CHAPTER – X

CONCLUSION

British rule in India was comparable to a banyan tree, under a banyan tree little or nothing can grow. The tree overshadows and kills essentially everything beneath it. The only growths that can live and thrive are the stems or slender branches sent down to the ground from the tree itself; these take root and develop; nothing else can

- J.T. Sunderland

India during the 17th century was far ahead of the leading European mercantile nations which were striving to develop trade with India, particularly the manufactures of India like fine cotton and silk fabrics, spices, indigo, sugar, drugs, precious stones and diverse works of art, etc., drew the European countries to the shores of India. It was this fact that forced the European nations to discover sea route to India after the land route was closed by the Turks. The Portuguese navigator Vasco-da-Gama reached Calicut in 1498, then followed by Dutch, English, French and Danish, and opened trading centres in different parts of India.

The trade with India was such a beneficial that, the competition started between these nations to control India’s trade, as a result the armed conflict was inevitable, and finally the British survived. The Indian rulers, including Mughals initially welcome these European traders, because the balance of trade was largely in favour of India and the export of Indian manufactures increased. The European traders also earned huge profits for the Indian manufactures in Europe. To promote trade more widely and to get more benefit, they started interfering in the internal politics of India to sustain their interest. This political interference increased rapidly
after 1707. Gradually by 1750s the Mughal Empire declined and disintegrated. The conflict with Nawabs of Bengal and English victory in Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) paved the way for political control of India by British.

After the acquisition of political power in Bengal, they extended their sway by conquering far distant territories one after another. And by adopting other methods like subsidiary alliance system, Doctrine of Lapse and so on. Ever since the acquisition of Bengal India’s economy was made to subserve the British colonial interests. The surplus and self sufficient economy of India was transformed into a colonial economy. The self sufficient Indian villages, which functioned as little worlds of their own, by self-subsisting, providing the food stuffs, it needed except few necessities like salt, iron etc. They produced the cloth by spinning and weaving as a secondary activity not only for themselves but for the outside market too and enjoyed worldwide recognition. But the deliberately designed colonial policies of British reduced India from a manufacturing to a raw-material producing country.

Thus there began an immense change in Indian economy. The self-sufficiency and the co-ordination between agriculture and industry diminished. Dubious methods were adopted to ruin trade, crafts and industries. Various rules of mercantile company strangled the handicraft industries of India to encourage production of agricultural raw materials to feed the growing industries of Britain. Hence Indian exports shifted from manufactures to raw cotton and food grains. The imports no longer consisted of gold and silver but machine made textile goods. So the destruction of handicraft made thousands unemployed, who without any alternative fall back on agriculture, thus the dependence on agriculture increased. Consequently large part of Indian population lived under severe poverty. The
government hardly took any steps to improve agriculture except, the commercial crops, which needed for Britain’s industries. The development of irrigation were also seldom carried out. In addition the land revenue was continuously enhanced and forest were resources exploited by neglecting the needs of people.

The consciousness of these exploitative phenomena gradually developed in the expression of public opinion. First the emerging educated urban middle class began to think seriously the true nature of colonial rule. Their main instrument of action was the public press. Later they began to form political and social associations. Unfortunately this early expression of public opinion was confined to educated midd class in few cities and towns.

Dadabhai Naoroji gave the lead in this direction in 1870s he exposed the severe poverty of Indian people and gave numerous examples with statistics that India’s per capita income was just Rs. 20. He was soon followed by nationalist leaders like M.G. Ranade, G.V. Joshi, G.K. Gokhale, D.E. Wacha, Pherozshah Mehta, B.G. Tilak, K.T. Telang in Bombay Presidency, R.C. Dutt, Subramanya Aiyer, Surendranath Banerjee etc at the national level. These early nationalist leaders moulded the trend of economic thinking. They exposed the exploitative economic policies of British. Their ideas were taken up with alacrity by the nationalist newspapers. In every public platform particularly at the Indian National Congress Sessions the question of economic exploitation were repeated as a result the economic ideas of their leaders nourished the nascent national movement.

