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GRT FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN BOMBAY KARNATAKA – A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CRITIQUE

Shiladhar Yallappa Mugali

M.A., Ph.D. , Associate Professor, Dept. of History and Archaeology, Karnatak University, Dharwad .

Abstract:-This paper is a critical survey of historical writings on the Freedom movement in Bombay Karnataka. The important works, articles, Ph.D. thesis's and etc selected for the survey. The method of this study is historical, infact it is a historiographical critique. The analytical study is also attempted. The scope this study is mainly focused on Bombay Karnataka region, but most of these references are deals with the Karnataka as whole and at same time few references were restricted and limited to specific aspects and regions or districts. Originally this paper presented in the national seminar on 'Recent Studies on South Indian History' held at Shivaji University, Kolhapur (March 2010).

Keywords:Freedom, Historiography, Nationalism, National Movement, Bombay Karnataka, Lavani, Revivalist, Intellectuals

INTRODUCTION :-

The Karnataka was in the forefront of India's freedom struggle. Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan were pioneer in combating the British. Even small Kittur (1824) principality raised the banner of revolt. Sangoli Rayanna, Dhondiya Wagh, Halagali Bedas, Naragund Babasaheb, Hammige Kenchangagouda, Mundaragi Bhimarao and many others revolted against the British mighty power. Since the foundation of Congress people from this region especially Bombay Karnataka actively participated in the every activities and movement of it. Sri Narayan Rao Chandavarkar, Sri Bhate, Sri Mailar Madevappa, Channanna Wali, Veeranagouda Patil, R.R. Diwakar, Gangadharrao Despande, Hardekar Manjappa, Sir Siddappa Kambli, Hosamani Siddappa and Kaka Karkhanis many other hosts of local leaders played significant role in national movement. There were ardent leftiuent followers of Tilak and even of Gandhiji, Jawarhal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose. The National leaders visited Bombay Karnataka several times and have addressed and presided the rallies, functions and the sessions. The intellectuals like poets, Folk Poets novelists, play writers and Biographers too contributed threw their writings and participation. So, vast literature consists of events, memories, episodes of freedom movement was produced.

There was great response to Swadeshi movement (1905-11), Khilafat and Non-Co-operation movements of 1920-23. In early 1930's Salt Satyagraha at Sirsi, Siddapur and Ankola carried successfully. There was Forest-Hullubanni Satyagraha, Non-revenue campaign in Hirekerur taluk and other places of Bombay Karnataka. Even Quit India Movement of 1942 was successful beyond expectations, especially it was a center of underground activities. Thus, compare to other parts of Karnataka the Bombay Karnataka was greatly contributed and was the centre of Congress activities and also the freedom movement.

In the following paragraphs, selected works, thesis and articles were choosen for study, they are;

The British writers and administrators' works concerning the 1857 Revolts in India also highlights the developments in Bombay Karnataka, especially about the anti-British revolts and resistances of Halagali Bedas, Naragund, Mundaragi and other chiefs of Southern Maratha country. The following are some important works, they are, 'A History of the Great Revolt'¹ (in 3 Volumes) by John William Kaye (Reprint-2011), 'History of the Indian Mutiny' (1857-59)² Vol.III, (1880) by Colonel G.B. Malleon, 'A History of the Indian Mutiny'³ by Holmes, T. Rice, (1913), 'Western India Before and During Mutiny'⁴ by George Lee Grand Jacob (1871), 'Memories of States of the Southern Maratha Country'⁵ by Edward W. West (1869), 'Indian Antiquary'⁶ Vol. XVI, (1984) and etc. All most all these works gives important references and informations about the 1857 revolts. But, they fail to provide detailed and specific information.

T.T. Sharma's *Karnatakadalli Swatantrya Sangrama* (1800-1857) (1957) it is in Kannada, which briefly sketches anti-British revolts of Karnataka. But did not contain detailed study about Bombay Karnataka.

