Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research
Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.
ISSN: 2998-4459 | Website: https://rlgjaar.com Volume-3, Issue-4 | April - 2026

Original Article

Brief History of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty

Dr. Vijayalakshmi Biradar
Associate Professor, Department of History
Government First Grade College for Women, Bidar

Manuscript ID:
RIGJAAR-2026-030409

ISSN: 2998-4459
Volume 3
Issue 4
Pp. 52-56
April 2026

Submitted: 06 Mar. 2026
Revised: 12 Mar. 2026
Accepted: 11 Apr. 2026
Published: 30 Apr. 2026

Correspondence Address:
Dr. Vijayalakshmi Biradar
Associate Professor, Department of History
Government First Grade College for Women, Bidar
Email: vypatil.025@gmail.com

Quick Response Code:

Web. https://rlgjaar.com

DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.24273311

DOI Link:
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24273311

Abstract

The Asaf Jahi dynasty, popularly known as the Nizams of Hyderabad, played a significant role in the political and cultural history of the Deccan for more than two centuries. The dynasty emerged during the decline of Mughal authority when Mir Qamaruddin Chin Qilich Khan, later known as Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I, established an autonomous power base in the Deccan in 1724. Although the Nizams initially maintained nominal allegiance to the Mughal emperors, their dominion gradually developed its own administration, military system and political identity. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Hyderabad's relationship with the British East India Company increasingly limited its external independence. The Nizams nevertheless retained substantial authority over internal affairs and patronized architecture, education, literature, public works and industry. The reign of the seventh Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, witnessed important institutional developments as well as political tensions that culminated in Hyderabad's integration into the Indian Union in 1948. This paper presents a concise historical account of the dynasty, its rulers, administration, relations with the British, contributions and eventual end.

Keywords: *Asaf Jahi dynasty; Nizams of Hyderabad; Deccan; Hyderabad State; Mughal Empire; British paramountcy; Mir Osman Ali Khan; Operation Polo.*

Brief History of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty

The Asaf Jahi dynasty emerged in the Deccan during a period when the Mughal Empire was experiencing political decline. The family's rise is traced in the supplied historical account to Abid Khan, a Persian nobleman from Samarkand who came to India in the seventeenth century. His son Ghaziuddin Khan strengthened the family's position through service and alliances within the Mughal court. The family's political influence grew during the Deccan campaigns of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. In 1687, Aurangzeb captured Golconda Fort after a prolonged siege, bringing the Qutb Shahi kingdom under Mughal control. The Mughal conquest created the political conditions in which the future Asaf Jahi rulers would establish their authority.



Figure 1. Artistic illustration representing Mir Qamar-ud-Din Khan (Asaf Jah I), founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty.

Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)
This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work noncommercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations ae licensed under the idential terms.

How to cite this article:
Biradar, V. (2026). Brief History of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty. Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research, 3(4), 52–56. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24273311

Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research
Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.
ISSN: 2998-4459 | Website: https://rlgjaar.com Volume-3, Issue-4 | April - 2026

The founder of the dynasty was Mir Qamaruddin Chin Qilich Khan, better known as Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I. He held important positions in the Mughal administration and was appointed Subedar of the Deccan. His authority was challenged by Mubariz Khan, the existing Subedar. Their forces met at Shakar Kheda on 11 October 1724, where Qamaruddin emerged victorious. Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah subsequently acknowledged his authority and conferred the title Asaf Jah. This event marked the foundation of the Asaf Jahi dynasty.

Asaf Jah I did not formally declare independence from the Mughal Empire. He and his successors continued to acknowledge the Mughal emperor symbolically for many decades. Coins and official documents initially retained references to the Mughal sovereign, even as the Nizam exercised extensive authority in the Deccan. The Nizam was the highest civil and military authority in his dominion and was assisted by a Diwan, or Prime Minister, in daily administration. The state maintained its own officials, laws, army and symbols of government.

After the death of Asaf Jah I in 1748, disputes over succession created a period of instability. His son Nasir Jung and grandson Muzaffar Jung became rival claimants, receiving support from the British and French respectively. Muzaffar Jung was proclaimed Nizam in 1750 but was killed soon afterwards. Salabat Jung, his brother, was then declared Nizam with French support. His rule was marked by the influence of French military officers and political uncertainty. In 1762, Salabat Jung was imprisoned at Bidar and Nizam Ali Khan assumed power.

Nizam Ali Khan, who ruled from 1761/1762 to 1803, strengthened the dynasty but increasingly relied on the British East India Company. Treaties with the Company brought British troops into Hyderabad and restricted the Nizam's freedom to conduct external relations. The Treaty of 1798 required the disbandment of French battalions and the stationing of a British subsidiary force in Hyderabad. A further agreement in 1800 transferred control of the state's external affairs to the Company. These arrangements established the framework of British protection and influence over Hyderabad.

