CHAPTER III
THE NEED FOR THE IDENTITY AND ITS SOCI-POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCE

To facilitate a specific understanding of the Kannada identity and its historical roots, a list of dynasties and their respective periods is mentioned, to help reach the core thought of what is Kannada culture, and which dynasty has influenced it the most. The identity of the Kannada nation before the naming of Karnataka is referred back to the rulers ranging from the Satavahanas to Wodeyars. But the specifications of who is the true ‘personality of Kannada’ is again an arguable issue, and which of these rulers spoke Kannada, and what identities they carried, is another debatable subject. And yet the debate is again entangled in the question of who represents Kannada in the modern context. Is it the King Kempegowda, or is it the Wodeyars? Here it is not just the rulers or their mighty legacy that stands on the middle path but the question of which ruler represents which caste. As the caste factors determine the modern vote banks, respective caste leaders are created for representation, rather than their mighty personality.

Here I also wish to illustrate the symbols of each dynasty and their representations, and stress on the fact that even with all of these representations we still are in need of new iconic representations, regardless of the existing authentic line of historic rulers of the land of Kannada.

To understand the nervous system of the Kannada nation and its historical and socio-political aspects I here wish to discuss the social history of Karnataka and how these events and circumstances eventually led to the representational crisis and hence to the necessity of identity-making, thus paving the way for the unification movement, and further in the process led to the origin of the concept of Kannada Mathe – Thaye Bhuvaneshwari and the Kannada flag.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Period</strong></th>
<th><strong>Empire</strong></th>
<th><strong>Territory</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>238-225 B.C.</td>
<td>Shatavahanas</td>
<td>Deccan comprising present Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra. Areas between Godavari and Krishna</td>
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<tr>
<td>345-540 A.D</td>
<td>The Kadambas of Banavasi</td>
<td>Central, Western, Northwestern Karnataka</td>
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<td>350-999 A.D</td>
<td>The Gangas of Talakadu</td>
<td>South Karnataka, parts of Andhra and Tamil Nadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th-12th century A.D</td>
<td>The Chalukyas of Badami</td>
<td>From Narmada to Cauvery. Parts of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, Andhra</td>
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<tr>
<td>753-973 A.D</td>
<td>The Rastrakuthas of Manyakheta</td>
<td>Most of South India</td>
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<td>973-1156, 1183-1200 A.D</td>
<td>The Chalukyas of Kalyana</td>
<td>Parts of Karnataka, Andra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>985-1346</td>
<td>The hooysalas of Dwarasamudra</td>
<td>Parts of Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil Nadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>1336-1565 A.D.</td>
<td>The Vijayanagar empire</td>
<td>Most of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh. Most of South India.</td>
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The four dynasties ruled over the empire:
- Sangama (1336-1485)
- Saluva (1485-1503)
- Tuluva (1503-1565)
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<tr>
<th>Era</th>
<th>Rulers/Provinces</th>
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<tr>
<td>1570-1681</td>
<td>Aravidu (1570-1646-1681) Bahamani Kingdoms (many kings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1358-1481</td>
<td>Gulbarga, bidar, bijapur, daulatabad, Warangal, rajamahendri, mahore, gorilla, junar, Deccan area etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>1489-1510</td>
<td>Adil shahis (sultans) of bijapur</td>
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<tr>
<td>1400-1734</td>
<td>Bijapur and adjoining deccan areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1499-1763</td>
<td>Wodeyars</td>
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<tr>
<td>1485-1779</td>
<td>Nayaks of Keladi ikkeri</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-18th century</td>
<td>Maratha Interlude</td>
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<tr>
<td>1513-1728</td>
<td>Yelahanka nada prabhu (Kempegowda I-1513-69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1761-1799</td>
<td>Yelahanka prabhu (Kempegowda I)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1799-1831</td>
<td>Deccan and some parts of andra, tamil nadu and kerela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831-1881</td>
<td>Krishnaraja Wodeyar III</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895-1940</td>
<td>Old mysore regions</td>
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<td>1940-47</td>
<td>Old mysore regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>State of mysore</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Renamed as the State of karntaka</td>
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The Visual Culture of Contemporary India
Assertion of Kannada Visual Identity in Context of Globalisation
Figure 1 The front page of a book on Karnataka with the most prominent symbols of ancient Kannada dynasties.

Figure 2 The Hoysala royal emblem at the Chennakesava Temple in Belur, Sala fighting the tiger, the symbol of Hoysala Empire at Belur, Karnataka
Figure 3 The Ganga Emblem - 10th century copper plate

Figure 3 Chalukya emblem of Aihole in Karnataka depicts Vishnu in *Varaha* form. A 6th century stone emblem

Figure 4 Vijayanagar empire: Royal Insignia: boar, sun, moon and dagger

Figure 5 Mughal Empire: Shāhān-e Gurkani
**Figure 6** The Kingdom of Mysore

**Figure 7** The Gandaberunda emblem in the Mysore Palace.

Kingdom of Mysore/Princely State of Mysore

**Figure 8** The State Emblem of Karnataka
Karnataka, a state in South West India, was officially formed on November 1, 1956, with the passing of the States Reorganisation Act. What was initially named as the State of Mysore was renamed as Karnataka in 1973. Thus the Unification of Karnataka refers to the formation of the Indian state of Karnataka, then called as Mysore State, in 1956, when several Indian states were created by redrawing borders on the basis of linguistic demographics. The formation of the State of Mysore was the culmination of a movement that had started several decades earlier during British rule, when the first demands for a state based on Kannada demographics had been put forward.

Almost the entire southern half of Karnataka was then under the Wodeyars of Mysore, with Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and his dewan Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya who was a notable engineer, scholar, statesman and a recipient of the Bharath Ratna, at the helm. With Kannada as the spoken language the public were living with respect and dignity under Wodeyar’s rule. But the northern regions of Karnataka were under the British and the Nizam of Hyderabad, and suffered under the misrule of these governments. As a result of this suppression, the seeds of the Ekikarana (unification) movement were sown in the northern parts of Karnataka, and all its most important protagonists were from there. One of the earliest and most important organisations that spearheaded the entire movement — the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha — germinated in Dharwad. The Sangha, established in 1890 by R. H. Deshpande with the objective of working for the revitalization of the Kannada language which had been marginalised under the rule of the Bombay Presidency where Marathi was the declared language, was a structurising point in the history of the movement. The Vidyavardhaka Sangha became the umbrella under which leaders from all over Karnataka gathered to further their protest and movement. The assertion of the Vidyavardhaka Sangha initiated many organisational forums throughout the geography of Karnataka, one such being the Kannada Sahitya Parishat which was establish in Bangalore in 1915. Subsequently the branching out of such voices was necessary to bring the diverse population under one roof, and thus the Karnataka Sangha (Shivamogga) was seeded in 1916, and the Karnataka Samithi was born in Kasargod in 1955.

The Kasargod Karnataka Samithi advocated the merger of Kasaragod with the Karnataka state and several volunteering individuals fought for this initiative: late Sri Umesha Rao, popularly known as ‘Gadinadu Gandhi’, late Sri B. S.Kakkilaya and late Sri U. P. Kunikullaya.
With such movements and agitations teaming up with the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha for a united struggle as early as in 1856, the pace of the movement was further quickened with the entry of Sri Aluru Venkata Rao. Aluru Venkata Rao drew up a strategy for integrating all Kannada regions of Madras Province and North Karnataka with Mysore kingdom, at a meeting of the Sangha in 1903.

With the nationwide protests over independence and reorganization taking a critical turn, Aluru found it the apt time to accelerate the movement to a larger dramatic turn. He roped in literary figures for the All-Karnataka Writers' Conference in Dharwad in 1907 and 1908. Later, with the effort of the Sangha, Deshpande and Aluru established the Kannada Sahitya Parishath in Bangalore in 1915. The Parishath subsequently picked up steam with annual writers' conferences and other initiatives, which culture continues to date. Aluru then sparked the idea of a Karnataka 'provincial' unit of the Indian National Congress. This idea later took the shape of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee.

First Kannada text

*Kavirajamarga* dating back to 9th century AD (814 – 877), is the first known Kannada manuscript, which describes the geographical boundaries and speaks of the 'national identity' of the then Kannada universe. The text starts with poetic verses outlining the geographical area of Karnataka, then ruled by King Nrupathunga of the Rashtrakuta empire, who was also called Amogavarsa Nripatunga. There is a dispute over the authorship of the text, with some scholars crediting it to Nrupathunga, and others attributing it to Srivijaya, who is believed to have host-written texts for Nrupathunga. The controversy continues to date. According to the inscription Kannada land extended from the river Narmada to the river Cauvery as revealed by this availability of edicts that belonged to the Badami Chalukyas. Nrupatunga in his *Kaviraja Marga* has described Kannada Naadu, the land between Narmada and Godavari. By the 9th century Karnataka had been shrunk up to the boarders of the Godavari.

