

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KARNATAKA IN THE NOTION OF KANNADA LITERATURE

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Abstract:

This paper examines how contemporary Indian Literature contributes to the discourse on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as catalysts for India's revitalization and transformation. Through a comparative analysis of Shobha De's urban narratives and Perumal Murugan's rural fiction, the study demonstrates how literary resistance aligns with three critical SDGs: Gender Equality (SDG 5), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Climate Action (SDG 13). De's *Socialite Evenings* and *Starry Nights* expose systemic gender barriers in metropolitan India, epitomized by protagonists who challenge patriarchal norms—"I didn't want to be a good daughter-in-law, I wanted to be a person." These narratives mirror SDG 5's imperative for women's empowerment in India's urban transformation. Conversely, Murugan's *One Part Woman* reveals how caste-based exclusion ("There was no room in this world for a barren woman") perpetuates rural inequalities (SDG 10), while *Poonachi* allegorizes the climate crisis through its depiction of ecological precarity ("Water was rationed even for the animals"), addressing SDG 13's urgency. This paper argues that these contrasting literary worlds—one reflecting India's globalizing cities, the other its marginalized countryside—converge in their critique of development challenges. Their shared defiance offers unique insights for India's SDG implementation, suggesting that literary narratives can diagnose structural obstacles to sustainable development, amplify marginalized voices in policy discussions, and imagine culturally grounded solutions for India's transformation. By bridging literary analysis with development studies, this research highlights fiction's underutilized potential in SDG advocacy, particularly for India's unique urban-rural dynamics

Keywords: SDGs, Indian Literature, Gender Justice, Caste Equity, Ecological Sustainability, Narrative Resistance

INTRODUCTION

Aliveness of the language and culture of a particular race, can concrete through its rich literature. As in the course of Kannada, beginning of the prose writing and freedom movement was formalized in similar phase of time. Until, the traditional poetry was unable to express the modern ideas which were bonded and come through the western intelligence. It was applicable to the all Indian languages. In a way journalism gave the greater contribution to popularize the prose. Without mention the Kannada journalism we could not assume the freedom movement. Hence, these two were thickly influenced vis-a-vis.

Kannada language has got the accreditation of classical language by the government of India. It has the above 2500 years of history and have the enriched literature in all forms. In India, the highest eight Gnanapeetha awards received by the eminent Kannada literatures namely Kuvempu, Karanta, Bendre, Masti, Gokak, Ananthmurthy and Karnad. The freedom movement of Karnataka highly influenced by the forefront writers of Kannada from 1900 to 1956 in the various notions of the Kannada literatures.

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 interdisciplinary studies like Kannada literature and its contribution to the freedom movement. The present research work has been undertaken with the assumption that grass-root level studies alone will help to make the freedom movement in Kannada literature more meaningful.

1. Correlate the all international national and regional historic events and movements nurtured in the forms of Kannada literature.
2. To study the nationalistic features portrait in essay, drama, theatre, poetry, lavani, folklore and other forms of literature.
3. To translate these above concerned all forms of Kannada literature into English and make it a good historic document.²¹

Review of Research and Development in the Subject

The middle class intelligence of Karnataka started journalism of Kannada as early as the origin of INC in 1885. There were hundreds of papers and journals were published across the state viz., Rajahansa (1891), Vrihanta Chintamani (1885), Suvasini (1900), Karnataka Vaibhav (1897), Krishna Sukti (1905), Swadeshashimani (1907), Karnataka Vritta (1890), Kannada Kesari (1902) and others, the freedom movement stimulated the publication of many Kannada newspapers and vis-à-vis. It gave birth to the growth of several forms of literature like the short story, essay, novel, drama, ballad, lyrical poetry, dynastic history, biography, autobiography, were developed in Kannada literature.¹

The role of prose literature is remarkable. The prose literature source the incidents and thought to the speech, drama and others forms. In this phase of prose works rarely quote the British directly, but in the form of icons or historical events of ancient and medieval India, through which met the absolute cause of freedom. Galaganatha, Venkatacharya, Vasudevaiah, Subodh Ramrao, Devudu Narasimha Shastri, M.S. Venkatakrishnaiah and other are represented the contemporary prose literature.²

