



THE FREEDOM FIGHTER OF ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS OF TWO DISTRICTS IN NORTH KARNATAKA

Dr. Venkatarao Palati¹ and Nagaraj Veerabhadrapa²

¹M.A. M.Ed. M.Phil. Ph.D.

Chairman, Department of Studies and Research in History , Davangere University, Davanagere.

² Research Scholar, Department of Studies and Research in History ,
Davangere University, Davanagere.

ABSTRACT :

During the rule of the last Nizam, viz., Usman Ali Khan Bahadur, the Hyderabad state was a reflection of social schisms, political upheavals, economic exploitation and religious atrocities. The struggle for independence and integration was more or less a struggle against the communalism of the Nizam government. The spirit of nationalism in the minds of the people emerged out of their instinct to protect their religion. In Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) the Swadeshi movement found its expression in the establishment of national schools.



KEYWORDS : social schisms, political upheavals, economic exploitation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The leaders clearly perceived the permanent necessity of an ideological basis for the freedom movement. Against the political odds created by the Nizam's government, the nationalists of this region struggled successfully to establish five national schools. In the history of the Hyderabad struggle, the founding of Hyderabad State Congress and the entry of the Swamy Ramananda Tirtha coincided not by an accident, but as a result of a series of seemingly non-political movements meant for the political preparedness of the people of Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) to launch direct action against the autocratic rule of the Nizam. This helped develop political consciousness and national spirit among the Kannadigas of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur districts. The Police Action was a historic event in the history of independence movement in Hyderabad state. To restore law and order and to grant the responsible government and to integrate the state with the union of India, a Police Action became imperative.

Kannada speaking areas of Hyderabad province were added to new state. At this juncture, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel ordered this step under the Command of Maj. Gen. J.N. Choudhari on the early morning of Monday, 18th September, 1948. The Hyderabad army surrendered to the Indian forces on same day and of the next, the Nizam Usman Ali Khan Bahadur signed the instrument of accession, the incorporation of the Hyderabad state into the Union of India. Thus, with the Police action, an era of tyranny, communalism, political chaos and confusion in the state came to an end. The problems of the people of the Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) did not find any solution with the merger of Hyderabad in the Indian Union. The question of freedom from Muslim autocracy was a minor question in comparison with the

question of these Kannadigas finding their rightful place in the new Karnataka state. There could be no place for them until they were allowed to merge with their linguistic kinsmen. Thus, efforts were made by the Nizam's, Karnataka Parishad to encourage the people of Bidar, Kalaburagi and Raichur who were losing their cultural distinctiveness to extend their whole-hearted support for the formation of United Karnataka. The Kannada Sahitya Sammelan held at Gulbarga in March, 1949, passed a resolution for the formation of the united Karnataka by merging in it the area of Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka). The people of Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) toiled hard to integrate their territory to form —Vishal Karnataka. They firmly believed that a linguistic province produces what democracy needs, viz., the social homogeneity.

There was neither freedom of speech nor that of an association. People were deprived and denied of their fundamental rights. They did not enjoy the economic liberty owing to the deep-rooted feudal system and its henchmen. The minority enslaved the majority. The Nizam and Ittehad formulated such of the policies which aimed at establishing an Islamic state in a Hindu majority state. He did not grant the religious freedom to Hindus. Social life was tainted with communal feelings, which reached its climax, before the accession of the Hyderabad state to the Indian union, in the form of the —Razakar movement. It was privilege to be a Muslim. He was considered superior in the sociopolitical status to his Hindu counterpart who lived as a second grade citizen in the state. Swamy Ramananda Tirtha, in his memoirs of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, states that the Muslim fanatics treated the Hindus as slaves. The life of the people was controlled by the Muslim oligarchy. Muslims were allowed to use weapons. Much discrimination was shown in the application of law against the Hindus, whereas, Muslims enjoyed special treatment in the administration of justice. Private enterprise in education was almost forbidden and it was looked upon with disfavour. Kannada language and culture were reeling under the influence of Urdu, the official language of the state. The press, which is the mirror of public opinion, did not enjoy the freedom to publish articles on nationalism and liberty.

2. FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN NORTH KARNATAKA : HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The upheaval 1857 – 58 was the first organized armed attempt by the Indians to free themselves from the political grip of the English. The period was one of great tribulation for the Indians and the English alike, because the fate of both experienced such convulsions which were etched in the history of the country. The British emerged victorious, but the Indians gained too because the movement became a symbol of strength and sacrifice for the subsequent generations. In the decade preceding the outbreak the political map of India was radically changed. Lord Dalhousie had intensified the process of annexation through a vigorous application of the policy of „lapse. The years of his regime (1848-56) saw the absorption of nothing less than eight States which meant that a quarter million square miles of territory was added to the East India Company's territorial limits. The period also witnessed the missionary activities against early marriage, purdah system, the passing of the Widow Re-marriage Bill in 1856, activities of some English officers engaged in proselytizing, the introduction of railways, telegraph and the greased cartridges. The atmosphere of the country and especially of northern India was clouded with vague suspicions. The people felt confirmed in their faith that the British authorities were not satisfied with mere annexation of the States but wanted to interfere in their religious affairs and end the caste system.

The first signs of unrest were felt in the first quarter of the year 1857 when the sepoys Berhampore (five miles east of Nowgong), Barrackpore and Ambala resorted to incendiaries. The Indian Regiments were disbanded and the culprits punished. This, however, did not quiet the situation and proved only a prelude to the open rebellion which followed in May. The leaders of the first war of independence were both men and women, most important amongst the latter being Begum Hazrat Mahal, Rani Mahal, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Ramgarh and Rani Tace Bai. Some of them led troops to the battlefield and fought; while others accepted the sufferings and privation, imprisonment and death. It was on April 24, 1857, that C. Smyth, Commandant, 3rd Light Cavalry, ordered a parade to test the loyalty of the soldiers, at Meerut. Out of ninety sepoys present, 85 refused to accept new cartridges. As a result they were court-martialled and sentenced to

varying terms imprisonment extending up to 10 years. The Sentence thus passed was announced on May 9, 1857, in the presence of a gathering with an aim to create a consternation and fear. The sepoys were stripped of their uniforms and then were handed over to the smiths for fastening shackles round their arms and legs.¹ The sight might have been picturesque for the English Commander but the whole affair was distasteful to the Indians assembled. "There was a good deal of murmuring in your ranks". Says Gough, "and had it not been for the presence of the British troops it is impossible to say what might not have taken place."

Later in the evening the „women of bazaar“ jeered at the sepoys. "Your brethren have been ornamented with these anklets and incarcerated and for what? Because they would not swerve from their creed and you cowards as you are sit still indifferent to your fate. If you have an atom of manhood in you, go and release them."³ The taunts inflamed their hearts. The spark which fell from female lips ignited it at once and the night of the May 10, 1857, saw the commencement of a tragedy never before witnessed since India passed under British sway. The flames of free which broke out at Meerut, on May 10, spread rapidly over a large part of northern India.

The history of Indian freedom struggle would be incomplete without mentioning the contributions of women. The sacrifice made by the women of India will occupy the foremost place. They fought with true spirit and undaunted courage and faced various tortures, exploitations and hardships to earn us freedom. When most of the men freedom fighters were in prison the women came forward and took charge of the struggle. The list of great women whose names have gone down in history for their dedication and undying devotion to the service of India is a long one. Women's participation in India's freedom struggle began as early as in 1817. Bhima Bai Holkar fought bravely against the British colonel „Malcolm“ and defeated him in Guerilla warfare. Many women including Rani Channamma of Kittur, Rani Begam Hazrat Mahal of Avadh fought against British East India Company in the 19th century; 30 years before the "First War of Independence 1857". The role played by women in the war of independence of 1857 was creditable and invited the admiration even leaders of the Revolt. Rani of Ramgarh, Rani Jindan Kaur, Rani Tace Bai, Baiza Bai, Chauban Rani, and Tapasvini Maharani daringly led their troops into the battlefield. Rani Lakshmi Bai Jhansi whose heroism and superb leadership laid an outstanding example of real patriotism. Indian women who joined the national movement belonged to educated and liberal families, as well as those from the rural areas and from all walk of life, all castes, religions and communities. Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Vijayalakshmi Pundit and Annie Besant in the 20th century are the named which are remembered even today for their singular contribution both in battlefield and in political field.

