

An Unknown History of Samasthan Narayanpur

Syed Muneer

Assistant Profesor, Nagarjuna Govt. College (A), Nalgonda, Telangana

Abstract:

Samasthan Narayanpuram is a Mandal headquarters of Bhongir-Yadadri district of Telangana State. Previously it was in Nalgonda District. It is a well-known Samasthan in the reign of Nizamul-Mulk-Asifja of Deccan. Once Nizam government announced a reward to stop atrocities perpetrated by a notorious thief Singal Rao Mannewar in the area of Gattuppall. Manchal Reddy killed the thief and got Narayanpur as the reward. His son Ramana Reddy built Rajapeta fort in 1775. Raja papireddy converted to Islam and subsequently had closer ties with the Nizam. He was renamed as Gulam Ghouse Khan Bahadur. His son-in-law Badruddin Khan built the famous Falaknuma palace on a knell at Narayanpur. This area was infested with notorious thieves so they built a citadal around the entire village with only seven gates. After converting to islam Gulam Ghouse Khan built Masjid-Mahboobia. A minarate was built for giving Azam. This construction of complex one.

Keywords: Samastan, falaknuma, Citadal, Azan Minar

Introduction:

Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf jah-I defeated Mubaraz Khan, then subedar of the Deccan and laid foundation of the princely state of Hyderabad. He ruled this state independently from 1724 but he never openly declared independence from Delhi. Thus, was born the Asafjahi dynasty that ruled Hyderabad until 1948. Seven rulers namely Quamruddin Khan Asafjah-I (Nizamul-Mulk Asafjahi-I 1724-1748) Nizam Ali Khan Asafjah-II (1762-1803), Sikandar jah Asafjah III (1803-1829), Nasirud-Daula Asafjah-IV (1829-1857), Afzal-ud-Daila Asafjah-V (1857-1869), Mir Mahbub Ali Khan Bahadur Asafjah-VI (1869-1911), Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahudur Asafjah-VIII (1911-1967) ruled this state.

They divided their kindom into three parts. One part became their own private estate known as the Sarfi-khas the revenue from which went to the privy purse, another was allotted for the expense of the government and was known as the Diwan's territory renue from which went to the government exchequer and the remainder was distributed among nobles like jagirdars, zamindars and desh mukhs who in return piad nazars (gifts) to the Nizam for the privilege of collecting revenue from the villages under them. These jagirs occupied pre-eminence position in the Nizam's dominion covering about forty percent of the total area. *"At the time of Jagir abolition in 1949 about 1/3 of the total population of the Nizam's dominions numbering six million were living in jagir areas."*¹

Fourteen Samsthans belonged to Hindu Rajahs who were holding their lands since along time before the Nizam came to the Deccan. They were recognized by the Nizam on the condition of an annual payment called peshkush. *"There was no effective, institution over the jagir administration as the jagirdars were semi-independent rulers of their area did not even relish the idea of Diwani officials visiting their jagirs."*² These jagirdars were leading a life which could certainly not to be commended. It was

remarked by Theo La Thouche “His exalted highness consider these nobles and jagirdars as his special charge and takes the greatest personal interest in their family affairs.”³

Review of literature:

Specific works on the construction of Gadees and Samsthanams were very scanty. But significant references to Samsthanams were made in all major works that dealt on Telangana.