B. Venkatacharya was translated the 'Anand Matha' of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee from Bengali to Kannada. The Sanyasi revolt which was took place in the 18th century and was one of the first anti British revolts In India. The summary of the 'Anand Matha' was the Sanyasi revolt. The famous and fabulous national song Vande Mataram was a part of that novel. The novel injected the hundreds of youths; they might ready to shed their blood for the cause of freedom. In the same way 'Devadu' used the Kadamba dynasty of Karnataka by making 'Mayursharma' as the hero of Kannada race and he fought against the Pallavas of Kanchi. Galaganatha communicated through Vijayanagar and Vasudevaiah used the Rajaputs in his 'Arya Keerti'. This task was concreted through writing articles about the great warriors, biographies of patriots, Autobiographies of the freedom lighters, historical events and incidents and so on.³

Short Story and Novel

There are many short stories published in the contemporary papers are of greatly influenced by the freedom movement. But, today they are available in figure counted, due to their dearth as literary work. Freedom fighters developed themselves experienced ideas directly in these stories. For example Gorur's 'Prayashchitta'. Theme of the story is, the young, lady, who has actively participated in the freedom movement. The Police Inspector, who could have been beaten her head by his lathi. But, after hitting that lady, the Police Inspector was mentally stressed by this incident and gave up the job, instead he married that young lady. Shantarasa

wrote the composition of short stories namely 'Urida Baduku' here many of the stories reflected the skirmishes by the Razakar's in Hyderabad Karnataka. Novels are very dominant source and they are remaining even today as the remarkable literary source for freedom struggle, due to their enormous availability.⁴

Rao Bahadur's (Kakemani) 'Bitti Beledavaru' is the very important work. This narrates the freedom struggle with a pacific scope than other novels in Kannada. Theme of the novel is Annarao, the eldest son of a Zamindar of Modnur. Annarao came in contact with revolutionary movement, when Tilak was imprisoned in 1908. After, he has actively participated in 1920's Non-co-operative movement, 1930's salt Satyagraha, Elections of 1936, quit India movement of 1942, and the second world war in 1945 struggling for freedom, he had to fight with his brother vis-a-vis. Family skirmishes, love-Loneliness. Zamindar servant, Zamindar-farmer relations took reverse turn and stand before sight in the huge novel about 720 pages. The novel ends with the fall of Herosima and Nagasaki.⁵

'Aoudaryada Urulalli' a novel written by K. Shivaram Karanth. It is getting very near influence by the life the great patriot Karnad Sadhashivarao. Goruru's 'Meravanige' is another big work might join this line. The hero of the novel, Sudharshan lived at Sabarmati Ashram for few years. His anti British speeches made him sentenced for imprisonment. After came out from the prison, he took a village called 'Mallige' as model one. It caused British official's anger eye. In 1930's he went to Ankola, and participated in Salt Satyagraha, forced the British cultured Patela's to resign their posts. Comparing their classmates having well and wealthy in condition it of him. Sudharshan himself worried for him unhealthy condition to family and helplessness to his mother. Further, he participated in anti simmon commission protest and Gandhi led cottage development programme. So, the novel introduced various facets of the freedom struggle.

The novel 'Madi Madidavaru' by Basavraj Kattimani is an important work, dealing with underground activities of 1942, in the region of Belgaum. 'Chirasmrane' of Niranjan is a popular novel a single incident is narrating up to end of the novel about the Ryot enlightenment other important novels reflected the deep influence of freedom Movement are 'Hindirugi Baralilla' of Ko. Chennabasappa, M.V. Inamdar's 'Murabatte' 'Hemantagana' of Vyasraya Ballala, 'Rashtraparush' and 'Prati Sarkar' of Mirzi Annaraya, Gokaka's, 'Vijayotsava', 'Suligali' of Jayateertha Rajapurohita 'Mugiyada Payana' o S. Anantanarayan and etc. are directly responded with the freedom struggle.⁶

Autobiographies and Biographies

In this part highly enlightened the influence of freedom movement, through translated the Autobiographies and biographies of national leaders, freedom fighters and revolutionaries.

