



THE INFLUENCE OF BACKWARD CLASS
MOVEMENT ON INDIAN NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN THE PRINCELY STATE OF
MYSORE

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ABSTRACT

The Princely State of Mysore has been recognized as the 'progressive' and 'Model' state in the British colonial empire, which played a unique role in Indian national movement. Due to the Nagara Insurrection in 1830 the Mysore kingdom was annexed with the colonial empire. From 1831 to 1881 for a period of half a century it was ruled by different British Commissioners and brought many changes in administration as well as education and Socio-economic conditions. These developments created a new awareness among the socially marginalized sections of the society and resulted to organize backward class movements in the Princely State of Mysore which were supported to the national movement of India.

Very soon after the end of the British Commissioner rule in 1881 and beginning of the Restoration of Wodeyars of Mysore rule in the kingdom, the representative assembly was established in 1881, four years prior to the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Yet, it could not become a nucleus for political movement in the Princely State of Mysore though it became more articulate and played a dominant role in mobilizing the people. The wants and the grievances of the people were expressed in the assembly and the government gave them due consideration. However, there were forces across the borders which were influencing the backward class people in the state to organize them politically and socially to achieve their development. This paper focuses on the emergence of backward class movement in the Princely State of Mysore in early 20th century towards nationalism and to take part in Indian National Movement.

KEYWORDS: Indian national movement, Vokkaligara Sangaha, Praja Mitra Mandali, Lingayats.

INTRODUCTION

Mysore for Mysoreans an agitation was started in 1910 with the Brahmin community demanding preferential treatment for entry into the administrative services of the state.¹ To secure the services of brilliant young men as recruits to the administrative services. The Mysore Civil Service examination was started in 1891. This examination was open to all Indian citizens. This competitive system created some uneasiness among the people of Mysore because during the Dewanship of Sir K. Sheshadri Iyer most of the higher services were filled by the recruits from Madras province. Most of the administration was controlled by people belonging to Madras. The Infiltration of Madras and the open competition for recruitment were vigorously opposed by several members of the Representative Assembly under the leadership of Sri Vekatakrishnaiah. This resulted in bringing into the forefront a rift between the Mysoreans and the non-Mysoreans. The agitators demanded that all appointments must go to the sons of the soil. Mysore for Mysoreans became their slogan. This agitation provided the breeding ground for the backward class movement in the Princely State of Mysore.

DISCUSSION

The Formation of Caste Associations in the Princely State of Mysore was also strongly supported for the organization of backward class movement. The conflict between the Madras Brahmins and the Mysore Brahmins made a great impact on the Non-Brahmin communities. After the Mysore for Mysore Brahmins agitation, Mysore Brahmins got the monopoly of Mysore administration. English education gave a fillip to the awakening of the people and helped to build community associations. As a result, a number of community associations came into existence in Mysore state. In Mysore State the untouchables constituted the largest community but due to ritual, economic, educational and also organizational factors they have until recently been politically irrelevant. The two dominant castes in Mysore State have been the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats, the latter better educated ritually higher and organized, took lead in state politics.² In the year 1906 some of the leading public spirited men of the community with the aim of ameliorating the conditions of the cultivation classes who constituted the backbone of the agriculture and industry of the state organized the Vokkaligara Sangha with the encouragement of the Dewan V.P.Madhava Rao. The

Dewan's address to the Representative Assembly on 19-10-1907 stated "The Vokkaligara Sangha tried to promote the material intellectual and moral interest of the great vokkaliga population".³ In 1909 "the Vokkaligara Patrike, a Kannada weekly organ of the Vokkaligara Sangha, was started. This paper had a long and uninterrupted life."⁴ This weekly paper created a sense of awareness among the Vokkaligara Community.

Following the lead given by Vokkaligara Sangha, other communities organized their own associations. The most significant among them were the central Mahammaden Association which came into existence in 1908. The Mysore Lingayat Education Fund Association in 1909, Aryavysya Mahasabha in 1915 and the Indian Christian Association in 1920. Also the Adi-Dravida Abhivridhi Sangha in 1920, the Jaina Education Fund Association in 1921 and the Kurubara Sangha in 1922 were founded.⁵ all these associations were striving hard to secure the betterment of their respective communities in matters pertaining to administration, public service, social and economic growth. Even the most backward and downtrodden people like untouchables put forth their claim for social and economic uplift. Gradually leaders emerged in their community. In the year 1916, the budget debate in Mysore legislative council was rendered very lively by a speech made by Mr. H. Narasinga Rao, championing the interests of the backward communities. He argued for scholarships for these communities in order to make them more self-reliant. Almost all the backward class Representative Assembly members demanded educational reforms.⁶ The growth of the caste associations may be taken as an indication of expanding primordial loyalties from 1900 and onwards. In 1906-09=3, 1915-19=2, 1920-22=8, 1923-25=18, 1926-28=9, 1929-31=5, 1932-34=10, 1935-37=12, 1938-40=13, 1941-43=19, 1944-46=35, Caste Associations came into existence.⁷

