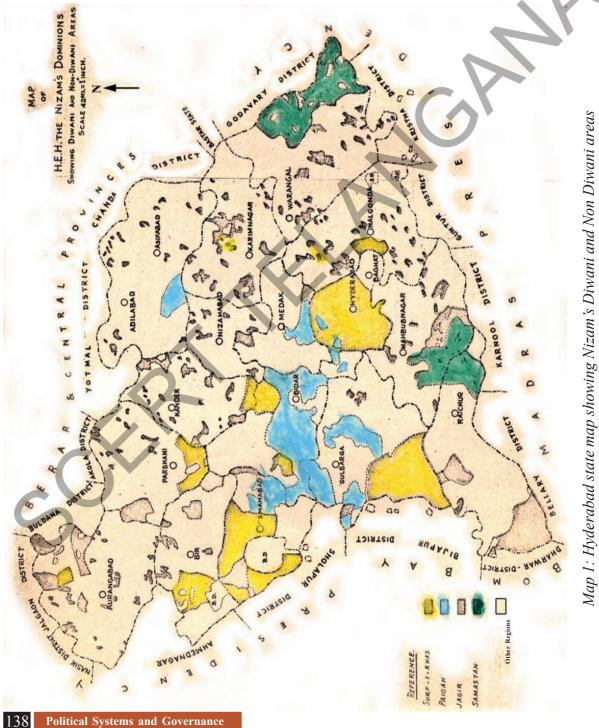




Freedom Movement in Hyderabad State

Hyderabad was an important princely state under the British paramountcy in Deccan. It was ruled by the Nizams who were allied with the British Viceroys and had to adhere to the policies decided by them. The Viceroys appointed Residents in Hyderabad who supervised



the policies of the state and also interfered in the administration from time to time. In this chapter, we will read about the condition of the people of this state under the British-Nizam rule and how they fought for freedom. The Hyderabad state comprised of regions in which Marathi, Kannada, Telugu and Deccani Urdu were spoken. In this chapter we will look at mainly the Telugu and Urdu speaking districts which form Telangana state in the present day.

Early years of Nationalism

In October 1888, in Hyderabad, a small committee of influential people circulated handbills and placards for holding a meeting to popularise Indian National Congress. Aghoranatha Chattopadhayay was the initiator of nationalism in Hyderabad. The Congress attracted a large section of the educated classes in Hyderabad. Mulla Abdul Qayyum of Hyderabad became a great champion of the Congress. He attended the Congress meetings and appealed to Muslims to actively participate in it. He attacked the nobility, and opposed the special favours granted to them in the Nizam state. He was also responsible for organising Anjumen-e-maref which aimed at developing social, intellectual and



Mulla Abdul Qayyum

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economic life of the people. Various newspapers were published from the state indicating the extent of nationalist influence. Papers like *Hyderabad Telegraph*, *Deccan Standard*, *Musllism-I*- *Safiq* etc. propagated the ideology of nationalism and reforms. Many of them supported the nationalist cause.

The missionaries like Rev. Gilder of the Chaderghat Methodist Episcopal Church also supported Congress. Thus, Congress had gained roots in Hyderabad and served as an important channel in awakening the people on the questions of independence, economic development and forms Government with representative institutions.

In the year 1892, Arya Samaj was established in Hyderabad. Arya Samaj served as a training ground for workers in constructive activities and helped to rouse public opinion and build socio-religious awareness. It has been credited many leaders to the nationalist movement in Hyderabad. The National movement was a mixture of religious fervour and political aspirations during this period.

Feudal system of the state

The Nizams were initially provincial governors of the Mughal emperors. They ruled with the help of hereditary *jagirdars* and subordinate 'kings' of Samsthanams. The important Samsthanams in Telangana were Wanaparti, Gadwal, Domakonda, Sirnapalli, Kollapur, Palwancha, Atmakur and AllaDurgam. *Jagirdars* were given control of dozens and even hundreds of villages which they ruled as they desired and collected taxes from the people. The rest of the kingdom was ruled directly by the Nizam with the help of '*deshmukhs*' about whom you read in an earlier chapter.

The Nizams wanted to retain the old system in which the king and his nobles controlled all the resources and ruled as they willed. They did not allow any democratic systems like local bodies or legislatures. The VII Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan, opposed the Congress-led nationalist movement and passed several *'firmans'* or royal orders curtailing its political activity in the state. They had a network of police and spies who kept a close watch on people.