History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka (1962) Vol. I.7

This first volume was edited by M.V. Krishna Rao and G.S. Halappa and it consists of sixteen chapters. The first chapters titled as '*The concept of Freedom*'. In this the generalized concepts related to political freedom were discussed. Without giving importance to socio-economic emancipation of the masses. In the second chapter '*The Heritage of Karnataka*', in which it was mentioned that since the establishment of Vijayanagara rule in 14th century, its rulers successfully defended freedom and culture against the incursions of North India and the revived patriotism of the masses. The three hundred years of struggle between the South Indian Kingdom and Muslim invaders illustrate sentiment of freedom. The great effort that the Karnataka people defended this country. Vijayanagara stands as an example of patriotism. Its foundation was based on the enthusiasm and concerted political action of people. It was Vijayanagar that saved the south at a time when Hindu India was crumbling in the north. This empire later inspired Shivaji and heroes to revive the old glory of lost values. Even this tradition of independence was continued by principalities like Keladi, Mysore, Surpur, Kittur etc. It also pointed that, Shivappa Nayak, Kittur Channamma, Sangolli Rayanna, Hyder Ali and others as crusaders for freedom.

But reality there was mutual conflict and rivalry between the Vijayanagara and the Deccani Sultans. Thus, this chapters illustrates the pro-Hindu and Hindu-revivalist version of Indian nationalism rather than objective and genuine historical explanation.

The subsequent chapters in this volume deals with the anti-British revolts took between 1799 to 1858. The heroic fight of both father and son, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. Hyder Ali's struggle was described as a first example of a concerted national exertion and Tipu Sultan as a nightmare to the Britishers. The description about the Rani Channamma of Kittur (1824) and her leftiuent Sangoli Rayanna is also mentioned.

Overall the importance of this volume is that, it provides the important documents relates to anti-British revolts and resistance, they were the records of Poona Residency Correspondence edited by G.S. Sardesai (1958) 'Central Record Office, Hyderabad, Records supplied by Tallur Rayanna Gouda and Bhaveppa Mugi. At the end further documents, records are given in the appendix, which is spread over 290 pages. These relates to Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan, Kittur Channamma, Badami insurrection and Ballads of (folk literature) the heroic struggle against the Britishers. From historical point of view these informations given in appendix are of great value. Even for the research purpose these are very use full. The method and writing style of this volume is narrative description. But due to the appendix and auxillary reference this volume became comprehensive and valuable work of history.

***The History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka : (1964) (Vol-II) Ed. by G.S. Halappa.*⁸**

This is again a comprehensive study on the title, and it is rarest study of this kind. It consists of four parts, the first part consists of 17 chapters covering 340 pages, which deals with the main streams of the Freedom Movement in Karnataka. There is thorough discussion about the Western Impact, the Belgaum Session (1924), Quit India movement and etc. The regeneration of Lingayats and other communities, the Brithday celebration of Basaveshwara (1913), the deteriorating conditions of scattered Karnataka especially Bombay Karnataka. Then the visit of Balagandadhar Tilak to North Karnataka and its impacts, the emergence of national movement in Karnataka etc are due mentioned. The major events like Non-Co-operation movement, Civil Disobedience movement, Forest Satyagraha, Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movement are discussed in detail. A brief profile of Mylara Mahadevappa and Channappa Wali is given.

The part two of this volume contains the auxiliaries about 200 pages concerning various aspects like the Role of Press, The Role of Intellectuals, Poets, Novelists, Play Writers, Biographers and Folk songs. There were separate chapters on the Unification movement, Khadi movement, the Harijan Movement, the Political Developments of Princely States like Ramadurg and Hyderabad Karnataka.

The Part three constitutes the memories and reminiscences of persons involved in the freedom movement. Appendix are given in the last part of this volume. It contains the documents, Judicial and Police Records and Official Records. The photographs and illustrations are the special feature of this volume.

Thus, this volumes provides various source materials for the study of history of freedom movement in Karnataka. Most of the studies relates to freedom movement are based on this volume. It is rare work which throws light on the rise and growth of freedom movement in Karnataka.

The critical analysis of these two volumes one can notice the following short -comings and criticisms, they are as follows;

- i. The first volume glorifies the Vijayanagara rule and described that it was founded to protect the Hindus from Muslim invasions. This, there is pro-Hindu and Hindu revivalist version of narration which is not acceptable in view of their enmity with the contemporary Reddys (Gajapatis) and other Hindu rulers.
- ii. In Bombay Karnataka and Princely Mysore parallel to the Congress movement there was powerful non-Brahmin movement was there under the dynamic leadership of Sir Siddappa Kambli and Justice Party. But there is no separate chapters on these important developments of modern Karnataka, only pheripheral reference is given. Even there is no detailed study about social conditions and the response of the lower strata of the society to the freedom struggle.
- iii. These volumes (both I & II) fails to trace the economic situations that influenced the emergence of national movement. Thus,

this lacks the economic orientation of the nationalism.

