



THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE BY RAJARSHI KRISHNARAJ WODEYAR IV

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ABSTRACT

The Distribution of social justice by Krishnaraja wodeyar IVth is a unique chapter in the history of India, who has been called as 'Rajarshi' by Gandhi. Krishnaraja wodeyar IVth was a political sage and nation builder. He hailed from the famous wodeyar family which swore by absolute patriotism and social justice. He was greatly influenced by Buddha, Basava, Rajaram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandiji and other eminent Philosophers and statesmen. He was Fortunate enough to receive Western Education and inculcate certain noble values such as justice, freedom, fraternity and collective welfare. He was mainly responsible for building the princely state of Mysore as a 'progressive and model state' in Indian subcontinent. He was the first ruler in the entire south India who guaranteed benefit of reservation to the backward class, Dalits, Minorities and other weaker sections of the society.

He established several educational, cultural, Industrial and other progressive institutions. He was the pioneer of industrializing and modernization of the princely state of Mysore. He was wedded to noble public cause and social justice. Krishnaraja wodeyar IVth goes down in the history of Karnataka as the champion of the social justice and catalyst of development. An evaluation of the role of Krishnaraja wodeyar IVth In the distribution of social justice assumes profound significance historically and other wise.

KEYWORDS: Nationalism, Backward Classes, Khadi, Dewan



INTRODUCTION

The winds of nationalism, inspired by the Mahatma's clarion call, blew over Mysore as well, though the magnitude of the movement was much more evident in the parts of today's Karnataka, popularly known back then as Bombay Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka. The people in these regions were under the repressive rule of the Bombay presidency and the Nizam respectively. Their counterparts in the kingdom of Mysore enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity and did not feel the pinch of foreign rule.

DISCUSSION

The freedom struggle in Mysore was preceded by a period of renaissance that facilitated the spread of new ideas and technology. The spread of education, the introduction of printing, the activities of the Christian missionaries and their impact on Indian society and the spread of liberal and democratic ideas widened people's outlook towards their own lives and their political consciousness.

Almost at the same time, the Backward Classes Movement began in Mysore State. The quest of backward caste of traditional society to seek political and social participation could be termed a byproduct of the spread of modern ideas. The Miller Committee appointed to look into the demands of the backward classes recommended reservations. The government took the recommendations seriously and decided to include backward classes in government jobs. Also the derisive attitude of the missionaries led Indian society to look inwards and introspect on existing social evils. The Mysore Social Progress Association was formed in 1915 and held its conference at Bangalore in 1917 where the Aashakta Poshaka Sabha was formed to empower weaker sections of society.

The maharaja's government, as we have seen, was no less committed to social reform. The 1894 law banning child marriage (girls below the age of 8), the first Indian state to enfranchise women (1923), pioneering strides in female education-these were all significant milestones in Mysore's social history. R. Gopalswamy Iyer in Mysore and Govindacharya Swami in Bangalore made significant efforts in the eradication of untouchability much before even the Congress could take up the issue. In fact, Dewan K. Sheshadri Iyer had founded separate schools for 'untouchables' and Sir M. Vishweshwarayya had instituted scholarships for them. The time thus seemed ripe for a social movement that sought

representative and responsible governance for the state. To counter Brahmin dominance in administration and public life, the Praja Mitra Mandali was formed by non-Brahmin groups. It opposed the demand for responsible government in Mysore, pointing out that the non-Brahmins had a very small share in the government service and demanded special privileges to amend this. Their activities were encouraged by Prince Kanthirava Narasimharaja Wodeyar, who believed in the concept of social justice.

Princely states like Mysore were to enroll members in the Congress but engage themselves in constructive activities, like production of khadi, cow-protection and propagation of Swadeshi etc. It was the untiring efforts of people, like Tagadur Ramachandra Rao that helped the Congress bridge this gap. As mentioned earlier, his efforts to eradicate untouchability won him, and through him the Congress, public acceptance. He struggled to ensure entry of untouchables to the Gunja Narashimhaswamy Temple at T. Narasipura, as also allowing them to use public wells and tanks. His Khaddar Sahakara Sangha started in 1925 in Tagadur helped the villagers earn a living. Rao's efforts to uplift one of the most backward communities, the Kanniyars, won him great praise from national leaders, including Gandhi.

The implementation of Reservation policy for backward class and depressed classes in the Princely State of Mysore are very significant in the Socio-Economic History of India. Reservation in the State in Independent India and Post State Reorganization Karnataka had seen many the ups and downs and Road Blocks, and in the process contributed to the evolving future of Social Justice in the Country. After the Rendition of the Princely State of Mysore, a Dewan was appointed to assist the Mysore king. It so happened that all the Dewan appointed in the initial years was only from the then larger Madras Presidency-Tamil or Telugu Brahmins. That was naturally an irritant, and the Mysore Brahmins, resented that domination of the Brahmins from Madras Presidency, in the affairs of the Princely Mysore State everywhere- in the Services, Appointments, and Education. The Maharaja of Mysore, in 1910, conceded the Demands of Mysore Brahmins and Appointed Visweshwarayya a Brahmin Engineer of Mysore, as the first Dewan from Mysore. This in turn opened the gates of domination by the Mysore Brahmins-100% in higher services, and 82% in all jobs.

