CHAPTER IX

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM DURING GANDHIAN ERA
IN BOMBAY KARNATAKA
- IT'S ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The return of Gandhiji in 1915 from South Africa and his remarkable leadership in Champaran (1917, in North Bihar) and Kaira (in Gujarat) and in Ahmedabad in 1917-18 changed the course of India's struggle for independence. In Champaran he took up the cause of peasants against landlords, in Kaire (Kheda) against revenue officials and in Ahmedabad that of mill workers against mill owners. After these movements Gandhi emerged as an influential political leader of India's Freedom struggle. In the year 1916, the Sixteenth Bombay Provincial Conference was held at Belgaum. It was very significant because, Gandhiji attended along with B.G. Tilak, Dadasaheb Karndikar and other prominent leaders.1 Again the eighteenth Bombay Provincial Congress was held at Bijapur in 1918. Vittalbhai Patel was elected president, Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu were also present.2 The visits of Gandhi began to influence the people of Karnataka as a result the resurgence of the spirit of nationalism felt more in Bombay Karnataka.

As the people of Bombay Karnataka responded to Tilak's call, now they followed the Gandhiji's footsteps. The ground was already prepared by nationalists of Bombay Presidency especially Tilak, and the nationalist newspapers like Kesari Mahratta. The nationalist papers of Bombay Karnataka also played vital part. The swadeshi movement (1905) had really created widespread awareness in Bombay Karnataka. And the Home Rule movement also spread the idea of Home rule by Tilak. Thus, when Gandhi appeared on the centre stage of national movement the
people of Bombay Karnataka came under his influence and the struggle turned mass movement beginning with the non-cooperation. We have taken Khadi, salt satyagraha, forest satyagraha and No-tax campaign as economic background to nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

The Khadi movement in Bombay Karnataka

The launching of non-cooperation movement on 1st August, 1920, indicated the widespread clamour for freedom in Bombay Karnataka. The non-cooperation movement under Gandhi popularized the use of Khadi. The distribution of charkhas, use of Khadi and boycott of foreign cloth became a cardinal tenet of Gandhian movement. Gandhi toured Karnataka in 1920 and 1921. In response to Gandhiji’s call of boycott of courts, schools, colleges several leaders of Bombay Karnataka resigned and participated in freedom movement. Along with the non-cooperation movement Gandhiji launched constructive programme of which Khadi was one. As a matter of fact Gandhi did not merely organize a political movement but also initiated complementary social and economic activities, as ancillaries to the political struggle. That is why under Gandhian phase it is difficult to separate the political awakening from economic awakening. However, Gandhi indeed along with political and social emancipation thought to build the Indian economy on sound indigenous lines.

Among the leaders of Bombay Karnataka Hardekar Manjappa, who is called ‘Karnatak Gandhi’ propagated Khadi vigorously. Hardekar Manjappa took a view of Khadi on the same day the launch of non-cooperation movement in 1 August, 1920. And decided to give up the mill cloth in place of khadi. Under the spell of Gandhi he propagated khadi in Bombay Karnataka.
The greatest movement in the history of Bombay Karnataka was the Belgaum session of Indian National Congress (1924). It was here that Gandhiji became the president (it was the only occasion he became president of INC). Prior to the Belgaum session of INC the leaders of Bombay Karnataka made people realize the importance of the session by holding district conferences. At these district conferences khadi exhibitions were held at Bijapur and Haveri (Dharwar District). It attracted thousands of people, and the local leaders taught about the importance of charkha and the revival of village industries.

Under Gandhiji's influence the leaders of Bombay Karnataka gave such a importance to khadi that the huts for visitors and delegates were built with khadi. The Swadeshabhimani of 26 December, 1924 says, the work of sewing up the khadi material involved eighteen skilled workers who worked fifteen days round-the-clock. Obviously the idea according to Gandhi was to propagate khadi and urge the people to give importance to khadi.