1. **Qureshi A.I. :** (1947) in his book on “*Economic development of Hyderabad*” discussed mainly the economic structure of the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad and made significant references to Samasthanams of Nalgonda District.
2. **Kusro AM:** (1958) in his work “*Economic and social effects of jagirdari Abolition and land reforms in Hyderabad*” extensively referred to the land holding patterns, jagirdari system and styles of living of these jagirdars - while discussing these issues, the author extensively mentions about Samasthanams and their social economic functions
3. **Ramakrishna Reddy V:** (1987) book on “*Economic History of Hyderabad State (Warangal Suba 1911-1950)*” dealt vividly on the land holding patterns and briefly discussed the social economic functions of these Samasthanams.
4. **Thirumali I:** (2003) in his book “*Against Dora and Nizam*” discussed about Socio, Economic and Cultural development that taken place in late 19th and 20th century in Telangana. He also explained about the evolution of Dora in Diwani region. He critically examines the Telangana Armed Struggle as the fight between Dora and downtrodden people. He studied this movement in its broader Socio-cultural context, rather than from the angle of more economic and agrarian relationships.
5. **Bhanumathi Ranga Rao (S):** (1992) in her work “*Land revenue administration in The Nizam’s dominions (183-1948)*” explained about the Land management in Nizam’s dominions. She wrote about the various land tenure systems like Gattedary, Talukdari, Amani, Ijra, Pan Makta, Tahud, Sarbasta, Pattadari, Pot pattadari, Shikamdari, Kouldari, Watendari, Banjardari and Inamdari. She graphically described the sufferings of the ryots due to various methods adopted by the Nizam and his feudal lords Doras. She described the loopols of Jadirdari and inamdari systems. She also brought out the reforms introduced by Salarjung under the Zillabandi system.
6. **Narender K.V. and Raveendra S (2011):** work entitled “*Telangana Gadeelu*” in (Telugu) it covers about 30 Gadees of Telangana, in which only two Gadees of Nalgonda District namely ‘Rajapeta’ and ‘Nadigudem’ were considered. This book is the collection of 26 articles “*Telangana Gadeelu*” published in Andhra Jyothi Telugu daily in Sunday editions. They described the Architecture and family history of Doras of Gadees. Their main focus was on family history.

Objectives of the study:

The study on Samasthan Narayanpuram have some important objectives.

- a. It is to explore the history of founders of Samasthan Narayanpuram.
- b. To understand the Architechral importance of this Gadee.
- c. To assess the general information with regard to socio-economic conditions.

Content:

The Nizam government once announced a reward to stop atrocities perpetrated by a notorious thief in the area of Gattuppal. A person by name Manchal Reddy killed the thief and got Narayanapur as the

reward. His brother Somi Reddy was appointed as the patel of Narayanapur. His son Ramana Reddy nabbed a rebel feudatory of the Nizam and rewarded with the titles sir Mannewar, Sir Deshmukh, Sir Desh pande. He was appointed as administrator over the paragona of Rajakonda, Bhuvanagiri, Adavimarry, Shadnagar, Narsikonda, Indurthy, Indriyala and Ibrahimpatnam. *"They belongs to Reddy caste but awarded the title of Rao Bahadur. So they added Rao in their name"*.⁴ Ramana Reddy built Rajapeta fort in 1775 and laid foundation to Rajapeta Samstanam. His son Vedire Venkata Narayana Rao found an eponymous Samstan Narayanapuram. His son Ramana had his education in association with luminaries like Mir Layak Ali and Salarjung. He was famous as Raja Papi Reddy. He converted into Islam and subsequently had closer ties with the Nizam. He adopted the Islamic name Gulam Ghouse Khan Bahadur. He was polygamous and had six wives. But only his last wife Hussain Begum gave him heiress, Zahirunniss Begum. She was married to Badruddin Khan, son of Nizam's paternal aunt. It was this Badruddin Khan, who built the famous 'Falaknuma Palace' on a knoll at Narayanapur. As the only heiress of Narayanapur Samsthan becomes a member of the royal family of the Nizam. Thus this Narayanapur Samsthan was left desolate. As there was no one to take care of the properties, they are being illegally occupied by others. *"The petty samsthans Narayanapur and Rajapet under Nizam rule which had no independent powers"*.⁵

Architecture - Samasthan Narayanapuram Gadee (a fortified house)