Representations to the Mysore Brahmins, their growth and domination in all the State Services and Education, gave raise to strong Voices of protest by many of the then Backward Classes, and Claims for Reservation to Backward Classes. The Lingayats, Muslims, Mudaliars and Vokkaligas were in the forefront of the Demand for such Reservations. In fact, they demanded an end to all Brahmin Monopoly. Important Backward Castes had in fact, started in 1905 Veerasaiva Education Society and their Mutts opened their Schools; and in 1906 Vokkaliga Sangha started their own Schools and Hostels.

Having conceded the demands of Mysore Brahmins for Representation in Services, and Appointment of Visweshvarayya Dewan, the King was no reason in denying the demands, and refusing reservations to Backward Classes. The king in 1918 Appointed Millers Committee, headed by Mr. Miller, Chief Justice of the High Court of Mysore to look into the Claims of Backward Classes. In protest, Vishweshvarayya resigned from his position as Dewan. Miller after examining the demands of Backward Classes, in his report submitted in 1919 recommended Reservations for Backward Classes. C J Miller Recommended as follows :

1. 75% Reservations
2. Time Bound Target to achieve at least 50% share of Jobs to Backward Classes
3. Appointment not on the basis of Marks, but on the crucially important Characteristics of Sincerity, Honesty, Courage and Compassion
4. Fellowships and Scholarships for Backward Classes Students
5. Free Sites and Land grants for Schools and Hostels

The Maharaja agreed with the Chief Justice Miller, and provided reservations for the Backward Classes. The Backward Classes in Mysore then meant everyone other than the Brahmins, Anglo-Indians and Europeans. Muslims also got the reservation.

The Reservations for the Backward Classes, brought about considerable changes in the social fabric of the then Mysore State. It rightly loosened the Grips of the Brahmins, to a considerable extent. But, it sadly benefited powerful backward classes like the Vokkaligas, who took large and undue benefits from the reservations for the backward Classes. Added to that, in the name of economic Backwardness, influential Brahmin communities with the right connections, and powerful backward classes with good contacts and better influences forged ahead,

particularly during the decades of planned developments. After Independence these distorted and skewed Developments, created a lot of Social unrest in the State with the Most Backward Classes, demanding for Social Justice.

The Princely State of Mysore was the older state, in the southern part of India, to give greater importance to the spread of women's education. There was no legislation passed with regard to the educational matters but when the primary education was made compulsory for the first time in 1913. Elementary education regulation was passed. This compulsion was only for the boys in the beginning, but later, it was imposed to girl's also.¹ To attract the girls and their parents, the government passed a resolution that education should be offered free of cost in its schools and colleges, all over the state, to the girls, except in the native Christian and Eurasian schools. With the government's liberal attitude and encouragement, Women's education slowly became popular, and every year, the number of schools and strength of the students in them, both increased. The following table shows the number of schools and strength of the students in public girls' school.

| Year | Public girl's school | Strength |
|---------|----------------------|----------|
| 1901-02 | 235 | 12,110 |
| 1902-03 | 235 | 12,540 |
| 1903-04 | 243 | 12,342 |

The Maharani's college was the largest school of the primary section in the whole of Mysore state. Further, to encourage widowed women to continue their studies, 34 state scholarships were awarded, in the year 1906-07. Another interesting phenomenon was that private agencies opened schools for girls from the Mohammedan, and Panchama communities, besides those from such linguistic background as the Kannada, Marathi, and Tamil.

After rendition, the Maharaja continued his full support and co-operation for the spread of women's education and opened separate schools for Mohammedan girls. It was primary education that had attracted the people much. The Government gave permission to open schools in Bangalore, Mysore, Tumkur, Shimoga, Davanagere etc. The increase in the number of girls in the Primary section was chiefly due to the establishment of one aided girls' school, and another un-aided Zanana school. The Maharaja of Mysore gave equal encouragement to women's education among the Muslims, Hindus, Christians and all other minority people, including the

depressed and backward classes. Castes and communities, such as the Untouchables, Lambanis, Voddas, Korachar, Korma, Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravidians; and hill tribes and Animists formed an important section of the total population of the state. These communities came to be categorized as Depressed and Backward Classes of the society. They had suffered much marginalization, alienation and discrimination and were deprived of the benefit of education. Because of Untouchability and caste prejudices, people had been kept in the dark. After rendition in 1881, the state government opened two schools for Untouchables at Huskur and Narasapura.

Under the influence of the missionaries, girls from these communities were also admitted to the boys' school. In Belur, a Untouchable philanthropist constructed a school-building at his own cost. The government encouraged private agencies to open schools by sanctioning grant-in-aid to the schools. In Tumkur, Wesleyan mission maintained a school for the Untouchables, for which purpose the government sanctioned grant-in-aid. There were 17 girls in the Untouchable School. With the encouragement of the government, such schools were opened in all places of the state, mostly by the local bodies. Besides the above, the Missionaries also opened few schools in Hassan, Mysore and Anekal. It is interesting to note that the Mysore government exhibited its interest in imparting education to these classes, further to encourage them to get admitted in general schools. Special grant-in-aid was sanctioned by the government to these schools, including the one called the indigenous school, which made them to open their doors for the low caste people. With the encouragement of the government, many private agencies came forward to open schools for them.

CONCLUSION

Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar did not neglect the welfare of the Untouchables. He gave lands near Ashokapuram in Mysore to them who were till earning their livelihood by growing betel nut leaves which are known by the famous name as "Mysore chigurele". This horticulture has given a contended livelihood for thousands of such laborers. No doubt due to the generosity of the Nalwadi Krishnaraja wodeyar, the Dalits got lands for tilling in the pre-independence day.

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