Of the inscriptions found in the areas surrounding present-day Karnataka, from Maharashtra alone around 1,000 are available, of which 300 are in Kannada and 76 in Marathi. According to these inscriptions, the ancient map of Kannada land included present-day Goa, some parts of present-day Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, specifically Kolhapur, Sangli, Solapur, Osmanabad and Namded districts. Marathi
scholars acknowledge that South Maratha once belonged to Kannada regions. This is also stated in the book *Kannada Kannadiga Karnataka*, published by Kannada Pustaka Pradikara. In Nasik and Nagpur, even today Kannada is spoken, especially by the backward community, as litterateur Chidanandamurthy points out in his book *Bashika Bruhut Karnataka, Nilgiriyinda Nasik Varege*. In present-day Andhra Pradesh, Kannada inscriptions are found in Nizamabad, Medak, Mehboobnagar, Kurnool, Ananthapur and Chittoor. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu they are found in the Nilgiris district, and in Kasargod district of Kerala. Hence it is fair to infer that present-day Karnataka has lost Goa and the above mentioned 13 districts spread over three states.

Other inscriptions that historically landmark the existence and identity of Kannada land are the Halmadi inscriptions and the Talagunda Pillar inscriptions dating back to 450 AD, and the lohole inscriptions dating back to 635 AD.

**Sri Shankaracharya**

Shankaracharya (788-820) one of the great scholar, a social reformer is refered as father of vedic philosophical thought. Besides his critiques on “Prasthan Traya” considered as his greatest contribution, his other contributions such as “Advaitha Philosophy” also called Maya philosophy or “kevaladvaita Veda” “Upadesha Sahasri”, “Viveka Chudamani”, “Soundarya Lahari” and many more. Shankara gave importance to the communal worship of Shiva, Vishnu, (Surya) the sun, Ganesha, Kumara and Goddess Shakti. That is why he was called the “Shanmatha Stapanacharya” (one who established the six cults). This means he did not urge for the worship of single God. This must have been an attempt at the integration of six (out of many) most popular cults of those days. Religious integration leads to national integration. Prompted by this need he travelled all over India and established many Mutts. The four Mutts that were establishes were in the East at Puri, Orissa, Govardhana Mutt, with Vedic Heritage of Rig Veda and West at Dwaraka in Gujarat, Kalika Mutt with Sama veda, and in the North at Badari in Uttar Pradesh, Jyothish Mutt with Atharvaveda and lastly at South at Sringeri, Karnataka, Sharada Mutt with Yajurveda.

Similarly many social reformers such as Ramanujacharya (1017-1137) , Madhavacharya (1238-1317) and many more whose names all are not mentioned had contributed to the social System.
Sri Basaveshwara

One of the most important philosopher and social reformer, who was against the Caste system. Basaveshwara (1132-68) was the leading light of Veerashaivism movement in 12th century. Being born to the Brahmanical tradition when he was made to undergo “Upanayanam” he threw off the sacred thread by saying that “By birth I have the Lingadiksha and there is no necessity for an upanayana”. Basaweshwara became a disciple of the saint Jathavedamuni, under whose guidance he learnt Vedas and worked towards liberating the superstitious mass from the clutches of misinterpreted tradition. He was invited by Bijjala, the kalachuri king and made him the minister, with which he was able to bring about many reforms relentlessly in order to wipe out the superstitious practices and belief that were deep rooted in society.

Basaweshwara who began a movement against castism brought into practice, intercaste marriages. The Brahmin Madhuvaiah gave his daughter in marriage to the son of Haralaiah who was a Harijan under the guidance of Basaweshwara. This led to voluntary changes in the static traditional society. He went to the house of an untouchable by name Nagadeva and ate in his house. Even those who have been kept out of the society as Pariahs (out-castes) were given ‘Shivadiksha’ by Basaweshwara and induced in them a new religious awareness. He took step to stop inhuman sacrifices of animals that were taking place In the name of religion. In this context he declared “pity is the source of religion”.

Akka Mahadevi was a prominent figure of the Veerashaiva Bhakti movement of the 12th century Karnataka. Her (about 430 Vachanas) Vachanas in Kannada, in a form of didactic poetry are considered her greatest contribution to Kannada Bhakti literature. Yet the term 'Akka' (elder Sister) which is an honor given to her by great Veerashaiva leaders like Basavanna, Chenna Basavanna, Kinnari Bommayya, Siddharama, Allamprabhu and Dasimayya speaks volumes of her contribution to the movement that was underway. She is seen as a great and inspirational woman for Kannada literature and the history of Karnataka. She is said to have accepted the god Shiva (‘Chenna Mallikarjuna’) as her husband, traditionally understood as the 'madhura bhava' or 'madhurya' form of devotion (This is similar to how 8th century Andal declared herself marriable only to lord Vishnu or as centuries later Meera, a 16th century saint, considered herself married to Krishna)
Kempegowda

Yelahanka is about 8 miles from Bangalore and during the early 15th century a principality came into existence and flourished here. The rulers were called Yelahanka Prabhus. Rana Byregowda was the first of the dynasty. He was originally from Yanamanji Puthur (Alur) of Kanchi in Tamil Nadu. Rana Byregowda left Aluru, crossed Palar river with seven families of his brothers and selected ‘Ahuthi’ village near Nandidurga for his stay. Among his brothers Malli Byregowda, Sanna Byregowda, Veeregowda were prominent. Rana Byregowda had children by name Jayagowda, Sanna Byregowda, etc. These people were called ‘Morasu Vokkalu’ (the Morasu family) as Kanchipuram was also known as ‘morasu Nadu’. Rana Byregowda son Jayagowda (1417-33) went to Yelahanka and acquired the title “Yelahanka Bhupala” (The protector of Yelahanka country) became a vassal of Vijayanagar. Kempegowda (1513-69) is titles as “Bengaluru sthapaka” the founder of Bangalore, “Yelahanka Nadu Prabhu”.

The foundation of Bangalore

Kempegowda selected the place of present Bangalore for the capital. The Present day Doddapete and Chikkapete junction known as the “Bellichowka” became the centre of the city. A fort was also built in order to protect the city. The Halasur Gate to the East, the Sondekoppa gate (at the end of Aralepet, on the Kempambudi tank bund) to the West, Yelahanka gate to North and Mysore gate of the city with Towers. The capital city started attracting people other than officials. The emperor of Vijayanagara, Achyutharaya was happy at the news of the establishment of new capital and as a mark of appreciation he bestowed a gift of 12 “Hoblis” Bevur, old Bangalore, Kengeri, Hesaraghatta, Jagani, etc with a net income of 30,000 pagodas (Varahas). The folk stories also says that building of the main gate was not possible even after repeated construction, it fell until the priest announced that if the gate was to stand firm, it needed the sacrifice of a pregnant woman; and Kempegowda’s eldest daughter-in-law Lakshmamma, who was pregnant went to the gate and sacrificed herself.

Kempegowda II (1572) came to throne after him, during his reign many Tanks, reservoirs, and also temples were built. He renovated the Someshwara temple at Ulsoor and scenes from “Girija Kalyana” are carved on the walls of the temple. With Magadi as his capital he ruled for many years. Thus the dynasty was called the “Kempegowdas of Magadi” from his time onwards.
The magnum opus — Karnataka Gatha Vaibhava

Sri Aluru, also known as ‘Kannada Kula Purohita’, meaning the high priest of the Kannada clan, published several articles and books, predominantly — Karnataka Gatha Vaibhava meaning the “past glory of Karnataka”, in 1912. This book, which made a great impact during its time on people of every age and class, narrates the glory of the history of Karnataka until the decline of the Vijayanagar Empire, followed by the encroachments of the Marathas, the Nizams, and finally the British.

This book was one of the prime motivators in encouraging the public to associate with the Ekikarana movement. The movement gradually gained momentum and spread taking the form of protests, agitations, rallies and conferences, wherein the focus was both on gaining the independence of the nation and also to building a new state of Kannada-speaking people.

Anti-British Uprising

Anti-British uprising by the end of 18th century, various leaders fought against British, starting from Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan waged the third Mysore War in 1792. Dhondiwagh in 1800, Venkatadri of Igur from Shimoga Dist., Shivalingalaih Deshmukh and Tirumala Rao Deshmukh, Diwakar Dixit, Raoji Raaste, Balaji Deshpande and Settippa Tukkali, Amatur Balappa and Kittur Rani Channamma’s Defeat on December 4, 1824 followed by Sangolli Rayanna. Various other revolts such as Nagara Revolt (1830-31), revolt in Coorg (1834-37), revolt of 1857 at Surapur, Naragunda, Mundaragi.

