

Contribution of Marathwada Movement in Hyderabad Liberation Struggle

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Abstract

Marathwada independence anniversary year, what was the situation in Marathwada at that time? We are going to see which agitations had to be done during the Nizam Shahi period and who took part in those agitations. How did the struggle against the dictatorship of Hyderabad State stand? The power that the Nizam had established over Marathwada came to an end. Finally, on September 17, 1948, the region was freed from the yoke of Nizam Shahi, and Marathwada became a part of India. In this article, we are going to learn about the Marathwada Liberation Day.

Keywords: unjust regime, Satyagraha against injustice, revolutionary movement, armed struggle, Operation Polo

Introduction

India became independent on August 15, 1947, but at that time the entire country was fragmented into various states, with 562 of the then 565 states agreeing to join an independent India. But Hyderabad, Kashmir, and Junagadh - three entities - did not join independent India. After independence, British rule was over, but the people of these three states were not yet independent. At that time, Marathwada was a part of Hyderabad State, and the people of Marathwada had to fight a long battle against the Nizam of Hyderabad to gain independence, and many had to sacrifice their lives in this fight.

1938–1948 is known as the major period of the Marathwada liberation struggle. During this period, different political movements, student movements, and armed movements took place to free Marathwada from the Nizam's rule. To crush this opposition, the Nizam of Hyderabad formed the *Razakar* organisation with the help of

Qassim Rizvi and started oppressing the people of Marathwada. The Nizam tried to create an atmosphere of terror among the citizens of the state by using this *Razakar* organization. This was Nizam's attempt to preserve his own kingdom. But India got independence on August 15, 1947, and after that, the opposition of the people of Marathwada got a boost. It called for the celebration of India's accession day on August 7 and India's independence day on August 15 as an open challenge to Nizam's authoritarian rule. This challenge received a great response from the people. After that, various action programmes were taken to undermine the power of the Nizam.

Marathwada was a part of Nizam's Hyderabad state for a long time before the country gained independence from the British. The Hyderabad liberation struggle of Marathwada was fought along with the Indian freedom struggle. A great movement was set up during this period to free Marathwada from the unjust rule of the Nizam. This movement was led by Swami Ramanand Teerth. Hyderabad *Sansthan* at that time included parts of Telangana, present-day Marathwada, and Karnataka state, and the population of Hyderabad *Sansthan* at that time was around 1.6 crores. While the struggle for freedom continued, the *Razakars* continued to oppress the people. But under the strong leadership of Swami Ramanand Teerth, Govindbhai Shroff, and Dingambarrao Bindu Ravi Narayan Reddy, Bhausahab Vaishampayan, Devi Singh Chauhan, Babasaheb Paranjape, Shankar Singh Naik, and Vijayandra Kabra—this fight reached the villages.

Objectives

1. To study the participation of Marathwada in the Hyderabad Liberation War.
2. To study the events of Satyagraha in Marathwada.
3. To study the contribution of citizens of Marathwada in the dissolution of the Hyderabad Institute

Research methodology

It was impossible to write such articles in such a short time after reading reference books. So all the information was obtained from the website. And the said article has been written by following the theoretical method to write it.

Literature review

While writing the article on 'Contribution of Marathwada Movement in Hyderabad Liberation Struggle', the researcher could not find and access early reference books in a short time, so the article has been written using only electronic sources.

Marathwada History in Brief

Of the 16 *Mahajanapadas* of Emperor Ashoka, two *Mahajanapadas*, one *Ashmaka* and the other *Mulak*, were situated in the Godavari valley. In both of these *Mahajanapads*, the majority of the people spoke Maharashtrian Prakrit. The *Gayasaptasati* was a Prakrit work compiled by the *Satavahana* king Hal, who compiled 700 *Gathas*. It reflects the lives of the people of the Godavari Valley. From this, it is clear that this region is the origin of the Marathi language. Many Maharashtrian Prakrit's ruled this region, and it was a speaking region. Later, many people established their Nizam Shahi in Hyderabad in 1724 by *Subhedar Nizam ul Mulk* of Delhi. It consisted of three language-speaking regions.