'Gandhis autobiography' my experiments with truth is translated in two versions. One is under the title of 'Satyashodhana' by Nittur Shrinivasrao and his wife Padma. Through which the famous 'Satyashodhana Pustaka Bhandhara' was began in Bangalore. Another one is 'Sathyanveshane' by Goruru. So, Jawaharlal Nehru's Autobiography is also translated. Kastura bai Gandhi, Netaji Subhaschandra Bose, Vallabha Bhai Patel, Balagangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and other's biographies of national leaders are published in vernacular editions.⁷

Babu Krishnamurthy was written the 'Ajeya Krantikari' it's a life history of Chandrashekhar Azad, Dr. G. Ramakrishna wrote 'Bhagat Singh'. And other few booklets introduced the life style of revolutionaries. Many autobiographies of the Karnataka freedom fighters who were engaged in the national cause are published. H.K. Veerannagouda's 'Baduku Meluku,' N.S. Hardikar's 'Magidaru Moggu'. 'Nanna Jeevana Smritigalu' of Alur Venkata Rao and

the Autobiographies of Gangadhar Rao Deshapande, Kadidal Manjappa, Sardar Venkataramaiah, K.F. Patil, Tagadur Ramachandra Rao, R.R. Diwakar, Karnad Sadashvarao, Siddavvanahalli Krishnasharma, Kaujalgi Hanamanthrao, Mohare Hanamantrao, T. Siddalingaiah, Swamy Ramananda Teertha and three huge volumes of 'Swatantrya Sangramada Smritigalu', edited by Suryanath U. Kamat are of greatly influenced the youth and made them voluntarily plunged in to the arena of freedom movement from the regional unit of Karnataka⁸.

Essay and History

National freedom movement brought up the political system of the country, constitution, Economic development and other burning topics in the minds of educated intelligentsia. So many essay works are came out, and published as paper articles in thousands. Burli Bindhu Modhav started the 'Minchina Balli' Grantamala for publication of such the essay works. Grama Swarajya, Sarvodaya, Socialism, Revolutions of French, America and Russia's events were systematically worked out. The essay's enormously published regarding prohibition of liquor, caste and color.

Historiography is another important form of prose developed by the influence of freedom movement. Some incidents and events of freedom movement could filled the pages of articles and books. R.R. Diwakar's "Karnatakadalli Kara Nirakarane" and 'Karnataka through the ages', Alur Venkatrao's 'Karnataka Gatavaibhava' are the finest among them. Isoora and Vidhurashwatta massacre, Savarkar's first freedom movement of India (1857) was translated in Kannada and the Government was forfeited it. Karnatakada Swantrya Sangramada Smritigalu Volume I, II and III and "Karnatakadalli quit India Horata" are edited by Suryanath Kamat. Bharateeya Vidya bhavan estimated the huge project to publish Gandhian works in 100 volumes. N.P. Shankar Narayana's "Nyayalayagalalli Swatantrya Horata", 'Swatantrya Gangeya Savira Toregalu', 'Swatantryada Guri-Bharata Dari' and 'Swatantryada Agnidivya' are the best efforts towards developed the Historiography under the influence of freedom movement and nationalism⁹.

Poetry

In 1921, Prof. B.M. Srikantayya heralded the 'Navodaya' movement. The seven Jnanapeetha awardees except U.R. Ananthamurthy and Karnad rest of all the five have been writing since the Navodaya times. Samsa's plays in Halegannada, D.V.G's Mankutirnmana Kaggera' and K.S Narasimha Swamy's 'Mysore Mallige' a collection of poems with love and separation as the theme, are the landmark works of the Navodaya period G. Rajaratnam, Pu. Thi. Na., Gorur, A.N. Murthy Rao M.R. Srinivas, T.N. Srikantayya, A.R. Krishnashastri, S.V. Ramganna. V. Sitaramayya are belonged to Navodaya stream of literature.¹⁰

In the mid-forties the Navodaya movement gave way to Pragathisheela Chaluvali. A. N. Krishna Rao was the torch bearer for this. The movement brought writers from their ivory tower to the common man. It was direct effect of Gandhi's tour in Karnataka and contemporary freedom struggle across the country. Anakru, Basavaraja Kattimani, Tarasu, Niranjana, Chaduranga, Triveni, Anupama, M.K. Indira and others portrayed the freedom and agrarian movements in their writings.

Next to the progressive movement was the Navya movement. This was influenced mostly by the Post war writers like T.S. Eliot, Auden. Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, Sartre and Camus. Gopalakrishna Adiga was the foremost exponent of the Navya movement and his 'Bhoomi Geetha' is said to have been influenced by T.S. Eliot's waste land. P. Lankesh, Sri Krishna Alanahalli, Shantinath Desai, Tejaswi, Nisar Ahmed, U.R. Ananthmurthy, Yeshwanth Chittala,

Vyasaraya Ballala, Chandrashekhara Kambar, A. K. Ramanujan and others are influenced by Navel literature. Post-Navya writing is some times called as Navyottara Sahitya. In this face there are mainly three streams namely, Bandaya, Dalita and the feminist movements. Our study confines from beginning of out break of 1857 revolt to India's independence i.e., in the Phase of Kannada literature Navodaya, Pragatisheela and Navya are taken in consideration as concern to our topic of research¹¹.

