CHAPTER - VI

EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF BIJAPUR DISTRICT IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE
Independence for India was achieved as a result of the cumulative effect of the struggle of its each village, district and state. In this way, individuals, villages and talukas of Bijapur district have contributed their maximum to the freedom struggle. Thus Bijapur district as a whole plays an important role and occupies a prominent place in the history of Indian freedom struggle.

From 1757 to 1947, the history of freedom struggle in Bijapur district was a remarkable and a memorable one and it can be likened to a great epic.

Prior to the First War of Indian Independence of 1857, the Bijapur district had witnessed the sparks of freedom struggle in the form of Armed insurrections. In support of this one should remember the 'Sindagi Bandaya' of 1824, revolution in Badami (1841) and the revolt by the brave hunters (Bedas) of Halagali in 1857. These series of 'Armed Insurrections' can be said to have inspired the later freedom struggle.
The Bedas of Halagali gave a tough fight to the British in 1857 against the 'Arms Act'. Even when the whole Halagali village was burnt down to ashes, the Bedas did not care to stop revolting against the British.

Many individuals who are remembered even to this day for their role in the freedom struggle are from Bijapur district. Among them may be mentioned Kaka Karkhanis, who was a very close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, Hanumanthrao Koujalagi, B.D. Jatti, Chanabasappa Ambli and many others, who worked with such great national leaders like Gandhiji, B.G.Tilak, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and others and attained national recognition.

"The struggle for freedom was first started by Shrinivasarao Koujalagi, who was a lawyer and also a friend of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Koujalagi's residence was not only a home for himself and his family members, but it was a home for all freedom fighters. He was calles as 'Karnataka Shimh' (Lion of Karnataka),
in Bijapur district."\(^1\) One can observe, such a type of homely feeling and cooperation among almost all the freedom fighters irrespective of caste, creed, religion, language, etc. They united themselves to achieve the goal of national independence.

Many of the national leaders visited the Bijapur district during the freedom movement and conveyed their messages to the people, namely, "Barrister Vithalabhai Patel, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Padmaja Naidu (Daughter of Sarojini Naidu), B.G.Tilak, Narasimha Chintamani Kelkar, Shivaram Mahadev Paranjape, C.Raja Gopalachari, C.R.Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Acharya Kripalani, Rajendra Prasad, Veera Nariman, K.M.Munishi, Jawaharlal, Nehru, Shoukat Ali, Mohmed Ali and others."\(^2\)

The impact of the visit of these national leaders created the mass awakening in Bijapur district. The freedom fighters responded overwhelmingly to the calls


\(^2\) Ibid., p-1185.
of these and other national leaders who inculcated in the people the idea of unity and patriotism. The result was that the freedom fighters worked with unity, cooperation and dedication. Almost all parts of the district had been plunged into the freedom movement. Many lawyers of the district gave up their practice. Many students boycotted their schools and colleges. National schools were also established.

The political awakening was so intense that even children shouted slogans against the British government. "A boy of 5 years, who was the son of a jail Superintendent by name Mone, shouted a slogan against the British as, "Nahi Rakhana Nahi Rakhana, Ish Badmash Sarkara Nahi Rakhana' (Never, never retain this wicked government)."

The "Prabhat Pheries" (morning rounds with singing of patriotic songs in Chorus) taken out by the revolutionaries also inspired the other people to join them in their rounds. All the people irrespective of age and sex, participated in this march.

3. Ibid., p-1183.}
"The press in the Bijapur district has contributed a lot to the freedom struggle. The role of the press was very important and noticeable one. Papers like 'Karnataka Vaibhav', the Kannada weekly, edited by Jayarao Deshpande in Bijapur, published articles against the evil administration of the British and awakened the revolutionaries and also the people of the District. 'Uday', the Kannada weekly (for some time as the Daily) edited by S.C. Mirji, was started mainly for the purpose of mass awakening during the freedom struggle. Likewise 'Nava Karnataka' edited by P.G. Halakatti, and 'Sharana Sandesh' edited by Hardekar Manjappa, a social reformer. He propagated movement for 'Khadi' through his paper 'Sharana Sandesh'. In the year 1921, in Bagalkot 'Nava Bharat', the Kannada weekly, edited by Dharwadkar Yalagurddaro, helped in propagation of the freedom movement.

Mangalavedhe Shrinivasrao translated Gandhiji's 'Young India' into Kannada as 'Tarun Bharat'. Later it was renamed as 'Kannadiga' which helped in creating the idea of unity."\(^4\)

\(^4\) Ibid., pp.1184-85.
The Bijapur district witnessed intense struggle for freedom in Bijapur, Chadachan, Athurga, Indi, Bagalkot, Galagali, Yalagur, Guledgudd, Badami, Cholachagudd, Kerur, Hunagund, Ilkal, Gudur, Kamatagi, Muddebihal and many more places.

The revolutionaries had chalked out programmes for carrying on the freedom struggle such as, burning railway stations, post boxes and official records, Government offices, removing railway fishplates, cutting telephone and telegraph wires, students boycotting the schools and colleges, lawyers boycotting the courts, cutting the toddy trees and picketing of liquor shops, propagation of Khadi and using it, propagation of 'Charaka', preparation of salt, burning the foreign goods, singing the patriotic songs, and many more programmes. Through these programmes revolutionaries in the district totally paralysed government administration and the British had a tough time facing such situation.
Many meetings of national importance were held in the Bijapur district during the freedom struggle.

"In the year 1918, in Bijapur the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee was held. Barrister Vithalbhai Patel was the President. Hanumanthrao Koujalagi was the President for the Reception Committee. In the same year 'Removal of untouchability' Conference was held with Mahatma Gandhi as the President. Other programmes for the eradication of untouchability were also held in the district. The 'Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee' meeting was held in Bagalkot in the year 1928. Veeravaman Naik (Hyderabad), K.T.Bhasyam (Bangalore), T.Subramaniam (Tumkur), Pandit Taranath (Tungabhadra), Gangadhar rao Deshpande (Belgaum), Tekur Subramaniam (Bellary), Dr.N.S. Hardikar, Mudaveedu Krishnaraao, Jayaramachar(Koppal), Rangrao Diwakar, Bindumadhav Burlee, Ramarao Hukkerikar, D.P.Karmarkar, Veeranagouda Patil, Dr.Savanur Hanumanthrao, K.Sampadgirirao, Y.Mahabaleshwarappa (Bellary), Shivamurthy Sastri, D.V.Gundappa and many other leaders from all over
Karnataka were present at the meeting. Many institutions were established during this time namely, 'Karnataka Chamber of Commerce', 'Newspaper Conference' Committee for unification of Karnataka, 'Congress Seva Dal Samsthe' and Burlee Madhwachar established 'Vaidya Parishad.'

Like manner throughout the movement, the people of Bijapur District participated in all the freedom movements and sacrificed their lives for the sake of their motherland until their goal was achieved on 15th August, 1947.

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5. Ibid., p-1186.