



# War Of Independence In Dakshina Kannada- A Glance

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Dakshina Kannada is a part of Karnataka state and geographically long and narrow strip of territory situated on the south western part of India bounded on the north by North Kanara, on the South by Malabar, on the East by Mysore and Coorg, on the West by the Indian Ocean.<sup>1</sup> It is culturally a beautiful region with many natural features. The range of high Western Ghats, the dense evergreen forest found in them, the treasure of medicinal plants, the wealth of fauna, the constantly flowing water bodies, the winding road that looks like a line drawn, the railway track built by Colonial influence, the ocean stretching along the coast on the other side; this ocean and the west. The agricultural land found in the middle of the ghats and the independent residential houses attached to this agricultural land, the burning lakes here and there are the natural picture of Dakshina Kannada.

Dakshina Kannada has forests, hills, plains and plains and is a land inhabited by adivasi, tribal and agrarian people. While rice is the staple food crop and later, betel nut, coconut, black pepper, bananas are the main products of the agro-economy. The imposition of commercial crops to replace the traditional crops that started during the British rule has grown to relevance, the beautiful natural environment of Dakshina Kannada under the capitalist and colonial grip changed after the colonial intervention.

According to Caldwell, the English word 'Kanara' for Dakshina Kannada is derived from a Dravidian word.<sup>2</sup> Tamil Sangam songs mentioned Alupas were the first rulers in the region of Dakshina Kannada and mentioned as Tulunadu. We can trace the reference to Bhutanatha Pandya as an important king, who first ruled strongly in Dakshina Kannada. Dakshina Kannada was ruled by the Vijayanagara period during the sixteenth century. After the fall of Vijayanagara, it came under the control of local rulers. In the 16th century,

<sup>1</sup> John Sturrock (Vol.I) & Harlord Stuart, (Vol.II), *South Canara*, Madras, 1894, 1895 (Re.print. 2003).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*,

when the Portuguese who came for trade arrived in Tulunad and started to take over, the struggle of Ullala Abbakka, a woman from Tulunad who stood against the colonial power; provided the foundation and inspiration for the next struggles against the foreign rule. Abbakka of Tulu Nadu emerges as a self-respecting, self-respecting symbol of the Tulu people.<sup>3</sup>

During the sixteenth century, Dakshina Kannada ruled under Vijayanagara and was divided into Mangalore and Barakur for the administration. A local king who was a vassal ruler during the Vijayanagara period laid siege. The power of the Chautas of Moodbidiri, the Bangas of Bangadi, the Ajilas of Venur, the kings of Kumbale, the Domba Heggade kings of Vittala, the Tolahars of Sural, the Bhaira kings of Karkala, the Savant kings of Mulki, the Banga kings of Bangadi can be found in Dakshina Kannada, and they issued edicts in their names.<sup>4</sup>

Mangalore became the centre of struggle between the British and Sultans in Dakshina Kannada, which was subject to the Sultans. Tipu Sultan had made an effort to have a dockyard and independent navy at Mangalore. His aim was to control the coastal trade, control the British and achieve economic supremacy.<sup>5</sup> The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War of 1799 resulted in the fall of Tipu Sultan and the entire coastal Karnataka was taken over by the British. The region of Kanara is directly fall on Colonial regime.

In Dakshina Kannada, the British had to face resistance from the beginning in the earlier; Kings of Kumbala, Vittla and Nileshwar did not join Tipu and supported the British. After Tipu's death, despite his unsuccessful attempts to woo his queens, he was portrayed as a symbolic king, confined to massage, 'administration of temples', etc. Along with this, the Chautas of Moodbidiri, the Bangars of Bangadi, the Ajilas of Venur, the Satavahanas, the Tolaharas, and other important minor dynasties ruled in Dakshina Kannada. They fight for their independence.

Increase in land revenue, tariffs, and agricultural failures distressed the farmers. Cash system of taxation, price fall further made the condition of farmers miserable. In 1810-11 the peasants organized collectively and stopped the payment of land revenue and taxes.<sup>6</sup>

In Dakshina Kannada, the peasants again fought in 1830-31 as a protest against the colonial systems. Farmers had formed groups and fought in different places. From Kasaragod to Kundapur, from Mangalore to Bantwala, Charmadi, the farmers took up the struggle for refusal of revenue. Although struggle was not successful. Eric Stokes called these rebellions as the Tax Rebellions. These struggles were suppressed under the leadership of Collector Kamaran.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Amrita Someswara (ed.), *Abbakka Sankatana*, Mangalore.p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara (1799-1860), A Study in Colonial Administration and Regional Response*, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 48-50.

<sup>5</sup> Surendra Rao, 'Haidarali, Tipu Sultan and Mangalore (1763-1799),' B. A. Viveka Rai (ed.) *Mangalore Darshana*, Volume 1, Mangalore, 2016, 124-186.

<sup>6</sup> N. Shyam Bhatt, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>7</sup> John Stokes Reports, *-Report on Revision of Assessment and on the Disturbances known as koots in Kanara (1830-31)*, Mangalore, 1885, p. 120.

In 1837, the people of Puttur and Amar Sulya in *Tulu region* revolted and it was recognized as Kanara Revolt in the records. Kalyana Swami, Aparampara, Budibasappa were the leaders of the Rebellion. Including Bantwala, British treasury depots, were targeted by the militants, who later extended to the entire Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu regions and expressed strong opposition to the British. For the fighters, the main objective was to establish the royal dynasty under the authority of Maharajas. When the colonial power interfered in the local tradition, culture, ideation and economic aspects, the people of Dakshina Kannada raised revolt against the colonial regime. It is seen as the first peasant freedom struggle of the common people of Dakshina Kannada.

