

Haveri District and the Indian freedom movement

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Abstract

The one great blessing that the unification of India through the British rule had brought about was the rise and growth of a sense of national unity, however vague and uncertain it might have been in the initial stages; and this conception was strengthened by the work of reform bodies like the Brahmo Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission (established by Swami Vivekananda), the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay (1867), the Arya Samaj in the Punjab (1875), the Theosophical Society in Madras (1882), and the Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona. Most of these movements aimed of course at the eradication of social abuses and unhealthy developments in religious practices. But this renaissance, especially in India where every aspect of life is infused by religious and moral purposes, was bound to lead to efforts at improvement in the political field also.

The political revival of the Maratha and Sikh powers was preceded by religious movements, rousing the people to new endeavour. The press and the new literature that grew up in the years previous to 1885 also indicated the disaffection that was steadily growing among the people. Haveri district along with Gadag district was earlier part of undivided Dharwad district. Owing to the demands of the people Haveri district was carved out of old Dharwad district and was formed on 24.08.1997.

History of Haveri district dates to pre-historic period. Evidences are available on existence of pre-historic civilizations on the Tungabhadra and Varada river basins. Stone carvings depicting Stone Age civilizations are found in many parts of the district. About 1300 stone writings of different rulers like Chalukyas, Rastrakutas are found in the district. Though none of the major kingdoms of Karnataka had their headquarters in Haveri, many Mandaliks ruled in this district. Bankapura Challaketaru, Guttavula Guttaru, Kadamba of Hanagal and Nurumbad are some of the well known Samanta Rulers. Devendramunigalu the teacher of Kannada Adikavi Pampa and Ajitassenacharya the teacher of Ranna Chavundaray lived in Bankapura. This was also the second capital of Hoysala Vishnuvardhana. Guttaru ruled during latter part of 12th century and up to end of 13th century from Guttavol (Guttal) village as Mandaliks of Chalukya, independently for some time and as Mandaliks of Sevuns of Devagiri.

Key words: Haveri, freedom struggle, congress, reform bodies, British empire, national movement.

Introduction

The Karnataka State has contributed a lot for the freedom struggle. Kannadigas are very well-known for bravery and courage. They believed and continue to believe that freedom is more valuable than their life. When one speaks of freedom, one is sure to remember Karnataka rulers namely, Kadambas, Hoyasals, Chalukyas of Badami, Vijayanagar kings for their love and dedication for freedom. Dr.D.C.Sarkar says .Ever since the growth of Chalukyan dynasty from 6th century, Kannadigas have played a remarkable and memorable role in the history of freedom movement."There are also some evidences of Karnataka kings who ruled in Bihar, Bengal and in other parts of India. The sacrifice made by women is a unique feature of the culture of Karnataka. One can remember. Attimabbe of 10th century, Akka Mahadevi of 12th century, Gangarabika of Vijayanagar, Wanake Obawa, Rani Kittur Channamma, and Belaradi Mallamtna. The first woman who revolted against the British rule in India in 1824 was from Karnataka and she was Rani Channamma of Kittur. The 17th century poet Sarvajna of Karnataka has eulogised, in his compositions in triplets called as .Vachsnas., Kannada culture and its supremacy. He was called as the 'pole

star' of Karnataka culture. He has stated in his compositions that freedom is a must to one and all and that they need not have any sort of bondage.

In his .Vachanas. he has very eloquently spoken of bravery, faithfulness of the people of Karnataka. He firmly believed that one must sacrifice for the sake of his country. The following triplet forcefully brings out this .Adiya Mundide Swarga, Adiya Hindide Naraka, Adigaswamedh Phala, Swami Karyakke 2 Madiyalebeku Sarvajna. (Kannada) Karnataka has been known for many years as a land of bravemen. When British power slowly spread all over India, the people of Karnataka could not tolerate the Imposition of an alien rule and alien culture. So many decisive battles were waged by bravemen and women of Karnataka like Hyder All, Tippu Sultan of Mysore, Rani Channamma of Kittur, Sangolli Rayanna of Bailhongal, Bheema Rao of Mundaragi and many others. So Karnataka as a whole has played a vital role during the freedom struggle in India. The Bedas and Kodagas have been the foremost fighting races of Karnataka, and have continuously maintained their high reputation. The Bedas of Halagali fought under the leadership of Balaji Nimbalkar against Britishers. They had the great encouragement from Diwakar Dixit son of Chidambara Dixit of Murgod, but Nimbalkar died in the struggle During the struggle Jadiyahappa, 3alappa and 19 other people were hanged. The feelings of the Bedas of Halagali, who faced with an order from East India Company to surrender their arms, are recorded in a popular Kannada folksong, which highlights the brave deeds of the Bedas.

