

COLONIAL LEGACY AND POST-INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT IN TELANGANA: A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a critical study of the colonial era and the post-independence era in Telangana, examining the socio-political, economic, and cultural transformations that shaped the region across different historical phases. The study focuses on the impact of colonial and feudal structures under the rule of the Hyderabad State and the subsequent changes that emerged after the integration of Telangana into the India following independence. By analyzing historical records, government policies, agrarian relations, educational developments, industrial growth, and social movements, the research aims to evaluate the continuities and discontinuities between the two eras. The colonial period in Telangana was characterized by feudal land systems, economic exploitation, limited access to education, and socio-cultural inequalities under the Nizam administration and indirect British influence. The study critically explores the role of jagirdari and zamindari systems, peasant oppression, and the emergence of resistance movements, particularly the Telangana Peasant Armed Struggle, which challenged oppressive socio-economic structures. It also investigates the influence of colonial administrative practices on regional identity and governance. The post-independence era witnessed significant political and developmental changes, including land reforms, industrialization, urbanization, educational expansion, and democratic governance. However, despite modernization efforts, issues such as regional disparities, unemployment, agrarian distress, and cultural marginalization continued to persist. The thesis further examines the rise of regional consciousness and the movement for separate statehood, culminating in the formation of Telangana in 2014.

Keywords: government, independence, Telangana.

INTRODUCTION

Post-colonial governance refers to the political, social, and economic systems established in formerly colonized nations after gaining independence from colonial powers. It encompasses the processes and structures of governance that emerge as nations transition from colonial rule to self-rule. This transition often involves the complex task of rebuilding state institutions, rethinking political systems, and addressing the lasting effects of colonialism on various aspects of society. The meaning of post-colonial governance can be understood through several key dimensions. Politically, it involves the establishment of sovereignty and the creation of institutions that reflect the aspirations of the newly independent nation. This may include the drafting of constitutions, the formation of governments, and the development of legal and judicial systems. However, the governance structures inherited from colonial rule often present challenges, such as centralized power, authoritarian tendencies, and weak democratic institutions, which post-colonial leaders must navigate. Economically, post-colonial governance must address the legacy of colonial economic exploitation, where the colonizers established systems that prioritized the extraction of resources for the benefit of the colonial metropole. After independence, many former colonies struggle with economic dependency,

underdevelopment, and inequality, requiring the government to adopt policies that promote self-sufficiency, equitable growth, and social welfare. Socially, post-colonial governance must also confront divisions fostered by colonial "divide and rule" strategies, such as ethnic, religious, or class-based tensions. The challenge is to forge a cohesive national identity and promote inclusivity while healing the wounds of colonialism. Thus, post-colonial governance is an ongoing process of reconstruction, reconciliation, and nation-building. The decolonization process, which gained momentum in the mid-20th century, led to the dismantling of colonial empires and the establishment of sovereign states across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. This period was marked by significant socio-political changes as newly independent nations sought to assert their identity, governance structures, and economic policies, often in the face of considerable challenges inherited from colonial rule. The transition from colonial to post-colonial periods was not a uniform process; it varied significantly depending on the region, the nature of colonial rule, and the strategies employed by colonial powers to manage their exit. This study aims to explore the socio-political shifts that characterized the transition from colonial to post-colonial periods. By examining the experiences of select regions, the research will highlight the continuity and change in governance, the restructuring of social and economic systems, and the persistent influence of colonial legacies. The post-colonial era, often idealized as a time of newfound freedom and national rebirth, was in reality a complex period of adjustment, where the remnants of colonialism continued to shape the political, social, and economic landscapes of many nations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trina Dey et.al (2024) This research explores the complex trajectory of women's rights in India by conducting a comparative study of their status before and after the country's independence in 1947. The study aims to critically assess whether the post-independence period led to true empowerment for women or whether exclusionary practices continued to dominate their lives, despite legal and constitutional advancements. In pre-independence India, women were subjected to rigid patriarchal norms that confined them to domestic roles, with limited access to education, property rights, and public participation. The British colonial administration, along with traditional societal structures, reinforced gender discrimination, although some reform movements, such as those led by social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, initiated legal reforms aimed at improving the position of women.