Gandhiji's presidential speech at Belgaum dominated the importance of khadi and boycott of foreign goods leading to the revival of village industries. Khadi became the economic aspect of his nationalist vision, indeed khadi was part and parcel of the Indian struggle for liberation and symbol of Gandhism. Gandhi thought that the poor people too could realize their strength through khadi and asserted, 'If he begin to wear khadi-hand spun and hand woven-cloth, he will be assisting to rebuild the main cottage industry of India, without cottage industry the Indian farmer is doomed. He cannot maintain himself merely on the produce of the land. He needs a supplementary industry, the supplementary industry is spinning according to him spinning was the easiest, cheapest and best cottage industry which
was well within the reach of every poor in India. Thus khadi became virtually the watchword of Indian patriotism. The wearers of khadi to be looked upon as freedom fighters.\(^{13}\) Just as Satyagraha proved to be a potent political technique for the attainment of freedom, so also khadi proved, in the economic domain to be a powerful challenge to British authority.\(^ {14}\) Gandhiji realized the fact that the reason for the degradation of India was mainly economic deterioration rather than political thus he instilled the idea of khadi among the rural masses and made them conscious about the nationalism. In response to Gandhiji's campaign the village people took up spinning and the entire country was humming with the pleasant noise of spinning wheels in hundreds of Khadi Bhandars as well as thousands of homes.\(^{15}\) Thus the Khadi movement gave a new turn to the village life.

Along with the promotion of khadi Gandhi stressed the importance of boycott i.e. refusal to use foreign cloth, Gandhi said at Belgaum, the boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers.\(^ {16}\) He further said we import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by for the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's Chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that has ruined the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. He also stressed on the point that khaddar not only saves the peasant's money but it enables them to become self-sufficient and self-reliant and called the free trade policy of Britain with India illegal in his words 'I call the
Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of Indian peasants.\textsuperscript{17}

It was the reality that we have discussed in the previous chapters that the Bombay Karnataka not only produced for the local needs but also exported the cotton manufacturers to other parts like Poona, Vengurla etc. but once the railways came they completely crushed. The artisans lost their job and pushed to depended on agriculture so that was indeed true that the Lancashire lived and survived on Indian peasantry. This speech of Gandhiji were popularized by the native press and, since Belgaum is within Karnataka the message of Gandhi had reached the interiors and had far reaching impact on the leaders, students, women and masses alike of Bombay Karnataka thus the impact of khadi became profound throughout Bombay Karnataka.

The people of Bombay Karnataka were already familiar with Swadeshi and boycott under Tilak during (1905-1908) swadeshi movement. Hence after Belgaum congress khadi and boycott gained further impetus. The leaders of Bombay Karnataka undertook the khadi and boycott activities rigorously and inspired the people to use goods of khadi and develop village industries. The two significant events in the field of khadi and village industries in the Gandhi era were the founding of the All-India Spinners Association in 1925, and the All India Village Industries in 1934.\textsuperscript{18} In 1923, itself khadi activities were started at Hudali, a village near Belgaum by Gangadhar Rao Deshpande. It was one of most important centre of khadi production. During 1937 April, Gandhi visited Hudali to inaugurate the khadi exhibition.\textsuperscript{19}
Thus the khadi movement became widespread through the efforts of Hardekar Manjappa in Bombay Karnataka. He toured various parts of Bombay Karnataka particularly the villages of Bijapur district and attracted people to wear khadi and develop village industries. He was main instrumental in formation of ‘charaka sangha’s in Muddebihal, Talikot, Sindagi, Masibinal, Malghan, etc. in Bijapur district. These charak sangha’s advocated people to adopt spinning. Thus the at least by not purchasing foreign cloth chain of wealth was stopped through his efforts.20