Pre Gandhian freedom movement

Though there were many strong attempt from local rulers and activists in Karnataka the attempt to oust the British or English out of India failed as there were no unified force or combined effort till 1920, after which Gandhian philosophy was unquestionability followed by the nation. But till 1920 all the effort that sparked out did awakening the need for freedom.

In 1885 National Indian Conference was formed in Bombay, in which two delegates had represented Karnataka-Sabhapati Mudaliar and Kolachalam Venkata Rao of Bellary. Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV welcomed this idea of the formation of congress and in the session held at Madras in 1897 and 1902 he had given much contribution. Thus,
he had supported the spirit of nationalism. In the later sessions, leaders like Narayana Rao Chandavarkar, Srinivasa Rao Kaujali and Alur Venkata Rao and Kadapa Raghavendra Rao of Dharward were the important ones. With the notion that congress was believed to be the Brahmin Party, non Brahmins did not wish to join it, besides Karnataka state became disintegrated, with west was merged with the Bombay Presidency, the east with Hyderaband, and the south with Madras presendecy.

To educate the people about nationalism, politically awakened activist brought out newspapers, and through them educated the people about Nationalism. The chief ones among the papers were Karnataka Prakasha (Bangalore), Chandrodaya (Dharwar), Hitabodhini (Belgaum) and Kannada Suvarna (Bombay). These papers enlightened the people about Kannada state, language, culture and about the crisis the country was passing through. Prior to Mahatma Gandhi, the congress leadership was taken up by Dadabhai Navroji, Gopalakrishna Gokhale and Balagangadhara Tilak. Many were influenced by them especially lawyers and doctors, landlords began to take an active part in congress meetings. With the nationalism spread through Tilak’s ‘Kesari’ (Marathi) and ‘The Maratha’ (English) which were the most popular all over India, similarly locally Gangadhara Rao Deshpande, published paper ‘Kannada Kesari’ and enlightened the people about freedom.

With the split in congress, the extremists became Tilak’s followers and the moderates supported Gokhale. In the congress session, kannadigas like Srinivas Rao Kaujali, Alur Venkat Rao, Gangadharma Rao Deshpande, supported Tilak.

The Literary and Cultural Organisations

In preaching the idea of integration, educational, literary and cultural organizations contributed the new method of educational rejuvenated culture of development with the provincial languages and culture that began to defy Imperialism. Many organizations were formed such as the Wesleyan Mission was founded in Mysore and opened both English and Kannada medium schools in 1834, The Basel Mission Jesuit Society in Mangalore in 1861, and Banumaiah Educational Institution in 1917 in Mysore. The Karnataka Vidya Vardhaka Sangha 1890, the Karnataka Itihasa Samsodhana Sangha 1916, Karnataka Sabha and Karnataka Education Board 1917, were started at Dharwar. The Basaveshwara Vidya Vardhaka Sangha was started in Bagalkote in 1906. In Tumkur, Siddaganga Educational Institute was founded. And in Bangalore, Karnataka Sahitya Parishad and Theosophical Society came into exis stance.
in 1917. All of these organizations contributed in the education and spreading awareness about state, country, language and unity.

**Journalists and media**

Satyagrahi from Udupi, Karma Veera, Taruna Karnataka, Samyukta Karnataka from Dharwar and Hubli, 'Sadhana' from Hyderabad, 'Kodagu' from Mercara, 'Kanadavrutta' from Kumta, Karnataka kesari from Bellary, 'Prajamata', 'Chitragupta', 'Tainadu', 'Veera Kesari', 'Viswa Karnataka' and 'Deshabhimani' from Bangalore. 'Sadhvi', 'the star of Mysore', 'Kannadiga' from Bagalkote, 'Karnataka Valbhava' from Bijapur. The other papers published from Bomabay were Kannada Sahitya Parishath's Patrike, Vishwa Karnataka Patrike, Loka Shishkana, Karnataka Vrutta, Dhaurdhari, Jaihind and Hubli Gazatte all these inspired the Kannadigas to demand integration.

Articles that appeared in Vishwa Karnataka edited by Ti. Ta. Sharma, Jaya Karnataka edited by Alur Venkat Rao, Samyukta Karnataka edited by R. R. Diwakar, Karnataka Vaibhava edited by Mohare Hanumanta Rao are certain worth remembering. Many of the publishers and editors were put into prison. Mohare Hanumanta Rao was handcuffed and was taken in procession along the streets. All these papers had one common purpose- the need for integration.

**Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee**

Luminaries like Gudlappa Hallikeri, Siddappa Kambli, R. H. Deshpande, Rangarao Diwakar, Koujali Srinivasarao, Srinivas Rao Mangalvedhe, Kengal Hanumanthaiah, Goruru Ramaswamy iyengar, S. Nijalingappa, T. Marlyappa, Subramanya, Sowcar Chennaiah, H. K. Veerangowda, H. C. Dasappa, H. Siddaiah and Anakru, the popular orator, were in the forefront of this mission with Sri Aluru Venkata Rao.

In 1920, a Karnataka State Political Conference was held in Dharwad, presided over by V.P. Madhav Rao, at which a unanimous resolution was passed, demanding the unification of all Kannada speaking areas. The meeting also called upon all Kannadigas to attend the Nagpur Congress, at which eventually the Indian National Congress took the landmark decision to create the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee. This further brightened the aura of the Ekikarana movement and of leaders like Gudlappa.
Hallikeri and Kengal Hanumanthaiah, who played an active role in the movement, and who later became the chief minister of Karnataka.

Karnataka Ekikarana Sabha

The newly formed Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee of the Indian National Congress held a historic conference in Belgaum, presided over by Mahatma Gandhi and attended by Kannadigas from all over the state. Incidentally, the conference was held at the same venue where the first Karnataka unification conference presided over by Siddappa Kambli was held. These two meetings drew numerous leaders, writers, poets and intellectuals from all over Karnataka. They drew attention to the glory of Karnataka with numerous inspiring speeches and poems. Incidentally, the well-known song *Udayavagali namma cheluva Kannada nadu*, meaning “May our charming Kannada land rise,” was first sung at the first Karnataka unification conference.

Thanks to the valuable support of the Indian National Congress, the national views of the Karnataka Ekikarana Sabha were politically strengthened. This was a very important event in the history of the Karnataka. The Karnataka Ekikarana Sabha was later renamed as Karnataka Ekikarana Sangha.

The Belgaum congress

Belgaum congress was held on December 21, 1924 presided by Gandhiji. It was conducted from Dec. 21 to 30. Several committees were formed and various subjects were discussed such as Nationalism, upliftment of Harjans, removal of untouchability, Khadi propaganda, the Hindu Muslim unity, the co-ordination between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins, the basic education and rural cleanliness. The Belgaum session had in mind the bringing together the swaraj party and Muslim leaders, as swaraj party leaders such as Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das and other who were not satisfied with the principle of non-violence left congress and the Muslim leaders such as Shaukat Ali, Mohamed Ali and Mohamed Ali Jinnah who kept themselves away from Congress or the Karnataka state.

At the same time in 1924 December 21 and 23, Kannada Sahitya Sammelana also took place, in which Huylagola Narayana Rao’s famous song “Udayavagali Namma Chaluva Kannada” laid the foundation stone.
Recommendation for unification and the election

Noted litterateurs like Kuvempu, Bendre, Gokak, Shivaram Karanth, Kayyara Kinhanna Rai M. Govinda Pai, S.B. Joshi and Betageri Krishna Sharma were supported in their demand for the unification of Kannada speaking areas, by newspapers as well as college and public bodies. In 1928, the Nehru committee recommended the formation of a single province by uniting all Kannada speaking areas. The man behind this recommendation was Gudlappa Hallikeri. This recommendation came as a boost for the unification activists.

In 1937, followed by the Simon commission, the Congress demanded formation of Karnataka and Andhra states. This demand met with resistance from both the British and the princely states: the latter feared the loss of territory, and the British were unclear about what this would entail. Meanwhile, there were attempts by Siddappa Kambli to approach the Simon Commission, which was tactically prevailed & prevented by Aluru and the other leaders, as they had boycotted the Commission. With the circumstances politically weakening the movement with the rulers of the princely states, Gudlappa Hallikeri sought the support of the Maharaja of Mysore. The Maharaja obliged by addressing gatherings in all Kannada speaking provinces of Bombay and Hyderabad, resulting in massive support to the unification movement from all over.