Sikandar Jah succeeded Nizam Ali Khan in 1803 and ruled until 1829. During his reign, the state faced serious financial difficulties, administrative weakness and growing dependence on British support. The influence of ministers and British Residents increased. He was succeeded by Nasir-ud-Daula, who ruled from 1829 to 1857. His period was also marked by financial pressure and British interference. The state's inability to repay its debts led to the annexation of Berar by the British in 1853. Salar Jung I was appointed Diwan in the same year and began a long period of administrative reform.

Afzal-ud-Daula became the fifth Nizam in 1857 and ruled until 1869. His reign coincided with the Indian Revolt of 1857 and the transfer of authority from the East India Company to the British Crown in 1858. During this period, the Nizam's relationship with the British remained central to the political position of Hyderabad. Salar Jung I continued to exercise considerable influence as Diwan. He introduced systematic land and revenue surveys, improved postal and telegraph services and supported the development of railway connectivity. The Hyderabad–Secunderabad railway line was completed in 1874, linking the dominion with the wider railway network.

Mir Mahboob Ali Khan succeeded Afzal-ud-Daula in 1869 when he was a young child. A regency council administered the state during his minority, with Salar Jung remaining Diwan. Mahboob Ali Khan later assumed direct authority and ruled until 1911. His reign combined courtly splendour with continuing administrative developments. The period also reflected the strong influence of the British Resident and the political constraints imposed by the subsidiary alliance.

Mir Osman Ali Khan became the seventh Nizam in 1911 and ruled until Hyderabad's integration into the Indian Union in 1948. His reign was one of the longest in the dynasty's history. The supplied account describes him as a ruler associated with both personal wealth and personal frugality. Hyderabad continued to function as a princely state under British paramountcy, retaining substantial internal administrative structures while remaining constrained in matters of external policy.



Figure 2. Artistic illustration representing Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh Nizam of Hyderabad.

Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research
Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.
ISSN: 2998-4459 | Website: https://rlgjaar.com Volume-3, Issue-4 | April - 2026

On 17 November 1919, Osman Ali Khan announced an administrative reform under which the government would function through an Executive Council operating under a written constitution. The office of Diwan was replaced by that of Sadr-i-Azam, or President of the Council. The members of the Council were appointed rather than elected, and the Nizam retained the power to issue farmans overriding its decisions. Ali Imam was appointed as the first Sadr-i-Azam and introduced a separation between the judiciary and executive, as described in the source material.

The Nizams' administration maintained a system in which the dominion was divided into different categories of land and revenue. The Sarf-e-Khas represented the Nizam's private estate, while the Diwani or Dewan's Territory supported government expenditure. Other portions were assigned to nobles and aristocratic families, including the influential Paigahs. This arrangement shaped the financial and political structure of Hyderabad and gave powerful landed families considerable influence.

The dynasty's legacy included significant patronage of architecture, education, literature, music and the fine arts. Hyderabad's built environment reflected Persian, Mughal, Indo-Saracenic and European influences. The source highlights palaces such as Chowmahalla and Falaknuma, as well as public buildings including the Hyderabad High Court and Osmania General Hospital. The Nizams also supported roads, bridges, irrigation works, tanks, wells and afforestation. These projects contributed to the development of public infrastructure across the state.



Figure 3. Chowmahalla Palace, associated with the royal heritage of the Nizams of Hyderabad.

Education was another important feature of the Nizam period. Osmania University was established in 1918 under Mir Osman Ali Khan and used Urdu as the medium of instruction. A Department of Translation was created to make higher education available in Urdu, including subjects such as medicine and engineering. Schools, colleges and libraries also developed under state patronage. Students could study Kannada, Telugu and Marathi as optional languages alongside Urdu. At the same time, the central position of Urdu in administration and education became a subject of concern among non-Urdu-speaking communities.



Figure 4. Main building of Osmania University, established in 1918 during the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan.

The state also encouraged small-scale industries and public works. The Mahboobshahi Mills in Gulbarga (Kalaburagi) and the Azam Jahi Mills in Warangal are cited in the source as examples of industrial activity. Agriculture remained a major part of the economy, and government projects included the construction of wells, tanks and roads

Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research
Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.
ISSN: 2998-4459 | Website: https://rlgjaar.com Volume-3, Issue-4 | April - 2026

in rural areas. However, the source also notes criticism of the dynasty for limitations in modern education, healthcare and agricultural reform, showing that its legacy included both institutional achievements and areas of social and economic concern.

