



## UNIFICATION OF KARNATAKA WITH RESPECT TO CHITRADURGA DISTRICT- A SAGA OF PEOPLE OF KANNADA LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT :

*Unification of Karnataka was a natural and logical outcome of renaissance of India in general and Kannada renaissance in particular. The feelings of nationalism, patriotism, democracy, individuality and such related emotional feelings were almost absent in India earlier. The concept of the whole country as a single unit politically was kindled by the contact with the British; their education; their common government throughout the length and breadth of India and a common official language, as established by them.*



**KEYWORDS :** *natural and logical outcome , feelings of nationalism.*

### INTRODUCTION

Unlike many other countries in the world, India is neither small in area nor is it united by a single language. The unique quality of the country is that, it is the way of life and the culture which binds the people here. This unity in diversity was awakened as a result of the English impact. Sarcastically, it was the very diversity which had made the British adopt a divide and rule policy for breaking the country, using it for their ulterior motives. While on the one hand Indians succumbed to the British, on the other they realised the necessity to be united. Linguistic policy was a result of recognising one's own individuality as far as the states were concerned.

#### 1. Recognition of states by the centre, on the basis of their linguistic specialities:

By the time the nation gained independence, the states wanted to be recognised by the centre, on the basis of their linguistic specialities. India being a country of many languages, different habits, beliefs, life styles, etc., having diversity in almost everything, states had to be divided on the basis of language, that being the most accurate division. Thus the states in India were formed on the basis of languages after independence, though prior to independence they were the result of many historical events. Each state had its own way of attaining this status and each state to some extent fought to be recognised so. So too Karnataka had to resort to several movements and agitations to call the attention of the central government of India, to unite its parts. Unfortunately Kannada speaking people were the only ones in the South who had been divided and shared among many states. This had to be brought together and a new Karnataka had to

be formed. There were a large number of people who spoke Kannada, followed the same style of life, but still, who had been included in different states. So the, problem of unification was unique to Kannada speaking people.

Therefore the story of Karnataka unification has a special place. Unification of Karnataka is a saga of those people who wanted to belong and be one. They wanted to belong to a state where Kannada was the language in all fields of activity such as spoken, written, imparted education in, official as well as a language loved and accepted by all people belonging there. Unification movement is a process which includes not just the political but also the emotional, cultural and linguistic aspirations of the people who wanted to be a part of the whole and it is about such people who struggled to achieve it. The twin movements of Kannada renaissance and unification of Karnataka went hand in hand because they were ideas closely related.

## **2. The renaissance of Kannada language:**

The renaissance of Kannada language and literature lighted in the hearts of the Kannada people a desire to live together under one government. This takes us back to the history of Karnataka. Karnataka was ruled by several kings and kingdoms at different times - such as the Gangas, Kadambas, Rastrakutas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Sevanas etc. During all these periods Karnataka was never a united whole. Different kingdoms ruled different parts of Karnataka. These kingdoms brought many parts together from time to time - not with an idea of bringing together the whole of the Kannada speaking land, but to only increase their domain and rule a larger area. Such was the situation of the Kannada land at the earliest. As we go back to a period a little earlier to the British, we may see that different rulers of Kannada land were at loggerheads with each other and this gave an opportunity for the British to usurp those parts of the area, which they considered profitable for themselves. That also was a time when the British had faced stiff opposition by many different rulers in the Kannada areas.

At this point, it is also necessary for us deal with aspects relating to division of the land by the British. The British, when they took over the parts of Karnataka, divided the land without any rhyme or reason. Why did they divide only Karnataka? And not any other kingdom of the south? It was because, from the beginning they had faced opposition from the rulers of Kannada land - particularly that of Hyder and Tippu. Many smaller kingdoms and pategars had also opposed them - such as Kitturu Chennamma, Abbakkadevi, and such others, but the British could easily put them down. However the opposition faced from Tippu was the hardest. He had posed one of the greatest dangers to the British in India. He had recognised the danger of the British and he had also changed along with changing times, unlike many other Indian rulers. He had tried to build a modern navy and his infantry was not only trained by the French but also was armed with muskets and bayonets. The British recognised these. Added to this, Mysore was economically better off than many other parts of the country. With the fall of Bidanur, India's grannary of spices went into the hands of Hyder and Tippu and those rulers were forced to directly deal with the Arab and Western traders who dealt with the famous spices of the East. It was a prosperous state and the British wanted to acquire the control over the lucrative trade of that state. Tippu had been involved in many developmental activities such as encouraging trade with other countries, realising the importance of commerce, sending embassies to France, Turkey and Iran etc. All these threatened the existence of the British in India. So when they got Mysore state, after Tippu's death, they wanted to annihilate the whole, so that the state would not prove any danger to them. They had looked upon Tippu as their most formidable rival in the south and as the chief obstacle standing between them and their complete dominion over South India. In order to safeguard their existence, they wanted to destroy this. Therefore after defeating Tippu, they did not want to leave any chance for the people of Karnataka to rebel. Hence they sliced - literally mutilated the Kannada land and shared it with other rulers such as he Marathas and the Nizams.