The year 1946 was very significant for the movement. A massive conference inaugurated by Sardar Patel on January 10 that year in Bombay declared that the interests of all linguistic groups would be of top priority for the new government of independent India. This was to have a bearing on the Constituent Assembly that met the same year. Incidentally, the All-Karnataka Convention too was held that year at Davanagere, the geographical centre of Karnataka — a very high profile event which drew thousands from all over. It was presided over by the then Revenue Minister of Bombay M.P. Patil. A strong appeal to create linguistic states was made to the Constituent Assembly by influential leaders who attended the conference, namely, Gudlappa Hallikeri, Kengal Hanumanthaiah, T. Mariyappa, H. K. Veerangowda, H. C. Dasappa, H. Siddalal, Subramanya and Sowcar Chennaiah.
After 1947

After the declaration of Independence, Kannada linguistic regions were grouped under five administrative units of the Bombay, Madras, Kodagu, Mysore and Hyderabad princely states.

With the unification issue not being addressed, the Karnataka Ekikarana Parishat met in Kasargod, demanding a unified Kannadiga state.

Meanwhile, the Lingayat minority in the regions of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur who were under the Nizam of Hyderabad expressed their grievance at having been neglected. Eventually, with the overthrow of the Nizam's rule by the central government, its citizens were finally independent on September 17, 1948, celebrated by the Karnataka government as the Hyderabad Karnataka liberation day.

The same year, the government appointed the Dhar Commission under Justice S.K. Dhar, to look into the question of linguistic reorganisation of states. The Commission rejected the idea of linguistic reorganisation. In December, the same year, the JVP Commission was appointed to look into the issue. (The Commission was so named as its members were Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya) This Commission, while favouing the creation of Andhra state, rejected the demand of the Karnataka Ekikarana movement. This was seen as a betrayal by the Congress, as in its 1951 manifesto, the party had promised priority for creation of linguistic states. The hurt Ekikarana leaders formed a new party, the Karnataka Ekikarana Paksha, to contest the 1951 elections. Hand-holding them were all the literary stalwarts and leaders of the region, like C. M. Poonacha, the Chief Minister of Kodagu, Kengal Hanumanthaiah, S. Nijalingappa and Gudlappa Hallikere.

In 1953, the Congress session in Hyderabad passed a resolution favouring the creation of Andhra Pradesh and clearly rejecting the proposal of Karnataka. This was the last straw for the Ekikarana Paksha. A.J. Dodameti, a senior leader and member of the Bombay Assembly resigned and began a hunger strike in Dharwad. There was rioting in Hubli, which left many injured, and many courted arrest. The Congress candidate was trounced by the Karnataka Ekikarana Paksha's candidate. Under pressure, Prime Minister Nehru again constituted a states reorganisation committee, called the Fazal Ali Commission, which was headed by Justice Fazal Ali.

Meanwhile Mysore government also suffered another defeat, with the fact-finding committee headed by M. Seshadri who opposed the unification, which was rejected
with being overwhelming support of Mysoreans led by the statesman Sir M. Visvesvaraya. This situation was further electrified by Gudlappa Hallikeri who made an impassioned demand before the states reorganisation committee, demanding unification of states based on linguistic demography. This recommendation was eventually made by the commission to Parliament, which was at last ratified it.

The State of Karnataka, 1973

On November 1, 1973, during the chief ministership of Devaraj Urs, Mysore State was renamed as Karnataka, as the name ‘Mysore’ was not inclusive of all other regions and ‘Karnataka’ represented the totality of all Kannada linguistic regions. Though the Fazal Ali Committee’s recommendation made the Kannadiga population unified under the State of Mysore sigh with relief initially, it soon began to rankle that a few important regions were not included. Especially the non-inclusion of Kasargod (which went to Kerala) was a serious disappointment as ironically, it had been a consistent supporter of the Ekikarnana movement. Leaders like Kayyara Kinanna Rai continued to fight for Kasargod’s merger with Karnataka even after the State formation.

In the book on U. R. Ananthamurthy omnibus edited by N. Manu Chakravarthy, Ananthamurthy says: “The nightmarish experience of the state of national emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975 and the cumulative effect of the economic policies pursued by the Indian state beginning with the Nehruvian era did make an impact on the political character of the Indian national-state that had to be properly contextualised by someone with a socialist bent of mind. The nature of parliamentary democracy — with all the manipulations of all the political parties, irrespective of the ideology they professed but never really practised — had to be interrogated if one were to arrive at any kind of fair estimate of the state of Indian democracy.

“The last two decades of Indian life — socio political and economic — have witnessed the powerful impact of the phenomenon of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. The phase of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation has ushered in a post-modern world, in the sense that earlier notions of tradition and modernity have undergone unbelievable transformation. It is no longer possible to understand tradition and modernity as one used to earlier. Moreover, the very concept of a nation has altered radically. Similarly the understanding of the value of culture is at sharp variance with what it meant earlier. The divergences are quite strong and are spreading quite forcefully. But one also beholds much continuity from the past that resists these changes. India is a nation and a culture lost at the crossroads today.”
The vision of Sri Aluru Venkata Rao in the process of shaping Kannada identity

A student of Fergusson College in Poona, Aluru was positively influenced by the nationalist fervour of leaders like Tilak. In his journal *Jaya Karnataka*, he writes “... Kannataka is not just land (*nadu*). Not just language. Not just art and architecture. Not just history. Just like the individual person, a country (*desa*) is said to have three levels of the body (*deha*): the gross (*sthula*), the subtle (*sukshma*) and the spiritual (*karana*). Just as an individual attains salvation (*moksha*) through development of the triple bodies, so does a *desa* (land/country) attain progress (*vikasa*) through these bodies. In his book *Imagining Unimaginable Communities*, K. Raghavendra Rao discusses Alur’s life and his views on nationalism. The gross or the external body of a *desa* is made up of its political, social, educational and similar institutions, and its subtle body comprises its language, history, art and architecture, and culture. But its spirit or spiritual core is its religious life (*dharma*). The journal *Jaya Karnataka* was a tool to awaken the people of Karnataka, specifically the educated middle-class urbanites, and also to bring together all the writers split across the fragments of geography.

Aluru condemns the Indian tendency to talk about cosmic welfare at the cost of nationalism. He asks the direct question, “What is a nation?” According to him, the immediate answer would be to identify it with a country, a language, a religion or a race (*vamsa*). Citing the case of Russia and England where the nation is multi-racial and multi-ethnic, he rejects the racial concept of nationalism. Citing the case of multi-lingual Canada and Switzerland, he rejects the linguistic identity of the nation of nationhood. He rejects the religious identity of the nation by showing how nations were multi-religious collectives. The reason why he undertakes this negative exercise is to expose the wrong notions prevalent in India, especially the wrong notion that India cannot be a nation because it is multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious. He answers this with a link to the ancient seers, the identity generated millennia ago, on the concept of *sanatana dharma* (eternal religious tradition) recognised by others as Indians (*bharathiyaru*) and condemns on the irony of our non-acceptance of this ancient concept.

The concept and the terminology of Karnataka*ta* originates from a self-conscious, theoretically formulated concept Aluru outlined in a letter to a senior leader Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, popularly known as the Lion of Karnataka, on June 14, 1926, in English: “... From my experience of the public life of Karnataka and also from my experience in other fields, I have come to the conclusion that no movement,
political or otherwise, is possible unless there is Karnatakatva in us. By Karnatakatva, I mean the sum total of all our feelings and duties towards Karnataka (like Hindutva), so it is that from the political field, I turned to this less ambitious but more solid work. My Karnataka is somewhat different from ‘provincialism’...”

**Mahajan Commission, 1976**

After the integration, areas such as Kasargod, Nilgiris, Solapur, Akkalakote, Jatta and Gadlinglaj with Kannada speaking populations were left outside Karnataka, having been merged with neighbouring states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra. A one-man commission headed by Sri Mahajan was formed to settle the border dispute between Mysore state and Maharashtra. Both states promised to abide by his verdict. Mahajan, after an intensive survey reported that Akkalakote, Jatta and Kasargod should go to Mysore, and Nippani, Khanapura and Halyala should merge with Maharashtra. Belgaum was to be retained within Mysore. Maharashtra was disappointed. Hence, it rejected the Mahajan Commission verdict. The Maharashtra stand is that a vast majority of people in the state (Belgaum) speak Marathi, not Kannada. This view, based on statistics, was rejected both by the Commission and by Parliament. Every state in India contains minority groups. So numbers cannot be the sole factor to decide the issue, it was felt. Though discussed several times in Parliament, the problem has remained unresolved.

**Mahajan Report**

This report talks of the areas of contention between Karnataka and Maharashtra. Of 814 villages of Belgaum, 264 were given by Karnataka, and of the 516 villages demanded by Karnataka, 274 villages were given by Maharashtra. Karnataka demanded Kasargod from Kerala, but this demand was rejected by Kerala.

