



The Role of Rajahamsa Newspaper as on Inspirational Force in Freedom Movement in Dharwad

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Abstract :

Dharwad as the home for education and culture has played its own prominent role in the freedom movement. The new era which emerged in Dharwad in the social and religious areas during the 19th century as in other parts of the country has created national consciousness. Those great men born then were responsible for sowing the seeds of awareness among people about the suppressive role of Britishers and were instrumental in kindling the national spirit. 'Dharwad Vrutta' and 'Chava' were the two Marathi news magazines which were in Dharwad in the beginning. 'Chandradoya' Kannada magazine was published by Huchhayya Vibhuti since 1976. Later on, Karnataka Vrutta (1891 – Balavantrao Jathar), Dhananjaya (daily newspaper – 1895), Wagbushan (1896), Vagdevi (1916 – Honnapurmth), Karmaveer (1921 – Ranganath Diwakar). These newspapers instilled inspiration among the people of this area and made them enter the freedom movement. Among them Rajahamsa newspaper has been one of them.

Key Words : Rajahamsa, freedom movement, Dharwad

Introduction :

North Karnataka was part of Mumbai state during that period and therefore the region came under the influence of leaders of that area. Poona was the hub of political activities at that time. It was popularly perceived that people in Dharwad used to spread their umbrella when it rained in Pune. It means that if any movement or new Journal was started in Pune its influence was felt in Dharwad. Inspiring speeches of Tilak and others and Journal's

like 'Kesari' and 'Maratha' created new enthusiasm among people of this area and made them enter the freedom movement.

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Rajahamsa newspaper establishment and growth:

A group of youngsters including the Late Ramarao Desai, Haribhvu Jambekar, Ramarao Ballari, Vamanrao Jathar started weekly newspaper 'Rajahamsa' in 1891. After sometime the running of this newspaper became the full responsibility of Vamanrao Jathar. Mr. Vamanrao purchased a printing press for this newspaper and was running it. Rajahamsa Printing Press was in Desai Galli at that time. This weekly newspaper contained the writings on the misrule of the local officers and criticisms used to be made without any fear in the editorials of the paper. The paper used to highlight the people's desires and aspirations, likes and dislikes and to publish the people's complaints and thereby to get them removed. This paper which was promoting national spirit among people ultimately became an eyesore for the government.

In 1898 this weekly published a national song entitled "Bhavani Talwar" relating to Shivaji Maharaj. This was disliked by the Government and raised its objections about it. The Government decided to seize the original paper of the poet who wrote this poem. The English DSP of Dharwad went with hundreds of policemen and raided the entire Desai area. The documents of the Printing Press were searched for nearly three hours. But no objectionable material was found and the policeman returned disappointed. It was a period during which Curzon Shahi type of oppressive regime had engulfed the entire country. The freedom of Press was found only in name. Its impact was felt on the 'Rajahamsa' news weekly and the manager of the Printing Press was subjected to various type of torture. The news weekly had to be closed for some time without any alternative.

A Kannada newspaper called 'Rajahamsa' was started in Dharwad for spreading the news of First World War and the national movement Lokmanya Tilak. The Late Annacharya Hosakeri was the editor of this newspaper. Kannada speaking people of the area happily welcomed this Kannada newspaper when general educated people had to depend on English or Marathi newspapers. Fresh news were published by this paper during the first 4 years of

this daily newspaper through Reuter News Organization's Telegrams. Hosakeri Annacharya the editor used to publish the news with appropriate headings. Hence, in a short period this newspaper became quite popular with the people and due to the demand from the public, the weekly paper was also started. This paper used to receive printed notifications of Central Government and Bombay Government. A summary of these notifications were published in this paper. The number of subscribers of this paper was increasing as it was publishing news items of public meetings, etc. The office of Rajahamsa paper was a type of educational centre for the enthusiastic youthful writers. A group of news agents was born and young writers got an opportunity for writing. The Late Govindacharya Guttal, the Late Madhwarao Kabbur, Rangarao Diwakar, etc. had started writing lead articles in this newspaper.

Rangarao Diwakar was working as teacher in Victoria High School in the beginning of 1917 and he had started spending his time writing lead articles in Rajahamsa office. In 1921 Rangarao Diwakar with the cooperation of the Late Madhwarao Kabbur and Late Ramarao Hukkerikar started 'Karmaveer' weekly newspaper. Even then he continued to write for Rajahamsa daily newspaper.

The Role of Rajahamsa Newspaper as on Inspirational Force in Freedom Movement in Dharwad :

The movement for boycotting schools and colleges, courts and offices, foreign clothing and liquor was started vigorously during the beginning of 1921. These news items used to appear daily in Rajahamsa newspaper and make people enthusiastic. In the post 1921 July 21 police firing in Dharwad, 29 people were arrested. Of these those related to Rajahamsa daily newspaper were also arrested. They included the owner of the newspaper the Late Vamanrao Jathar, and those who wrote articles like the Late Govindacharya Guttal and those related to Karmaveer like Madhwarao Kabbur, Rangarao Diwakar were arrested. In addition to these Madhwacharya who was selling the paper in the town was arrested. Further, the Late Annacharya Hosakeri of 'Vijaya' newspaper and B. Krishnarao Mudaveedkar of "Karnataka Vrutta" newspaper were also arrested. It was presumed that these arrests of those who were writing in the newspaper would result in the closure of the newspaper, but that did not happen and all the newspapers continued to be published continuously without any fear.

