would allow for a fair representation of minorities in electoral politics. Within such administrative units, he believed, policies could be framed and implemented that would address the specific historical oppressions of minorities.

Later in 1969, alive to the conjoined histories of Telangana, Marathwada, and Hyderabad-Karnataka, he proposed the formation of Deccan Pradesh as a 'viable and composite linguistic state where English and Hindi would be mediums of instruction in education and one of the regional languages being an optional language'. Arguing that the grievances voiced by the people of these regions were similar, he said that re-joining them would make them financially independent and not reliant on subsidies from the centre. The state could also be 'a link between the North and South', he argued.[129] This call to resurrect the erstwhile Hyderabad state came from Sham Sunder's assessment that the formation of linguistic states in the south had resulted in intense caste communalism and hindered national integration. Going against the grain of contemporary political discourse that supported linguistic reorganisation, he said, 'In Karnataka, Lingayats are thinking of establishing the Lingayat Raj, the Reddies in Andhra are for Reddy Raj, the Marathas for Maratha Raj. Nobody seems to say Jai Hind, but Jai Andhra, Jai Karnataka, Jai Maratha has become the slogan for

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[128] The Times of India News Service, "Bheem Sena Wants Six New States," *The Times of India*, October 13, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[129] "Old Hyderabad State as 'Daccan Pradesh' Urged," *The Times of India*, June 27, 1969, https://search.proquest.com/docview/497981347?accountid=142596, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

communal governments in the South and SCs are being used by these rulers as fuel to feed their communal furnace.'[130]

Many of Sham Sunder's political articulations were concerned with territorialising the nation along the principle of historical oppression. His demands for separate settlements for Dalits, the creation of new states within the Indian Union for minorities, and for a composite Deccan Pradesh where linguistic chauvinism, coterminous with casteist communalism, would not be given free play, were among his experiments with reimagining territorialism. In his political career, particularly after the accession of Hyderabad into the Indian Union, Sham Sunder stood at a distance from dominant political discourses that sought to eschew questions of both caste oppression and the place of minorities in the new nation. At a time when the nation was gripped by the question of internal reorganisation of territory, Sham Sunder sought to foreground the duplicity of democratic discourse which, based on electoral politics, stunted political aspirations of Dalits and minorities.

This exposition of Sham Sunder's work and thought maybe methodologically different from the rest of the chapter which has focussed on an analysis of texts concerned with history. But it is central to the concern of how regional histories can be forged through dialogic modes rather than through the mimicry mode of replication.

*Claiming Histories*

If Sham Sunder advocated the dissemination of a historical consciousness to mobilise Dalits to throw off the shackles of oppression, this logic seems to be reappearing in the region again, as history-writing initiatives are being taken up by sections of civil society in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Rather than emphasise socio-economic identities, these initiatives seek to

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[130] Sunder, "Plight of Scheduled Caste and Tribes in India: Petition to the Lok Sabha," 56.

foreground a spatial identity, drawing from the region, which can be mobilised to access state benefits.

In 1995, a meeting of progressive activists from the region was called to discuss the reasons for the backwardness of the region. Discussions revolved around two key issues: why had Hyderabad-Karnataka lagged behind all other regions in development, despite four decades of being part of the democratic state; and why were people not rising in rage against this underdevelopment. Describing this meeting, Laxman Dasti, an activist of the region, writes, 'After several discussions, one truth finally came to light. We still do not know our own history! Because we have not written our histories, we are absent from textbooks in schools and colleges and so we have been deprived of history!' Dasti also cites Ambedkar and Ram Manohar Lohia to argue that those who are not aware of their region's history cannot achieve progress and make history.[131] Further, he says, addressing readers from the region, that Hyderabad-Karnataka is still a part of their self-identification, and 'if we were to lose this name, we would lose an essential part of ourselves.'[132] It is through this name that they have been able to access developmental benefits from successive governments in the state, he adds. Dasti's formulation is remarkable for several reasons: it links underdevelopment to a lack of historical consciousness; it asks that the histories of the region be written by those from the region; it argues that historical awareness can create conditions for mobilisation of people against state neglect; and finally, in eschewing the notion of historical underdevelopment of the region, it locates the question of backwardness within the contemporary state of Karnataka.

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[131] Laxman Dasti, *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)* (Gulbarga: Hyderabad Karnataka Vimochana Dincharana Samiti, 2009), 9. The title of the book roughly translates to A description of our history: Important events in the 224-year history of Hyderabad-Karnataka.
[132] ibid.

Laxman Dasti's publication is titled *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)* and was brought out on 17 September 2009, on the occasion of the Hyderabad Liberation Day. Supported by the Karnataka government, including the Information and Broadcasting department in Gulbarga, and the Hyderabad-Karnataka Vimochana Dinacharana Samiti, the stated aim of the publication was to start the process of disseminating the 'history of the region' to its youth, particularly school and college students. The region's modern history is the focus of this publication, and since this is coterminous with the Asaf Jahi rule, the attempt has been to offer a historical narrative of the dynasty, modified to suit the needs of the region. This is not original research but a short compilation of historical narratives. The publication also consists of messages from regional politicians and scholars alike, giving us a sense of the patronage that shaped the publication and its ideas. Unlike histories in the district gazetteers, which are focused on the nation or the freedom movement, this publication offers an instance of a historical narrative written for the region alone.

The foreword for this publication was written by the region's well-known litterateur Vasant Kushtagi, who commends the Asaf Jahi state for having tried its best to make the lives of its subjects comfortable, despite being shackled to the British colonial power. He highlights several of the developmental measures undertaken by the Asaf Jahi state such as introducing primary education in the mother tongue; conducting administrative affairs in the language of the region; building water-related infrastructure such as tanks, bridges, and canals; establishing key services such as a judiciary, hospitals, postal services, and railways; promoting higher education in engineering and medical sciences; and aiding agriculture through distribution of seeds and fertilisers and starting cooperatives and banks. Upturning some of the conventional narratives on the place of Urdu and vernaculars in the state, Kushtagi argues that the promotion of Urdu was natural because it was the state's official

language, but it did not mean that the vernaculars were ignored. This is a remarkable deviation from popular narratives that cite the privileging of Urdu as an instance of the Asaf Jahi state's communal character. He further goes on to claim, 'the state was large-hearted enough to respect people of all religious persuasions.'[133]

Shashil G. Namoshi, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader from the region and a member of the High-Powered Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances (HPC FRRI), in his message, points out that the region had a great presence in histories up to the eighteenth century. However, hardly any accounts exist of the region between 1724 and 1956. This is a crucial point to make because Namoshi here recognises that modern histories of the region have two distinct periods: the rule of the Asaf Jahi dynasty between 1724 and 1948, and that of the Indian Union between 1948 and 1956. He says, 'Our histories, when written, should encompass the periods of Nizam's administration, Razakar violence, liberation movement, and a free Hyderabad under the Indian Union.' This extended history, Namoshi argues, can aid in creating social unity as well as awareness for our progress.[134]

In his contribution to the publication, Dasti adopts a refreshing perspective on the Asaf Jahi state, listing the emphasis on building water and education infrastructure through the rule of all the seven Nizams. Claiming that all facilities of the modern world were available in Hyderabad during the period of the Nizams' rule, he mentions the Osmania University being the first of its kind native language university, and its highly accomplished translation bureau.[135] He also highlights the opportunities for employment created by the state through the establishment of mills. He appreciates the measures undertaken by Salar Jung to ban the

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[133] Vasant Kushtagi, "Foreword," in *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)* (Gulbarga: Hyderabad Karnataka Vimochana Dincharana Samiti, 2009), 3.Incidentally, Kushtagi was one of the special invitees to the editorial board that undertook the revision of the Gulbarga Gazetteer in 2004, analysed earlier in the chapter.

[134] Shashil G. Namoshi, "President's Note," in *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)* (Gulbarga: Hyderabad Karnataka Vimochana Dincharana Samiti, 2009), 6.

[135] See Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*.

practice of Sati in the state. Dasti also reminds his contemporary readers that it was the implementation of the Mulki rules by the last Nizam Osman Ali Khan, which gave priority to Hyderabadis in admissions to professional colleges and state bureaucracy, that has allowed Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to claim special status under Article 371.[136]

Unlike gazetteer histories, which condemned the dynasty for its close association with the British, especially the support rendered to the latter during the 1857 rebellion, Dasti appreciates the strategic approach of Prime Minister Salar Jung in this period. Terming it as an instance of Jung's foresight and clever political thinking, he says that if Hyderabad had supported the native kings, the state would have been taken over by the British and lost its separate identity.[137] Similarly, in support of ruler Mir Nizam Ali Khan's decision to accept British help in the late eighteenth century, Dasti argues that this had helped him keep Tipu Sultan and the Marathas at bay and secure the borders of the state.[138]

Dasti's approach to the early history of the region eschews the thematic of a Hindu-Muslim encounter that runs through much of the historiography on Karnataka. In a quick summary of the largely Muslim dynasties, he focusses on the Bahamani rulers and one of the successor states, the Barid Shahis, who ruled Bidar. He does not mention the Vijayanagara kingdom at all, and argues that successive dynasties in the region have been models for communal harmony.[139] Given that historical narratives are saturated with communal rhetoric, it might not be too far-fetched to presume that this absence is a deliberate choice by the author to sidestep the rhetoric.

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[136] Dasti, *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)*, 27–29.
[137] ibid, 24.
[138] ibid, 23
[139] ibid, see pp 15, 18-19.

Indian historiography on Osman Ali Khan has been ambivalent given that he presided over the state during the period of 1947-48 and asserted independence for Hyderabad from both Pakistan and the Indian Union. This document recognises this tension but makes an unequivocal claim on the Nizam as 'our ruler'. Namoshi, for instance, argues that the religion of the ruler is not of any consequence, and that we should realise and accept the fact that the Nizams were 'our rulers'.[140] Dasti writes that Osman Ali Khan, although very rich, opposed unnecessary spending, and although he was parsimonious in some respects, generously spent for his subjects' welfare.[141] The consensus in this document is that Osman Ali Khan was grievously misled by Kasim Razvi, the MIM leader, so that he strayed from the avowed path of communal harmony that his dynasty had preached for centuries. For Kushtagi, Osman Ali Khan's decision to stay independent was the result of 'selfish' advice offered by Razvi, and it is due to such counsel that the Nizam began to conduct the state's affairs with a 'jaundiced' eye and the law and order situation deteriorated considerably.[142] Dasti also echoes a similar assessment, but lays blame on the British as well for stating, when they left India, that native states had the option of merging with India or Pakistan or staying independent. If they had not presented such 'unrealistic' options, the Nizam would not have become 'selfish'. It was in this 'greed for power' that he came under the influence of the 'staunch communalist' Razvi, Dasti claims.[143] The Nizam later repented his decision, joined the Indian Union, and keeping in mind the long years of communal harmony that the dynasty had ensured, the central government made him the Rajpramukh, he adds. This claim over the Nizam as 'ours' needs to be understood, perhaps, in light of the regard that the Wodeyar kings of Mysore are held in popular histories and the desire to have an imperial past. More importantly, to argue for the

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[140] Namoshi, "President's Note," 6.
[141] Dasti, *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)*, 25.
[142] Kushtagi, "Foreword," 4.
[143] Dasti, *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)*, 25.

Asaf Jahi state as welfare-oriented then allows for developmental neglect to be located squarely in the contemporary state of Karnataka, rather than in some vague notion of 'historical underdevelopment'.

In dealing with the Police Action period, however, the publication follows the dominant narrative of the 'freedom movement' that fought the oppression of the Asaf Jahi state. It claims that hundreds of lives were lost in the violence between 1947-48—no estimates are, however, provided. Swami Ramanand Tirth receives glowing tributes as the man who led Hyderabadis in this movement for liberation, and the Indian Union, led by 'iron man' Vallabhai Patel, presented as a watchful guardian who pleaded often with the Nizam to stop the 'violence'. As part of the movement, camps were set up along the borders of the state and attacks against state machinery were conducted by these camp inmates. This is presented in a positive light, as Dasti argues that looting police stations allowed these 'freedom fighters' to gather weapons to fight against the state. In this narrative, Razvi is cast as an unmitigated villain who not only misled the Nizam, but rendered him ineffectual by virtually capturing all state institutions, raising a private militia army of the Razakars which outgrew the Nizam's own army by 'five times', and 'kill(ing) everyone' who opposed him. Such an unambivalent understanding of Hyderabad's history in the fateful years of 1947-48 glosses over the doubts expressed over the extent of violence that the state actually witnessed in these months. It does not acknowledge dissenting statements made by Congress leaders on how much of the Razakar violence was exaggerated for effect by the combined forces of the HSC, Arya Samaj, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Andhra Mahasabha, among others.[144] The publisher of this document was the Hyderabad-Karnataka Vimochana Dinacharana Samiti whose primary purpose has been to anoint 17 September as a national event, akin to Independence and

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[144] See chapter 2 for more on this matter. Also see Sundarlal, Ghaffar, and Misri, "Detailed Report of Pundit Sundarlal, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdulla Misri on the Aftermath of the Police Action (Military Invasion) by the Indian Army of the Hyderabad State in September 1948."

Republic days celebrated in the rest of the country. Presenting this picture of law and order breakdown and the freedom movement aids in these efforts. Kushtagi argues that the significance of the day has been erased from historical memory and is not to be found even in history textbooks. It is to work against this tendency of forgetting that a 'movement' began in 1995, he claims, to recover this history. Once this history is realised and Hyderabad-Karnataka is accorded the special status it deserves, Kushtagi states, it can achieve developmental success, and be as 'prosperous' as during the rule of the ancient kingdoms of Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas.[145] That Kushtagi harks back to the rule of the 'Hindu' kings for prosperity is revealing of some of the unease that still marks the rule of the Nizams.

This demand to name 17 September as Hyderabad Liberation Day harks back to a particular historical narrative in which the Asaf Jahi state was presented as feudal and oppressive, and the Police Action marked a liberation from such a regime. In the context of this publication where the Nizams' rule is presented as welfare-oriented, the valorisation of the freedom movement seems inexplicable and incongruous. It is for this reason that the demonisation of Kasim Razvi and the concomitant portrayal of the Nizam as having been misguided is essential to argue for the celebration of 17 September as Nada Habba. Characterisations of these individuals as communal and misguided, respectively, allows for a resolution of the narrative tension where the dynasty can be claimed as one's own, but also as a power that people rebelled against when it went against their wishes. The then-chief minister, B.S. Yeddyurappa of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is acknowledged profusely in the publication for his support, and it is said that he suggested that the liberation day be celebrated for a month, like the Mysore Dasara.

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[145] Kushtagi, "Foreword," 4.

The move to celebrate the day likely evoked criticism from several quarters, because post-police action violence was borne disproportionately by Muslims, whose economic life was shattered across different places in the state. Dasti alludes to this when he seeks to clarify:

> Some people had wrong notions about this move. That is because they did not know this history…When, great changes are happening, it is inevitable that some events will take place... But we can't use them to not commemorate our history…When our country was partitioned, innocent Hindus in Pakistan and innocent Muslims in India died in thousands. But does that mean that India and Pakistan will not celebrate their Independence Day? Of course, these tragic incidents must be condemned across history.[146]

This is the only one of two places in the publication where Dasti acknowledges the tension around commemorating a day that had disastrous consequences for the region's Muslim minorities. It sits uneasily, thus, with his desire to create a secular narrative of Hyderabad's history.

*Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat* began with the question of underdevelopment and argued that its persistence in the region was due to the lack of historical consciousness around which a regional identity could be built and mobilised. Dasti returns to this theme towards the end when he says, 'After being liberated from dynastic rule, we have to now liberate ourselves from the nomenclature as Karnataka's most backward region and lay down the road for Hyderabad-Karnataka's progress.'[147] Even as the Nizams are hailed as generous and welfare-driven, it is not the shared rule of 224 years that is made the centre of a mobilisation; it is rather the tense affair of the 'Hyderabad Liberation Movement' that has been chosen as the pivot around which a regional identity is to be formed. This choice could be governed by several coalescing factors: the impression that the 'freedom movement' is a unifying force in Indian history and could be so here in the region; the belief that the struggle against the

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[146] Dasti, *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat: Hyderabad-Karnatakada 224 Varshagala Nadeyalliya Mukhya Ghatanavaligalu (1724-1948)*, 11.
[147] ibid, 33

Nizam was actually a moment of unity among the populace, thus invoking that historical memory; and the growing popularity among the dominant Lingayat caste of the Hindu nationalist party BJP in the region, whose ideological predecessors the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha had undertaken much of the campaign against the Nizam which communalised the public sphere in the state.

## Deploying histories, claiming underdevelopment

The novelty of historical understanding in *Namma Itihasa Kaifiyat* can be recognised only when compared to the dominant framework that governs most writings on Hyderabad-Karnataka. In their book *Inclusive Growth – 371 for Development of Hyderabad-Karnataka Region,* the authors offer the following reasons for the region's backwardness:

> In the past Hyderabad Karnataka region was governed by many localised regimes which had no urge of doing any welfare-work for their people or economic development of their territories, unlike Maharajas of Mysore. Even during the colonial period, part of the region was not directly ruled by British administration and the fallout was late initiation of social modernization or development initiatives that had already made a considerable headway in other parts of the country.[148]

Contemporary underdevelopment of the region is often attributed to 'historical factors', namely the region's feudal past. What is also remarkable in such writings on the backwardness of the region is the central role accorded to the state to alleviate underdevelopment in the region. The focus is on grants accorded for infrastructure development, reservation in education and employment, and a general fillip to the economy through irrigation and industrial development. Further, in the case of Hyderabad-Karnataka, an attempt has also been made to accord 'special status' under Article 371 of the Indian Constitution, so that the state is bound to earmark funds, undertake development work and offer affirmative action. This imagination of the state as a prime actor in development has

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[148] Shalini Rajneesh, Chaya Degaonkar, and Sangeetha Kattimani, *Inclusive Growth- Article 371 for Development of Hyderabad Karnataka Region* (Gulbarga: Prasaranga, Gulbarga University, 2011), 10.

longer roots in the region, starting from the modern Asaf Jahi state of the 1850s, which had intervened to some extent to reorder economy, society, and landscape. One such intervention was the promulgation of the Mulki rules, a matter I have discussed in chapter 3 as well.