A small number of professional men, merchants, retired civil servants and land holders began to organize associations to further the interests of their communities. In 1909, CR Reddy, an ardent champion of the non-Brahmin movement in Madras was appointed Professor in Maharaja's college in Mysore. His personal dynamism and reputation as a scholar made him very popular in the intellectual circles and gained him easy access to the Royal family of Mysore. He created new leaders from backward communities. "Mr. Reddy directed his non-

Brahmin campaign to get special treatment for non-Brahmins and gradually forged the leaders of Vokkaliga, Lingayat and Muslim communities into formal political association. This campaign gained momentum on 18th November 1917 when the non-Brahmins organized the state's first Political meeting in Bangalore⁸ called Praja Mitra Mandali.

The foundation of Praja Mitra Mandali political party in the Princely State of Mysore greatly influenced on the backward class movement. The founding of the Praja Mitra Mandali- the first non-Brahmin party in Mysore- took place at about the same time as the Justice party in Madras. "In Mysore the castes most fit to replace the Brahmin power monopoly were the Lingayats and the Vokkaligas"⁹ The Praja Mitra Mandali was formed on 6th December 1917 with the leadership of M. Basavaiah, Mahammed Kalami, H. Chennaiah, Mahammed jafar, M. Subbaiah, Mahammed Abbas Khan, A.V. Nanjundashetty, Moganna, Thimmaiah, Mahammed, Banumaiah, M. Narayanaiah, Dhanakotishetty, Nanjappa and others were the members of the Mandali¹⁰ During the twenties the non-Brahmins were a very loosely organized group, primarily interested in patronage. As pointed out by Dushkin the leaders of the Praja Mitra Mandali were "self-appointed spokesmen for their rural community fellows but appear to have been particularly active in asserting the interests of town dwellers like themselves". after the emergence of Mandali 'The star of Mysore' was started by Yajaman Veerupakshaiyah from Mysore for spreading the aims and objectives of the Praja Mitra Mandali.

The Constitute of Miller Committee in 1918 by Krishnaraja wodeyar IV is a landmark event of the history of the Princely State of Mysore. The government of Maharaja Nalvadi krishnaraja wodeyar became sympathetic to the aspirations of the backward section of the people and was trying to promote their educational and economic interests by the way of reserving seats in school and also by providing scholarships and hostel facilities to the backward and depressed communities make them progress. In this direction the other important measure was constitution of a committee consisting of both Brahmin and non-Brahmin members under the chairmanship of Sir C. Miller, Chief Judge of the Mysore High Court. Other members were Dewan Bahadur C. Srikanteswara Iyer, Rao Bahadur M. Muthanna, Rao Bahadur M.C. Rangaiyengar, and Rao Saheb H. Channaiah. Navab Gulam Ahmed Kalami and Mr. Basavaya¹² The Miller Committee was to investigate and report on the problems concerning.

"(i) Any necessary changes in the existing rules and recruitment to

The public services.

(ii) Special facilities to encourage high and professional education

Among the backward classes.

(iii) Special measures to increase the representation of the backward

Classes in the public services without materially affecting

Efficiency."¹³

The leaders of all the backward communities were to met the Miller Committee and press their betterment. The Miller Committee constituted in August 1918 submitted its report in July 1919. The members of the committee were convinced of the necessity of special treatment to the backward classes in matters of public service and recommended spiral favors to the backward classes. The Princely State of Mysore was the first state to appoint a committee to go in to the demands of the backward classes, the realization of which would break the monopoly of a dominant minority in the intellectual field.

The establishment of Praja Paksha in the Princely State of Mysore is also very significant event which was also influence on the organization of backward class movement. "Around 1930 a new leadership emerged in the non-Brahmin movement, a leadership which Dushkin 'Class of 02.'¹⁴ As she also emphasizes the emergence of this new leadership signified important changes in the political situation.