The builders of Narayanapuram Gadee acquired this samsthan, playing a key role in nabbing hard core thieves of that area. They took special care in the architecture of the gadee. This area was infested with notorious thieves so they built a citadal around the entire village with only seven gates. These gates were always guarded by sentinals preventing the strangers from entering the village. Some of the gates were very broad and some of them were very narrow having space only for pedestrians. Only three main entrances of 40 feet high and built in a zigzag method slowing down the pace of the travelers were remain. These gates reminds us famous Golkonda fort gates. The citadel built in stone. At the top of the citadel wide enabling the sentinals to sleep. Strict vigilance was kept during night time. The wall is wide over small gates and resembles the Nizams architecture. These gates were like a small room and was guareded. The height of the citadal varied from 40 feet to 50 feet. Big boulders were used for the strong foundation for the citadal. Big size stones were used for the building of wall. On the gaps between the walls are filled with flakes of stone. On this stone wall there is a mud wall. There were orifices in the wall to observe the enemy movements. To the south west of Narayanapuram village there was a Gadee. In front of the main gate of the gadee there was a drum to alert the people. The drum was sounded when a king or officials visited the gadee. There was a big bell at this entrance. The bell was rung to inform the people for time. The hearsay is that this bell is moved to Dist. Police headquarters. The spiral staircase was used so it was called "giri giri" banglow. No trace of Banglow is fond now. An M.P.P. office and a police station were built in the place where once the gadee stood.

Masjid-e-Mahboobia:

After converting to Islam and taking the name of Gulam Ghouse Khan Bahadur Papi Reddy has become a close associate of the Nizam, Mir Mahboob Ali. In 1906 the Nizam fell ill and recuperated. With the permission of the Nizam Papi Reddy built masjid Mahboobia as a token of thanks giving to God. In an inscription on the wall of the masjid it clearly states that he had taken the permission of Nizam. This masjid has a complex archtechure. It is built on 6 feet platform and comprises 6 feet

stairs. So this masjid appears loftier than any other personnel masjid. This is not built like any other personal masjid. This is not built on a large area and all the enclaves are built within this area. A room for Iman was built to the left side of the masjid, another room was built to the right side as a store room. A slanting veranda was built in front of the masjid, adjoining to this veranda there is a large facade. A well and bathrooms were built in front of the masjid, cold water and hot water were provided in this 'Gusul khana'. There were large cauldrons for water heating on the elevated platform of the masjid within its precincts there was 'wajukhana' a small water body, meant for cleaning hands, legs and face a mandator before performing namaz. There is a drainage system for letting the used water go outside. There is a big well outside the mosque from where water was drawn to fill the wajukhana. There was an underground tunnel which connected this well and 'wajukhana'. This is a large well encompassed by a stone wall. There are arch-like structures in this wall. This well is neglected and people are filling it for their personal use.

Azan Minor: A minaret was built for giving Azan. This minaret is built on a 6 feet high circular basement. This minaret width was reduced and height was increased to 30 feet. Steps were built to ascend the minaret. There were 24 steps, at the end of these 24 steps, the minaret widens around this there is a roofed wall. This room is 15 feet high. Above this room there was a parapet wall there are ten feet small minarets on the four sides of the wall. The inner and outside were plastered with 'dunglime'. There are ornamented carvings outside the wall.

Socio-Economic Conditions:

The Asafjahi dynasty of the Nizams was the Muslim rulers of the Hyderabad state. The administration was predominantly Muslim in the Khalsa, Sarf-I-Khas and Paigah lands. Other lands were owned by non-Muslim landed elite in rural areas primarily Brahmin, Reddy and Velma castes. At the bottom of the caste hierarchy there were Dalits who were largely used as labourers. Generally the society of this period could be divided on the basis of economic class and professional relations were as follows:

1) Dora 2) Upper Caste people 3) Lower Caste people 4) Untouchables 5) Animists

During the Asafjahi's period various autonomous regions were allowed to continue as separate states like Jagirs. Though many Jagirs were not granted for perpetuity but practically they became hereditary. These Jagirdars were called themselves as Rajas. There were about fourteen Samstanams in Nizam state. The rulers of these Samstanams were called as Dora's. In Diwani areas also some local chiefs were appointed as revenue collectors. Gradually these local chiefs also became as Dora's.

Upper Caste People:

Brahmins: Brahmins belonged to the highest ritual (sacred) status but they did not possess significant land property. Agriculture was not their main occupation. There was a popular proverb in Telugu. 'Bapanasadyam Battemchetu, Kapula chaduvu Kasulachetu' (Brahmins cultivation is waste of salary (payment), Kapu's education is waste of fees). The Neogis secularized Brahmins of Telangana were engaged as village Karnams. Patel and Patwari occupied next place to Dora in every village. The Patwari was always belongs to Neogi Brahmin. They also served with Vetti workers and bhagelas live in comfortable bungalows, in the style of the Doras. These people were dishonest and mischievous it was generally feared that enmity with a Patwari lead only to the grave.

