

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KARNATAKA: ROLE OF ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS – AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The agitation for Swadeshi was given a new lease in 1896 when the whole country protested against the counter-availing excise duties on Indian cloth and received a fresh impetus after the partition of Bengal in 1905. The view stressed was that Indians should unite irrespective of their religion or any difference and 'wake up to the national cause' by adjuring the use of Lancashire cotton.⁷

This was a period in which three major potential streams emerged. Moderates followed the constructive Swadeshi the political extremists used extended boycott and side by side the growth of a terrorist movement. By 1905, the creed of "Atmashakti" or self reliance filled the air of Bengal with Swadeshi schemes of textile mills, improved handlooms, river transport concerns, match and soap factories, earthen-ware factories and tanneries, National Education through Muffosil Schools, the Taraknath Patil Society for the prohibition of technical education and efforts to translate Tagores' Swadeshi Samaj into practice were the highlights of this age.⁸

During the course of Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, like a victorious general, undertook a propaganda tour in 1906. Tilak covered the North Karnataka and delivered inflammatory speeches at Belgaum, Dharwad, Gurla Hosur, Pachchapur and Bijapur on boycott, Swadeshi, Swaraj and national education. The cardinal aspect of his message was that saving the country from the alien bureaucracy and reviewing its ancient glory would be possible only through Swaraj or self-government. This understanding could come only through national education, which imparted heritage and infused an intense love of the motherland and determination to revive the splendour and glory of the part.

Key Words: prohibition of technical education and efforts to translate Tagores' Swadeshi Samaj.

Introduction:

Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, Alur Venkatrao, N. S. Hardikar, Hardekar Manjappa, Sakkari Balachar, Krishna Rao Mudvedkar, Ananthrao Dabade and many others undertook extensive tours and delivered speeches. Swadeshi industries arose in many places of Karnataka like, weaving factory at Kittur and Badami, match box factory at Dharwad, a porcelain factory at Lakshmeshwar. The Karnataka Industrial Conference held at Dharwad in 1907 to decide on the lines of development of Swadeshi industry and boycott of foreign goods. Foreign cloth was burned in Ranebennur and other parts of Karnataka. This awakening came to be sustained greatly by the work of the national schools, which were started at many places of Karnataka.

Thus, the Swadeshi movement spread all over the nation, in a short period of time it scattered in Karnataka also. The people across the country gave their full-fledged support to the progress of this movement and they were fully responsible for the growth of industries and establishment of national schools, colleges in their respective areas. But the heroic deeds of the leaders of the Swadeshi movement and the growth of this movement are highly neglected. Even on some occasions the role of Karnataka State in the Swadeshi movement is often neglected and even on some of the occasions many regional and national scholars and the researchers underplayed it. Hence, the present study makes an honest attempt to probe out the valuable role played by the Karnataka State and its revolutionaries in the epic movement of Swadeshi.

2. Aims and Objectives

All the researches which were undertaken after the post-independent period even up to 1980's and 1990's appeared to be stray, unconnected and peripheral without covering the role of individuals, small groups and organizations. The aim of the work however, is to fill up the big gap left behind by the studies and researches so far done. A limited time span and geographical unit of Karnataka has been chosen for sake of the grass-root level study.

The researches done so far, though helped to develop broad perspectives about India's struggle for freedom, several misconception are holding the minds of the people for long. One such misconception was that the neglect of participation of the various associations and organisations sabhas and samitis in the movement. The second misconception was that the constructive reforms like Socio-religious, politico-Economical and cultural associations and their contributions were felt as only the Gandhian contributions, but didn't trace the Tilakan contribution. Besides, it was also believed that the Ideas of formation of sabha and samitis were traced more familiar with Gandhiji, but not it of Tilak. There were some of the ill-conceived and ill-founded ideas which have filled the pages of the history of freedom movement in India. The present project has been undertaken with the assumption that grass-root level studies alone will help to correct the misconceived notions.

The researchers on freedom movement in India in their over enthusiasm to highlight the role of great freedom fighters and their ideology have overlooked the role of the common man, individually and collectively and their sacrifices for the noble cause of India's freedom. It is believed that it is only grass-root level studies which enable us to highlight the role of organisations in the freedom movement. The Socio-economic analysis by applying quantitative methodology to the study of freedom movement in India would be possible only means of grass-root level studies like the one on hand.