Freeman Munisi Mateko et.al (2024) How has public and publicly guaranteed debt in post-independent Zimbabwe relentlessly spiralled over time? The mixed method study aimed to determine the causes and effects that have triggered a debt crisis in Zimbabwe. Descriptive data on public debt was obtained from the World Bank portal for the period 1980–2022. The research used documentary evidence obtained from online repositories. Documentary analysis was used under the data analysis section. Research findings indicated that high public debt was a result of continuous borrowing from financial institutions, corruption, weak institutions, non-

adherence to the available legal frameworks, unbudgeted expenditures, as well as a lack of transparency and accountability in public debt management.

N. Malleshham et.al (2023) The struggle for the integration of Hyderabad State into the Indian Union post-independence represents a crucial chapter in India's political history. The Hyderabad State Congress (HSC) played an instrumental role in this transition, advocating for democratic governance and the unification of the diverse territories under the rule of the Nizam. This paper delves into the formation and activities of the HSC, analyzing its strategies in mobilizing public opinion and political sentiment against the feudal regime of the Nizam, and how it fostered grassroots movements. Following India's independence in 1947, the HSC emerged as a significant force, leveraging both political negotiation and mass mobilization to address social inequalities perpetuated by the Nizam's rule. The paper examines the ideological framework and leadership of the HSC, including key figures such as Ranga Reddy and Swami RamanandTirtha, whose efforts were pivotal in expanding the Congress's reach and influence within Hyderabad. Furthermore, the document highlights the significance of the Hyderabad State Congress in the broader context of national integration, contributing to the discourse on self-determination and the formation of a democratic state in the post-colonial period.

NimaiGhara et.al (2023) The process of decolonization marked a significant turning point in world history, leading to the emergence of newly independent nations and the reshaping of global socio-political dynamics. This study examines the socio-political shifts that occurred during the transition from colonial rule to the post-colonial era, focusing on the lasting impacts of colonialism and the challenges faced by newly independent states. By analyzing the experiences of select regions, this research explores the continuity and change in governance, social structures, and economic policies. The study reveals that while decolonization brought formal independence, many post-colonial states continued to grapple with the legacies of colonialism, including economic dependency, political instability, and social inequalities. These findings underscore the complex and ongoing nature of the post-colonial transition.

Denise Bentrovato (2022) Emerging educational research in Africa reveals an eventful course of development for school history curricula in post-colonial African states as they grappled with issues of quality and relevance in history education. The study proposes a systematic analysis of the content, pedagogy and assessment methods for grounded by evolving history syllabuses in response to curriculum review processes over the last six decades. It also provides insights into the shifts undergone by Malawi's priorities and aspirations in the context of its legacies of European colonialism, one-party dictatorship and authoritarianism and its transition to democracy in the mid-1990s. Illuminating the entanglements of these processes with power politics and their contribution to the stagnation of the discipline of history, the article concludes that, although successive reviews have promoted curriculum change over time, they have failed to bring about meaningful reform.

Post-Colonialism Era

In India, the years following its 1947 declaration of independence from British colonial control are referred to as post-colonial. It includes the social, political, and economic shifts that took place when India became an independent country from a colony. During this time, there were attempts to forge a new identity, deal with the effects of colonialism, and formulate

development and governance policies. During this time, India faced difficulties like economic inequality, social unrest, and partition, all of which shaped the country's future as it attempted to identify itself in the post-colonial world. Post-colonial scholars have called for a re-evaluation and reclamation of indigenous knowledge. Post-colonial India has witnessed cultural hybridity, where traditional and Western knowledge systems have intersected and influenced each other. This fusion is evident in fields like literature, art, and philosophy. There is an ongoing discourse on decolonizing education to restore the value of indigenous knowledge. This involves incorporating local perspectives, languages, and traditional practices into the curriculum.

Indian Knowledge System in the Post-colonial Era

The Indian knowledge system has benefited from the post-colonial age in many ways: Formal education and contemporary institutions were brought during the colonial era, which helped literacy and knowledge grow throughout the nation. Development was aided overall by exposure to Western scientific methods and technology, which led to breakthroughs in engineering, technology, and medicine. The Indian system of government and justice remains structured due to the legal and administrative framework that the British imposed. The basis for a modern India was built by the investments made by colonial rulers in the development of infrastructure, including telecommunication, urban planning, and railroads. With increased global engagement, post-colonial India has promoted international cooperation, cross-cultural contacts, and a more expansive worldview. After India gained independence, a democratic political system was established as a result of the colonial experience, which shaped the country's democratic values.

