

The Freedom Movement in Kalyana Karnataka: Role of Bellary and Raichur Districts

Dr. Bharateshagouda S. Shiriyappagoudar

Associate Professor in Department of History, Government First Grade College, Kundagol, Dist.
Dharwad, State Karnataka, India

Abstract

The Raichure and Bellary served as vital epicentres of nationalist awakening and anti-colonial resistance within the Kalyana Karnataka (formerly Hyderabad-Karnataka) region, bridging regional freedom struggles against both the British administration and the oppressive rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The freedom struggle of Kalyana Karnataka, with special study of Bellary and Raichur Districts in Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) region is in the present Kalaburagi division, one of the four divisions of Karnataka state. A brief geographical location, Historical and Socio-economical profile of each district is discussed below. Hyderabad - Karnataka is the name given to the area which was the part of erstwhile Hyderabad province, when the new state of Mysore (presently Karnataka) was formed in 1956. These areas later came to be known as Hyderabad-Karnataka region. If we look at the history through the ages, different rulers have neglected the region during pre-independent and post-independent periods. As we know the whole nation celebrates the Independence Day on 15th August every year since 1947, but the people of Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka) celebrate Independence Day on not only 15th August but also on 17th September, since 1948. Even during India's independence struggle Hyderabad, Karnataka was under Nizam's rule. The people of Hyderabad, Karnataka have had to fight for their independence not only against the British but also Hyderabad Nizam who supported the Razakars. The freedom movement in the region was in no way at low profile; it was as serious as in other parts of the country. But unfortunately nobody highlighted this aspect in the history of the freedom movement. Hyderabad, Karnataka region originally consisted of three districts-Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur (and recently Koppal district) which belonged to the Hyderabad state and later merged in Karnataka state. These districts along with Bellary form the Gulbarga division in the state (though culturally Bellary is different from the other). These districts on the border areas of the Nizam state did not receive proper attention of the rulers and hence remained backward and neglected. The Hyderabad state, the largest and the richest of the Indian princely states was a relic of medieval autocracies. The form of administration was absolute monarchy. But the state was governed by an irresponsible bureaucrat, with an executive council at the top.

Keywords: Hyderabad-Karnataka, Kalyana Karnataka, Princely States, Social Homogeneity, Muslim Fanatics, Razakar Movement and Swamy Ramananda Tirtha.

Introduction

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. 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 Teertha 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 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 tinctured 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.

Freedom Movement in Kalyana Karnataka- Geographical and Historical Background

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 sepoy Berhampur (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 Hazarat Mahal, Rani Mahal, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Ramgarh and Rani Tara Bai. Some of them led troops to the battlefield and fought; while others accepted the sufferings and privation, imprisonment and death. It was on 24 April 1857, that Smyth, Commandant, 3rd Light Cavalry, ordered a parade to test the loyalty of the soldiers, at Meerut. Out of ninety sepoy present, 85 refused to accept new cartridges. As a result, they were court-martialled and were 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 sepoy were stripped of their uniforms and then were handed over to the smiths for fastening shackles round their arms and legs. 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 bazar" jeered at the sepoy. "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." 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. Woman'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.

The Swadeshi Movement in Hyderabad State and Its Impact

The Swadeshi Movement had its reverberation in Hyderabad city also. Arya Samaj and Ganesh Utsav committee tried to popularize the Swadeshi spirit by establishing many Vyama Salas to improve the physique of the youth and develop in them the spirit of self-confidence. Many prominent citizens of state kept themselves in touch with development in British India by attending the annual session of the Indian national Congress. The growing cultural and political awareness to the Hindu citizen of the state perturbed the Nizam's government¹¹. In order to perpetuate its autocracy it decided to implement a systematic policy of cultural annihilation of the Hindus. As the part of this grand design the Hindu names of the districts and towns were changed. As a part of these grand designs in 1905, the Telugu names of the districts like Elagandala, Palamuru, Indure and Methuku were changed as Karim Nagar, Mahaboob Nagar and Nizamabad state was proclaimed as an Islamic state. During the rule of Osman Ali Khan the steps to Islamic Hyderabad state were intensified. With the encouragement of the government the blatant communal organization Majlis-ite Lhahadul – Musclemen was founded. This organization along with Anjuman Tablig Gulisthan was inaugurated. Table's movement to convert the Hindus into Islam to counteract these activities the Arya Samaj launched with great vigor and sudhi movement to reconvert into Hinduism the neo converts of Islam. On 28th August 1915 the first Educational Conference was organized. The conference demanded the establishment of a University at Hyderabad. The demand provided an ideal opportunity to the Nizam to accord high status to Urdu language and at the same time crushes the languages like Telugu, Marathi and Kannada. On 28th August 1919, the Osmania University was established to impart education in Urdu medium.