Objective:

This paper seeks explore the importance of Haveri district in Indian freedom struggle

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA

Books like History of India Gained in a Dream placed before the minds of the educated youth the aims and objectives of the fight against the foreigner. A. O. Hume was clearly aware of the temper of the people. Mr. Hume had unimpeachable evidence that the political discontent was growing underground. He came into possession of seven volumes containing reports of the seething revolt incubating in various districts, based upon the communications of the disciples of various Gurus to their religious heads. This was towards the end of Lord Lytton's rule, the seventies of the last century. A Bengali drama, Neela Darpan, gave a harrowing account of the pitiable condition of the Indian workers in the indigo plantations, which were owned and managed by Europeans. The life and work of great European national liberators like Mazzini and Garibaldi were translated into Indian languages ; and their patriotic fervour and wonderful achievements provided inspiration for thousands of Indians, many of whom, especially in Bengal, took to underground revolutionary activities.

The reports were arranged according to districts, subdistricts, sub-divisions, and the cities, towns and villages included in these. Not that an organized mutiny was ahead, but that the people, pervaded with a sense of hopelessness, wanted to do something, by which it was merely meant, ' a sudden violent outbreak of sporadic crime, murders of obnoxious persons, robbery of banks and looting of bazars, acts really of lawlessness which by a due coalescence of forces might any day develop into a National Revolt (Pattabhi Sitaramayya : History of the Congress, Vol. I, p. 8). To Indians educated in the British liberal tradition, there was rude disillusionment when they saw that those liberal ideas and sense of justice and fair play were meant only for home consumption and were not applicable to dependencies like India. Discontent which had been only passive came to a head and developed into desperation in the incident connected with the appointment of Surendranath Banerjea to the Indian Civil Service. . Although he proved successful in the competitive examination, attempts were made to remove his name from the list. Ultimately the name was restored by a writ of Mandamus in the Queen's Bench, and Mr. Banerjea was appointed to the I.C.S., but he was soon dismissed on grounds which were now regarded as inadequate. The man who was thus denied an

opportunity to serve the British Government was destined to be the leader of the great national movement in India. He took to public life and in 1876 founded the Indian Association of Calcutta, which, to use the language of its founder, ' was to be the centre of an all-India movement,' based on ' the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini '. It was an organization of the educated middle class with a view to creating public opinion by direct appeals to the people. Mr. Banerjea's great opportunity came when in 1877 the maximum age-limit for the Civil Service Examination was reduced from twenty-one to nineteen. This created a painful impression throughout India, and was regarded as a deliberate attempt to blast the prospects of Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service. The Indian Association organized a national protest against the reactionary measure. A big public meeting was held in Calcutta and Mr. Banerjea led a whirlwind campaign, holding similar meetings at Agra, Lahore, Amritsar, Meerut, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Delhi, Lucknow, Aligarh and Benares. The nature and object of these meetings is thus described by Mr. Banerjea : . The agitation was the means ; the raising of the maximum limit of age for the open competitive examination and the holding of simultaneous examinations were among the ends ; but the underlying conception, and the true aim and purpose of the Civil Service agitation, was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India . Surendranath Banerjea, by his fiery eloquence and transparent sincerity, roused the people to a high pitch of national enthusiasm. Then came the protest against the insulting Arms Act and the offensive Vernacular Press Act. The agitation against these unpopular measures shaped the political life of India and made it conscious of its strength and potentialities. Soon it ceased to be a mere question of repealing these obnoxious measures. There was a steady development of national aspirations, and a higher ideal dazzled the vision of political India. It was not thought enough that Indians should have their full share of the higher offices. They must eventually bring the entire administration under popular control and therefore make a definite demand for representative institutions' The Political Conference which was called at Calcutta in 1883 was a pioneer attempt at political organisation on a national scale. A. C. Mazumdar, in his book, Indian National Revolution, says from personal experience : .It was a unique spectacle of which the writer of these pages still retains a vivid impression, of immense enthusiasm and earnestness which throughout characterized the three days ' session of the Conference, and at the end of which everyone present seemed to have received a new light and a novel inspiration. Similar Conferences were held in Bombay by the Bombay Presidency Association and in Madras by the Mahajana Sabha. Thus was the ground prepared for the building up of 'a national platform from which to create a New India.