## **3. Kannada land and non-Kannadiga rulers:**

Karnataka was divided into fourteen smaller independent states or the Indian states as they were called such as - Mysore, Kolhapur, Sangli, Hiri Mirji, Kiri Mirji, Kurandvad, Jamakhandi, Mudhol, Ramadurga,

Jat, Akkalakota, Aund, Savanur and Sonduru; three main administrative areas - that of Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency and Coorg. Thus the Kannada land, was divided totally. Earlier too, the Kannada land was subjected to many a division by different rulers who gained and lost different parts, yet the whole area remained the Kannada land. But after the division by the British, the entire land was divided into so many pieces and distributed among so many non-Kannadiga rulers, that Kannada people could not be brought under one leader who could lead them against the British. While the British safeguarded their purpose, the plight of Kannadigas was pitiable. For earlier, like most of the parts of India, they were tossed between rulers. But during the British rule their wings were cut off. Particularly those border areas' of the Kannada land, which did not belong to a Kannada ruler had a hard time. Their position was that of a second rate citizen. They did not have as much freedom as a person who spoke the language of ruler. They were forced to learn the language of the state to which they belonged; they were dominated by the people who spoke the language of the ruler and worse than all, Kannada was looked down upon; there were no Kannada schools; people were discouraged learning Kannada and speaking the language. The border areas such as those belonging to Tamil, Urdu and Marathi provinces suffered this plight. The British government was not interested in doing anything in this regard, as it suited their convenience. During such times, as a result of Indian renaissance, India opened her eyes to a whole new world outside. Indian renaissance affected all parts of the country in all walks of life. Changes took place in every language of India. Life got resettled. While this happened throughout the country,

#### 4. Kannada renaissance:

Kannada renaissance, which was also a part of it, started affecting the life of the Kannada people. The social and political changes started affecting the common man; such changes also in turn brought further desires - desire for freedom and desire among the people speaking the same language to live together; the desire to be united as a linguistic whole. This was the status of the people of the Kannada speaking areas before unification.

The intention of this study, is not to collect the statistics or the detailed data regarding the unification movement, as that is not in the realm of this study. On the other hand it deals with persons who influenced the people; the layman, directly or indirectly through their language and writings towards political unification as well as a psychological bringing together of them. These persons were prominent in bringing a change in the thought process, in the way of looking at life and cultivating better aspirations. This led to the idea of unification.

The idea of political unification was brought about on the basis of cultural and literary renaissance. Division of land on the basis of language was some thing which the British could hardly comprehend. For they did not know that kind of diversity with in their own country. Therefore a person like Curzon could think of dividing a piece of land without any yard sticks and qualms. Thus when he divided Bengal, the result was the greatest uproar caused by the generally patient and passive people. Lord Curzon, without giving a single thought to the issue divided Bengal (in 1905) into two parts. His main intention perhaps was to create a Muslim dominating area and at the same time to disperse the revolutionary elements in Bengal. But he obviously did not know the significance of touching upon a volatile issue such as language. Because when the division separated a people speaking the same language, the resistance was greater. It only shows the natural love a people would possess for one's language and anything affecting that would cause great upheaval. This was not understood by the British. Bengal province consisted of three areas Orissa, Bengal and Bihar. When a place called Sylhet was transferred from the Bengal province to the Chief Commissionership of Assam, the people strongly protested. Later, Hindi speaking people of Bengal and the Oriya speaking population wanted to join together which was not objected by the other people. All these instances clearly show that people speaking the same language have greater affinity as brethren. Thus when Bengal was divided the greatest agitation against it was expressed by the people, Hindus and Muslims together. This perhaps was the earliest agitation on linguistic claims.<sup>1</sup> Where as when the Hindi speaking areas of the same Bengal province was separated it was accepted without any opposition.

