Chapter 3

ENTANGLED HISTORIES
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Entangled histories

Subversion of hegemonic construction of Hindu nationalism and several competing claims for hegemonic national identity emerged strong in South and Western India—Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Maharashtra (though their provinces were scattered among all these states). Several region-specific movements emerged strong along with the pan-Indian mainstream Hindu nationalist movement and Marxist movement between 1920s and 1940s. Tension created by the regional movements with conflicting interests stunted the growth of Hindu nationalism, though V D Savarkar and other nationalists aggressively equated nationalism with ‘Hinduism’ by 1920s.

In the construction of masculine Hindu nationalist identity, women of all castes and men of lower castes, Muslims and Christians were considered as the ‘Other’. Caste, for Tilak and other Congress nationalists, was a divisive force which obstructed growth of nationalism and was an impediment in unifying the masses against the anti-colonial struggle. They rejected caste and wanted caste reform, but they didn’t desire radical change in the structures which upheld the discriminatory

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101 Growth of nationalism varies from South India to North India; in the South caste was brought to centre stage of nationalist debates as early as nineteenth century and they became vital after 1920s due to several reasons. However, all the economic, political, religious and social factors behind the growth of the non-Brahmin and Dalit movements are not analysed here. S. Chandrashekhar (Dakshina Bharatadalli Vasahatushahi Rastriyate Mattu Sangharsha, translated by C Naganna, Hampi: Kannada University, 2000) and N. P. Shankaranarayana Rao (Swatantra Gangeya Savira Toregalu, Bangalore: Navakarnataka, 1991) discuss varied responses to nationalism and anti-colonial struggle in South India due to economic, geographical, social, educational and cultural differences.

102 V. D. Savarkar has defined the ‘Hindu’ as a ‘person who regards this land of ‘Bharatvarsha’ from the Indus to the Seas as his ‘Pitribhumi’ as well as his ‘Punyabhumi’ that is the cradle land of his religion.’ Hindutva/Who is a Hindu? (Nagpur: 1923) The exclusivist Hindu nationalism grew along side the Muslim nationalism during this period which culminated in the carving of two nation-states—India and Pakistan.
and hierarchical practices. M.G. Ranade’s words could be better example for the mainstream reformists’ views: Social reform was in the great Hindu tradition... of seeking out ancient principles in order to restate them; instead of destroying the structure the reformer should “lop off diseased overgrowth and excrescences and... restore vitality and energy to the social organism.” Like ‘women’s question’, caste issues were also relegated to the secondary concern.

Besides, the upper caste men who had become part of the colonial administration due to early access to education continued to wield control over the lower castes and classes. The same colonial administration with its doctrine of ‘progress’ unleashed contradictory forces: seeking upward mobility, for dalits, like for women, was both emancipatory and victimising.

By 1920s, however, policies of the colonial administration, education system, growth of communalism and caste-based politics, constraints of the Congress nationalists in including the marginalised sections and conflicting linguistic sub-nationalisms had led various castes and communities to re-organise themselves and reaffirm their identities. The marginalised communities began claiming their ‘democratic rights’ and their control over natural resources. The emergence of their determined movements on the social scene, bringing the caste and community issues to the fore coincided with the advent of Gandhian nationalism which foregrounded ‘Harijan welfare’ as one of its prominent agenda.

But, the leaders of these movements including Dr B. R. Ambedkar and E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker, diverge from Gandhi who defended the ancient ‘Varnashrama’ against the later distorted ‘Jati system’. These leaders rejected his paternalistic approach to the caste issues through ‘reform from above’.

103 Quoted by Kumari Jayawardena, Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World, 1986, page 80
These leaders diverged from the social reform movements which sought to modernise society without changing the base or ideologies of its patriarchal and hierarchical formations. As part of their modernising efforts and to foster Hindu unity, the Gandhian reformists advocated caste reforms through ‘sanskritisation’, assimilating ‘non-Hindus’ to the Hindu way of life: ensuring their ‘upward’ mobilisation through changes in their behaviour with new sense of bodily purity and etiquette and upper caste norms of sexuality and respectability of women.

But, some of these regional movements tried to change the bedrock and challenge the dominant ideologies of the patriarchal and hierarchical society, though they couldn’t provide effective counter-hegemonic alternatives. They critiqued the gender and caste from outside the mainstream nationalism’s discursive frame, though they were finally absorbed into the mainstream Congress nationalism despite bitter differences by 1940s.

These movements had contradictory effects while dealing with gender issues and were ambivalent in their approaches. The men of different castes with contesting claims for identity opened issues of women’s rights; for, maintaining gender hierarchy is crucial to sustain caste system. Their combined critique of gender and caste hierarchies opened up new spaces for women. Besides, women’s participation in these movements had also put great pressure on the dominant formulation of ‘women’s question’.

Rosalind O’Hanlon in her essay, “Issues of Widowhood: Gender, Discourse and Resistance in Colonial Western India”, notes that the growth of ‘modern’ forms of gendered domination within caste communities can also throw into sharp relief the contest between men from different communities that access to a ‘colonial public sphere’ had created. These entangled histories of gender reforms led both to a tightening of control over women from lower caste communities over the nineteenth century,
and to the modernity that upper caste women began to claim as the fruits of their victory over caste
patriarchy.104

One of the first to relate caste oppression with women’s exploitation was Jyotirao Phule, the
most radical reformer of the nineteenth century. This Maharasthrian of ‘low’ caste led the anti-Brahmin
struggle and opposed polygamy and child marriage while advocating women’s education and widow
remarriage. His Satyashodhak Samaj, set up in 1873, pioneered the anti-Brahmin movement. His
forceful writing in Marathi, especially works like ‘Gulamgiri’ published in 1872, had a powerful impact
on the contemporary society.

He reinterpreted history to invert the hegemonic construction of the ‘Aryan race’ and projected
the counter-myth of Northern-Brahminical conquest over Dravidians of the South. Hence for him
‘golden past’ meant pre-Aryan period. He constructed Maratha identity which challenged the
identification of the Brahmin with Kshatriya and the dominant Hindu portrayal of Shivaji as nationalist
hero who freed the motherland from Mlecchas and protected Brahmans and cows. Phule dismissed
this as ‘false religious patriotism’. According to Rosalind O’Hanlon, Phule’s ballads depict Shivaji as
Kunbi-Maratha folk hero with concern for peasants.105 His construction of Kshatriya identity drew
from rural and agriculture traditions.

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104 Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Issues of Widowhood: Gender, Discourse and Resistance in Colonial Western India,” in
Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia, Douglas Haynes and Gyan

in detail life and works of Jyotirao Phule, the first leader of the Dalit movements. The book contributes to an
alternative historiography which attempts to view religious, political and colonial power in the 19th century
India from ‘beneath’.
Both Phule and Tarabai Shinde, an activist of his Satyashodhak Samaj, articulated caste oppression as something experienced by both lower and upper-caste women. But they focused on the far greater burdens of chastity and caste purity that regulated upper-caste women. Like Pandita Ramabai, Tarabai was also critical of the patriarchal norms and argued that caste was the main form of social antagonism in Hindu society. Angered by a court verdict to prosecute a young Brahmin widow for killing her illegitimate child, Shinde wrote ‘Stri-Purusha Tulana’, in which she criticised male cunning as responsible for women’s misadventure. She could also see how ideologies of the ‘ideal wife’ constituted in contrast with ‘loose women’. She could view sexual economies of marriage and prostitution as two sides of the same coin.

Defending Pandita Ramabai, Phule argued that while she had been a primary force in encouraging education among girls, Brahmins had stopped sending their daughters and daughters-in-law to schools since they were ‘throwing away the scriptures’ and revolting against family authority. He also wrote new marriage ceremonies, following mainly peasant traditions without the necessity of Brahmin priests, and stressing equality between men and women.

Almost three to four decades later, Ambedkar continued to fight for the Dalit cause. He opposed Gandhi’s ideas on caste Hindu religion, faith in ‘pure Varnashram’. Like Nehru, Ambedkar had faith in the State as redeemer of injustice of Indian society while Periyar had reposed faith in a radical critique of civil society.

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The Gandhi-Ambedkar confrontation also rests on their fundamental differences in approaches towards Hinduism. For Gandhi, the anti-untouchability movement was part of reforming Hinduism of the ‘blight of untouchability’ and leadership of the movement should come from above as a measure to atone for its sin of untouchability practised for centuries. Gandhi considered it as a moral problem of the upper caste.

But for Ambedkar, it was also a matter of rights and leadership of Dalits, their identity and political representation. He claimed that they had separate political interests and discrimination against them was experienced as a civic disability that makes them less equal. In the debates over separate electorates with Gandhi and also in his later writings, “The Annihilation of Caste, or What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to Untouchables,” Ambedkar argued that the political recognition of the Dalit, rather than religious inclusion in the Hindu community, was the more forceful challenge to caste Hindu society. For, he believed the evil system could not be eradicated without changing the system which is inherently exploitative and the initiative should come from Dalit leaders.

Ambedkar interlinked marriage, sexuality and caste hierarchy and advocated inter-caste marriages. His views on women’s rights are probably best codified in his drafting of ‘Hindu Code Bill.’ Through this Bill he wanted to put an end to a variety of marriage systems prevailing in India and legalise only monogamous marriage. Most importantly, it sought to confer on women the right to property. But, his proposal met with strong opposition on the ground that it would ‘destroy Hinduism’ and the Bill was dropped in 1951.

Like Ambedkar, E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker also rejected Gandhi’s paternalistic approach to caste reform. Periyar, as he is known, was a staunch supporter of Congress up to 1925 when he broke away to launch the Self Respect Movement (SRM). He opposed Gandhi who expressed his
faith in norms of Varnashrama dharma at a public meeting in Mysore. Thereafter he undertook a systematic and relentless campaign against Gandhi’s politics of piety. But he chose to work on those very spaces Gandhi had recognised as pertinent for transformation of Hindu subjectivity and drawing of ‘Hind Swaraj’.

Periyar worked to advance a counter to both the lure of the Gandhian Congress as an institution and nationalism as an ideology. He rejected the nationalist claims as the ethic of our times, and instead chose to create a social and cultural movement of revolt against caste, Brahminism, religion as well as the rule of men over women.

The very term ‘self respect’ indicates the utopian vision of a casteless and perhaps atheist society based on human dignity and self-worth. Gandhi sought to saturate civil society with what we might call a coercive vision of a community of discipline. His practises centered on re-signifying the intimate spheres of Indian society – relations of gender, attitudes to filth and cleanliness, bodily comportment and the practices of sexual intercourse and defecation, to name a few.

Periyar’s response to the Gandhian attempt to saturate civil society with idioms of religiosity was to use reason and rationality to counter caste cunning, much as Phule had done almost fifty years earlier. Gendered forms of behaviour were the primary sites where religious rituals exercised their hegemony, and it is no surprise that Periyar too sought to produce a ‘feminist critique’ of civil society. It was the Self-Respect Marriage that posed the greatest challenge to caste orthodoxy, much as the greatest challenge to caste reformers, the multiple layers of women’s ideological and material suppression. He advocated equal rights for women, popularised marriages based on self-respect which meant that there should be equal consent between man and woman and that there should be no priests to officiate at a marriage.
S. Anandhi’s explicit focus in “Women’s Question in Dravidian Movement c. 1925 – 1948”, on self-respect unions brings out the significance of these attempts to critique the gender hierarchies inherent in the structure of the Hindu marriage, and thereby to thoroughly ‘politicise’ marriage.  

The restructuring of marriage as a ritual also provided an alternative idiom of austerity or frugality, which could then function as an implicit moral critique of the financial burdens of weddings that the woman’s family bore. The SRM’s attempts to reduce the financial burden of weddings was connected to the attempts to rethink marriage itself as a partnership of two political comrades who had decided to marry, relieving families of any part in the performance of the marriage.

Relying on the witnessing of political comrades doing away with the Brahmin priest and the tying of the ‘tali’ and arranging the wedding ceremony at times considered inauspicious according to the Hindu almanac, Self-Respect marriages questioned the nexus between marriage and religious rituals.

It also posed challenge to the sexual relations that sustained caste patriarchy. Rethinking intimacy involved an attempt to make use of legal claims to equality and recognition; yet it also addressed issues of pleasure and sexuality quite directly. Periyar argued:

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108 Such reconception of marriage – Mantra Mangalya was proposed by Kannada writer Kuvempu in 1960 as mentioned in his autobiography, Nenapina Doniyalli, Mysore: Udayaravi Prakashana, 1993
There is a basic difference between our insistence on birth control and other's notion of birth control... They have only thought of family and national welfare through birth control. But we are only concerned about women's health and women's independence through birth control.\(^{109}\)

Periyar's approach differs from the colonial and nationalist configurations of gender which had been attentive to the social reform of upper caste practices, enabling 'modern' upper caste subjectivities. Periyar provides critique of issues of marriage, divorce, and sexual autonomy of women, which is in contrast with the nationalist investment in the 'new woman'. His emphasis on women's education was also not to groom them as qualified wives, but to make them economically independent.