**Gokak Report fuels Gokak Chaluvali agitation**

Karnataka had adopted three languages — Sanskrit, Hindi and English — as the medium of instruction in schools. With the move towards globalization and new-age careers demanding knowledge of English, the Kannada-speaking population began to move towards English, just as people in other states had. Additionally, since Sanskrit was offered as a choice in schools, students could finish their schooling without studying Kannada at all. Fears that this would lead to complete marginalization of
Kannada, led to a movement against retaining Sanskrit as the first language in schools. This movement was supported by teachers, writers, scholars and others. With pressure mounting on it, on July 5, 1980 the government constituted a committee to study the issue. It was headed by Jnanpith awardee and former Vice-Chancellor of Karnatak University Prof V. K. Gokak.

**Gokak Report**

The report submitted by the committee recommended that the government should accord first language status to Kannada with the primary facilities that the language needed for its implementation. However, even before the government could make any announcement, there was opposition to the report from several sections of the public such as the non-Kannada-speaking minorities. This resulted in minor protests from pro-Kannada and Karnataka organisations.

The Kannada film industry jumped into the fray, and under pressure from the industry and from the Kannada movement leader G. Narayankumar, matinee idol Dr Rajkumar agreed to promote the cause of Kannada. With several other top artistes of the industry, Dr Rajkumar took out a rally from Belagavi to Bengaluru, giving speeches about the importance of Kannada. Work in the film industry ground to a temporary halt as its members joined statewide rallies. The presence of stars in huge numbers added momentum to the movement, and succeeded in drawing the attention of the common public. The entire movement, known as the Gokak Chaluvali, emphasized on primacy for Kannada.

**Government accepts Gokak Committee report**

As the movement snowballed, Chief Minister R. Gundu Rao announced that the government had accepted the Gokak Committee report and assured the activists that Kannada would be the official language of communication throughout the state in all government departments, and that the language would be nurtured as the mother tongue of the people.

**1990 Language compulsion**

Kannada Abhivrudhi Pradhikara, a dedicated department for the development of the Kannada language was set up on July 6, 1992 (DPAR182kol92 Bangalore dated July 6, 1992). The demand for implementation of the language at the working culture, Administration must be in Kannada, Dr sarojini mahishi report must be implemented
with immediate action, all government office must be advised to use Kannada language with literature training, service exams, advise must be given by the government that Kannada must be communicated in all government and state office all over.

In front of state officials and the dept Kannada language must be used, if violated necessary action must be taken. On 29 4 1994-5 government also ordered that the primary and high schools must implement Kannada in schools.

Dr Sarojini Mahishi Varadhi – Job employment

Government studies the submitted report and apply Dr Mahishi report, Ci228ris90Bangalore dated 21-04 1995. The following conditions were stipulated and rules laid down to describe a Kannadiga and to protect his entitlements. To qualify as a 'Kannadiga' or a citizen of Karnataka, a person must have resided in Karnataka for a minimum of 15 years and should be able to give proof of this in the form of either a ration card, a school certificate or birth certificate. He or she must also be able to read and write Kannada. Industries which had acquired lands from farmers were under obligation to give a job to one member of each family from which they had acquired land. The personnel officer must be a Kannadiga. Districtwise committees must be established to ensure employment of Kannadigas and oversee the implementation of the Mahishi report recommendations. A report must be sent to the government periodically on such implementation.

The report made it imperative for new industries to hire Kannadiga staff. On failing to do so, they would forfeit any facilities extended by the government. The district committees were tasked with checking and verify these terms. Further, it was made mandatory for technological institutions to get government approval for the syllabus, career support and placements.

By implementing the recommendations of the Sarojini Mahishi report, it was sought to ensure that Karnataka got its rightful share in all Indian jobs, and especially make sure that jobs in the Karnataka government set-up went to Kannadigas. It also intended to wrest control of the seat of power at the Vidhana Soudha, which in popular perception was seen to have been captured by migrant lobbies.

The Wodeyar and the Kingdom of Mysore

The Kingdom of Mysore (1399–1947 AD) was a kingdom of southern India, traditionally believed to have been founded in 1399 in the vicinity of the modern city of Mysore. The kingdom, which was ruled by the Wodeyar family, initially served as
a vassal state of the Vijayanagara empire. With the decline of the Vijayanagara empire (circa 1565), the kingdom became independent. The 17th century saw a steady expansion of its territory and, under Narasaraja Wodeyar I and Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar, the kingdom annexed large expanses of what is now southern Karnataka and parts of Tamil Nadu, to become a powerful state in the southern Deccan.

The kingdom reached the height of its military power and dominion in the latter half of the 18th century under the de facto ruler Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. During this time, it came into conflict with the Marathas, the British and the Nizam of Golconda which culminated in the four Anglo-Mysore wars. Success in the first two Anglo-Mysore wars was followed by defeat in the third and fourth. Following Tipu's death in the fourth war of 1799, large parts of his kingdom were annexed by the British, which signalled the end of a period of Mysorean hegemony over southern Deccan. The British, however, restored the Wodeyars to their throne by way of a subsidiary alliance, and a diminished Mysore was now transformed into a princely state. The Wodeyars continued to rule the state until Indian independence in 1947, when Mysore acceded to the Union of India.

Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (July 18, 1919 – September 23, 1974, rule: 1940-47) was the 25th and the last Maharaja of the princely state of Mysore, ruling from 1940 to 1950. He was the only son of Yuvaraja Kanteerava Narasimharaja Wodeyar and Yuvarani Kempu Cheluvaja Amanni, and was well known as a litterateur, philosopher, musicologist, political thinker and philanthropist. Being an academic and an art lover, he travelled widely, meeting connoisseurs, artists and scholars. He ascended the throne of the Kingdom of Mysore on September 8, 1940 after the demise of his uncle Maharaja Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar. After the princely states were annexed by the Indian union in 1956, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar was appointed the “Rajapramukh” (Governor) of the state. Later he became the Rajapramukh of Madras. Being a part of unification movement of Karnataka state on November 1, 1973 he aptly lit the sacred lamp in the temple of Kannada Thayee Bhuvanehwari, at Hampi, when the state was renamed as “Karnataka”.

SIR M Vishweshwariah (1912-18)

Sir M Vishweshwariah is the most famous among the architects of modern India and thus was awarded with the title of Bharata Ratna in 1953 along with Rajaji and Nehru. He was one of the modern reformist of Karnataka, with his intelligence, and administrative qualities that had brought outstanding revolutions to the state.
Introduction of 'block systems' to irrigation, building of Dams, Paddy and sugarcane research farms, Iron and Steel works at Bhadravathi in 1916, several small scale factory productions, silk research centres, Sandal oil factory, Hindustan Air Craft Factory were all outcomes of his genius. He wrote many books on the economic policies of the state: A Vision of Prosperous Mysore, Reconstructing India, Rapid Development of Industries, Planned Economy for India, Memoirs of my working Life (Autobiography)

As Dewan of Mysore Vishweshwariah played a worthy vital role both in terms of administration and involvement in unification of Karnataka.

Andanappa Doddameti (1808-1972)

Andanappa Doddameti, a fearless freedom fighter known for his Kannada patriotism, was a patron of the Harijans and strove for their upliftment. He was born in Jakkali village, and was educated at Dharwad. Deeply influenced by Gandhiji's speech at Belgaum, he plunged into the freedom fray, actively participating in the non-violence movement and was imprisoned many times. He was responsible for bringing Jamkhandi into the Indian Union. He undertook fasts unto death for the cause of Karnataka integration. Representing Rhona taluk four times in the State Assembly, he became Irrigation Minister in 1970. His most significant contribution to Kannada, Kannada Mahimna Stotra has been discussed and produced as a evidence supporting the argument in this research in subsequent chapters.

Bellary Siddamma

Among the thousands who sacrificed their lives for the nation during the Karnataka unification and pre-Independence struggle are a large number of women whose names went tragically unrecorded and who are hardly remembered today. Siddamma was one such freedom fighter. Married to Murigappa, a freedom fighter from Davanagere, Siddamma was not educated, but actively participated in the freedom movement with her husband, inspiring many to join the fray. In the Aranya Satyagraha Movement led by S. Nijalingappa, she played an important role. On one occasion, she was badly beaten up by the police while she was addressing a gathering. Undaunted by the blood pouring out of her wounds, Siddamma continued with her speech. She was imprisoned for 18 months by the British. The Mysore Government had passed orders forbidding the hoisting of the national flag. She defied the orders and hoisted it during the Mysore Congress session and again at Shivapura in 1938. Many were arrested.
mammoth gathering of nearly 25,000 people praised her dauntlessness on the occasion. She started an organisation called Mathru Mandira for the welfare of the wives of the freedom fighters, destitute women and children in Davanagere.