Language is an important aspect of a culture. When language breathes easy and is encouraged, culture also lives. With this intention many of our leaders like Tilak and Gandhiji encouraged separation of states on the basis of language. In fact Lionel Curtis, the father of dyarchy in India had much earlier supported the cause of linguistic provinces. He had recognised the fact that, "unity of language, race and religion are important factors and language is the most important of them all".<sup>2</sup> He had even referred to the division to be made on the linguistic basis and a particular reference to the Kannada people also had been made by him. Later the same was affirmed by the Simon Commission in 1928 and 1929. Finally the Nehru Commission, headed by Pandit Motilal Nehru as the chairman upheld the fact that, "the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area should be the main consideration in the formation of states in India". A state would advance in all spheres of life when people there remain happy and are capable of development. The capacity to develop would occur when education can be imparted in the mother tongue, which would not be possible if a people are ruled by another language. The cause of education and culture would be upgraded only when the people belonging to a language live together. Primary education for a child has to be in its mother tongue for a child to excel. The Nehru committee report further claimed that, 'rapid progress in education as well as in general culture and in most departments of life, depends on language'. Thus the importance of the division of states on the basis of language was recognised by the national leaders even prior to Independence. In Karnataka the need to bring together the areas, where people spoke the same language was suggested at first by Sir Thomas Munro, the collector of Bellary in as early as 1826. He had suggested that Dharwad be included in the Madras presidency as, people speaking the same language would live happily being together. The motto of the unification movement was to rectify the wrongs done by the British while dividing the land. The unthoughtful division made by the British had caused caustic effect upon the language, culture and life of the people. This was recognised by many leaders who wanted to undo the doings of the British. For this only a movement by the people could bring together the lost peace, and language was the unifying factor here.

National awakening for freedom also initiated the regional consciousness among people. This was the time when the Kannada speaking people who had spread out in the other states began to discover their own history and literature, language and culture. This was also motivated by many national and regional leaders. In fact the regional leaders were in no way concerned only with the state; they were a part of the national struggle. Their aim was independence for the country, along with that came the idea for unification. At the national level, leaders like Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhiji, Nehru and others had seen the necessity to divide the country on the basis of language. Thus the idea of linguistic unity was brought into the minds of the people.

This was accelerated by the works and doings of many a leader. Their recognition of the need for a unified Kannada land was a result of their love for the language. It is important for us not only to know about the agitation, movements, political upheavals and hardships faced, but also to recognize those leaders who undertook all this and thus brought about the necessary changes in the awareness of the Kannadigas which in turn helped unification. In this context the work done by scholars and litterateurs in different parts of the Kannada speaking areas' is considered very important. They started working towards unification by motivating the common public. It had to be people's wish alone which would get the desired result. Therefore people had to be instilled with the desire for unification and they had to be inspired. Thus inspiring the Kannada people was done by the writers and literary men, such as Alur Venkata Rao, B. M. Srikantiah, Masti, Shanta Kavi, D. R. Bendre, Huyilagola Narayana Rao and others. People like Alur, had joined the freedom struggle under the leadership of Tilak. But he very soon realised that his presence was more necessary at the state level than at the national front. Therefore he announced that his services were first towards his state and then to the country. By serving his state he would serve his country. Lokamanya Tilak also had approved of his decision. This was the first break got for the unification movement in Karnataka, for Alur was the first to voice the demand for unification in 1907. In 1905 Alur had visited Anegondi, the area once belonging to the prosperous Vijayanagara empire which lies in ruins today. Seeing the ruins of the place Alur's heart was stirred and that was the moment when he vowed to serve the state