ARMED INSURRECTIONS

Karnataka has been a land of freedom fighters from the earliest times. When the British power slowly spread over the whole of India in the last part of the 18th century, the people of Karnataka could not tolerate this alien rule. So they decided to wage a revolt. Thus the revolution started, and we call it as 'Armed Insurrection' . Venkatappa Naik of Surpur, Bheema Rao of Mundaragi, Baba Saheb of Nargund, Rani Channamma of Kittur, Rani Channamma of Keladi were a few notable brave men and women who struggled throughout against the British for the freedom of the country. During the second half of the 18th century, the British slowly advanced their power and very shrewdly carried on their operations at first as vassals of the Moghal Emperor and the people accustomed to leave matters of government, could not notice the fact that they were slowly but steadily being succeeded to the position of slaves under a foreigner. The brave resistance put up by Hyder and Tippu to the British had a deep defence of Mysore. Hyder, who had defeated the wadeyars and conquered Mysore, was fed up with the expansion policy of the British, Earlier, he was on friendly terms with the British. But later on, he came to know about the plan of expansion of the British empire in India, in order to curb their desire he tried to become friendly with the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas.

But he could not do so, because by that time tactfully the Britishers had taken the support of the Marathas and Nizam. Hyder had a short lived life and died early. Then Tippu, the gDn of Hyder, continued the fight with the British. In the year 1792, he fought with the British in order to drive them away. But Tippu was fully defeated and he was put into great trouble. Later on, in the IV Mysore War (1799), Tippu died fighting as a brave man. Thus, the father and the son protested and revolted against the Britishers. There was revolt throughout Karnataka as it took place in Mysore. Dhondaji a Maratha Sardar of Channagiri, Shimoga district, later came to be known as 'Wagh', which means 'Tiger in Marathi, was a great revolutionary. He served in the army of Patavardhan of Miraj, Chatrapati of Kolhapur and Tippu of Mysore. Wagh fought against the British after the death of Tippu, by forming a small infantry unit consisting of Bidanur and Shikaripura. He sought the help of Gopal Nayak of Tamil Nadu, Kerala Varma of Malabar and the French in Mahe in 1800, to fight against the British. The British, with the help of Dhondo Pant Gokhale of Peshwe, were ready to face Wagh. In the battle of Londa, Wagh killed Dhondo Pant Gokhale. Later Wagh was killed by the large army headed by Arthur Wellesley at Konagal. Simultaneously Venkatadri, the palegar (ruler) of Shimoga, was also subjugated by Wellesley. During this period, Venkatapadri, the Palegar of Aigur of Shimoga district, revolted against the British; but it was suppressed by Wellesley's force. In 1820, armed insurrection took place in Bidar. The Indian princes had been induced to become autocratic and tyrannical, as a result of the policy pursued by the British. This system bore hard on the zamindars and smaller potentates who were under the suzerainty of the former. In the year 1820 A.D. there were wide-spread insurrections in Bidar district.

The leaders of these outbreaks were shivalingappa, Tirumal Rao and Megharam. Disturbances arose again in 1857 and a number of places were captured by the insurgents. The contingent troops marched against the insurgents and were in action against them from the 19th March to 24th March, 1852. The rebellion was put down. Veerappa of Koppal rose in revolt in 1819. Sindagi in Bijapur district which was under the British rule, faced revolts from Diwakar Dixit, Rawji Raste, Balaji Deshpande and Settiyappa Tukkali. They deliberately neglected the British rule and started collecting taxes themselves. But in 1824, Stevenson, then Collector of the British took severe steps and curbed the revolt. Rani Channatrima of Kittur was the first Indian woman who rose against the British even before the uprising of 1857. The credit of hoisting the freedom flag goes to this tiny principality. The courageous spirited warriors like Sardar Guru3iddappa, Balappa, Sangolli Rayanna, Bicchugatti Chanabasappa, Gajaveer and others stood by the Rani to fight against the British. The following were the courageous words of the spirited warriors. We will fight till the heads of the British army fall to the ground, we have never eaten your salt and will not forsake you.

BIRTH OF NATIONAL CONSCIENCE

Indians realised that it was impossible to drive the Britishers out of India through armed resistance. The social and religious reformation of 19th century brought the National awakening among the Indians. Then the reformers awakened the mass to go against the Britishers' cunning administration. Lord Lytton's administration and the famine and natural calamities made the people to revolt against the British. The Indian National Congress came into existence in 1885. The first Bombay Congress Session was represented by Sir Narayan Rao Chandavarkar from Karwar, Kashinath Rao Telang, Sadashiv Rao Bhate of Belgaum, Kolachalum from Bellary, Venkata Rao, Modallyar and others. The northern Karnataka comprising the districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Haveri and Karwar was part of Bombay province. The paper Kesari published by Tilak contained his speeches and inspired the people of Karnataka. Later, Tilak started the Home Rule Movement. The foreign goods were publicly