Telugu (Andhra), Kannada (Karnataka), and Marathi (Marathwada) Latur means the former Osmanabad district was the last part of the Marathi-speaking people during the Nizam period. The region was named according to the language, and the Marathi-speaking people retained the name Marathwada.

Pre-independence India was a diverse group of kings, chieftains, clan principalities, and power centres. Eventually, the British came to India. The British, who came to India for the purpose of trade, directly occupied India and became the rulers. In this case, all the kings who were ruling here were either overthrown or went under the control of the British. The Nizam-ruled Hyderabad State also became a part of the British Empire. Marathwada was a part of the Nizam regime itself. Meanwhile, India was partitioned, and two nations, India and Pakistan, emerged. Two proposals were put before the princely states in independent India: India or Pakistan. This proposal was put forward by the Government of India and then-Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Responding to this proposal, almost all Indian institutions agreed to merge with India. The only exceptions are the states of Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Jammu and Kashmir. It was also the plan of Nizam, the head of the Hyderabad State, to declare Hyderabad an 'independent nation' or join Pakistan. The excitement of the Hyderabad Liberation Struggle and the Marathwada Liberation Struggle started here.

What is Marathwada?

Marathwada is the largest administrative state of Maharashtra and includes the districts of Aurangabad, Beed, Osmanabad, Latur, Parbhani and Nanded. Also, Godavari River, which we know as *Dakshinganga*, flows through the districts of Marathwada.

People here mainly do agriculture for their livelihood. If we go to study the historical background of Marathwada, we also find that many historical forts like *Ajanta*, *Ellora*, *Devagiri*, and *Kandhar* are located in Marathwada. Not only this, but it also includes holy places like *Paithan* and *Tuljapur*, where many saints have passed away. A big project like *Jayakwadi* has also been implemented in Marathwada itself.

Why is Marathwada Liberation Day called?

On September 17, Marathwada, which was under Nizam's control, came under India's control. On this day, Nizam left his grip on Marathwada, and Marathwada was freed from Nizam's grip forever, so this day is called *Marathwada Mukti Sangram Din*. All over Maharashtra, Marathwada Liberation Day is celebrated on September 17th every year.

Who played a role in the Marathwada Liberation War and how?

This battle was fought in the village of Marathwada. Many freedom fighters came forward without worrying about their lives. Kashinath Kulkarni, who blew up a bridge to stop Nizam's Prime Minister in Marathwada; *Dagdabai Shelke* of Dhopatshwar village in Badnapur taluka, known as Rani Lakshmbai of Marathwada; *Vitthalrao Katkar* of Beed, who brought the *Rohillas* to a standstill; *Harishchandji Jadhav* of Latur, who blew up Bardapur police station; *Janardhan Hortikar Gurji* of Hoti village in Osmanabad district, who conquered Naldurg; *Suryabhan Pawar*, who drove out *Razakars* in Parbhani; Vinayakrao Charthankar; Vishwavanathrao Katneshwarkar; Marotrao Paul of Gulkhand village in Palam taluka; Devraoji Kavale of Nanded;

Jeevanrao Bodhankar, etc. fought the freedom struggle brilliantly in the corners of Marathwada. Sridhar Vartak, Jankilalji Rathi, Shankarao Jadhav, Janardhan Mama of Jalana, Kishan Singh Rajput, Govindrao Pansare, Bahirji Baplikar, Rajabhau Wakad, Vishwanath Bhise, Jayantrao Patil, etc. worked without risking their lives in this liberation struggle. It is not possible to appreciate the struggle done by all these martyrs and freedom fighters in the liberation struggle. Yasin Juber, the Hyderabad minister, vowed to take back the land captured by the *Muktisena*, thus preventing Nizam's forces from advancing on Jategaon Hill in Vaijapur Taluk of Aurangabad district. Mansingh Rajput, Laxman Awchar, Ramlal Rajput, and Ramchandra Dhandewar were at the forefront, and Ramchandra Dhandewar was martyred by a gunshot at Balgir *Math* Sarla. Godavari was overflowing at the time. A man named Ramchandra Sirsagar carried the martyr on his back, dug a pit in the pouring rain, and completed his ritual.