and bring back the lost dignity for mother Kannada. He, after that wrote a number of articles and books to inspire as well as to create awareness in the Kannada people about the heritage to which they belonged. His writings had the desired effect. His writings not only provoked nationalistic feelings, but they also introduced a new kind of writings - patriotic and nationalistic. His writings for the first time touched the hearts of the people, and they started realising what they had missed until then; which they had experienced, but could not express. This was further continued by many writers and poets such as Shanta Kavi, Huyilugola Narayana Rao and others, who wrote inspiring poems. But the epitome of all this was the writings of B. M. Srikantiah. B. M. Srikantiah, who had been a witness to the sad plight of Kannada language and literature was in a position to recognise the short comings of the language. Being in a position that he was, - a teacher at the university level, he took up the task of uplifting Kannada language. He also recognised that the border areas needed full support of all the people of Karnataka. Therefore he toured those areas and thus gave them a feeling that the people of the rest of the Kannada speaking areas were also with them in their fight for unification. It was a task to be achieved together for all. His patriotic songs created a ripple in the minds of the Kannada people. Kannada people of the border areas recognised and welcomed his support. Thus B. M. Srikantiah's doings created a strong sense of oneness among all the Kannada people. In order to further such feelings, B. M. Srikantiah wanted to introduce a uniform Kannada language. His speeches and writings had a great effect on the Kannada people of the border areas. In fact it would be quite apt here to refer to the writing of Sri Siddaiah Puranik about the visit of B. M. Srikantiah to Kulburgi (Gulbarga). During those days Urdu was the official language in Gulbarga; people loved to transact in English, and Kannada had no place. When B. M. Srikantiah visited the place, he gave a speech in English, and it was so effective that the local Marathas and Muslims were not only surprised at a Kannadiga's command over English language but also from then on changed their views about the Kannada people and the language. The same writer records the fact that, dignity for Kannadigas in that place was procured because of B. M. Srikantiah. However, all this only relate the services rendered by B. M. Srikantiah, in gaining a respectable position for Kannada language as well as the people. Though unification was a political movement, it was fostered by writers and journalists. The ideas of unification were provoked by the thinking minority; it was further developed and achieved by the political workers. In 1907, Alur Venkata Rao published his article stating that unless the Kannada people were united, development of Karnataka was not possible. This article actually paved way for the unification movement<sup>2</sup>. The work of motivating the people was done by those leaders who travelled all over the Kannada speaking land. Alur, Benegal Rama Rao, Mudaveedu Krishna Rao, B. M. Srikantiah and others did this. Thus the seeds of unification were sown in the literary world by the thinking minority and it blossomed in the political field. The idea of celebrating cultural festivals concerned with Kannada land and people also was started by the leaders as a part of unification. Thus 'Nadahabba', 'Basaveshwara Utsava' and 'Vijayanagara Utsava' etc., were begun in order to create love for the land and language in the minds of the people.

While all this went on in the cultural and literary levels, different Institutions also started getting involved in this. In the north Karnataka region, this work was mainly done by the Vidya Vardhaka Sangha, which was started by R. H. Deshpande. He, along with other leaders such as Kaikini Shyma Rao (I President), Venkata Rangokatti (I Vice President), Namadar Rao, Gurusiddappa Gilaganji, Rao Saheb, Srinivasa Rodda, Rao Saheb Rama Rao Desai, Santaveerappa Menasinakai, Sheshagiri Rao Koppikkar, Gurachar Morab etc., worked hard to bring the Kannada people together. The institution also used to publish a journal by name 'Vagbhushana' and Alur's article in this journal about unification was the first to shake the Kannada people into awareness about unification.

Ultimately on November 1st 1956, the Karnataka state was formed. Regions from different border areas came to be included in Karnataka. The state was called New Mysore and the Maharaja of Mysore (Gayachamarajendra Wodeyar) was appointed as its Governor. The unified state was renamed as Karnataka on the 1st November, 1973. Thus unification of Karnataka, though was a political movement was fostered by writers and journalists. Newspapers played a major role in spreading the ideas and bringing people together. The ideas of unification were provoked by the thinking minority; it was further developed and achieved by

the political workers and the public. The timely awareness of the people got the state for them. In conclusion we may say that literature is the reflection of human mind. Man's desires, aspirations, achievement, life and everything else that involves human beings is the ingredients of literature. History is the description of the same along with the mass movements, agitations and united efforts of the people. While literature works with imagination, the latter involves facts and reality. Nevertheless, one is influenced by the other. The works of creative writers like B. M. Srikantiah, Alur and others influenced people in involving with the facts of history. That is the importance of these writers. Among the said professors, who are chosen here for the study some influenced directly and the others were onlookers and reflected. However each one contributed in his own way to the history of the Kannada renaissance and Unification of Karnataka.