Reddys: Landlords of Telangana hailed primarily from Non-Brahmin upper castes like Reddy, and Velama. Around 90 percent of the Deshmukhs, Maqtedars etc belonged to these castes. However among Reddy, the pancha Reddy were prominent one. They are Motati, Gudati, Pakanati, Chittapu and Gone. The Motatis take the highest rank and are proud of their blood since as they believe that Raja Pratapa Rudra and his descents belonged to this caste.

Velmas: Tradition says that the Velamas were in race of Khastriya. Who ruled over the country to the north of the Narmada river. Raja Pratapa Rudra of Kakatiya dynasty attracted by their physique and commanding features welcomed them to his kingdom and conferred on them the command of 77 forts in his kingdom. They gradually became agriculturists and traders. A few of them were rich landlords and village officers. *“Like Reddy's, the velamas were also divided into many sub castes among them the Rachavelama were a highly respected class”*.⁶ The leading Zamidars in Telangana belonged to this sub-caste.

Kapus: This caste is considered as the village landholders with considerable size of Patta land. *“These landholders lived mostly in a bungalow type pucca houses and had enough cattle, land, and stock of grain and agricultural instruments”*.⁷ They dressed like peasant but they lived with dignity. They are considered as PeddaKapu, Peddarytus or motabari rytus. These people generally liked to be in the company of Doras and village officers to get their official work done and continue their work peacefully. The younger generation of this group brought the nationalist and communist (AMS) ideologies and politics into the rural areas.

Komatis: Komatis are mostly found in Telangana. They are the traders, shopkeepers and money lenders. This is a wealthy and prosperous caste. They played crucial role in agricultural finance and benefitted a lot. When Nizam joined subsidiary Alliance in 1798, the tax should be paid in cash *“In Telangana payment in kind has always been prevalent. So now landlords played the role of merchants by taking revenue in kind and paying cash to the state. Thus they played an additional role as merchants and restricting the local bania, Komati to shop - keeping.”*⁸ In the time of Dorala Rajyam the Komati's have an additional responsibility to supply the commodities to Govt. officials who visit the village.

Lower Caste People:

In the opinion of Dasarathi Rangacharya Saptangalu (seven service castes) - Kummari (Pottery), Kammari (Melters), Vadla (Carpenters), Kanchari (Metal worker), Mangali (Barbers), Chakali (Washerman) and Mala - Madiga (Out caste leather workers and field labours) were minimum requirement for setting up a village.” *“Therefore there is no village in Telangana without these castes. Inam (tax- free) lands were given to them in lieu of their service apart from granting other remuneration”*.⁹

Kummari: Kummara are potters living in Telangana. They make pots, bricks and tiles. *“This caste has six endogamous divisions (1) Shetti or Telaga or penta kumara. (2) Balija or Lingayathkummara, (3) Bendarkummara (4) Dandu Kumara (5) Maratha kumbhar (6)Dandukumbhar”*.¹⁰ They have such divisions as Dishswant and silwant, but inter marriages between them and the Lingayaths potters are not allowed.

Kammari: This is a caste of Panchals. It is a Telugu black-smith caste. They belongs to Saivas, Vaishnavas, Lingayaths and most of them are shakthi worshippers.

Vadla: The Telugu name of carpenters was vadlas. This caste also came under panchals. The favourite object of worship of panchals is the goddess Kalika.

Kanchari: The Kanchara is the manufacturers of brass and copper utensils in Telangana. This also a caste of panchals.

Mangali: the barber caste is known as mangali in the Telangana. “*The mangali are divided into 3 sub castes in Telangana. Konda or Sajjan Mangala, Sri. Mangala, Reddi mangala*”.¹¹ Barbers are generally engaged as musicians and torch bearers. The barber women works as a midwife and nurse.

Chakali: The washer man caste of the Telugu country is known as chakali. They also eat leaving of the higher caste people.

