



## Impact of visits of Mahatma Gandhi on Nationalist Movement in Princely Mysore

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### **Abstract**

*Mahatma Gandhi being a national leader visited several parts of the present state of Karnataka as a part of his national campaign. All his visits had tremendous impact on the nationalist activities in Karnataka & innumerable number of people became instant followers of Mahatma Gandhi & his ideals of Khadi & Swadeshi. This paper dwells on the impact of visits of Mahatma Gandhi on nationalist movement in Karnataka.*

**Key words:** *Ideals of Khadi & Swadeshi, nationalist movement*

"Like Swaraj, Khadi is our birth-right, and it is our life-long duty to use that only. Anyone who does not fulfill that duty is totally ignorant of what Swaraj is." (Mahatma Gandhi -Navajivan, 5-3-1922; 23:11)

The 39<sup>th</sup> Indian National Congress Session was held in Belgaum. It was a historic place since the dawn of history. The Congress ideals were first propagated by A. O Hume here. He visited Belgaum to propagate Congress ideals in 1893. It was a home for both the factions of the Congress Bal Gangadhar Tilak visited it in 1906. This place was a scene of Mahatma Gandhi's historic visit in 1924.

### **Historical background:**

On February 5th 1924, Mahatma Gandhiji was released from prison

following an operation for appendicitis. The Hindu-Muslim cooperation for which he had striven so zealously had nearly vanished. With the abolition of Khilafat in Turkey, no encouragement was left for preponderance of the Indian Muslims to collaborate & work together with the Hindus. The Muslim League eclipsed during the Khilafat agitation found a breathing space once again. Thus with the passage of time the incongruity between the Hindus and the Muslims began to appear and communal riots occurred at regular intervals. To compensate for the sins of his erring countrymen, Gandhiji undertook a fast of 21 days from September 18 to October 8. This was his desperate effort to solve the



communal tangle. The Council entry programme of the Swarajists was not welcomed by Gandhiji. But the circumstances as they were, it was impossible for anybody to bring back the masses to an active non-cooperation and therefore as sort of compromise was reached. The Congressmen were given freedom to decide for themselves either to work for the Council entry or to carry on the constructive work outside the Council. It was in this background that Gandhiji presided over the Belgaum session in December 1924 with the objective of restoring unity between Congressmen who were for Council entry and those against it and between Hindus and Muslims. Removal of untouchability and spread of Chakra and Khadi were the other objectives<sup>93</sup>.

### **Historic session of 1924**

The Belgaum Congress session was a momentous event and the enthusiasm of the people of Karnataka, as it was the only Congress session in which Mahatma Gandhi presided. The venue where the session was held was named Vijayanagara and the entrance gate was designed like the Gopura of the Virupaksha temple at Hampi. A flag railway station was constructed near the site of the Congress Session, which

came to be called 'Vijaya Nagara', after the mighty empire of Hampi and the entrance gate, with an impressive height of 70 feet was designed as a 'gopura' from the same place. The huts for visitors and the delegates were built with Khadi and had bamboo roofs. Mahatma Gandhi was taken in a procession to the Congress camp. All efforts were made to represent the culture and history of Karnataka at the session. For the supply of water round the clock, a tank, named Pampa Sarovara was constructed<sup>94</sup>. To feed the participants, a huge kitchen was set up and thousands of lanterns and petromax lights were brought from Bombay for lighting purpose. Volunteers of Hindustan Seva Dal, trained by N.S.Hardikar were looking after the arrangements and attending the comforts of the visitors.

When Mahatma Gandhi<sup>95</sup> along with the Ali brothers, Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and a host of leaders arrived at Belgaum, they were welcomed by a mammoth crowd led by Gangadharrao Deshpande, the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The Session began with 'Vande Mataram' sung by Paluskar. This was followed by two songs in Kannada by a choir. Great stalwarts of music like Veene Seshanna gave their recital



and Huyilagola Narayana Rao sung the Kannada anthem 'Udayavagali namma cheluva Kannadanadu' at the session<sup>96</sup>.