Language and Religion

The Nizam rulers of Hyderabad state were Muslims who spoke *Deccani Urdu*. However, the majority of the people of the state were Hindus who spoke Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. Urdu was the official language and more than 90% of all high officials were Muslims. Urdu was the medium of instruction from primary school to university degree. Even technical textbooks were translated and made available in Urdu.

The Nizams were slow in setting up schools in their kingdom. Many *jagirdars* did not even allow setting up of schools in their areas. The Nizams were also suspicious of private schools that they thought would become centres for propagation of anti-Nizam ideas. They actually discouraged the setting up of private Telugu medium schools and did not allow those students to join Osmania University. As a result, even by 1941, only 9.3% people of the state were literate (only 4.3% women were literate). In contrast, other princely states like Travancore had 47.7% literacy rate, Baroda had 23% and Mysore had 12.2%. During militant nationalist period under Balagangadhara Tilak, national movement has taken a religious turn and that influenced Hyderabad also. Language and religion became major issues during this period. Urdu was the official language of the State. Telugu linguistic movement has become the Telangana people's concern.

- Do you think the problems faced by the people of Hyderabad state were in some ways different from those faced by people living in British ruled states?
- Was there any difference between the attitude of the British and the Nizams when it came to democracy?



Fig 12.1: Arts College, Osmania University

The Last Nizam (1911-1948)

Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last ruler of Hyderabad State, tried to modernise the administrative system under the influence of the British. The colonial masters exercised control to develop agriculture and industry for colonial needs. Reservoirs, big irrigation projects like Nizam Sagar, Ali Sagar etc. were designed by the famous engineer Sir M Vishveshwarayya.

Nizam introduced separate railways, roads, airways, and electricity departments. An Industrial Trust Fund was created with a capital of one crore rupees for the industrial development of the state. The important industries of Nizam period included; Singareni Colleries, Nizam Sugar factory, Azam Jahi Mills, Sirpur Paper Mills etc. All these industries played a vital role in the State's economy and provided employment opportunities for the people in Hyderabad State.

In 1941, the Nizam founded the *Hyderabad State Bank* (now State Bank of India) as the state's central bank, which managed the Osmania Sikka, the currency of the Hyderabad state. It was the only state which had its own currency, the Hyderabadi rupee, which was different from the rest of India.

Important public institutions like the Osmania General Hospital, Osmania University, High Court, Central State Library, Unani Hospital, Jubilee Hall, Town Hall now known as *Assembly Hall*, Hyderabad Museum, now known as *State Museum*, Hyderabad House in Delhi were built during his time. To protect the historical monuments, the Archaeological Department was established in 1914. This relative development had taken place in colonial political situation but it also helped the rise of middle class in Hyderabad and to initiate new political ideas.

Mir Osman Ali Khan was also ambitious and wanted to continue to rule Hyderabad as an independent king after the British left India in 1947. This ran counter to the wishes of the people of the state who wanted to become part of Independent India. Let us see how their wishes were fulfilled.

Andhra Jana Sangham - Library Movement

In the early 20th century, a large number of books were printed in Telugu in the Andhra region and circulated through libraries that had been set up in Telangana towns and villages. In 1901, Sri Krishnadevaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam was established in Hyderabad by Komarraju Lakshmana Rao along with Nayani Venkatarangarao and Ravichettu Ranga Rao, which continues to this day. However, Telugu remained discriminated in the Hyderabad state. In 1921, in a meeting in Viveka Vardhini College in Hyderabad, a person was insulted for bringing up a resolution in Telugu rather than in English or Urdu. Telugu speaking people felt greatly offended by this incident and were motivated to fight for the rightful place of Telugu. During this period, the linguistic debate entered in to the Hyderabad nationalist discourse.

In 1924, Madapati Hanumantha Rao and others formed the Andhra Jana Sangham to establish libraries and reading rooms, encouraged students and scholars. They collected and circulated Telugu manuscripts to promote Telugu literature. They published small booklets and held meetings in the villages to set up libraries. Some of these booklets spoke of the



Fig 12.2: A Colonial officer as well as an Indian official from Nizam's court meeting people at Keslapur in Adilabad.

problems faced by small traders, peasants, labourers and the poor people. They also set up over 4,000 schools, many of which had to be closed down due to the opposition of the government. Nevertheless, the movement grew in momentum as more and more people - women, students, singers etc. participated in it.

- What are the languages spoken in your area?
- What is the medium of teaching in schools and colleges today in our state?
- Do you think all teaching should be done in one's mother tongue?
- Why do you think it is important to publish books in mother tongue?