Contribution of Women in the Hyderabad Liberation Struggle

In Hyderabad State, women were treated very badly. Also, they were given very low status. Marriage of girls at a young age means child marriage, child widowhood, a lack of literacy, a poor life, malnutrition, etc. Women were chained to many indecent customs. So women also started fighting against these immoral customs and against slavery. There are two periods of women who contributed to the Hyderabad Liberation Struggle. In this first period, women started running libraries, participating in cultural events, and providing food to the activists of the movement. Among the women of the second period, women like Dagdabai Shelke, Tara Paranjape, Shakuntala Sale, etc. were included in this Hyderabad liberation struggle.

Contribution of Arya Samaj in the Hyderabad Liberation Struggle

We can see that many people tried to fight against the unjust rule of the Nizam in Hyderabad State. But Arya Samaj was the first to raise his voice against Nizam's slavery regime. In the period from October 24th, 1938, to August 7th, 1939, many *satyagrahis* of Arya Samaj had to sit in jail for fighting against this tyrannical regime. The Nizam wanted to make all of Hyderabad a Muslim place.

But Hyderabad State had the maximum number of Hindus. Then the Nizam started plotting to convert the devout Hindus to Islam in order to establish all Muslims in Hyderabad State. For this, the Nizam also did the work of forcing the religious Hindus to convert by force. He also changed the names of many villages in Hyderabad State and started giving them Muslim names. In which he renamed the villages of Bidar as Mohammadabad and Dharashiv as Osmanabad. All his Muslim clerics working under the Nizam also joined his cause and started inciting the Dalits to Hinduism. A picture was put before their eyes, showing that they are being subjected to great injustice in Hinduism and that they are being exploited. Along with this, Nizam also started killing Hindus. Started oppressing women in Hinduism. Children were also killed. By doing this, the Hindus started living under the rule of the Muslims, despite being the largest population. Anyone who tried to raise his voice against this was thrown in jail.

The rise of the Arya Samaj

In this dire situation, there were only two options left for the Hindu people: one was to convert to the Muslim religion and accept it, and the other was to raise their voice and fight against this injustice. At such a time, the Arya Samaj emerged in Hyderabad state. Arya Samaj started building temples for Hindus in Hyderabad state. And started the propagation of Hinduism. Due to this, the people of the Hindu religion who were afraid of the Nizam and went to the Muslim religion also saw a ray of hope, and they started to return to Hinduism after seeing that they were getting the support of Arya Samaj.

As soon as the Nizam noticed this, he started imposing various bans on the Arya Samaj to remove them from his path. Arya Samaj temples were demolished, and Arya Samaj religious preaching was banned. Arya Samaj people were falsely accused and jailed. The Arya Samaj proposed to the Nizam to withdraw all these false offences and make a treaty of friendship, but the Nizam, who was obsessed with proselytising, did not stop his intrigues.

Then, on behalf of various organisations, Arya Samaj decided to raise a voice against this injustice by doing *Satyagraha*. But even there, the Nizam imprisoned all the *satyagrahis* before sitting for the *satyagraha*. After the dire consequences of this, the angry Arya Samaj organisations staged a jail-wide protest. The Nizam, fed up with the angry reaction to the Arya Samaj's fury, finally withdrew the ban on the Arya Samaj in the Hyderabad State and eventually relinquished his suzerainty over the Hyderabad State.

Contribution of Swami Ramanand Teerth

A great leader, scholar, and sage in the Hyderabad freedom struggle, his earlier name was Venkatesh Bhagwan Khedgikar. He was born into the Karmath family at Sindagi (District Bijapur) in Karnataka. Father Bhagwan Rao was a primary school teacher. Bhagwan Rao also had an affinity for spirituality. He took *Sannyas* after two daughters but did not get his wife's consent. Then his guru ordered him to go back to the homestead. Just as Dnyandev's father had returned from asceticism, Bhagwan Rao returned, and Venkatesh, a son like Dnyanoba, was born to him.