This work Genesis and Growth of Economic Nationalism in Bombay Karnataka gives us an interesting findings. The research reveals that, since Bombay
Karnataka was part of Bombay Presidency, the ideas of nationalist leaders of Bombay Presidency about the economic exploitation, the impact of British rule, and results which it had brought provided a base for the growth of nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

Due to several factors like lack of education facilities in comparison to Bombay and Poona where good education facilities were available, lack of communication in the initial phase, absence of large cities, backwardness, and so on obstructed the awareness and thus we do not see any leaders like B.G. Tilak, Ranade, G.V. Joshi emerging from Bombay Karnataka except N.G. Chandavarkar, who hailed from Kanara but settled in Bombay. However the nationalist papers played vital part in spreading the economic ideas of nationalist leaders among the people of Bombay Karnataka. B.G. Tilak and his Kesari, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, along with other nationalist papers of Bombay Presidency, and native both Kannada and Marathi papers of Bombay Karnataka played very significant part in spreading the economic ideas, which ultimately nourished the spirit of nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

The main ideas of nationalist leaders, which were most concerned to the people in Bombay Karnataka were backwardness of agriculture, excessive land revenue, stringent forest rules, recurrent famines, decline of indigenous industries particularly touched the heart of people because they were intimate and connected thus the economic aspects helped for nourishing nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

Agriculture in Bombay Karnataka under British rule was very backward and stagnant. The colonial policies of free trade, which destructed the handicraft industries increased the dependence on agriculture. Nearly 80% of people were
dependent on agriculture. G.V. Joshi revealed some interesting facts that the general style of cultivation marked deterioration. The Mahratta of Tilak reports the decline of production of agricultural crops. These were due to wrong colonial policies that the government bothered about collecting revenue but never show any interest in development of agriculture.

The over assessment of land revenue, lack of manure, shortage of cattle, insecurity of tenure, growing indebtedness and want of education, were the reasons for the backwardness of agriculture. Government seldom took steps to develop irrigation facilities. The Gokak canal project, although planned in 1850s, started its work only in 1876, that was as a famine relief work. It was the deliberate negligence on the part of colonial government, because the government never wanted to spend money for the project. If the Gokak canal could have developed properly, it could have transformed the whole of eastern part of Bombay Karnataka's barren land into ever smiling green field, but the government as always looked for benefit, half heartedly did some work. G.V. Joshi revealed that only 4 percent of the total area in Bombay Presidency was irrigated and urged the government to increase irrigation facilities. Even though there was ample scope for its development.

Another noteworthy feature is that, the government took several steps to cultivate American cotton, to feed the industries of England. Dharwar and Belgaum districts were largely grown this cotton, but the benefit was hardly reaped by the peasant. It was only during the American civil war the demand for the cotton was increased, due to that fact the government thought that prosperity has increased and land revenue has been enhanced, as a result the cultivator severely suffered. This encouragement of cotton cultivation increased the export of raw cotton, thus
destroying the handicraft industries, which overcrowded the agriculture industry consequently increased the poverty. The nationalists and the press identified the real causes for the backwardness of agriculture and depression of the ryot. But the government denied them and said the backwardness of agriculture and depression was due to increase of population. However, the reaction by the nationalists and the nationalist papers developed the awareness among the people by exposing the true causes of backwardness.

Among the various reasons, the rack-rented land revenue system of the Bombay government was the most important cause for the backwardness of agriculture and poverty of the bulk of agricultural population. In Bombay Karnataka Ryotwari system of land revenue was introduced, the high pitch of assessment, enhancement of land revenue at every revisional settlement once in 30 years, the rigidity of land revenue, the heavy incidence of land revenue on population and on cultivated acreage, rack-rented the peasantry of Bombay Karnataka. The land revenue was always pitched too high that the ryot was not in a position to pay. The ryotwari system, which had a system of revisional settlement was the worst pattern. It is found that as high as 44.2% was increased in Dharwar after the revision settlement. It was, in fact, raised due to the misconception of prosperity of cotton boom during American civil war. These increase of land revenue pressed hard on the ryot, who was forced to go to the moneylender never to be free again.

Next, the stringency of land revenue was such that, even during droughts or famines no remissions were given. Whether crop came or not, the ryot was forced to pay the land revenue. G.V. Joshi found out that even the district of Bijapur, which lies in the driest zone, and continuously suffered due drought and famine was not
spared. In fact with harsh methods the officials collected land revenue by selling their belongings like cattle etc.

The native papers of Bombay Karnataka reveal that they continuously urged the government to grant remissions, but the authorities hardly moved. Thus the ryotwary system in Bombay Karnataka took over the large part of ryot’s income, and perhaps the ryot hardly had two meals regularly, especially the district of Bijapur suffered the most.

The excessive land revenue forced the ryot to fall into the clutches of moneylender, as a result the Deccan riots broke out in Maharashtra in 1875. Though the situation was almost same in Bombay Karnataka, no riots took place, that might be due to lack of awareness and leadership in Bombay Karnataka, however, the riots did spread the awareness among the ryots of Bombay Karnataka about the law which passed to protect the ryots from the moneylender. The wonder was that as Chandavarkar said, the government passed the law to control the moneylender but the real cause, the rigidity of land revenue was not touched.