*The Nativity Question*

These rules in the erstwhile Asaf Jahi state accorded priority to Hyderabadis in matters of employment with the state. This particular delineation of the population along lines of nativity has survived the state's transition from princely to democratic regimes and has continued to determine the trajectory of politics even in the constituent linguistic regions, now part of other states.

Around 1955, against the backdrop of an impending dissolution of Hyderabad State, Telangana leaders were in negotiations with their counterparts from Andhra to ensure that their region had equal representation in politics and state services when the new state came into being. This was popularly called the Gentlemen's agreement and key points included: the rotation of the posts of Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister between the two regions, spending revenue surplus generated in Telangana within the region itself, reservation of subordinate state services in Telangana for its residents and, expenditure planned in ways that would even out regional imbalance.[149] Marathwada stood to gain from Vidarbha's demands that all regions that were to constitute *Samyukta Maharashtra* were treated equally within the new polity. The result was the Nagpur Agreement, which assigned the governor of the new state with responsibility for setting up separate development boards for each region and equitable arrangements for education and employment in state services. This agreement was

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[149] See Economic and Political Weekly, "Meaning of Telengana," *Economic and Political Weekly* 4, no. 28/30 (July 1969): 1107–8.

accorded constitutional status through the incorporation of Article 371 to the Indian Constitution.[150]

Meanwhile, in Hyderabad, at the time of the state's dissolution, demands were made that the States Reorganisation Bill incorporate provisions for the constitution of regional committees for Marathwada and Hyderabad-Karnataka when they were transferred to Maharashtra and Mysore respectively. Such a provision had been included in the draft bill for the Telangana region. The then-Chief Minister of Hyderabad B. Ramakrishna Rao ruled out the possibility, stated that the demand was a 'belated' one, and that 'at best development boards charged with special responsibility of promoting speedy economic growth could be thought of in the present context.' Telangana had been deemed a 'special case', which is why 'legal provisions for creating a suitable machinery had been included in the draft States Reorganisation Bill.' [151] Later, Rao did propose setting up three regional boards for Telangana, Marathwada, and Hyderabad-Karnataka, which would prepare development plans so that 'each region could go to the new State with its plan.' The proposed reorganisation of states had necessitated the division of the second Five-Year Plan along these regional lines, he stated.[152] However, this does not seem to have taken place. The Gentlemen's agreement and the Nagpur agreement in the case of Telangana and Marathwada, respectively, had secured the rights of both these regions in the new spatial-political contexts, however.

Hyderabad-Karnataka lost out amidst these separate negotiations that the other regions had with their linguistic counterparts. The authors of *Inclusive Growth* state, 'Lack of leadership and optimistic attitude on the part of the then-leaders that the problem will be solved after

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[150] See Ajit Kumar, "Article 371(2) and the Receding Demand for Vidarbha State," *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 4 (January 26, 2013): 71–76.

[151] The Times of India News Service, "No Regional Body For Marathwada: Mr. Rao's Views in Assembly," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, April 1, 1956, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

[152] "3 Regional Development Boards Proposed: Sequel to Hyderabad's Disintegration," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, April 30, 1956, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India.

integration with Karnataka made them to remain silent,' they claim. Reorganisation of states had deprived people of Hyderabad-Karnataka of their rights under Mulki rules and the funds they have lost for over four decades has been an unjust deprivation, they add.[153]

In the 1990s, when the issue of backwardness began to be debated within Hyderabad-Karnataka, Mulki rules and the negotiations conducted by Telangana and Marathwada during the period of states reorganisation was invoked. In my interview in Raichur city, Razak Ustad, vice-president of Hyderabad-Karnataka Horata Samiti noted,

> It is only in 1997 that we began to realise that Mulki rules are applied in Telangana and Marathwada and so should be applied to us. Actually, the rule is that Mulki rules should continue till the time Parliament repeals them. As on today, it has not yet been removed. When we joined Mysore state in 1956, it should have been followed...The state government has... snatched it from us unconstitutionally.[154]

Even as activists from the region invoke the history of Mulki rules and mobilise regional identity, it is pertinent to note that this demand for a 'special status' is a call to the state to act upon its duty towards ameliorating backwardness. Backwardness and regions as developmental categories gain salience in this discourse, replacing assertions of nativity and autonomy that the Mulki-non Mulki conflict earlier represented. Nativity is asserted, but in the form of regional identity and the region's primary identity is its backwardness.

This assertion of regional identity does not challenge the nation. The linguistic state however comes under the scanner for its role in perpetuating the state of backwardness in the region. Asserting the historical specificity of Hyderabad-Karnataka, it brings to the fore unresolved tensions that had been subsumed during the period of linguistic reorganisation. It asks whether linguistic affinity alone can be sufficient to determine ideal territorial limits. If it

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[153] Rajneesh, Degaonkar, and Kattimani, *Inclusive Growth- Article 371 for Development of Hyderabad Karnataka Region*, 14.
[154] Interview with Razak Ustad, Raichur city, 19 November 2017.

indeed is adequate, how is the fact of vast differences between regions in a state to be explained?

*'Attitude' of Neglect*

In January 2013, the region was finally granted special status through a constitutional amendment that included the incorporation of Article 371(J) in the Indian Constitution. This was after a sustained campaign in the region demanding recognition of its underdeveloped state and the neglect it had faced under successive state governments. The constitutional provision was a combination of Telangana and Vidarbha models of development where reservations in education and state employment were provided to those with domicile certificates from the region (Telangana model) as well as the establishment of a Hyderabad-Karnataka Regional Development Board (HKRDB) with a mandate to undertake development projects in region (Vidarbha model).The HKRDB is meant to receive grants from both the centre and the state.[155]

The essential legal infrastructure was finally in place for a focussed intervention into the region. However, the implementation has been tardy. A key factor for this has been that the HKRDB, which receives most of the funds for the region, has been unable to spend the money allocated to it. On the one hand, the state government does not release the funds budgeted for the board in each fiscal year. An overview of funds allotted and released over the years since the board came into existence in 2013 shows that only between fifty and

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[155] Seventy percent of available seats in educational institutions in the region and eight percent in state-wide institutions is reserved for students from the region, according to the Karnataka Educational Institutions (Regulations of Admission in the Hyderabad-Karnataka Region) Order 2013. Within state employment, for posts within the region, the reservation is as follows: Group A Junior Scale: 75 per cent, Group B :75 per cent, Group C: 80 per cent and Group D: 85 per cent. Reservation to the extent of eight percent in State-level offices or institutions or apex institutions is also mandated under the Karnataka Public Employment (Reservation in Appointment for Hyderabad-Karnataka Region) Order 2013. See S. Rajendran, "Reservation in Education, Jobs in Hyderabad-Karnataka Notified," *The Hindu*, November 6, 2013, Online edition, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/reservation-in-education-jobs-in-hyderabadkarnataka-notied/article5318219.ece.

seventy-five percent of the funds have been released to the board for undertaking its developmental works. But in a more damning indictment of the HKRDB, even the funds released to it have not been utilised fully, with anywhere between forty and eighty percent of the funds being returned to the state treasury. The rate of expenditure has been abysmal in most years, with the average hovering around fifty-seven percent [156] (see Table 6).

*Table 6: Financial condition of the HKRDB*

| Year | Funds to HKRDB (in crores) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Allocation** | **Releases** | **Rate** | **Expenditure** | **Rate** |
| 2014-15 | 600 | 300 | 50 | 123.35 | 20.6 |
| 2015-16 | 1000 | 750 | 75 | 388.8 | 38.9 |
| 2016-17 | 1000 | 750 | 75 | 1054.86 | 105.5 |
| 2017-18 | 1000 | 500 | 50 | 355.29 | 35.5 |
| 2018-19 | 1000 | 500 | 50 | 692.97 | 69.3 |
| **Total** | 4600 | 2300 | 50 | 2615.27 | 56.9 |

*Source: Compiled from data provided in Economic Surveys of Karnataka, 2017-18 and 2018-19*[157]

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[156] In 2016-17, the board seems to have spent more than what was allocated to it. If this year is discounted, the average rate of expenditure would be about 34 percent.

[157] Department of Planning, Programme Monitoring and Statistics Department, "Economic Survey of Karnataka 2017-18" (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, February 2018), http://planning.kar.nic.in/docs/Economic Survey Reports/ES_17-18/English.pdf; Planning, Programme Monitoring and Statistics Department, "Economic Survey of Karnataka 2018-19" (Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, February 2019), http://planning.kar.nic.in/docs/Economic Survey Reports/English 2018-19.pdf.

What explains this inability to utilise the meagre funds granted to a region that clearly needs it? After all, it hosts nearly eighteen percent of the state's population whose literacy rate is 64 percent (ten points lower than the state's average) and is home to twenty-four percent and thirty-four percent of the state's SC and ST population. Activists in the region attribute it to the 'attitude' of political leadership and government employees that cumulatively affect the development of the district. The region's reputation as backward has meant that government employees prefer not to be transferred to the region or when transferred find ways to stay away, mostly in Bangalore, many activists stated. This 'attitude' has affected, among other things, the ability to plan an administrative infrastructure necessary for implementation of development projects. For instance, data regarding infrastructure work undertaken by the board shows that the average completion rate of projects is only thirty-seven percent. This rate has been steadily dropping from the high of 86.3 in 2014-15 to the low of four percent in the fiscal year 2017-18 (see Table 7)

*Table 7: Works approved and completed by the HKRDB*

| Year | Infrastructure works | | |
|------|----------|-----------|-------------------|
|      | **Approved** | **Completed** | **Rate of completion** |
| 2014-15 | 1920 | 1656 | 86.3 |
| 2015-16 | 2773 | 1957 | 70.6 |
| 2016-17 | 3239 | 1431 | 44.2 |
| 2017-18 | 4695 | 186 | 4.0 |
| 2018-19 | 6834 | 1946 | 28.5 |
| Total | 19461 | 7176 | 36.9 |

*Source: Compiled from data provided in Economic Surveys of Karnataka, 2017-18 and 2018-19*

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Deliberations on the nature of development necessary for the region has also been a casualty. A sector-wise look at what HKRDB has been approving and spending its money on also reveals that its major investment has been in roads and bridges, with 6820 projects approved, 4742 projects completed and Rs. 1626 crore spent on it. This far exceeds the next highest category, i.e. education where a paltry Rs. 282 crore has been spent.[158] Even here, it is not clear what kind of projects are clubbed under education, health etc – whether they are infrastructural or not. Razak Ustad refers to such anomalies when he states that the board has 'no concept of development' and that 'all levels of government seem to be involved in only making roads.'[159] The Economic Survey Report of 2018-19 acknowledges that vital human development indicators are still uniformly low in the region but offers no assessment or reflection on why this may be so. It merely states, 'This indicates that barriers to development are still strong enough to retard the development process.' While acknowledging that 'intensive efforts are required to bridge the development gap', the report confines itself to suggesting that the focus should be on education, health and nutrition, skill development and supporting farm and non-farm activities. [160] This lack of assessment of the continued underdevelopment of the region despite the allocation and release of funds calls for a sustained reflection of, and from, the political and administrative machinery of the state, an act not forthcoming.

Even though backwardness is acknowledged, ironically it is this backwardness that seems to hinder its progress. Dismissed however as attitude – and hence not of serious concern – it does not factor in significantly in the analysis of why regions remain backward. This persistent negligence and active shunning are central to the experience that people from

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[158] Planning, Programme Monitoring and Statistics Department, "Economic Survey of Karnataka 2018-19," 714.
[159] Interview with Razak Ustad, Raichur city, 19 November 2017.
[160] Planning, Programme Monitoring and Statistics Department, "Economic Survey of Karnataka 2018-19," 715.

backward regions face in their encounter with the state. It forms the basis for demands for increased representation in the state, and in some cases for a separate state.

Conclusion

In 2018, when protests for a separate North Karnataka state were taking place, one of Hyderabad-Karnataka's most prominent leaders, Mallikarjun Kharge, former minister and MP from the region, stated that Karnataka had been united with great effort and the demand for a separate state was not right. For his region's backwardness, he blamed the Nizams who, he said, had neglected the region. This statement by a senior political leader represents the manner in which the Asaf Jahi state is continually invoked to explain backwardness, even as the post-independent linguistic state is excused for its neglect of the region.[161]

This chapter has traced the trajectory of this particular discourse that animates political and administrative common-sense in Karnataka. It first explored the context informing historical narratives of the linguistic state by offering a synoptic view of the conditions of production of history and the thematic concerns of such scholarship in India in the 1950s. Nationalist historiography, as this genre is called, focused largely on the freedom movement against British imperialist forces, even as it promoted the idea of a timeless but historical Indian nation. Condensed into a template, this framework is reiterated in regional histories, including Karnataka.

Studying the post-facto consolidation of historical narratives regarding Karnataka's unification, the chapter analysed three texts to identify ways in which the formation of the linguistic state is explained as unification rather than reorganisation. Central to this construction is the idea of a mono-lingual Kannada identity that has existed through time and has always awaited a unification. The chapter studied the narratives of pride that congeal

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[161] Reddy, "Nizams Neglected Hyderabad Karnataka Region: Mallikarjun Kharge."

around different Kannadiga-Hindu dynasties and narratives of disdain of Muslim dynasties that ruled the northern parts of the new state.

Official histories of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, studied through the district gazetteers, follow a similar template with slight modifications. Given that stirrings of a freedom movement are essential for such histories, the district gazetteers replace the British with the Asaf Jahi state as the outsider, against which the people of the region waged a battle, first for their civil rights and then to merge into the Indian Union in 1947. These histories, written without scholarly care, have no space for the dissonant histories of Muslims and Dalits, two important communities in the region. As a corrective, the chapter introduced a key Dalit figure, B. Sham Sunder, and traced his political thought on the question of minorities and their rights in post-independent India. He created the Bhim Sena, whose unabashedly aggressive approach to dealing with Dalit atrocities and claiming their rightful space in the new nation, generated quite a stir in the linguistic state. Sham Sunder's articulations emphasised the importance of paying attention to territorial rights and disseminating historical consciousness, if minorities were to lay claim to the resources of the Indian nation. A strikingly similar articulation emerges from Hyderabad-Karnataka in the 1990s—devoid, unfortunately, of any reference to Sham Sunder—where civil society groups start exploring the causes of the region's persistent underdevelopment. This leads them to a reworking of their histories, claiming the Asaf Jahi state as their own, and focusing on the 'struggle for liberation' as the glorious period of the region. It is argued that a lack of historical consciousness has kept people dispersed and not mobilised them to rise in rage against the region's neglect.

One strand of Hyderabad-Karnataka's historical connection with the Asaf Jahi state was repeatedly invoked in the years leading up to the grant of special status. This was the Mulki

rules promulgated by the erstwhile state to protect the rights of its residents for employment in state services. This history and the continuance of these rules in Telangana and Marathwada animate the discourse of injustice in the demand for special status. Neglect by the linguistic state on account of the region's backwardness constituted the other arc of perceived injustice. Backwardness was claimed as the region's burden. Hyderabad-Karnataka was granted special status through a constitutional amendment, but that has not resulted in any significant changes in the state's attitude towards it, as developmental indices continue to remain poor. This chapter has demonstrated how the absence of the region in the historical imagination of Karnataka, or more accurately, its presence *only* and *merely* as an underdeveloped region, has affected the state's attitude towards it. In claiming underdevelopment, voices from the region have attempted to repudiate the notion of a historical backwardness and locate it within the 'attitude' of neglect of the linguistic state.

## Chapter V

## 'Feet in Both Places': Interpreting the Experience of Migration[1]

Introduction

On a Thursday afternoon in June 2017, I sat talking to Uma, Shashi, Mala, and Sunita outside their homes at LB Nagar in Bengaluru.[2] Uma, who had migrated to the locality as a bride twenty years ago, was stitching a traditional patchwork quilt while she responded gingerly to my questions about what life in Bengaluru was like for her. Her sister-in-law Shashi, who moved between the city and their *ooru* (village) frequently, was more forthcoming, curious to know if I could offer something worthwhile (monetary or in kind) for the time she was spending talking to me. At one point in this group conversation, I turned to Mala and Sunita, both women in their early twenties who had recently migrated to the city after marriage, and asked if they preferred Bengaluru or their *ooru*. Shashi interjected: 'Will their mother-in-law and father-in-law accept it quietly if they say they want to be in Bengaluru because they like it? There are farms back in the *ooru* to look after. If you don't go when crops have to be harvested, will they let it be? Can you let go of your farm simply because you want to stay in Bengaluru?' For good measure, she added: 'How can we stay in one place only? You should have your feet in both places!'[3]

The women in this conversation were migrant-residents[4] of a rehabilitated slum settlement in Bengaluru, who traced their roots back to a village in Yadgir district in Hyderabad-

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[1] A shorter version of this chapter is forthcoming in the journal *Urbanisation* under the title: 'Feet in two places': Affective spaces of circular migration'.

[2] All conversations took place in Kannada and have been translated to English by the author. Names of places and persons have been changed to protect identity.

[3] Interview with Shashi, June 29, 2017.

[4] I propose the term migrant-residents as a conjunctive term in order to unsettle the fixed notions of temporality and spatiality adduced to these terms. My interlocutors remain both migrants and residents in that they live in the city and in the village and it is near impossible to delineate their lives in the manner that migration scholarship has tended to do until recently.