Andhra Maha Sabha

The leaders of various sections decided to unite into one large organisation and thus Andhra Maha Sabha (AMS) was formed in 1930. Among its founders were Madapati Hanumanta Rao, Ravi Narayana Reddy, etc. Its initial objectives were creation of more educational facilities. They submitted prayers and requests to the government seeking the establishment of schools and redressing grievances of the people. In its annual conference in 1935, the following demands were identified:

- 1. Compulsory primary education should be implemented.
- 2. Mother tongue (Telugu) should be the medium of instruction.
- 3. The legitimate rights of the people in *Jagirs* should be protected.
- 4. Child marriages should be discouraged.
- 5. Local self Government should be introduced.
- 6. Untouchability should be eradicated and the untouchables should be given due place in the society.

You can see that they combined both educational and social reform objectives. The AMS activities spread rapidly all over Telangana and libraries and cultural centres were established even in remote villages. Peasants and labouring people came to them to learn to read, listen to the news from a newspaper and discuss current topics, as well as their own problems with regard to the Nizam government and doras. Night classes and discussions were held in these centres. People read books written by social reformers like Veeresalingam and nationalists like Gandhi, Nehru etc. They also wrote new books on local problems. As Editor of the Golconda Patrika, Suravaram Pratapareddy inspired nationalistic fervour amongst the people. Kaloji Narayana Rao, Dasarathi Krishnamacharya, Dasarathi Rangacharya are some of the literary luminaries who fought for the freedom of Hyderabad State.

As more and more poor people joined the movement, they began to expect that their issues would be taken up by the AMS along with education. The Nizam government subjected these centres to a lot of harassment as they were becoming centres of new radical thinking. By 1940, many communists had joined the AMS and they insisted on taking up other demands of the rural people like end to *vetti*, land reforms, oppression by *doras* etc. Some of the old leaders of the AMS disagreed and wanted it to continue as educational and literary forum.

- Is there a public library in your village or locality?
- If you have ever been to a public library, describe what happens there in your class.
- Why do you think did the libraries become the centres of anti-Nizam and anti-landlord movements?

• Why do you think were the Nizams and jagirdars not in favour of Telugu medium schools?

Hyderabad State Congress

The Indian National Congress only functioned in British India and did not function directly in the princely states. However, the common people faced more oppression and injustice in these princely states and they wanted to join the larger freedom movement of India. In such states, the nationalists formed 'state congress' to fight for democratic rights, reforms, representative government etc. This happened in Hyderabad too.

The Hyderabad state congress was formed in 1938, seeing the rising tide of nationalism in Hyderabad, the Nizam banned the singing of *'Vandemataram'*, the popular nationalist song. This caused a mass reaction and the students in schools and colleges took part in agitations by singing that song. The Nizam responded by closing down the colleges and forcing many students to go to other states to continue their studies.

Enthused by the response of the youth of the state, the Nationalists of Hyderabad, who were sympathetic to the Congress movement in the country, set up the



Swamy Ramananda Tirtha

Madapati Hanumantha Rao

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Hyderabad State Congress in 1938. Its prominent leader was Swami Ramananda Theertha. Several young leaders like B. Ramakishan Rao, Jamalapuram Kesavarao, K. V. Ranga Reddy, J. V. Narasinga Rao were top leaders of the movement. Young Congress leaders like Dr. M. Chenna Reddy later became the Chief Minister of the then Andhra Pradesh and P.V. Narasimha Rao became the Prime Minister of India. The State Congress demanded that fundamental rights should be conferred upon the people. They wanted the scrapping of circulars restricting the freedom of

speech, association, press and right to hold religious processions. They also demanded the rule of law for the state to be made by elected representatives and not the Nizam.

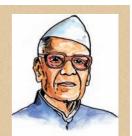
In 1942, they started satyagraha in tune with the All India Ouit India Movement. It was also banned and its leaders were arrested. In 1946, when the independence of India was imminent, the Hyderabad State Congress began a campaign for the merger of Hyderabad state with the Republic of India to put an end to the rule of the Nizam.

- Find out more about the song Vandemataram.
- Find out about the life of Swami Ramananda theertha.

The Telangana Armed Struggle (1946-51)

You read about the deshmukhs (doras) and *jagirdars* of the Hyderabad state in Chapter 10. Recall the problems faced by

Konda Lakshman Bapuji began to became popular as a leader ridden against caste rural discrimination. The Vetti exploitation in Armoor talug of Nizamabad had drawn his attention to a reality of profession/caste Konda Lakshman based labour/material extraction.