The nationalist leaders and nationalist papers of Bombay Presidency unanimously agitated for the introduction of permanent land revenue settlement, but the government did not incline. The discussions at the Indian National Congress sessions and reports in papers, and B.G. Tilak’s resolution at Dharwar in the 1903 Bombay provincial conference spread the awareness among the people. The No-Tax campaign of Tilak during the 1896 famine played vital part in Bombay Karnataka, that several songs, dramas were tagged to propagate the ideas of Tilak, and this incident certainly had deep impact over Bombay Karnataka region.
The stringent forest rules of the Bombay government attracted the attention of nationalist papers of Bombay Presidency. The government to gain more revenue by exploiting the forest of Kanara brought several rules, particularly after the Forest Act of 1878. The forest were divided into protected forest and reserve forest. The protected forest areas converted into reserved forest, as a result the agricultural land declined. The government put several restriction, the privileges enjoyed by the local people were curbed. Thus people faced scarcity of wood, dry leaves for manure, fodder for animals etc. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha noticed the rules, which affected people and sent a representation but nothing came out.

The forest grievances of Kanara people united them, and formed Vanadukkha Nivarane Sabha to urge the government to redress. The government on the other hand suppressed the Sabha by taking strong measures. These government measures, in fact attracted the attention of press and the nationalist papers of Bombay Presidency severely criticized the government act.

In the whole of Bombay Karnataka, interestingly the people of Kanara had very actively protested against the government, we do not get such large protest in other part, the reason could be the education and awareness, even during the 1930s the people of Kanara actively participated in forest satyagraha. The people of Kanara, due to the stringent forest policies of government even drawn the attention of nationalist leaders by attending in the 1887 Congress Session of Madras. In 1903 in the Bombay provincial conference Tilak raised the stringency of forest rules at Dharwad. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha by sending its agent to know the real fact to Kanara represented to the government to redress the grievances of people of Kanara.
In fact, the forest rules of Bombay government by imposing severe restriction provoked the people to participate in national movement.

As regards the famines, it became the common phenomena in Bombay Karnataka. The severe famines of 1876-78 and 1896-98 caused great hardship on the people of Bombay Karnataka. The district of Bijapur suffered the most, there was no respite from famine to that district. Thousands and thousands of people died, countless cattle perished. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha which sent its agents to the affected districts of Bombay Karnataka revealed the horror brought by the famines. The district officials hardly report the government about the real conditions and always pressed the peasant to pay tax, despite severe starvation. After the severe criticism of government the Famine Relief Code was framed, but in practice the relief were inadequate, as the Journal of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha shown the food wages provided to relief workers were less than the prisoner. The land revenue were hardly suspended even in the district of Bijapur land revenue continuously collected. It is found that the nationalist papers of Bombay Karnataka constantly urged the government to grant remission but the government hardly took it.

The nationalist leaders took up the cause of famine and urged the government to take immediate steps to mitigate the suffering. They argued that famines in India occur mainly due to the great poverty of the people. And suggested the government to improve the condition of cultivators, moderate the land assessment, remission of taxes, and to stop the drain of wealth, but the government’s half-hearted efforts did little to mitigate the suffering.
The famine indeed provided a genuine opportunity to Tilak to awaken nationalism on the burning cause. During 1896-98 famine and plague, Tilak played a very significant part, he translated the famine code, with the help of the agent of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha toured throughout the Bombay Presidency and awakened the peasantry about their rights. And also organized famine relief camps. Thus these activities immensely helped for the growth of nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

The worst thing was that the famine relief fund, which collected to mitigate the sufferings were used for war. Although the districts of Bombay Karnataka were constantly suffering from famine, the government did not try to develop any large irrigation work nor small irrigation works were encouraged.

The introduction of Railway into Bombay Karnataka was to get the cotton, before the advent of British, the Bombay Karnataka region was famous for handicraft industries, but with the introduction of railway the handicraft industries disappeared completely, because the railways flooded the machine made cloth in the markets. At the same time no new industries were developed by the British Government. Thus the nationalist leaders responded in the form of Swadeshi movement in 1905. The Swadeshi movement was in fact, a great success as far as Bombay Karnataka was concerned. Due to Tilak’s efforts and his influence attracted the masses to join the Swadeshi movement, Swadeshi industries, National schools were opened, people began to use swadeshi or indigenous goods. In some places like Ranebennur foreign cloths were burnt. So the swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods under the influence was carried out by the local leaders like Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, Srinivas Kaujalagi, R.R. Diwakar, Govind Rao Yalagi etc. These local
leaders played a very important part in awakening the people by clearly exposing the true nature of colonial rule.