iv. The role played by the religious heads, Mathas and other institution did not find a place in these historical volumes. Infact they too deserve a specific and separate study.

v. Even these volumes did not include the role and response of working class, Depressed Classes, Peasants, common men and youths. Thus, contributions of subaltern groups was neglected.

vi. The influence of Satya Shodhak movement of Mahatma Phule and Shahu Maharaj on Karnataka was also neglected by the editors.

vii. The second volume editor Dr. G.S. Halappa's projection of only two-three local leaders and neglect of other shows his biased and partial attitude toward them.

viii. There is separate chapter on Harijan Movement but the editor did not mention any activity and organization of the Depressed Classes led by Dr. Ambedkar, who addressed several Parishats in Bombay Karnataka during the same period.

Despite all these shortcomings and critics both these were very lengthy and comprehensive documents. Almost all studies on freedom movement in Karnataka were references of these volumes. Thus, these become bases and guideline for the further studies.

Economic life in the Bombay Karnataka (1818-1939) (1963) by R.D. Choksey. It gives an account of Economic conditions of Bombay Karnataka, regarding agriculture, land revenue, forest, irrigation and literary and etc.

Historical Writings on the Nationalist Movement in India – Karnataka : (1977) (Article) by K.R. Basavaraja.⁹

In the first part of it, the rise and growth of Freedom Movement in Karnataka briefly sketched, which shows that people of Karnataka were keenly interested in the Congress activities since its inception to the achievement of Independence. The second part discusses the contribution of intellectuals like Hardekar Manjappa, S.K. Sharma, K.V. Puttappa, T.P. Kailasam, Galaganath, Venkatacharya, Raja Rao, Basavaraj Kattimani, Mirji Annarao and others.

In the third part, list of biographies of the nationalist leaders of Karnataka given. They are Karagudri's *Senapati Doctore Hardikar* (1934), R.R. Diwakar's *Sereya Mareyalli* (1947), *Kara Nirakaraneya-Vira-Kathe* (1955) and *Karamayogi Hanumantha Rao* (1958), R. G. Mutalik Desai's *Sri Hukkerikar Rama Rao* (1963), Ramachandra Vadavi's Marathi translation of autobiography of *Sri Deshpande Gangadhara Rao* (1964) and etc. The bitter experiences and troubles faced by the national leaders were reflected in these biographies, which greatly inspired the youths.

In the fourth part name of the important folk singers and Poets, Lavanikaras and Kiratamakars are mentioned. The fifth and sixth part deals with movement for the Responsible Government in Mysore and the Role of Press respectively. The last two parts narrates about the importance of the famous work on the subject, namely *Freedom Movement in Karnataka* (Vol.II) (ed.) by G.S. Halappa.

Thus, in this 15 page lengthy article the historiography of the Freedom Movement in Karnataka is briefly sketched. Though it is model work and guide to further research, but it lacks the critical and analytical study. Since, it is in article form author attempted to highlight the things in survey method without much elaboration of the study.

'Karnataka Charitre' (1900-1956) (Vol. VII) Ed. By S. Chandrashekhar.

It contain the few articles which directly relates to the Freedom Movement in Bombay Karnataka. The very first article is written by the editor himself, which is titled as, *'Karnatakada Swatantrya Chaluvaliya Adhyayanagalu'*¹⁰ i.e., the studies on Freedom Movement in Karnataka. In this briefly listed the studies on the same. In this the critical and analytical discussion is presented. It pointed that, the origin of Nationalism in Karnataka can be traced to the 19th Century Hindu Revivalism and this revivalism was believed to be the emergence of response to the pragmatic attempt of Christian Missionaries. As in the national level Tilak and some other utilized regionalism, (regional nationalism) religious sentiment and caste groups to create national consciousness, so also the Alur Venkata Rao, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, Venkatayya, Galaganath and other arose the pro-Kannada or Karnataka regionalism.