Every short-term and macro-level geographical unit has exhibited its own peculiarity and unique characteristic features during the freedom movement in India. National level studies, however, failed to do full justice to such individual organisations and regions which sometimes played more significant, more fascinating and more determining role. Grass-root level studies alone can signify such events and movements, such ideas and organisations of the macro-level, sub-national units. Besides, the role of the writers, columnists, journalists, terrorist underground activities and small and petty events of national significance have been totally neglected by the national level studies. Such events, movements and individuals can receive better deal only in the grass-root

level studies. It is therefore the present research project has been undertaken with the aims and objectives of overcoming the deficiencies enumerated above.

3. Significance of the Topic

Of all the Kannada speaking areas, the four districts of Bombay presidency viz., Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwad and North Kanara were the earliest to receive and nurture the spirit of nationalism like Bengal and Maharashtra as compared to the Indian context. Karnataka, though it divided in various divisions of administration

On the eve of Swadeshi movement, it could produce some of the eminent freedom fighters of great calibre and dynamism, independent ideology and organising capacity like Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, Hanumanthrao Deshpande, Govindrao Yalgi, Alur Venkatrao, Muduvvedkar Krishnarao, N. S. Hardikar, Hardekar Manjappa, Karnad Sadashivarao, Srinivas Rao Kaujalgi, Hanamanthrao Kaujalgi, Jayarao Nargund, Krishnarao Jorapur, Vittal Rao Devlgoanker and several others.

The State of Karnataka played a significant role in encouraging native press which fastened the cause of nationalism. Journalists like Alur Venkatrao, Hardekar Manjappa, Jayarao Deshpande, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande and others used Dharwad, Belgaum, Mangalore, Bijapur and Bangalore as centres of their activities and carried the nationalism through their papers. Eminent Marathi papers like Kesari, Kal, Navkal and Chitramayajagat were highly circulated in the northern Karnataka. During the Swadeshi movement the role played by Lokamanya Tilak was no less significant, who was the guiding force of the time. With a result the parts of northern Karnataka like a seething cauldron as the land of Tilak's followers. All these aspects together explain the significance of Karnataka State in the Freedom Movement, hence the significance of the topic chosen for research.

4. Significance of the Study

Though the history of the freedom movement in the sub-national and sub-cultural zone of Karnataka has received due attention of the historians. The studies in the short-term level in the State yet awaiting the attention of the researcher. '*History of freedom Movement in Karnataka*' by G. S. Halappa is undoubtedly a movement work on the subject. But, however, as far as the topic was concerned, it is felt that no full justice has been done. The account is less and nominally explained, not given in any details. The learned scholar has concentrated on main stream of the movement and traced the role of the prominent associations and organisations the ideologies of the role of national schools and Revolutionary groups, the role of the Provincial Congress, the common mass mobilized for the first time for the national cause etc., totally neglecting the role of local organisations and institutions, sabhas and samitis and without socio-economic analysis of the movement. Since the present study aims at filling up some of these important gaps, the topic assumes significance. Since the present work has been undertaken with an intention to do justice to the all organisations worked for the cause of the India's independence and they as yet remained unwept, unsung and uncared. The significance of the present work therefore needs no exaggerations. Besides, the study also aims at highlighting unique features of the freedom movement, interesting events and fascinating stories which find no place in the supra-regional studies. The politico-economic analysis of the macro-

scope study is also expected to make the research more meaningful, fascinating and an unusual academic exercise. All these ideas put together have enhanced to the significance of the topic chosen for research.

5. Nature and Scope of the Study

The researcher, in order to make his studies systematic, continuous and connected, is expected to define the limits and boundaries of the studies in respect of time, space and theme. The present researcher proposes to cover history of the Freedom movement in Karnataka. There was a considerable difference in the nature of the movements in parts of the British administered areas on the one hand and that of the princely states on the other. Naturally the oppressive and tyrannical rule of British resulted in the asymmetrical growth of nationalism and public awakening in their dominions when those compared to the regions under the princely states. As a result, the researcher of the study makes an honest attempt to trace the dis-uniformity in the effectiveness of the Swadeshi movement in the different regions of Karnataka ruled by the different authorities.

Though the study is aimed at confining its extent to the present day boundaries of Karnataka, the external influences like the western impact, impact of national leaders like Lokamanya Tilak, Bipan Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Terrorists of Bengal, national and international affairs, leaders and their thoughts, and others, national newspapers pouring into the State could not be neglected.

The topic chosen for research has very broad perspectives. Therefore, in respect of time, quite an extensive period from 1905-1947 has been chosen for research. Even though the present study could cover the events from the Swadeshi movement and to make the present study more interesting and comprehensive the researcher has been taken the extra labour, time and effort to include the events up to the end of saga of the freedom.