Bapuji

Bapuji wanted even armed action to overthrow the Nizam's regime and trained people in art of throwing bombs to even physically eliminate the Nizam. He was a practicing lawyer, defended the victims of different cases against Visunuru Ramachandra Reddy. He closely associated with the Communists to the extent that they fight for the people's rights in democratic manner. His life is a message of homogenization of diverse political strands for democratic co-existence.

> the peasants and service castes of the Telangana region.

From 1929, Ryot sangams were established at Nalgonda, Pillalamarri, Karimnagar, etc. to fight against the exploitation by the Patels, Patwaris, Deshmukhs, Revenue and Police officials. AMS was also active in this area. establishing libraries and night schools. The Communists working in AMS and Kisan Sabhas took leadership positions in the AMS in 1946. They gave a radical programme against vetti and put forward the demand of land to the tillers. The AMS then spread to the then Nalgonda, Karimnagar, and Warangal districts. The AMS set up village level branches, which were known as Sanghams. The Communist Party gave leadership to the Sanghams. Initially, the main demands of the peasants were limited to fight against illegal feudal exactions, levy system, excessive land rent, eviction of tenants, and for abolition of *vetti*. It was meant to draw all sections of the rural society (small landowners, landlords and service castes) into the struggle against the *doras* and the Nizam.

The AMS petitioned the government about the misdeeds of Visunuru Ramachandra Reddy opposing the collection of levy. When the officials came for inquiry, a sort of commotion developed. Ramachandra Reddy tried to become violent so that no inquiry would take place and the misuse of grain levy by him would not come to the notice of the officials. The Andhra Mahasabha activists led by Doddi Mallaiah, were passing through the Gadi and Miskeen Ali, the follower of Visunuru Ramachandra Reddy, shot from a hole in the wall assuming that they were attacking the gadi. That hit Doddi Komuraiah, who died instantly. It happened on 4 July, 1946 and this was supposed to be the beginning of the armed struggle. This incident sparked

off the famous Telangana Armed Struggle. *Sanghams* were set up in village after village and processions were taken out singing songs of Doddi Komuraiah. The



Doddi Komuraiah

deshmukhs (doras) and Nizam tried to violently suppress the movement. This forced the *Sanghams* to build squads of armed fighters. They began to drive away the *deshmukhs* and set up their rule through village Panchayat. Guerrilla squads were formed to defend the villages and Gram Raj committees were set up to resolve villager's problems. Cultural groups were formed to sing *Burrakathas* with the message of the struggle and went from village to village to arouse people.

Nalla Narasimhulu set up squads to arm the people's movement recruiting people mostly from Vetti workers. Under the guidance of the squads, the Sanghams established parallel

Nalla Narasimhulu

governments and "People's courts". In this manner to the then Nalgonda and Warangal districts were broke from Nizam's rule and established Sangham rule in its place.

Wherever they established their power, *vetti* was abolished, eviction of tenants was stopped, rents were reduced, wages of workers increased and excess lands of the landlords were redistributed to the landless. The people burnt the records of the village officials and moneylenders and seized the grains hoarded by the landlords and the merchants.

The movement was transformed into a broad anti-Nizam and anti-feudal struggle demanding the merger of Hyderabad with independent India. To broaden the scope of the movement and integrate various sections into it, the demand was raised to merge Telangana with the other Telugu speaking regions to create *Vishal Andhra*.

The fanatic Muslim enthusiasts formed Ittehadul Muslimeen, an organisation to protect the 'Muslim domination' of Hyderabad state and Nizam rule. They set up a force of volunteers called Razakars. They first attacked the Muslim intelligentsia who were fighting for democratic political set up in the state. They acquired weapons to fight the democratic political parties and spread communal attacks. They also began to fight the peasant sanghams of Telangana and the communist militants. Seeing this, they were supported by the landed gentry and doras. There was a bitter struggle between the Communists led peasants and Razakars supported by the doras. After India attained independence, the razakars started attacking the political movement. that was started for the integration of the Hyderabad into Indian Union. They ruthlessly attacked the villages to create panic so that Hyderabad remain independent of India. The razakars burnt villages, taking

women hostages to create fear psychosis among the general public. In an incident, a person called Battini Mogilaiah was killed by razakar gang while hoisting the national flag in Warangal Fort. In an another incident of communal frenzy of the razakars, a large number of people were shot dead in Biranpally village of Siddipet District.