The conference of the non-Brahmin movement, in 1929 leading men in the state brought into existence of Praja Paksha. "D.S. Mallappa, H.B. Gundappa Gowda, B.N. Boranna gowda, V.Venkatappa, B.N.Guptha, H.C. Dasappa, D.H. Chandrashekaraiah, Rao Saheb Chennaiah, Devegowda H. Siddaiah, and subbaiah were the leading leaders of the Praja Paksha."¹⁵ To say that during the early 1930s several leading members of the Praja Paksha had developed networks of supporters within their home districts is not to say that the Praja Paksha itself had taken root in the district. "The first session of the Praja Paksha was held at Channapatna under the president ship of D.S Mallappa. The second session of the Prajapaksha was held at Mysore under the President ship of H. B. Gundappa gowda. The members of the Prajapaksha tried to establish powerful local links by contesting District Board Elections. The leading non-Brahmin leaders were elected as Presidents of district

boards. On 1930 out of eight districts seven district board presidents were non-Brahmins.”¹⁶ The non-Brahmin members of the representative Assembly demanded formulation of schemes for the overall development of the backward classes B.N. Gupta started the newspaper ‘Prajamatha’ from Madras, for spreading the aims and objectives of the Prajapaksha.

The formation of Praja Samyutha Paksha in 1935 is also greatly encouraged the backward class movement in the Princely State of Mysore. H.K. Veerannagowda who was a prominent member of the party who later became the president of the Karnataka Congress highlighted in an article ‘Praja Paksha and Brahmins’ their consistencies of the aims and actions of the party. “He argued that it was not possible to achieve responsible government by having both love of the country and love of the community and pleaded that leaders of the party should strive for communal harmony.”¹⁷ This appeal touched the head and heart of many leaders of praja paksha and prajamitra mandali. To make a more constructive approach to politics and to serve as an effective opposition to the autocratic government the prajapaksha and the prajamitra mandali were merged. Thus established in January 1935 a new political party called praja samyuktha paksha or people’s federation.

The membership campaign of the praja samyukta paksha, a new party was open to all communities including Brahmins. The striking innovation of this new party was mobilization of rural support by organizing Ryots’ conference in every taluk of the state to hear and act upon agrarian grievances. The first conference of the people’s Federation was held in Hassan under the president ship of Sri K.C. Reddy; H.B. Gundappa gowda played a dominant role in organized this conference with the support of his Hassan young fellow supporters. During this time several temple entry movements took place in Mysore. In this year 1935 Mr. Sangappa, who was got B.A. degree and he belong to mocha community who was entering Belur temple with his fellowmen.”¹⁸ The members of the federation organized inter caste marriages and inter dining. In the year 1937 October 16 Mysore People’s Federation merged with the Mysore Congress. This merger completed the evolution of a nationalistic political party with wider base in Mysore State.

Thus, the backward class movement was emerged as a new sprit in the Princely State of Mysore and influenced and the organization of National movement to a great extent. Ultimately the Praja

samyukta paksha merged with Mysore Pradesh congress party and majority of the leaders of the backward classes joined to congress party. To sum up the emergence of the Backward Classes Movement in the Princely State of Mysore, in early 20th century the backward class movement was influenced both by the non-Brahmin movement of the Madras presidency and by the conflict that erupted in the princely State of Mysore between the Mysore Brahmins and the Madras Brahmins.

The English education and the new opportunities opened up during the early 20th century led to the formation of the caste associations in the princely State of Mysore. Several Backward Caste members began get mobilized during the early 20th century. They founded The Praja Mitra Mandali which became the first political organization of the state with the name Prajapaksha. The Backward Class movement and appointment of the Miller Committee and its favorable report led to the mobilization of the masses on political lines which were in fact helpful to the national movement. The new leaders had much wider political commitments. They were influenced by all India political events and Gandhian satyagrahas and constructive programmes. In contrast by their predecessors they were anti-British and demanded responsible government in the Princely State of Mysore through Mysore chalo or palace Satyagraha.

The move demanding Mysore for Mysoreans started in 1910 with the Brahmin community demanding preferential treatment for entry into the administrative services of the state. ¹To secure the services of brilliant young men as recruits to the administrative services. The Mysore Civil Service examination was started in 1891. This examination was open to all Indian citizens. This competitive system created some uneasiness among the people of Mysore because during the Dewanship of Sir K. Sheshadri Iyer most of the higher services were filled by the recruits from Madras province. Most of the administration was controlled by people belonging to Madras. The Infiltration of Madras and the open competition for recruitment were vigorously opposed by several members of the Representative Assembly under the leadership of Sri Vekatakrishnaiah. This resulted in bringing into the forefront a rift between the Mysoreans and the non-Mysoreans. The agitators demanded that all appointments must go to the sons of the soil. Mysore for Mysoreans became their slogan. This agitation provided the breeding ground for the backward class movement.