However, in its later phase, even the SRM exhibited patriarchal consciousness in its functioning. While in the early phase of the movement both men and women were addressed by a single world 'Thozhar' (comrade), with the formation of the Dravida Kazhagam in 1944 women activists were rechristened as 'mothers and sisters'; in the public meetings and conferences during the anti-Hindi agitation, women activists were introduced in terms of the achievements of their fathers and husbands; during the same agitation, women activists themselves likened Tamil language to a chaste woman and called for women's participation to protect the chastity of the Tamil language; and the Dravida Kazhagam's aims and objectives stated in the Trichinopoly conference in 1945 did not have any specific reference to women's issues, but for calling them to participate in the party activities. These examples show that while the SRM challenged patriarchy, it failed to create a new anti-patriarchal consciousness even among its own followers.

\(^{109}\) Cited by Anandhi, Gender and Caste, 2007, page 27
Ram Manohar Lohia, who had separated from the Congress to support Socialist Party in 1939 and was identified as one of the ‘left wing militants’, also held the cause of Shudras, Harijans, Muslims, Adivasis and women as central to a revolutionary movement. His understanding of oppression of women went beyond that of Ambedkar and was closer to Phule. He included an open attitude on sexuality that represented a break with Hindu ‘pativrita’ puritanism.

In 1953, in his essay on the two segregations of caste and sex as the primary factor in the degeneration of India, he argued:

India is perverted today; with all their talk of sex purity, the people are by and large dirty in their ideas of marriage and sex… Celibacy is generally a prison-house… It is time that young men and women revolted against such puerilities. They should remember that there are only two unpardonable crimes in the code of sex conduct: rape and the telling of lies or breach of promise. There is also a third offense of causing pain or hurt to another, which they should avoid as far as possible.

Apart from promoting inter-caste marriage as a long-term solution, Lohia insisted that a women’s movement should focus on the needs of 80 per cent low-caste toiling women – minimal facilities such as drinking water were more important than legal reform. He viewed sexuality and marriage for women as central to live a life and they are not subordinated to that of husband/father/son.

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110 Ram Manohar Lohia was a great influence on the intelligentsia in Karnataka after 1950s, especially with his support to a peasant movement, Kagodu Satyagraha.

Though he could perceive the caste and class hierarchies as close knit, his criticism was not sharper and his approach to reform was also more on the lines of 'sanskrisaton' than the militant anti-Hindu stance of Ambedkar or Phule.

**Respectability and sexuality**

Though ideal of companionate marriage together with nuclear family was posited by nationalist reformists and anti-caste reformists outside the discursive field of nationalism, it didn't affect gender hierarchies within nuclear family to a large extent. Paradoxically, these gender hierarchies took new forms with greater burden of guarding the 'morality' and 'respectability' falling on woman. Regulating woman’s sexuality is as crucial to maintain caste and reproduce caste boundaries as it is to nation.

Besides the colonial administration and missionaries' intervention and the nationalists' reforms also had produced paradoxical situation. While criticising polygamy, bigamy, exogamy and other plural forms of marriages in Indian society and upholding monogamous, endogamous Brahmin marriage forms on the scriptural basis, certain marriage forms and family systems particular to certain communities were considered as evil or anomalous to Hindu ‘tradition’ or ‘anti-modern’. These customs in which women enjoyed considerable freedom and had material base through ownership of property were abolished by upholding patriarchal nuclear families.

The changes brought into institutions of family and marriage were not the result of only the nationalists’ striving for ideal of homogenisation, but also consequences of many other changes in the economic and social conditions effected by the colonial rule which made recasting of family necessary in fundamental ways.

Analysing how within the framework of judiciary such changes were brought into these three systems, Janaki Nair observes:
The process of producing new knowledges on Hindu Law was one that simultaneously effected changes in the reproductive sexual economy of families especially as it was linked to rights to property. One of the ways in which this was done was by classifying such matrilineal traditions as that of the Nayars, the Devadasis or the Basavis as anomalies within Hindu Law, rather than as fully a part of it. This paved the way for twentieth century nationalism to claim that the right of Hindu women to property was one that was benevolently bestowed on them by the efforts of social reformers.  

Crucial to these changes in the family system was redrawing boundaries between respectable female sexuality related to reproductive capability within family and disrespectable sexuality of woman such as a sex worker and lower castes/classes outside domestic sphere. As Partha Chatterjee stated, "the new patriarchy which nationalist discourse set up as a hegemonic construct culturally distinguished itself not only from the West but also from the masses of its own people."  

The new configuration of gender relations is entangled with refashioning of new morality and conjugalities which would suit new family arrangement. Linked with the emerging concepts of women’s responsibilities towards nation, ideologically women have to shoulder the onus of guaranteeing the ‘respectability’ of both family and nation. Besides, this disparity was rendered as ‘natural’ while acknowledging man’s promiscuity and considering woman’s chastity or monogamous fidelity as necessary. Female sexuality, linked to kinship and respectability, is to be regulated while man’s sexuality could claim autonomy and pleasure.

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112 Janaki Nair, Women and Law in Colonial India, 1996, Page 146
114 An instance of outright rejection of woman’s claim to sexual pleasure and autonomy is the case of publishing ‘Radhika Santwanam’, written by a courtesan Muddapalan, in 1919 by Bangalore Nagaratnamma, a courtesan of Mysore and patron of arts and musicians. The book was banned by the colonial authorities as it was considered to be ‘obscene.’ Susie Tharu, “The Arrangement of an Alliance: English and the Making of Indian Literatures,” in Rethinking English Essays in Literature, Language, History, Svati Joshi (ed), Delhi, 1994
Two such prominent cases are - matriliny which was replaced with patriarchal family system with male as legal inheritor of the property; and ban on Devadasi system in which woman outside the domestic sphere could have a family and enjoyed considerable freedom. Ban on Devadasi system delinked her from her land rights and material bases while proletarising her sexual services like that of prostitutes. Even regulation of prostitution through legislation during this period was based on double standard of morality.

Matriliny system existed in Malbar and a strikingly similar system ‘Aliyasanthana’ in South Canara prevailed among several communities including Muslims in the pre-colonial India. These family systems consisted of female descendents and were exogamous.

The introduction of the colonial rule in the country brought several serious changes including transformation of its agrarian structure, the employment of men from these communities in the colonial bureaucracy, exposure to English education and acquisition of private property outside the family holdings. These changes intersected with changing ideologies of marriage, family and female sexuality. While matriliny was considered unnatural, sexual relations of women were discomforting to new moral consciousness of the English educated youth. Man-woman relationship in such communities was not considered valid as per the new laws of marriage, but as a sort of ‘concubinage into which woman enters of her own choice and is at liberty to change when as often she pleases.’

Muslim community in South Canara and Malbar which followed the matriliny also sought to reform the system as it went against the Muslims’ new recognition of pan-Indian Islamic identity and as ‘discredit to their religion’.
Like in the debates on widow remarriage, where actual woman was marginalised, in the debates on new laws on matriline, women were totally marginalised. Besides, the concept of ‘adultery’ was also introduced making adultery by women a serious offence as it poses threat to patrilinial family. Hence, confining women’s sexuality within family was central to moral order of the middle class.

The nationalist construction of the ‘respectable woman’ is well-informed and educated but a private woman and in contrast is ‘public woman’ who occupied ‘public places’ outside the familial sphere. As a publicly sexualised figure her sexuality didn’t nurture the nationalist ideologies of ‘motherhood’ and neither did she fit into new notions of marriage and gender relations. ‘Immorality’ of lower caste woman and public woman like prostitute was defined vis-à-vis ‘chastity’ of upper caste wife.

Even widow’s ascetic or desexualised life would stand as a symbol of ‘purity’, as an essential quality to retain caste status or in case of widow marriage, when widow’s sexuality can be regulated through domestication. But public woman occupied an ambiguous position which proves indeed home/world or private/public boundaries are porous. One of the ways to reform these women also meant to domesticate them and bring into the hegemonic system of marriage and recoil them into the mould of upper caste patriarchy without questioning the centrality of morality and sexuality of women in the nationalist discourses.

Arts or entertainment in the public by these women were regarded as evil practices in the ‘tradition’ in the debates on abolition of the systems like Devadasi, ‘Lavani’ and ‘Nautch’. Besides, the art forms such as ‘Bharatanatyam’ and ‘Lavani’ were ‘purged’ to elevate them to ‘classical status’, as these art forms practised by the ‘degraded women’ had acquired negative connotations.
Devadasis had their own codes of marriage and property inheritance within community. Young girls ‘dedicated’ to temples were considered married to deity and they were expected to offer sexual services in exchange for patronage and hence, she was not a threat to the patron’s family, but a part of it. They didn’t live domestic life like other women though they could have a family outside the conventional domestic frame. Their properties passed from mother to daughter.

The debates on abolition of Devadasi system, which began by 1892, had centered on ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, as the system also went against the emerging notions of property relations, family and marriage. The colonial laws and discourses regarded the system as ‘illegal’ and ‘immoral’, disrespectful aspect of Indian culture.

The nationalists who argued for the abolition of the system contended that it was a corrupt aspect of the antiquated custom. The Self-Respect Movement, which gave impetus to the abolition of Devadasi system, found it necessary to implement an anti-erotic ethic to end unequal structures of Brahminism and to achieve conjugalty based on companionship. For them Devadasi system was a representative of the dominance of Brahminism within Hindu religion.

Curiously, for those who favoured the system, it occupied ‘private’ sphere of tradition, art and national culture. Even though they were concerned about young girls being pushed into prostitution, some of those from the lower caste groups argued that the attempts to abolish the system was upper caste plan to reinforce its hegemony in the name of ‘progress’ and ‘modernity’.

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While abolition of Devadasi system was strongly advocated in Madras Presidency, middle class women adopted ambivalent stance on the practice. One of them, Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy, an early woman legislator, moved a bill for prohibition of Devadasi dedication in 1927 in the Madras Legislative Assembly. She saw the continuance of the system as an instance of exploitation of the lower castes for Brahminical needs. Though she didn't displace the centrality of morality in the nationalist debates on the system, she pointed out laxity of morals on men's part and criticised double standards of morality.

Though anxious about women's autonomy she also had subscribed to the nationalist patriarchal notions when she sought to resolve the 'problem of Devadasi sexuality within the framework of marriage. Following the Gandhian norms of morality, she called for exercise of voluntary self-control and chastity and she even opposed the use of birth control measures.

However, she wanted regularisation of property owned by the Devadasis as it was done by Princely State of Mysore. The Mysore State had taken up the issue as early as 1892 preventing women from dancing in two of the biggest temples in Mysore, the Nanjangud and Melkote temples. But when the affected women appealed to the Government it sought scriptural basis. Although scriptural support was provided by Agamiks (experts in temple rituals), the bureaucrats who were bent on their 'modernising mission', firmly decided to ban the tradition in the state-run temples. They considered personal purity, celibacy and right conduct were necessary for women to be employed in temple services.

116 Janaki Nair, Women and Law in Colonial India, 1996, page 166
117 B M Aradhya: Devadasi, Bangalore: 1989
By 1909 the system was abolished in all Muzrai temples and by 1919, the process of cutting off material support for newly dedicated Devadasis or the descendants of older ones was nearly complete. According to Janaki Nair: “The gradual erosion of the material support for the artistic abilities of the devadasi resulted in her decline as a professional dancer, producing in its place the proletarian sex worker, with nothing to trade but her sexual services.”

However, in Madras Presidency, dedicating young girl was considered a criminal act. Further, with the passage of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act 1930 (SITA), Devadasis were clearly recognised as prostitutes.

Though these legislations didn’t prevent women from becoming prostitutes, prostitution was suppressed from public view. Underneath SITA, there is an assumption that prostitution is a necessary evil. While for the colonial authorities they were a medical threat to the health of soldiers, for the nationalists they were a social threat. Under these various laws, prostitutes were to be penalised.

Janaki Nair, *Women and Law in Colonial India*, 1996, 167; D. V. Gundappa mentions how “Anti-Nautch” campaign affected lives of many of these Devadasis as their arts – Bharatanatyam and music lost patronage and only prostitution remained. He narrates some of life stories of such women including Bangalore Nagaratnamma who had published *Radhika Santwanam*. These accounts show transition of arts from its caste/class status to classical stage and that of ‘devadasi’ status to sex worker. DVG Kriti Shreni, Volume 6, 1996

See Janaki Nair’s article on ‘Imperial Reason’, National Honour and New Patriarchal Compacts’ in early twentieth-century India, in *Oxford Journals*, Volume 66, No.1, 2008, page 208 – 266. In the article, she points out that the colonial authorities in the late 19th and early 20th century had plans for control and containment of venereal diseases among British subalterns in India; but during the Gandhian nationalism in the interwar period, the authorities compromised with the nationalist leadership and the issue was considered as moral threat to racial order posed both by the ‘white’ prostitutes and the ‘native’ diseased women. She tracks such four separate moments in a period of transition in the Princely State of Mysore from the late 19th century to the 1930s, when crucial questions of masculinity and national honour came to be resolved by both colonial authorities and Indian elites in the quest to recast or preserve family honour and racial purity. However, in the interwar period, there was an ironic reversal of these positions, as British colonial authorities, hard-pressed to preserve racial honour through the prohibition of white slavery in India, were compelled to defend the ‘trafficking’ of women in India, even as the nationalist elite attempted to cleanse national honour and save the victims of prostitution.
for keeping a brothel and penalties were to be imposed for allowing premises to be used as a brothel, for procuration, for encouraging or assisting in prostitution. Though there were other reasons for women becoming prostitutes, who were termed ‘sex workers’ by then, the colonial authorities and the nationalists didn’t show inclination to address the economic and social causes.