As far as the nature of the Freedom movement in Karnataka was concerned, it can be aptly said that the movement was more active and intensive in few of the regions of the State. Because on the eve of Swadeshi and aftermath the geographical region of Karnataka was divided into many administrative divisions like, British dominions, princely states and the minor independent ruling families. When compared to the other regions of the State, the British provinces were having the most-corrupt, tyrannical and oppressive administrative measures; which succeeded in lightening the spirit of nationalism and awakening in the common mass. The enlightened educated middle class in the British Karnataka Super fed and plunged into the national arena of freedom struggle. As a result the Swadeshi movement was more active and intensive in the British dominions. Hence, the present study is focusing much on the British regions of Karnataka.

When the country was striving towards achieving the noble motive of releasing India from the colonial yoke, Karnataka was not an exception to the national Phenomenon; State was with the nation in every agitation and movement against the unlawful colonial rule. It was during the period of freedom movement that the people adopted neo-nationalist measures for struggle. The study commences with the uprisings made by some of the disgruntled elements in the beginning of nineteenth century which sparked the first reaction of the people of Karnataka to the British expansionist policy in the State. The latest limits of the study have been extended up to 1947.

6. Approach

As the research topic confines to the Freedom movement in Karnataka, it can be considered as the sub-national and macro-level study and therefore a grass-root level approach has adapted. With this approach, it is hoped that the role of the local organizations, associations, institutions, committees and conferences, samitis and sabhas and negligible segments of society in the India's struggle for freedom can receive due recognition and their sublime sacrifice for the noble cause can very well be identified and recognized. In the ultimate analysis, the proposed approach may be described as a subaltern approach.

A research scholar, in respect of such macro-level studies can develop interpretative, analytical or narrative approach. In view of the fact that research on the Freedom movement in Karnataka State has been undertaken for study, for the first time it is felt desirable to develop analytical and narrative rather than interpretative approach. Therefore, elaborate analyses of political ideologies are conspicuous by their absence.

7. Research Method

Historical method consisting of data collection, criticism, synthesis and exposition has been followed in the development of the present thesis. The document pertaining to the Freedom movement in Karnataka were scattered. Majority of them were preserved in the various files at the Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay. A few of these records were collected from the National Archives, New Delhi, Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore and Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad. With an intention to establish the authenticity and credibility of the documents, the method of corroborative evidences has been followed wherever necessary. While utilizing the diaries and memories personal prejudices and biases have been eliminated to the extent possible.

As far as synthesis is concerned, the conventional method has been adopted. The chapterisation of the thesis is primarily based on the thematic approach followed by chronological order. The exposition is concerned; a simple style of narration has been followed. In order to authenticate the account, a good number of footnotes and references have been given at the end of each chapter. Evidences have been quoted more from the primary than the secondary sources.

8. Research Design

Considering the extent of the territorial unit, intensity and variety of the movements, the thesis has been divided into seven chapters. Attempt has been made to make the study analytical and comprehensive. These objectives intended to be achieve in the present thesis will be effectively brought forth by the research design given below.

The first chapter being introductory does not contain any aspect of freedom movement. But the aims and objectives, relevance and significance, nature and scope, approach and methodology, source material as pertaining to the study was explained.

The second chapter is devoted for a detailed analysis of various factors which gave birth to the spirit of nationalism which were echoed by the national and international incidents in the State of Karnataka.

The third chapter deals with the politico-economic Organisations. It mainly consist the provincial congress and swadeshi industries.

Fourth chapter is considered as the nucleus of the thesis. It presents the narration of the role of socio-religious organisations especially the contribution made by Arya Samaj and others like, Brahma samaj, Prarthana samaj, Ramakrishna mission and the Theosophical society are explained thoroughly.

Fifth chapter entitled 'The Literary and Cultural Associations'. The chapter is devoted for National Schools. Various schools were traced from tilakan period to gandhian phase, narrated the outstanding contributions of the schools in the state. In part of cultural associations the religious festivals, literary samitis, Kannada Sanghas, and various unions of unification Movement are thoroughly discussed.

The sixth chapter reserved for Revolutionary Groups. In this regard Karnataka state level militant activities were traced. Special focus has been given to The Mazzini Club and its nationalist works.

