



Leading A Movement towards Freedom: The Leaders who Lead Karnataka to unification & Independence

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Abstract

This paper highlights only a few of these stalwart leaders who breathed in the air of self-consciousness, self-awareness & self-perception through social reconstruction activities. It was not an easy job but these leaders strove hard with promotion of impulsive persuasion, patriotic urge, advocacy of self-reliance. The Nationalist movement was supported by accumulated efforts of innumerable people who contributed to the awakening of ideas of Unification & Freedom across Karnataka region. In Karnataka nationalist awakening was slow to take an explicit character because of the rule of Maharaja in one hand & imperative control of British on the other. This paper sketches the role of several of these leaders who strove hard to create a consciousness of Unity & togetherness among Kannada people & side by side attempted to integrate mass awareness towards Nationalist Activities. They pained towards mobilizing the mass consciousness through a variety of social reconstruction programs. The movement towards Freedom also acquired a new-fangled shade as unification movement gathered impetus across Karnataka region.

Key words: *movement towards Freedom, integrate mass awareness, Nationalist Activities*

"I am a salesman of Swaraj. I am a devotee of Khadi. It is my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear Khadi." (Mahatma Gandhi - Navajivan, 26-4-1925; 26:548)

Introduction:

The Nationalist movement was supported by innumerable people who contributed to the awakening of ideas of Unification & Freedom across Karnataka region. In Karnataka nationalist awakening was slow to take an explicit character because of the rule of Maharaja in one hand &

imperative control of British on the other.

Aluru Venkat Rao: Aluru venkar rao was one of the most eminent leaders of the movement. He had a very strong impact on the *Ekikarana* movement which was fighting for a separate state encompassing all speaking areas of and Nizam's Hyderabad. Even



though the first strains of this movement had started as early as in 1856 and the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha had been established in 1890, the movement took a dramatic turn with the arrival of Aluru Venkata Rao on the scene. The single most important event that spurred the movement into frenzy was the publishing of Aluru's magnum opus, Karnataka Gatha Vaibhava in 1912. Such was the impact of his work on the masses that he came to be known as the Kannada Kula Purohita or the 'High priest of the Kannada kula'. He was an active member in all literary activities outside North Karnataka. He mobilized funds and popular support in founding Kannada Sahitya Parishat, the august literary body in 1915. He was vice president and real force behind Vijayanagara sixh-century celebrations in Hampi when all living great South Indian historians, researchers, archeologists and writers were brought on a single platform in 1936. He was elected as the President of 16th all Karnataka literary meet, "Sahitya Sammelan" held in Mysore 1930. He wrote books on Madhwa philosophy and Bhagavadgita for commoners leading a sage's life. He died in 1964. Dharwad city is full of memorials, in founding of

which Aluru had a hand. Karnataka College and University, Shantesha library and Vidyavardhak Sangha. Itihasa Samsodhak Mandali, and Sadhankeri, which he himself named and lived in.

Justice S.S. Setlur (1862-1930):

It was Mr. Justice S.S. Setlur who founded the Congress party in Princely Mysore in June 1921 through which various constructive activities were monitored. He studied Law & became a leading solicitor in Bombay. He was a staunch follower of Lokmanya Tilak. He was highly impressed by his sharp writings & speeches. Tilak's concepts of Swadeshi & National education attracted him towards joining politics. In 1908, the Dewan of Mysore, Sir V.P. Madhava Rao⁸³ appointed him as a Judge of the Mysore Chief Court. But the British Resident in Mysore, Sir Stuart Fraser, objected to the appointment in view of Setlur's links with Tilak. Setlur had to resign his judgeship. Mr. Setlur was an authority on Hindu law and had translated original works such as those of the Mithakshara School from Sanskrit to English. While in Mumbai, he also served as the Correspondent of The Hindu paper.



Gangadhararao Deshpande

(1871-1960): He was an outstanding nationwide leader of the Congress. He was the poignant spirit behind the Belgaum Congress of December 1924, which was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi. He enjoyed the unique privilege of being a close lieutenant of both Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. In fact, he was called the Tilak of Karnataka⁸⁴. He was the founder and first President of the Karnataka Provincial Committee⁸⁵, after the Nagpur Congress accepted the principle of linguistic provinces. It was the Belgaum Congress, which gave a stimulus to the political ambition & aspirations of Kannadigas. It is of interest that it was Deshpande who opened the Khadi Vastralaya in 1926. In 1956, when the States Reorganization Commission, led by Mr. Justice Fazl Ali, visited Belgaum, they interviewed Deshpande & recorded his views on the unification of the Kannada-speaking areas.

Dr. N.S.Hardikar (1889-1975):

He was the founder of the Hindustan Sevalal, sacrificed a lucrative career in medicine to plunge into the freedom struggle and Gandhian constructive activities. He was inspired by Tilak. Hailing from Dharwad, he took his degree in Medicine from

the Calcutta University and had his higher education from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor U.S. He was one of the first from Bombay-Karnataka to study in the United States. Hardikar launched the Hindustan Sevalal on the eve of the Belgaum Congress and stood side by side with Deshpande.