Dr Rajkumar (Singanalluru Puttaswamayya Muthuraju) - 1929-2006

Born and brought up in Chamarajnagar in rural Mysore, Muthuraju became an icon of Kannada cinema under the screen name Rajkumar. This Dada Saheb Phalke awardee with an awe-inspiring fan following did not have any outstanding academic background. Rather, he had studied only up to the third standard. However, he had a passion for theatre, and plunged into the world of drama, working with theatre groups and performing all over Karnataka. Interestingly, Rajkumar used a different dialect of Kannada: not the Kannada that is spoken in his native village, but a standard Old Mysore Kannada termed as ‘Shistabhashe’. He used this elite dialect with ease. His films brought him superhero status. His involvement in the Gokak Cheluvali movement Varadi and his rally from Belagavi to Bangalore raised his stature in the eyes of the people, who saw him as the son of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari during these periods.

Abduction of Dr Rajkumar

The abduction of Dr Rajkumar by jungle bandit Veerappan on the night of July 30, 2000, came as a shock and wreaked havoc in Karnataka, especially in Bangalore. The actor, who was 71 then, was abducted along with his son-in-law Govindraju and two others from his farmhouse at Dodda Gajanur, which was in the princely state of Mysore prior to 1947, and is now a part of Erode in Tamil Nadu. In exchange for the hostages, Veerappan demanded the release of his gang members who were jailed under a defunct anti-terrorism law. The abduction drama, which played out for 108 days, shook the entire state and stretched the government machinery to its limits. Rajkumar fans and Kannada activists went on the rampage everywhere, burning buses and other vehicles, assaulting motorists and declaring a bandh. Initially the government had to declare a holiday to save the common people, especially school children, caught up in the violence. During the three and a half months when the abduction drama played out, the entire State was in a state of mourning, with Rajkumar’s songs and films being over-played and his fans and Kannada activists over-reacting. After 108 long days of herculean efforts and intense negotiations, Rajkumar was finally released on November 15, 2000. Incidentally, the abduction heightened the tensions between Karnataka and the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, as Veerappan was a Tamilian. It did not help that the two states were already at loggerheads over
the Cauvery water-sharing issue. Probably this was the period which saw the maximum amount of flag usage and (Karnataka) goddess representation in the socio-political public sphere.

**Shankar Nag**

Shankar Nagarkatte (9 November 1954 - 30 September 1990) popularly known as Shankar Nag was one of the most popular actors and directors of not just the Kannada film industry, but of the Indian film industry as a whole. His outstanding evergreen works such as the tele-serial *Malgudi Days*, based on celebrated novelist R.K. Narayan's short stories, is a work of artistic brilliance. He did not limit himself to Kannada films, but had worked in films of other languages as well. For example, his 22 June 1897, which won a National award, was in Marathi. His career flowed in two parallel streams: he worked in popular films and used the money raked in by these commercial hits to make intelligent films with artistic sensibilities. Thus his body of work represented a rare confluence of an elite working culture and a non-elite commercial career.

**Vishnuvardhan**

Matinee idol Vishnuvardhan (18 September 1950 - 30 December 2009) was born Sampath Kumar in a Mysore Brahmin family to H.L. Narayana Rao and Kamakshamma. His father was an artist, music composer and scriptwriter. The family lived in Chamundipuram of Mysore, and thus the cultural inheritance of Mysore had an influence on him. Though his high school and college years were spent in Bangalore, he is referred to in the Karnataka film industry as the pride of Mysore. Vishnuvardhan acted in about 220 movies, including 200 in Kannada. He also featured in Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam and Tamil films. Vishnuvardhan was popularly known as Sahasa Simha ('valorous lion') and Abhinava Bhargava (Emperor Of Acting). He is also referred to as 'The Phoenix of Indian Cinema'. He adopted the screen name Vishnuvardhan at the insistence of legendary director Puttanna Kanagal, who directed his maiden film, *Naagarahaavu* — one of the finest movies ever made in Kannada. This movie gave him the image of 'the angry young man of Kannada cinema'.

There are several other important figures whom I haven’t discussed in this chapter, such as K.C. Reddy, S. Nijalingappa, Kengal Hanumanthaiah, Gangadhaara Rao Deshpande, R. R. Diwakar and Hardekar Manjappa, among others, who were equally important in the making of the Karnataka State and contributing to the Kannada 

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**THE VISUAL CULTURE OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

**ASSERTION OF KANNADA VISUAL IDENTITY IN CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION**

PAGE 58 OF 406
identity, since my research is restricted to an area of visual cultural studies and to the making of the Kannada identity.

Ambareesh

Malavalli Huche Gowda Amarnath or M.H. Amarnath — Ambareesh to his fans — was born on 29 May 1952 in Doddarasinakere village near KM Doddi of Maddur taluk in Mandya district of Karnataka. This hugely popular star, also titled 'Rebel Star' and 'Mandyada Gandu' is also a prominent politician. His grandfather was the legendary violinist Tirumakudalu Chowdiah, after whom the famous Chowdiah Memorial Hall and Chowdiah Road in Bangalore are named. Being born into a Gowda family there was pressure on him to lead the Vokkaliga community. Ambareesh was elected to the 12th Lok Sabha from Mandya parliamentary constituency on a Janata Dal ticket. He later joined the Indian National Congress and represented Mandya Lok Sabha constituency for two more terms. He was Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting in the 14th Lok Sabha, but resigned over his dissatisfaction with the Cauvery Dispute Tribunal award. However, the resignation was not formally accepted. Though he was defeated in the May 2009 General Elections, he still continues to be in politics with a parallel career in films, and acting as a mentor to the Kannada film industry.

Chidanandamurthy and Aluru

Before moving further with the discussion on the circumstantial need for identity and representation I wish to quote from the essay titled Kannada Rashtriyiyatheya Swaroopa from the book Sahitya Kathana by Kannada scholar and literary critic D. R. Nagaraj who compares two renowned and celebrated scholar-activists of Kannada nationalism at two points in historical time and space during the evolution of Kannada culture — Aluru Venkata Rao and Chidanandamurthy.

He quotes the words of Aluru: “Karnatakatva (like Hindutva) is a focusing lens. Through it we see not just Bharat but the entire world. The rays of the world and the rays of India are embedded in our lens of Karnatakatva... we should not forget that the idea of Karnataka is bigger than that of Kannada... the health of a state is not determined by the health of the linguistic majority, but by that of the linguistic minority... when in Dharwad a Marathi library was about to close down, I took away all the books, integrated it with my library and returned it to the Marathi speaking community when...
they felt confident about restarting it... Columbus discovered America, I too had to search and find anew Karnataka, I found it after a lot of effort and study.”

Nagaraj juxtaposes it with this text from Chidanandamurthy: “Arise, awake, Kannada people! Intellectuals and politicians are cheating you by invoking pseudo terms like ‘international brotherhood’, ‘national unity’ and ‘linguistic chauvinism’. A Kannadiga can never be a chauvinist; have faith in your tradition... let us respect people speaking other languages, but if they come to Karnataka and try to colonise us we should not tolerate it... the kindness of a person with self-pride is different from the kindness of a weakening, Karnataka should digest the good in other cultures but should retain its own identity.”

These similar texts are quoted and discussed by Sugata Srinivasaraju in his book *Keeping Faith With The Mother Tongue*. He points out that “Nagaraj argues that while Aluru has a vision of self-confidence, Murthy speaks from a position of insecurity. If Aluru sways towards ‘spiritual nationalism’, the nationalism that Murthy professes stems out of fear and anxiety. For Aluru nationalism should become a spiritual tool, instead of it becoming a mere political tool, to integrate the memories and minds of the people. He says “nationalism is a form of spiritual anger”. But Murthy builds his nationalist logic on hatred, and in fact traces the starting point of Kannada culture to a trivial incident that takes place when the Kadamba king Mayura Sharma goes to Kanchi in Tamil Nadu. He says that Kannada pride was awakened when Mayura Sharma was insulted by the Pallavas. Nagaraj not only questions such imagination of starting points of cultures, but says that Murthy makes a minor wrestle into a metaphor of profound historial dimensions”. Here Sugatha mentions that the trend of Kannadigas having a ‘tense’ relationship with neighbouring Tamils is a result of such spurious imagination. In the narratives that relate to the release of the Cauvery river water to Veerappan’s kidnapping of Kannada filmstar Rajkumar and to the debate on the according of classical language status to Tamil, this imagination of hatred plays a major role.