9. Source Materials

Historicity and authenticity of the research work depends to a large extent on the primary sources used as evidences. The primary sources used in the present thesis are so vast and heterogeneous that only the classified account can reveal its magnitude. Therefore, the sources used in this thesis may be classified under the following broad headings;

- (i) Archival sources;
- (ii) Newspaper and Periodicals;
- (iii) Memoirs and
- (iv) Private collections

(i) Archival Records

The official documents pertaining to the Freedom movement in Karnataka has been preserved in the form of folios at the National Archives, New Delhi, Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay, Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore and Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad. These are all paper documents. Official documents of national significance have been preserved in New Delhi. They are all in English language. These documents have been classified into political Department and Home Department. Such documents preserved in the National Archives are very few, though they are of great national significance.

Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay is a rich repository of official documents pertaining to topic under research. A large number of official documents mostly written on papers have been preserved in the folio entitled political Department and Home Department. As we move in the chronology from the middle of the 19th to 20th Century the folios becomes voluminous. The official records directly pertaining to the topic of the research have been spread over more than one hundred files.

Report on Native News Papers constitutes very valuable and contemporary source material preserved in the Archives, Bombay. These files entitled report on native papers are innumerable. Karnataka State

Archives established during the post Independent period doesn't have any official records as pertaining to the Northern-Karnataka. But however some private collections of the Individual freedom fighters like Hardekar Manjappa, Alur Venkatrao, Sadashivrao, Muduvedkar Krishnarao, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande and others have been partially preserved in the State Archives of Karnataka. Also some available fragments of the some of Kannada daily and weekly papers are preserved in the micro-film division of the Archives.

(ii) Newspapers and Periodicals

'Karnataka Vaibhava' was not only one of the earliest newspapers published in Kannada from Bijapur, but more significantly it was a paper of high nationalistic spirit and fervour. It was very standard and popular daily newspaper throughout the course of the freedom movement in India and after. Therefore, the value of this newspaper in respect of Freedom movement in Karnataka was invaluable.

'Karnataka Vritta', published from Dharwad was another weekly of fervent nationalistic spirit. The developments in North Karnataka have been published in greater details in these papers. Besides, the nationalist papers like 'Dhanurdhari', a Kannada weekly edited by Hardekar Manjappa, 'Deshabhimani' a Kannada daily edited by B. S. Iyengar from princely State of Mysore area contained news items as well as interpretative articles on the event of the Freedom movement in Karnataka.

Besides these, larger section of the press like Kesari, Maratha, The Hindu, Vishal Karnataka, The Bombay Chronicle, The Times of India and the Galaxy of Kannada papers like Kannadiga, Chandrica, Chandrodaya, Kannada Kesari, Dharwad Vritta, Rajahamsa, Vagbhushana, Lokabandhu and many other papers have published aspects of the Freedom movement in Karnataka and area around with due importance and necessary details.

(iii) Memoirs

'Swatantrya Sangramada Smritigalu' edited by Dr. Suryanath Kamath is a valuable treasure of primary source for reconstructing the history of freedom Movement in Karnataka though not exhaustive, it presents the memoirs of prominent participants in the saga of the freedom struggle in Karnataka. The diaries maintained by Hardekar Manjappa published under the title 'Rashtradharma Drastara: Hardekar Manjappa' edited by G. S. Halappa are valuable sources on the study. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande had the epithet of 'The Lion of Karnataka' was an eminent freedom fighter from Belgaum. He had recorded his memories in Marathi by Pundaleekji Katagade, these memoirs of Gangadhar Rao Deshpande re-written by Ramachandra Vadavi in Kannada, as entitled with "Deshpande Gangadhararayararu" in the form of an autobiography is only an authoritative source to talk about the all side developments of Tilakan phase. 'Nanna Jeevana Smritigalu' by Alur Vekatr.

10. A Brief History of Karnataka - At a Glance

Karnataka was the cradle of many kingdoms, a treasure of many renowned dynasties and a centre of sculpture. Her cultural tradition is glorious, unity in diversity; tolerance and an attitude of mutual co-operation, the understanding and tolerance among different religions are the important aspects of its culture. The different kings, saints, poets, intellectuals, reformers and artists of Karnataka, have fostered

these aspects. We can see here the meeting point of the Aryan culture of the North and the Dravidian culture of the South.