3. ROLE OF WOMEN IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE:

The failure of the Government to take up the Nehru Report to take up the Nehru Report and take note of the demand of the people within the stipulated period forced the Indian National Congress to proceed with its plans of launching Satyagraha as had been decided at its session in December 1928, at Calcutta. Therefore, the Indian National Congress which met in December 1929, at Lahore declared on the midnight of December 31, 1929, the goal of the Congress to be complete independence instead of Dominion Status. Thus the New Year was ushered in with new hopes, a changed creed and the prospect of an active fight ahead. The congress members of the legislature were instructed to boycott elections and 26 January 1930, was declare as Independence Day which was to be celebrated throughout the country every year. Gandhiji was empowered to initiate the Civil Disobedience Movement in any manner he considered best. Gandhiji selected the breaking of Salt Laws as the centre of gravity. He felt that since salt was a thing of common use, salt tax was unjust for the poor in the land.

4. FREEDOM STRUGGLE:

Bellary is a district in Karnataka with hot and dry summers, Historical sites, Farm Land and Rich minerals characterize Bellary district. Also the home of famous Vijayanagara Empire World Heritage Site recently making headlines with mining industry. On 1st October 1953 CE, the Bellary district of Madras State

was divided on a linguistic basis. Areas with a significant Kannada speaking population were transferred to Mysore state, which later became Karnatakastate. Areas of the district with a significant Telugu speaking population were merged into the Anantapuram and Karnulu districts in what would later become Andhra Pradesh state. Bellary city itself, with large numbers of both Kannada and Telugu speakers, was included into Mysore state after protracted debate and controversy.

It may be recalled that in the first round of states reorganization, states had been created largely on the linguistic principle. V.P. Menon, who was a witness to this entire process of re-organization wrote, —We had demolished the artificial barriers between the states, inter se and the rest of India and had indeed laid the foundation for an integrated administrative and financial structure. But the real integration had to take place in the minds of the people. It would take some time for the people of the erstwhile states to outgrow the regional loyalties and to develop a wider outlook and broader vision. That task requires great vision and patience. The best-governed state is the one that possesses a sound political system and an efficient administrative system.

Each of these is indispensable, if the state is not to fall into anarchy. Though, in fact the area (Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka)) produced the first Kannada book called Kavirajamarga written by Sri Vijaya, who lived under the rule of Rashtrakuta king, Amoghavarsha Nrupatunga of Manyakheta (the present Malkhed in Kalaburagi district). During this time, the Manyakheta was a famous cultural centre. Throughout history, the -Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) area has been very famous for its socio-cultural and religious activities. The area was also known as the place of —Sharana of the twelfth century under Kalyana dynasty. Bijjala was a famous king and his prime minister, Basavanna, has done a great service to mankind in the removal of inequalities and establishing a casteless society. Basavakalyana (which is part of Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) region), was the cultural centre of Sharana movement. It was under the Nizam rule that this region was totally neglected; and after independence of the country nothing changed. The history of this region is a saga of sufferings and backwardness and a long spell of stagnation both in economic and social sectors. However, the region was expected to have a bright future. Because large scale and rapid development was expected to take place when the Tungabhadra and Upper Krishna Projects were completed. But, unfortunately, the projects were not completed even after the completion of the period. This region has remained neglected even in the new set up as it was woefully neglected in the erstwhile Nizam's Hyderabad state. The area is full of potential, talent and material resources. After its integration with the state, considerable effort has been made to promote development in this region by State Governments through the five-year plans. Even so, till 1980, all the three districts occupied the bottom position except Bellary (placed 10th place in per capita income). The continuous backward position of this region consequently led the authorities to undertake some specific efforts for development. These include the preparation of development plan by the Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) Development Board (HKABD) in 1992, for implementation of schemes in this region.