Gandhiji was pioneer in the freedom movement and his foot prints were facsimile in all Indian languages. Gandhiji was an epoch maker and became theme to the contemporary poetry. Intellectual order of the time, the ideas of Ravindra, Vivekananda, Ramateertha, Aravinda, the famous trio of the freedom movement Lal, Bal and Pal's contribution not only become the mere politics, but philosophical one. The dream of freedom became remarkable inspiration. This concept, became collective thought and novelty to the poetry. In this regard the common folk and the freedom fighter themselves composed in simple style of poetry in the form of Tripadi, Lavani and Kathana Padya¹² (Poem story).

Theater and Art

Kannada thinkers and writers are opinion that, "Kannada literature was not supported the Indian national movement in expected, volume, composition of literature in this regard is less". This was, applicable to even drama as consider it as literature. But, overview the contemporary theatre, itself contributed to the freedom movement in expected manner.

Except folk theatre, the companies became main activity centers of drama. The then class and mass became the audience of company dramas. In the field of theatre, that was not flitted into professional and amateur.

The exhibition of historical dramas like Sangolli Rayanna, Tipu Sultan, Kittur Channamma, Yecchama Nayaka, Sindhura Laxmana and others made remarkable effect to the people acceptance towards the freedom.¹³

Abbigeri 'Kannada Sahitya Seva Nataka Mandali', at first acted the drama of 'Kittur Channamma' composed by Shivalinga Shashtri in 1929. This was having fully message of freedom movement. All comprise might experience the taste of torture by the police officials for getting license. It was quite common struggle to the owners of the drama companies to get license and start the exhibition of drama.¹⁴

Asprushyata Nivarane' by 'Shivalingeshwara Natya Sangha', 'Bhagyaodaya Nataka Mandalis', 'Naragund Bandaya', 'Rajadhroha' of Sharada Sangita Nataka Mandali of Gokak, and 'Lokaseva Sangita Nataka Mandali of Sampagavi's', 'Sangolli Rayanna', were forfeited the license by the police officials. By the impulse of the dramas, the audience snapped with their chappals to actors, who were acted as in role of British Officials. While exhibition of dramas like Kittur Channamma, Sangolli Rayanna and others, the subservient speeches of the drama carried the audience class towards the freedom movement. After end of the exhibition the audience took oath to dedicate their lives to the cause of liberty to the nation. After came out from the theatre many audience burnt their dresses made up of foreign cloth. While returning to their villages, from the drama companies, the audience cutting off the toddy trees.¹⁵

Owners of the theatre, after forfeited the license by police, the same drama was played at that night with changing the title of the drama without changing it's subject matter. Some of the Kannada sub-ordinate officials to the British helped the companies secretly and gave the license.

In the way of historical dramas, the Puranic dramas also creatively changed the scenes with suitable to the freedom ideals. Kandagal Hanmanthrao's 'Akshayambra', Anakru's 'Bhakta Pralhada', B. Puttaswamaiah's, 'Akkamahadevi' and Kurukshetra', Shivalingh Swami's 'Veera Rani Rudramma', dramas of Garuda Sadashivarao, Nalawadi Shrikanthashashtri, Sriranga, Samsa, Kailasam, Mahantesh Shashtri, Duttargi and others were highlighted prohibition of untouchability casteism and liquor and simultaneously gave importance to the Khadi and Charaka, literacy of downtrodden class, non-violent struggle had other Gandhian ideals in their dramas importantly. In finally, the company dramas not only provocation the freedom movement but defend the underground activists, agitators, freedom fighters, revoltees from the Iron clutches of the British officials¹⁶.

Position of Kannada in Karnataka

Karnataka had been more stricken and victimized than Bengal; for, while the misfortune of the latter was due to the recent partition, the affliction and humiliation of the former had commenced a century earlier. When it had been torn as under and its different parts handed over to different provinces. The people of the northern districts of Karnataka were subjected to the aggressive influence of the Maharashtrians those in the north-eastern parts were subjected to the relentless autocracy of a Muslim state, while in the remaining parts (except the princely State of Mysore) there was the imposition of Andhra (Telugu) or Tamilian influence. Still, the national upsurge found Kannadigas ready to take up the national cause and identify themselves with the rest of India.

Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, when he was studying a graduation in the Deccan College at Pune in 1892-93, was demanded to spare some pages for Kannad articles in the quarterly of the college but, finally succeeded. Maharashtrians were trifling the students of Karnataka as 'Kanadi Appa'. Even Marathi Scholars like Dr. Bhandarker claimed to the Kannada students that as "your language is the language of Southern barbarians", once at the college campus.

At a public meeting at Gurla Hosur in Belgaum district, in the beginning of his speech, Tilak said that "we are the Maharashtrians like a rent holders in view of the language.¹³ There was in many parts of Maharashtra Kannada was dominated prior to Marathi language, when it was in growing stage, but recently Kannada doesn't have its traces in Marathi areas. So that Kannadigas must forgive me, it has come to talk in Marathi.

Once, while at a public meeting at Bailahongal in Belgaum district Tilak was speaking in Marathi, but the villagers didn't follow the meaning of Marathi wholly, Tilak traced the gloomy faces of the mass and informed to Gangadhar Rao Deshpande to translate his Marathi speech in Kannada and also advised to continue the Kannada language in the public meetings. Hence, Tilak pay respect to the provincial languages and suggest developing the culture of learning the neighbouring vernaculars with one's own language.

Alur Venkata Rao was also criticised the dull and poor linguistic love of the Kannadigas. The Bengalees made a nation wide uproar for the partition of Bengal only in two parts. But, the geographical unity of Karnataka was spoiled in fragments. Eventhough Kannadigas were not awakened. For that he visited all most all the historical places of Karnataka and wrote a monumental work entitled with '*Karnatakada Gata Vaibhava*'. In this work he narrated the past glory of Karnataka and its language, literature, art and architecture etc. It opened the sleepy eyes and sticky hearts of the people of Karnataka.

One significant feature of Alur Venkata Rao's works was the use of colloquial language for the benefit of the common people. In fact Venkatarao's style of narration is highly refined

emotional and full of un-usual Sanskrit vocabulary to be understood by people with higher education and background of Sanskrit knowledge. But surprisingly he has used the simplest possible language in the style of day to day conversation among rural folk. He was fond of selecting the most suitable illustrations from Indian mythology which are quite familiar to even to un-educated masses. In a book entitled '*protest denied home rule*', Alur Venkata Rao has examined the weakness of the Indian people in being very assertive in our demand of Home Rule. Accordingly to him Indian people have no co-ordination, no unanimous opinion. India lacks one single common language which is essential for making a nation, nor are there enlightened people in India, people who cannot manage the affairs of a big nation of India.

Similarly, he examines the problem of multiple languages in India. He excel that people are baffled as to whether they should develop national pride for national language or their mother tongue. Therefore, ultimately it is an uphill task to bring about nationalism in India, as long as a single language is adopted and developed as a national language.

Alur Venkata Rao thoroughly examined the problem of language and nationalism. He has advocated the principle of three languages. In order to bring about the spirit of nationalism in India, he said that Hindi should be used for administrative purpose all over India. Secondly, we should also adopt the mother tongue in our domestic dealings in addition to Sanskrit as the medium of social contact and communication.

But however, he warned the people about their linguistic patriotism. He says language is the main gate to the human mind. It is a means for achieving excellence of human soul and the nation, but not to harm him. In one context he said that the spirit of nationalism should be hidden in our hearts, as the devotion for Rama was hidden in the heart of Anjaneya was opened there the script Sri Rama was found written.

Similarly, if our hearts are cut open, one should find the script 'India is my nation' (this is my Bharatha Desha) written in our hearts.

National Status

History of Karnataka and Kannada literature impacted and impressed by the Bengal, Maharashtra and little bit from state of Madras. The national poets (Rashtra Kavi) fame Kuvempu and Govinda Pai and others like Punje Mangeshrao, Dinakar Desai, Venkatrao Alur, Balacharya, S. B. Joshi, were produced Kannada poetry on the lines of Ravindranath Tagore, Subramanian Bharati, B. C. Chatterjee, and the writings of the historic trio, namely Lal, Bal and Pal. These writings given a new strength and leap forward to freedom movement and volumize the Kannada literature.¹⁸

Conclusion

Kannada literature played an essential role in shaping the consciousness of Karnataka's people during the freedom movement. The integration of nationalist themes in prose, poetry, theater, and journalism created a strong cultural foundation for resistance against British rule. This study highlights the literary contributions that have remained unacknowledged and aims to preserve this heritage for future generations.

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