On 26 May, 1928, the first Karnataka khadi conference was held at Dharwar, under the presidentship of Hardekar Manjappa. This conference resolved to start a special journal for the propagation of the khadi. Hardekar Manjappa, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande and R.R. Diwakar to brought the monthly journal called Khadi Vijaya in 1928, but next year the name changed to Udyoga and came under the sole stewardship of Hardekar Manjappa.21 During 1930’s Rama Rao Hukkerikar, H.R. Venkataramaih and Jalihal Anant Rao established the Akhila Karnataka Swadeshi Sabha and strenuous efforts were made to start khadi co-operatives at Bagalkot, Gadag, Hubli and so on.22

Ironically Hardekar Manjappa played vital part in popularizing khadi, not only through his activities but also through several books like ‘khadi shastra’, written in 1934.23 The meaning is the science of khadi, it is divided into light chapters (i) the industrial age, (ii) the antiquity of khadi in India, (iii) the Indian Textile Skill, (iv) The Destruction of Indian Handicrafts by the British Government, (v) The significance of the Spinning-wheel and the Handloom, (vi) Khadi versus Mill Cloth, (vii) The Boycott of Foreign cloth, and (viii) The sanctity of khadi. It shows how well
Hardekar Manjappa involved in khadi movement. He asserted political nationalism is inadequate unless backed up by economic nationalism. Thus Hardekar Manjappa was the champion of khadi movement in Karnataka. He served the movement by making public speeches, writing books, editing journals, and starting a craft-oriented training institution. The khadi movement was also popularized by Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, Srinivas Rao Kaujalagi, R.R. Diwakar, Krishna Rao Mudvedkar and other leaders by touring throughout Bombay Karnataka. This movement brought awareness especially among the rural people of Bombay Karnataka, and they actively participated in the national movement.

Salt Satyagraha

In 1930 Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement which started with the famous Dandi march and the Salt Satyagraha on 6 April, 1930. The movement very soon gathered momentum as a mass upheaval throughout India and it preached open defiance of law. The salt tax under colonial rule was one of the repressive tax on common people. Gandhi said 'there is no article like salt outside water by taxing which the state can reach event he starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless. The tax constitutes therefore the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise.' Before launching the movement Gandhi served on the viceroy a 11 points ultimatum which, inter alia included 50% reduction in land revenue, abolition of the salt tax and government monopoly over salt, lowering of the rupee-sterling exchange ratio, protection of indigenous textile industry, 50% reduction in civil and military expenditure, total prohibition of intoxicants and so forth. Gandhi said to the people who gathered at the Sabarmati Ashram before the start of movement 'wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt
laws should be stared... Liquor and foreign cloth shops can be picketed. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the courts by refraining from litigation. Government servants can resign their posts. I prescribe only one condition, viz. let our pledge of truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of swaraj be faithfully kept. Gandhi waiting in vain for 41 days for the response to his ultimatum, started the march along with 78 volunteers from Sabarmati Ashram on 12 March. After reaching the coast of Dandi, Gandhi picked up salt laying on the coast and broke the salt law, with this, salt became the symbol of India's will to freedom. Mailar Mahadevappa participated in Dandi march.

Soon after Gandhi's Dandi march the leaders of Bombay Karnataka felt that Kanara district was eminently suited for launching Civil Disobedience Movement, the reason was the villages and towns on the coastal areas of Kanara were suited for Salt Satyagraha. Hanumant Rao Kaujalgi and N.S. Hardikar met Gandhi at Jambusar while he was on his march to Dandi and appraised him about the movement in Karnataka. Thereafter N.S. Hardikar announced the decision to start Civil Disobedience Movement in Karnataka. Volunteers began to come from Belgaum, Hubli, Sirsi, Honnavar, Kumta, Siddapur. Earlier on 6 April, 1930 volunteers from Hubli went in procession with R.R. Diwakar after the procession left the town, the volunteers marched towards Anokala under the leadership of Burli Bindu Madhav Rao, Sri Paramanna Hosamani.