When the SITA was passed in the Mysore Legislative Council and Representative Assembly in 1937, both the opponents and the supporters grounded their debates on the site of woman-as-victim to be rescued by commercial vice. Though class and caste aspects were not considered, they considered the legislation was necessary to rescue family honour and national honour. The supporters of the Bill including D. S. Mallappa and Ramachandra Rao Sindhia argued that the legislation was necessary for regeneration of the nation. However, the opponents of the Bill including D. V. Gundappa and N. G. Sanjivaiah found that suppressing prostitution would cause more harm to safety of family woman. As Janaki Nair points out:

This open defence of prostitution was an acknowledgement that the sanctity of the family, which the nationalists had modernised but nevertheless invested with the responsibility of preserving Indian tradition, could not be guaranteed without the parallel figure of the “disresectable” public woman.120

However, women’s organisations like the All India Women’s Conference and women legislators like Muthulakshmi Reddy could see the male interests in suppression of prostitution without bringing men into the purview of the legislation. They also argued that chastity and self-control should also be followed by men and those who abetted prostitution should also be punished. But their suggestions were not incorporated when the legislation was made in the Madras Presidency in 1930.

120 Janaki Nair, Women and Law in Colonial India, 1996, page 174
'State-sponsored' reforms

The Princely State of Mysore could pass these bills with relative ease with its claim of 'modernisation mission', while there was much opposition to legislations on 'personal' issues in the British India.

The Mysore kingdom came under British administration for a period of 50 years from 1831. Several historians have studied the influence of the five-decade indirect colonial rule in securing the appellation of 'progressive princely State' for Mysore. Donal Gustafson stresses that Indian ministers carried out the reforms in Mysore State while James Manor opines that they were introduced largely to secure positive image for British administration and Indian nationalists.121

The modernisation process was initiated by the bureaucrats with Maharaja's authority as mediator between the subjects and the bureaucracy. Reformatory efforts by them didn't generate much hostility as they did in the British India since here the State was run by the native ruler and not by the alien authority. However, the Dewans and the representatives involved in the administration were Western educated upper caste people. Social reforms carried out in the Mysore state were in consonance with its economic and political reforms. However, these reforms were non-democratic as they yielded to the pressures of the dominant elites of the State and also to the imperialist policies.

The centre of power in Mysore itself was embroiled in conflicts among several caste and class groups contesting for political power and control over wealth or resources. Hence the evolution

of the Princely Mysore State into a ‘modern state’ cannot be viewed as a linear process. Though the British, the Maharaja, the Dewan and the elites were collaborative in ‘modernisation’ endeavours of the State, their relationship was uneven and power equation among them kept changing due to several factors. It requires a more comprehensive study to analyse the dynamics of power relations among different caste/class groups, Dewans, the colonial authority and the Maharaja, and their implications on social reform, reconstruction of gender relations in family, at different points of time.

Besides, from the periphery, the growth of the Press also had put pressure on the centre of power. Hence, it is not possible at this stage of research work to clearly state how a limited number of women took part in the largely political activities of these different pressure groups or the implication of such participation on political empowerment of women. But, undoubtedly these different caste/class groups from within and outside the centre of power had impacted on the ‘social reform’ measures initiated from above.

There was also contradiction in the transformation of the earlier kingship into the present model-state-in-the-making as the Maharaja was responsive to people and also had to oblige the increasing pulls of the parliamentary democratic set up. However, by 1949 the contradiction led to collapse of the power centre as the agitation for ‘responsible’ government became intense.

One of the crucial conflicts in the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century was between the ‘Madrasi’ elite Brahmins whom the British had appointed in key administrative posts and the Mysorean Brahmins, comprising Srivaishnavas (among them Hebbal Iyengars), Smarthas and Madhwas. Hence, the struggle during this period was more for ‘Mysore for Mysoreans’, than for ‘Swaraj for Indians’. By 1910 the Mysorean party had acquired upper hand in the administration.
But the second conflict arose by 1910 with the emergence of anti-Brahmin communal and class groups.

The non-Brahmin groups, especially Lingayats and Veerashaivas had a history of the ‘Vachana movement’ of twelfth century when orthodox Hindu hegemony was countered. Though it meant to be ‘beyond caste’, Veerashaiva community itself had later become a rigid caste category. The non-Brahmin movement by these groups and also Muslims, who again shared antagonistic relations among themselves, substantially challenged the monopoly of the Brahmins in the power corridor by 1918.122 Their relations with the British, the Maharaja and Dewan kept changing, sometimes conflicting and at times collaborative. By 1930s, with the growth of communal conflicts, the nexus between Muslims and Lingayats also broke down and another pressure group, comprising agrarian Vokkaliga community and Kurubas came to contest for the hegemonic power.

Besides, labour unions, which were largely concentrated in Bangalore, also joined these pressure groups.123 They allied with the Congress by 1930s and took an anti-government stance. Besides, these groups were further divided into loyalists and detractors of the Maharaja. Hence, the British and the Maharaja pandered to interests of different groups at different points of time.

122 The non-Brahmin leaders here were also aware of the anti-Brahmin movements in Madras Presidency where a non-Brahmin party or Justice Party was established in 1916. The pioneer of the non-Brahmin movement C. R. Reddy, who was an educationist, established the Praja Mithra Mandal on the lines of the Justice Party. Besides, in 1905 itself, Vokkaligas and Lingayats had also taken up educational initiatives through their caste associations and reforming their communities was underway with much vigour. According to Dr S. Chandrashekhar (Vasahatukaleena Karnataka, Bangalore: Kannada and Culture Department, 2006) Vivekananda’s visit to Mysore and establishing Ramakrishna Mission coincides with mobilisation of ‘Shudra’ community. Vivekananda had asked the Mysore State to open schools for the Dalits. A Lingayat Education Fund Association was set up in 1905 in Mysore. In 1906 Vokkaliga Sangha was set up; in 1909 a Muslim organisation was also established. According to Ramesh Bairy (Journal of Karnataka Studies, 2006-2007), Brahmins’ associations were also set up in several districts across Karnataka by 1920s.

123 State-controlled industrialisation was under progress during this period in select places and this period also witnessed uneven development of capitalist system.
The nationalist Congress party, which was largely considered as Brahmins' bastion also tried to rein in these labour and caste groups by 1930s. However, there was not a single party leader who represented pan-Karnataka ever, though individual Congress members joined different groups in different regions. One of the prominent leaders C Rajagopalachari also had resigned from the Congress by 1940s. The agitation against the British was carried out by different groups outside the leadership of the Congress party, by some of the individual members of the Congress party and also by the Press.

However, violent conflict erupted in the region between 1937 and 1938 with demand for ‘responsible government’. There were major political developments after the Quit India Movement of 1942. Finally, in 1947 Maharaja of Mysore became governor and the Congress Raj started. The power-centre went through a major reshuffle.

Caught in the conflicts for hegemony by different interest groups, the power-centre couldn’t bring drastic changes in social order which would facilitate significant betterment of women’s condition. Even while bringing reform in the ‘legal status’ of women, the Princely Mysore State was not wholehearted about accommodating women in the political arena. Apart from ignoring pleas from the women’s organisations and members during the legal reform, the Maharaja himself was reluctant on extending political privileges to women. When the legislative reforms were suggested in 1922, the Maharaja was hesitant to accept women as eligible for membership of two representative bodies—

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124 Several peasant agitations, independent of these party leaderships, were held in Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts at the beginning of the 20th century and continued even after the Independence. Peasant women’s participation in these movements also makes for interesting research work.

125 In 1910 there were 45 newspapers and magazines in Mysore, 10 of which were English and 35 Kannada. They largely discussed the ongoing freedom movement and the effects of British rule.
The Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council. He felt that the State had gone sufficiently far in extending the franchise to women. He expressed similar apprehensions in 1938 when a committee headed by K R Srinivas lyengar submitted that of the 11 seats reserved for women two each should be reserved for women from Muslim community and Harijans.

The electorate was also clearly divided on the caste and community lines. Besides, the committee had also recommended that women could also contest for more seats outside the reservation. However, the Mysore government expressed doubts about eligibility of women to contest elections. But the recommendation was accepted after one of the members, K. D. Rukminiyamma suggested that arrangements be made for election through women’s organisations in all districts except Bangalore and Mysore where number of literate women was relatively high.

The re-organisation of caste and communities into further rigid categories had affected women in several ways. They were divided on the caste and class basis, hampering growth of a strong feminist movement. Electoral politics was one aspect of such forces which tied woman back to her community. She would represent honour of not only nation, but also her caste and community. Her access to caste/class status necessitates regulating her sexuality and adhering to caste norms to retain her caste identity. The Mysore State’s endeavours of economic and political reforms have not contributed to change women’s status within the patriarchal families of different caste and communal groups.

126 It can also be mentioned here that many of the liberal thinkers like D. V. Gundappa also criticised appointment of Sarojini Naidu as the president of the National Congress. Kalyanamma, a writer, criticised D. V. Gundappa for opposing the woman poet’s appointment to the post. Creating awareness among women was encouraged, but not their political participation. Kalyana Saraswati (Sumitra Bai, ed.); Bangalore: Karnataka Lekkhakiyara Sangha, 1992

127 Tirumala Tatacharya Sharma, editor of "Vishwa Karnataka", Mysore Rajakeeya Sudharonegala Tirulu, Bangalore, 1940
Though the Mysore government was clearly ahead of its time in reforming woman’s status in legal and political terms, it remained ‘conservative’ protecting patriarchal interests of different castes and communities. Both men and women, often within the administration and from outside, have criticised the gender disparity in several of its reform measures. For instance, K. T. Bhashyam, a Congress member of the Mysore Legislative Council moved the proposal to confer property rights on women and introduced a draft bill – Hindu Law of Inheritance Bill in 1928. In the same year, K. S. Chandrashekhar Aiyar committee comprising H. C. Dasappa, Ramachandra Rao Sindhia and five other advocates from Bangalore and Mysore and Superintendent of Maharani College K. D. Rukmaniamma, was appointed to examine the necessity for legal transformation of women’s status. Ironically, while delinking Devadasis from their land rights, the State took up initiatives to provide property rights to Hindu women within the framework of inheritance, joint family incidents, adoption, maintenance, women’s limited and full estate. The committee also ignored women’s pleas with regard to property rights of unmarried daughters and rights over ‘Stridhana.’

The contradiction was pointed out by one of the members of the committee, H. C. Dasappa, who opposed equal rights of sons and daughters over ‘Stridhana’ when it had meant to be bequeathed to women:

... under the guise of giving them a few crumbs here and there, they have practically taken away the whole loaf. That is what it comes to and it is unfortunate that in the select committee we had not a single lady member who had any right either to vote or append any vote. It is equally unfortunate that here we have not a single woman to defend her position when this inroad is made into her rights.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{128} Proceedings of the Mysore Representative Assembly, December 1932, page 411, 412; cited by Janaki Nair: 1996.
He further pointed out that the lone woman member in the committee who had no right to vote, was also not heard. Dasappa also ensured that woman could claim maintenance if the husband married a second wife or neglect by the husband makes her life miserable. But, the opponents of such reform of women’s rights criticised it stating it amounts to aping the West; it would lead to fragmentation of lands and curtail man’s traditional rights to polygamy. However, no changes were made which would fundamentally transform the women’s position or challenge the patriarchal family notions.

Similarly, women were not passive objects or mute spectators of the uneven capitalist elements colluding with patriarchal interests in the Mysore State’s development agenda. Despite being close to the king and his family and occupying certain administrative position, Kalyananma, who was also a journalist, criticised the male domination and patriarchal capitalist interests promoted by the Representative Assembly. On two such occasions she openly criticised the male members for marginalising ‘women’s question’ in their development agenda. Once, when lakhs of rupees were raised for celebration to mark the silver jubilee of enthronement of Krishnaraja Wodeyar, Kalyanamma appealed to the members to open a ‘Women’s Home’ for widows and destitute women.

When her suggestion was not heeded to, she strongly criticised the members for neglecting the issues of oppressed women who would have contributed to the nation’s progress.

On another occasion, she noticed that women’s issues didn’t figure at all in the debates during the meeting of the Resource Development committee (Sampadabhivriddhi committee). Besides, the committee also had decided to withdraw its support to a scheme for training women in home industries. Kalyanamma objected to the committee’s decision stating that the scheme was sanctioned for the benefit of poor and widowed women. The committee justified its decision stating the programme didn’t yield any profit to the Government. Kalyanamma questioned: “If the government expects returns
on each of its investments, why can’t it realise how much profit it has earned from the iron factory in Bhadravati and Krishnaraja reservoir?" 129

The initiatives for reform which came from above in the Mysore State were to clearly serve the dominant patriarchal elite groups and were in tune with its doctrine of ‘modernity’ and ‘progress.’ The Dewans were nationalists in their support to Congress outside the State and were equally suppressing its activities, violently, in the State. 130

The nationalists in the Mysore State, unlike in other parts, had to fight the oppression of both the State and the British even while their activities were not so much appreciated by the National Congress which had adopted an ambiguous stance towards the Mysore State. 131 Gandhi could hail the Mysore State as ‘Rama Rajya’, despite the fact that the State’s economic policies were more in favour of industrialisation and forging a sense of ‘nation-ness’ in the economic domain modeled on the West.

There is a strange similarity in addressing Dalit and women’s issues in the Mysore State. Though legal status of woman was improved, there was no scope for strict implementation of these legislations. While schools were opened for girls, the texts prescribed for them were the ones which endorsed nationalist ideology of ‘training to become a good wife.’