### Presidential Address:

In his presidential address Mahatma Gandhi addressed several national issues such as banning of foreign goods, encouraging spinning and weaving of Khadi, working towards eradication of untouchability and other issues. "I am convinced that Swaraj cannot come so long as the tens of millions of our brothers and sisters do not take to the charkha, do not spin, do not make khadi and wear it."<sup>97</sup> A number of sessions were also held at Belgaum on the occasion like the

1. All-India Khilafat Conference,
2. All-India Hindu Mahasabha Conference,
3. All-India Non-Brahmin Conference,
4. All-India Social Conference
5. The first Karnataka Unification Conference<sup>98</sup>,

Karnataka people reacted positively & confidently to the call given by Mahatma Gandhi & oriented towards for constructive several social & community oriented programmes<sup>99</sup>. The

spread of Khadi and village industries was taken up all over Karnataka<sup>100</sup>. There was a sporadic khadi movement in Princely Mysore as well<sup>101</sup>. The enthusiastic people undertook setting up of khadi<sup>102</sup>. The organizations for Harijan welfare were set up in many places of the state.

1. The lower rungs of society were included in the programs and there was a wide participation in the Congress lead Movements.
2. Between 1922 and 1925 national leaders like C.Rajagopalachari, C.R.Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, S.Srinivasa Iyengar, Pattabhi Seetharamiah, Jamnadas Mehta, Konda Venkatappiah and others toured all over Karnataka and kept the national spirit alive<sup>103</sup>.
3. The flame of freedom struggle was also kept alive by a host of Congressmen of Karnataka like N.S.Hardikar, Srinivas Rao Kaujalgi, Gangadharrao Deshpande, Kadapa Raghavendra Rao, R.R.Diwakar, Krishna Rao Mudvedkar and others.
4. The authorities in Princely state of Mysore understood the value of spinning and weaving Khadi in the scheme of rural development and often



cooperated with the Congress workers in the extension of Khadi industries and other village industries sponsored by the Congress<sup>104</sup>. The Diwan of Mysore, Albion Banerjee not only permitted the Department of Industries to send exhibits to the Congress exhibition at Belgaum in 1924, but also gave a donation for the expenses. It led to the setting up of All India Spinners Association (AISA) / Akhil Bharat Charkha Sangh in 1935<sup>105</sup>. “ Every village shall plant and harvest its own raw-materials for yarn, every woman and man shall engage in spinning and every village shall weave whatever is needed for its own use “ was the message Gandhi propagated & this was taken seriously by people.

### Conclusion:

Thus the visit of Mahatma Gandhi & his presiding of Congress session of 1924 can be heralded as a great step in promotion of the peasant consciousness. Even though there were some loopholes in the post Congress Session programs there was a widening of the spirit among peasants of this region who started participating in Congress lead Movements. The Salt Satyagraha held in Ankola Siddapura & Mangalore were

projected by the peasantry & promoted by the Indian National Congress leaders. The High inclusion of peasantry in this movement was a affirmative indication of the awareness among peasantry.

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## Stages of Development of Local Press & Its impact on National Movement in Karnataka

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### **Abstract**

*Old Mysore region being a Princely state, powered by two political agents such as the Princesdom & Colonial Government Supervision due to the signing of Subsidiary treaty, had multifarious problems in linking the people in Congress party lead political activities. Princely state of Mysore had to face stern annoyance in handling this situation Hassan, a part of this Princely state also nurtured problems during National movement. They could not involve directly in National activities. This becomes relevant because the press monitored several political issues rejuvenating social living of the period. There was a new call for "Rural Reconstruction" at the National level which was reflected in State level Press also.*

**Key words:** *Dual political authority, social reconstruction, propagation of Swadeshi*

### **Introduction**

Indian freedom struggle was an epoch making event with a conglomeration of activities through countless organization & innumerable population. Many regions in Karnataka reflected a plethora of eventful activities during this freedom struggle. The leaders & vast mass of population depicted keen enthusiasm & zeal in a variety of activities focusing on fighting the colonial British rule. The population in this region supported the state level leaders as well as participated energetically in all state level political activities.

### **Background**

Old Mysore region being a Princely state, powered by two political agents such as the Princesdom & Colonial Government Supervision due to the signing of Subsidiary treaty, had multifarious problems in linking the people in Congress party lead political activities. Princely state of Mysore had to face stern annoyance in handling this situation Hassan, a part of this Princely state also nurtured problems during National movement. They could not involve directly in National activities. But the local journalists & writers convincingly assisted



the people of this area to engross themselves in community based activities & thee by supported them to aid the national cause.

