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State and Feudalism: Jagirdari Relations and Hierarchy in Nizam's Dominions

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Abstract

The jagirdari system of Nizam's Dominions with its inherent social and economic tyranny, over 225 years, reduced the lives of the peasantry and other lower sections in the rural areas to such a misery and deprivation that the launching of a direct struggle for the removal of the jagirdars and the Nizam's autocratic government under the leadership of the Communist Party of India, in 1944-1948 was heartily welcomed and spontaneously joined by the long oppressed people. Immediately after the 'Police Action' in 1948, the State government took up the question of jagirs in Hyderabad State. Consequently with the promulgation of the Hyderabad (Abolition of jagirs) Regulation, 1358F (1949), all types of jagirs in the State were taken over by the government and converted into the diwani tenure, which formally ended the jagirdari system in the Hyderabad State.

Key-Words : Feudalism, Jagirs, Al-Tumgha, Jamiat, Tankha-i-Mahalat, Hereditary Jagirs.

Introduction

The Hyderabad state was one of the largest princely states in India before independence and here a political structure from medieval times had been preserved intact till the State was amalgamated in the Indian Union in 1948. The jagirdari system in the State is one among the institutions which were borrowed or continued from the Mughal times. The first Nizam, who was a viceroy of Mughals established the Hyderabad State in 1724 and introduced the Mughal system of making land grants to noblemen with some modifications.

The jagir was a tenure in which a certain tract of land was given to a State servant together with necessary and full power to collect the revenue accruing there from for his own personal use, and to govern the territory assigned to him. But the jagirdar was not the owner of the land assigned to him. If the assignment was conditional the grantee was required to render some public service such as the levy and maintenance of troops or some other specified duty. If unconditional, the land was entirely at the disposal of the grantee. It was held either for a certain period or more usually for the life-time of the jagirdar, and passed on to the State on his death. On many occasions, though the assignment was renewed for their heirs on payment of a nazarana and sometimes some of jagirs were specified to be a hereditary assignment, without which this specification, it was held to be a life tenure. The whole of Hyderabad State was divided into two distinct portions, 1) the diwani or government lands, whose revenues were devoted to the expenses of administration, constituted nearly 60% of the total land of the

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