The Nizam did not intervene and silently watched the situation. In 1948, the independent Indian government merged Hyderabad with India through police action. The Telangana Armed Struggle continued even after the merger to enforce land reforms and protect the peasants from the *doras*. The Sanghams distributed about ten lakh acres of land to their rightful owners. In this battle, about four thousand villagers lost their lives and many more were arrested and imprisoned. However, it was suppressed by the Indian armed forces and it gradually declined by 1950.



Ravi Narayana Reddy

Ravi Narayan Reddy was a prominent leader who participated in a movement against the Nizam and the proposed constitutional reforms in 1936. He was instrumental in turning the Andhra Mahasabha towards left politics and played an important role in Telangana peasants struggle. He was a founding member of the Hyderabad branch of Communist Party of India and Telangana freedom struggle. He connected the peasants struggle with democratic movement to dislodge the Nizam's

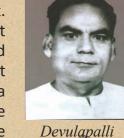
government.

Mukhdum Mohinuddin was one of the early radicals in Hyderabad city intellectual circles. He was a member of Comrades Association formed by the teachers and students of Osmania University. He also became the secretary of CPI in Hyderabad, coordinated the village struggles with trade unions in Hyderabad Municipality and Praga tools.



Mukhdum Mohinuddin

Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, a prominant communist leader was born in 1917 in Chandupatla village, Present Suryapet District. He came into contact with Indian nationalism and joined reformist movements. He was one of the earliest to go underground to build the people's movement in Telangana. He established Communist Party in rural areas recruiting the AMS workers. He published a number of booklets on Vetti and atrocities of Doras on people. He has taken militant stand within the Andhra Maha Sabha paving the



way for armed struggle. He strongly advocated that Telangana *Venkateswara Rao* people's movement against feudal oppression began much earlier than usually believed to have begun in 1946.

Shaik Bandagi struggle would point to the people's upsurge. Bandagi's share of his land was challenged by his brother (Abbas Ali) who was a supporter of Visunuru Ramachandra Reddy (Visunuru Deshmukh). When the matter went to the court Bandagi won the case. It was felt that this was the defeat of Visunuru Deshmukh as he encouraged his brother Abbas Ali, therefore, he became restless. Visunuru Deshmukh's goondas killed Bandagi. This incident angered the people of the surrounding villages. The villagers participated in building a memorial for him and Bandagi became a symbol of people's struggle and the people's movement grew stronger in the villages.

In those days, the landlords were actively evicting small peasants and taking over



their lands to give them to new tenants at a higher rent. The sanghams became active to resist this. A notorious Deshmukh like Visunuru Ramachandra Reddy tried to forcibly take over the land of a washerwoman, Ilamma. This was resisted effectively by the Sangham.

Arutla Ramachandra Reddy showed his revolutionary attitude during his student career itself. During his student

Chakali Ilamma days in Osmania University, he used to participate in the political activities of Andhra Maha Sabha, State Congress and Arya Samaj. When the Nizam government forcibly collected the taxes and the doras seized the crops, he resisted such attempts. He organised attacks on the rice mills, looted food grains at Bhuvanagiri, Mundrai,

Jangao and distributed food grains to the needy. He was thus instrumental in organising the Sanghams around Kadivendi and Palakurti.

Arutla Ramachandra Reddy

Baddam Yellareddy was one of the earliest nationalist leaders who participated in salt satyagraha in 1930. He had taken up Harijan upliftment programme in Hyderabad. Later, he became a prominent communist leader and worked in the Telangana Armed Struggle. Bheemireddy Narasimha reddy was influenced by the leftist ideology and became a communist. He organised anti-vetti struggles against the landlords and government officials. He worked as an underground activist and became a leader of dalam. Bommagani Dharmabiksham joined the political activity as a student. He established a hostel in Suryapet for the poorer children. He later became a prominent communist leader in Nalgonda district.



- What role do you think was played by the AMS in making the Telangana Armed Struggle possible?
- Was Telangana Armed Struggle only for removal of the grievances of the peasants or did it have other aims?
- Why do you think the *doras*, who were Hindus, helped the Razakars?