129 Kalyanamma, “Rajatotsava Smaraka Tippani”, “Sampadabhyudaya Karyakari Sangha Tippani”, Saraswati, 93-95. Elaborate discussion on Kalyanamma is taken up later in this chapter.

130 However, by 1940s with Nehru at the helm of the Congress affairs, the nationalists’ demand for ‘responsible government’ gained impetus. The subsequent political development is not discussed here in full detail.

131 Problems faced by the nationalists in Mysore were different from those in Bombay Karnataka, which was the epicentre of anti-British movement in Karnataka.
When it came to Dalits, the State banned the entry of Ambedkar, and it took up with eagerness the Gandhian Harijan welfare programmes. Gandhism attracted different classes, castes and interest groups across Karnataka. Harijan welfare programmes such as bhajans, harikathas and exhortations against consuming alcohol, meat-eating, animal sacrifice, extravagant expenditure and other aspects of moral uplift and sanskritisation were taken up. Welfare services such as sites for houses, provision for drinking water facilities, increased grants for hostels, scholarships and other school fees and preferential appointments in government services were stressed.

An Abhivruddhi Sangha was started in 1920s, and was represented in the Assembly by P. Murugesham Pillay, a weaving master from Minerva Mills. The Adi Jambava Sangha was set up to represent the oppressed classes of Karnataka. Many upper caste reformers were associated with these santhgas. In Bangalore, Deena Seva Sangha promoted caste integration by organising inter-caste dinners on Gandhiji’s birthday. The Mysore Anti-Untouchability League was started in 1931 (formed predictably by Brahmins and other upper caste Congressmen) and immediately set about drafting anti-untouchability legislation. As Gail Omvedt observes:

The dominant Gandhian-Brahminic reform effort was thus focused on religiously-defined moral upliftment (sic) coupled with appeals to a paternalistic state. Gandhians never targeted the system as 'exploitative' and never spoke against caste as a system or campaigned against traditional caste duties within the jajmani system...

Besides, Dalits in Karnataka though exploited, had better material base than their counterparts in Maharashtra. Hence radical social or ideological movements didn’t grow in Karnataka.

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For women, both from upper caste and lower caste, these reforms had contradictory effects. Involvement of upper caste men and women in reforming Dalit women, obviously under Gandhi’s influence, facilitated mobilisation of lower caste women. For instance, Nagamma Patil of Kachaví village and wife of Veeranagowda, following Gandhi’s instructions, brought up two Harijan girls along with her daughters and gave them education.

Later, the couple started a Harijana Balikashrama which later became Mahila Vidhyapeeth in Hubli. It is interesting to observe that the Mahila Vidhyapeetha’s sister organisations were Shishu Vihara, training for the teachers of these baby sittings (Shishu Vihara), Primary Teachers’ Training College, Girls’ High School, Akkamahadevi College, Home for blind girls, tailoring, doll making, music, Kala Udyoga Mandira, Gramodyog, etc., all for women, especially from the lower caste and rural areas.133

The lower caste women, who obtained privileges that the upper caste women had so far enjoyed, at the same time were brought into the strictures of upper caste, middle class nationalist ideologies of respectability, marriage and chastity.

Apart from the State’s intervention in social reforms and influence of Gandhian principles, there were many social reformers from non-Kannada speaking communities who had invested in mobilising the public through their reformist activities. (However, a deeper study is required to measure the exact influence and interaction that took place among these different factors in the milieu of Kannada-speaking community.) Kundakuri Veereshalinga Panthulu, a Telugu reformer and champion

133 Gandhi Mattu Karnataka: Bangalore: Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, 1970, page 441-442
of widow marriage, had stayed in Mysore State to campaign for the widow marriage and to educate the public. Recalling his association with Veereshalinga Pantulu, D. V. Gundappa says Pantulu's three novels were translated into Kannada at that time: Satyavati Charitre was translated by Nanjanagudu Ananta, Rajashekhara Charitre by Bellave Somanathaiah and Satyarajana Deshayatregalu by Benagal Ramarayaru.

More than his literature, he had become famous for his widow marriage campaign. Pantulu and his wife Rajalakshamma together arranged nearly 45 widow marriages during which D.V.Gundappa was one of the 'priests' along with another Sharma, a government employee and a member of Arya Samaj. Pantulu, associated with the Brahmo Samaj, held these marriages in Bangalore Cantonment area which was under the British India as the Mysore State still had not enacted legislation on widow marriage. D.V.Gundappa also recalls that in the same period, another Dayaram Gidoomul and his wife had opened an orphanage for widows and destitute women.

Apart from such individual initiatives, Bangalore Literary Union, Ranade Society and Vidhava Vivaha Sangha were also established. The reformist activities in Maharashtra had greater influence in Bombay Karnataka region. In Mangalore, apart from the Brahmo Samaj (as mentioned in the previous chapter), missionary activities, Saraswath community's reform initiatives and Self-Respect Movement mobilised different castes and classes by 1912. In Hyderabad, despite violent suppression of any such activities by the Nizam, the Arya Samaj led by Swami Ramananda Theertha and individual educated youth like Pandit Taranatha took the initiative. By 1920 caste associations and women's organisations had also taken up the issues of widow marriage, child marriage and female education.

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134 D. V. Gundappa: "Nenapina Chitragalu", DVG Kriti Shreni: Volume – 7; page 574-577
Besides, several periodicals and newspapers also debated social reform in great detail and in particular, the ‘women’s question’.135

A study of Hardekar Manjappa, who was called Gandhi of Karnataka, provides an instance of interface between the impulse to modernise caste/communities and working out Gandhian project of Harijan welfare and khadi. He had an antagonistic relationship with the anti-Brahmin groups of Mysore for his clear affiliations to Gandhian Brahminism and for promoting ‘khadi,’ which the caste groups considered a Brahmin activity.136 Though he consciously didn’t involve in the activities of the anti-Brahmin groups, he worked to modernise Lingayat community and contributed to its hegemonic claim for the dominant position from outside. He had prepared a bibliography of magazines and journals related to the Lingayat community from 1860 to 1934. He published ‘Dhanurdhari’, a magazine which contained translations from Tilak’s ‘Kesari’ and he had read Marathi literature and translations of Max Mueller, James Mill and Herbert Spencer. In his early days he was also under the influence of Arya Samaj and later Home Rule League of Annie Besant.

He became a staunch Hindu nationalist who also brought ‘Basava Dharma’ from its periphery to the centre of Hindu nationalism in Karnataka, apparently to reconcile the opposing forces while forging a strong Lingayat identity. On the lines of Brahmins’ Ramanavami celebrations, he began ‘Basava Jayanti’ celebration from 1913; ‘Akkamahadevi Jayanti’ from 1935 projecting her as model for the women of Veerashaiva community; and published ‘Sharana Sandesha’ to popularise Basavanna’s

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135 For example, The Hindu published from Madras Presidency also championed the cause of widows. It also reported about Dewan attending marriages of young girls aged six and it gave publicity to seven-month old baby girl’s marriage in 1891. Cited by S. Chandra shekhar: 2002 page 30
136 All the quotes and facts are cited from ‘Rashtradharmadrishtara Hardekar Manjappa’, a compilation of his works, G S Halappa (ed), Dharwad: Hardekar Manjappa Smaraka Granthamale, 1966
philosophies; set up a Veerashaiva Youth Association in 1917 to carry out reformist activities and
contributed to establishing various Veerashaiva educational institutes. After 1920s he dedicated himself
for the Gandhi's Harijan and khadi programmes along with participation in the anti-colonial movement.
He published ‘Khadi Vijaya’, a monthly devoted to khadi.¹³⁷

All these various factors have bearings on his vision of the Hindu culture and family. In his
writings on patriotism and nation, he compares nation to family and propagates ideals for men and
women within the framework of continuum of family-society-nation.¹³⁸ Though his ideal was joint
family, he was aware of the changing social and economic conditions which drove the educated to
prefer nuclear family. Accordingly, he proposed changes to the systems of family and marriage which
could be both ‘traditional’ in certain aspects and also ‘modern’ to suit the new social order.

Marriage, in his view, was instituted to regulate sexuality of both men and women. He quotes
from Mahabharata to substantiate his views: Shwetaketu, son of a sage Uddalaka, was angry when
his mother went with another man and he brought idea of marriage to elevate status of man from that
of animals. Hence indulging in sex outside the framework of marriage was clearly characteristic of the
uncivilised and sanctity of marriage was unquestionable.

¹³⁷ Gandhi, appreciating the magazine in his letter dated 9 September 1928, said: “It will be better if people,
especially the mercantile class, devote themselves to Khadi. The victory for Khadi is then assured.” (cited in
Karnatakada Gandhi, M M Kalburgi (ed), Bangalore: Directorate of Kannada and Culture, 1989)
¹³⁸ His writings on these issues are: ‘Streeneethi Sangraha,’ (which was translated into Marathi as well), ‘Adijana
‘Grihashikshana’, ‘Hindu Jagriti Avashyave?’ and ‘Swakartavya Siddhanta’. Apart from these he has translated
works by various others on celibacy, conjugality, marriage, spirituality and Swami Ramaswamia’s sermons – all
of which echo his views on these issues.
Manjappa lists ancient types of marriage, ‘Brahma vivaha’, ‘Daiva vivaha’, ‘Arsha vivaha’, ‘Prajapatya vivaha’, ‘Asura vivaha’, ‘Gandharva vivaha’, ‘Rakshasa vivaha’ and ‘Paishachika (Paishacha) vivaha’, as categorised in ‘Manu Smriti.’ However, the modern times required reform in marriages; for, expectations from wife, husband and family have changed. He listed modern day marriages: ‘Balya vivaha’, ‘Vishama vivaha’, ‘Proudha vivaha’, ‘Shikshita vivaha’, ‘Prema vivaha’, ‘Mishra vivaha.’ He takes a moralistic stance while judging which would be better in the interests of nation and which are to be accepted as inevitable in the changing social and cultural scenario. Child marriages have been banned by the government itself while ‘Vishama vivaha’ (aged men marrying young girls) are becoming increasingly distasteful among people. Late marriage and marriage of the educated are welcomed. The change in such preference, he says, indicated change in woman’s status as well. Woman was not looked at as sole object of gratification but occupied important role as reproducer of healthy heir of the family, member of society and citizen of nation and hence her education was of importance. However, he was clearly against woman working for livelihood outside the family as he opined, it indicates decline in her status.

Women of working class and lower caste don’t figure in his argument, though he expresses anxiety about increasing spread of venereal diseases through prostitution, which was a national threat. So in the interest of national health, he suggests medical facilities for prostitutes deployed to serve army men in urban and rural areas and bringing legal reforms in this regard on the lines of Germany, France and Belgium.

In his ideal of companionate marriage, wife occupies secondary position. His advices for women include her obedience not only to husband but to other members of family, to maintain her health to produce healthy children; not to watch movies, plays which would cast ‘corrupt influence’
and instead to read stories of ‘pativrita’ women of the past; to maintain hygiene and manage domestic
duties efficiently; to be supportive of patriotic husband. He provides examples of such ‘pativriatas’
ranging from mythical Maitreyee to Kasturi Devi (Kasturba), the wife of Gandhi.

Hardekar advocates ‘Brahmacharya’ for youth and married men. He himself was a celibate
(reasons he cited were poverty and fear that marriage would be a hindrance to his social services);
and like Gandhi he changed his food habits to remain celibate. He equally emphasises ‘Brahmacharya’
for men and chastity for women. He advises youth not to waste their semen and indulge in ‘immoral
acts’ so as to retain their masculinity and mental capacity; to be able to satisfy their wife after marriage
which otherwise would lead to infidelity in wife; and, to produce strong and healthy children.139 Youth
need to earn their livelihood before entering into the wedlock as otherwise it would push women to
work outside the family and lead to marital discard. Besides, husband should be a mentor for his wife
in all aspects of life.

Such anxiety to re-organise family life and reform the institution of marriage is evident in the
debates on issues of child marriage, late marriage and widow marriage; besides, woman’s claim for
freedom, her educational and employment opportunities also seemed to have been considered as
threat to family. Most of these debates, published in various periodicals, largely keep in mind the
upper caste literate woman.140

139 Such debates and advices on parenting and health for the national cause probably would deserve a separate
study.
140 There are exceptions, however. For example, K. N. Kini, Education officer of Mysore district, writes about lack
of women teachers in villages and expresses concern over rural women’s education. Swadeshabhimani, Pustaka
24, Friday, August 1, 1930, page 15
A few such debates on marriage, conjugal relationship and 'women's question' in various periodicals and books by men and women between 1920s and 1950s are discussed here. They include discussions on 'frivolous' details like change in dress code among Hindu women causing anxiety among the orthodox sections to a feminist argument over need for women, including widows to wear dresses which don't necessarily mark their married/widowed status. Besides, some of the authors like Pandit Tharanatha emerge with profound thoughts on emancipation of woman and lower caste people while analysing different dimensions of patriarchal, hierarchical society.