Nagaraj further argues that there is a symbiotic relationship between Kannada nationalism and the idea of a Hindu state or Hindutva. In Aluru it gets downplayed because of his other “liberal and sensitive” pursuits, but in Murthy it has become the truth, sprawled across his sub-conscious. Then he goes on to point out that unlike the beliefs of the two revered Kannada scholars, modern Kannada sensibility has been hugely enriched by Christian and Muslim thought streams. Quoting a research work he says, of the 240 folk poets of the 19th and 20th centuries listed in north Karnataka, 24
were Muslims. This is the second largest number after the 116 poets from the dominant Lingayat community. Then, it was the Christian sensibility that readied us to face the 20th century. Missionaries educationally revived Kannada and even gave the language its first dictionary. “Forget languages for a moment, even when it comes to architecture, how can we leave out the influence of Islam in the northern districts of Raichur, Bidar, Gulbarga and Bijapur? Similarly, can we leave out the splendour of the churches and their music in coastal Karnataka? To peg the idea of Karnataka on just Hindutva, is tantamount to weakening the foundation,” he forcefully argues, and adds that since Murthy fails to take all this into account, his chariot of Karnataka is stuck in the medieval ages.

In his final argument, Nagaraj points to the three models of Kannada nationalism. One is a model that treats Karnataka like a shrine, a static reality, and professes an angst-ridden nationalism with (Kannada) language at the centre. This is Murthy’s model. The second rejects the cultural reality of Karnataka and views it as a convenient unit of administration or a model political entity. This nationalism operates on abstract ideas, which escape the familiar route of language and culture. Nagaraj does not cite an example for this form of lifeless nationalism, but then we see this model shaping up with the surge of the IT industry in Karnataka. The third model that Nagaraj envisages is that of Karnataka as a turf of multiple realities. He re-imagines the Karnatakatva of Aluru as one of the authentic forms of protest against the global monoculture that is developed as a result of growing capitalism.

Then Sugata says that the nationalist model based on grand assumptions of the past, alienated from the dynamics of the present — the one that Nagaraj identifies as model number one — can often be tragic because it soon hits a conceptual dead-end, with a good example of the self-immolation bid that Chidananda Murthy made on a Saturday afternoon in August 1997. Out of sheer frustration that Kannada was losing ground in Karnataka, he jumped into the Tungabhadra river near Hampi, the very same historical site where many unification meetings and vital events had taken place. Luckily he was saved by a boatman. I reproduce here the translated excerpts of his self-immolation note. Incidentally, it also gives a snapshot of Kannada activism in the last three decades:

“...I had taken that vow eight to nine years ago in Hampi before Lord Virupaksha in the presence of several people. ‘I will bring about a pro-Kannada awareness in entire Karnataka. If I cannot, I will offer myself to the river Tungabhadra as a sacrifice, right
here.' This was no secret. That vow was a firm vow, a vow taken after thinking at great length; it was not a vow taken in the heat of the moment...

...To bring about awareness, I (actually it should be ‘we’) built an organisation. Kannada tasks were done — some of them. But a general awareness could not be brought about. To build an organisation, money is required, and the money has to come from the rich. How can I ask the rich for money? To get money from them is to lose the moral right to talk about injustice and exploitation. The rich have to be praised. Is all this possible? I could not create a state-level organisation. It was not just shortage of money; I also lack some qualities necessary for building an organisation. Be that as it may, I had been thinking for some months that I should do as an individual what I could not do through the organisation. I had not forgotten the vow... what I could not achieve when alive, I desire to achieve by going away from life. What I could not do through the Shakthi Kendra, I have set out to do through self-immolation.

Once I was seized of the idea, it haunted me like a ghost for two or three days. I could not see the charm of Hampi. It scared me. It was a veritable fear. On the top of it, I suffered from cold, fever and weakness. I tossed and turned in the bed. Right under the window of my room was the river, the Tungabhadra, the way to my salvation. 'The weakness of the will is abominable, give it up. Rise, oh Arjuna!';

‘Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached’; ‘power’.

‘Chandi, Chamundi, demand what you want’

‘If manly enough, will you sacrifice yourself?’

‘Stamp on the clay, climb, stamp again and again, let the arrogance perish.’

I remembered such poetic tenets of noble origin. The Sharanas, their courageous life, their talk, their sacrifice also came to my mind. So also did the Haridasas. I recalled the brave spirits of those who had sacrificed themselves in the cause of great values. Akka Mahadevi, who treated death as it were nothing, came to my mind. In fact my life was shaped by the teachings of such persons, the guidance of great gurus. After two or three days, fear and anxiety receded, and my resolve became stronger.

Self-sacrifice should not be a momentary decision. Knowing fully well that the imperative of fulfilling my vow continued to remain, I thought of alternatives before me if I stayed alive. Within the framework of my strength, I could not see any
alternative. I guarded myself against any imaginary alternative that may spring from a desire to live for some more time.

My *jalapravesha* is not a ‘suicide’; it’s self-immolation. Suicide is a sin; it’s an act that takes place in a weak moment. If such a moment passes, the person may continue to live. To take a recent example, the death of Potti Sriramulu was not a suicide, it was self-immolation. I am citing it, though everyone knows about it. The Indian tradition has condemned suicide but has permitted self-immolation, though without glorifying it...

... I am afraid my writing may become a mere speech. Some have ridiculed me as one who shoots his mouth off about Kannada and does nothing else. Ours is not merely a language struggle. On that pretext, our struggle has spread to all spheres of life. These are things you know well. The Kannada Shakti Kendra played a unique role in a number of Kannada-related issues — an independent Doordarshan; the Mahishi commission report and the Kannada Development Authority which was meant for its implementation; Kannada University (the Kannada Shakti Kendra also played a major role in giving a fillip to the sidelined technical university and its establishment); the Gokak agitation and the language formula; the making of the statues of two poets; the installation of the Kittur Rani Chennamma statue; Belgaum-Kasargod issues; the naming of Da Ra Bendre Road; the order on name boards; useful books on the Cauvery-Krishna water disputes (as many as 10,000+ 10,000 copies have reached the people); the stoppage of Urdu news telecasts; the South-Western Railway Zone at Hubli (unfortunate that it was not done); retention of the subject of Karnataka history in CET and PUC examinations; mother tongue as medium of instruction; naming of ‘Sulekere’; streamlining of the Kannada Sahitya Parishath; inquiry commission on Cauvery riots; drought relief fund; relief fund for the earthquake-hit and so on. Even so, the matter of bringing about a general awareness is unsatisfactory. You and I have struggled. There is a common awareness about Kannada in Karnataka. But that is not at all enough. By ‘not at all enough’, I mean exactly what the words mean.

And this is precisely what makes me burn with dissatisfaction. It has disturbed my peace of mind. It haunts me like a ghost day and night.

What next if this goes on? What next?

Where would Karnataka be?

The solution: collective awareness.

It’s the awakening of the Kundalini shakthi of the Kannadiga in all his magnificence.
All this is abstract, stylized.

In fact, what has to be brought about is awareness in the chief minister, ministers, legislators, officials, litterateurs, artistes, farmers, in everyone. The regret. The desire to become the life-force of a new enthusiasm.

Let my self-immolation bring this about.

No one is pained about Kannada (except a few people). I am going with all the pain they ought to have had. They — not all of them — committed a sin by neglecting Kannada. I am carrying the burden of all their sin.

I said, ‘barring a few people’. ‘How many?’

How many among the highly visible people? They can be counted on the fingers of my hand.

And activists? One hundred? Two hundred?

Is this enough, oh Lord Virupaksha?

I found it difficult to go from town to town, and from person to person to propagate the cause of Kannada. It was something I could not do. Look here, I will enter everyone’s mind through my self-immolation.

I will touch their inner consciousness; I will pray, call them with love; I will cry, I will haunt them. In their consciousness, I will become lightning, thunder, a thunderbolt.

Oh, the people of Kannada, don’t just warm up to this as mere poetry. It is my lord, the anguished call of a brother who was born with the same blood that runs in your veins...

...Bless Karnataka, bless India. I am smiling as I enter the river. My namaskara to everyone.

Jaya Bhuvaneshwari Jaya Pampambika, (Hail Bhuvaneshwari, hail Goddess of Hampi)

Jaya Virupaksha, (Hail Virupaksha, the deity of the Hampi temple)

Jaya Bharata jananiya tanujathe, (Hail the daughter of Mother India)

Jaya he Karnataka Mathe...” (Hail the victorious mother of Karnataka)
This highly emotional and expressive tale of anxieties is Chidanandamurthy's brand of nationalism which is not similar to Aluru Venkata Rao's or A.N. Krishna Rao's nationalism.