Merger with India

When India became Independent in 1947, Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam wanted Hyderabad to remain an independent State. The common people and the political groups of the state wanted the Nizam's rule to end, so that Hyderabad would become part of Independent India. A large number of campaigns were organised Ramakrishna by the Hyderabad State Congress led by Ramananda Theertha in 1947. The Razakars attacked them too. Then, the Indian government decided to end this anarchy and the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel sent armed forces to Hyderabad. Hyderabad was finally integrated into the Indian union on September 17, 1948. The Nizam, however, was asked by the



Fig 12.3: Osman Ali Khan and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

government of India to continue as the ruler till the transition to democratic setup was complete. The Nizam was forced to abolish the Jagirdars and Deshmukh watans and initiate democratic processes of elections. When the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950, the Nizam rule came to an end but Mir Osman Ali Khan continued to be the Rajpramukh of Hyderabad (head of the state). But, he had



to act on the advice of the Government of India. Elections were held in 1952 and an elected government was formed in Hyderabad state. Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was the first Chief Minister of the Hyderabad

Burgula

state. The Nizam continued as Rao Rajpramukh till 1956.

- Why do you think was the Nizam allowed to retain power even after the merger?
- Why do you think did the Nizam agree to pass the *firmanas* abolishing the feudal system?
- Why do you think did the Nizam's rule end on 26 January 1950?

With the formation of Andhra Pradesh, merging Andhra and Telangana regions, the *Rajpramukh* was replaced by a Governor appointed by the President of India. Thus the Nizams rule over Hyderabad state ended. The establishment of the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 was based on the Gentlemen Agreement with Andhra. Subsequent to the formation of the new state, the provisions of the Agreement were

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violated by the then government. It caused discontentment among the people of Telangana Region. Likewise, the discrimination shown by the ruling parties in the fields of irrigation, education and employment further accentuated the call for a separate state of Telangana. You will learn more about on how it led to the Telangana Movement in higher classes.

Women in the Telangana Struggle

Women suffered the most under the rule of Nizams and *dora's* domination in villages. They were constantly harassed. They not only had to work for the landlords but also to serve the visiting officials. Many women were made *adabapas* (slaves) of the landlords. Such women attended the night schools of Andhra Maha Sabha and decided to join the



Sanghams and the Communist Party. Some of them took arms and fought the *Razakars*, some of them sang songs and inspired people, some of them acted as doctors and nurses. But they had to make supreme sacrifices for the sake of the movement. Read the following interview given by one such woman:

Fig 12.4: Women Guerrilla squad

"My name is Kamalamma. I come

from the village in Manukota Taluqa. Ours was a bonded labour family... My mother was a slave in the house of some landlords... My father died when I was fifteen. The Telangana struggle had started then. The dorasani wanted to send my sister as a slave to one of her daughters... The dorasani used to beat my husband. That was the life of a bonded labourer, [who] graze buffaloes, collect dung, one had to do everything. They even used him as a goonda. Unable to bear the trouble in these landlord's houses we came into the struggle...

First, my brother became a squad commander... My husband and I also joined the Communist Party... My work was in the cultural squad. My voice was good; I used to sing songs, and travel to several places... We worked in the forest and helped the Koya tribal women... I was also in a hospital centre and learned first aid and to give injections... then my son was born in the forest... Then the comrades told me, 'The boy will cry and all of us will get caught because of this child. You give him away to someone or leave him somewhere...' But no one would take him. I walked for two days and left him with a coal miner...After that neither my body, nor my mind stayed in my control. There was one torrent of tears from eyes to the earth..."

Keywords

- 1. Firmans
- 2. Vetti

3. Feudal System

6. Guerilla Squad.

- 4. Subordinate kings
 - ngs 5. Legitimate rights
- 7. Jagirdars
- 8. Representative Government

Improve your learning

- 1. Why do you think was the literacy rate in Hyderabad state was lower than other princely states?
- 2. Describe the activities of the Andhra Maha Sabha for the promotion of education.
- 3. What were the demands of the Hyderabad State Congress and how many of them were fulfilled after 1948?
- 4. Do you think that the Telangana Armed struggle helped to end the rule of the Nizam? Give your reasons.
- 5. Read the paragraphs under the heading 'Feudal System of the State' and answer the following: Do you support the Feudal system of the Nizams? Why?
- 6. Many movements were led against the rulers in the past. Do you find any movements taken up nowadays? If yes, what are they?
- 7. What questions would you ask the librarian to know about the library of your area?
- 8. Locate the following places of Nizam's rule in the India map.
 - a) Aurangabad b) Warangal c) Raichur d) Gulbarga
 - e) Hyderabad f) Khammam
- 9. Collect the pictures of leaders of the Telangana armed struggle.