burnt down in Belgaum, Navalgund, Hanagal and Haveri and in other places. Many of the prominent Kannadigas such as Alur Venkat Rao, Mudaveedu Krishna Rao, Sakri Balacharya and others travelled throughout Karnataka and encouraged the people to participate in the Swadeshi Movement. Many of the volunteers of this movement were imprisoned. The Vangbhang (Partition of Bengal) Movement spread rapidly throughout India due to the division of Bengal in 1905. Then Tilak visited Karnataka and put forth his four principles which were: 'Swadeshi Prasar', 'Videshi Bahiskar', 'National Education' and 'Demand for Swaraj'. Deshpande Gangadhar Rao of Belgaum, Koujalagi Shrinivas Rao of Bijapur, worked as his trustworthy followers. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande by his roaring lecture became famous throughout Karnataka and was called as 'Karnataka Shimha (Lion of Karnataka)'. Like him two other leaders were also given such titles and they were Lala Lajpat Rai, 'Lion of Punjab' and T. Prakashan of Andhrapradesh known as 'Andhra Kesari'. The literary works of Alur Venkat Rao, Galaganath, B. Venkatacharya, K. Vasudevacharya, Subodh Ramrao and Shantakavi (Sakri Balachar) greatly inspired Kannadigas. The role played by Karnataka Sabha founded by Alur Venkata Rao in 1916 in Haveri, was remarkable. The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Ramakrishna Mission had their own influence in Karnataka. Revolutionary organisations were also established in Karnataka as in Maharashtra, Bengal and Punjab. Govindrao Yalagi of Belgaum was the main leader. He had the support of Gangadhar Rao Deshpande. The training in arms and the use of ammunitions were taught to the youths in the Mazzini Club which was established by Yalagi. In Belgaum the match factory was situated in the Patil street in the building of Ushathai Gogate Girls High School, where also bomb was being prepared.

NATIONAL IMPACT OF THE HAVERI

The revolutionary centre in Goa had the contact with Karnataka with the revolutionaries like Veera Sawarkar, Senapati Bapat of Maharashtra, Barindra Ghosh (the brother of Yogi Aurobindo Ghosh of Bengal). The supporter of Yalagi, Hanumanthrao Deshpande was imprisoned for many days, in connection with the bombs and pistols. Gunda Bhat Joshi of Guledgudd was also imprisoned for a year. Bheemaroo Bevir and Dr. Handur were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Ganapule was in the revolutionary organisation. All these brave Kannadigas were responsible for bringing up the name of Karnataka in the history of Indian Revolution. Dr. N.S. Hardikar established Hindustani Seva Dal in Hubli. Within a short span of time, it was developed as an All India Organisation and Bagalkot also being its centre. All the Seva Dal volunteers did a good service in all the movements. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande established a branch of Charaka Sangh at Bangalore, and he became the first 'Sanchalak' of the Sangh. Gandhiji's ideas and principles of 'Charakn' were propagated for the people through the 'Charaka Sangh'. Nearly 400 representatives from Karnataka attended the Congress Session in Nagapur and they demanded a separate Regional Congress Committee and they succeeded in it. 'Karnataka Simha' Gangadhar Rao Deshpande was its first President. Later on, the freedom movement spread rapidly in Karnataka. Students boycotted classes and joined the movement. Burning of foreign goods, protest meetings and processions were held. Many Kannadigas had to lose their life and had to be imprisoned.

Conclusion

The history of Haveri traces back to the pre-historic period when the Stone Age civilizations existed on the Tungabhadra and Varada river basins. Evidence in the form of around 1300 stone carvings scattered across different parts of the district reveals that the region was under the rule of prominent dynasties like the Chalukyas, the Rastrakutas, the Hoysalas, and the Kadambas.

Haveri played a very important role in popularizing the vision of a socialist India both within the national movement and in the country at large. Nehru argued that political freedom must mean the economic emancipation of the masses. Throughout the 1930s, he pointed to the inadequacy of the existing nationalist ideology and the hegemony of bourgeois ideology over the national movement, and stressed the need to inculcate a new socialist or basically Marxist ideology, which would enable the people to study their social condition scientifically and to give the Congress a new socialist ideological orientation. Thus the national movement based itself on a clear-cut anti-colonial ideology and the vision of a civil libertarian, democratic, 'secular and socially radical society. The Indian economy was to be developed along independent, self-reliant lines. It was this vision, combined with anti-colonial ideology and a pro-poor radical socio-economic orientation that enabled the national movement to base itself on the politically awakened and politically active people and to acquire the character of a popular people's movement.

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