The negative impact of post-colonialism on the Indian knowledge system

Traditional Indian cultural practices were disrupted and distorted by colonialism, which caused certain groups to lose their sense of cultural identity. Native languages were marginalized and some communities' access to education was hampered as English emerged as the primary language for administration and education. The colonial educational system frequently served to uphold hierarchies by favoring Western knowledge over indigenous wisdom and fostering a sense of inferiority toward native knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge connected to sustainable practices and regional ecosystems was impacted by the colonial economic policies that exploited resources and created economic inequities. Social divides were institutionalized by the colonial government, which led to problems like caste discrimination and unequal access to education that still have an impact on society today. Despite these detrimental effects, there is a rising understanding of the necessity of recovering and reviving indigenous Indian knowledge systems in the post-colonial period to promote a more inclusive and well-rounded approach to cultural practices, research, and education.

Postcolonial penalty: Continuities, legalities and the 'everyday state'

The question of what could be expected of postcolonial states is a vexed one. In the wake of the Second World War European powers that since the 17th century had slowly but progressively colonized swathes of Asia and Africa now began rapid decolonization. Many colonial regimes in Africa were still relatively new and European tenure there had been, to redeploy Hobbes's famous epithet of life outside political community, nasty brutish and short.

That many post-independence governments and leaders in Africa would turn out to be equally or even more savage and venal has given rise to intense debate as to how this could have come to pass. and cited earlier both reflect elements of Mahmood Mamdani's important thesis here. For it was the dual and oppositional structure of colonial governance and legal orders in Africa that set the seeds for postcolonial failure. Here, new states often 'succumbed to caprice and terror on the morrow of independence'. Whether these new states sought to redress problems of urban/rural governance or to settle problems of rivalling ethnicities, either way, he argues, they tended to 'soften one part of the legacy while exacerbating the other'.

METHODOLOGY

The Telangana demand basically sprang from the identity of the Telangana people, culture, and dialect and their overall character. It is not based on the grievances of backwardness. For, the districts of what forms Telangana today were well developed even before the formation of the state. For example, they are considerably more developed than north-coastal Andhra such as Vijayanagaram and Srikakulam. Therefore, the claim that the Telangana demand was based on the grievances of economic backwardness, as is popularly believed, is somewhat misconstrued. What was important in the demand for a separate state was the identity of the Telangana people. The second dimension that triumphed with the formation of Telangana is representation. It was essentially a political question. The people of Telangana and the political leaders of Telangana were long denied political representation within the politics of united Andhra Pradesh. This means that even though the formal structures of liberal democracy were there, the elected representatives never were taken seriously, and given positions of power or responsibility to take care of the constituencies and the people who they represented within the united AP. Political power always belonged to leaders from Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra. With the triumph of Telangana demand, what succeeded was the political representation of an area in real terms and not just in formal terms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Besides the TDP and Congress, there is also a distinct role played by the left in Telangana politics. Telangana is traditionally known as the stronghold of both parliamentary and non-parliamentary left. Of the two parliamentary parties, the CPI (Communist Party of India) supported the demand for a separate Telangana state. The other parliamentary party CPI(M) has not supported it. The nonparliamentary left has largely supported the demand for a separate statehood for Telangana. This being the case, CPI(M) stands thoroughly delegitimized in Telangana because it did not support the cause. Both the electoral and non-electoral left exist in Telangana, and even though they may not directly be in positions of power, do wield substantial moral influence on politics. The discourse in Telangana politics therefore is liberally loaded in terms of left language, though in actual terms the substance of the politics may be very different.

When we say that the left parties have a weak moral influence, we mean that the actual policies of the respective governments both in undivided Andhra Pradesh and in Telangana have little to do with socialism. At best they may have been populist but not socialist. The governments in the past and now have always been promoting private industry and private sector, i.e.

capitalism in the broad sense. Also, governments both past and present have not hesitated to crush ultra-left insurgency in the state. The state of Telangana always had an active ultra-left insurgency and successive governments have consistently been following the policy of crushing this movement. However, the left holds mass appeal but weak moral influence on the parties in power. Also, since the intelligentsia, academia and journalists are largely in favour of different shades of the left, the left discourse has a higher currency in Telangana than in other states. Most of the ideologues of TRS themselves hail from different shades of left politics. Therefore, TRS certainly carries more left influence on its government than any previous dispensation. However, this is in sharp contrast to the current TRS' policies of inviting capital and private industry to invest as much as possible in Telangana. There is a clear contradiction in the ideological background and the current functioning of Telangana Rashtra Samiti. It is quite possible that many of the popular intellectuals who supported the movement enthusiastically from their left ramparts are today somewhat unhappy about TRS as it actively promotes private capital and private sector policies, though tinged with the populist social policies.