The formation of Caste Associations in the princely state of Mysore caused to the conflict between various castes and communities. I.e., the conflict between the Madras Brahmins and the Mysorean Brahmins made a great impact on the Non-Brahmin communities. After the Mysore for Mysoreans agitation, Mysore Brahmins got the monopoly of Mysore administration. English education gave a fillip to the awakening of the people and helped to build community associations. As a result, a number of community associations came into existence in Mysore state.

In Mysore the untouchables who constitute the largest community but due to ritual, economic, educational and also organizational factors they have until recently been politically irrelevant. The two dominant castes in Mysore have been the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats, the latter better educated ritually higher and organized, took lead in state politics.² In the year 1906 some of the leading public spirited men of the community with the aim of ameliorating the conditions of the cultivation classes who constituted the backbone of the agriculture and industry of the state organized the Vokkaligara Sangha with the encouragement of the Dewan V.P.Madhava Rao. The Dewan's address to the Representative Assembly on 19-10-1907, stated "The Vokkaligara Sangaha tried to promote the material intellectual and moral interest of the great vokkaligar population".³ In 1909 "the Vokkaligara Patrike, a Kannada weekly organ of the Vokkaligara Sangha, was started. This paper had a long and uninterrupted life."⁴ This weekly paper created a sense of awareness among the Vokkaligara Community. Following the lead given by Vokkaligara Sangha, other communities organized their own associations. "The most significant among them were the central Mahammaden Association which came into existence in 1908. The Mysore Lingayat Education Fund Association in 1909, Arya vasya Mahasabha in 1915 and the Indian Christian Association in 1920. Also the Adi-Dravida Abhivridhi Sangha in 1920, the Jaina Education Fund Association in 1921 and the Kurubara Sangha in 1922 were founded. All these associations were striving hard to secure the betterment of their respective communities in matters pertaining to administration, public service, social and economic growth. Even the most backward and downtrodden people like untouchables put forth claim for social and economic uplift. Gradually leaders emerged in their community.

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Year of Registration	No. of Community Associations
1906-09	3
1915-19	2
1920-22	8
1923-25	18
1926-28	9
1929-31	5
1932-34	10
1935-37	12
1938-40	13
1941-43	19
1944-46	35

A small number of professional men, merchants, retired civil servants and land holders began to organize associations to further the interests of their communities. In 1909, C.R.Reddy, an ardent champion of the non-Brahmin movement in Madras was appointed Professor in Maharaja's college in Mysore. His personal dynamism and reputation as a scholar made him very popular in the intellectual circles and gained him easy access to the Royal family of Mysore. He created new leaders from backward communities. "Mr. Reddy directed his non-Brahmin campaign to get special treatment for non-Brahmins and gradually forged the leaders of Vokkaliga, Lingayat and Muslim communities into formal political association. This campaign gained momentum on 18th November 1917 when the non-Brahmins organized the state's first Political meeting in Bangalore"⁸ called Praja Mitra Mandali.

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The government became sympathetic to the aspirations of the backward section of the people and was trying to promote their educational and economic interests by way of reserving seats in school and also by providing scholarships and hostel facilities to the backward and depressed communities make progress in this direction the other important measure was constitution of a committee consisting of both Brahmin and non-Brahmin members under the chairmanship of Sir C. Miller, Chief Judge of the Mysore High Court. Other members were Dewan Bahadur C. Srikanteswara Iyer, Rao Bahadur M.Muthanna, Rao Bahadur.M.C, Rangaiyengar, and Rao Saheb H. Channaiah, Navab Gulam Ahmed Kalami and Mr. Basavayya¹² The Miller Committee was to investigate and report on the problems concerning.

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CONCLUSION

To sum up the emergence of the Backward Classes Movement in Princely Mysore in early 20th century, I must say that the Mysore movement was influenced both by the non-Brahmin movement of the Madras presidency and by the conflict that erupted in princely Mysore between the Mysore Brahmins and the Madras Brahmins. The English education and the new opportunities opened up during the early 20th century led to the formation of the caste associations in princely Mysore. Several Backward Caste members began get mobilized during the early 20th century. They founded the Praja Mitra Mandali which became the first political organization of the state with the name Prajapaksha. The Backward Class movement and appointment of the Miller Committee and its favorable report led to the mobilization of the masses on political lines which were in fact helpful to the national movement. The new leaders had much wider political commitments. They were influenced by all India political events and Gandhian satyagrahas and constructive programs and finally assimilated with Indian national congress party. In contrast by their predecessors they were anti-British and demanded responsible government.



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