The Khilafat Agitation and the decision of Mahatma Gandhi to start the Non-co-operation Movement excited people of Hyderabad. Wearing of Khadi and propagation of Swadeshi became very popular. The government of India was worried about the likely attitude of the Nizam towards the Khilafat agitation, which has deeply stirred the feeling of the Muslims against the British. The Muslim wanted the Nizam to

lead the Khilafat Movement and were prepared to confer on him the title of Mohiul Millat-e-Waddin so in his letter of 13th June 1920 to the Viceroy Chelmsford, the Nizam stated that he would not “hesitate for a moment to add my voice to the appeal for leasing the sovereignty in terms of peace. In the letter the Nizam to refereed himself as an ‘Ally’ (of the British) and a ‘Ruler’”. Further he offered the following unsolicited advice on matters concerning British Imperial Policy. The first Hyderabad Political Conference was held at Kakinada in 1923. The Prominent leaders like Shaukat Ali, Mohmad Ali, C. R. Das, Vallabhai Patel and Sarojini Naidu addressed large gathering that assembled at various railway stations on the Nizam state Railway. About 25 delegates and 500 visitors from Hyderabad attended the sessions at Kakinada. Among them included prominent leaders like Madapati, Hanumantha Rao, Raghavendraraao, Sharma and Vaman Naik. These leaders took the opportunity to arrange meeting of the Raghavendraraao, Sharma and Vaman Naik. These leaders took the opportunity to arrange a meeting of the Hyderabad delegates and visitors. This meeting is popularly known as the Hyderabad Political Conference. The meeting was called outside Hyderabad state since the Nazism’s Government banned Political Conferences in the state under an order called ‘Gasti No. 53. The second Hyderabad Conferences was held in Bombay under the president-ship of Y. M Kale. The third Hyderabad Political Conference was held at Pune and it decided to organize in the state itself.

In 1938 the cultural national emotions of the people suddenly burst out in the form to various agitations launched by several organizations like, the Arya Samy, Hindu Maha Sabha and the Hyderabad state Congress. Vande Mataram agitation of Hindu student of Osmania University was unique. Osmania University had three hostels having two prayer halls one for the Muslims students and the other for the Hindu students. Muslim students were complained to the warden that the Hindu students were reciting Vande Mataram song in their prayer hall by this the warden ordered the closure of prayer hall and students were did not object to the closure of prayer hall, but the Hindu students requested the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to remove the ban. The Vice-Chancellor suspended the student from the university and ordered to vacate the hostel at night and harsh methods were employed to compel the Hindu students to leave the hostel at night by this the Hindu day scholars too sympathize the hoteliers went on strike. The Hindu students also objected to wearing of blue Sherwani and Pyjama, which was made the uniformed of the college authority that they would wear white shirt and dhoti. Hindu students demanded to start Telugu, Marathi, Kannada and Sanskrit departments in the University. The students of other colleges and High schools all over the state started the agitation. Many students were expelled from their schools and colleges. Among the expelled students were P. V. Narasimha Rao, Hayarivachari, Aratla Ramachandra Reddy, Devalapalli, Venkateshwara Rao, Nookala Ramachandra Reddy and others. These students ha played an important part in national and state politics Indian National leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and V. D. Savarkar. Mahatma Gandhi supported the Vande Mataram Movement of the students of Hyderabad state

Freedom Movement in Bellary District

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 Karnataka state. 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, 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 Sharanas 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.

Freedom Movement in Raichur District

The freedom movement in Raichur, part of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, was a distinct struggle against both British imperialism and the autocratic Nizam rule. Led by leaders like Pandit Taranath, the movement featured the 1920 establishment of the nationalist Madrasa-E-Hamdard school, widespread Satyagraha's, and efforts to stop tax payments (Nazarana) to the Nizam. The freedom struggle in Raichur, part of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, was defined by intense opposition to both British imperialism and the Nizam's autocratic rule. Key movements, led by figures like Pandit Taranath, included establishing national education (Madrasa-E-Hamdard in 1920), promoting Khadi, and

supporting the Hyderabad State Congress for liberation. Key aspects of the movement in Raichur include. A revolutionary figure, Pandit Taranath (born in Mangalore, active in Raichur) advocated for boycotting taxes (Nazarana) imposed by the Nizam and launched national education initiatives, preparing the youth for the freedom struggle. Hyderabad State Congress: Activists in Raichur were heavily involved in the Hyderabad Karnataka region's struggle against the Nizam, aiming for both liberation and eventual merger with the Kannada-speaking region of India. Resistance Movements: Similar to other parts of Karnataka, the movement in Raichur involved Satyagraha, strikes, and promotion of Swadeshi ideals. Impact of Regional Politics: The struggle was influenced by the political awakening in the neighbouring Bombay Presidency and the broader Hyderabad State, often termed a fight against "Muslim autocracy". The region gained freedom from the Nizam's rule only after the Indian Union's police action, post-1947.

Conclusion and Findings

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 Independence of India.

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 Raichur 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 an end from 17th September 1948. During the period that struggle the voice in favour of Kannada had been kept alive by leaders like Dr.S.Melkote, Manvi Narsingarao, Bhimsenrao Tavag, Krishanacharya of Sagar, Siddayya Puranik, Jayatirth Raj Pourohit, Siddavanahali Krishna Shrama, Kaptral Krishnarao, and others. The result was that after the accession of Hyderabad State with Indian Union, the Kannadigas in the districts of Bidar, Gulbarga, and Raichur were actively participated in the struggle for the unification of Karnataka. The result was that according to State's reorganization act from 1st November 1956, Hyderabad Karnataka becomes a part of new Mysore State. The demand for renaming the state as 'Karnataka', however it continued to be voiced for the next 17 years. The Government of Mysore renamed the state as "Karnataka" with effect from 1st November 1973.

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