



REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONALIST STRUGGLE IN KARNATAKA & ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

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Abstract

Indian National Movement involved various societal components which left indelible mark on the progression of freedom struggle. There were many societal components during the long drawn process of freedom struggle which highlighted mass inclusion of all communities & fostered their community behavior. The Circumscribed pattern of Indian national movement was inflamed by involving a plethora of socio religious reformative thinking which linked the people all over India together. Important mile stone episodes such as Swadeshi movement , Non co-operation , Civil Disobedience , Quit India, Salt Satyagraha etc involved masses on a momentous scale & there by channeled the social issues such as removal of untouchability, literary , adult education , Khadi , Swadeshi etc. This paper seeks the spotlight on the societal issues which were addressed during this movement & the reformative rethinking of the Nationalist leaders which linked society towards forward progression through social reforms.

Key words: Indian National Movement, Swadeshi , Khadi , Societal impact, Reforms

Introduction

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Refelctions on Swadeshi

The Swadeshi movement was a befitting reply to a growing colonial power. It became relevant because the British government could be constrained only through economic unsteadiness. Whole of India find its own means of supporting Swadeshi movement & Karnataka enthusiastically responded to the call of Swadeshi. On 5th May 1905 a public meeting was held which presided by Gurunatha Rao Patak was held in the Victoria Theatre at Dharwad to protest



against the partition of Bengal and to encourage the establishment of Local & Swadeshi industries. The meeting resolved that everyone should vow not to use foreign cloth, except in inevitable circumstances in order to encourage Indian artisans and trade in Indian goods & manifested to make people use only Swadeshi goods. To spread the message of Swadeshi and boycott, Bal Gangadhar Tilak toured North Karnataka in 1905-06 which helped the cause of Swadeshi. Following the National leader, Local leaders such as Alur Venkata Rao, Sakkari Balachar, Krishna Rao Mudvedkar, Anantha Rao Dabade and others undertook extensive tours and delivered speeches on Swarajya, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education.

Reflection on Industries

Swadeshi industries arose in many places. Vittal Rao Deshpande of Hebbal started a weaving factory at Kittur. Another factory was built in Badami. Cloths made here were sent even to Bengal. Rama Rao Alagvadi opened a Match factory at Dharwad, while in Laxmeshwar a Porcelain factory was established. Factories for manufacturing bangles, pencils and many other articles of common use arose in many places. A Karnataka Industrial Conference met at Dharwad in 1907 to chalk out plans to develop Swadeshi industries in Karnataka. New Banks were established to help these industries. Boycott of British goods: Apart from wide support to Swadeshi movement, people of Karnataka wholeheartedly participated in the

boycott of British goods. Ranibennur witnessed one of the biggest bonfires of foreign cloth.

Reflection on Textile Industry

Textile dealers in Belgaum decided not to import foreign cloth and in Dharwad, grocers decided not to purchase Daboti and Johnson sugar. In Alnavar it was decided to smoke batti's instead of bidis and anyone found breaking the rule was fined. Hoteliers stopped the sale of tea and people poured kerosene into gutters and instead began to use indigenous oil for lighting. In one instance after it was noticed that a bangle seller had sold foreign bangles saying that it was Indian, the bangle seller was not only abused but also had to forego money.

Reflections on Prohibition

In Belgaum, along with swadeshi movement, prohibition was also advocated and toddy contractors had to incur heavy loss. For picketing liquor shops in Belgaum nine persons were awarded one-week imprisonment and fined Rs 680/- in June 1908. Though a prominent person of Belgaum offered to pay the fine, the youths refused his help and preferred imprisonment. On 8th August 1908 a public meeting was held in Bagalkot, which was addressed by Jayarao Nargund, Zainapur, Yalagundrao, Dharwadkar and others. It was proposed to establish a Swadeshi Vyaparottejaka Samstha in Bagalkote. In Bangalore & Mysore picketing in from to the liquor shops gained momentum & women enthusiastically joined hands in condemning this social evil. In Shimoga &



Tumkur regions people came forward to close down toddy shops.