(a) Antiquity of the word 'Karnataka'

This land whose antiquity can be traced back to about 2000 B.C. has the name "Karnataka". It is not clear how this name originated. The Sabha Parva of "Mahabharatha" while referring to the "Janapadas" refers to "Karnatam" and the Bhisma Parva refers to "Karnatam". In short the words "Karnataka", "Karnata" and "Kannada" are indicators of a land, people and language. Their origin is: Karnadu-Kannadu-Kannada.⁹

Our ancient Sanskrit texts have referred to "Karnataka". Ancient poets have called her "Kuntala", "Banavasi", "Punnata", "Mahishika" etc., Shudraka's "Mruchhakatika", Varaha Mihira's (6th century A.D.) "Bruhat Samhita", "Markandeya Purana", (8th century A.D), Somadeva's "Kathasaritsagara" have also referred to "Karnata".¹⁰ In the Tamil text "Shilappadikaram" (between 2nd and 5th century A.D.) has a reference to "Karunadigar". In the Velvakudi copper plates of the pandyan king Shedyen Parantaka (8th century A.D.) there is reference to "Karunadigan".¹¹

In the work of the 10th century poet Rajashekar's "Kavyamimamse", "Karnataka" has been referred to. The Greek astronomer Ptolemy's works (140 A.D.) have some Kannada words as well as reference to certain places of Karnataka. Like for instance: Badiyamayi (Badami), Modugolla (Mudgal), Petrigala (Pattadakallu), Pasage (Palage) etc. Nrupathunga's "Kavirajamarga" describes the extension of the Karnataka from the river Kavery to the river Godavari.¹²

The words, "Karnadu", "Kammittunadu" and "Karunadu"- found in Tamil classics have been interpreted by scholars as to mean the land of black soil, the land of fragrance and land at a height (Plateau).¹³ According to B.S. Saletore, "Kannadu" or "Karnadu" originally meant a great land or a land of heights and Sanskritised form of these names probably became "Karnata", "Karnata", "Karnataka" and "Maharashtra" (vast land).¹⁴

A seal of Mohenjadarro has a symbol of an eye and this might have given rise to the proto-Dravidian word "Kannar" whose Sanskritised version is "Karnataka". Fr. Heras opines that the seal shows that Kannadigas are one of the oldest people of this land.¹⁵

As according to Venkanniah there was a small district in the hilly regions of "Sreesaila" and "Kannavishaya" (Karnata province), "Kannadu" from which Kannadigas derived their name for their land and language.¹⁶

Muliya thimappaiah argues that the original race of Kannadigas was a mixture of these two tribes viz., the "Kanvas" and the "Natas". Shamba Joshi is of the opinion that the "Kalavas" belonging to original Dravidian race are called "Kannas" or Kannaru. The admixture of these two tribes viz., Kalavas and Kannas gave rise to the Karnataka culture.¹⁷

Thus as to the origin and development of the word "Karnataka" the scholars hold diverse opinions and each interpretation has been criticized by others. As such no final word has yet been said

about it. So far the oldest record available regarding the origin of Kannada script and language is the Halmidi inscription (Hassan Dt.) of Kadambas (450 A.D.). From this to later Vijayanagara time many inscriptions have come to light and they are in old (Halegannada) and Medieval Kannada (Nadugannada).¹⁸

Conclusion:

Karnataka was called Mysore State in recent times and now since 1st November 1973 has been renamed as "Karnataka". The ancient name "Karnataka" for this land, language and people is appropriate. Karnataka with many historical and cultural traditions has a place of pride in Indian history. The dynasties namely Ganga, Kadamba, Chalukya, Rashtrakuta, Hoysala, Vijayanagara and Mysore are famous for their valour and adventure. This land has given birth to many illustrious sons like Devaraya, Sankanna Nayaka, and Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. A valiant historical person who can easily be in this roll of honour, Kappe Aarabhatta of 7th century A.D. has been described in Badami inscription as:

"Good to the good
Tender towards the tender
Wicked to the wicked
Is none other than the Vishnu himself."

Such inscriptions, reflecting the valour and greatness of Kannadigas are found throughout this land.

This does not mean that Karnataka was just a battlefield. On the contrary it was a meeting point of various religions and philosophers. The great scholars, preachers and reformers like Shankara, Ramanuja, voluntarily came down to Karnataka. The famous sons of Karnataka like Basaveshwara, Madhvacharya, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and their followers worked hard to install in the minds of people the qualities of piety, bhakti, social service, patriotism and introspection which have helped in the growth of the Karnataka culture. The ancient inscriptions and literature proclaim that these qualities were interwoven into the life of Kannadigas. According to one inscription these qualities were taught by the mother to the child from the cradle:

The Chief Minister, Lakshmidhara of Devaraya I, the king of Vijayanagara was taught by his mother even as a child playing on the lap of his mother: "Build tanks and lakes, dig wells, construct temples, help the orphans and friends; protect those who have faith in you and support your followers." A survey of a land and its culture where such things are taught to babies will be a signpost to the present generation and posterity (future generation).

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