Nearly 40,000 volunteers gathered at Ankola on 13 April, 1930 under M.P. Nadkarni's leadership collected sea water in eastern pots at Pojageri and prepared contraband salt at Ankola, it was auctioned at a public meeting in defiance of the
rules, thus breaking the salt laws of colonial government.30 Before on the same day Gandhiji broke salt law at Dandi on 6 April, 1930 Gangadhar Rao Deshpande auctioned contraband salt at Belgaum.31 The government decided to take action and arrested M.P. Nadkami and Swamy Vidyananda. However, Salt Satyagraha continued for over six weeks at Ankola. Volunteers continued to come from all over Karnataka, including princely state of Mysore, and thousands and thousands participated despite warning and arrest by police.32 The enthusiastic local leaders, students, women, peasants and masses participated in large number. A shandy of contraband salt was organized at Ankola on 20 April, 1930, and again on 25, 27 April and 3 May, 1930 over 600 people brought the contraband salt to the shandy for sale and over 6,000 people bought this contraband salt, in fact the salt law appeared to be non-existing.33

On May 17, 1930 the working committee of the Karnataka provincial congress met at Hubli under the presidency of Srinivas Rao Kaujalagi, and unanimously decided to carry on the propaganda against drink, the picketing of toddy auction - sales and the boycott of foreign cloth. Leaders like D.P. Karmarkar, Srinivas Rao Kaujalagi, M.B. Kabbur, Krishnabri Panjikar and were directed to take charge in different parts of Karnataka. Even K.T. Bhesyam of Bangalore was participated.34 the Salt Satyagraha was offered at various places, the prominent places were Bisanal in Bijapur district, Kiresur and Yavagal in Dharwar district.35 As a matter of fact, Pringle Kennedy who moved a resolution in protest against enhancement of salt tax in 1890 congress, said thus 'salt tax was an income tax on all incomes down to the lowest. In India the lowliest peasant, the poorest coolie, nay the very beggar. Widow in the street, has to drop her mite into the imperial treasury. The poorer a man is, the
heavier is its incidence. Such was the salt tax under colonial rule. Thus the salt tax was imposed on poor and rich alike, but it caused more hardship on the poorer class. So the Gandhiji's movement attracted large number of people in Bombay Karnataka, and it is clear from the above evidence that the salt satyagraha was a great success and it immensely contributed for the growth of nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

Forest Satyagraha

The discontent against the stringent forest rules began after the Indian Forest Act, 1878. The government divided the forest into protected forest and reserve forest, year after year the protected forest converted into reserve forest as a result the agricultural land declined in Kanara. And the Bombay government put many restriction through subsequent rules on the movement of people. The privileges enjoyed by the local people since time immemorial were curtailed. The grievances led to the formation of Kanara Vanadukkha Nivarane Sabha (Kanara Association for Removal of Forest Grievances in 1886. The Sabha in 1887 convened a meeting and decided to send Pundalik Narayan Pandit to Madras Congress to appraise their grievances to nationalist leaders. Since then the people of Kanara continued agitation against the stringent forest rules. They were supported by the nationalist papers of whole of the Bombay Presidency (see Chapter VI). M.D. Karki, who represented the Kanara in Bombay Legislative Council, raised voice against the stringent forest rules of Bombay government in Kanara during the Home Rule movement and the non-cooperation movement. The awareness further spread among the masses. However, the beginning of Civil Disobedience Movement at Ankola and participation of large number of people from all parts of Karnataka by defying colonial laws under Gandhiji's inspiration. The forty-five days of salt satyagraha took a virulent form in
Sirsi and Siddapur and broke out in the form of forest satyagraha. In fact the congress leaders had planned the Civil Disobedience Movement in thorough manner. The visit of Sardar Vallabhai Patel to North Karnataka and his inspiring speeches at Bailhongal (Belgaum district) on 15 September, 1930, in which he described the heroic fight put up at Bardoli and exhorted the ryots to fight for their legitimate rights with unity and firmness, and never be coward by the show of governmental might. So the visit of national leaders including Gandhiji to Bombay Karnataka inspired the people. Sardar Patel's address provoked the peasantry of Bombay Karnataka and as a result large number of peasantry participated in salt satyagraha.

