

Hardekar Manjappa (1886 – 1947): The Gandhi of Karnataka

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Abstract

Hardekar Manjappa was one among the hardly remarkable glittering gems in the history of modern Karnataka. His freedom movements, social programmes, cultivation of journalism and service to the field of literature are the peerless efforts. Manjappa's long journey from Swadeshi to Swatantrya laid numerous milestones in the saga of struggle for freedom. His wondering towards villages, national schools, khadi prachar, satyagrah and Alamathi Ashrams, Bhajan and Tarun Sanghas, Dhanurdhari and Sharana Sandesha papers, Basava and Akkamahadevi Jayantis were some steps by him towards the constructive reforms in modern Karnataka.

KEYWORDS: Dhanurdhari, Sharana Sandesha, Ashrama, Khadi, Sangha

INTRODUCTION:

Manjappa was born in the Hadekar family of Banavasi in north canara district of Karnataka on 18th February, 1886. He was last his father in his beginning age and grew in the shelter of brother Madhulingappa and mother. Manjappa was passed 'Mulky' Exam in 1903 in Sirsi. Very next year he was joined as assistant teacher in his school, whereby he passed Mulkey, for the monthly salary of rupees seven. In 1905 he was deputed to a separate class room as symbol of promotion by his beloved teacher Sanganabasayya. It was the time of anti-partition movement in Bengal took turn as swadeshi movement across India.

Publication of Dhanurdhari:

Manjappa published the paper 'Dhanurdhari' in 1906 from Davangere with the help of his brother Madhulingappa. Now they come from Sirsi to Davangere for the publication of paper on the lines of Tilak's kesari in Marathi. Davangere was the only place to express views about Tilak, to the people of princely state of Mysore. Printing press owner unconditionally increase the printing charge of Dhanurdhari. But, Manjappa with the help of Bondade Balappa purchased an old printing press in Shivamoga and started the 'Sachchidananda press' in Davangere. But in 1908 Tilak was arrested and sent to mandle. At the same time British government declared the Marle-minto reforms in 1909. The political conditions were very bitter and government extended some regulations on papers even in princely states. The strength of subscribers to the paper 'Dhanurdhari' were severely decreased. His brother returned to Sirsi. In this period of confluence Manjappa spent many days without sufficient food. For his poorer condition and work hard for the cause of political awareness he has had no time to maintain family. That's why he gave up the think of marriage and took oath of Brahmacharya at his early age of 24. So, he changed his food habits as convenient to the life of Brahmacharya.

Social Work:

It was the year 1908, Manjappa didn't have the clear ideas in the field of socio-religious affairs and even regarding the Basaveshwara and Veerashaivism. With the associateship of local persons like Nidagundi Madivalappa, Kanchikare Mahalingappa, Ganapatrao Bada and others in Davanagere impressed him a lot in the knowledge about the above fields. Ganapatrao Bada did write the book 'Patitoddhara, by Manjappa.

Bhajana Sangh – 1911:

Manjappa went to Bombay with his both of neighbours to purchase the accessories to their Jenning factory. Where in Bombay Manjappa has visited the Arya samaj mandir. Bhajan and comments were attracted him a lot in mandir. After returned from Bombay to Davanagere again with the help and suggestion of Madivalappa, Mahalingappa and Mrityunjaya Swamy of Murughamath of Dharwad in 26 June 1911, Manjappa started the Bhajana Sangha in Davanagere. Every Monday evening they used to sing the philosophical songs of Nijaguna and Sarpabhushana Shivayogi's. Manjappa published some selected Bhajan songs.

Series of Lectures in Shravana:

Hardekar Manjappa requested Sri. Mrityunjaya Swamiji of Murughamath to start the series of Shravana lectures by calling the reputed scholars from across the state to deliver the lectures on various issues. It was become the dais to reach the people about political struggle against British raj.

By the close contact with Sri. Mrityunjaya Swamiji, Hardekar was started to study the religious scriptures especially regarding Veerashiva principles, Yoga, medicine, ayurveda, palmology and others.