### **Influence of All India Level Political Developments**

The All India level pro nationalist activities had their sway in this region. A powerful left wing developed in India in late 1920s<sup>106</sup>. It contributed to the radicalization of Indian freedom struggle<sup>107</sup>. There was an ideological diversity & doctrinal differences among the leaders of National freedom Movement<sup>108</sup>. Feeling the inadequacy of the existing nationalist ideologies new leadership breathed in new ideas to oust the colonial masters<sup>109</sup>. The goal of political independence became clearer with socio economic content. The social & economically weaker sections became the pivotal point of involvement in all political discussions by all political parties<sup>110</sup>. The agenda of all parties shifted from educated mass to illiterate, unorganized, hither to neglected working class sector. The working class & agricultural sector people were motivated to voice their problems in All India Congress Party meetings<sup>111</sup>.

### **Impact of the Socialist Ideas**

The theory of Inclusion was mastered for several reasons. The

Socialist ideas had become strikingly attractive. This had speeded up of the All India Congress Party political schedule. The youth had become more energetic & self-motivated. Social emancipation & the societal progression of the poor & the downtrodden gained momentum<sup>112</sup>. Student & Youth Organizations came to be organized. Youth leaders started speaking against social ills such as illiteracy, drinking & untouchability .There were youth who became radical solutions to the political problems<sup>113</sup>. There was an ideological diversity & this lead to doctrinal disputes. Existing leadership was displaced & youth became more active in politics. The Constructive Work in the socio economic field was mainly concerned with reconstructing the villages, where vast majority the people of India lived<sup>114</sup>. In the programme of economic reconstruction khadi was the pivotal item of work. The charkha mixed up with the revolutionary doctrine of non-co-operation looked like a fad. But it was a piece of the whole set of the Gandhian idea and activity<sup>115</sup>. The Congress sessions came to hold exhibitions which were a visual education in better village life and work. All these issues were



directly channeled in National as well as state level Newspapers<sup>116</sup>.

### **Impact of Press**

The local press was instrumental in a forming a public opinion & creating an environment of patriotism. The local newspapers & state level papers carried articles on Swadeshi & setting up of rural industries. Newspapers such as Vriththantha Choodamani ,Praja hitaishini, Vriththantha patrike, Prajamata , Tayinadu, Swarajaya , Namma nadu ,Janma bhoomi ,Vijaya dwaja ,Kannada nudi , Dhanurdhari , Karmabhoomi etc were famous & had circulation here but Vritthantha bodhini & Vishwa Karnataka had larger circulation<sup>117</sup>. The official restrictions & the Press Acts were so rigid that many newspapers struggled to survive in old Mysore state . Many young eminent writers such as Goruru Ramaswamy Iyengar , Anantha pura Krishnswamy, Iyengar , Harihalli Krishnashastry , Subramanya Nadig , Subramanya shastri, Narahari shastri , Gundappashastry , Giridhara rao , Anantharama shastry , Shahadaksharaih , etc wrote various mind blogging articles on community based issues<sup>118</sup>. As a consequence Harijan uplift ment was taken up

seriously besides adult & women education. Education was focused on as a supplement to Fight National Freedom Struggle<sup>119</sup>.

### **Impact of Press Censorship:**

the impact of press & Journalism, on Indian social movement was high & had great implications behind censorship during this period. The press while being scrutinized minutely diverted its deliverance from political agenda of giving prominence to political issues & oriented towards Socio economic problems<sup>120</sup>. The press during this period was suffered with Lack of news prints, restrictions on number of pages, press censorship & internal movement. But the press preponderantly changed the attention of the mass towards social reconstruction works<sup>121</sup>..The study explores the vicissitudes of peasants industry workers, status and role of small scale daily bread earners in South India, who were handicapped by continuous hartals & bandhas<sup>122</sup>. The labor class was organized in All India level through labour organizations. This helped the establishment of local organizations at state level which had its impact in Hassan area also. The Press took up the issues of these small time labourers through publishing the speeches of labour leaders in newspapers<sup>123</sup>. The press could



influence people to indulge in social community based needs<sup>124</sup>. There were wide references to local journalism motivating the people to participate in anti-foreign goods campaigns pro khadi campaigns anti liquor campaign, picketing etc. Adult education was seen as direct inference<sup>125</sup>. 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 campaign<sup>126</sup>.