A write up in Kannada Kogile on "Hendatiya Kartavya" (Wife's duty) expresses concern over change in women's dress code. For the author women from respectable families and prostitutes dressing in same style was an indication of 'bad days' of Kaliyuga and of complete erosion of ancient values. After an elaborate description of 'new fashion', he wonders whether Hindu women learnt to wear white blouse from Muslims or Christians; further such new fashions among women have left no distinction in appearance between the Hindu respectable women and whores. Following such harsh criticism on changing practices of women, he cites various quotations from the scriptures to explain the duties of ideal wife towards husband and parents-in-law and how she should keep off 'fallen women' to guard her chastity. He places 'respectable devoted wife' on the pedestal of glorious domestic world in contrast with Western women contesting parliamentary elections. The author wants nationalist educationists to teach women these values of 'pativrita'.

141 Kannada Kogile III, 1918, 1919, Volume 4, Volume 5, page numbers 1 and 47 (Kannada Patrikegalu Mattu Muhile, Dr K. Chinnappa Gowda and Dr N. K. Lolakshi (ed), published by Mangala: Prasaranga, Mangalore University, 2006. Most of the magazines cited here are collected in this book and some other magazines I referred are in libraries of various institutions including Kannada Sahitya Parishat and NMKR college in Bangalore and Mangala Gangotri, the University of Mangalore.)
In another magazine, *Swadeshabhimani* published in 1936, a writer criticises legislations such as “Sharada Bill” (Sarda Bill) which favour late marriages, dismissing scriptural basis on which the supporters defended the Bill. The writer contends that unlike European women, Indian women become mature and sexually active at an early age. If they are not married, they will indulge in immoral affairs and pose threat to society. Another reason he cites is that educated women show no modesty, lack feminine virtues and regard for elders. They may fall in love in colleges and indulge in infidelity after marriage. Fear of women’s sexuality, coupled with the corrupting influence of the European culture and education force the writer to argue for circumscribing women’s mobility and rights.

Logic behind such arguments is to bind her more tightly to ‘family’ by attributing prestige, respect, false sense of honour to the status of housewife. Those who argue against women taking up jobs or pursuing education also rely on these grounds and further contend that women shouldn’t compete with men in ‘public’ as they are more virtuous than men and by entering the public place they lose these virtues and become corrupt.

Some of the reformers, like Hardekar Manjappa for example, argue in favour of late marriages, on similar grounds stating that being liberal and respectful towards woman, who is growing conscious of her restricted status is necessary to contain her dissatisfaction and check infidelity. K. S. Ramaswamayyangar, Koppa, in his article, published in *Karnataka Nandini* in 1920 on the glorious status of ancient Hindu women, compares Hindu women’s ritualistic status as wife with that of European women. He argues that though European women claim superiority and freedom in their activities outside home, they don’t enjoy prominence in rituals as much as Hindu women do. And with
regard to public participation, he exaggerates the valour of ancient women who fought in battlefield along side husband.¹⁴²

Probably, portraying an image of chaste wife rising to the occasion and displaying her valour was necessary not only to justify Indian women’s past glorious status but also to exhort them to participate in the anti-colonial movement.¹⁴³

G. R. Jossieur, in his book *Arya Mahila Keerti* published in 1930, writes about brave women, especially Kshatriya women such as Maharani Samyukte, Rani Padmi, Rani Tarabay, Rani Durgavati, Rani Bhavani and Jodhpur Maharani. While describing the grit of Mysore Maharani Lakshamnannath he compares her to mythological women like Savitri and Draupadi. The book was recommended as textbook by *The Hindu* which stated: “This book is the most suitable for non-detailed study in the higher classes of secondary schools as it inspires the young women of India with a lot of courage and patriotism”. Another magazine, *Panchacharya prabha*, appreciating the book, says, the author should have included in the list patriotic queen of Kittur Rani Chennamma who fought against the British and it would have brought credit to ‘Karanataka Desha.’¹⁴⁴

There were other educated men who found it necessary to improve the status of women to ensure equality of all individuals in an emerging democratic set up. Sri M. A. Doreswamy Iyengar, (MA, BL, Mysore) in his article in *Jayakarnataka* (1933, December), defending Sarda Bill, cites examples from scriptures to disprove the arguments of the opponents of the Bill. Referring to a

¹⁴² *Karnataka Nandini*, edited by Nanjanagudu Tirumalamba, Volume 3, Edition 5; March 1920
¹⁴⁴ This recommendation letter, printed at Sri Panchacharya Electric Press, Mysore is with the book at ‘Shashwati’ library of the NMKRV College, Bangalore.
meeting held by a committee appointed by the Government on the issue, he rules out any fear of threat to Hindu Dharma as custom of late marriage was also prevailing in several communities within the Hindu Dharma. Further he argues that women are made to suffer under pressure to marry before they reach puberty. (He refers to a Brahmin community, Malavyas who formed an association and met in Kashi in the presence of a king to address this problem. They thought the scriptural rules could be amended under the British rule as the situation required so and hence decided to approve late marriages.)

He says Sarda Bill has further increased sanctity of marriage. He doesn’t approve the opponents’ demand for non-interference by the British in ‘personal’ affairs stating marriage is a national issue as well and the legislation ensures democratic rights to individuals. He points out contradiction in the arguments of the orthodox Hindu groups who claim ‘internal freedom’ in family matters, but seek legal intervention from the same ‘meat-eating, alcohol-drinking, foreign (colonial) rulers of alien religion’ if it serves their selfish motives. Further, he argues that judiciary now has authority to legitimise or illegitimise ‘shastras’ and hence, religions should keep off from political sphere and restrict to their ‘usual field’ of spirituality. The writer’s arguments clearly demarcate changing position of religious institutions and the government in their hold on ‘personal issues’; he uses new language of ‘democracy’ and ‘individual rights’ indicating attempts of the newly educated to free themselves from clutches of orthodox, religious hold and seek shelter in ‘secular’ state rule.

Some of these pro-reform persons, desiring liberation of women, critique the inadequacy of new legislations based on orthodox Hindu scriptures. A write up in Swadeshbhabhiman (November, 1927) discusses denial of freedom and liberty to women after the Vedic period. The courts, which

145 Chinnappa Gowda and Lolakshi, Kannada Patrikegalu Mattu Mahile, 2006, page 68-69

133
relied on Hindu scriptures for their verdicts on property rights, further worsened women’s plight, the article points out. While the Privy Council conferred property rights on women only if their husbands die intestate, male members of the family were accorded precedence over daughters for a share in the family property, it says.

Drawing from both the Western scholars and ancient scripts, D. K. Bharadwaj adopts a slightly different stance on marriage, conjugality and sexuality of men and women. In his book, *Santana Vijnana or Manovanchita Santati* he calls for a rational and healthy approach to sex. While redefining conjugal relationship within the framework of ideal monogamous and companionate marriage, he discusses various evil systems such as dowry and child marriage prevailing in India; he explains Plato’s concept of love and Christian philosophies of marriage in the West. He argues love should be the bedrock of the conjugal relationship and woman should be given more freedom in sexual relationship.

Pandit Taranath, one of the eminent scholars in Kannada, who also fought against oppressive rule of Nizam in Hyderabad Karnataka, has a distinct approach to ‘women’s question’ and conjugal

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146 D. K. Bharadwaj: *Santana Vijnana or Manovanchita Santati*, Bangalore: Ram Mohan Company, 1929. Another book on marriage, *Maduve* by N Kasturi, published in 1940 takes an anthropological approach to marriage. He explains various forms marriage and family prevailing among tribes across the world. His approach is distinct in his outright dismissal of considering these practices as ‘uncivilised’. Without any binaries of ‘high’ or ‘low’ cultures, he tries to analyse rationale, geographical, social and economic conditions which compelled them to follow these practices. *Maduve*, Mysore: Prasaranga, University of Mysore, 1967 (fourth print).
relationship. He accepted certain Gandhian principles, but differed on several issues including his approach to sex as sin.\textsuperscript{147} Taranath’s argument is: If sex is sin, how can marriage be holy?

He could see through hypocrisy underneath the arguments of the conservatives who reinterpret the scriptures to justify their stance against reformatory laws on women. He dismisses, rather satirically, invoking the past to describe ‘glorious status’ of women. Instead, he criticises mythological stories and beliefs of different religions and cultures reproduced and reinterpreted time and again to maintain the hierarchical, oppressive system. He wrote extensively in magazines on sexual issues and contended that the ‘basic instinct’ can’t be regulated through social, cultural or religious mores.

He questions logic behind the claim for freedom from the alien rule while refusing the same to the lower castes and women. He doesn’t credit Hindu religion of having accorded highest status to women as there are discrepancies between ideals and practices of Hindu society. He notices that most of the religions in the world hem women’s life with rules and regulations. Discussing women’s problems, he says marriage in Hindu society has become slave trade; women are denied rights to voice their problems even if husband is corrupt and infected with venereal diseases.\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{147} In his letter to an American, (dated August 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1935) he writes how Gandhi boosted morale of freedom fighters through his ‘spiritualized politics’ after 1920s; he appreciates Gandhi for claiming rights over ‘Swaraj’ without succumbing to narrow nationalist interests: “The altruism of ancient Aryan speaks through this man, the deep feelings of the Hindu: and that is why, in spite of a century-old British education and reading of European and American literature deifying selfish, all-exclusive nationalism, patriotism and such rubbish, millions bow to the all human, universal, altruistic call of India’s Saint and Seer, Fighter and Educator!” (Prof M. Dhruvanarayana, \textit{Pandita Taranath}, Dharawad: Kannada Adhyayana Peetha; 1976 page 149-150) Taranath himself was described as a ‘Yoga practitioner, mystic with magical healing power, an Ayurveda doctor.’ He married at the age 40, a year before his death and his wife Sumatibai had written books on women: \textit{Towards Womanhood} (with foreword by Dr. B. K. Nehru, Gwalior); \textit{Woman Awakened} (foreword by Dr. Annie Besant, Madras); \textit{India and Industry} (foreword by a Bangalore-based doctor C. B. Ramaraya).

Though their motherhood is hailed supreme, there is not a single book which tells mothers how to bring up child, he argues questioning the rationale behind glorifying motherhood. He finds only man’s selfish interests behind such glorification. He says satirically that had women followed all those regulations specified for her in religion and scriptures, and had men strictly ensured that women followed these mores, “Hindu community would have been undestroyed. It would have departed from the material world to heavenly abode.” He dismantles the whole argument on spiritual superiority to which women are markers in the nationalist discourse.

He criticises mythical monogamous hero, Rama who rejected Sita second time in ‘Ramayana’. Rama had put Sita’s chastity to test once and there was no need to rake it up frequently in the later part of the epic. He contends that if Rama had any love for Sita, he would have followed her to the forest leaving the blaming ‘praja’ and ‘rajya’ to his brother Bharata. However, there is no ideal combination of mercy, love and harmony in Rama as portrayed by different authors, he argues. And, Laxmana, who chopped off ‘other’ woman’s nose, is projected as an ideal; but our men chop off the wife’s nose and douse her with kerosene; while claiming ‘marriage is forever’, they desert the wife if she falls sick or fails to beget a child, Taranath points out.

Condemning superficial beliefs behind ‘brahmacharya, grihastashrama and vanaprasta’, he argues that the patriarchy is well maintained through its ideals such as imposing ‘brahmacharya’ on boys and training daughter to become wife since her birth. Boys at a young age are distanced from their mother so that they will not see and develop compassion for the suffering mother; and such distancing is undervaluing motherhood itself, Taranath says. There are more don’ts than do’s in preaching ‘brahmacharya’ - proscriptions outnumber prescriptions while preaching brahmacharya - instilling fear than courage. These arguments are situated on a larger canvas of his theory of ‘dharma’
with its different connotations and a distinct and holistic approach to life. His sharp criticism of pseudo-spiritualism behind such arguments is to dismiss ‘man-made’ rules that contravene ‘nature’. He argues that rules must be in consonance with ‘nature’, paving way for evolution of soul; in his answer is a vision to liberate human kind of its own restrictive arrangements of life.

From ‘home’ to ‘nation’

When women themselves began discussing ‘women’s question,’ they approached the issue from different points of views and when they used the same language and concepts propagated from their male counterparts, they transformed them with novel meanings.

If they speak more intensely about the domestic world, that is because they see ‘nation’ through ‘home’ along the continuum of family-society-nation. Their intense engagement with domestic issues is also linked to interests of nation-in-the-making. When they gradually addressed the subject of social reform they spoke more about reforming society on behalf of women than women on behalf of national interests. They were engaged in simultaneous emancipation of the ‘self’ and the country and hence their redefining of womanhood is entangled with fashioning of a national identity; their national interests lead them to make themselves qualify for its citizenship. Besides, their images as morally autonomous and authoritative figure at home on which honour of family and nation stands, also enforce their participation in the nationalist project. Their relationship with husband and children, and their daily chores at home become crucial for the stability of family and nation.