In fact, during the movement for separate statehood different shades of intellectuals had pressed for different ideas of Telangana. For example, the Dalit intellectuals and activists had pressed for what they imagined as a caste-less 'social Telangana'. The revolutionary intellectuals supporting the insurrection in the countryside had hoped for a Telangana which would be a revolutionary base area for the rest of the country. The liberal democratic political parties had hoped for a liberal democratic Telangana. However, despite the many ideas of Telangana mooted at the time of separate statehood what has been realized so far is a liberal democratic Telangana that supports the capitalist development path. The present TRS government is aggressively trying to attract capital for industrialization and development. Thus while what was realized may be different, there were, and still are, different views about what an ideal Telangana should look like or what the idea of Telangana itself should be.

Social Structure of Telangana: More Change than Continuity

While in the section above we discussed the question of politics and identity, in this one we discuss briefly the changing social structure of Telangana and its contradictory nature. Firstly, nearly seventy percent of the population of Telangana lives in rural areas, i.e. in villages. There have been significant changes in these villages and in their social structure and power structure. Traditionally, land served as the basis for social dominance and power. The three top ranking castes in the Telangana social structure who owned most of the land were the Brahmins, Reddys and Velamas. Over time, especially since the sixties there has been the emergence of the middle castes. Land ownerships have shifted to the middle castes as the aforementioned upper castes have moved to urban pursuits. Rural social structure today is dominated by middle ranking peasant castes. There is also an emerging phenomenon of Dalit (formerly untouchable) castes in some villages. The shift in land ownership pattern towards the middle castes and the urbanization of the upper castes, who are leaving the villages, do not mean that the position of elites in the power structure has changed. The recent Telangana Human Development Report for example notes in its very Preface the following fact: 'The social structure in Telangana is uniquely skewed towards socially marginalized Sections - backward classes, scheduled castes

and scheduled tribes and religious minority Groups - which constitute 85 percent of the state population. Social backwardness often converges with economic backwardness and low human development'.

The elites still come from the upper castes, who now are mostly urban based and have extended their ties overseas, particularly the US. The US link is of particular significance to the Telangana elites. In fact, most upper caste families in Telangana have one or two members of their families in the US. They form the elite of society. This being the phenomenon, this has resulted in an increase in the gap between the elite and the newly emerging middle ranking peasant and Dalit castes. To conclude, social structure as such has come to be dominated by middle ranking peasant castes and Dalit castes, but the numerically smaller upper castes at the same time have become even more powerful by establishing overseas linkages. Therefore, while Telangana polity has seen the emergence of masses, this has not much affected the elite bastions. Power at the state level still continues to be controlled by the elite castes, though certainly more number of people from the middle and lower castes hold the levers of power now. The elite-mass distinction only appears to increase over time, in spite of the increasing emergence of the middle ranking peasant and Dalit castes at the level of rural society. The summary of the story is that there is definitely more change than continuity, which however does not mean that the elites have disappeared from the story. In fact, they have very well managed to retain their positions of power. As the reviewer has rightly noted, the change is contradictory but when we see reality dialectically the real contradictions of the society become apparent. (These observations of Telangana society, including rural society, are based on this author's close acquaintance with the society over the past half century.)

CONCLUSION

The story of the beginning and the end of the State of Hyderabad is linked to the political conditions prevailing in India, during their respective times. It owed its birth to the turmoil of 18th century politics in India. It survived and thrived with the support it got from the foreign powers, especially the British. The British though were using the Nizam as a pawn to further their interests in India, it is quite obvious that they did not want to take up the administrative responsibility of all provinces in India. Therefore they created this body of Native Rulers who remained loyal to them for allowing them to be called "Independent" rulers. In this guise of protection, they interfered in the affairs of the native States and the Native rulers meekly submitted to them. All they got from the British were a few titles which had no value. The Nizam of Hyderabad was not only the first Native ruler to sign the Subsidiary Alliance but throughout the stay of the British in India, he remained loyal to them. The loyalty soon turned into dependence on the British. They owed their very existence to the British. This worn out relic of the Mughal Empire would have long before the end of 18th century been thrown out of the political scene had the East India Company not maintained them in its own interest. But the people of Hyderabad had to ultimately pay a heavy price. The British and the Nizam had a nexus and the princes had been used by the British as buffers to control the people's movements. Thus the political situation before and after the Police Action was a turbulent period full of emotion.

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