Koppal district is an administrative district in the state of Karnataka in India. The Koppal district came to existence on 25th August 1997, bifurcated from Raichur district of Karnataka. Palkigundu is described as the Indrakila parvata of epic fame and there is an ancient Shiva temple called the Male Malleshwara. There are two Ashokan inscriptions at Palkigundu and Gavimatha. It was the capital of a branch of Shilaharas under the Chalukya's of Kalyan. In Shivaji's times it was one of the eight prants or revenue divisions of Southern Maratha Country. During 1857 Revolts, Mundargi Bheema Rao and Hammige Kenchana Gouda died fighting the British here in June 1858.

At first, women had not been allowed to participate as Gandhiji had thought they would complicate matters. But the women of the land, coveting a place of equality with men, could not sit back at the call of the nation. They protested that in these critical days there should not be any watertight compartments of services. Women demanded that “no conference, no congress or commission dealing with the welfare of India should be held without the presence on them of their king. Similarly they must ask that no marches, no imprisonment, no demonstrations organized for the welfare of India should prohibit women from a share in them.” Later they were permitted to take part in all phase of the campaign. They (the women) started their

march on the road to liberty by breaking salt laws, forest laws, taking out „Prabhat Pheries“, processions picketing schools, colleges, legislative councils and clubs. The Government met the just demand with lathi charge, shooting, arrests, Section 144, Press Ordinance, Unlawful Instigation Ordinance and Intimidation Ordinance. Nizam was succeeded by Mir Osman Ali Khan who endeavoured to improve the administration to meet the needs of the times. While hundreds of Hindus were murdered, more than 125 women were raped, some in public places mainly by the Razaakars. The Gorta village in Basavakalyana taluk bore the brunt of Razaakars attack. More than 200 Hindus in the village were massacred and their residences set on fire. This massacre is called the “Jalianwala Bagh” massacre of Karnataka. The Indian armed forces entered the Nizam state on September 13 and completed an operation within 109 hours. At around 4 pm of September 17, 1948 General Al Edroos, Commander in Chief of the Nizam's army, surrendered to General A.M. Choudhary of the Indian army.

With the state set to celebrate Hyderabad-Karnataka liberation day on Monday, a trip down memory lane shows that it was no easy task for freedom fighters to secure independence from Nizam rule and the tyranny of the Razaakars. As many as 30 camps were set up by the freedom fighters of Hyderabad-Karnataka region along the borders of Raichur (which also included the present day Koppal) and Kalaburagi (including Yadgir) to wage an armed struggle against the Razaakars and to liberate their region from Nizam rule.

5. CONCLUSION:

In 1912, Salar Jung III was appointed as the prime minister. After his resignation in 1914, Nizam took the reins of government in his own hands and dealt with the heads of various departments without any intermediary. He pledged all the resources of the State to the British for prosecution of the First World war (1914-1918) for which he was hailed as the “Faithful Ally” of the British and began to be styled as “His Exalted Highness”.

The British never gave up its right of interfering in internal affairs, yet it allowed considerable autonomy to Nizam to rule his subjects to the extent, it would not affect the British interest adversely.⁴⁴ This tacit understanding allowed the Nizam to continue his feudal rule without any interruption up to 1947. The increasing spread of the freedom movement throughout Hyderabad state was regarded with alarm by the Nizam. When India achieved independence on 15th August 1947, the Razakars in Bellary and Koppal let loose a reign of terror in the Hyderabad State and popular reaction to it threatened the continuance of the Nizam's rule. Finally, on 13th September 1948, the Government of India started the Police action against Hyderabad. The Nizam was left with no option but to accede to the Indian Union. With this the long rule of the Asaf Jahi dynasty came to be an end from 17th September 1948.