Francesca Orisini, analysing periodicals published in Hindi between 1920s and 1930s, recognises the pressure on women writers of the period:

The burden of finding a place within the family and social fabric fell once
again on these women. It was up to them to ‘remember their womanhood’
while finding different places within society, to face opposition and solitude
and to build bridges of compromise between old and new roles, between
themselves and the social world around them.149

We can see such intense involvement in writing about re-adjustments of family life with an
interest in national regeneration in the first woman journalist in Kannada and one of the early novelists,
Nanjanagudu Tirumalamba.150 She began her journal as a ‘ritual’ to uplift women for the cause of
nation. As the title of her publication suggests – ‘Sati Hitaishini’, writing was for her an enterprise to
awaken women and impart them ancient values of wifehood.151 The factors that influenced the social
concern of Tirumalamba can be made out by her description of the ills plaguing the country when she
started her periodical, ‘Karnataka Nandini’ in the year 1916. As she puts it, “Famine triggered by
wars, fear of epidemic outbreak, subjugation by colonial rulers, blind imitation of all that is Western,
licentiousness as a fallout of education” compelled her to bring out the publication.152

In her emphatic defense of ‘Arya culture,’ Tirumalamba attributes the ‘fall’ of India to erosion
of ‘Aryan values’ – lack of faith in religion, men and women deviating from their social responsibilities,

149 “Domesticity and Beyond – Hindi Women’s journals in the early 20th century”, South Asia Research, New
Delhi: Sage publications, Volume 19, Autumn 1999
150 Kannada journals published or edited by women between 1910 and 1955: Nanjanagudu Tirumalamba: ‘Sati
Hitaishini’ (1913), ‘Kamataka Nandini,’ (1916), ‘Sannarga Darshini’ (1922); R. Kalyanamma: ‘Saraswati’ (1921);
Dwarakabai: ‘Chitra’ (1930); Shyamala Devi: ‘Jayakaranataka’ (1940-41, 42, but she had begun writing and
editing after her husband Belagavi Ramachandranraya took over charge of Jayakaranataka from Alur Venkatrao
in 1930); K Varjadevi, B. Mohini: ‘Suvasini’; M. R. Laxmamma: ‘Belalu’ (1942), ‘Sodari’ (1950); and Saraswatibai
Rajawade: ‘Suprabhata’ (1952). Apart from these, most of the periodicals had a separate section on woman’s
issues, to cater to female readership.
151 Even when she writes a detective novel, ‘Vikrama’, upon request by readers in 1931 Tirumalamba says that in
consonance with the objective of her publications, she needs to impart values of wifehood through the
characters of the novel and prepare woman to become ‘good wife’ so that she will be an able companion to
husband in his service of the nation.
152 Hitaishiniya Hejjegalu, Vijaya Dabbe (ed), Bangalore: Kannada and Culture Department, 1992, page 100.
lack of virtues in men and feminine qualities in women. She compartmentalises the roles of men and women in nation-building, assigning them clearly demarcated duties. Men are supposed to serve the nation outside the family and eke out a livelihood, control and mentor the wife; women are supposed to be enlightened and devout wives of their nationalist husbands. The task of reviving fading values would be made easy with such marking of the boundaries.

In her essay titled *Abala Dourjanyam* (women’s misdemeanours), Tirumalamba blames women for the pathetic state of colonial society. The graphic description of melancholy of ‘Bharat Mata’ sums up her lamentations:

Devoid of earning capacity sons rejected agriculture and invited poverty by their extravagant ways. People who took up jobs have become destitute on account of their excessive self-indulgence. Women focused attention on their external appearance and became fashion-loving. They have been whiling away their time indulging in luxury, unmindful of the need to strike a balance between the family income and expenditure. Thus, dedication took a backseat and efficiency became a casualty. My children have become insipid.  

Women expecting more liberty over and above their ‘dependence’ on men in a family set up and, men, on their part failing to exercise their ‘authority’ over women are construed as the excesses of modern education. The cult of ‘new age fashion’ comes for damning indictment from Tirumalamba: “I am unable to distinguish whether you are a male or a female. I cannot bear your sight of ‘Ardhanarishwara’ (half-man and half-woman) appearance with new hair style and grooming.”

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153 Tirumalamba, *Abala Dourjanyam*, Nanjanagudu, 1931. (The article is in collection of ‘Tirumalamba’s works by C. N. Mangala, in NMKRV College. The extract of the article is in ‘Nanjanagudu Tirumalamba Ondu Adhyayana’ by Dr. Arjunapuri Appaji Gowda, Mysore: Prasaranga, Manasa Gangotri, 1995, 249-250) and also Vijaya Dabbe: 1992
She is equally disturbed by ‘masculine conduct’ of women. She intensely feels ‘house’ should be set in order and ‘Arya Dharma’ should be revived for social welfare. Terming women as ‘Adishakti’ who play a prominent role in establishing ‘Arya Dharma’, Treamalamba postulates that women should be respected by according ‘limited’ liberty.

All the ‘modern’ trends such as widow marriage and English education for girls, which seem to violate the ancient ideals, also become a cause of concern. Wifehood and motherhood are upheld as supreme over any other roles for women. Though she criticises ill-treatment of widows, she feels women should voluntarily follow ascetic widowhood.

Husband is god for woman and his death is the consequence of wife’s sin in her previous birth; “The life of a widow acquires meaning in adopting ascetic virtues.” Widow marriage is a symptom of woman’s licentiousness, according to Treamalamba. With her notion of chastity, she fears that woman’s excess freedom, education and employment would end in infidelity. She opposes child marriage not because of woman’s sufferings but because it doesn’t help her in begetting ‘healthy and valorous child’. Advocating education that would train women to be good wives and mothers, she brands English education as ‘corrupt influence’ while opposing her contemporary writer and activist Kalyanamma’s plans to open a badminton court for girls.

Though Treamalamba here seems to be an accomplice in propagating the nationalist patriarchal ideologies, she stands on a different ground from the male nationalist in asserting ‘woman’s identity within domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{154} In her novels, she portrays ‘new woman’. These novels depict nuclear family with ideal couple against the sufferings of ‘good’ women in the joint family. Here the conflict is between the old patriarchal values and the new ones.
Her writing itself is a rebellious act at a time when women’s creative ability was doubted. In her ‘Hindu Mahileyara Vritagalu’, she questions the rationale behind denying women rights to observe the rituals like Varamahalakshmi Vrita, Mangala Gouri Vrita, Bheemanamavasya, Swarnagouri Vrita and Anantapadmanabha Vrita. These rituals play a key role in reproducing and reaffirming patriarchal ideologies of devoted, chaste wife and uphold husband as sole supreme authority in woman’s life. Tirumalamba asserts that women are entitled to follow these rituals and terms the diktats denying such rituals to woman as ‘insensitive’.

Women’s writings in periodicals for the next three to four decades show them swinging between this newly-found ‘moral authority within the domestic sphere’ and umpteen opportunities for self-exploration outside. Kalyanamma, who held administrative position (appointed as bench magistrate in Mysore in 1933), set up women’s association (Sharada Stree Samaja) and ‘Makkala Koota’ for children and launched a magazine ‘by woman for woman,’ goes a step ahead in expanding ideal ‘Arya Mahila’ image by taking wife beyond the domestic sphere. Though she doesn’t directly question ‘secondary position of wife at home and her obligations towards family as a wife and mother’ her social feminist views charge ‘Arya Mahila’ concept with new meanings. It also marks a shift in imagining ‘woman’ as a universal, homogenous gender category.

Harsh criticism of her novels by Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, another novelist of the same period, makes Tirumalamba to gradually withdraw from writing, later. As Geeta Prasad analyses, both Masti and Tirumalamba shared the same platform in their revivalist approach to ‘dharma’. But, Masti, an English educated with inclination towards ‘Sanatana Dharma’ is anxious about changing social life while Tirumalamba, caught in the web of these ancient values is looking for new opportunities such as education, albeit with apprehension. Ironically, Masti’s this assessment was acclaimed as the first objective criticism of literary work in Kannada, though he keeps his personal beliefs as yardstick for the assessment. While recognising his literary merits as critic, the Kannada literary world was oblivious to Tirumalamba’s works and even her existence till 1970s. Geeta Prasad: Adhunika Mahila Abbivyakti, Bangalore: Dhatri Pustaka, 2009
Inspired by Bengali women like Sarala Devi and her mother who published ‘Bharati’, Kalyanamma brings out ‘Saraswati’ in 1917. She believes that woman can regain her ‘respectability’ by extending her services to society.\textsuperscript{156} She changes the track of ‘women’s question’ as she could see through dominating male interests in development agenda of the Mysore State (as discussed earlier).

As Sumitra Bai points out, while introducing Kalyanamma’s social reform activities:

Projects for reforming women’s status as envisaged by Kalyanamma comprises entire gamut of duties and responsibilities of the present day Social Welfare, Family Welfare, Health, Education and Information and several other departments. Kalyanamma believed that all these reforms could be brought through women’s organisations itself.\textsuperscript{157}

There are contradictions in Kalyanamma’s views as she couldn’t rule out woman’s ‘traditional role’ at home while asserting necessity of her social participation to elevate her status; while not dismissing notions about husband’s status, she insists on an ideal egalitarian conjugal relationship.

She herself points out two reasons for not accepting woman’s entry into ‘public’ sphere: one is to think that it amounts to aping Western women; secondly, it poses threat to stability of family.\textsuperscript{158} Kalyanamma, however, dismisses such fears of imitation by referring to social involvement of ancient women such as Gargi and Maitreyee. She also hails the contributions of contemporary women in the vanguard of women’s emancipation. She attributes the decline in woman’s status to her alienation from social activities, loss of social activism.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{156} This is pointed out by Nemichandra, in “Achala”, bi-monthly, March 1, 1988, Bangalore: Jagriti Mahila Adhyayana Kendra, Sumitra Bai: \textit{Kalyana Saraswati}, Bangalore: Karnataka Lekhakiyara Sangha, 1992, page 150. Sumitra Bai doesn’t agree with Nemichandra’s view that Kalyanamma looked towards new horizon with her feet firm in ‘tradition’. Sumitra Bai observes an alert reading will clearly show remarkable progress in Kalyanamma’s views over the decades.

\textsuperscript{157} Sumitra Bai, \textit{Kalyana Saraswati}, 1992, page 16

Her assertion of woman’s rights at par with men’s in social activities comes with a caveat. “It is neither justifiable nor proper to neglect family by virtue of such a right.” She advises woman to balance her ‘private’ and ‘public’ lives and considers motherhood supreme over holding presidential post or any other leadership.

Kalayanamma, however, lays emphasis on women liberating themselves from the shackles of domestic life stating that women’s sphere of activities encompass the entire world. She exhorts economically privileged women to work hard for the cause of the deprived women; ‘to help women who have become destitute due to famine and plague over the past 10-12 years; to help them through education and to make them economically independent.’

Instead of accepting widowhood as a karma - the outcome of one’s deeds in previous births- she (herself a widow having suffered stigma attached to it) says widows should be trained in vocational courses to help them earn their livelihood.

Kalayanamma welcomes Sarda Bill and other legislations which were being passed to reform woman’s legal status in the Princely State of Mysore. When K. T. Bhashyam proposed reforming law to allow widow marriage, she insisted that the decision makers should keep in mind widow’s economic condition. She observes that there had been a spurt in child marriages after the enactment of such laws due to the fear of excommunication by mutts and the community.

Apart from highlighting fallouts of child marriage on women’s education and attendant consequence of early widowhood she links the issue to national cause, stating it would lead to producing ‘weak race’. Stating marriage is an agreement between man and woman, and claim for freedom doesn’t mean competing for authority, she clearly puts forth an ideal of egalitarian conjugal relationship.

159 ‘Balya Vivaha Khandane’, Kannada Kogile, Volume 2, No. 5, August 5, 1917
The sense of superiority and nobility attributed to woman’s domestic duties was hard to resist as it comes with a set of religious, socio-cultural beliefs and largely imposes on her a national identity as ‘Indian/Hindu’ woman. It puts women in double-bind situation as rejection of familial duties would amount to rejection of her ‘identity’. At the same time pulls of the external world can’t be resisted as women achievers were hailed across the world. They had before them examples of such women engaged in various domains – as teachers, doctors and scientists etc.

Devangana Shastri of Gokarna puts forth a proposition that since the welfare of society and nation hinges on family, women can plunge into social service by treating family welfare as the focal point of all their activities. She terms women competing with men for equal rights as an adverse effect of new found liberty concomitant to Western reformist programmes. Appreciating women with accomplishments in their chosen fields, she opines that women should study disciplines that would complement sustenance of family life.

However, by 1930s and 1940s, increased participation in ‘public’ activities such as freedom movement and new employment opportunities has gradually shaped feminist consciousness. They gradually began to question the rationale behind the superiority accorded to domestic duties and woman’s bondage to family. However, they don’t reject the pedestal of ‘house wife’, but contest uneven power relations. K. G. Lakshmi Kujnahithu in her ‘Stree Swatantrya’ in 1936 argues that the division of labour between man and woman was made for mutual convenience and equality in the

\[160\] Many of these women writers were aware of the women’s movement in Britain, women’s participation in public life in Japan and Russia. Kalyanamma also refers to women of China and Japan; translates their works/speeches. See Sumitra Bai, *Kalyana Saraswati*, 1992

past. But, she points out that over the years, woman’s status at home had become stagnant while the authority associated with it had diluted. Challenging such uneven power relationship within ‘home’, she questions the very logic of the Independence struggle. Critiquing the moral premises of the whole nationalist movement, she says: “The question that the youth of today must ask is: Is it possible to experience national freedom in the absence of freedom at home?”

A more comprehensive awareness of women’s position at home and of various social, economic, legal and religious forces regulating them is evident in the writings of women in these decades. Shrimati Vimaladevi, (Akhila Bharata Sri Parishat, Bhavanagara Adhiveshana president) writes in 1939 on how women themselves obstruct progress of women and calls for a change in their approach towards ‘female’. The article seems to present lopsided views with ‘masculine bias’, but the author takes a different position here in awakening women towards the need for shedding inhibition on education, marriage and widowhood.