This note is presented here to mark the fact that the nationalism that each activist preached, had identities of a similar kind, though the idealism and the method of expression differed. Here, Chidanandamurthy, like Aluru Venkata Rao followed the visual appraisal and the declaration of motherhood of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari. Kuvempu, in a poem discussed in a subsequent chapter, refers to Mother Bhuvaneshwari as the beloved daughter of Mother India.

Fortunately, at least the visual representative structure of form remains the same in the above cases too. The letter also illustrates the emotional expressiveness of the nationalism impressed on the supremacy of the Mother Goddess. In fact none of the frontline activists dared to go against the national Gandhian idealisms in the local structure too.

The "Where would Karnataka be?
The solution: collective awareness.
It's the awakening of the Kundalini shakthi of the Kannadiga in all his magnificence.
All this is abstract, stylized."

mentioned in the letter of Chidanandamurthy refer to the same visual narration of the 'Shakthi Peetha', (shrines of goddess powers) which links further to my upcoming evidence and its role in the identity-making discussed in the further chapters on the conceptualizations of "Andanappa Dodametti's 16 goddess representations in direct reference and abstract symbolization on the existing Shakti Peethas of Karnataka of various regions of the geography of the State, thereby representing the respective demography and public." In the divided demography of the State, this had a very serious purpose and role to play — of unifying to fight for the common issues of land, language and identity, thus merging all of these prime focuses into a single line concept of Mother Goddess Bhuvaneshwari and her represented flag as the symbolic statement of the State and its sub-nationalism.
In this context, the place where Chidanandamurthy attempted self-immolation is very crucial. It is the very same place where gatherings for the unification movement had taken place, and which had echoed with pledges and prayers for the fight for identity. It is the very same place which was once the capital of the Vijayanagar empire. And it is the same place where the temple of Lord Virupaksha and the shrine of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari stand. That the theatrical attempt at self-immolation took place here, adds to the notion of Kannada, and the trigger of nationhood revives to another level with the staging of a sacrifice to the goddess.

Asserting on the value and the iconography of the goddess, here I wish to point out that the concept of the Mother Goddess created for the sole purpose of the unification of Karnataka and to give it a sense of identity, tended to gravitate to a higher order of superpower for whom an activist like Chidanandamurthy attempted to sacrifice his life. Here a close parallel that can be drawn from the national movement is the case of Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, Sukhdev Thapar, Rajguru, Ram Prasad Bismil and others. But it fails to transcend to make the most of this opportunity to lavish it on the visual medium, with such a potential real-life incident the visual makers fails to transmigrate such sensitive breaking news to the best poster of the decade on the nation of Kannada.

But even with such ground-breaking real-time inspiration, despite the fact that it was termed “emotional” or that it marked high “anxiety” why did these cases failed to make it into the visual plethora? Why didn’t these sensational happenings get translated into a powerful visual medium?

Why is it that these weren’t either demonstrated as tableaus or great patriotic actions?

These questions may require a different deviation to answer, but to a greater extent one of the most important aspects here is the crowd awareness, the wish of the crowd to see and not read. The prevalence of illiteracy even during the period ranging from the 1950s to the 1990s had the similar issues, but several such incidents went unnoticed in the visual world.

Incidentally, another literary stalwart, B.M. Srikantaiah, a Professor of Kannada, with a very strong base in English, Greek and Sanskrit literature, had given a speech at Dharwad in 1921, titled Kannada Mathu Taleyyattu Bage, meaning ‘my mother tongue raising its head’, which served almost as a de facto manifesto for the Kannada cause in the early years. In a note that he prepared for the Mysore census report of
1941, he refers to ‘resurgent’ Kannada and speaks about its ‘trends and aims’. He highlighted eight main points, under which the following thoughts were expressed: “rouse the men, women, children for Kannada in a re-unified Karnataka; reorganise the standard language; purify, strengthen and discipline it; absorb world-culture... in the great literatures of the East and West. Let there be in Karnataka a few specialists in each, to bring in light from all quarters; establish a living catholic taste. Experiment in freedom. Work out the old things and new in a sympathetic imagination, to ennoble and enrich the human spirit; no more meaningless conventions or flourishes for pedants. Write for the people: simply, sincerely, strongly.”

B. M. Sri (as he was fondly known) offers a universal approach. In his poems too, he compares both the mother of England with India along with her daughter Kannada Mathe with respect to both the worlds and with sheer compassion and devotion as a universal appeal. The point here that I wish to highlight is that the concept of Kannada mother is again an accepted formula.

Kuvempu, celebrated as the Rashtrakavi (national poet) was born in a Vokkaliga family, considered a low caste in Karnataka. He, however, offered a different contribution to the making of the Kannada identity. He wrote using Brahminical elements like Sanskrit words, verses from the Bhagavad Gita, Vedas and Upanishads. However, his novels had unconventional themes. He sought emancipation from his Shudra origins and the low caste dialect of his birth (in Kannada each caste uses a different dialect) by using language as a tool: using Sanskrit, and English which doesn’t have any caste connotation.

Kuvempu’s very simple poems, and his spectacular magnum opus Ramayana Darshanam, plays, and novels such as Kanoru Heggadathi and Malegalalli Madumagalu, are even today considered great contributions to the literary tradition of India.

Kuvempu even wrote against the Mysore Maharaja, though he ironically did learn and teach at in the Maharaja’s College, Mysore.

From a Vokkaliga Kannada speaker, Kuvempu consciously moved to a non-Vokkaliga identity through creative emancipation to English and Sankrit, and then back to Kannada, this time very consciously using Shudra language, thereby proving his intellectual calibre. As a writer and a very serious poet, he can be compared to Tagore too. Very interestingly, in his writings he uses references to the kajana, a bird found in Tirthahalli, in contrast to kogile, the cuckoo, based on a belief in Malnad areas that the kogile has a negative connotation, symbolizing lack of rain in the coming season.
These subtle symbolic representations which went against established conventional thought were the main features that made Kuvempu stand out.

In contrast was Da. Ra. Bendre, whose mother tongue was Marathi. Though from a Brahmin background, he liberally used folk elements in his works — even his lines borrowed from the Upanishads had a folk style of expression, sung as a celebration. The local dialect and the folk language he used even for serious poetry, appealed to a large spectrum of audience including children, the language he employed being so simple that even labourers could sing his compositions, though they delineated the philosophy of the Upanishads. He was also a master in balancing with complexed works of philosophy like Kuvempu.

Writer Masti Venkatesh Iyengar served as a govt employee, District Collector, known as the father of Kannada short stories. He used the form of the modern short story to the fullest extent, almost creating this genre in Kannada. Serving government as District Collector Masti was known for his historical novel and was known as the father of Kannada short stories.

Shivram Karanth, on the other hand, was an all-rounder. Active in theatre and Yakshagana, he also painted, made films, and was a prolific writer, penning detective novels, poetry and articles on science. He can be credited with reviving the Yakshagana art form almost single-handedly. He also contributed to the science encyclopedia and was an educationist with a concern for teaching methodology.

Kuvempu represented Mysore, Masti represented and was Bangalore-based, Bendre represented Dharwad, and Karanth represented South Kanara(Karnataka). However, though, their work was anchored in specific regions, all of them were pan-Karnataka writers, extremely popular in all regions. Incidentally, Kuvempu’s first poetry collection was published by Masti in Bangalore!

All these poets supported and contributed to the Kannada movement, and accepted and glorified the figure of the Kannada Mother Goddess through their works in their own style. None of them ever stood against the theory of the Mother Goddess or the concept of the flag or the idea of the Kannada State.

A. N. Krishna Rao, a progressive novelist, leader and Kannada activist, a friend of writer Mulk Raj Anand and celebrated artist Nandalal Bose, was culturally magnanimous, with a fine understanding of Western literature and culture. In his autobiography Barahagarana Baduku (A Writer’s Life) mentions a curious incident:
“Every Friday, Gurudev Tagore read out his new works to teachers and students of Shantiniketan. After the reading, students were allowed to ask questions and clarify their doubts. One Friday, after reading, Kudja Garji and one Bengali student got up together to ask a question. Gurudev turned towards Garji and said: 'Please sit down, let me answer my Bengali friend first.' I was surprised and wondered if a world-poet and a universal human being too could reside in such narrow compartments.”

Krishna Rao wrote the foreword to Andanappa Dodametti’s *Karnataka Mahimna Stotra* which contains illustrations of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari by artist Kondacharya. Krishna Rao vociferously acknowledges the concept of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari and her representation for the cause of identity-making.

*These examples of Kannada poets, activists and leaders are crucial to understand the trajectory of the Kannada movement and its subtle and varying incandescence, in contributing to the concept of the Mother Goddess of Kannada and to the identity and representations of Karnataka statehood.*