Swamy Ramanand Tirtha:

The history of the freedom struggle in Hyderabad-Karnataka cannot be touched without mentioning the name of Swamy Ramanand Tirtha. He was born Venkatesh Khedagi in Sindagi town in Bijapur District. He was ordained as a sanyasi, and became Ramanand Tirtha. A postgraduate of the Poona University, he was for a time associated with the well-known trade unionist M.N.Joshi. Ramanand Tirtha is better known for his struggle against the repressive regime of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Razakars. When Mr. S.B.Chavan was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, he named the Marathwada University at Nanded after Ramanand Tirtha⁸⁶.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya:

she was among the few women from Karnataka to make it big in the Congress at the national level and also in public affairs. Hailing from an aristocratic Konkani-



speaking family from Mangalore, she became a child widow. She later went to England and obtained a Diploma in Sociology from the London University. Kamaladevi was a versatile personality and her interests included the fine arts and acting. She acted in the silent film with Kannada subtitles Vasanthasena. For a time, she was married to Harindranath Chattopadhyay, the actor and poet- brother of Sarojini Naidu. Kamaladevi served as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha.

Thagadur Ramachandra Rao (1898-1988): It was Thagadur Ramachandra Rao (1898-1988), who can be called the "Father of Political Unrest" in princely Mysore⁸⁷. He was, perhaps, the first to launch the politics of agitation against the rule of Dewan Mirza Ismail. Even before the Vaikom Temple entry movement in the then Travancore State (1924), Ramachandra Rao spearheaded the movement for allowing entry for members of the Kaniyar caste into the famous Shiva temple in Nanjangud. He launched the Gandhian constructive movement in a big way in the villages of Mysore District by opening Khadi kendras, launching Harijan welfare programmes etc.

K.T.Bashyam (1895-1956): He was foremost among the Congress leaders of Indian States. His home in Cottonpet in Bangalore was also the headquarters of the Mysore Pradesh Congress. He was one of the earliest to join the Congress (1921). He was a brilliant lawyer, legislator and political leader⁸⁸..

Kyasamballi Chengalaraya

Reddy (1902-76): The first chief minister of Mysore, was a household name in old Mysore. Hailing from Kolar District, he was the President of the Mysore Congress at the time of Independence. Before that, he had the record of a long struggle in the freedom movement. He was also a member of the Constituent Assembly along with his father-in-law, H.R.Guruva Reddy⁸⁹. He later became a member of the Nehru Cabinet, and was Governor of Madhya Pradesh⁹⁰.

Other Leaders- Several Stalwart leaders like

Gudleppa hallikerei
Kengal hanumathaih
Koujalagi srinivasa rao
Nijalingappa S
Mariyappa T ,
Rangarao diwakar
R H Despande
Siaddappa kambli
Siddappa hallikeri
Srinivas rao mangalvadhe,
Subramanya ,



Sowcar Chennaiah,
Veerannagowda,
.Dasappa H .C
Siddaiah H

All of these & a host of others appealed to people to join in constructive activities⁹¹. In 1920, Karnataka State Political Conference was held at Dharwad. At this conference, which was presided over by V. P. Madhav Rao, a unanimous resolution was passed demanding the unification of all Kannada speaking areas⁹².

Conclusion: Thus in Karnataka nationalist awakening was slow to take an explicit character because of the rule of Maharaja in one hand & imperative control of British on the other. The move towards Unification integrated itself with Nationalist Movement because of the measured activities of these committed leaders who successfully ignited the consciousness of people to unite together & fight for united India.

Table: 1. List of Women Freedom Fighters

Name of freedom fighter	Place of hailing
Susheelamma bellare	Bellary
Umabai Kundapura	Hubli
Krishnabai Panjekar	Honnagara
Kamaladevi Chattopadhaya	Mangalore
Yashodhara Dasappa	Bangalore
Tayamma Veeranna gowda	Mysore
Mahadevitayi Doddamane	Hubli
Bellary Siddamma	Bellary
Gowramma Venkataramayya	Mysore
Bommakka Kanagil	Hubli
Nagamma Patil	Dharawada
Vishalakshamma patail	Dharawada
Subbamma jois	Sirsi
Lakshamma Gurupada rao	Jamkhandi
Padamavathi bidri	Jamakahandi
Sarvamangala byrappa	Sirsi
Bhavani bai	Sirsi
Sarojamma srinivasachhar	Hubli
Jayalakishmi bai	Bellary
Hemavathi Gopalayya	Hubli
Shakunthala kurthakoti	Belgaum
Anuasuya ramarao	Belgaum
Sowbhagya Srikanthaiah	Belgaum



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