In 1922 the manager of Rajahamsa Printing Press the Late Manjunatharao Tembe continued the publication of 'Rajahamsa' facing all the obstacles without losing confidence and ignoring the financial distress. Dharwad received electricity for the first time in 1929. Till that time the work in the Printing Press was carried on during the whole night with the help of Kerosene Oil, Lamps and with Hand Operations. Rajahamsa office during that period was like a central place for local leaders to meet. Shri Tilak visited this office in 1916. Leaders like Gangadharrao

Deshpande, Venkatarao Alur, Vithalrao Joshi, Dr. Hardikar, etc. used to come many times and give their guidance's. This office has been visited by Late Lala Lajpat Rai, Shoukal Ali in 1921, C. Rajgopalachari and Ramdas Gandhi in 1923, Jayaramdas Daulataram in 1928 and G.V. Mavalnkar in 1938.

Rajahamsa newspaper gave full support to candidates of Swaraj Party during 1923 and 1926 general elections. In the election of these candidates the publicity work of Rajahamsa was worth mentioning. The newspaper has rendered extraordinary service in the publicity work during 1930 Salt Satyagraha and 1931-32 Civil Disobedience Movement. The publicity work carried on through this paper during 1930-32, no-tax movement in Sirsi, Siddapur and Ankola talukas is to be considered as unprecedented. In 1932 February, the Civil Disobedience Movement assumed violent form. This led to the police officers to bring police force on 12-02-1932 and raided the office of Rajahamsa and houses of major writers. They searched the places for 3 hours for seizing the leaflets related to no-tax movement. They could not get any leaflets. But they got hold of the documents in the Printing Press, the subscribers addresses, Bills, Receipts, Receipt forms, etc. related to Rajahamsa office.

There was only one Cyclostyle Machine in Dharwad. It was in Karnataka Congress Committee office. The Government had declared all Congress offices as illegal and they were locked and sealed. But the Cyclostyle Machine of Karnataka State Congress Committee was shifted out before it was locked and hand bills were printed secretly on the machine and they were distributed. The DSP during that period Mr. Roger's had proposed to close the Rajahamsa newspaper and seal the printing press. But he could not get any proof against the newspaper.

'Rajahamsa' newspaper used to publish daily news from Congress bulletins which were declared as illegal. The bulletins were published from Sirsi, Siddapur and Ankola talukas. There were attempts from Dharwad officers to acquire these bulletins and file a case against 'Rajahamsa' newspaper. All the letters to Rajahamsa were censored before reaching the newspaper. But police could not get any objectionable paper and later on the police censored letters posted by 100 people. The police became frustrated when they could not get any clues. A handbill was traced at last in the Garag Sidlingappa Library.

News letters were posted in the name of students in the hostels of Karnataka college and they were collected from there to the newspaper office for publication. One student each was nominated for each no-tax area in the hostel address. Packets containing handbills were received in the hostel every day. The same were taken and delivered to the Printing Press of the newspaper through Shri Govindacharya and important news were selected from those handbills and the same were published in the newspaper the very next day. The handbills were sent in the form of songs of poet Purandaradas.

Shambhooraya was managing the Rajahamsa newspaper during the Civil Disobedience Movement and he used to publish news about the Civil Disobedience Movement. The radio news was published in Rajahamsa newspaper during that period. There was only one radio in Dharwad in Saraswatpur area and arrangements were made to bring news from there. In addition to this details were published in the newspaper about no-tax movement and government's suppressive rule. This newspaper was a source of inspiration and for promoting national spirit.

Government imposed a restriction against publishing the name of any Congress member through an ordinance. This was a big problem and it was difficult to escape from it. However, the newspaper used other methods of conveying the name of Congress leaders. For Gandhi's name it used the word 'India's Great Man', for Jawaharlal Nehru 'President of Lahore Congress', for Karmarkar 'Strategist for No-tax Movement' were used to convey the readers the actual name in an indirect way. The newspaper was published for some months through this exercise. The ordinance of the government was withdrawn after the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Conclusion :

The Rajahamsa newspaper used to publish often about untouchability, publicity about khadi and village industries, encouraging the use of indigenous products and unity among Hindus and Muslims. Publication of Vishal Karnataka daily newspaper was proposed after the Congress assumed power in the states. With this view "Vishal Karnataka Publications Ltd. Company" was established. Simultaneously, Rajahamsa weekly was converted into Vishal Karnataka. A Kannada monthly 'Sadanand' and an English weekly 'Karnataka Front' were started in 1938. This way, multiday publications were going on from Rajahamsa Office Newspapers working with National Spirit during those days. But the newspapers were not getting advertisement from Government or Non-Government institutions as they were facing the ire of the British Government. It was not possible to run the newspapers only through subscription. Second World War was started during the same period. Congress Ministries in the states resigned. Government ordinances and suppression were started again. Rajahamsa Printing Press was asked for guarantee during the "Quit India Movement". Rajahamsa daily newspaper was closed in 1944 unavoidably.

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