Reflections on Education

The movement also saw the establishment of National Schools in various parts of Karnataka. Alur Venkata Rao started a school called popularly as "Nutana Vidyalaya" at Dharwad with arts and crafts as subjects in the curriculum. Another National school came up at Navalgunda by the efforts of Dundopanth Sahasrabuddhe. In Belgaum Kaka Kalelkar established the Ganesh Vidyalaya, while Jaya Rao Nargund started another school at Bagalkote. Similar schools were established at Hanagal, Angadi and other places. In South Kanara district, Ammembala Srinivasa Pai was the moving spirit in the boycott of foreign goods and the spread of Swadeshi. Men like K.P.Rao and Panje Mangesha Rao assisted him, while Kolachalam Venkata Rao and Sabhapathi Mudaliar were the leaders of the freedom movement in Bellary (G.S.Halappa - History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka Volume 2)

Refelctions on unity & solidarity:

Though Tilak had aroused the spirit of patriotism of the people of Karnataka the Kannadigas had no separate political entity, which would have been a spur to concerted action. This was realized and keenly felt by leaders from the early years of the century. In 1915 the Kannada Sahithya Parishad had been established at Bangalore with the object of bringing together all Kannada-speaking people in order to create a sense

of political and cultural community among them. In 1916 Alur Venkata Rao and Kadapa Raghavendra Rao founded the " Karnataka Ekikarana Sabha" with the acknowledged objective of attaining a unified Karnataka. (G.S.Halappa -History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka Volume 2) .Leaders such as Tagadur Ramachandra Rao highlighted British atrocities at the Jalianwala Bagh. The demise of Bal Gangandhar Tilak in 1920 saw a spontaneous turnout of people in large numbers to condole his death and the city and the surrounding areas observed bandhs as a mark of respect to the departed leader. The Tilak National Union began in Mysore in 1920 with local leaders such as Swami Rao and Ramaswamy Iyengar among others.

Reflections on Unification

It was felt that the fight for freedom would be strengthened and sanctified if there were the consciousness of brotherhood among the people of Karnataka. Kadapa Raghavendra Rao toured all over Karnataka and roused the people into enthusiasm for Karnataka unity. Memorials were submitted to the Secretary of State for India, Montagu demanding a separate province for Kannada speaking people. In 1920, the All-Karnataka Political Conference was held at Dharwad under the president-ship of V.P.Madhava Rao, a former Diwan of Mysore. Delegates from all parts of the Karnataka region participated and it was decided to send maximum number of delegates from Karnataka to the Nagpur Congress



session. It was decided to request for a separate Congress province, which should include all Kannada-speaking areas. The Nagpur Congress session permitted Karnataka to have a separate Pradesh Congress Committee (P.C.C.) and Gangadharrao Deshpande became the first K.P.C.C. president. He was called "Father of Political Unrest" in Princely Mysore as he was involving all the people in societal constructive activities. A District Congress Committee was founded for Mysore state with Justice Setlur as president and local committees were started at Shimoga, Tumkuru, Bangalore, Mysore and other places in the state. (G.S.Halappa -History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka Volume 2)

Reflections on Social Constructive Activities

Cow protection movement in Mysore state gathered momentum. Leaders such as Alur Venkata Rao, Sakkari Balachar, Krishna Rao Mudvedkar, Ramachandra rao, Anantha Rao Dabade, Kadapa Raghavendra Rao, etc held public rallies to create awareness about cow protection. A mass awareness program regarding removal of untouchability through temple entry programs was taken up by leaders such as Karnad Sadashiva Rao. Anti conversion drive in Mysore state against the conversion by missionaries was also taken up during this period. Ramachandra Rao was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, deeply influenced by Satyagraha movement. Instrumental in admitting many lower caste people into schools. (Bhagavan,

Manu. "Princely States and the Hindu Imaginary: Exploring the Cartography of Hindu Nationalism in Colonial India" Journal of Asian Studies, (Aug 2008)

Reflections on Khadi

Ramachandra Rao founded the Khaddar Sahakara Sangha in 1925. He was arrested for opposing the visit of the Simon Commission to India in 1928 and became the first political prisoner in Mysore State. He was popularly known as Mysore Gandhi. Because of his influence and efforts Mahatma Gandhi made his visit to Mysore State. He visited Badanavalu village in Nanjangud Taluk of Mysore district which facilitated the Khadi center to come up elsewhere in Karnataka. (M.K. Gandhi ; Village Swaraj ; Pub. Navajeevan ; Ahmedabad; Page 21-28) Leaders like Kolachalam Venkata Rao and Sabhapathi Mudaliar in Bellary asserted social consciousness in this region through incessant public meetings & rallies. (Bhagavan, Manu. "Princely States and the Hindu Imaginary: Exploring the Cartography of Hindu Nationalism in Colonial India" Journal of Asian Studies, (Aug 2008)