Karnataka. Along with their families, they migrated to Bengaluru to work as construction labourers and have slowly grown roots in the city. Yet, as Shashi said, despite long stays in the city, these residents continue to have lives in both places of 'origin' and 'destination' (thereby destabilising these fixed categories in migration scholarship, more on this later). This chapter explores the experience of being a poor migrant in a global city and examines how migrant-residents represent their precarity, their ambivalence about work and city, and their abiding relationship with their villages. An examination of these narratives will demonstrate the ways in which conceptions of backwardness are variously accepted, contested, and deployed by the migrant poor. How do the poor construct their specific difference of being poor? In doing so, are understandings of backwardness and underdevelopment itself transformed? These are some questions this chapter explores.

In the context of this thesis, the chapter shifts from analyses of archival and documentary material to anchor itself in life-history interviews conducted with migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka, residing in two settlements in Bengaluru. It does so to foreground the affective and experiential dimensions of underdevelopment. The previous chapters had alluded to various forms of affect in the discourses of development: the despise of Hyderabad for being a Muslim state, couched in the language of feudalism and medievalism; the inordinate attachment that non-state entities, and later the Indian Union, had to the 'fact' of the backwardness of the state; the incontrovertible belief among officers of the Indian Union that Muslims in Hyderabad had been disproportionately favoured by the Asaf Jahi regime; the cherishing of Mysorean culture and progress by legislators who did not want the princely state merged with its backward linguistic brethren; the treatment of officials and individuals from the 'newly-added areas' as outsiders in the Mysore-dominated linguistic state; and finally, the attempt to forge belonging to the nation and the region through historical

narratives of unity. However, this emphasis on affect focused on the macro level of populations and state formations.

In this chapter, I shift the focus to an examination of intimate, everyday negotiations that people carry out with both the factuality and discourse of their 'backwardness', in the context of a generally rising precarity of rural life and livelihoods. My focus on migrants from the region is informed by the fact of state neglect of the region, as well as the widespread impoverishment of agrarian economy across the country, making migration to urban areas a common phenomenon. The developmental regime in the linguistic state has bestowed much of its resources and attention onto its capital city Bengaluru and I focus thus on migration from Hyderabad-Karnataka to the state's prime urban centre. By migrating, settling and working in the city, poor migrants from the region lay claim on the city and the state as their own and I explore the various modes in which these claims are made. What I highlight in the process is the different ways in which understandings of the village, city, region, and development are negotiated and articulated within the everyday language of lives on the margins of global capitalist development.

This chapter is based on fieldwork and oral history interviews conducted at LB Nagar and VB Colony,[5] located in the western parts of Bangalore, just off the city's Outer Ring Road, a major infrastructure corridor.[6] Migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka form a significant portion, if not all, of the population in these two settlements.[7] In the former, most migrants from the region are connected familially and belong to one village in Yadgir district. In the

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[5] Names of places and persons have been changed to protect identity. Fieldwork was conducted between July and December 2017.

[6] Based on analyses of slum populations, Janaki Nair states that Kannada speakers are seen in larger numbers in the north western and western parts of Bengaluru, indicating that intra-state migrants possibly settle in these parts. Janaki Nair, *The Promise of the Metropolis : Bangalore's Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 261.

[7] I choose to call these places settlements, and not slums, with due regard to their histories as previously uninhabited places that my interlocutors settled on to build community life. Although activists and state officials view them as inhabiting a slum, the residents themselves do not employ this nomenclature, preferring to call their settlements as 'sheds'.

latter, most migrants are from villages in and around Raichur district. LB Nagar has been subject to redevelopment, i.e., tin sheds have been replaced by low-rise buildings constructed by the Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB). Residents of VB colony, however, are unable to make any incremental changes to their colony because of a collusion of local political and real estate interests that thwart any such measures.[8] In both places, men and women work as unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the construction industry, earning daily wages between Rs. 250 and Rs. 800, depending on their gender and type of work available. With these migrant-residents, I have conducted interviews and had conversations about migration decisions, personal histories, life in informal settlements, work in the construction industry, and memories of, and choices offered by, the village, among other subjects.

Methodology

This chapter is based largely on these conversations. Unlike traditional interview settings involving a single interviewee, my interviews were often group conversations. Others in the settlements walked in and out of the interviews I was conducting, offering information tidbits, life contexts of the interviewees, and explanations about general trends. My interviewees sometimes strayed away from our interviews as they started having conversations with their neighbours about a range of everyday concerns such as traditional necklaces, the need for an activist to go to the 'pension office' to receive widow pension, or who has gone back to the village for how long. This was partly due to the spatial context of the interview, which took place outside their homes and in common spaces. Far from being a deterrent, this mode of interview allowed me greater insights into life in the settlement—the differences and continuities in concerns, values, and investments of generations of migrants; ways in which discourses of poverty and being poor are constructed; and the gendered

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[8] Even the attempt to build toilets have been forcibly prevented. Residents have to walk to the wooded area behind their settlement to relieve themselves.

traditions that consolidate inequality between the sexes. Group conversations also enabled memories to come flooding back, as they did with 60-year-old Amba once. Upon my request, Amba took me to meet her brother-in-law who had also migrated with her to Bengaluru. While goading Appanna to speak to me of the *thippla*[9] their generation had together experienced, Amba suddenly recalled songs that women sang while doing agricultural tasks such as sowing or harvesting, and at social events, such as the celebration of a young girl attaining puberty. These songs spoke of women's migration from the natal to the marital home and the trials and tribulations of this migration, and of drought and state intervention in providing care, among others. The most remarkable aspect of Amba's recall was that she could not remember these songs later, try as she might. It came to her as she sat talking to me along with Appanna and his wife Anita, and then receded to the recesses of her memory. Such unconventional interview formats thus provided a richer sense of the *collective* and *gendered* experience of migration and of living and labouring in the village.

While the fieldwork focuses on migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka region, choosing to focus on those living in such 'slum' settlements requires some explanation. Poor migrants from the region live scattered across the city, and those with prior kinship and village networks that they can activate while here, live in settlements. Although numbers are not available, anecdotal evidence suggests that many migrants live on construction worksites, on footpaths, and in other such precarious spaces in the city. Choosing to do fieldwork in an established space such as the settlements allowed me access to those with longer histories in the city, as well as the opportunity to interview people across different generations and their relationship with the city and the region. While poor migrants from the region may be employed in other service sectors, a substantial presence is within the construction industry, where women work as unskilled workers and men as unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled

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[9] This word refers to difficulties faced due to scarcity and deprivation. That it was used only by older migrants who had experienced staggering poverty due to drought gestures towards a semantic history of drought.

workers. The residential settlement, and not the construction work site, was the field of study for both logistical and methodological reasons. While it would not have been feasible to conduct interviews during working hours at the sites, the settlement being a place of rest, residence and even home, allowed me to access the interviewees' identities as migrant-residents and to explore connections with labouring and belonging between the city and the region. Studying them as both construction workers and migrant-residents allowed for foregrounding the processes of city-making that they are part of and lay claim to.

Quite literally, building Bengaluru as construction workers is one part of this process of city-making. Migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka belong to the universe of internal migrants who form the vast army of labour evicted from the countryside to perform cheap labour for service sectors such as the construction industry, and fuel the process of accumulation in the urban through conversion of land into real estate. But urbanisation, or city-making, in the current moment consists not only of urban sprawl and large infrastructural projects, but also the proliferation of 'wastelands', including slum and squatter settlements. Migrating from an underdeveloped region to live in the 'wasteland' of a slum, what is the experience of living in a divided city, where the spoils of a booming economy are unevenly shared? As construction workers who live in informal settlements, my interlocutors were best located to respond to this condition of life within the contemporary development regime.[10]

In its intent, methods, and analysis, this chapter follows the oral historical methodology, recognising the mediated nature of sources and their interpretation.[11] By focusing on the

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[10] Spatial segregation is a key strategy and outcome of this regime. For instance, first-generation migrants at VB Colony helped build much of the buildings within the nearby Bangalore University campus. Before its occupation, residents of the settlement often drew water and firewood from the forested areas of the campus. Now, however, they are prohibited from going in, let alone draw resources from it.

[11] In her essay on memories of women workers of a major textile strike in 1937 in Peterborough, Canada, Joan Sangster talks of how her respondents' perception of her as being sympathetic to their ideologies, as a feminist influenced their explanations of events. She calls for an acknowledgement of this mediated nature of the interview and to understand it as 'historical document created by the agency of *both* the interviewer and the

migrant poor from the hitherto-underexplored Hyderabad-Karnataka region, the attempt has been to bring to historical view not only a region and its peoples obscured from historical scholarship, but also the experience of migration, an integral part of life in rural India. Unlike traditional oral history scholarship which focuses on events and memories built around them, my interviews were geared towards life histories. In them I trace the migration journeys, decisions and factors around migration, and finally the process of settling and labouring in the city. Questions were asked also about how the interviewees felt and continue to feel about migrant lives, what relationships are important to them, and how and when things began to change in the city and at the workplace. The experiences narrated to me are crucial to understanding life that takes place not only at the intersection of a globalising economy and a failing agrarian system, with efforts made to prop the latter, but also to understanding life as conducted under the signs of capitalism and patriarchy.

Revisiting Migration

Internal migration is one of the key features of mobility in contemporary India, with scholars suggesting that nearly three out of ten Indians have crossed the administrative boundaries of a village, town, district, city or state to live and work elsewhere than their place of origin.[12] Despite the significance of internal migration in contemporary India, the two primary sources for capturing migration-related data—the Census and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) surveys—are not designed to capture seasonal and short-term migration, are adequate for semi-permanent migration, and best only for permanent migration.[13] However, despite the inadequacy of data sources, it is clear that short-term migration has been on the

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interviewee'. Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of History," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 1 (1994): 10.

[12] Ravi Srivastava, "Internal Migration in India: An Overview of Its Features, Trends and Policy Challenges," in *Internal Migration in India Initiative*, vol. 2: Workshop papers (National Workshop on Internal Migration and Human Development in India, New Delhi: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2011), 2.

[13] ibid, 4.

rise in recent years, with data from Census 2011 showing 17.6 million migrants who had migrated only a year before the census survey took place and 63.9 million migrants who had been residing in their destinations anywhere between one and four years before the survey was conducted. In Karnataka, the migrant population stood at 26.4 million, with nearly 42 lakhs having moved between one and four years before the Census survey.[14]

*Circularity of Migration*

One term that has gained currency within migration scholarship in India to describe the nature of internal migration in recent decades is circular migration. Used globally to describe migration between two or more countries, the term has been deployed in the Indian context to refer to the constant movement (primarily seasonal and short-term migration) that poor internal migrants in India undertake, often between the rural and urban. It is estimated that nearly 100 million people in India undertake this form of movement, contributing to nearly ten percent of India's GDP.[15] Circular migration, it is argued, 'is now an integral part of livelihood strategies in agriculturally marginal areas', and is especially so among those with few assets and little education.[16]

Despite a significant proportion of migration being classified as circular migration, there seems to be little attention paid to developing it as a distinctive concept. For one, it is not clear if circular migration is considered synonymous with short-term or seasonal migration,

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[14] Registrar General of India, Census of India, 2011, Migration Tables, Table D-3: Migrants by place of last residence, duration of residence and reasons for migration - 2011(India/State/UT/District/City/UA)(Total, SC/ST, Appendix).

[15] Priya Deshingkar and John Farrington, "A Framework for Understanding Circular Migration," in *Circular Migration and Multilocational Livelihood Strategies in Rural India*, ed. Priya Deshingkar and John Farrington (Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–36.

[16] Deshingkar and Farrington, 18. Despite circular migration being a major livelihood strategy in rural areas, most qualitative studies in India on circular migration focus on the destination as a site of inquiry. Some exceptions include Soundarya Iyer's work on the urbanising effects of circular migration on the "source" area, i.e., the village, and Jonathan Pattenden's work on effects of socio-political change in source areas due to circular migration. See Soundarya Iyer, "Circular Migration and Localised Urbanisation in Rural India," *Environment and Urbanisation* 8, no. 1 (March 2017): 105–19; Jonathan Pattenden, "Working at the Margins of Global Production Networks: Local Labour Control Regimes and Rural based Labourers in South India," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 10 (2016): 1809–33.

or if the term is meant to encompass a different kind of migration altogether. Various definitions abound of what constitutes circular migration: '…where the migrant does not move permanently from the source to the destination'[17]; '…individuals who migrate from place to place for temporary periods'[18]; 'individuals who migrate, leaving their families and property, with the intention of returning, either because they have precarious jobs in the destination areas or if the cost of permanent relocation is high relative to its benefits…'[19]; or, '…repeated migration experiences between an origin and destination, involving more than one migration and return. Effectively, it involves migrants sharing work, family and other aspects of their lives between two or more locations'.[20]

Temporariness, constant movement, and an abiding relationship with the origin/source appear as key attributes of circular migration in the above definitions. Given that one or all of these features are present in different kinds of migration, including semi-permanent and permanent, the distinctiveness of circular migration seems difficult to sustain. In the case of rural to urban migration, exclusionary urbanisation ensures that spatial rights are not accorded to even long-standing migrants in the city, leaving poor migrants with a lasting sense of impermanence about the city. Further, the long tradition of scholarship on labour, work, and the urban has established that rural migrants in cities have always drawn resources from the village to sustain life in the city and vice-versa, and, as such, migrants have for long shared 'work, family, and other aspects of their lives between two or more locations'.[21]

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[17] "Report of the Working Group on Migration" (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, January 2017), 51.

[18] Ministry of Finance, "India on the Move and Churning: New Evidence," in *Economic Survey 2016-17*, vol. I (New Delhi: Government of India, 2018), 267, https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2017-2018/e_survey.asp.

[19] Gaurav Nayyar and Kyoung Yang Kim, "India's Internal Labor Migration Paradox: The Statistical and the Real," Policy Research Working Paper (World Bank Group: Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation Global Practice, February 2018), 18.

[20] Graeme Hugo, "What We Know about Circular Migration and Enhanced Mobility," Policy Brief (Migration Policy Institute, September 2013), 2, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Circular-Migration.pdf.

[21] See for instance Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "Peasants and Proleterians in Bombay City in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *History, Culture and the Indian City: Essays by Rajnarayan Chandavakar*

Given these academic difficulties, it may seem then that the use of circular migration as a descriptive term does not offer any clarity and may possibly obscure some traditional distinctions based on duration and movement within migration scholarship. While macro-studies of migration rely on certain stable (even static) categories of time (seasonal, short-term, semi-permanent, permanent), space (origin, destination) and movement (arrival, return) to classify migration, circular migration unsettles these fixities. If the movement is circular, the questions of origin and destination, and arrival and return, do not arise by the virtue of its pattern. Given that migration decisions are also contingent on matters of health, security, and stability, reliance on durations as a distinguishing feature also seems untenable. Further, migrant articulations are at variance with these broad classifications, and fluidities—of time, space and movement—rather than fixities, mark their experience of migration. Recognising the necessity of studying migration through the perspective of fluidity, scholars have focussed on unsettling some of the essentialist premises that govern migration scholarship. Griffiths et al call for understanding migrant subjectivities temporally and decisions to migrate as 'on-going, complex and often opportunistic rather than planned'. This, they argue, 'might lead us to an understanding of how it is that there's nothing as permanent as a temporary migrant'. Further, paying attention to rhythms of migration then help us study 'mobility as non-linear, recognising the importance of repetition, simultaneity, seasonality, and cycles'.[22]

Following this, it is the argument of this paper that the productive potential of circular migration lies in the possibilities it opens up for interpreting migrant experience. Paying attention to the adjectival term 'circularity' in circular migration helps foreground the rhythm

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(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59–82; Chitra Joshi, *Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and Its Forgotten Histories* (2003: Anthem Press, 2005).

[22] Griffiths, Melanie, Rogers, Ali, and Anderson, Bridget, "Migration, Time and Temporalities: Review and Prospect" (Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, 2013), www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2013/migration-time-and-temporalities-review-and-prospect/.

of ceaseless repetitive movement that animates the life of poor labour migrants. The repetitive circularity of this movement dispels notions of linearity and breaks down the discreteness of spatial entities such as city, village, rural, and urban. Often, for migrants, origins become destinations, cities become homes, returns never take place despite clear intentions, temporariness can become a permanent feature, arrivals take on the texture of returns, and the native village can acquire a sense of foreignness.

*Fluidities and mobilities*

This churning of spatial and temporal relations due to circular migration is an aspect with which migration scholars have recently been engaging. In his work, Jonathan Rigg, drawing on new strands in migration scholarship, suggests studying the village both as a 'physical unit' and 'identifiable entity' as well as a 'discursive category or notion'. He also argues that the urban could be studied as 'a state of mind' and as 'a set of social and cultural practices', thereby allowing for a 'more thorough-going and pervasive identification of the urban'.[23] Unmooring these entities from their fixity as only, or merely, geographical locations enables us to see them as key coordinates of migrant experience. However, even as fixities are replaced by concepts that better capture the dynamism of migration, scholars have been attentive also to the importance of places to the experience of migration. Translocality is one such concept deployed by scholars to study the networks through which places are connected and the ways in which people, ideas, and practices circulate between them. In a review article on translocality, Clemens Greiner and Patrick Sakdapolrak argue that the concept allows for us to 'comprehend the tension between mobility and locality and to enhance understanding of this relationship' and 'to capture the diverse and contradictory effects of interconnectedness

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[23] Jonathan Rigg, "From Rural to Urban: A Geography of Boundary Crossing in Southeast Asia," *Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 1, no. 1 (January 2013): 5–26, https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2012.6.

between places, institutions and actors'.[24] Within migration scholarship then, theoretical frameworks grounded in perspectives of fluidities have opened up new ways to understand the phenomenon of migration in the contemporary moment.