One of the forms of forest satyagraha was 'Hullubanni Satyagraha' tax on grazing cattle. The Bombay government with the purpose to exploit the forest resources converted protected forest into reserve forest, and practically the reserve forest came to the doorsteps of village or human settlement. The government neither leave any forest land for grazing nor allow the people to collect grass from forest. The aim was financial gain the officials imposed two-annas to some time two rupees per pair of cattle for grazing into forest. D.P. Karmarkar gives the following figures.

| Total forest land in India | 10,99,888 sq. miles |
| Total land left for grazing | 51,000 sq. miles |
| Grazing land in Bombay Presidency | 64,000 sq. miles |
| Total Cattle | 1,79,00,000 |
| Actual number of cattle grazing | 23,98,000 |

The figures indicate that the government grazing land was sufficient only for 23,98,000 cattle, while the total aggregate cattle was 1,79,00,000. This inconvenience
was greater in Kanara district, where after reserve forest there were no land left for grazing separately.

Since the government’s forest revenue was increasing from various kinds, the Hullubanni or grazing tax was one of the important revenue source. The government increased Hullubanni tax from two annas to 4 annas. The following figures shows the income from Hullubanni.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>Rs. 2,79,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>Rs. 3,13,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-23</td>
<td>Rs. 4,85,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>Rs. 5,21,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>Rs. 5,70,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It makes clear that the grazing tax enhanced nearly three times. Thus, along with other forest rules, the grazing tax was great burden on the common people.

The local leaders of Indian National Congress fully supported the forest satyagraha. The Hullubanni was an economic cause, and it attracted so much attention that, the forest satyagraha spread the whole of Bombay Karnataka, but the Kanara was the nerve centre of the forest satyagraha. In August 1930 the forest satyagraha was started at Sirsi under the leadership of Venkatesh Ramaiah, while in Siddapur Shanker Rao Gulwadi was the leader. Taking stock of the situation the government arrested important congress leaders including Dr. Hardikar. After the Kanara district congress committee (met on August 6, 1930) decided to launch satyagraha at Sirsi, Siddapur, Ankola and Kumta. The congress committee decided to continue forest satyagraha until grazing tax confiscation of property by government ceased.
The leaders of Hindustani Seva Dal K.A. Venkatamaiah, S. Vasudeva Rao and Vankatesh Magadi took the lead and motivated the people. The grazing tax was so high in Siddapur that normally Rs. 250 could be collected but the total annual collection of the government was Rs. 3,500 in 1930.

The forest satyagrahis defied the forest law entered the Reserve Forest, where entry was prohibited, and cut the twig, in some places they cut the fully grown sandal wood tree in contravention of the forest rules. The high handedness of subordinate officials, since the introduction of forest law in 1878, now brought the anger of the people out. At Yasale in Sirsi taluk, about 2,000 people participated in the forest satyagraha. The satyagraha movement was diversified and organized in more centres, there were 21 centers in Sirsi taluka, while there were 18 centres in Siddapur taluka from where forest satyagraha was being organized. The people of other taluka too joined and started forest satyagraha at Ankola, Kumta, Haliya. Even in other parts of Bombay Karnataka in Bijapur, Dharwad and Belgaum districts the forest satyagraha organized. At Shiggaon in Dharwad district broke the forest law, brought wood and openly sold in market. The forest law was broken at Akkatangerhal village (Gokak taluka) in Belgaum district. It was noteworthy that, whole village people participated. To stop the satyagraha nearly 1000 policemen surrounded and prevented the people to move out of village, but before that the people cut several sandal wood trees and burnt. In Bijapur district also people started forest satyagraha in different parts. At Kerur the forest satyagraha took place, people after cutting trees brought the wood and auctioned. Gundappa Joshi, who was the president of Taluka Congress at Guledgudd organized forest satyagraha.
The significant factor was large number of people, women, students, participated, though the government took very severe steps by beating, arresting the people continued the forest satyagraha throughout the Bombay Karnataka. The Patels of Sirsi and Siddapur resigned in protest against the police suppression. The lead was taken by Shivarama Manjayya Hegde of Kannalli, he was followed by 26 Patels in Siddapur taluka, while Sirsi Dodnalli Timmayya Hegde was followed by 42 Patels resigned.51