Reflections on Social Associations

A significant aspect of the movement in Mysore was that social reforms preceded political demands, and hence there were movements to eradicate untouchability, constitute a Representative Assembly to provide a forum for public participation in public affairs, reserve jobs for backward classes, and expand education,



women upliftment activities among others. The list of association such as Sri Kempu Chaluarajammanni Avaru Mahila Samaja , The Vani Mahila Samaja Arsikere , Mahila Samaja Sakaleshapura etc were started to restructure the conditions of women. The Kasturabagram in Arsikere started in 1946 also had the intention of upliftment of women through self-help. The Kasturaba Gandhi National Trust was one of the pioneering constructive founded in 1945 to promote women welfare. The Shankarapura Mahila Samaja Hassan 1945 had also same intention of making women self-dependent. The Shankarapura Mahila Samaja Hassan 1945 had also same intention of making women self-dependent. Mahila Samaja Sakaleshapura which was started in the year 1940 had the motto of promoting social cultural wellbeing of women youth hostels for students seeking education and shelter for both men & women started serving the community which was a welcome sign. The society awakened itself towards basic needs such as education & health. National schools were established in Mangalore, Dharwad, Hubli, Hangal, Bagalkote, Bijapura

Reflections On Village Social Welfare

The Kasturaba Gandhi National Trust was one of the pioneering constructive founded in 1945 to promote women welfare, Gadag, Belgaum, Sirsi, Hospete, Siddapura and other places. In the National school run by Alur Venkata Rao at Dharwad, Dr. Bendre and R.R. Diwakar

worked as teachers. Leaders like A. G. Ramachandra Rao , S. G. Athri, K.M. Rudrappa Gowda, Gopal Rao Belavadi , Boranna Gowda , Tippeswamy , Lokanna gowda actively undertook education of the masses. Social activists such as Goruru Ramaswamy Iyengar , Shama Rao , Srikanteshappa , Venkatachala Shastry, Sri Sachchindananda , Ramarao etc toured villages all over the state creating mass consciousness Associations such as Mahila Samaja , Balawadi , Geleyara Balaga, Stree Samaja, Yuva Sangha Kala Sangha came up tackling the issues of Society.

Reflections on Sarvodya

The Congress philosophy of Sarvodaya ameliorated the lower caste people to participate in pro societal activities. There was an increase in the number of charitable institutions such as hospitals & welfare homes. Mahatma Gandhiji's call for Individual Satyagraha was assisted the awakening of the public Sevadal karyakartas Volunteers camps became popular. Mahatma Gandhi's visits to Mysore, Tagadur, Badanwal and Nanjangud in 1934, and his public address on January 5 that year on eradicating untouchability, fired the imagination of the people. This was followed by visits from leaders such as Pattabhi Sitaramayya in 1937 and Jawaharlal Nehru, who helped galvanise public opinion in favour of independence. The net impact was mass awakening and tremendous public participation in the Quit India movement in 1942. Students took the lead and there was widespread rioting as an expression of people's



opposition to British rule. (Bhagavan, Manu. "Princely States and the Hindu Imaginary: Exploring the Cartography of Hindu Nationalism in Colonial India" Journal of Asian Studies, (Aug 2008)

Reflections on Christian Missionary Activities

The Church Of South Indian Organization had its origin in a small boarding school founded in 1856 under the auspices of the Holy Wesleyan Methodist missionary society. later it was amalgamated in Methodist mission church in 1946 .It ran a Destitute Home for orphans during the great famine of 1876. It gave educational and medical help for the poor and needy during the famine, later it became a home for orphan children. It trained them in the arts and crafts. It also promoted self-help for poor and down trodden .this institution later became a well-known name in the district for its social service, With the empowerment of the local bodies in 1927 Elementary education & suffrage received importance which was mainly due to the efforts of local leaders through press. Their writings on important making local bodies an high power instrument in Societal advancement paid fruits. – the local press was instrumental in helping the writings on spiritual issues.

Reflections on Religious & Secular Associations

Many religious based associations sprang up in this area. The Adayatama prakashalaya was one such institution

which was started in Holenarasipura. Sugjana deepika , Aruodaya , Sanathana dharma, Deepthi , Bhakti vardhana etc newspapers were started with an intention to spread Hindu philosophy.

Conclusion

Several social & community need based tasks were undertaken as supportive of national struggle. Adult education was seen as direct implication. Women & children welfare associations became popular, the segmentation of community as untouchables Dalits & poor, illiterate people was revoked & they were motivated to participate in all types of social campaigns .Loyalty & patriotism alone was stressed as a bond unifying large mass of Indians. its reflections on societal & community based issues was reflective of the National consciousness. The increase in community based associations, the high demand for local Suffrage & the growing support for schools & elementary education had a great proposition in the region. Even though the local leaders had limited access & easily succumbed to hostile State policy, their role in inspiring the rural mass towards Nationalism was substantial & noteworthy. This study becomes relevant because there had been a proportional rise in the reflective & intricate studies in Indian national Movement & their combined impact on subalterns.

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