Locating itself within such scholarship, this chapter focuses on the experience of circular migration for my interlocutors, who ordinarily reside in two poor settlements in Bengaluru. While some have moved from the village to other cities such as Goa or Pune before settling in Bengaluru, others have directly moved to this city from their village. Such movement can simply be called back and forth migration between source and destination. However, by designating them as circular migrants, I am foregrounding the sense of inescapability from this circle of movement for poor migrants caught between unviable rural systems and exclusionary urban regimes. Circularity is also appropriate, for these migrants not only traverse between the physical city and village but also inhabit affective spaces of the city, village, and *desha* and live with notions of 'home' and 'without home', even though a house exists in the settlements they reside in.

My interlocutors form part of the country's vast army of internal, circular migrants, whose mobility patterns, like migrants elsewhere, do not allow for easy classifications. Most first-generation migrants have returned to the village, after decades of working in the city, once their bodies were found not valuable for construction labour. They sometimes leave because there is a farm in the village to tend to and/or because the 'shed' they lived in needed to be taken over by their sons to live with their families. Young migrant households also depart for the village, locking up their houses and sheds, sometimes with a clear sense of when they would return, and at other times not knowing if they would at all. Women who lose their husbands and sons stay in the village for months and years, sometimes returning to the city to

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[24] Clemens Griener and Patrick Sakdapolrak, "Translocality: Concepts, Applications and Emerging Research Perspectives," *Geography Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): 373–84.

carry on work as construction labour. Finally, even within a migrant household, experiences of migration are different and cannot be neatly classified according to generations—a temporal mode of classification often used to assess the gains and losses of migration. For instance, the husband might be a second-generation migrant, but his wife who migrated from the village after marriage is still a first-generation migrant, for whom the city is a foreign place; the mother and son can both be first-generation migrants, working at the same construction site from the time they arrived in the city.[25] These were some of the complexities in the act of classifying migration that I encountered during fieldwork. Only two things seemed predictable: that migrant decisions are not always purposive and with preset intentions, and that most migrants retain strong ties with their villages. Their stock answers to researchers who ask them their reasons for migration include low agricultural incomes, higher wages and the availability of regular work in the construction sector, and the need to pay off debts incurred due to losses in agriculture or in conducting social events such as weddings. But underneath these answers lie an intricate web of personal contingencies and structural determinants that this paper will explore to foreground the spatiality of experience.

## Ooru, Desha and Bengaluru

A month after I had finished fieldwork, on a Sunday morning in February 2018, I visited Amba, one of the earliest migrant-residents of LB Nagar and my most frequent interlocutor. Around sixty years old, Amba spent most of her waking hours stitching patchwork quilts, since her body has been deemed ineligible for the hard manual labour required on construction worksites. She had stitched four such quilts and had asked me if I wanted to buy

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[25] On the differing implications of migration based on gender within a household, see Nitya Rao, "Migration, Mobility and Changing Power Relations: Aspirations and Praxis of Bangladeshi Migrants," *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 21, no. 7 (2014): 872–87.; on changing household structures due to migration see Chandni Singh, "Migration as a Driver of Changing Household Structures: Implications for Local Livelihoods and Adaptation," *Migration and Development*, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2019.1589073., Rigg, "From Rural to Urban: A Geography of Boundary Crossing in Southeast Asia."

them from her. Under the canopy of the tree where she usually sat during the day, I met her and Rama, and told them that I was in Bengaluru only for a brief while before I returned to my university in Delhi. Both were surprised at my leaving what they called the *desha* to stay in distant Delhi. Amba said that she had planned to invite me to her *ooru* for the Yellamma festival (celebrating a popular goddess of the region). But 'you are leaving the *desha* and going away,' she said.[26] Later, as I chatted with her co-parent-in-law[27] Rama about the latter's recent stay in the *ooru* for undertaking harvest work and about cropping patterns in her *ooru*, she said, 'You should come to our *ooru* and see for yourself. Then you will understand all this better. But you are leaving the *desha* and going away. How will you come?'[28]

This vignette foregrounds the different spatial locations—Bengaluru, *ooru,* and *desha*—that animate the experience of being a poor, labour migrant. While Shashi's brief outburst (presented in the beginning of the chapter) succinctly summarised the necessity for migrants, particularly women migrants, to maintain a dual presence in Bengaluru and the *ooru*, conversations with Amba and Rama drew attention to the affective entity of the *desha*, one that I tentatively describe as a space of familiarity. In the *desha*, familiarity occurs through a shared experience of language, social practices, kinship networks, and work relations, marking spaces that resemble the social worlds of the migrant's *ooru* in some respects. In our conversations, the village, commonly referred to as *ooru*, remained without a name unless I asked for it. The *ooru* was generic, with the story of the village being the same across interlocutors: lack of adequate rainfall, unviable land holdings, and mounting debts that made survival based solely on the rural economy impossible and migration the rational choice. Bengaluru—which is how the city is called in the local language of Kannada—was always

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[26] Informal conversation with Amba, February 11, 2018.
[27] Rama's son is married to Amba's daughter
[28] Informal conversation with Rama, February 11, 2018.

referred to by name while the category of the city remained absent in migrant articulations.[29]

Their story of Bengaluru was similar too: migrating here for work in the construction sector, even as they undertook struggles to secure permanent residential rights. The *ooru* without a name and the city with only a name had differing affective investments among migrants. This section explores migrant attachments with the *ooru,* Bengaluru, and *desha* and their struggles with notions of (im)permanence, (in)security and (un)belonging. Through this, it will foreground the ineluctably spatial nature of the experience of being migrant.

*Desha as process and place*

My conversations with the residents of VB colony often took place in a small open space, under the shade of a large tree, in the settlement. On my first visit, I had noticed an idol placed inside an enclosed metal covering under the tree and was told that the deity was Thaiamma (akin to mother). She had 'appeared', they said, after a fire had engulfed the settlement. The lack of casualties and minimal damage to houses in this fire was because they were protected by the deity, they said. By the end of my fieldwork six months later, the entire space had been remade with a large canopy built over the 'shrine' and musical instruments hung from the metal ceiling as decorations, and had acquired a flavour of festive permanence.

This particular development brings together three crucial aspects of life in the settlement: the threat of eviction, a felt need for protection amidst hostility, and a constant process of creating familiarity in the face of uncertainty. Located amidst a largely middle-class neighbourhood, residents of VB colony are under great pressure to move out, and the three fires that have erupted in the settlement were meant to be threats issued by local real estate

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[29] Other cities, when referred to, such as Pune, Bombay, Goa were also named rather than referred to by the generic category city.

interests to force them into leaving.[30] Remaking the space with seemingly permanent structures such as a 'shrine' of sorts is, then, a form of claim-making for the residents. Apart from the pragmatism of this move, the settlement deity is also a form of solace to the residents suggesting that there is a cosmic force looking out for them. Finally, the 'appearance' of Thaiamma and her consecration is a common practice in rural India, where each village has a deity looking over the community's well-being. This is a practice of inhabitation that draws on the familiar—a practice, I call, of the *desha*—but deployed in hostile urban contexts.

The *desha* is not the *ooru*, even as it contains elements similar to the *ooru*. It is more appropriately defined as being host to an imagined community bound together by affinities of language, traditions, space, and sometimes kinship. It is not the political nation, but a cultural universe whose practices can be transposed to different spatial contexts, as it happened with the shrine at VB colony. Here some residents are connected familially, but many were strangers to each other before they settled down together. But now, nearly every household in the settlement contributed to the upgradation of Thaiamma's abode, reflecting some effort at community living. Part of what makes this possible is the familiarity that emerges from having inhabited the larger region of the *desha* (most residents here are from in and around Raichur district), before migrating to the city. Cultural and linguistic differences are not vast, even if caste distinctions might prevent anything more than this contingent living where

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[30] In the year 2006, when both LB Nagar and VB Colony were set ablaze, a fact-finding committee found that the fires were intentional; that it was an escalation of the threats and dangers such as physical abuse that slums dwellers had faced daily. Tellingly, these fires took place in one electoral constituency, the report said, hinting at the collusion of political interests at various levels. 'These fires have destroyed everything that the poor slum residents had including vessels, pots, clothes, blankets, money, etc. Within a few hours, structures that have been built by the poor incrementally over years are flattened. There is little time to save anything. Whatever little documents that the family had, including ration cards, voter cards, etc. were also lost in the fire,' the report said. People's Union for Civil Liberties, People's Democratic Forum, Slum Jagatthu, AIDWA, Madiga Misalarti Horata Samiti, Students Federation of India, Democratic Youth Federation of India, Pedestrian Pictures, APSA, Vimochana and Alternative Law Forum, "Slums under Fire: A Fact-Finding Report on the Slum Fires in Bangalore," Fact-Finding Report (Bangalore, February 2006), https://www.scribd.com/document/192471097/Final-Slum-Fire-Fact-Finding-Report.

familiarity binds. For Ganga, around 60 years old and one of the earliest residents of VB colony, this living together is *laya*, a word that gestures to a place of rest and repose, a dwelling and a feeling of embrace. 'When we get out of our houses, we ask after each other, have you had food, did you sleep well, etc. We talk to each other in the language of our *desha*, about the cares of our lives', she said.[31] A local pushcart vendor often arrives at their settlement with various condiments that women use in cooking foods specific to the region; neighbours arriving from the *ooru* are requested to bring back essential food supplies like jowar (also called sorghum, a staple cereal) or chilli powder. Jowar is expensive in Bengaluru and the city's chillies are not spicy enough for them. For migrants in VB colony, threated by eviction and haunted by impermanence, these practices of the *desha* offer *laya*.

Places can also become part of the *desha* over time. For Amba and Rama, who were surprised that I was leaving for Delhi, Bengaluru had become part of the *desha*, given that they had spent over 20 years in the city, most of those years in the same locality. At the LB Nagar settlement, Amba and Rama had received a small flat each from the KSDB and were less affected by feelings of impermanence than those at VB colony. Most migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka in this settlement were related familially and had migrated from Yadgir district to work in the construction industry. As two of the first migrants in the settlement, both Amba and Rama have seen a steady flow of immediate and distant family members flow into and out of the city. Their own sons have now joined the construction workforce and Rama's grandchildren are among the first generation from this migrant community to be enrolled in schools. This form of generational residence is part of the reason for the embrace of the city as *desha*. Children from migrant families, many of whom were born or grew up in the city, have replaced their parents as the primary workforce in

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[31] Interview with Ganga, August 29, 2017.

construction industry. Now married and with school-going children of their own, migrant families have struck roots in the city, even though ties with the *ooru* continue to tug.

Economic logics also aid in this expansion of the *desha.* The presence of migrant families in the city provides cushioning for short-term migrants from the region, who may seek work in the construction industry to tide over contingent crises. Anjaneya, a second-generation migrant at VB Colony, described the pattern of migration quite simply: 'You face a loss, you bundle up some jowar, your belongings, and you come here (to Bengaluru)'. Once here, you make do with some relatives until you set up your own shed, he added.[32] Basava, about 25 years old and another second-generation migrant at LB Nagar, recounted how his relatives took out a loan for Rs. 50,000 and lost it all when the rains failed. If this happens over two years or more and people are deep in debt, they come to Bengaluru to pay off the debts, he said.[33] Anjaneya and Basava's statements are explanations that reveal how Bengaluru has become part of the circular lifeworlds, or the *desha*, of rural migrant communities from the region (See Appendix I for a detailed historical presentation of migration data of the districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka and between these areas to Bangalore). For those who reside in the city for longer durations, the constancy and repetitiveness of this circulation of people from the *desha* fosters a sense of belonging, making the city itself part of the *desha.*

The *desha* also contains within it an implicit reference to a spatial outside, which is the terrain of the foreign, the unfamiliar—as when Amba and Rama were surprised to learn I was leaving the *desha* to go to Delhi. As an explanatory device, the concept could help clarify certain long-standing mobility patterns within the wide rubric of internal migration, namely that migrants prefer to travel short distances between adjoining villages and districts and

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[32] Interview with Anjaneya, December 24, 2017.
[33] Interview with Basava, December 10, 2017.

more recently, within boundaries of linguistic states.[34] The *desha* maps spatially the reluctance of migrants to travel outside an affective realm where precarity is heightened because of the unfamiliar; travelling outside the *desha* could possibly indicate distress migration. In this sense, the *desha* can also foreground the forced nature of migration when migrants choose precarity over familiarity and travel outside this realm. The narratives of first-generation migrants on what prompted them to undertake the move outside of their *desha* indicated great distress: Ganga narrated how her husband lost his lands to alcoholism, gambling, and prostitution, and the family was forced to migrate to the city; Rama had lost her husband, had five children to care for and no land to draw income from; Basava's mother migrated to the city to mitigate some of the crushing poverty which had forced her to put her son into bonded labour in the village. For these first migrants, Bengaluru's initial unfamiliarity meant that they worked for wages as low as between Rs. 25 and Rs. 40 in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This period marked the beginning of migration from parts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region to Bengaluru and a study of recruitment practices in the construction industry in the city found that 'labour catchment areas' had moved from villages neighbouring Bengaluru to far-away districts within the state such as Gulbarga and Kolar, as well as adjoining districts in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The authors argue that, with the growth in construction activities, job contractors needed to recruit peasant communities in distant rural areas to be able to control and maintain a constant supply of labour working for low wages.[35] What began in the 1980s as a steady inflow of migrants from this region to Bengaluru has only been increasing and significant numbers of 'Gulbarga migrants' (as most migrants from the region are colloquially called) largely work as unskilled labourers in the

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[34] A study that uses data from the 2001 Census has shown that migration within neighbouring districts within the same state is at least 50 percent higher than that of neighbouring districts outside the state. This, they argue, is because state-level entitlement schemes are not portable across state borders (Kone, Liu, Mattoo, Ozden, & Sharma, 2018).

[35] M.S. Shivakumar, Yap Kioe Sheng, and Karl E Weber, "Recruitment and Employment Practices in Construction Industry: A Case Study of Bangalore," *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 23, 1991, M27–40.

construction industry. Several of my interlocutors who had travelled outside the *desha* to unfamiliar Bengaluru had to confront a foreignness in everyday living. Uma, who migrated to LB Nagar from Yadgir recalled the incomprehension she faced because she could not understand the dialect of Kannada spoken in the city. 'We would just stare at people blankly if they spoke to us. We didn't understand what they said, and they would not understand what we said', she said.[36]

For second-generation migrants with some security of settlement and established networks, wage precarity is somewhat reduced. Both VB colony and LB Nagar have been recognised as residences of construction workers and job contractors often arrive at the settlements to call up people for work. Residents also travel in groups looking for work. Yet even as these migrants establish themselves, new migrants from far away regions in eastern India are beginning to take their place in the construction workforce. Activists working to organise such workers in large construction projects such as the Metro Rail face language hurdles as most migrants are from West Bengal, Orissa, and Bihar.[37] Thus, even as older migrants strike roots in migrant destinations, recreate the *desha* through modes of inhabitation and embrace the city as part of their circular life-worlds, long-distance migrants from other regions are recruited to ensure that low wages continue to be the norm in the construction sector.

In their essay, Vinay Gidwani and K. Sivaramakrishnan argue that while migration as 'a material and symbolic activity' has been well-established, 'what is new and important in terms of agrarian social relations is the intensity and the rate at which labour, goods, and meanings are now able to circulate through space'.[38] The *desha*, in this contemporary moment of circular migration, is one such affective and spatial register that, as practice, can be

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[36] Interview with Uma, June 29, 2017.

[37] Interview with NP Samy, founder-president of the Karnataka State Construction Workers Central Union, December 21, 2017.

[38] Vinay Gidwani and K.Sivaramakrishnan, "Circular Migration and the Spaces of Cultural Assertion," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93, no. 1 (March 2003): 186.

transposed to new contexts, and, as entity, can expand spatially to include the previously unfamiliar.

*Belonging and estrangement in the ooru and the city*

Yet, it needs to be reiterated here that this embrace of Bengaluru as migrants' *desha* is tenuous. The precarity of work and residence in the city for migrant-residents leaves them with a sense of being permanently temporary. Workplace accidents and fatalities or the devaluation of older bodies by contractors could result in sudden or gradual losses of income; without work, it is not only difficult to make ends meet in the city, but also to justify not returning to the *ooru*.[39] The *ooru* then retains salience as both material and affective resource. Migrant households sometimes leave Bengaluru for months together to return to their *ooru* for jathras (village fairs), house constructions, resolving household disputes, and in cases of illnesses and death. Some households only undertake temporary stays in the city. Such ties with the *ooru* might aid in the sustenance of life in the city, but also come in the way of fostering relationships of trust for which a permanence of locality seems essential. This was most apparent in VB Colony where people live under the threat of eviction.

Gowri, from this settlement, is around 35 years old and has lived the migrant life since the age of 11 when she married and moved to Goa with her parents-in-law and husband. She always wants to return to the *ooru*, her daughter joked.[40] Gowri agreed and said that the *ooru* offers solace that the city could never do. 'In the *ooru*, we are at peace. We live like one family. Everyone knows that we will never leave the *ooru* and go away somewhere. But here everyone is from a different *ooru*,' she explained. In times of difficulty, neighbours refuse to

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[39] Often migrants whose bodies were no longer considered suitable for construction labour, returned to the village, living off the meagre income of the farm.