Celebration of Basava Jayanti – 1913:

On the lines of Ramanavami, Manjappa thought of to celebrate the Basava Jayanti. He lettered many scholars and astrologists to fix the date of birth of Lord Basaveshwara on the source of sloka of Basavapurana of Bhimakavi. Manjappa finalized the birth of Basaveshwar in 1132 and he began the celebration of jayanti from 1913. So, the seed of Basavajayanti was sown by Manjappa in modern Karnataka is still celebrating by the Kannadigas.

Cast of Compulsory Primary Education:

Manjappa was very instinct and consensus of casting free and compulsory primary education to the children. He was quite openly propagated this thing in the session of 'Veerashaiva mahasabha', held in Belgaum. And the same was requested to the then Diwan of Mysore, Sri. M. Visvesvaraiah while his visit of Davanagere in about 1913.

Veerashiva Taruna Sangha – 1917:

Hardekar Manjappa intended to built the youth association when he met Pune in 1917. Immediate after return from the Pune with the suggestion of Sri. Shivamurthy Swamy Hiremath, Manjappa inaugurated the Taruna Sangh in the year 1917 on the day

of Basava Jayanti. Gadigayya Honnapurmata, the famous lawyer, thinker and editor was invited from Dharwad as chief guest to the 'Veerashaiva Taruna Sammelana'.

Jnana Prasarak Sangh:

With odd intention to bring the integration among the all sanghas and samitis Manjappa started "Jnana Prasarak Sangh", in 1918, by which he was arranged special discussions and discourses to the youth community.

Shivayogeshwar Marathi School:

Manjappa was impressed and influenced by the Marathi papers like Tilak's 'Kesari'. So, in this effect he has started the Shri. Shivayogeshwara Marathi School in 1918, to teach and learn the knowledge of Marathi journals and books in the school. Narayana Sharma was appointed as teacher in the school. Manjappa didn't believe in the astrology.

In the influence of Gandhiji:

Manjappa had the yoga to meet and enjoy the lecture of Gandhiji in 1915, in Bangalore at a large mass session, presided by K. P. Puttanna Shetty. Hardekar was published the biography of Gandhiji in Kannada at first time in January, 1919. He explained the story of Gandhi elaborately in 20 chapters.

Khadi Prachar:

As belonged to the princely state of Mysore, Hardekar Manjappa took Khadi as comprehensive nation building work of Indian National Congress. Manjappa now used his 'Jnana Prasarak Sangh' for the disseminating khadi. He refused the factory made clothes and however, Manjappa didn't believe the Gandhian thought regarding the bonfire of foreign clothes, while millions of Indian poor were in the condition to unable for making proper shelter themselves. He upheld the opinion of C. F. Andrews to share the foreign cloth to the Indian poor unless bonfire them.

Creation of National Literature:

After, the journal 'Dhanurdhori', was closed due to lack of economic crisis, Manjappa depended on writing and publishing the book for leading his personal life. But, after 1920, the non-cooperation movement was initiated by Gandhiji, Manjappa creatively indulged in the composition of national literature. In a way he started 'Rashtra Jeevana Granthamale' in 1921, by which he had intended to bring four books every year with the support of public. The first book 'Bharateeyara Deshabhakti', was published in 1921 by Granthamale. It is consisted the theme of nationalism in the philosophical approach and propagated his socio-political thoughts. It is a research oriented of new trend.

Reform of Veerashaiva Samaj:

Manjappa opposed Veerashaivas to joins hands with the non-Brahmin party. So, in 1921 he wrote a book on 'Veerashaiva Samaja Sudharane', with the effort he was criticized by many Veerashaiva leaders. As a Veerashaiva, Manjappa only the person indulged in khadi activities. Seemed him as a traitor in view of Veerashaiva Samajists.

Life of Swami Ramateertha and his Lectures:

Hardekar Manjappa translated Swami Ramateerthas life and lectures in five volumes in 1921-22, on the base of English books are written by Narayana Swami and the Marathi by Pathke and Burle. Introducing Swamy Ramateertha in Kannada is a great contribution and symbol of nationality by Manjappa. How, he got magnum opus works into Kannada, vis-à-vis translated the great works of Kannada to other languages. On the base of Venkannaiah, M. R., Sri and other Vacanakaras, he composed the book 'Vacankarara Samaja Rachane' in 1936.