The author pointed that, even today pro-Hindu or Hindu Revivalist writers glorifies these sentiments and argue that, this was the only symbolic means to create nationalism then. But, due to this symbolism and symbolic techniques, there was evil and negative impact on the movement itself. The minorities and illiterate masses were kept outside the mainstream of the movement and this was the hidden agenda of pro-Hindu or Hindu revivalist nationalist. The author further alleges that, both Imperialism and Brahmanism had an understanding in neglecting illiterate masses. Brahmin community was the first to be influenced by the western liberalism and were very soon dominated and monopolized their hold in British administration, educational institutions, politics and services. But were not ready to give up the share and representation to others.¹¹ Thus, all these developments led to the Brahmin and non-Brahmin tussle in the Congress led national movement and, the Bombay Karnataka is best example of this, where powerful non-Brahmin Movement was emerged. Overall this article reveals the neglected part of the history and its facts were interpreted according to convince of local intelligentsia. Even, there is no objective study of the Freedom Movement of this region i.e., it is not free from bias. Then due to communal interpretation of facts there was great hurdle to national integration.

The Another Article titled *'Karnataka Swatantrya Chaluvaliya Arthik Hinnale'* in the same volume highlights the

Swadeshi or Khadi movement of the Bombay Karnataka.

In this volume one more article entitled *Rajaneeti, Samaj Mattu Arthikate, Mumbai Karnataka* (Politics, Society and Economy of Bombay Karnataka) by C.R. Govindraju¹² contain the anti-British resistance, deteriorating and scattered situation of Kannadigas (Karnataka) due to dominance of Marathi, the early Socio-Cultural and educational institutions, then the impact of the Indian Renaissance mentioned. It also briefly reflects the socio-economic situation of this region.

K.M. Chitnis's *Historiography of Karnataka-Bombay Karnataka*, it was a presidential address delivered in the one of session of Karnataka History Congress. This list out the source materials that are available in Archives of Maharashtra pertaining to Freedom Movement in Bombay Karnataka.

Hosagannada Arunodaya (Kannada) by Srinivas Havanur depicts the renaissance of Kannada literature and the impact of new education, work and activities of Christian Missionaries and etc.¹³

R.R. Diwakar's two works provide the valuable account about the events of the Freedom movement in *Bombay Karnataka*. The first one titled as '*Kara Nirakaraneya Veera Kathe*' (Kannada). Which throws light on the no-revenue campaign in North Canara district during 1930-34. Second titled as '*Quit India Movement in Karnataka*' (Kannada) (1988), which contain the reminiscences of freedom fighters, the news papers, files and underground literature of from 1942-44. This is based on the archival material collected from Bangalore, Bombay and Delhi archives.

*Swatantrya Sangramada Smritigalu*¹⁴ (1998), (Vol-I,II and III) (Kannada) edited by Kamat Suryanath. It is a collection of reminiscences of about 800 freedom fighters in Karnataka in three volumes. This contain district wise reminiscences, in this the freedom fighters have shared their experience and the stories of their struggles. Though it is first hand record, written and opinion shared by the freedom fighters. But regarding these volumes the common bias and critic is that, most of these freedom fighters belongs to single community i.e., Brahmins. Thus most of the non-Brahmin freedom fighters were not included in these volumes. Even, it neglected the illiterate and backward masses. Who were also actively participated in the freedom struggle. Another critic is that these reminiscences and memories of the freedom fighters was not properly scrutinized and was not examined in light of contemporary jail records and official documents. Thus, very credibility of these volumes is doubtful. Since, it was based on the information that were obtained from individual participants, writers. *Swatantrya Sangramada Geyageetegalu*¹⁵ by the same editor, contains the patriotic songs and folk songs, which inspired the masses.

Apart from above works/articles, there are also few research thesis, of Ph.D., which sketches the history of freedom movement in Bombay Karnataka. The importance of these research studies that, these works fill the gap left out by the other works (books) with regard this region's struggle. Another notable thing is that, these research works were mainly concentrated on specific aspects and micro study of the Bombay Karnataka. The Ph.D. Thesis of Karnatak University, Dharwad are consulted and referred to this present study. They are as follows;

Bal Gangadhar Tilak : A Study of His Role in the Indian Nationalist Movement, (Ph.D. Thesis) by S.S. Angadi.*

Apart from basic ideology of nationalism, it highlights main events of Bombay Karnataka with reference to Tilak's visits and the speeches delivered at Belgaum (1916 & 1917), the Home Rule League branches of this region. But study lack the historical method and is mainly based on the secondary sources. It also lack the use of local records, memories and reminiscences of Tilak's followers of this region. Since, it is politics subject, so, highlight is on political ideology.