Venkatesh, alias Ramanand, had his primary education in his hometown. He came to Solapur for high school. Patriotism was instilled in him from childhood. Swami had to eat canes because Gandhi wore a cap during his matriculation, but he did not follow the order to remove the cap. He was expelled from school. Then he took a matriculation exam from a national school. BA with history, economics, and political science from Maharashtra University, Pune. And M.A. by writing the thesis 'Development of Democracy'. Graduated.

Sannyas Deeksha

Took charge of educational institution for propagation of national ideas started at Hipparga in Osmanabad district. He renounced his birth name and became a monk at Hipparga on January 14, 1930. He became Swami Ramanand Tirtha after taking *Sannyas Deeksha* from Swami Narayan. He worked as principal at Yogeshwari New School in Ambejogai. This period was filled with freedom struggles and social revolutions against the British. Swami Ramanand Teertha joined active politics in 1935 to free the motherland from slavery.

Maharashtra Council Session

The political atmosphere in Marathwada started with the Partur Parishad. In the year 1937, under the chairmanship of Govindrao Nanal, the Maharashtra Parishad of Partur was held, and in a way, consciousness was created among the youth. Nizam's government had imposed restrictions on newsletters, meetings, and printing and forced the public to refrain from holding meetings without permission. The medium of the university was also kept in Urdu, giving priority to the minority language 'Urdu' in the field of education. The system of education was meagre. Women could not go beyond primary education. Instead of educating the students in a comprehensive and nation-building manner, the university was imposing a particular religious system of education on the students.

In 1938, the second session of the Maharashtra Council was held at Latur. At this time, there was talk of disobedience. It was decided that a committee of Mr. Digambarrao Bindu, Kashinathrao Vaidya, and Swami should decide the next programme, and the session was adjourned as a protest. At the same time, Andhra Parishad and Karnataka Parishad also started awareness work in their departments. The Nizam government also banned them. To get out of this dilemma, it was decided to create a single political organisation of all the three councils, and the organisation 'Hyderabad State Congress' was started. But the Nizam also banned the State Congress. So there was no other option but disobedience.

Due to Swamiji's absolute service, the power of activists from all departments was united with him. Swamiji made contact with the young workers and made them his own. It was no longer possible to oppose Swamiji. So it was decided to disobey the State Congress. In the first batch, under the leadership of Govindrao Nanal, young leaders from three divisions did satyagraha. He was arrested. The second batch did Satyagraha under the leadership of Swamiji. They were also arrested.

In 1940, Mahatma Gandhi gave permission to certain individuals to carry out personal satyagraha. Swamiji, Achyut Bhai, and others participated in it. Swamiji was redeployed when the '*Chale Jaav*' campaign started in the country. During this period, many developments were going on at the Hyderabad Institute. Keeping in mind the power of the people, the government expressed its intention to allow another body if the name of the State Congress is changed. Activists endorsed the name 'Hyderabad National Conference' as it promised that people would be empowered under the Nizam. All the leaders were released, but later the government went back on its word and refused to grant recognition.

Foresight and Diplomacy

Further, after the independence of India in 1947, a new trend started in the politics of Hyderabad. After the independence of India, the Nizam was not ready to merge Hyderabad State with India. His desire for an independent Muslim nation was not hidden. At the same time, the wily Nizam was negotiating with Pakistan and wanted the help of the United Nations as well. He was struggling to create his own independent nation by doing anything. Swamiji saw this as the biggest national threat. So Swamiji declared that "Hyderabad is an integral part of India; we will not rest unless it merges with India". So Swamiji was arrested again, and the leaders came to grips with the struggle of 1947-48. Many activists went underground, and the movement took off in earnest.

The Razakar movement, which originated in Hyderabad and was supported by the government, culminated in atrocities involving hooliganism, oppression, arson, and looting. People also took up arms to protect themselves and others. People attacked the customs office, police station, and government office and left the government running. The building under the trust of Umri Bank was attacked in broad daylight, and the bank was robbed. When there was a ban on hoisting the tricolour flag, people started hoisting the tricolour flag on their houses through 'Zhenda Satyagraha'. The participation of women increased to a large extent. The Nizam was afraid of this. Swamiji was in jail at that time. All this was happening under the leadership of Digambarrao Bindu, a colleague of Swamiji. Swamiji himself had planned an alternative plan for when Swamiji was in jail. Finally, Swamiji was released.