[40] This recalls what Chitra Joshi says in her work on the experience of migration for mill workers in Kanpur: 'Moving to the city meant both a fracturing of cultural worlds and an attempt to retain and create a new familial world' and 'living in the city entailed a constant longing, waiting for home...Times in the city seemed transitional even to workers who had lived there for years' (Joshi, 2005).

lend money because of the uncertainty of whether it will be returned. 'What if the debtors go back to their *ooru* and never come back? … What faith can you have here?' she asked. In the *ooru* though, ownership of land and house ensure that the household is rooted to the place and will not abandon it.[41] For someone who has lived most of her life outside the *ooru,* Gowri is very certain about the *ooru* as a repository of affect and the city as something temporary that she inhabits, until she returns to the *ooru*. 'Our *ooru* is what is permanent. Here, nothing is permanent,' she declared.[42] Thus, although Gowri has lived in Bengaluru for over 20 years, and could traditionally be considered as a permanent migrant, permanence for her '…is associated less with duration of time and more with emotional attachment'.[43] Further, for Gowri, a Kuruba by caste,[44] her discomfort partly arises from having to share settlement space with other castes, particularly scheduled castes and tribes. The *ooru*, for her, is also a return to the 'safety' of predictable lives in single-caste neighbourhoods.

At LB Nagar, caste is not of much consequence, for most are connected familially and belong to the *Bestru* caste, a backward community whose traditional occupation was fishing. What rankles older residents though are the changes in affective relationships in the settlement. Uma recalling her initial days twenty years ago said, 'Back then, it was like an *ooru*. Calling someone mother or sister meant you treated them in that fashion. Now no one supports anyone, my concern is with me and you are concerned with yourself. Earlier, if I had food, you could eat, if you had, I could eat. Now it is not like that.'[45] While in Gowri's descriptions of life in the city, the *ooru* is a repository of affect, in Uma's account, life in Bengaluru itself resembled the *ooru*. This community, bound together by shared experiences of distress and

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[41] Interview with Gowri, July 7, 2017.
[42] ibid.
[43] Griffiths et al make this argument when critiquing migrant scholarship that assumes a linearity in people's movement from being temporary to permanent. They argue for an understanding of migration that is attentive to the different temporalities—cyclical, repetitive, seasonal among others—that characterise mobility (Griffiths, Melanie et al., 2013).
[44] Kurubas were traditionally shepherds and are now a politically strong force in politics.
[45] Interview with Uma, June 29, 2017.

poverty, had dissipated according to Uma, as people now prioritised opportunities for accumulation offered by the city.[46] For her, the relative affluence experienced by the current workforce emptied community relations of affect. 'Now, everyone is here to make money. Back then, there was no money. Now, they work and look only after themselves', she said.[47]

Rapid growth of the construction sector has indeed offered a continuous flow of work for migrant labour. The increase in wages for women and men from Rs. 25 and Rs. 40 in the 1990s, respectively, to Rs. 250 and Rs. 400 (for unskilled labour) has made the sector attractive to migrants who want to flow in and out of the workforce. This instability of the migrant identity—i.e., people move in and out of being a migrant, as they travel between the city and the village periodically—possibly accounts for changes in the nature of community relations, as they have less incentive to build communities of affect in the city. Several factors coalesce together in ensuring this fluctuating affiliation: the arduous nature of labour on construction worksites that forces workers to withdraw from the labour force periodically when they can afford to; the precarity of residence in the city as land becomes real-estate; and piecemeal interventions by the state in the rural, which offer hopes of sustainable life in the village.[48]

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[46] Migration scholars Priya Deshingker and John Farrington divide types of circular migration into two categories, i.e. coping and accumulation. While coping is aimed at survival, accumulative migration is undertaken by those with more assets, skills, and social networks and results in an improvement in household situations, post migration. The authors state that coping can become accumulative over time when job opportunities increase, as it has in the construction sector. Uma's response to my question of change over time in Bengaluru alludes to the experience of changing nature of relationships within the community that the transition from coping to accumulation introduces (Deshingkar & Farrington, 2009).

[47] Interview with Uma, June 29, 2017. Svati Shah has argued, based on conversations with activists in Marathwada, that the increasing numbers of migration in the present are the result of a move towards a cash-dependent economy in rural areas. While earlier migration was for economic reasons such as food, people now migrate for money for weddings, dowry, and debts incurred for purchase of land and construction of houses. Most of these transactions are now only cash-based, when previously they may have been conducted in both cash and kind. Svati P Shah, *Street Corner Secrets: Sex, Work, and Migration in the City of Mumbai*, Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 70.

[48] Migration scholars have often criticised the preventive measures undertaken by the state to stem migration. Deshingker has contested the view of migration as a failure of development and migrants as victims of this failure, and argues that this movement is undertaken also for positive reasons such as the ability to earn better, escaping oppressive caste and gender dynamics, and a desire for urban lifestyles Priya Deshingkar, "Towards Contextualised, Disaggregated and Intersectional Understandings of Migration in India," *Asian Population Studies* 13, no. 2 (2017): 119–23. Rigg argues that states' policy prescriptions are aimed at enabling viable rural

This last factor is particularly under-studied and is of importance to understanding migration among low-caste households with small and marginal landholdings. Most households in my fieldwork settlements owned anywhere between four and ten acres in their villages, but had either leased out their land or left it to other family members to farm while they worked in Bengaluru.[49] This ownership of land was a major factor for retaining ties with the village. Unlike in the city where work and residence are precarious, in the *ooru* they are owners of property, even if this property is economically unviable. Government loans, when possible, are also availed to buy farmland. Basava from LB Nagar, for instance, narrated how his brothers and he bought land in the *ooru* after borrowing from a public-sector bank. Migrants often retained some of their legal entitlements in the village. Amba and Rama often travelled to the *ooru* to collect their widow pensions. Bama, a Dalit woman who had lived with her parents in VB colony since childhood, was, along with her husband, constructing a house in the latter's *ooru.* For this, they had received grants earmarked for scheduled caste communities from the village panchayat; their stay in the city has become intermittent. Manikantha, also from VB Colony, had worked in the city as a construction worker for decades and was now a mestri (foreman/supervisor), but had, until recently, accessed the ration subsidy for his household in his *ooru* itself. These, and other such material resources offered by the state at the site of the village, motivate people to continue to retain ties with it through generations. However, put together, these are piecemeal measures offered by the state and do not create an economically sustainable life in the village, even as crop failure,

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(often agricultural) systems, overlooking 'the necessarily mixed motives that inform the process and colour its outcomes'. He calls for treating migration as 'not symptomatic and emblematic of rural development failure, but indicative, in many cases, of rural development success'. Jonathan Rigg, "Moving Lives: Migration and Livelihoods in the Lao PDR," *Population, Space and Place* 13 (2007): 163–78, https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.438.

[49] My interlocutors often spoke of the lack of irrigation facilities for their land, making income from farms dependent on the vagaries of monsoon. Where irrigation facilities existed, such as in Raichur, where most residents of VB colony are from, their lands were mostly located at the tail end of the canals, meaning that water supply was inconsistent. On unequal distribution of irrigated water in catchment areas in the Tungabhadra river basin, see Mollinga, *On The Waterfront: Water Distribution, Technology And Agrarian Change In A South Indian Canal Irrigation System.*

scarce irrigation resources, and mounting debts create the conditions for circular migration, and fractured belonging, in the region and the city.[50]

Even as the *ooru* retains salience as both material and affective resource, the city is also ground for making claims for permanent residence. At VB Colony, against the backdrop of threats, my interlocutors were keen to emphasise the permanence of their stay in the settlement in our conversations. Absamma, in her late fifties, and one of the first among the migrants at VB Colony to arrive in Bengaluru, repeatedly stated how the city is her permanent home now. 'We go to our *ooru* once in a while only. We vote here, our ration card has this address. We have a labour card here. We have got everything done here and not in the *ooru*', she said.[51] The reality may be far more complex, with different entitlements spread out between the *ooru* and the city, but what is of concern here is the manner in which belonging is articulated. The documents Absamma cites as evidence of belonging are in terms comprehensible to the State; claims by the poor are made in this idiom with the understanding that their migrant status needs to be underplayed. In the eyes of the state, migrants' origins are far more important than their destinations and, thus, they remain ineligible for the space of, and rights in, the city. Another response to this demand by the state to produce evidence of permanence is to emphasise the long duration of their stay in the city, thus erasing the constancy of circular migration that marks their lives. VB Colony residents often stated that they have lived for over thirty years in the area; Ganga recollected, for instance, having moved to Bengaluru a year before Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination, and having moved to their current residence during the unrest in 1984, after the assassination. Such articulations by the poor are made recognising that permanence and

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[50] For work that details the impact of migration from this region on households, see Jonathan Pattenden, "Migrating Between Rural Raichur and Boomtown Bangalore: Class Relations and the Circulation of Labour in South India," *Global Labour Journal* 3, no. 1 (2012): 163–90. Singh, "Migration as a Driver of Changing Household Structures: Implications for Local Livelihoods and Adaptation.".
[51] Interview with Absamma, August 29, 2017.

immobility are implicit requisites for the State to consider their claims on the city as legitimate.

Yet another mode of claiming permanence was to assert their status of being the first/original inhabitants of the neighbourhood. All the older residents I spoke to recollected how the area was initially a *kadu*—while the word literally translates into a forest, it signifies the isolation from, and absence of, a human settlement, such as in the village. At LB Nagar, residents recall the marshy, swampy outpost that the area had been, how they regularly encountered snakes and other such dangerous creatures, and how they made the area habitable by raising the height of the settlement using construction debris. These histories show that the city's expansion into these wastelands takes place partly through the work of the first settlers, i.e., the migrant, labouring poor, in making these areas habitable. As we walked through a middle-class neighbourhood back to the settlement one afternoon, Rudra alluded to the work put in by his community when he said, 'All these buildings you see around, they are here because of us. Not because of anyone else...'[52]

Throughout my fieldwork, ambivalence was the primary feature of migrant articulations towards both the city and the *ooru*. Individuals often vacillated between belonging and estrangement towards both these spaces. Basava, who has bought land in the *ooru* along with his brothers, talks of Bengaluru as his mother, with whom he can speak and understand the language of the city, when I ask him why they chose to migrate here and not to other places such as Bombay, Pune, Hyderabad, or Goa.[53] But, in an earlier conversation, narrating the untimely death of his mother, he had said, 'If my mother had been alive, we would never have come here. I would not have had to see Bengaluru. However difficult life may have been, we would have stayed put in the *ooru*.' Yet another time, he sat, silently in agreement,

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[52] Interview with Rudra, September 10, 2017.
[53] Interview with Basava, December 10, 2017. These are places where people from Hyderabad-Karnataka also migrate to in significant numbers.

when his friend Linga declared, 'No one prospers if they are in the *ooru*. Even if you are not addicted to drinking, drugs, or smoking, it is impossible to achieve any degree of prosperity; the *ooru* is dead'.[54] On why people like him still invest in land in the *ooru*, Basava said, 'Desire. Why should we work under someone in Bengaluru? We can work on our own here (in the village). Such thoughts come to us then. We are still not in debt then, you see? We think let's buy two oxen and we'll be set'.[55]

Gowri, who longed for a return to the *ooru*, was, in fact, part of a vocal group of residents at VB colony, who had been demanding that they receive legal rights of residence to their settlement. Manikantha, whose daughter was married to a man in their *ooru* and had drawn ration from the government depot there until recently, spoke about his discomfort at staying for too long in the *ooru*. 'I don't know what to do there. I just come back to Bengaluru in 2-3 days every time I go,' he said.[56] Rudra from LB Nagar, who spoke with pride about their contribution to the development of the neighbourhood, was also intimately aware of a lack of future in the city and in working as construction labour. 'I know now that my life is always going to be difficult. But if our children even now must undergo the same difficulties as me, then what is the point? If we put our children in school, how will they learn, how will anything enter their head when they have to confront so many difficulties daily? It just won't happen', the 20-year old said.[57]

In migration scholarship that is often geared towards policy prescriptions, migration is viewed either as a failure of development models or as a movement that needs to be encouraged by the state. Both sets of scholarship use qualitative data to substantiate their

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[54] Interview with Linga, December 10, 2017.
[55] Interview with Basava, December 10, 2017
[56] Interview with Manikantha, December 24, 2017
[57] Interview with Rudra, September 10, 2017

claims.[58] However, in doing so, they erase the affective contradictions in migrant articulations about the city, *ooru*, and of constant movement. The poignancy of Rudra's conclusions about the lack of opportunities for upward mobility in the city needs to be set against his pride regarding the contribution of his community to the development of the city. Gowri's constant feeling of the city being an exile from home needs to be placed alongside her desire to own a piece of land in the city. Basava's investment in the village through land purchases need not be seen as incommensurate with his belief that the city is like his 'mother'. Holding these ambivalences together, not tending towards a resolution in either direction of migration being positive or negative, can allow us then to understand the migrant subjectivities produced in a mobile universe.

Representing Backwardness

Subjectivities are also produced in dialogue with contemporary discourses, draw in spatial coordinates of the village and the city, and inform representations of the self and the community. Conversations with my interlocutors revealed the number of stereotypes that migrant-residents choose to live down as poor inhabitants of the city. For instance, the opposition to granting land rights to migrant-residents in the city stems from the notion of the 'greedy poor'. In our conversation, Chandramma, a land and housing rights activist working with communities at LB Nagar and VB Colony, told me that the local leaders who oppose land rights for residents at the latter settlement argue that these migrants are not really poor, that they own land in their villages, and are, by implication, 'greedy' for a 'free' place in the big city.[59] This argument is premised on a popular understanding that ownership of land in the rural is an indication of economic self-sufficiency. My interlocutors might own land, but

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[58] Work by Jan Breman is representative of the school of thought that believes much of migration to be a result of failing development interventions into the rural. See for instance Jan Breman, *Of Peasants, Migrants and Paupers: Rural Labour Circulation and Capitalist Production in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985). Deshingker and Rigg, among others, believe that migration can have positive impacts all round.

[59] Informal conversation with Chandramma, August 30, 2017.

these are lands in drought-prone regions, where holdings need to be far larger than in irrigated regions for them to offer sustenance. Leasing land is, therefore, a commonplace household strategy that small and marginal farmers deploy.[60] They are then 'free' to join the workforce in Bengaluru. This specific context of precarity that enjoins small and marginal farming households to turn to labour migration is elided when ownership of lands is conflated with prosperity. Further, representation of the poor as greedy is part of the discourse of the suspicious state which, in the contemporary moment, has sought to limit the extent of its provisioning of entitlements, rather than expand to include the rising numbers of precarious poor. The focus then is on 'controlling abuse' of welfare schemes by creating a plethora of conditions that various classes of poor must meet to be able to avail their entitlements. Under these circumstances, my interlocutors often deployed representations that were strategic and designed to ensure stability of their lives.

*Docile subjects*

My interlocutors often represented themselves as a docile community. At LB Nagar, Hyderabad-Karnataka migrants share the residential blocks redeveloped by the KSDB with Tamil labourers, who apparently received these allocations because of the local corporator, a Tamilian herself. Referring to these Tamilian neighbours, Rama claimed that her people are a peaceful lot and keep to themselves, and in case of any fights in the locality or at the workplace, simply retreat. On construction sites, Tamilians refuse to do the work if it is arduous, Gowri claimed: 'They don't work so much. We work like donkeys. We carry whatever they ask us to carry and climb five floors when they ask us to. They can't climb. So, they will just say they won't do it.'[61] These self-representations of being good workers who do whatever work they are told to do ensures the preference for migrant workers from

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[60] M.V. Nadkarni et al., *Socio-Economic Conditions in Drought-Prone Areas: A Bench-Mark Study of Drought Districts in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu* (Concept Publishing Company, 1985).
[61] Interview with Gowri, July 7, 2017.

Hyderabad-Karnataka among job contractors. Presenting themselves as neighbourly residents who stay out of trouble works to undercut popular stereotypes of migrants and slum-dwellers as uncouth, criminals, and uncivilised. However, such representations of docility mask small and big acts of assertion. In one of my many conversations with Amba, who now occupies a home at the redeveloped LB Nagar, she mentioned how her building is the only one in the block to have 'her people'. The rest of the buildings in the block have been occupied by Tamilians. 'We occupied this one building, thinking, "Why should we let them have everything?" The rest of our people are in buildings up the road.'[62] At VB Colony, this representation of docility is further challenged as residents continue to assert a right to the space of the city by staying put on occupied land, despite threats of fires and demolitions and restrictions against building toilets, and are fighting long-drawn out court cases. These assertions are also possible, several residents pointed out, because of the support of housing rights activists, who have stood by and worked with them to achieve some degree of ownership of land. At LB Nagar, 'ownership' has been facilitated by activists through occupation of houses built by the KSDB.

Docility, however, is not only strategic but also reflect some deep-seated notions about 'people from Hyderabad-Karnataka'. These are notions that invoke the history of the region, specifically the feudal nature of societal relations, and draw linkages between this and its impact on the psyche of people inhabiting the region. In other words, assertions that people from the region are a subjugated people because of the continued existence of feudal relations are commonplace, even among activists of progressive inclinations. Housing rights activists Chandramma and Arul Selva, separately, narrated the same instance of docility they encountered among migrants from the region living as slum residents in Bengaluru.[63] Both

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[62] Informal conversation with Amba, June 23, 2017.
[63] Interview with Chandramma, an activist, February 26, 2018; Interview with Arul Selva, an activist, November 11, 2017.

said that, on one of their surveys, they had come across a large settlement of migrants from the region squatting on private land, with permission from the owner. After introducing themselves as reporters, they spoke with residents to assess the history of the settlement. When they returned a few days later, they found the entire settlement had vanished without a trace. Apparently, the owner of the land had panicked after their visit and had asked the residents to vacate immediately. The squatters had left without protest, said Selva, and reasoned that the system of oppressive caste and land relations in the region had meant that migrants from the region were unaware of their rights, entitlements or even the possibility of standing their ground against arbitrary evictions. Chandramma also echoed the same views linking backwardness of the region, the apparent feudal nature of society there, and the creation of subjugated subjects. This narrative they placed in contrast to other migrants/slum residents who are apparently able to assert their rights in the city in the face of the authoritarian forces of landed interests or the State. While this relationship between feudalism and docility is often asserted with regard to peoples of Hyderabad-Karnataka and their low productivity, this claim by activists posits a different argument about the implications of modernity. Here, modern subjects are those who recognise and assert their rights-bearing selves rather than accept subjugation; as the labouring poor, they are the exploited subjects of development, and it is on this ground that they ought to make claims of the State. When they do not assert their claims, for progressive activists, the people of Hyderabad-Karnataka seem untouched by this idiom of modernity.