Bhois: This is the caste of fisherman found throughout the state. They are known as Bestas and Gunlodus. The original occupation of the casteis fishing and palanquin-bearing. Gunlodus are dwellers on the river bank. They eat with the Bestas but do not inter marry with them. The Bestas important deity is Ganga the river goddess. At the Dasara festival the Bestas worship their nets.

Darzi is the state caste of Tailoring. The great shepherd caste of the Telugu people is Golla. Goundla is the toddy-drawing and liquor vending caste found in Telangana. Kurmas are the shephards and blanket wavers caste. Mutrasi is the caste of cultivators, hunters and beggers. The evil practice of dedicating girls to deities prevails. Perka is the caste of people who known for their traditional work of weaving gunny bags. They also carry the grain and salt. They are the caller dealers. Salve is the great weaving caste among the Telugu. They indulge in strong drink and eat mutton, focol and fish.

Untouchables:

Madiga: The Telugu leather-workers and village menials were called as Madiga. The sindhollu, chindiwandlu or Bogammadigasare the courtezans of the madiga caste. Dappumadiga acts as musicians to the Lambadas playing of their religious rites. The Dasarimadigas were spiritual advisers to the Vaishnava sect madigas. Jangamamadigas also claim a high social position among Saivamadigas.

Girls were dedicated to their deities.. These girls known as joginis become prostitutes. “*The madigas eat beef, horse flesh, pork, fowls, mutton and the flesh of animals which have died a natural death. The bear is held in special respect. No madiga will injure or kill this animals. The madigas are more animistic than hindu in their beliefs. Their tribal deity is matangi. They worship other village deities and Hanuman and Mahadev*”.¹²

Mala: Village watchman and menial in Telangana were called as malas. The Malas are village watchman, labourers and grooms. They form part of the village baluta and paid in kind for the duties discharged. Some of them were coarse cotton cloth.

Animist (Tribes):

Gonds: This is an Animistic tribe confined to the Warangal and Adilabad districts. The Raja Gonds claim to a Rajaput descent. The Pradhans were the holots of the Gonds and serve as genealogists and bards to the raja Gonds. The Thotis in turn, are the bards of the Pradhans and form a group of wandering minstrels. The Principal deity of the Raja Gonds, Pradhans and Thotis is “Phersaphan”. The religion of Gonds is animism. “*The occupation of the Gonds is hunting and agriculture by a rude method known as dhya or daha*”.¹³

Koya: Koya is a forest tribe chiefly found in Warangal district. They have a dialect of their own, mixed with Telugu words. The Koyas are animistic in their beliefs and worship Mamili.

Lambada: Lambadas are a wandering tribe of grain and salt carriers, cattle breeders and graziers found in the districts of Warangal, Nalgonda, Mahaboobnagar and Adilabad. They are also known as Banjaras.

Yerkala: A wandering tribe of thieving, begging, fortune telling and basket making gypsies found living in movable bamboo and date mat-hut in all the Telugu districts. The Yerukala derive their name from the Telugu word Eruka, as the women of the tribe profess to be great expert in fortune telling. They have few scruples regarding their diet. They eat fowls, fish, pork, carrion, field rats, mungooses, foxes and cats. They indulge freely in strong drink.

Vetti System: In Telangana the Vetti system was all pervasive affecting all classes of the people in varying degree. “*Like most of the Deccan states, in Telanganato a barabalutadars played an important role in colonising the region and setting up villages and developing agriculture.*”¹⁴ Dasharathi Ranga Charya opined that Saptangalu (Seven service caste) were the minimum requirement for setting up a village. These castes were given Inam (tax free land) in lieu of their service. But during the 19th and 20th century these service castes and out caste were converted into Vetti (forced labour) labourers in the changed environment.

The Vetti people are supposed to work in the houses of village officials like Dora, Patel, Patwari, Mali patel. One man from the one harijan family had to send to do Vetti. These people had to attend the daily work of the above people. They also carry the post. They had to do extra work whenever an officer came to the village chavadi. They had to collect wood from the forest for fuel, cleaning work in the village, carry the luggage of the Dora’s relatives and government officials. Boya, Besta and Chakali communities were forced to carry on their shoulders men and women of the landlord families. They also forced to run before and behind the bullock cart as path cleaners and escorts. The toddy tappers were required to supply five pots of toddy every day. The weavers had to supply cloths to the landlord’s household servants.