She attributes treating widows as lesser mortals to the malice of women with husbands (‘Sadhave’) in projecting themselves as superior and fortunate (‘Punyashaali’) human beings over their counterparts. She prescribes a dress code for women by which it should not be possible for anyone to distinguish them as unmarried or married or a widow.

Increasingly, these writers frame ‘women’s question’ from different dimensions, decoupling it with national or community interests and treating it as an issue that affects women at the individual level. Such a distinct stance is found in the arguments of Mankalamma from Uttara Kannada. She herself was a child widow and actively participated in freedom movement and social reform activities.

162 Swadeshabhimani, Pustaka 30, Sanchike 25, page 13; Chinappa Gowda and Lolakshi, Kannada Patrikegalu Mattu Mahile, 2006
She openly challenged the social reformers to prove their commitment to ideals by marrying widows. A social reformer, Ganapatibhat Akkadasa married her and together they campaigned across Karnataka on widow marriage.163

Questioning idealised notion of ‘brahmacharya’ imposed on widows, she foregrounds sexual freedom for women. She doesn’t cite any past instances nor does she link it to nation’s interests, but proceeds on a humane ground and sympathetic understanding of woman’s natural desire. Even while stating she doesn’t force anyone for widow marriage, she drives home her point strongly urging people not to make widow suffer by keeping her in confinement and not to prevent widows who want to get married. “It is difficult for a widow to practise ‘brahmacharya’ in daily life while watching nature, flowers blossoming in garden, sisters delivering babies, natural beauty, and in contrast her sufferings,”164 she says.

Family is projected as a ‘safe haven’ for women. On the pretext of the protection, woman’s rights and freedom are circumscribed. Panajikar Krishnabai of Dharwad lays emphasis on economic independence for women. In an essay titled ‘Streeyaru Mattu Arthika Swatantrya’ (published in ‘Jayanti’) she contends that women have been deprived of powers in the guise of ‘protective sheath of men’ in a family arrangement. In spite of the scriptures proclaiming women as equal partner, she has been reduced to a subaltern always under the control of father, husband and son. A woman is pushed to the flesh trade since she doesn’t have property rights. A wife can’t protect wealth and property if her husband is a spendthrift. She expresses skepticism about statutory protection for women’s property rights.

163 Her life story is written by Shalini Raghunath, Samanvitha, Heggodu: Akshara Prakashana, 1994
164 This is a speech delivered at a public function during Dasara in Puttur. ‘Vidhava Vivaha,’ Navayuga, 1938-1939, Volume: 18, Sanchike: 8, page 15, Chinnappa Gowda and Lolakshi, Kannada Patrikegalu Mattu Mahile, 2006
Some of these women writers could discern inadequacy and male interests in the contemporary social and legal reform programmes. Writing in the 1940s, Shyamaladevi Belgaunkar\textsuperscript{165} postulates that women’s perspective of world is clearly distinct. She argues that the opinions and views on society hitherto expressed are biased, because, women’s perspective of the world has been completely ignored. The social reconstruction will not be satisfactory without realising the women’s comprehension of the world; neither would it be stable and perfect, she contends.

Hence, subscribing to the notions of ‘golden past’, ‘dark medievalism’ and ‘Arya Mahila’ doesn’t make her accept secondary position of women in family/society.\textsuperscript{166} She accepts claims of woman’s moral authority, feminine virtues and gendered categories of ‘heart’ and ‘intellect’, but only to critique damage done to woman and society by men. Her theoretical premises of accepting these gender binaries in literature though appears objectionable, it should be observed that she bases her argument on these very theories to claim woman’s stake in nation-building or rather social welfare. She argues that women with their tenderness and feminine virtues should intervene in the world affairs to end violence unleashed by men due to their limited, coarse intellectuality without tenderness of heart.

Feminism combined with universal humanism, for her seems to serve as an alternative, a soothing touch to the wounds inflicted on the world civilisation by Nazism, imperialism and world wars.

\textsuperscript{165} She comes from a family of women who were into prostitution, but she married Ramachandrarayaru. She was a member of the Akhila Bharata Mahila Parishat. Most of the women writers referred here can’t be categorised as ‘elites’ as they lived a life of struggle against social stigma and injustices. Her short stories encompass issues of women of all castes and classes. Vijaya Dabbe; \textit{Shyamala Sanchaya}, Bangalore: Karnataka Lekhakiyara Sangha, 1989

She strongly believes that there would not have been wars in the history of mankind if women were allowed to have their say in public sphere. Man’s stubborn attitude, the proclivity to exert and impose one’s view through coercion and aggressive pursuit have transformed the earth into a battlefield, which otherwise would have been a garden of flowers. Extolling the innate administrative skills of women, Shyamaladevi advocates equal role for women in nation-building and world affairs: “Given an opportunity, woman, with her humane qualities, will bring together imperialists and Nazis; root out the man-made discriminations in society.”

Pointing out lacuna in the reformist literature of men, Shyamaladevi argues that women themselves should take up their problems. She proposes a woman’s literature:

It could often be seen that a few male sympathisers, in their attempt to take sides with woman, have made a mockery of her plight. It is difficult for male reformers to understand the travails of women pushed into prostitution, deprived of property rights, widows denied remarriage and of those belonging to Dalit communities. Women should start writing to put in place a feminist perspective reflecting the ground realities. Woman, if allowed a level-playing field, will not only rectify the injustice meted out to her but also heal the wounds of entire mankind.

But she is aware of limitations of feminism which began along side the bigger wave of social reform and national movement. Hence, like most of other women of this period, she knows feminism can survive in India only if women balance their image as ‘Arya Mahila’ and at the same time successfully guard their universal feminine identity.

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Her ideological stance is clear in her translation of Begum Sultana Meera Amiruddin's words:

The Indian woman of today is looking at the world under transformation standing on the threshold of her house. The past has a tradition rich with experience and knowledge and the future holds a vast sphere to conquer. She should patiently edge ahead with her head on shoulders. 169

Women writers in these decades up to 1950s operate within the framework of Gandhian feminism and though don't desire a radical rupture in their relations within family, negotiate for an egalitarian and respectable position both within family and society. But acceptance of the designated place of 'mother' or 'wife' doesn't blind them to mechanism of oppressive system underneath religion, economic and social set up.

Saraswatibai Rajawade, who seems to be under the influence of the Progressive Movement, could challenge the very ideologies of 'patrivrita' and marriage though she doesn't reject woman's familial responsibilities. Insisting on economic empowerment of women from all social strata, in her essay ‘Streeyarige Arthika Swatantrate Entu?’, she links woman’s individuality and her economic status.170 While Kalyanamma advocated economic empowerment for women who don’t have shelter, Saraswatibai Rajawade finds it necessary for even 'housewife' to be economically self-reliant to develop a strong sense of individuality.

Her assertion of 'awakened individual self' of woman is articulated more clearly in her essay ‘Streeyarige Vyaktitvavillave?’. Placing literature, religion and philosophers of the world on a common pedestal in presenting woman as a secondary subject with no individuality and as shadow of her

169 “Bharatadalli Streeyara Chaluvali”, ibid. page 268
husband, she challenges the very premise of chastity, ‘patipa\raise.5ex\vbox{\hbox{ra}}\vbox{\hbox{ya}}nate’: “Where does individuality come to a woman who believes her husband is god and never bothers about her own elevation and authority.”?

She could question religious and social beliefs which ensured continuity of woman’s bondage to domestic sphere and made ‘marriage’ central to woman’s life. She argues that relationship between man and woman has nothing to do with the evolution of a person’s individuality or a fulfilled life. If this argument had any ground, she observes, Buddha would not have gone to forest rejecting his woman. However, she finds answer to gender and caste oppression within the framework of spirituality, stating god doesn’t discriminate among people, but man-made system does.

She was aware of inadequacy of social reform movement in bringing about fundamental changes in society and its failure to forge effective counter-hegemonic ideologies. In her column, ‘Akkana Ole’ she attacks social reformers who criticise all that is ‘sanatana’ but fail to present an alternative value system and vision of society. Instead, she points out conservatism beneath these social reform programmes including Dalit’s ‘temple-entry’. The programme ensures percolation of superstitious beliefs of upper castes to other castes and communities, she argues. Instead, answers should be found in breaking unholy nexus between religious institutions, economic set up, caste system and considering Dalit issue as of national importance. She advocates exogamous and companionate marriage to end caste oppression.

171 ‘Stree\raise.5ex\vbox{\hbox{yar}}\vbox{\hbox{i}}ge Vyaktit\hbox{\i}tvivilla\hbox{\i}ve?’, Srivalli T.S., Giribale Sahitya Vachike, 1994, page 250-254
She incorporates rural women’s problems within the agenda of feminism, ‘women’s question’ and considers rural woman at the centre of her arguments stating problems of urban and rural women are different and hence strategies to address their problems should also be different.¹⁷³

**Note on Kannada nationalism, Unification Movement**

The caste politics, regional, socio-economic differences between the Princely State of Mysore and other regions of Kannada-speaking community including Bombay Karnataka are entangled in the Unification Movement which gathered momentum by 1920 in Karnataka. Linguistic and cultural renaissance in Kannada preceded this political movement demanding unified linguistic state with fixed territorial markers.¹⁷⁴ Besides, though many wrote on reviving Kannada and found the need for linguistic identity, all of them were not active participants in the Unification Movement. The Unification Movement became more aggressive after 1920; culturally, Kannada nationalism had begun to grow much earlier and its accounts were narrativised in varied ways.

However, there is no consensus among scholars on exact period of beginning of Kannada nationalism. Some locate it in the *Kavirajamarga* (which had identified the geographical markers of Kannada ‘Naadu’), many others locate it in the colonial period. For example, Jayaprakash Banjagere’s *Kannada Rashtreeyate* (Kannada Nationalism) points out that there was Kannada speaking community, as mentioned in *Kavirajamaarga* of 10th century.¹⁷⁵ But, he seems to equate the pre-colonial

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¹⁷³ Her short stories critique double standard of morality and regulation of woman’s sexuality and the corrupt religious institutions.

¹⁷⁴ Demand for unified linguistic state became more intense following the establishment of the Congress province of Karnataka. The headquarters of the Karnataka Congress Committee was Hubli in Bombay Karnataka which was dominated by the Lingayats and in Bangalore, dominated by the Vokkaligas. There were demands for two states for the same linguistic community by these different groups which also had support of technocrats, Dewans, litterateurs amongst others.

Kannada speaking community with the one that was constructed at the end of the nineteenth century. Besides, he focuses more on socio-economic aspects than the cultural aspects that contributed to the growth of nationalism. But some of the scholars locate emergence of Kannada nationalism in the nineteenth century.116

Formation of linguistic identity and accompanying cultural revival began in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Spread of print culture, Bible translations, textbook writing, history writing, publishing old Kannada texts, collecting epigraphs and other related materials of history – all these by the colonial missionaries and the colonial administrators to understand their subject, also contributed to the awakening of Kannada consciousness among the native English educated elite. However, many of the natives, following the works by the colonial scholars and the missionaries, engaged themselves in producing the history of the region, language and literature, but with a pride for their mother tongue. By the end of the nineteenth century, awakening of love for the mother tongue was clearly discernible.

Several pro-Kannada organisations – Karnataka Vidhyavardhaka Sangha (1903), Karnataka Sabha (founded in 1917 to intensify political agitation for the Unification) in Bombay Karnataka, Karnataka Sahitya Parishat set up by the Mysore Princely State (1915) were actively involved in mobilising the Kannada-speaking public.

A modern Kannada reading public emerged with the spread of print culture through newspapers, magazines and literature. By 1920s there was a language-based nationalism, following

the examples of Bengali and Marathi nationalism, developed in Karnataka. This pride of mother tongue, however, didn’t always go with the claim for one nation-one state, as many of the votaries of Kannada language didn’t believe in ideologies of nationalism itself and some others were divided over two-state demands. Besides, narrativising the national accounts of Kannada linguistic identity and history also varies.

One of the pioneers of the Unification Movement was Alur Venkatarao who in 1903 first spoke of unified Karnataka in his journal Vagbhushana. He studied in Pune at the end of the nineteenth century and was greatly influenced by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. A kind of anti-Marathi sentiment awakened the Kannada consciousness in the writers of the north Karnataka region. Alur’s Karnataka Gata Vaibhava served the need of the nationalists for a ‘glorious past’. It was based on the writings on Hampi and other places by the Orientalists. In north Karnataka, there was an overlapping of Hindu and Kannada identity. Though initially the ‘other’ was Marathi for the Kannada self-construction, the language used was that they derived from the Tilak nationalist discourses where obviously the ‘other’ also became Muslim.

Alur was the main initiator of the 600th year celebration of establishment of Vijayanagara Empire in 1935. Vijayanagara/Hampi began to occupy, since then, an important position in the construction of Kannada, and Kannada identity. In Karnataka Gata Vaibhava, the fall of the Vijayanagara kingdom is mourned as the fall of Kannada and Hinduism. This account of ‘fall of Vijayanagara’ is constructed in the same mould as the Hindu nationalism did: Though the ‘idea of Karnataka’ has existed from the time of the earliest dynasties in the southern and northern Karnataka regions, the historical “unity” of the Kannadigas and their culture was broken in the 13th century with the defeat of Dwarasamudra by Malik Kafur. Striving for linguistic unity is traced to the time of the
Vijayanagar kings, the rule of the Bahmani Sultans marks a break in the cultural continuity of the region. Some of these Unification narratives, however, acknowledge that territorial disintegration and the dismemberment of the Kannada people occurred with the defeat of Tippu Sultan and advent of British rule in 1799.  