However, conversations with residents of LB Nagar and VB Colony revealed a more complex picture by foregrounding the myriad ways in which discourses of backwardness are accepted, appropriated and challenged. For instance, Amba also did echo this notion of docility in one of our conversations, when she said, 'We are the kind of people who walk with our backs bent down… We never take the route of anger.' But she also added, 'We

never get in other peoples' way. But if they do, we don't take it lying down. We give it back to them.'[64] In Amba's version of this bent, backward self, there is an acceptance of docility but not of passivity. Subjugation is conditional; when pushed, they will act to reclaim dignity, argues Amba.

*Exteriority of backwardness*

Contradictions abound in these self-representations. In my conversation with Shashi and Uma, when I brought up the differences in dialect between Bengaluru and the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, Shashi explained them as a matter of how illiteracy rests on the self. She said, 'Those who have not gone to school are different, those who haven't are different. What do we who herd cows know about anything.'[65] Uma, however, explained it as a matter of refinement: 'Ours is a coarse dialect. There are fissures in our words, in the way we speak. But your dialect is refined'. She added that every region has its own kind of dialect.[66] In saying so, Uma rejected the value-laden implications associated with dialects, and rendered them merely a product of spaces. At VB Colony, in a conversation about dialects, Gowri said, 'People here think that we speak roughly. Sometimes they get angry and ask us why we are being confrontational. But our language is more respectful, and we address everyone as *Amma*, *Akka*, *Anna*, unlike in Bengaluru where people address us in the singular.'[67] Gowri was challenging here the notion that civility is the preserve of the literate or is reflected in speech sounds. Such articulations of self-respect were often enunciated as a counter to the negativity surrounding the poor, the migrants, or those from backward regions, even as some of these discourses are accepted. Teleological notions of progress were accepted as a general characterisation of their condition, i.e., by being poor, they have not been able to, for

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[64] Interview with Amba, August 27, 2017.
[65] Interview with Shashi, June 29, 2017
[66] Interview with Uma, June 29, 2017
[67] Interview with Gowri, July 4, 2017

instance, access education and better employment opportunities. But they rejected the embodied implications of poverty, such as passivity, lack of civility, and inferiority of speech, which circulate about the poor and/or those from the region. My interlocutors accepted the material realities of poverty as a determining condition in their lives, but not the ensuing implications of poverty on their being.

My interview with Rudra exemplified this distinction that my interlocutors often made, as our conversation veered between his personal history and his reflections on his community and poverty. He recollected for me the time when their settlement was set on fire and all their belongings perished, following which they received donations of old clothes and bedsheets. He said, 'I did not use it at all. I have one habit. I don't wear used clothes… My brother-in-law taught me that we should not wear other people's used clothes. He says don't buy from the footpath, you can pay a little extra money and buy better clothes… My mother did not even let us use the bedsheets we got then.'[68] Rudra challenges the notion that the poor are freeloaders, dependent on the charity of either the state or society. His refusal of donations is then a claim to dignity, often stripped off from the poor. However, Rudra actively asserts his rights from the State as a matter of entitlement that the latter ought to provide the poor. His friendship with a young activist Raghavendra who works in the settlement has provided him with the language to lay claims on the State as part of a backward community. While talking of children in the settlement living uncared-for lives, especially when parents are out for work, he said, 'I see children playing outside when their parents are at work. They (the children) have no supervision and no one to feed them during the day, so they end up putting whatever they find in their mouths… Then I feel is this how we should be living? Why should we have the Government then? It should be helping those of us from backward

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[68] Interview with Rudra, September 10, 2017.

sections, shouldn't it?'[69] In Rudra's articulations, the experience of backwardness is intimate but also external, and can be alleviated through the intervention of the State, whose moral duty it is to provide for those whose only asset is their ability to labour.

For some others, backwardness is decidedly spatial and located in the village. In my conversation with Basava and Linga, both in their mid-20s, the latter declared, 'No one prospers if they are in the village.'[70] Wages are low, interest rates on loans are high, and debts cannot be repaid. The only way to be financially secure is to migrate to the city. Even so, there are attempts to secure one's future by investing in the village. When Basava told me that his brothers and he had jointly bought land in the village, I asked, surprised, why they would invest in a place they believed had no place for their present. Ownership of land, he replied, confers a higher status for the household in the village, and betters marital prospects, for instance. This act of investing in the village suggests that migration is not a strategy oriented towards a future in the city, but for a future in the village. The city is irrevocably an entity of the present, unlike the village which is the locus of the past as well as the future to which migrants return permanently, when depleted from labouring in the city, or intermittently, when accumulation in the city has been sufficient to live viably in the village for some time.

*Care and neglect*

The past of the village in which drought is present as a recurring feature continues to animate the memories of older women and their perceptions of the present in the city. When she spoke of her difficult life, Amba constantly referred to the drought that she had lived through in her childhood, the goat fodder that they ate as food, the single rupee they received for a whole day's work, and the ditches they dug as drought relief work. Even though drought was

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[69] ibid
[70] Interview with Linga

not the immediate factor for her migration to Bengaluru, it is the originary moment of adversity in Amba's life. Her difficult relationship with her sons and daughters-in-law continually invoke this traumatic period in her life. Her two sons have refused to look after her because, she says, she has no property to leave behind for them. Her constant tiffs with her daughter-in-law are over household matters such as not cooking food in proportion and not caring for and providing her meals.

> We have done so much for so little food. We have cleaned people's houses, if they asked us to paint, we would paint. But this generation wastes so much food… We could not even get a little rice back then, we used to cook some seeds and feed our children.  Sometimes we would dig ditches and get ten rupees for it. We would go to the ration shop and buy some broken rice and make *ganji* and eat.[71]

This memory of drought and its invocation is gendered in that it focuses on care and food, the lack then and abundance now. Amba almost single-handedly brought up her children after her alcoholic husband gambled away his lands; their refusal to care for her cuts deep. In Amba's narrative, her experience of drought folds into her own life marked by a lack of care. But it also points to the structural-intimate abandonment of poor women by familial and state structures. Practices of patrilineality and patrilocality not only ensure that women remain property-less but also render relationships with natal families tenuous. Women continue to bear the duty of care for children, even in cases when husbands shirk their income-earning responsibilities. This was a common narrative among several women I spoke to during fieldwork who had shouldered household responsibilities singly, and had been forced to put children to labour as well. In the absence of effective state-mandated welfare measures for poor women, it becomes a matter of individual fortune if there are familial ties that can sustain women once their bodies are too depleted to perform labour.

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[71] Interview with Amba, August 14, 2017.

In this context of state neglect in Hyderabad-Karnataka, the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's drought relief measures of providing work and food is a cherished memory that finds space in women's songs. Amba once took me by surprise when she started singing songs composed decades ago by women working in agricultural fields:

> *Bara bantha, Bara bantha,*
> *Nammavva thai, Indira Gandhi*
> *Indira Gandhi, Indira Gandhi,*
> *Baragalada badathana antha godi kalsyale,*
> *Godi kalsyalavva thai,*
> *Badavaragi naava jeeva kaladidiye, badavaragi naava jeevana kaladidiye*
> *Nammavva thai Indira Gandhi, neenindale nava badikidivi amma thai*

In this song, composed after the death of Indira Gandhi, and in which the singer is a woman, the former prime minister is referred to as a mother who saves the poor with the relief programmes she undertook. Gandhi's provision of food and work saved them from the dire poverty that the drought had brought in and it is because of her that they were alive, the song says. At a later point in the song, the singer asks Indira Gandhi why she had closed her eyes to the poor and recollects how the wages she ensured helped the singer sustain her family of nine children. This song recollects the difficult time of the drought and the state's intervention that helped mitigate some of this hardship. The song embodies this intervention in the figure of Indira Gandhi and presents her as a saviour. This device of embodiment is not only an outcome of the charisma of Gandhi in the period, but also a way of reconfiguring state intervention as care. If the terrible conditions of drought placed existence itself at risk, state interventions are not merely ameliorative measures, but acquire a far more intimate tenor. This difference in effect and implication is captured in the idiom of care, as when the singer says that they owe their lives to her, to the wheat she had sent for them, to the work she instituted for them to tide over the poverty of drought. It, however, has the effect of

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rendering state intervention as benevolence rather than in the framework of citizenship and rights ensuing from this fact.

Care expressed in the idiom of benevolence is a common framework that I encountered during fieldwork. In the face of unremitting poverty caused by recurring drought, mythical stories about gods also highlight the importance of benevolence as essential to the lives of the poor. One afternoon when I met Amba soon after the Ganesh Chathurthi festival, I asked her if they had celebrated the festival. Amba dismissed the festival and said, 'If anyone says Ganesha, it makes me angry. Tell me how Ganesha has been useful to us. He has only ever helped the *Banajigas* (dominant caste and landed Lingayats), the ones who wear the Linga. He has only made the rich more prosperous.'[72] She then narrated the story of Jokrama, the god of the poor: Jokrama arrives after Ganesha has left eating all the good food—jowar, ghee, and sugar. He roams the lands for nine days and finds nothing to eat and only barren lands, absence of rain, and people dying from hunger. He then meets the Rain God and impresses on him the need for rains by narrating how children, forests, and birds are dying without even water to drink. Jokrama convinces the Rain God, and it rains on parched earth and the drought abates.

This myth is grounded in the reality of rural caste-class hierarchies and the differential impact of weather conditions on the different communities dependent on agriculture in the village. In such a context, the Gods also differ; Ganesha, the God of prosperity is rendered upper-caste and greedy, and Jokrama is forged as the compassionate God, who, moved by the plight of the lower castes and classes, advocates on their behalf for rains. If drought is a feature of rural society in Hyderabad-Karnataka and is considered as the primary economic reason for persistent underdevelopment, this creation of a shared myth of a saviour God makes prosperity only a good spell of rain away, a matter of good fortune. Underdevelopment or

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[72] ibid.

backwardness is contingent, not historical, psychological, or permanent. And care could possibly eliminate the circumstances that cause poverty.

*Inferiority of the unlettered*

But there is more than a single story. It is crucial to also remember articulations such as Shashi's about how illiteracy forms the backward self. In both LB Nagar and VB Colony, children of construction workers are being sent to school, and are most often first-generation learners in the household. Their young parents, usually in their mid-20s, can offer no help with their schoolwork. At one point during my conversation with Anjaneya, when we were talking about whether labour in the city helps in upward mobility, his young daughter walked in. He pointed to her and said, 'We send them to school so that they don't become like us. They should be more equipped to deal with the world than us. We don't even know how to write our own names.'[73] Then he chuckled and said, 'We have to nod our heads to whatever they read. If we knew to read, we could correct it. But we don't know... So, these kids take advantage of us and do what they want.'[74] While Anjaneya talked self-deprecatingly about the upturning of parental authority in the context of literacy, Rudra's take on this was poignant. In my interview with him, he confided in me about the difficulties of his life: his father's alcoholism and death, his older brothers' alcoholism, his mother's and his struggle to provide for the wives and children, and his work as a helper on construction sites as a child. 'I know now that my life is always going to be difficult. But if children even now must undergo the same difficulties as me, then what is the point? If you put such children in school, how will they learn? How will anything enter their head when they have to confront so many difficulties daily? It just won't happen,' he said.[75]

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[73] Interview with Anjaneya, December 4, 2017.
[74] ibid.
[75] Interview with Rudra, September 10, 2017.

In an increasingly literate world, illiteracy gnaws at the young, labouring workforce who, as first-generation child migrants, had no opportunity to go to school. Even those as young as twenty years in both settlements have never stepped into school, and have spent their childhood at construction sites, first as toddlers and then as helpers. Illiteracy is germane to their understanding of themselves as not quite equipped to handle the world, as inferior, even if not backward. Pavithra from VB Colony, who has spent most of her twenty-odd years in Bengaluru, used to run away and hide when it was time for school. 'We just wanted to play back then… Now looking at the kind of work we have to do, I wish I had gone to school,' she said.[76] Gowri, whose four children all go to school, said, 'Right from when we were very young, our parents used to take us to the fields and then, soon enough, we began working there as well. That's how we became dullards. It's because we are dullards that we send our children to school… Those who know to read and write are different, we are different.'[77]

Yet although hopes for a better life are invested in education, there is also an awareness that literacy and schooling itself does not quite pave the way for a life of continuous good employment. Rudra talked of how his educated friends in the village remain unemployed and have no option but to continue farming. In this articulation, the promise of education is in its opening up of work opportunities which mirror formal sector employment; its failure to do so forces people to continue in 'backward' sectors, such as agriculture and construction.

Labouring in the city

With most of my interlocutors having migrated to work as construction labour, the construction industry and the phenomenon of real estate (i.e. where large swathes of land are converted into saleable property) as it plays out in Bengaluru form important contexts for my study.

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[76] Interview with Pavithra, December 17, 2017. Pavithra, Interview with author, December 17, 2017.
[77] Interview with Gowri, July 7, 2017.

The construction industry has been integral to urbanisation in the contemporary moment. Apart from creating the built environments that real estate profits are based on, it encourages migration by providing continuous employment opportunities to workers. In 2008, about forty million migrants were employed in construction work across the country, and this labour-intensive industry was the second largest employer in the country, after agriculture.[78] The construction industry also employed an equal number of migrant male and female workers – of its total workforce, 36 percent and 35 percent of men and women respectively were migrant workers.[79] In Karnataka, nearly twelve to fifteen lakh workers are involved in construction activities in the state, claims the Karnataka State Construction Workers Central Union, an organisation working for the rights of construction labour.[80] In Bengaluru, this surge in the fortunes of the construction industry has been fueled by desires to be a global city, as Michael Goldman points out. Speculative urbanism, which involves turning rural land into real estate, has brought in real estate and construction firms from other world cities such as Dubai, Singapore and New York. It has also made way for foreign speculative capital in the form of urban infrastructural funds, started by hedge and derivative funds, Goldman states.[81] A 2017 report on the real estate sector in the country predicted that Bengaluru was likely to be the 'most favoured destination' for non-resident Indian investments and was also the 'best' city for commercial real estate investment after Mumbai.[82] This was part of a phenomenon across Indian cities as the real estate market grew by 30 percent every year in

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[78] S.R. Sarde quoted in Priya Deshingker and Shaheen Akter, "Migration and Human Development in India," Research Paper, Human Development Research Paper (United Nations Development Programme, 2009), http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/migration-and-human-development-india.

[79] Indu Agnihotri, Indrani Mazumdar, and Neetha N., "Gender and Migration in India," in *Internal Migration in India Initiative*, vol. 2: Workshop papers (National Workshop on Internal Migration and Human Development in India, New Delhi: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2011), 148.

[80] Karnataka State Construction Workers Central Union, "Blatant Violation in Implementing Central Legislation in Karnataka" (Karnataka State Construction Workers Central Union), accessed September 21, 2017, http://kscwcu.org/organisation.html.

[81] Michael Goldman, "Speculative Urbanism and the Making of the next World City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 17.

[82] India Brand Equity Foundation, "Indian Real Estate Industry" (India Brand Equity Foundation), accessed September 21, 2017, https://www.ibef.org/industry/real-estate-india.aspx.India Brand Equity Foundation n.d.)

the mid-2000s.[83] In her study on real-estate markets in India, Llerema Guiu Searle found that real estate developers' profit margins were typically above 20 percent, '…making them significantly higher than margins for other Indian industries or American real estate projects.'[84] One of her respondents even told her, she says, that real estate developers did not take up projects if they were not assured a return of at least 35 percent. Part of the profits for the real estate came from keeping construction costs low, i.e. around 20-40 percent of total project costs. One managing director from a large construction firm told her, she says, that only 10 percent of construction costs are for labour payments. 'Real estate industry profits thus accrue from agrarian distress,' Searle argues.[85]

*Valuations of work*

In the case of the first-generation migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka who migrated to the settlements I studied, agrarian distress as a 'push factor' was particularly prominent in the context of recurring droughts and state neglect of the region. Having established networks due to stability and duration of residence has ensured some flow of construction work to migrant residents at LB Nagar and VB Colony. However, precarity and arduousness still mark the manual labour that they undertake, and work can still be irregular, subject to vagaries of weather, cash flows of individual builders, or even state policies such as demonetisation. Formal sector employment, with its security of tenure and income and relatively less arduous work, was a constant reference point in my conversation with Manikanta, a migrant-resident who had gone onto become a labour contractor, for instance. 'If it's government work, you get good salary even if you don't do any work. Ours isn't like that, madam. If you do coolie work, then only if you go to the site you get work… If we go to

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[83] Goldman, "Speculative Urbanism and the Making of the next World City," 13.
[84] L.G. Searle, *Landscapes of Accumulation: Real Estate and the Neoliberal Imagination in Contemporary India*, South Asia Across the Disciplines (University of Chicago Press, 2016), 35.
[85] ibid, 36.

the site and do no work, then also nobody will pay us… If it's government work, you can just go sign, give some excuse and stay home', explained Manikantha.[86] For many, the precarity of their lives and work is measured against the ideal represented by government sector jobs, with its permanence and less exacting work. Rama put it poignantly when she said, 'We work, we eat, we work, we eat. There is no past, there is no future. If someone asks us for four rupees, we won't have it. Whatever we earn is just enough to look after the children.'[87]

For Manikantha, a life as a coolie is like leading an 'adivasi' life. 'It's like living in the forest. Look around here. There is no electricity, no water, just look at the situation here. This is even after we have our own MLAs and MPs. We have been voting all the time. Does even a single person care? Look at our lives, living here in the city in a slum,' he said.[88] For men like Manikantha who come from farming communities, to live like an 'adivasi' is to live outside civilisation. But just beyond the forest is the settlement and just outside the slum is the city with its modern amenities. Just as the adivasis in forests live untouched by the care of the state, Manikantha argued, those in slums have been abandoned by their elected representatives to live a life of neglect, looking on onto the civilised world. Suresh, a migrant-resident at LB Nagar, was more disparaging about the life of manual labour when I asked him what they did with savings from their wages. Dismissing the possibility of any accumulation, he said of his life, 'Work till evening like a Waddar and stay a dullard.'[89]

Yet, even as coolie work is held with some amount of denigration, it is preferred over other kinds of work such as domestic work. With the profusion of middle-class settlements around LB Nagar and VB Colony, domestic work is presumably also widely available. Residents in both settlements have, however, steadfastly refused to enter this arena and prefer working in

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[86] Interview with Manikantha, December 14, 2017.
[87] Interview with Rama, August 27, 2017.
[88] Interview with Manikantha, December 14, 2017.
[89] Interview with Suresh, August 27, 2017.

the construction industry. In my conversations with women, many explained that they would be subject to ridicule in their villages if word got out that they were washing dirty vessels in other peoples' homes for a living. This devaluation of paid domestic work was common in both settlements and was indication of the ways within which workers in the informal economy classified work along lines of dignity.[90]

Both settlements are located in the western parts of the city where several large and small-scale industries are located, and which are also host to garment factories, a major employment source for women in the city. However, no one from these settlements has attempted to enter these lines of work, possibly since they are unlettered. How they choose to represent this of some interest. Rudra, for instance, said, 'If you go (to the factory) even five minutes late, they will abuse us roundly. At the construction site, if we are late, we can make up for it by working a little more in the afternoon or evening.' It is this flexibility that makes construction work attractive to the migrant poor. During the course of my fieldwork, I often saw women and men withdraw themselves from work for rest, to visit villages, and for weddings. This came at the cost of losing daily wages but was done with the knowledge that work could be found when they returned. Even though having to work for daily wages was considered a burden, the fact that it allowed for small amounts of accumulation was an upside that migrants used regularly.