Propagation of Satyagraha:

Manjappa propagated that, the principle of satyagraha was practiced by Prahlada, Buddha, Sacrates, Jesus and other greatman before Gandhi, but he rejuvenated it now. Manjappa started the 'Gandhi epoch' on 22nd March, 1922, as symbol of imprisonment of Gandhi after 'Chauri Choura' incident. Hardekar disseminated the nine principles of satyagraha viz., Satya, Ahimse, Brahmacharya, Asteya, Aparigraha, Aswada, Nirbhaya, Swadeshi and eradication of untouchability in Sirsi, Kumta, Honnavara, Gokarna, Ankola, Siddapur and other places in north canara district.

Karnataka – Gandhi:

In 1922 and 1923, Manjappa toured Karnataka to propagate the Gandhijis nine principles of satyagraha. Karnataka people agreed and accept the Hardekar's thoughts in view of religious moral attitudes. In a three days campaign regarding Gandhian principles held series of lectures in Bijapur, Manjappa injected the new energy in the audiens. Hence, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande the lion of Karnataka deeply impressed by the lectures of Hardekar, he called Mr. Hardekar Manjappa as 'Karnataka Gandhi'.

In 1923, Manjappa presided the 'Dharwad District Congress' session held at Haweri by the request of R. R. Diwakar. Where he was declared the worship of untouchables is the holy task it of Brahmana and Jangama. In all the holly works it is better to give an opportunity and offer to dalits and untouchables.

After Gandhi was returned to Sabarmati Ashram in 1924, Manjappa visited and lived a while at Ashram. When he discussed about Punarjanma (Rebirth) and Ashteya with Gandhi. He had the opportunity to meet and see the all India dignitaries when they come to meet at Sabarmati. Before he quit the sabarmati, got a weaving wheel from Madhan Gandhi.

Basaveshwara Sevadala:

At the first time in the history of congress, it had held its 39th session in Blgaum that's ever prescribed by Gandhi himself. Manjappa went Belgaum with his 'Basaveshwara Sevadala'. And where in Belgaum Manjappa freely dispersed the booklet namely 'Satyagraha Basaveshwara', it was simultaneously composed in Hindi and Marathi. Now Manjappa closer to Gandhi with the busy schedule of Gandhi, many Veerashaiva leaders unable to get meet him. For the purpose, Manjappa called the meeting of 'Veerashaiva Parishad' and where many leaders seen and taught with Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu by the help of Manjappa.

National School of Alamatti:

Manjappa decided and dedicated rest of his time for freedom and social reforms with the influence of Gandhi visited many villages in the Bijapur district with Bantanala Swamiji. Many people gave up their tobacco, smoke, liquor, prostitution and other evil habits. Now the close association of Manjappa with Bantanala Swamiji and Noorondaiah Patil, he shifted his Ashram from Harihara to Alamatti. Where he opened a school namely 'Veerashaiva Vidhyalaya, in May, 1927. Casting the job oriented professional education. Established a permanent trust for the look after the affairs of 'Vidhyalay' a school come boarding house. It was run upto 1934 for a short period of nine years. Later it closed due to decrease in the student strength.

Works of Manjappa:

Manjappa in his continuous public life about four and half decades had been written above fifty works and four papers. He sold the 3 lakhs of copies of his own books. Manjappa published four journals and built many public associations and organizations.

Estimate:

From Swadeshi to Swaraj in 1947, Manjappa rendered his Yeoman service in multi ways. He started the Gandhian epoch, satyagrah samaj, satyagrah ashram, veerasaiva parishad, veerasaiva vidyalaya, alamatti ashram, published above fifty books and run the four journals for years long. It indicates his work culture like a Gandhi. Hence, he rightly got the epithet as Gandhi of Karnataka by Gangadhar Rao Deshpande. However, he was criticized for his staunch Hinduism and diversified views about minorities.

Suggestions:

Government of Karnataka will have the time to publish his all fifty books and journals in series of volumes to help the broadening the further researches in social sciences like "Gandhi Kriti Sanchaya", in hundred volumes. Also create an award in his name for the persons who rendered unforgettable contribution towards society and culture.

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