The political position of Hyderabad changed dramatically after India became independent on 15 August 1947. The Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, did not immediately accede to the Indian Union and sought to preserve Hyderabad's separate status. A Standstill Agreement was signed with the Government of India in November 1947, but political tensions continued. The activities of the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen and the Razakars, the question of responsible government and the demand for integration intensified the crisis.

In September 1948, the Government of India launched Operation Polo, also referred to as the Police Action. The military operation began on 13 September and ended on 17 September 1948, when the Nizam ordered a ceasefire and Hyderabad State forces surrendered. The Nizam's sovereignty came to an end and Hyderabad became part of the Indian Union. Major General J. N. Chaudhuri assumed charge as Military Governor. In December 1949, M. K. Vellodi became Chief Minister, and the first democratic general elections in Hyderabad were held in March 1952, resulting in a ministry led by B. Ramakrishna Rao.

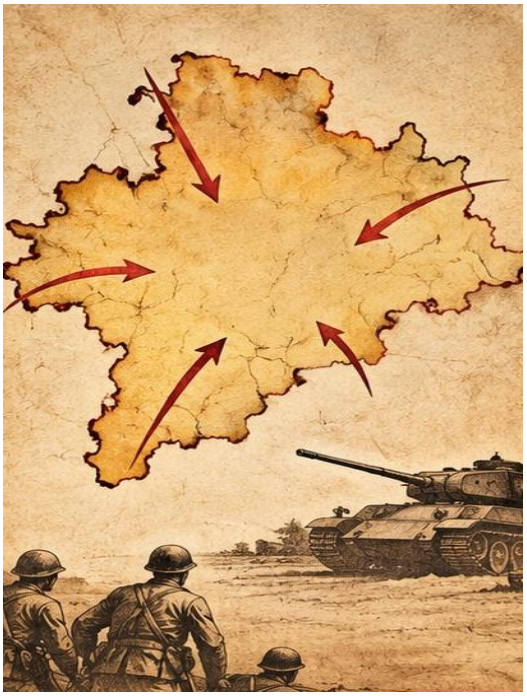


Figure 5. Artistic map-style illustration evoking the military operation and integration of Hyderabad in September 1948; not a historical operational map.

The integration of Hyderabad remains a subject of historical study, including discussion of the political negotiations, the armed operation and the violence experienced by civilians during and after the events of 1948. The supplied source records differing aspects of this transition, including the official account of integration and estimates from independent reports regarding civilian deaths. These aspects indicate the importance of examining the period through multiple historical records and perspectives.

Asaf Jahi dynasty formally ended as a ruling power with the integration of Hyderabad in 1948. Mir Osman Ali Khan continued to live after the end of his political authority and died on 24 February 1967. The dynasty's historical presence remains visible in Hyderabad's palaces, public buildings, educational institutions, administrative records and cultural traditions. Its more than two centuries of rule shaped the political and social history of the Deccan and left a complex legacy.

Conclusion

The history of the Asaf Jahi dynasty reflects the transformation of the Deccan from a Mughal province into a powerful princely state and, eventually, a part of independent India. Founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I in 1724, the dynasty maintained authority through changing political circumstances, succession disputes and growing British influence. The Nizams developed an administrative structure and patronized public works, education, architecture, literature and industry. At the same time, the system of governance remained monarchical, and the state experienced financial pressures, social inequalities and political demands for reform.

The reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan brought the dynasty into the final phase of its history. Administrative reforms and institutional developments took place alongside growing demands for political participation and integration with India. Operation Polo in September 1948 ended the Nizam's sovereignty and brought Hyderabad into the Indian Union. The Asaf Jahi legacy must therefore be understood through its achievements in culture and institution-building as well as the political and social challenges that accompanied its rule.

Acknowledgement

The successful completion of this research paper entitled **"Brief History of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty"** has been made possible through the guidance, support, and encouragement of several individuals and institutions.

I express my sincere gratitude to my research guide, teachers, and academic colleagues for their valuable suggestions, scholarly guidance, and continuous encouragement throughout the preparation of this research work.

I am particularly thankful to historians, researchers, authors, and scholars whose books, historical records, research articles, and publications have provided valuable insights into the origin, establishment, administration, cultural contributions, and historical significance of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

References

1. Lethbridge, Roper. The Golden Book of India. 1893.
2. Briggs, Henry. The Nizam. Delhi, 1861.
3. Luther, Narendra. Hyderabad: A Biography.
4. Campbell, A. Cloud. Glimpses of Nizam's Dominions.
5. Husain, Mazhar. Census of India, 1941, Vol. XXI: H.E.H. The Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State).
6. Kanihal, Narayan. Unique Features of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle.
7. Chopra, P. N. (Ed.). India's Struggle for Freedom, Vol. IV. Delhi, 1985.