Role of Bijapur District in the Indian Freedom Struggle (Ph.D. Thesis) by Umapati, K.L. (1992)*

The background chapters are almost based on secondary sources but few important works were referred. But there are also references of textbooks. Few statements were not supported by official records (references) for instance, regarding Dharwad Collector Stevenson's announcement of prize to catch live the leaders of the Sindagi revolt. The comparison between the secondary sources with original records was not satisfactory. This too belongs to Politics subject, thus, concentration is on politics.

Role of Press in Indian Nationalist Movement in North Karnataka (1556-1947) (Ph.D. Thesis) by S.V. Kanade (2005)*

Every chapter of this thesis contain the lengthy and detailed information. It traces the history of press in Karnataka as well as in India, the concept of nationalism, rise and growth of nationalism in Karnataka and anti-British resistances. Though it mentions the name of various nationalist papers but original reference of those papers are lacking. Even, the messages and views contained in papers are not emphasized. Most of the informations given are based on the Gazetters, books and other sources than the contemporary news papers. Instead of concentrating more on the role of nationalist press, it gave equal importance to the history of press of pre-independence era. Even, how nationalism in Karnataka emerged due to press is not properly highlighted. Thus, despite few short comings, this is a lengthy study than the micro or specific study.

A.B. Vaggar's Ph.D. Thesis titled '*Mumbai Karnatakada Samsthanagalalli Swatantrya Horata*' (2005)*

In this study both Anti-British revolts and freedom movement in the Princely States of Bombay Karnataka is discussed. Though G.S. Halappa's *Freedom Movement in Karnataka (Vol.II)* provides background and useful source material for this

study. But, this study in addition to the foresaid book. It provides the archival materials of Mumbai and Pune. Even, Kannada literary works were used. Especially, Ramadurga Tragedy is discussed at length with critical analysis of the incidents and issues. Even, revolts of Kittur and developments of Jamakhandi State discussed elaborately. Regarding the Savanur State there is brief narration about freedom struggle.

Freedom Movement in Bombay Karnataka – Role of Intellectuals, (Ph.D. Thesis) by Dr. S. Y. Mugali, K.U. Dharwad (2006).*

There are two main chapters in this thesis. In one of the main chapter, the role of poets and folk poets are discussed with illustration of patriotic and nationalistic poems and folk songs. It mentions about Shant Kavi of pre-Gandhian era poet and Kirthanakaras like Gersoppa Ram Pai and Jayaramacharya. The poets of Gandhian era are mentioned with their literary contributions, they are- Mudaveedu Krishnaraya (1874-1947), Sali Ramachandrayya (1888-1978), Dr. D.R. Bendre (1896-1981), B.K. Sharma (1900-1982), Huilgol Narayanrao (1884-1971), Tippayya Master and others. It also discusses the role of Novelists, Biographers, Play Writers and Folk singer and songs etc.

Genesis and Growth of Economic Nationalism in Bombay Karnataka (1800-1947) (2008, Ph.D. thesis) by Balaram Lamani.*

In this there is interpretation of economic nationalism, as a measure to promote the economic self-sufficiency of a nation, in other words to be free economically from alien domination. But explanation lack the Nehruian mass enslavement and Dr. Ambedkar's socio-economic democracy and equality. It highlights that, the economic exploitation by the British and its impact became base for the growth of nationalism in this region. The study did not highlight about the local reaction to the economic state of affairs. Economic hardships, agriculture, forests, industry, railways, famine, no-tax campaign, Deccan riots etc are mentioned, including mass movements. Thus, the background chapters are discussed in a very detailed manner. But, briefly discussed the main chapters. These deserve more details. But despite these few critics on National movement. It is specific and new study on the economic aspect of Bombay Karnataka.

CONCLUSION :

In this paper a theme related select works (books), articles and Ph.D. thesis are chosen for the study. The critical analysis indicates the following findings, of the firstly, the works (books) on Freedom Movement in Bombay Karnataka contain the general survey than the specific themes or issues. Most of these are subjective explanations and glorified and exaggerated and descriptive narrations rather than objective study. Secondly, as far as articles are concerned, the article by Dr. K.R. Basavaraj is a survey of literature type concerning the Freedom Movement, where as a article by the S. Chandrashekhara and others critically analyses the theme related issues and events (facts). Finally, the Ph.D. theses on Freedom Movement of Bombay Karnataka, few are specific and micro study of particular region or aspects. At the same time one or two thesis are general historical survey type of studies. Due to leading role of Bombay Karnataka and its leaders and, the diverse issues, events and facts of Freedom Movement of this region, there are multiple narrations and descriptions.

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