### **Local journalists / party workers:**

Gandhiji's visit to Karnataka in 1921, 1924, 1926 in 1927 & Pattabhi Seetharamaiah & Raja Gopalachari in 1937 heralded a host of cooperative activities. Sri A G Ramachandra Rao , Sri S G Athri, Sri K.M.Rudrappagowda Sri Gopal rao Belavadi, Sri Boranna Gowda , Sri Tippeswamy , Sri Lokanna gowda , Sri Gopal rao , Sri Sheshachala , Sri Padmanabha , Sri Swaminathan , Sri Guru murthy , Sri Shamasundara bhatta, Sri Subbanna kandimane , Sri Shankrapapa , Sri Srinivasa Iyengar , Sri Krishna bhatta , Sri Goruru Ramaswamy Iyengar , Sri Shama rao , Sri Srikantesha , Sri Venkatachala shastry Sri

Sachchindananda Rao , Sri Ramarao etc were famous columnists of the district<sup>127</sup>. Their pointed writings & motivational speeches helped the people this area to indulge themselves voluntarily in Congress sponsored Nationalist Activities<sup>128</sup>. The post-World war II scenario effected the Cooperative sector. The number of societies rose sharply increased. Mahila samaja , Balawadi , Geleyara balaga, stree samaja, Anganawady etc registered sharp rise in membership<sup>129</sup>. The Vani mahila samaja, Kasturba Gandhi mahila samaja, Shankaripura mahila samaja etc were started. 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 Sevalal karaykartas Volunteers camps became popular<sup>130</sup>.

### **Impact on Local Administration**

The Functions, Conflicts, Dynamics & Cross level influences of policy of Princely State of Mysore towards protecting their territorial integrity bordering



narcissism & conceit needs reconsideration. 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 body and high power instrument in societal advancement paid fruits<sup>131</sup>. The local press was instrumental in helping the writings on spiritual issues. Many religious based associations sprang up in this area. The Adhaytama prakashalaya was one such institution.<sup>132</sup>In addition to this Sugjana deepika , Aruodaya , Sanathana dharma, Deepthi , Bhakti vardhana etc newspapers were started with an intention to spread Hindu philosophy<sup>133</sup>.

**Impact on women** -Though Satyagraha has automatically brought India's women out from their darkness, Congressmen never felt the call to see that women become equal partners in the fight for Swaraj. Gandhi motivated Congress volunteers to include women in all Nationalist activities. Hence Congressmen to give the women of India a lifting hand, to help them to realize their full status as honored comrades in common service. The local press further helped women to involve

with all her might in all congress led activities.

### **Impact on congress workers:**

The speeches of the leaders of the Congress party were found frequent references in local newspapers. There was an increasing demand for hearing the speeches of these great national leaders. Hence many Newspapers carried an abbreviated version of their speeches. This motivated many youth in this part of the district. Most of these literates could ignite the light of patriotism by reading aloud the newspapers in public functions & gatherings. The uniqueness of these public gatherings was that it could attract both the literates & illiterates alike<sup>134</sup>.

### **The Prominent Leaders:**

1. Abdul bari,
2. Acharya narendra deo,
3. Achyutha patwardhana etc
4. Banerji C
5. Farid huq,
6. Jayaprakash narayan,
7. Kamaladevi chattopadhyaya
8. Manohar lohia,
9. Masani R



## Conclusion:

Thus this study revealed that the prospective implications of press during this period & its reflections on societal issues was highly monumental. Even though the genesis & the evolvement of press in Karnataka region was met with several problems the local journalists were successful in involving the people to work towards broader objective of building a new India. The increase in community based associations, the high demand for local Suffrage & the growing support for setting up of Primary schools & elementary education had a great proposition in the region. Even though the local press had limited access & easily

succumbed to hostile State policy the efforts to draw the attention of people for social & political issues was successful<sup>135</sup>. The Journalists were themselves trained in as Congress party worker or had experience of a Satyagraha. They became Journalists as well as leaders of their role in inspiring the rural mass towards Nationalism was substantial & noteworthy. There was a been a proportional rise in the reflective & intricate studies & their combined impact on subalterns. The focus on the critical tangles of State policy towards local press & the advancement of Journalism amidst antagonistic political environment.

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