The swadeshi agitation, the home rule movement, and the non-cooperation movement continuously attracted the attention of people towards national cause. Under Gandhiji the non-cooperation movement popularized the use of khadi. In Bombay Karnataka Hardekar Manjappa, who is called as Karnatak Gandhi for his efforts to propagate khadi, indeed played very vital role in spreading the khadi in villages and awakening the people.

The launch of civil disobedience movement in 1930 opened a new chapter in the freedom movement of Karnataka. The salt satyagraha was launched at Ankola by M.P. Nadkarni. All over Bombay Karnataka, students, peasants, women and masses took part in salt satyagraha. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, R.R. Diwakar, Mudvidu Krishna Rao and other leaders.

The salt satyagraha was followed by forest satyagraha in Sirsi, Siddapur in Kanara district and people by breaking the forest laws collected forest sources. A large number of students, peasants, women and masses participated in large number. Around 2,000 people participated in Kanara.

The forest satyagraha was followed by no-tax campaign. Due to the failure of crop in the areca plantation and fall of prices, the people of Bombay Karnataka had the example of Bardoli, and the visit of Vallabhai Patel to Bombay Karnataka spread the awareness. They were fully supported by the Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee.
To sign off, the growth of nationalism in Bombay had its base in economic aspects. The economic exploitation of Bombay Government and the activities of nationalist leaders of Bombay Presidency immensely helped for the growth of nationalism. The activities of freedom movement were severe and widespread in Bombay Karnataka than the Mysore princely state or in the territories directly ruled by the British like Dakshin Kannada, Bellary, or in the Hyderabad Karnataka.

Specially beginning with the famine of 1896-98 the nationalist leaders played very important part in awakening the spirit of nationalism. The swadeshi movement developed the awareness, and attracted many younger generation leaders of Bombay Karnataka towards the nationalism and developed the anti-British sentiment. The khadi and Civil Disobedience Movement further spread the spirit of nationalism during salt, forest and no-tax campaign became the mass movement.

The people of Bombay Karnataka responded to the call of nationalist leaders during the swadeshi movement. They propagated use of handicraft goods, boycotted foreign cloth, opened national schools that was reason the Vidyavardhak Sangh in Dharwar, Basaveshwar Sangha in Bagalkot came up and by educating the people spread the awareness.

The leaders of Bombay Karnataka like Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, R.R. Diwakar, Hardekar Manjappa who propagated Khadi and started Karnataka Seva Dal, Dr. N.S. Hardekar, Srinivas Rao Kaujalagi, Hanumant Rao Kaujalagi, Alur Venkat Rao played very important role and followed the foot steps of nationalist leaders. Their activities were responsible to spread the ideas of economic nationalism among the uneducated through songs like the following one in Kannada.
The song says,

When people wearing white cap (Gandhi cap) come to you and advice you properly, you think that they (people wearing Gandhi cap) are loafing vagabonds without work. If the police and military people come to you are always ready to treat them well with fine and tasty dishes.

By over work, we become weak, whereas they go on enjoying the feast after feast. By our ignorance and weakness, it is duly we who are feeding them. If we do not feed them, how can they exist?
Do you know the salary of viceroy? It is 21 thousand rupees per month and Governor's pay is Rs. 10,000/- per month and Chief Secretary gets Rs. 3,000/- per month.

In addition to it, they get many types of allowances. They also get money from various sources. The traveling expense for the travel from England to India is Rs. 30,000/-. For furniture in the office the expenditure is Rs. 25,000/- per province.

For military secretary and for his office the expense is Rs. One lakh and thirty six thousand. If wives give birth in England, all their medical expenses will have to be given by you people. Towards their car you should pay one lakh and eight thousand. At your expenses they travel merrily.

In addition to these, they got holiday allowance of Rs. 4,000/- per month. Tour expenses are Rs. 25,000/- per year.

In addition to pay, the expenses for their luxuries will amount to 5 lakhs, 38 thousand and four hundred. All these amounts will have to be paid by you, the poor Indians.

The Europeans take a total 45 crores and 60 lakhs to their land. If we question as to why they should be paid such huge amounts, they become very angry. The annual pay of an Englishman per year is Rs. 1,240/-. Where as per capital income of Indians is only Rs. 74/-. 

The treasury of India is made empty and the entire wealth is taken to their country. They bring out nasty laws in their parliament.
All these evil laws are going to be cancelled, so, says Gandhi. This matter is intimated by Bheema Kavi.¹

This song indicates that the economic exploitations particularly drain of wealth was known to the people. The uneducated people also understood the true nature of British rule through these songs from mouth to mouth. Thus it is clear that the economic exploitation of British and their explose by the intellectuals nourished the spirit of nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

Reference and Notes