Initially, the Kannada nationalists drew from the religious semantics of Hindu nationalism predominant in Bengal and Maharashtra. But, they deviated as such aggressive militant Hindu nationalism could not go well with the caste and cultural fissures in Karnataka even while the language deployed to narratise Karnataka nevertheless remained gendered with religious overtones. Karnataka and India were described as daughter and mother respectively (as State anthem penned by Kuvempu puts it *Jaya Bharata Janamya Tanyate Jaya He Karnataka Mate*), Karnataka/Kannada language was imagined drawing various images of goddesses. Chandi, Chamundi, Kranti Kahi (like Bankim’s image of Kali), Bhuvaneshwari, Kamatakadevi (a pleasant image of Mother Karnataka), Kannadambe and Banashankari – to name a few.

177 According to Mangalavade Srinivasaraya’s account in *Karnataka Darshana* (1937) Karnataka was fragmented into 22 divisions. Mumbai Karnataka, Madras Karnataka, Cantonment Karnataka (Belgaum, Bangalore, Bellary), Kodagu Karnataka, Hyderabad Karnataka, Hyderabad Karnataka Jahageer (Koppala, Gadvala), Mysore Princely State, Kolhapura state (a few regions with Kannada-speaking community), Kolhapura Samshana Jahageer, Eechalakaranj (Of 78 village ¼ is Marathi region), Kagala (Hir) 41 villages, Kagala (Km) six villages with a few Marathi regions and capital of Kolhapura, Gagana Bhavada with 76 villages, Vishalagada, Kapst, Toragallu, Sangali, Oundha, Miraji (Hir), Miraji (Km), Kurandawada (Hir) and Kurandawada (Km), Jamakhandi, Mudhol, Ramadurga, Akkalakote, Jatta, Savanuru and Sonduru Govindaraju C R., in his work on the Unification movement and Kannada literature, observes that these 22 fragments were broadly divided into five administrative categories by the British. Mumbai Karnataka (the most fragmented), Mysore Princely State, Hyderabad Karnataka under Nizam’s rule, Madras Karnataka and Kodagu. Each region has its own socio-economic and cultural history and requires more researches for comprehensive understanding of social background of Karnataka in the pre-Independence period. Govindaraju C R. 2006 And, Chandrashekhar S., *Vasahatukaleena Karnataka* Bangalore Kannada and Culture Department, 2006.

178 Govindaraju C R discusses how varied images of Kannada language and linguistic region were constructed deploying images of various goddesses by different writers *Kannadamma Hennu Sankathanada Nadu-Nud Roopaka Prateekagalu*, Hampi Prasaranga, Kannada University, 2005.
B. M. Sreekantaiah, however, differed from some of these Kannada writers as his
narrativisation of Kannada language indicated his political affiliation with the Mysore Princely State
and his passion for English. Hampi/Vijayanagara Empire doesn’t become central to his narratives as
Mysore Princely State and the benevolent king symbolised glory of Karnataka even while depicting
‘Kannadambe’ dressed in rags sitting in ruined Hampi.

He replaces image of ‘Bhuvaneshwari’ with ‘Rajarajeshwari’ in his ‘Kannadada Bavuta’
(Kannada flag). According to V. B. Tarakeshwara, B. M. Sreekantaiah believed that English should
be used for political activities, nationalist issues and inter-regional activities. Within the region
native languages should be used to educate children, women and Vokkaligas (Shudras).

Analysing B. M. Sri’s works, Tarakeshwara points out that in his narrative, the upper caste
adult men assume the role of teacher and mediator between the ruler and the ruled and also between
the nation and the region. Besides, what he regards as ‘veeryavat’ (potent) language was that spoken
by the upper caste men of the Mysore region.  

When compared to B. M. Sreekantaiah, writers from the Bombay Karnataka exhibit intense
anxiety in their narratives over building a unified Kannada state and bringing together Kannada speaking
communities scattered over the regions. For example, Da. Ra. Bendre invokes five deities (goddesses)

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179 Kannadada Bavuta, A collection of representative poems of the period from 5th century to 20th century;
Bangalore: Kannada Sahitya Parishat, 1984, (1938, first print), page vii, 164-167

180 According to Tarakeshwara (“Translating Nationalism”, Journal of Karnataka Studies 1, November 2003 –
April 2004, page 5-59) the pioneer of Hosagannada writers, B. M. Shreekantaiah, who played key role in the
process of standardisation and modernisation of the language, rejected the proposal of single language for the
whole of India. Instead, he advocated use of native language. B. M. Sreekantaiah believed that English should
be used for political activities, nationalist issues, and inter-regional activities. Within the region, native languages
should be used to educate children, women and Vokkaligas and Sudras.
of different corners of Karnataka in his poem *Kadala Pavana Parampare*: Mysore Chamundi, Kolluru Mookambike, Gokarna Bhadrakali, Badami Banashankri and Guddada Ellamma – all would bless the movement to unify Karnataka.181

Despite their shared history of Kannada literary tradition, probably mobilising Kannada speaking community with diverse histories and cultures of their own in each region was a more difficult task than mobilising the whole of India against the British. Besides, apart from the antagonistic linguistic relation between Maharashtra and Bombay Karnataka, people of these two regions had close cultural and blood relations. Hence Jayadevitayi Ligade, one of the few women activists in the Unification Movement says woman’s moral and constructive ability of achieving harmony between two families (that of husband and parents) make her eligible for a key role of establishing harmonious relationship between Maharashtra and Karnataka.182

Participation of women in the Kannada nationalist movement, at this stage of research, appears to be conceived in terms of her position as mother, mentor of child and supporter. Tirumalamba, one of the early champions of Kannada also portrays woman as mother having greater responsibility of ensuring that child is not carried away by the lure of English.183 Tirumalamba, in her *Sanmargadarshi*, a magazine meant for students, writes a ‘letter’ chiding a young school boy for having asked his father not to write in Kannada. She registers responses of the boy’s father, mother and an elder woman relative (paternal aunt). While his father stops writing letters to his son, the mother takes the moral responsibility of correcting his ‘English manners’ and impertinence to reject Kannada. She emphatically

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183 Hitaishiniya Hajjegahr. page 715
says he shouldn’t forget that he is a child of Kannada and his infatuation for English is an insult to the mother who is Kannaditi (Kannadiga).

Women writers in their presidential addresses during the annual Kannada literary meet also express similar sentiments. Shantakka Malimutt, in her address at 25th Sahitya Sammelana in Dharwad in 1940, says that women should shoulder the onus of protecting and developing Kannada language and culture as men are vulnerable and easily get seduced by the foreign language and culture. She further argues that in border areas of Karnataka sanctity of Kannada language is protected at home.\(^{184}\)

However, emphatic assertion of these assumptions about possible reasons behind absence of woman’s active participation in the Unification Movement and nature of their involvement in Kannada nationalism needs support of more research work including that on the development of these movements in the post-Independence period.

‘The road not taken’\(^{185}\)

Some of the intellectuals invested in research into the history of Karnataka, consciously chose not to hark back on the past glory and nor did they find Vijayanagar Empire as necessarily a symbol of the ‘glorious past’. Following Alur, a researcher Shankararao Baladeekshit Joshi, or Shamba Joshi as he is popularly known, took interest in inquiring into the history of ‘the glorious past’ of Karnataka – both with a nationalist’s passion and urge for awareness of ‘self’.

Shamba was initially influenced by Tilak, Aurobindo and later by Gandhi. He was active in both Tilak-led nationalist movement and in Gandhian Harijan welfare programmes. But, he didn’t

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\(^{184}\) Kannada Sahitya Parishapatrike, Bangalore, 1940

\(^{185}\) Title of the poem by Robert Frost can be the best metaphor to describe Shamba Joshi, who traversed a different path of Kannada history and that has made all the difference in his approach.
uncritically accept all their nationalist ideologies.\textsuperscript{166} But, more than Tilak, the Gandhian sociological imagination had attracted him. For, he noticed that many were enthusiastic about political battle against the British, but withdrew from addressing the internal problems as social reforms would require one to be self-critical.\textsuperscript{167} While Tilak’s nationalism didn’t envisage any such conflict between individual interests and that of society, the Gandhian vision needed one to be constantly self-critical. Such a shift can be seen in his accounts of the history of Kannada language and culture.

But his exploration of the history and origin of Kannada language and community led him to displace the notion of the upper caste Hindu identity with that of pre-Aryan agrarian tribe and to present his own arguments outside the framework of nationalist discourses and the orientalist discourses. While Kannadigas asserted that Karnataka’s boundaries stretched from the River Cauvery in the south to the River Godavari in the north, Maharashtrian scholars claimed that Maharashtra had stretched as far as the River Tungabhadra. Shamba’s inquiry was to know the historical process by which these cultural linguistic entities – Karnataka and Maharashtra came into being.

He found Kandamila tribe as common cultural substrata. He avoided the use of word ‘Dravida’ which had with it different connotations associated and differed from the Orientalists as well. Finally he traces the common origin to herdsmen, agriculturists – Marwars, Kurumbas and Halumata.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{166} He discusses these varied issues which influenced his sensibility in his youth in ‘Jeevanada Arthagrahana Paddhati’, \textit{Shamba Kriti Sampatra}, Volume 5, Malleperum G. Venkatesh (ed), Bangalore: Kannada Pustaka Pradikara, 1999, page 476-477 He wrote life story of Aurobindo Ghosh in 1921, (Dharwad: The Karnataka Trading Company); \textit{Tilaka Kathamrittana Sara} in 1932 (Dharwad: Lokamanya Smaraka Mandala); His book on Aurobindo was one of the major influences on Bendre and other members of ‘Geleyara Gumpu’ (Friends’ Association) in Dharwad, which was active in promoting the cause of Kannada and fighting the Marathi dominance.

\textsuperscript{167} Shamba Joshi: “Yakshaprashne Athava Baraliuru Samaja” (Gokarna,1948); \textit{Shamba Kriti Samputra}, Vol 6. page 168

\textsuperscript{168} His research works are \textit{Kanmareyada Kannada} (1933); \textit{Maharashtrada Moola} (1934), \textit{Karnatakada Veerakshatriyaru} (1937), \textit{Kannadada Nele} (1939), \textit{Kannadya Hattu} (1937) and \textit{Halumatakarshana} (1960). His research work dwelt on wider aspects of culture covering India itself later.
Worshipping of a maternal god, matriarchy-centered values were prevalent among them much before the advent of hegemonic patriarchal Vedic culture; not only that later even the Vedic culture absorbed the matriarchy-centered values in it.

Rajendra Chenni, analysing Shamba’s research into ‘the past’ or rather into the bases of culture and language, observes that Shamba deviated from the nationalist and revivalist thinkers in his investigation into the past. Shamba, without romanticising or idealising the past or regretting its ‘fall’ could take a dispassionate look into history. However, popular imagination followed Kannada linguistic nationalism modeled on Hindu nationalism.

Both in Kannada nationalism and the Unification Movement deep fissures were caused by the caste divisions and regional imbalances which even led to demand for two states. While in Bombay Karnataka Aluru and Galaganatha constructed a Hindu masculine nationalist and linguistic identity with Marathi as the ‘other,’ in Princely Mysore State obviously Tamil and Telugu along with English were considered as the Other. Later by 1940s A. N. Krishnarao took up the model of Hindu-Kannada masculine linguistic nationalism.

However, no significant novel in Kannada has dealt with the Unification Movement and Kannada nationalism before 1950s. As Rajendra Chenni observes, keeping largely political dimension of the Indian nationalism in mind, the ‘myth’ of nationalism seems to have remained alien to the sensibilities of significant Kannada novelists.

189 Rajendra Chenni. “Sham. Ba. Avara Samskritika Adhyayana: Ondu Parichaya” in ‘Amurthate Mattu Parisara’, Bangalore: Abhinava, 2003; Also Gourisha Kaikini, who notes Shamba’s views were appreciated by Maharashtrians as well, but he had few followers in Kannada. Gourisha Kaikini Samagra Sahitya, Volume 6, Ankola: Sri Raghavendra Prakashana,1997 page 9 to 50

190 Rajendra Chenni, Amurthate Mattu Parisara, 2003 page 35-54 Also, several other scholars have expressed similar opinions in Sham. Ba. Josh’yavara Samskriti Chintane, Bangalore: Karnataka Sahitya Akademi, 1992
Probably the same may hold good for the absence of significant novels on the Unification Movement. Four novelists - Galaganatha, Anandakanda, A. N. Krishnarao and Ram. Shri. Mugali discussed in the next chapter - also have either glorified or romanticised the linguistic nationalist movement on the lines of the Indian nationalist movement.

Shantinatha Desai observes that some of the authors in the post-Independence period, disillusioned with the contemporary economic, social and political conditions, took up a critical nationalist stance. However, we have A. N. Krishnarao and his followers carrying forward 'Kannada nationalism' in the post-Independence period along with 'regional' novelists like Shivarama Karanth who altogether eschewed grand narratives of nationalism, together shaping sensibilities of Kannada mind and culture. Taking Rajendra Chenni and Desai's argument further it would be interesting to study shifts in the post-Independence period in these two conflicting strands - the 'centripetal' inclinations of the writers 'firmly focused on region (community) and its culture' and 'centrifugal' inclinations for unified nation and culture initiated in the pre-Independence period.

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