



Remembering Karnad Sadashivarao- The Mahatma Gandhi of South India

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Abstract

Indian freedom struggle was a great saga of heroes who sacrificed everything for their mother land. Irrespective of their family problems these heroes plunged into freedom struggle with a primary objective of securing freedom from foreign yoke. In the region of present Karnataka State also there were several heroes who forfeited their life & immensely acted as catalysts of freedom struggle. Karnad Sadashiva Rao was one such great personality who imbibed himself the multitude of colors of the personality & ideals of mahatma Gandhi & for these acts of intense patriotism he is called popularly as mahatma Gandhi of South India .This paper sketches the multifarious roles of Karnad Sadashiva Rao during Nationalist struggle in Karnataka.

Key words: *Socio religious reforms, spreading principles*

Introduction

Indian freedom struggle is a lengthy list of people who sacrificed their whole life to the cause of their mother land. Irrespective of their personal problems these heroes plunged into freedom struggle with a primary objective of securing freedom from foreign yoke¹². In the region of present Karnataka State also there were several heroes who forfeited their life & immensely acted as catalysts of freedom struggle. Karnad Sadashiva Rao was one such great personality who imbibed himself the multitude of colors of the

personality & ideals of mahatma Gandhi & for these acts of intense patriotism he is called popularly as mahatma Gandhi of South India .This paper sketches the multifarious roles of Karnad Sadashiva Rao during Nationalist struggle in Karnataka.

Karnad & his early life

Karnad Sadashiva Rao was born in 1881 in Mangalore, as the only son of a rich and leading lawyer Sri Ramachandra Rao and Smt Radhabai. Even as a young boy, he was kind & generous, facing admonishing from his father, who was a strict disciplinarian. He imbibed the character of charity &



goodwill from his mother. He studied at Presidency College in Madras and later studied law in Bombay.

Karnad as a social reformer : Sadashiva Rao was attracted to the Indian nationalist movement which was encompassing the country. He was attracted by Gandhian ideals of minimalism & simplicity and he took to austere, plain life.

Karnad & Mahila Sabha -With the help of his devoted wife Shantabai, he founded an organization "Mahila Sabha" for betterment of widowed and downtrodden women. He granted funds to educate them and assisted them to find means of self-support. He organized re-marriage of child-widows. He also worked for betterment of Harijans. He was a member of the organization "Mission for Depressed Classes" for year. He arranged for entry of Harijans to temples of south canara district .

Karnad & Establishment of Tilak Vidyalaya- He started a school called "Tilak Vidyalaya" in the premises of his own house. This was open to all communities. The Hindi language, spinning, weaving, and other household handicrafts were taught in the school. Eighteen such educational

centers were started in the region soon after.

Karnad & drive towards stoppage of animal sacrifices:

He was responsible for stoppage of animal sacrifices as he stopped animal sacrifice at Kali temples in Kanara region.

Karnad as a congressman:

The year 1919 saw him involve in India's Freedom Struggle. Gandhi had launched the first Satyagraha movement. Sadashiva Rao was among the first volunteer from Karnataka to take pledge to be a volunteer in the independence movement. He was responsible for building of Congress Party in the present state of Karnataka. He organized rallies & processions of people & was instrumental in creating awareness among the people about Indian national struggle. He was travelling persistently from town to town, and from village to village, creating consciousness of freedom and independence, and spreading the gospel of Sarvodaya. As part of the constructive program, he organized spinning, weaving, handicraft and village reconstruction centers.

Karnad & personal tragedies:

In year 1923, he lost his youngest daughter, the only son, and also his soul-mate Shantabai who had



actively supported him in all his social activities. A shattered man, he went to Mahatma Gandhiji's Sabarmati ashrama to seek solace. But he has to return home only to respond to distress call from his district, which faced unprecedented inundation and needed immediate relief. World War I saw Sadashiva Rao in a new role, as a benefactor and servant of the poor. During this period food scarcity and famine like conditions were widely prevalent and the poorer sections were almost starving, because of the high cost of food articles. He organized relief camps for the flood victims, provided food and shelter from his personal funds. He purchased the commodity and then sold it to the needy at prices within their reach. The produce from his own lands was sold at the low price.

Karnad & as a nationalist campaigner:

The year 1919 saw the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Sadashiva Rao was among the first few and the very first in Karnataka to sign the Satyagraha pledge. It was Sadashiva Rao who unfurled the Congress banner in Karnataka. His role in no tax campaign was also commendable. Sadashiva Rao was a front-level leader in the "No-

tax" campaign and the Salt Satyagraha. Sadashiva Rao's house was a hub of India's freedom struggle. It served as a guesthouse for stalwart national leaders like C.R. Das, Sarojini Naidu, C. Rajagopalachari and others besides Mahatma Gandhi. In a caste-torn time, Sadashiva Rao united various communities of South Kanara for the cause of freedom. He was jailed three times, and during those five years, his health deteriorated. He even refused mosquito-curtain in the prison, because it was not given to all inmates. He'd lost all his inherited assets such as house. Lands, cash deposits At the Faizpura Congress Session in the year 1936, he was thoroughly soaked due to leakage in the hut he was staying. He was himself suffering from severe feverish condition but he extended help to the needy.

Sadashiva Rao caught fever and traveled to Bombay on Congress session work without informing. The fever worsened, and soon after reaching Bombay he died. He was 56. Not long after his death, Gandhi went to see Sadashiva Rao's mother. He bowed before her and said "Blessed are you mother, for having borne a son such as he". The Roman Catholic community of South Kanara paid the highest tributes. "Sadashiva



Rao's life was Christ-like, for it depicted purity of soul, and mind, nursed by supreme sacrifices" they condoled . It was evident that Christians in South Kanara had joined Congress because of motivation of their leader Sadashiva Rao.

Conclusion:

Thus Sadashiva rao rallied the cause of Indian freedom struggle & championed the cause of social reform as well along with congress led nationalsit struggle. He was a devout follower of Gandhian ideals & all through his life he struggled to inculcate the gospel of satyagraha, ahimsa , & patriotism among the people. These endless list of philanthropic & benevolent activities earned him a the title mahatma Gandhi of south India.

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