It is true that, the forest grievances which burnt into the formation of Vanadukkha Nivarane Sabha in 1886, initiated the struggle against the stringent forest policies of colonial rule, and the struggle continued by the people throughout the British rule, their grievances were equally exposed by the nationalist papers. Thus the forest satyagraha in 1930s immensely gained the mass support against forest rules, thereby it spread the spirit of nationalism.

No-Tax campaign

The No-tax campaign was the more widespread and more revolutionary in Bombay Karnataka. In fact the no-tax campaign that was launched in 1932-33 earned Kanara a notable place in the history of freedom movement in India. The No-Tax campaign carried out directly under Gandhiji’s direction. That actually the No-Tax campaign was started in 1930s soon after the forest satyagraha, but after Gandhi-Irwin Pact it was stopped on the advise of Gandhiji came back from London and arrest on the failure of Round Table conference. The No-Tax campaign in Karnataka resumed with more intensity and more widespread, that is why it is notable.52
Due to the economic depression 1929 world over the prices of various commodities fell, in Kanara the prices of areca nut fell from Rs. 10 per maund to Rs. 3. This fall in price caused great depression among the cultivators. Despite of fall in the prices the government neither reduced the taxes nor granted any remissions. At the same time, the Kanara district faced the problem due failure of crop in the areca plantations. The plantation owners petitioned the government seeking concessions in land revenue, but no response came from government. Thus the conference of planters was organized at Sirsi on 31 January, 1931. Similar conference was organized at Siddapur on 1 February, 1931. They decided to send petitions pleading the government their inability to pay taxes but all their requests fell on the deaf ears of government.53

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee gave its signal to launch No-Tax campaign. It was decided to launch the No-Tax campaign in four taluks, Hirekerur in Dharwad under the leadership of Veerangouda Patil, Sirsi, Siddapur and Ankola in Kanara. At Sirsi the No-Tax campaign was started under the leadership of Nayak Tippayya Mastar, while the leader in Siddapur was H. Anantraya, D.P. Karmarkar led the No-Tax movement in Ankola.54

The No-Tax campaign was started on economic ground. The people of Bombay Karnataka had the shining example of Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928, and the very leader of Bardoli’s Vallabhai Patel’s inspiring speeches in Bombay Karnataka particularly at Bailhongal motivated the people to launch the No-Tax campaign. Large number of congress leaders and activists, volunteers of Karnataka Seva Dal went to Kanra to take part in No-Tax campaign, like D.P. Karmarkar was sent to Ankola. The No-Tax campaign was launched in Hirekerur, Sirsi, Siddapur and...
Ankola, the people district refused to pay the taxes. Important leaders of Bombay Karnataka R.R. Diwakar, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande and others toured these talukas and motivated the people to join the movement.\textsuperscript{55}

After Gandhi returned from London, Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed in 1932. Uttara Kannada did not lag behind in its protest. All forms of Civil Disobedience like Forest Satyagraha, picketing of liquor shops and foreign goods' shops, etc., were resumed in all talukas of the district. The campaign was launched in Ankola and Yellapur taluks also. This time, the movement was launched only for political reasons, only demanding freedom as had been done in Ankola taluk in 1931.\textsuperscript{56}

The khadi, salt satyagraha, forest satyagraha and no-tax campaign attracted people towards the nationalism. Under the leadership of Gandhiji the leaders of Bombay Karnataka actively propagated Gandhiji's ideas and by touring different parts of the Bombay Presidency awakened the spirit of nationalism. The people of Kanara especially played very active part throughout the Gandhian period to spread the spirit of nationalism.

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