*Gendered impacts of accumulation*

In India, where division of labour in the construction industry is segregated on the basis of gender and region, women work across construction sites in the country at the lowest level as manual labourers and earn the least among the various segments of construction workers. As

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[90] Such distinctions could also be arising from the caste position of my interlocutors, who while lower down the caste hierarchy from the ritually superior Lingayats, considered themselves superior to the scheduled castes. Being small and marginal landholders, they possibly occupy a relatively better position than the landless and their sense of social distinction perhaps arises from this status in the village.

'helpers', their primary task involves carrying construction material and aiding men. Parity of wages do not exist, of course. But this is also sustained and accepted by participating migrant workers, who believe men do more arduous work than women on construction sites. 'They work as helpers only. What else can women do?' asked Manikantha, a long-time construction worker and now a mestri, when I asked him what kinds of construction work women do.[91] Once in a conversation with Gowri, intrigued by how often I was asked if I had brothers, I asked why sons are preferred over daughters. Matter-of-factly, she replied that having sons means getting higher and more sustainable wages. A man earns up to Rs. 700-800 per day once he starts doing coolie work, while a woman can only earn about Rs. 300 per day. 'How can any family run on women's wages alone?' she asked.[92] Preference for sons is also rooted in material practices of patrilineality and for women who get married and bear sons, it is through these men that the benefits of property are enjoyed. It persuades them then to participate in this son preference, which is based also on a devaluation of themselves, their work, and their daughters.[93] 'We can't do as much work as them…We can't carry the kind of heavy load men carry, that is why mestris pay women less than men,' Gowri had reasoned to me earlier.[94] This gendered division of labour and the more acute exploitation of women's labour in the construction industry is possible also because of the workings of such intimate patriarchies—even though higher wages for men come at the cost of a devaluation of women's work, it is acceptable because these men are *their* fathers, husbands, and sons, they belong to them. These ideological presuppositions dovetail easily with construction capital's requirements for cheap labour; it uses and consolidates these hierarchies, leaving women migrants disadvantaged, yet again.

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[91] Interview with Manikantha, December 14, 2017.
[92] Interview with Gowri, July 7, 2017.
[93] Saba, in our conversation, told me of how she gave birth to 12 children, and only of them was a boy. The boy died young and now Saba rues that she does not have the good fortune of having a daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Two of her married daughters have had children. Interview with Gowri, July 7, 2017.
[94] Interview with Gowri, July 4, 2017.

For migrant households then, accumulation is possible only when there are adult male productive members in the family. For many of the first-generation women migrants such as Amba, Rama and Ganga, a similar set of push factors had led them to Bengaluru—alcoholic husbands who gambled away their share of property,[95] not enough land and labour available in the village to sustain the family, and the refusal to draw on resources from the natal family since it violated tradition.[96] They spoke fondly of how they were well taken care of by their parents before marriage but believed that what happened after marriage was their fate, and that parents and brothers could not be drawn upon for sustenance. Their migration post-marriage to their husbands' villages also ensured that they remained physically distant from any property claims they could make. Based on her decades-long engagement with research in Haryana, Prem Chowdhry has argued that the practice of village exogamy, widespread in northern India, expels women from her natal village, and has been a long-standing spatial strategy to divest women from claims to natal property.[97] Further, since men held property singly in the village, their wives had little control when the men decided to gamble it away. Saba, for instance, narrated how her husband, a man of many vices, frittered away nearly ten acres of irrigated land, claiming that it was his property and he could do what he liked with it. They migrated to Bengaluru where she bore eight of her ten children and continues to work as a helper, even after her husband passed away. This intimate, physical expulsion of the woman from her natal family, and from property itself, performed and accepted as 'correct'

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[95] Alcoholism is a widespread social problem, and in the elections of 2018 in Karnataka, attempts were made to make banning alcohol an election issue. See Archana Nathan, "'Ban That Wretched Liquor and Free Us Women': In Poll-Bound Karnataka, Prohibition Demands Pick Up," *Scroll*, April 23, 2018, https://scroll.in/article/875556/ban-that-wretched-liquor-and-free-us-women-in-poll-bound-karnataka-prohibition-demands-pick-up.

[96] Rudra, in our conversation, also said that they never claimed any share from his mother's family despite the staggering poverty they once faced, and added, 'We never desired for it either.' Interview with Rudra, September 10, 2017

[97] Prem Chowdhry, "A Matter of Two Shares: A Daughter's Claim to Patrilineal Property in Rural North India," in *Political Economy of Production and Reproduction : Caste, Custom, and Community in North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015).

by all involved, [98] needs to be recognised as an important factor for migration of women to the urban.[99] Marriage may facilitate migration for women, i.e., women may follow husbands to the city, but because marriage is an expulsion from property, it forces women to migrate since they are customarily prohibited from inheriting from natal families.

In the city, the practice of male control over female labour within the household continues to this day. In our conversation, Vasanthi spoke of the lack of an anganwadi nearby that could act as a day-care centre for young children while their mothers were at work. The absence of such facilities affected women's entry into workforce since most contractors did not allow children to be brought onto worksites for fear of accidents.[100] As our conversation veered towards men from the region, Vasanthi said, 'Most men are intimidating, especially over their wives… They beat us if we don't do even one of the many tasks. They shouldn't be lacking in anything… Even if you die, it's okay. You must work well, earn wages, give it to them. The man will say I will drink, I will beat you. If you don't want that, go back to your father's house and leave me.'[101] This prospect of abandonment is unthinkable for the women I met and is the reason that Amba cared for, gave away her wages to, and incurred debts for the sake of her alcoholic husband, who eventually died from cancer.[102]

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[98] Gowri, one of my interlocutors told me that, perhaps, people from Bengaluru may ask for a share in property; her people however are content with the share they receive from their husband's family. While the law might guarantee a share in property, she said, 'Our peace of mind will not allow it... we let it go thinking we want our brothers and fathers to be prosperous.' Interview with Gowri, July 4, 2017.

[99] Migration of women after marriage may have been understood largely as a social phenomenon but it is a deeply political and economic act, aiding in maintenance of property regimes as well as transferring labour from one patrilineal location to another.

[100] Bama from VB Colony, in our interview, told me that she managed to put her son to school at an earlier age than usual because she was refused work at any construction site she went to with her toddler. Interview with Bama, December 17, 2017.

[101] Interview with Vasanthi, August 27, 2017.

[102] Interview with Amba, August 14, 2017

*Lost childhoods*

Penury faced by older women migrants had often forced them to put their children to work as helpers on construction sites. Men who scouted for labourers to recruit in the villages of Hyderabad-Karnataka in the 1980s and 1990s offered work for young children as added incentive for women who were left with responsibility to fend for their family and themselves. A male relative who facilitated Rama's migration to the city promised work for both her and her son. After she moved to Bengaluru, Rama managed to educate her younger son till high school. When her older son was struck by an inexplicable illness, the younger one was forced to drop out and join the workforce to supplement the loss of his brother's income. Starting as helpers, children did the same tasks as women—lifting heavy items, climbing floors and aiding adult men in construction work—and were a source of cheaper labour than women and men. The work, however, was no less arduous, and their young bodies suffered daily. Basava, following his migration to Bengaluru after his mother's fatal accident, worked as a helper and earned Rs. 60 per day for his efforts. 'Contractors used to hesitate before taking me on. I didn't know any of this work, I was new to the city. After working, my hands and legs would constantly give way because it was such hard work. I used to often feel so bad that I wanted to just get away from Bengaluru', he said.[103]

This fact of having been workers and earned their keep in the family is an important part of how young men relate to their families, to their work, and to their lives. Amba told me that her sons cite their work as child helpers to discard her claims for care and sustenance in her old age; they tell her we have earned our keep. After a fight with his mother over his supposed shirking of work, Rudra told me that what hurt him was that she did not recognise that he had worked throughout his childhood and had made important contributions to the stability of the household through his labour. Investment in the education of the current

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[103] Interview with Basava, December 10, 2017.

generation of children, then, represents the ardent desire of young parents to not only break this cycle of illiteracy and poverty, but also perhaps to provide some experience of childhood to their offspring, one that had been denied to them.[104] This is defiance, in a limited sense, of the acceleration of life events—joining the workforce, marriage, childbirth, and even death—that poverty demanded of first-generation migrants. Sending children to school and delaying marriage are recent trends that relatively stable households in both settlements are able to afford.

*Labouring bodies*

The experience of poverty, however, marks the body of the labourer in more ways than one. The hardness of manual labour, in this case construction labour, depletes the body and devours the strength of youth and necessitates the acceleration of life events. Yet early marriage and childbirth are understood as conventions by my interlocutors, and as endemic characteristics of the poor within existing frameworks on poverty. I argue that they are not indicators of backwardness or of a historical and traditional inability to modernise among the poor; they are not only a strategy for physical reproduction. Rather, this acceleration of life events is a consequence of absent childhoods and the brief period of youth available to those who do manual labour.

This arduous nature of manual labour, be it in agriculture or construction, Uma described as donkey's work. 'Carry the sand, carry the bricks, mix the cement, pass on the bricks, pass on whatever the men ask for, that's what women do. Men have to carry heavy bags of sand and bricks, build the walls… It's very difficult, this construction work. We have to carry all of this up and down many floors every day.'[105] Yet, Uma insisted that this is a better life and is

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[104] For young girls, this experience is different since they are expected to cook and look after the household when their mothers are away. But marriages delayed till after they have reached the legal age, or atleast attained puberty, is a positive generational change.
[105] Interview with Uma, June 29, 2017

still preferable to working in the village where they earned only Rs.100 for a whole day's work. 'At least here we can work like a donkey and eat like one too. As long as we have the strength, we can do this. Once we age, they (contractors) will not even call us for work', she said.[106]

The possibility of regular work and some degree of accumulation that the construction industry offers has enabled people to refuse customary and undignified forms of labour. *Jeeta*, as bonded labour is called in these parts, was a common customary practice in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, in which poor Dalit and backward-caste communities commit one or entire families to working with upper-caste, usually Lingayat, households, either to pay off debt or work for little or no wages. Rama pointed out that the possibilities of work and high wages in Bengaluru had made it easier for people to shun such arrangements. 'If they (upper-caste) ask us to come work like that, we abuse them and ask them to leave', she said.[107] Even so, the gains are minimal. Basava, who worked as a bonded labourer as a child, managed to escape the tyranny of *jeeta* work but landed in the construction industry to undertake exacting work first as a child helper and now has been working for nearly fifteen of his twenty-five years in the city.

For those whose bodies are past its prime, work is hard to come by. This is the case with Amba whose aged, plump body, full of aches and pains, is no longer desirable for construction labour. Hence, she has not been able to find any work. 'When I ask people to help me find work, they say even the "good" (read: able-bodied) people are not finding work, who will call you. Should only the 'good' people survive? Should people like me die?' she asked.[108]

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[106] ibid.
[107] Interview with Rama, August 27, 2017.
[108] Interview with Amba, September 10, 2017

*State apathy*

Amba should not actually have to be in this position. As a woman construction worker who has worked for over twenty years, she should have had access to the pension and health care funds that the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (KARBWWB) is supposed to provide workers across the state. According to the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, the board is authorised to collect a cess from construction companies and builders that goes towards a welfare fund for workers. Workers registered with the board are eligible to access pension if they are over 60 years, receive assistance for education, marriage, childbirth, illness, hospitalisation, purchase of instruments, house construction and are eligible for compensation in case of accident and death. Yet most residents in the two settlements are not registered with the board and do not have a 'labour card'. This is the situation across the state as evident from the fact that the KARBWWB by the year 2017 had only spent six percent of the Rs.3861 crores that it had collected as cess.[109]

To be registered as a construction worker and to have it renewed every three years requires a letter from a licensed contractor that states that the said worker has been working under his supervision continuously for ninety days. This criterion can only be met by establishment workers, i.e., those who are recruited by large construction companies as part of their regular workforce. My interlocutors were open market workers and found work through informal labour networks of mestris and other workers, and moved worksites regularly, could not meet this criterion. The Act was passed with the intention of regulating the informality of transactions in the construction labour market, but the criterion set by the welfare board to establish eligibility has only kept a large number of the deserving workers out of its scope.

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[109] Rakesh Dubbudu, "See 'Over 25,000 Crore Meant for Labour Welfare Remains Unspent,'" *The Quint*, August 16, 2017, https://www.thequint.com/news/india/labour-welfare-money-remains-unspent.

Further, the misplaced fear that in the case of an accident or the death of the construction worker, the contractor who offered the letter verifying the former's status maybe held liable for penalty or punishment has acted as a deterrent. Finally, many daily wage workers prefer to work with unlicensed contractors because wages are higher, even if this is substantially riskier. 'We don't go to licensed contractors because we get paid between Rs. 700 and Rs. 800 usually with the unlicensed ones. It can sometimes go up to Rs.1000. With the licensed ones, the wages will usually be around Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 because they have all the papers in order,' Basava explained to me.[110] These risky moves reflect a desire to accumulate as much as possible in the brief window that their body allows them and the demand for labour is high.

Risks, such as working with unlicensed contractors, are undertaken in the context of deeply exploitative labour relations within the industry. This is particularly stark at times of crisis such as deaths on construction sites. When I met Chandramma, the activist, for our interview, she was coming from visiting the hospital where the body of a young boy from LB Nagar, not more than 16 years old, had been taken. The boy had been to work at a house construction and died when he came into contact with live electricity wires. As soon as the death occurred, informal power networks had been activated: mestris were called, local power brokers in the village were traced, a deal negotiated over-night, the parents of the boy paid a couple of lakhs, and the body transported to the village for funeral. Chandramma rued the fact that this was done so hastily, but knew that accidents and deaths on construction sites were often dealt with in this manner. Such negotiations were possible because poor migrants find work through village and kinship networks and continue to find work only if they remain docile workers. It is these networks that get activated to resolves crises when they arise. The dispensability of workers' bodies is thus built into the profits of the construction industry.

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[110] Interview with Basava, December 10, 2017

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the contemporary condition of being a migrant, of having your 'feet in both places'. Interpreting this experience of being in two places has been the burden of this chapter. The chapter began with an engagement with migration scholarship and, in particular, with the term circular migration. I have argued that paying attention to circularity as a movement allows us to dispel with linearities of time, space, and movement that inform traditional classifications of migration. Circularity as a mode links spaces together through movement; but these constantly replayed connections change the nature and meaning of these spaces for migrants who move between them. Such fluidities of movement are better suited to understanding the varying patterns of migration undertaken by vast numbers of internal migrants in the country.

The chapter then focused on the affective investments made by migrants across spaces, the ways in which such investments are necessary for mitigating rural and urban precarities and how they are crucial to the formation of migrant subjectivities. While *desha* as process of inhabitation offer migrant-residents a sense of control about shaping their surroundings, *desha* as a space of familiarity is a consequence of the constancy and repetitiveness of circular migration, where migrants establish a foothold through semi-permanent residential rights and through their continuing ties with the *ooru,* aid in the flow of short-term, seasonal and occasional migrants belonging to kinship networks. This regular circulation over time allows for a tenuous embrace of the city as *desha* or part of an affective universe. The city and the *ooru* are locked in a fraught relationship for the migrant as she traverses both these spaces seeking belonging and feeling estranged. The dependence on both spaces for affective and material sustenance, given erratic wages, unviability of agriculture, temporary residence and a short shelf life as a construction worker, do not allow for establishing herself in either

spaces. The hostility of the urban and the state towards migrants pushes her to claim that she resides only in the city and has no ties with the *ooru,* thus erasing the constancy of migration. Despite several pragmatic and affective strategies to mitigate the uncertainties of their lives, poor migrants are often left with a permanent sense of being temporary, in the village, in the city, in the worksite.