In the month of May, 1870 Karnadu Sadashivarao, Ullala Ragunathiah, Mr. N. Arasappanavar started a branch of Brahma Samaj in Mangalore. Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj as the voice of socialism and nationalism in Mangalore. Kudmul Ranga Rao, a upper caste, worked for the backward; he was a teacher, closely associated with Ullala Raghunathaiah, the founder of the Mangalore branch Brahma Samaj. He was deeply interested in the courage and thoughtful religious programs of the Brahma Samaj. He tried to resolve various inequalities in Hindu society like social disparity, casteism, child marriage, devadasi system and widow marriage. Brahma Samaj and Arya samaj was reason for the socio- religious changes in regional level.<sup>8</sup>

Even before Gandhiji, Kudmul Ranga Rao worked as a farmer through constructive works like education, social reform, cottage industry, land grant and dedicated his life for others. Ranga Rao was a patriot who awakened the love of patriotism through the use of khadi, on the one hand, changed the traditional social evils on the other hand brought change in the society of the colonial period through education and organizations, which made the voice of Un Divided Dakshina Kannada recognized by the nation.<sup>9</sup>

Ever since the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the people of Dakshina Kannada have been very fond of the Congress. In Dakshina Kannada, the echoes of the struggle up to independence, including the great wars that followed, can be traced. Dakshina Kannada also responded to the swadeshi and boycott movement that took place across the country. The Theosophical Society was started in Mangalore in Dakshina Kannada by 1901 and came under the influence of Anni Besant and Balagangadhara Tilak.<sup>10</sup>

Dakshina Kannada came directly under Gandhi's influence after Karnad Sadashiva Rao wrote a letter to Gandhi in 1917 requesting him to lead and guide the freedom movement in Dakshina Kannada. Later he signed the Satyagraha Pledge in 1919. Subsequently Gandhi visited Dakshina Kannada three times during the

<sup>8</sup> Pramod, M.G. *Colonialism and Nationalism in Dakshina Kannada (CE 1865-1947)*, Un Published Ph.D. Thesis, Mangalore University, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> P. Kamalaksha, *Dalitoddaraka Kudmul Ranga Rao*, Mangalore, 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Pramod, M.G, Op.Cit.

national movement and all these visits had a great impact on the locals.<sup>11</sup> Later Dakshina Kannada actively participated the struggle; with birth to many patriotic leaders.

After Gandhiji's visit, the Karnataka Political Council was organized and many women activists, including Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, became involved in the national struggle. The boycott of foreign goods and the use of indigenous goods was an early stage movement that created awareness among the mass. More than 20 national schools were started under Karnad's leadership. The use of Khadi was encouraged. Anti-liquor movement, Forest Satyagraha, non-cooperation, boycott and picketing widely take place. Hindi Prachar Sabha starts and nationalism gets stronger. The anti-coercion and civil disobedience movement is organized more strongly in the district.

Salt satyagraha started in and around in Mangalore and soon spread to other rural places.<sup>12</sup> Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Radha and Suguna Karnad lead the mahila Satyagraha. The struggle was carried out by picketing in front of liquor shops and raising awareness through social songs, leading to the arrest of over 159 activists.

In 1940, a personal satyagraha took place and more than 40 people were arrested and convicted locally for participating in the satyagraha. The struggle in Dakshina Kannada became intense at this stage. Ammembala Balappa, Kushalanatha Rai, Devappa Alva, Attavar Ellappa, M.D Adhikari, Smt. Kamala among the prominent. Dakshina Kannada Congress Committee Secretary and Mazdur Sangh leader S. N. Holla started satyagraha at the central ground of Mangalore.

In the Quit India movement in Dakshina Kannada, a large number of people including school and college students participated in the leaderless movement. Revolutionary struggles ensue and many suffer hospitalization and imprisonment.<sup>13</sup>

From the influence of Indian National Congress people of natives directly supported the struggle based Gandhi's ideas; in the other side, the struggles carried out on local issues such as Tulu language, society, culture, or border issues were another form of anti-British struggles in Dakshina Kannada district. Leaders like N. S. Kille, S. U. Paniyadi is seen as the leader in this line.

Marxian influenced struggles in the district like B.V. Kakkillya and others led to the creation of a mass, pro-worker sentiment in society, which played an important role in the Subaltern base. Inspired by Subhash Chandra Bose, Attavar, Yallappa and H. V. Kamath was involved and played an important role in INA struggle.<sup>14</sup>

Colonial hegemony can be identified in Dakshina Kannada after independence. A large educated class pushed for the implementation of reforms in Dakshina Kannada. The revolution in the education sector

<sup>11</sup> "The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi"- Vol. 18, p. 216, Vol. 35, p. 194, Vol. 57, p. 209. Govt. of India,- Source: [www. Gandhian Heritage Portal](http://www.GandhianHeritagePortal.com).

<sup>12</sup> Suryanatha Kamath (ed.) *Karnataka State Gazetteer*, Bangalore, 1982 p. 363.

<sup>13</sup> Suryanath Kamat, *Karnatakadalli Quit India Chaluvali*, Bangalore, 1992, p. 75, 11

<sup>14</sup> Malar Jayarama Rai, *Deshat Tanan Balidana Koda Tulunada Sumatra Attavar, Ellappa*, Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy, Mangalore, 2013

in the district inspired businesses and the banking sector. The freedom struggle started in Dakshina Kannada earlier than the first war of Independence in 1857 in the country and continued to be influenced by various ideological influences along with social and cultural contribution to the country and ushered in further developments.