Swamiji informed the Government of India about the Razakari atrocities. The deplorable conditions in Hyderabad State and the nationalistic and inhuman acts there were repeatedly brought up to Sardar Patel and Nehru. He met Mahatma Gandhi from time to time and told him about the situation there. As proof of that, the Nizam Sansthan was abolished by taking police action on the initiative of Sardar Patel. Swamiji foresaw that India would never be a peaceful and progressive nation if the state of Hyderabad at the centre of India was born as a new nation of Islam.

Nizam's attempt to persuade Swamiji

Meanwhile, after the fighting on August 15, the Nizam sent Prime Minister Layaq Ali and Home Secretary *Chitnis* to Swamiji in jail for negotiations. He tried in vain to persuade Swamiji and push his plans. Not only this, Swamiji was also released from jail for two months for a change of heart. Rather, Swamiji took advantage of this opportunity to explain his plans to all the activists. Swamiji and the Government of India requested that Nizam merge Hyderabad State into the Union. However, he did not give up his insistence on keeping his state independent, and so the Government of India entered into a 'status co' agreement with the Nizam in November 1947, giving him a year's time. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Nizam struggled to maintain his kingdom.

Nizam's letter

Since Swamiji was in jail, the Congress Action Committee participated in the negotiations. On behalf of the Government of India, V.P. Menon, K. M. Munshi, and Sardar Patel were negotiating and discussing with Nizam and Swamiji. Swamiji was convincing everyone that the merger with Hyderabad was inevitable. As a last resort, Swamiji sent a detailed letter to the Nizam on January 23, 1948, explaining his position. "The Razakar and the Nizam should immediately stop the brutal atrocities. These atrocities are being committed against innocent, unarmed, and constructive protesters. These are disgraceful acts. The Nizam should immediately merge his state into a federal state and establish responsible governance," the letter read. But the Nizam did not listen.

"This is the right time"

Nizam's general Qassim Rizvi's organisation 'Razakar' started oppressing the people of Marathwada. In such a situation, Swamiji realised that the Satyagraha, with its legal methods of civil rights, would not be of much use against the Nizam shah, and he expressed his desire to intensify his struggle. The revolutionaries tried to

overwhelm the Nizam government by various means, like satyagraha, *sarabandi*, *looting* of Nizam stations, bank robberies, and the burning of government documents. It was headed by Swami Ramanand. While in Nizam's imprisonment, Swami was moving the formula of this struggle.

On the other hand, the people and the protestors were suffering due to the Razakari atrocities. His patience began to wear down, and his endurance began to run out. Swamiji requested Sardar Patel to give an idea of such a situation and take immediate action. Because he was the Home Minister, he had the responsibility to solve the problems of institutions. While the negotiations were going on, Sardar Patel was preparing a strong plan of police action. Only he was looking for an opportunity, and that right opportunity was shown to Sardar Patel by Swamiji.

Contribution of Govindbhai Shroff

Although the agitation against Nizam's rule in Hyderabad continued throughout the state, Marathwada was at the forefront. Govindbhai Shroff was at the forefront of the activists who took the lead of the Hyderabad Liberation War on their shoulders, inspired by Swamiji. He did his primary education at a Gujarati school in Aurangabad. He then joined a government school called '*Madrassa Phokaniya*, located in Aurangabad. Here, he has a good teacher named Karve. He established Ganesh Mandal in Aurangabad. After the principal learned about this, he attended to the students and warned them not to do anti-government activities. In another case, he was punished by the principal with a fine of one rupee and a written apology. Govindbhai refused to accept punishment. He took a firm stand that this is an injustice to the students. He boycotted the class. Other students at the school also supported him, but the principal was not ready to back down. Finally, he left this school and went to Hyderabad to complete his further education. He passed the intermediate examination at Nizam College, Hyderabad. Govindbhai was very intelligent. B.Sc. Along with his studies, he completed his B.Com. in Commerce. He started studying for this degree. Govindbhai returned to Aurangabad in 1936 after acquiring M.Sc. and LL.B. degrees. Meanwhile, he got a job as a teacher in a government high school in Aurangabad.