The carpenter and blacksmith had to supply all agricultural implements to the landlords free of cost and carry out free repairs. The washer men were forced to wash cloths and vessels in the house of the deshmukh and village officials. He should pound the turmeric into powder, should slaughter and prepare the chicken and goat for curry. The barber should shave master’s head and anointed bath. He should lit the lamps, spread the beds and arrange the pillows, press the master’s legs up to mid night. The potter was forced to provide hundreds of pots to the officers and landlords. He had to cook food for all those

officers who comes to village.

The cobblers had to patrol day and night in front of Dora's mansion. He had to husk puttis of paddy into fine rice and make announcement on dappu. The shepherd had to give a sheep from each of their heads on all the festival days of the village. When any officer visits the village the merchants had to supply by turn all commodities including good ghee. Suddala Hanumanthu brilliantly depicted the caste-based Vetti, extraction in a song "Vetti chakiri vidhanamu".

Bhagela System: The other important form of social evil was bhagela system. This type of labour extraction was predominant in rural areas of Nalgonda and Warangal district. By this system labourers contracted to serve his employers for an indefinite period on a low subsistence wage in repayment of a loan advanced by the employees to the labourers. Usually every landlord employed bhagelas. The main features of bhagela system are as follows: 1. Service was full time and any work assigned by the employer. 2. Changing of master was not allowed and the master's belief was that he had legal rights to compel a bhagela work. 3. Generally, the bhagela was in debt to his master. 4. When a bhagela died, his debt to his master transferred to his children. 5. For any offence of omission or commission the master have the right to punish him such as starve or confine a bhagela. 6. The grain or the goods that was given as remuneration did not meet the minimum physical needs of bhagela. 7. Generally bhagelas were ordinarily low-caste people like untouchable and low caste sudras. 8. It is only a oral arrangement the landlords who began to produce for the market had converted the gayakas, artisans and sudra lower castes into serfs (bhagelas and vetti workers) and extracted their labour to fulfill the modern market needs.

Reference:

1. Kusro A.M. *Economic and Social Effects of Jagir Abolition and land reforms in Hyderabad*, Osmania University 1958. P.No. 2
2. Bhanumathi Ranga Rao S (1992) *Land Revenue administration in Nizams Dominions (1853-1948)* Sharada offset printers, karimnagar. P.No. 15
3. Theo La Toche, *India's premier Ruling Prince, A Rapid Sketch of the Man and his work*, Bombay. 1946. P.No.71
4. Nagendar K.V. Raveendra S 2011 "*Telangana Gadeelu*" (Gadees of Telangana) Vilpa Computer Services Hyderabad. page no. 126
5. Reddy S.R. 2011 "*Telangana Charitra*" (History of Telangana) Telagana Prachuranalu page no. 219.
6. Adapa Sathyanarayana 2007. "*Society, Economy and polity in modern Andra*". Kanishka publishers, New Delhi. Page No. 16.
7. Mukherjee, A.B. 1964, "Succession of Cultural Land Scapes in Telangana Reddy Villages". *The Indian Geographical Journal*, XXXIX, 1 & 2. pp. 42-68.
8. Reddy, Ravi Narayana, 1983. *VeeraTelangana: Na Anubhavalu- Znapakalu* [Heroic Telangana: My Experiences—Rememberances]. Vijayawada: CPI. P.197 and 198.
9. Thirumali Inukonda 2003. "*Against dora and Nizam people movement in Telangana*" 1939-1948. Page . No. 3.
10. Census report of Hyderabad state 1921- Page No. 249
11. Ibid Page No. 255.

12. Ibid Page No. 252.
13. Sathyanarayana A. 2007 Page No. 30. "*Society, Economy, and Polity in modern Andra*". Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
14. Iyengar, 1931. *Economic Investigations in the Hyderabad State 1929-30*. Hyderabad: Government Press. p.125.