The chapter also studied the different representations of backwardness that migrant-residents sometimes claim and discard at other times. They claim docility but not passivity. They live lives afflicted by poverty but their selves are not structured by this poverty. Backwardness is not an intimate condition but one that can be alleviated through benevolence of the state (and of cosmic forces). Being unlettered was a sign of their inferiority but they were also aware that education was not a way out of poverty for them. It is in the awareness of the particularities of their lives that migrant-residents challenge stereotypes around the poor and the question the promises of modernity.

The chapter ended with a discussion on the experience of labouring in the city. These experiences are marked by a longing for work that migrant-residents believe are dignified and secure. They are also equally marked by a devaluation of women's labour within the construction industry that dovetails easily into the customary devaluation of women's selves. For first-generation child migrants, the exploitation of their bodies in the construction industry started early and their lives are marked by absent childhoods. The precarity of being a construction worker remains unmitigated by a state that sets up criterion at odds with customary practices of employment in the industry. The state maintains excessive vigilance over funds meant for construction workers even as the latter risk bodies and lives in the hope of higher wages.

# Conclusion

This thesis has charted the processes of region-making through a study of the visual-geographical, developmental, political, historical and affective registers that mark Hyderabad-Karnataka's twentieth-century existence. Engaging with these multiple registers has shown that regions cut across, escape or undermine political and administrative boundary-making efforts. Instead, they aggregate and foreground the entangled histories of different political-spatial entities. In this case, the study of Hyderabad-Karnataka offers insights into the making (and unmaking) of Hyderabad, Mysore, Karnataka, Bangalore city, and finally of the Indian Union as the region shifts from princely to democratic and from composite to linguistic states. In traversing these multiple spatial scales, the thesis makes a methodological intervention by arguing for regions as the appropriate scale on which to map development regimes.

Regions in nationalist modes of history-writing have been studied as sites which mirror the nation endlessly. This has been contested by scholars who have argued for the region to be treated as more than local flavours and instead be seen as offering possibilities for productive, even dissenting, dialogues. This is possible since critical regional histories make explicit and contest the homogenising tendencies of the nation-state, in this case both Indian and linguistic. A focus on the different, discrepant scales in which the region is emplaced reveal the cracks and fissures of a singular discourse, whether related to language, or to ideas of development. For instance, democracy and the place of minorities in this democratic regime was insistently posed within Hyderabad state to the larger Indian polity. Hyderabad's history between the period of 1930s and 1950s saw an increasing insistence on democracy as an end-goal for the state—a democracy that was not distinguished, theoretically or politically, from majority rule and was therefore not insulated from the dangers of majoritarianism. That

organisations of different ideological proclivities—such as the Hyderabad State Congress, Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, and socialist and left parties—were united in their demand for the dissolution of Hyderabad. The state's ostensible 'unnaturalness' also offers insights into an emerging consensus in the incipient nation-state that the majority—linguistic and religious—and its interests must hold sway over institutions of power. This logic was at the heart of the demand for linguistic states and for the dissolution of Hyderabad, where no linguistic majority could be easily be fashioned. Figures such as Sham Sunder who, in this period, did try to foreground the question of minorities and the central role they should occupy within the political life of the nation, have remained conveniently forgotten.

If the demand for a linguistic state was based on the felt need for a congruence between language and territory within which development could take place, this thesis has demonstrated how this promise has failed for regions constructed as backward. Instead, history has become the proxy for a continued marginalisation of Hyderabad-Karnataka within the newly-fashioned linguistic state. Such marginalisation of the region has meant an exclusion of its peoples within structures of the bureaucracy and political representation; and neglect of the region's interests in favour of the needs of nation and capital.

Regions are 'cusp spaces', in that their presence is necessarily hybrid, braided to different histories. Yet the impulse of states – be it the Indian, Hyderabad and Karnataka state – has been to delineate and fix these spaces geographically, culturally and historically, as this thesis shows. If the Asaf Jahi state sought to do so by mapping Hyderabad and its own regime onto the larger Deccan region, the Indian Union sought to provincialise Hyderabad into its territories and ensure that its histories align with the history of the nation through the deployment of familiar elements of a unified national movement. The Kannada nation has sought to map onto the region, ruled for centuries by Muslim rulers, its own Hindu

predilections as it traces the 'dismemberment' of the Kannada nation to 'Muslim invasion' to which linguistic reorganisation serves as 'unification' of Kannada peoples.

If space as region has been a main concern of this thesis, development as underdevelopment and backwardness has been the other concern. The thesis has historically traced the designation of Hyderabad, and consequently Hyderabad-Karnataka, as underdeveloped and backward through an engagement with discursive modalities that have enabled such classifications. By focussing on the history of the production of these categories, the attempt has been to show their constructed, and not self-evident, forms.

Such histories also allow for a more detailed engagement with development, one which is not limited to an economic understanding alone. Development has been a constant refrain in the making of postcolonial India, and this thesis engages with the territoriality of these demands for development and their implications, particularly in the demand for linguistic reorganisation of territory in South India. Perceived as a neutral demand – i.e. one devoid of caste and religious sentiments – development has retained widespread legitimacy within Indian public discourse However, as this thesis has shown, this neutrality has effectively cloaked both Hindu majoritarian sentiments, as in the case of Hyderabad, and prejudices about regions and peoples deemed backward, as in the case of Mysore/Karnataka. Tracing the longer histories of development and its rhetoric are particularly vital in contemporary India, where development has been deployed as a weapon with which to effect authoritarian acts of territorial reorganisation, as occurred recently in the case of Jammu and Kashmir and in Assam. The case of Hyderabad in 1948 reveals some of the longer histories to which contemporary political decisions are heir, albeit in ways that must mark significant departures and differences.

Scholarship within the realm of development studies has increasingly elaborated global regimes of development that valorise the urban and which residually relegates the agrarian and the rural to backwardness. It has also focussed on those who are located at the peripheries of the urban for what they might reveal about the rural. This thesis develops these insights to situate the affective lives of migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka living in Bangalore within a broader canvas of development. Through this, the thesis has sought to demonstrate how discourses of underdevelopment and backwardness that play out at larger spatial scales of linguistic states and nations are borne in everyday lives by those from marginalised regions and communities. Their acts of insurgent citizenship are revealed in a repertoire of smaller scale negotiations, where resistance is small, personal and often takes place within the locality, the village, the city and the *desha*. By documenting these acts, the thesis engages with the spatial interconnectedness of regions to larger scales of development and their lived and perceived realities from below. It opens up further lines of enquiry such as richer histories of the agrarian and of migration which bring out the connections between caste capital, territorial reconfigurations and state (non) interventions in the rural.

This effort of charting Hyderabad-Karnataka's regional history has alerted us to the need for deeper and richer developmental histories of princely states, and not merely histories that focus on issues of sovereignty with relation to the colonial and postcolonial Indian states. On the other hand, there is also a need for richer local histories that are not necessarily contained within the frames of the freedom movement, the misrule of Asaf Jahi state and individual efforts to fight off its 'shackles'. Within scholarship on Karnataka, agrarian and caste histories are avenues of enquiries that could give us a greater sense of the imperatives of the political movements of reorganisation as well as of developmental interventions. Caste histories in particular are essential to see how familial and social relationships were forged and sustained in the larger Deccan region comprising Bombay- and Hyderabad-Karnataka. It

can also offer us insights into the different kinds of regions—delineated perhaps on the basis of movement and networks—and their changing contours through the period of the twentieth century India.  My thesis in only an inaugural step in that direction.

# Appendix I: Historical and contemporary trends in migration between Hyderabad-Karnataka and Bengaluru

Bengaluru's emergence as a migrant destination for those from Hyderabad-Karnataka is of recent origin. Mobility patterns from the Hyderabad State, which the region was part of till 1956, indicate that the linguistically similar but non-contiguous territories of the erstwhile princely Mysore State were not attractive migrant destinations. Much of the migration within the Hyderabad State took place within its borders, the proportion ranging between 61 and 71 percent of total migration for five decades upto 1951. The direction of migration tended towards the districts of Marathwada region from the districts of Telangana region, according to Census reports of these decades.[1]

*Table 8: Migration within and outside Hyderabad-Deccan state*

| Year[2] | Total number of Migrants | Percentage of intra-state migrants | Percentage of women intra-state migrants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 998897 | 67.4 | 49.3 |
| 1911 | 681232 | 61.7 | 49.6 |
| 1921 | 708265 | 71.3 | 50.6 |
| 1931 | 802944 | 69.2 | 46.1 |
| 1951 | 1273593 | 68.1 | 56.4 |

*Source: Compiled from census records between 1901 and 1951*

Of the inter-state migrants, nearly 95 percent travelled to the adjoining states of Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency and Central Provinces and Berar. Census records between the years 1901 and 1951 show that between 42 and 62 percent of the emigrants from Hyderabad-

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[1] Due to lack of district-level figures in the census reports, state-level migration figures have been used to indicate general patterns.

[2] No data is available for 1941. The problem with taking 1951 as a baseline year is that emigration figures reflect the unquantified but possibly high numbers of migration that occurred because of Police Action in 1948 and the dissolution of feudal estates, following the abolition of the Jagirdari system.

migrated to adjoining districts within the Bombay Presidency. The cities of Sholapur and Bombay were key migrant destinations. The neighbouring territories of Madras Presidency and Central Provinces and Berar accounted for the rest of the migration.

*Table 9: Migration from Hyderabad-Deccan to adjoining states*

| Year | Bombay | | | Madras | | | Madhya Pradesh | | |
|------|--------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|----------------|------|-------|
| | Number | % | Women | Number | % | Women | Number | % | Women |
| 1901 | 129278 | 43.8 | 57 | 62507 | 21.2 | 51 | 94978 | 32.2 | 54 |
| 1911 | 140990 | 46.9 | 59 | 60692 | 19.8 | 52 | 92731 | 30.2 | 56 |
| 1921 | 219252 | 60 | 52 | 38916 | 10.7 | 39 | 90930 | 24.9 | 54 |
| 1931 | 170076 | 50.8 | 55 | 58476 | 17.5 | 53 | 91065 | 27.2 | 56 |
| 1951 | 353868 | 62.8 | 50 | 93083 | 16.5 | 52 | 93902 | 16.6 | 64 |

*Source: Compiled from census records between 1901 and 1951*

One trend needs to be mentioned here. Much of the migration is accounted for by women. Between the years 1901 and 1951, the proportion of women migrants ranged between 49 and 56 percent within the State and was consistently over 50 percent for inter-state migration. Census reports through the decades have attributed much of women's migration to marriage, in keeping with the customary practices of village exogamy and patrilocality. Marriage migration, as this trend has been termed can reveal to us the geographical contours of the *desha* in a particular historical period. In the case of migrants from the Hyderabad State, the *desha* extended outside administrative boundaries to adjoining districts of neighbouring states and adjoining districts of the natural divisions of Telangana and Marathwada.

Over the course of the twentieth century, migration patterns within Hyderabad-Karnataka region have altered somewhat, and a comparison of migration data between the years 1951

and 2001 attest to these changes.[3] While the quantum of migration in decreasing order for both the census years has been intra-district, inter-district (to adjoining districts) and inter-state (again to adjoining districts), newer destinations have emerged and some older ones have fallen off the migrant map. Prior to the formation of Karnataka, the region did not share borders with the erstwhile Mysore state and did not figure in the radar of migrants from this region – the 1951 Census was able to find only 6686 migrants from the entire Hyderabad-Deccan state, largely in Davangere, Bhadravati and Bengaluru. A district-wise migration pattern is given below.

*Gulbarga*: According to the 1951 Census, people from this district most probably migrated to the contiguous districts of Sholapur and Bijapur districts in Bombay Presidency. Within the state, Bidar, Mahbubnagar and Osmanabad towns were significant destinations as well as the towns in Raichur district where the Tungabhadra dam project camps offered avenues for employment. Migration data for the census year 2001 show that the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (including the districts of Thane, Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban)) was the most important migrant destination, followed by the districts of Pune and Bengaluru.

*Raichur*: In 1951, Raichur had one of the lowest numbers migrating out of the district owing to ample employment opportunities generated within the district due to the construction of the Tungabhadra dam. For those who did move out, important destinations included the cities of Gulbarga, Yadgir and Hyderabad. The Census of 1951 also suggests that Hyderabad emigrants in the adjoining districts of Bellary, Kurnool, Dharwad, Bijapur and non-adjoining districts of Madras and Bombay state may also have been from Raichur district.[4] In 2001, a new district Koppal was carved out of Raichur and both have differing migration patterns.

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[3] Migration data for the year 2011 is as yet unavailable. Further, since district-wise migration figures are unavailable for 1951, destination preferences as stated in the census report of that year have been used.
[4] CK Murthy, "Census of India, Hyderabad - Volume IX," Census Report (Hyderabad: Government Press, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1951), 521–24.

While those from Raichur migrate largely to Bengaluru, Gulbarga and Pune, a large number of migrants from Koppal head to adjoining districts of Gadag and Bagalkot.

*Bidar*: According to the 1951 Census, people from this district were migrating to various industrial centres of Bombay state, particularly to Sholapur city. Hyderabad city was yet another destination as were the districts of Bid, Nizamabad, Osmanabad, Nanded and Parbhani. Those from Bidar in the cities of Latur, Gulbarga and Nanded, the census report states, were agriculturists with subsidiary interests in these urban areas or had travelled for education. In 2001, data shows that the districts of Latur and Gulbarga continue to retain salience as migrant destinations; Hyderabad has declined in importance while Pune has emerged as an important destination for migrants from Bidar.

**Table 10: Key destinations for migrants from Hyderabad-Karnataka, 2001**

| Districts | Destinations | Migrants |
|---|---|---|
| Gulbarga (includes Yadgir) | Mumbai Metropolitan Region[5] | 33857 |
| | Pune | 25159 |
| | Bengaluru | 15563 |
| Raichur (includes Koppal)[6] | Gadag (mostly from Koppal) | 12213 |
| | Bengaluru | 9882 |
| | Bagalkot (mostly from Koppal) | 8621 |
| Bidar | Latur | 9782 |
| | Gulbarga | 7736 |
| | Pune | 6582 |

*Source: Table D-13, Migration by place of last residence by state and districts in India (0-9 years), Census of India, 2001*

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[5] District-wise migration is as follows: Thane – 15092, Mumbai (Suburban) – 13341, Mumbai – 5424
[6] For Raichur district alone, Gulbarga (4936 migrants) and Pune (4920 migrants) are key destinations.

These migration trends from this region outwards indicate that older ties with cities such as that of Sholapur and Hyderabad, districts such as Parbhani, Nanded and Nizamabad have either dissolved or shifted form towards circular migration (which is notoriously hard to capture). Pune and Bengaluru, both non-contiguous districts and which did not figure in the migrant universe in 1951, have emerged as important migrant destinations for people from the region. These trends reflect broader changes in the political economy of development in this period. Migration to Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru and away from adjoining districts which were historically important destinations reiterate the dependence on big cities for employment, the declining ability of smaller towns and cities to offer employment opportunities and the nature of growth tending towards service rather than agricultural sectors. That most of this migration is from rural areas allows us to presume that this movement is occurring in the context of an agrarian distress.

Even as we remember the caveat that migration data does not fully reflect the universe of mobility, census figures do give us a sense of the rate of semi-permanent and permanent migration. Migration from the region to Bangalore has been increasing, but growth rates have fluctuated between 41 percent for 1981-1991 and 36 percent for 1991-2001. While migration rates from Raichur and Bidar have shown a decline, the district of Gulbarga has retained a migrant growth rate of about 42 percent through the intervening decades.

*Table 11: Total number of persons in Bangalore district from districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka*

| District/Year | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | Growth rate 1981-1991 | Growth rate 1991-2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gulbarga | 5142 | 8930 | 15563 | 42.4 | 42.6 |
| Raichur | 3476 | 5890 | 8563 | 40.9 | 31.2 |
| Bidar | 1216 | 1970 | 2175 | 38.3 | 9.4 |
| Hyderabad-Karnataka | 9834 | 16790 | 26301 | 41.4 | 36.2 |

*Source: Table D-13, Migration by place of last residence by state and districts in India (0-9 years), Census of India, 2001*

Disaggregating this data to focus on migration patterns between rural areas of the region and Bangalore gives us a clarified picture of labour migration from the countryside to the city. Migration rates from the region have grown from 43 to 48.6 percent, largely due to increasing migration from rural parts of Gulbarga district. From 41 percent between 1981 and 1991, migration rates have climbed to 53 percent from undivided rural Gulbarga district.[7] Raichur district may show higher rates of migration than its current 43 percent if Koppal's migration data were disaggregated from it.[8] Migrants from Bidar seem reluctant to migrate to far away Bangalore and those who do are from its rural hinterland and that exodus has remained steady at around 39 percent.

*Table 12: Total number of persons in Bangalore district from rural areas of Hyderabad-Karnataka region*

| District/Year | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | Growth rate 1981-1991 | Growth rate 1991-2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gulbarga | 3037 | 5190 | 11108 | 41.5 | 53.3 |
| Raichur | 1703 | 3170 | 5592 | 46.3 | 43.3 |
| Bidar | 493 | 820 | 1145 | 39.9 | 39.6 |
| Hyderabad-Karnataka | 5233 | 9180 | 17845 | 43 | 48.6 |

*Source: Table D-13, Migration by place of last residence by state and districts in India (0-9 years), Census of India, 2001*

Although the actual migration numbers from the region are very small, it is needs to be remembered here that this data is biased towards longer-term migration.

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[7] Yadgir district has been carved out of Gulbarga district.
[8] This disaggregated data is not available for 1981 and 1991. In 2001, nearly 86 percent of total migration was from rural Raichur district.

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