Leadership qualities of Govindbhai

Within a short period of time, he gained a reputation as a student-loving teacher. In 1937, a session of the Maharashtra Council was held at Partur. It had a youth group under the leadership of Govindbhai. This group of youth was of the opinion that people should form an organisation against the tyrannical government of the state and fight the government through it. It was at this convention that Govindbhai's leadership qualities were revealed.

In the second session of the Maharashtra Parishad held at Latur, Govindbhai worked to bring about coordination between *Jahal* and *Mawal*. The Hyderabad State Congress was banned even before its formation. (Satyagraha) started in Hyderabad under the leadership of Swami Ramanand Teertha for political freedom and democracy. Govindbhai Shroff started a whirlwind tour throughout Marathwada to get the participation of the youth of Marathwada, and thousands of youth of Marathwada participated in the Satyagraha movement.

Azad Hyderabad Day

An active committee was formed in Hyderabad in 1947 to conduct this struggle. Digambarrao Bindu was the chairman of this committee, while Govindbhai was the head of the Marathwada division. Govindbhai went to

Delhi along with Digambarrao Bindu, met Gandhiji, and informed Gandhiji about the atrocities and bloodshed perpetrated by Nizam's army, police force, and Razakars on the people. On this occasion, he also met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Day by day, this liberation struggle became intense. On August 7, 1947, Swamiji and Govindbhai ordered that this day be observed as 'Azad Hyderabad Day' in the Indian Union. The activists of Hyderabad State observed Indian Independence Day with great enthusiasm. An enraged Nizam government arrested 3,629 people from Marathwada that day. At last, Hyderabad state was freed from the tyrannical rule of the Nizam by police action. But Govindbhai's fight was not over.

On September 17, 1948, Marathwada was freed from the yoke of the Nizam

Even though the country became independent, the people had to live under slavery. After the independence of India, many states agreed to merge their institutions with India, but the state of Hyderabad in the south was not at all ready to merge with India. In such a situation, the then Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, took the formula for the liberation of Hyderabad into his own hands. Then they started military operations in this area. Finally, after all kinds of harmony were created, the Sardars decided to take police action. Finally, on September 7, independent Indian forces were ordered to use police force against Hyderabad State. On September 13, 1948, 'Operation Polo' was a police operation. Hence, the Indian Army succeeded in establishing its dominion over all the important centres in Hyderabad State. Then, as soon as there were signs that the Government of India would now also arrest him, the Nizam decided to surrender to the Government of India, and the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad finally came to an end with the surrender of Mir Osman on September 17th. The Nizam conceded defeat, the Principality of Hyderabad merged with India, and the Tricolour was hoisted in the Principality of Hyderabad.

Swamiji was released on this day. Swami Ramanand Teertha was recognised throughout India as the true architect of the Marathwada liberation struggle and the oldest leader of Maharashtra. His popularity was immense. He also became an MP twice. But always kept a distance from the seat of power. After completing his second term, he went to Pandit Nehru and announced his desire to retire from politics. Nehru tried to stop them, but they did not stop. He participated in the United Maharashtra Movement and the *Bhudan* Movement of Vinobaji. He died in 1972 in Hyderabad.

Conclusion

These days, Swami has become very active in politics. Many people forget their karma yoga in the hustle and bustle of politics. But there was also Swami Ramanand Teertha, who took a vow of sacrifice to free Marathwada from the yoke of the Nizam. He became the supreme leader of Maharashtra, yet he kept himself away from the seat of power. Marathwada Liberation Day is a political festival in Maharashtra. This festival is celebrated on September 17 every year. On this day in 1948, the Nizam rule of Marathwada ended, and it became a part of independent India. In the Hyderabad Legislative Assembly, Marathwada MLAs forced the central government to divide Hyderabad. He also foiled the plan to create independent Telangana and Vidarbha states, along with Marathwada. During the formation of Union Maharashtra, Marathwada was included in Maharashtra on a linguistic

basis. The people of Marathwada also contributed a lot during the formation of Union Maharashtra. After that, on May 1, 1960, the state of Maharashtra was established.

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