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History of Mysore and Jnapaka Chitrashale: Some observations

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Abstract

Devanahalli Venkataramanaiah Gundappa (1887-1975) popularly known as D.V.G. is one of the multifaceted scholars that modern Karnataka has witnessed. As a renowned journalist, poet, political analyst and a philosopher Gundappa was witness to several important historical events. He contributed immensely to both national struggle and the Karnataka unification movement. *Manku Thimmana Kagga, Marula Muniyana Kagga, Shree Chennakeshava, Anthapura Geethe, Vasantha Kusumanjali, Umarana Osage, Shree Rama Parikshanam, Geetha Shankuntala, Shree Krishna Parikshanam, Ketaki Vana, Nivedana, Shringara Mangalam*, are some of his unique poetry collections. He has authored dramas such as *Shree Vidyananya Vijaya, Kannada Mackbeth, Parashurama, Prahasanatravee, Kanakaluka, Tilottame*. He is known for biographies also. He has written biographies of *Diwan Rangacharlu, Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Shri Vidyananya and Dadabhai Nauroji*. Being a distinct philosopher he has written commentaries on *Eshopanishat* and *Purusha Sukta* ^[1]. *Jeevana Dharma Yoga* or *Shrimad Bhagvad Gita Tatparya* ^[2] is his famous commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*. Being a political thinker he has authored *Rajyashastra, Rajyanga Tatvagalu* and *Rajakeeya Prasangagalu* in two volumes. Besides these his contribution to history students is more valuable. Jnapaka Chitrashale is one among them.

Keywords: History, Jnapaka Chitrashale, Devanahalli Venkataramanaiah Gundappa

Introduction

In the beginning of the 20th century D.V.G. entered public life as a journalist and he was a witness to the history of the Princely State of Mysore as a member of Representative Assembly *Janapaka Chitra Shale* or *Nenapina Chitragalu* in eight volumes is about many renowned people he came across in public life as well as whatever he heard and remembered from his memories. They are named as '*Sahithi Sajjana Sarvajjanikaru*', '*Kalopaasakaru*', '*Sahityopaasakaru*', '*Mysorina Diwanarugalu*', '*Vaidika Dharma Sampradayastaru*', '*Halavaru Sarvajjanikaru*', '*Hrudaya Sampannaru*' and '*Sankeerna Smrithi Samputa*'. There are Teachers, Advocates, Doctors, Officers, Literatures, Musicians, Public Institutions, Hotels, Diwans and more over the common people who are portrayed in this volumes. D.V.G. was aware of the limitations in his works. Hence he in the introduction, pleads about loopholes in mentioning names and dates. Yet for the research scholars who would like to capture the history of modern Mysore these memories of Gundappa, illustrated in this book can be valuable resources.

For long time he was a resident of Bangalore. As a result, one can see very rare and unique details about the development of Bangalore in the early decades of 20th century. In this article an attempt is made to study the glimpses of Bangalore and history of Mysore given by him in these volumes. D.V. Gundappa throws light on social, political, educational and various other fields of Bangalore. Here are some of the reminiscences of D.V.G. about Bangalore. In 1906-07 Swami Abhedananda the disciple of Swami Vivekananda visited Bangalore to disseminate the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. This influenced the public life of Bangalore deeply ^[3]. Similarly many nationalist leaders like R.C. Dutt, Mahatma Gandhi and others visited Bangalore ^[4]. Out side the princely state there were many nationalist and reformist journals and news papers in Bangalore. Because of these there emerged a general awareness among the public in Bangalore. It was at this moment 'Indian Progressive Union' was established. 'Hitawadi' a journal was began in January 1905. through this. The role of this institution and news paper in creating social awareness in Bangalore was crucial ^[5]. D.V.G mentions several prominent personalities in his book.

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C.Venkatavaradayangarya, Bellave Somanathaiiah, Advocate Saligrama Subba rao, K. Ramachandra Rao, K.A. Krishnaswami Iyer, M. Shrinivasayyangarya, Karpooora Srinivara Rao, H.V. Nanjundaiah, M.S. Puttanna, are some of the personalities who had profound influence on the public life of Bangalore as well as Mysore [6]. The Institution held discussions and discourses on several social problems like adult marriages, widow marriage, anti-sati legislation, anti-child marriage legislation. It also celebrated the birthdays of nationalist leaders like Raja Ram Mohanroy, Eswarchandra Vidyasagar, Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Lokamanya Tilak and others. Such public functions created awareness among the Bangalorians successfully.

D.V.G. throws light on several public institutions and associations which flourished during his time. Of these, Bangalore Literary Union established by Diwan Rangacharlu, was a prominent association. Basavanagudi was just then a developing lay out. B.Venkatanaranappa was instrumental in establishing Basavanagudi Union and Service Club in this lay out. Popular Education League, Shri Ramakrishna Seva Sangha of Chicka Pete, Bangalore Study Club, Gokhale Desha Seva Sangha, Book Club, Bangalore Study Club [7], were some of the associations which were established during this period. Though some of these have disappeared now, D.V. Gundappa's views will be useful to know more about these. Above all these, the establishment of Karnataka Sahitya Parishat in 1915 was very crucial. D.V.G. was directly involved in its establishment. Hence, we get to know that the Parishat was first started in Intermediate College Hall. There was a long debate as to what name to be given to Parishat and ultimately it was decided to name it as 'Karnataka Sahitya Parishat' [8]. There are many details about early educational institutions in this book. London Mission High School was first built, while Central High School emerged later. After Central Mission High School, Wesleyan and United Mission Schools were started. The first Sanskrit Pathashala was started in the Bale Pete house of Bhashyam Thirumalacharya. Later on this was shifted to Tulasi Thota and was renamed as 'Shri Jayachamarajendra Samskruta Pathashala' [9].

The government has appointed Arcot Shrinivasachalu for the presidents' post of Bangalore Municipality. He was the first non-government official to assume this position. During his tenure Lan Bagh was beautified [10]. We get to know political awareness in Bangalore through details on Mysore princely state. The nationalist news papers like Vandhe Matharam, Maratha, karmayogin, Kesarik were in circulation in Bangalore. Birthday celebrations of many nationalist leaders were quite common then. Under the influence of Tilak D.V.G. attended to celebrate Ganeshotsava in Bangalore publicly. Many nationalist extremists of Bengal and Maharastra used to visit Bangalore. The government was aware of these facts and had appointed many spies to keep track of these nationalists and observe their activities. There used to be debates and discussions on several topics of nationalist importance. As a reaction to Praja Mitra Mandali, the first non Brahmin organization of princely state of Mysore, Mysore Mahajana Sabha was established during 1918-19 in Sultan Pete. Rao Bahadur Srinivasa Rangacharya was its president while Advocate C. Krishnamurthy and M.S. Puttanna were other prominent members of this Mahasabhe. Under the auspicious of this association in 1919 December the first People's Convention was held and it created political awareness. Later, the well

known Sultan Pete Disturbances or Ganapathi Disturbances or Chamaraja Pete disturbances happened. Consequences of this riot, Hindu Mahasabha rose to head in Bangalore [11].

In 1931 Peoples Conference of all princely states was held in Bangalore under the leadership of G.R.Abhayankar. In this conference many resolutions were taken. One among them was the necessity of responsible government in princely states and integration of all princely states in India's state political system. This was an important incident in the history of princely states. Besides these details, we can get information about the epidemic plague in Bangalore, the existence of Devadasi system, the well known devadasis of the time Bhavani, Koyamatturu Tati, Bangalore Nagarathamma, and others [12]. Bangalore Nagarathamma was patronized by High Court Judge Narahari Rao. In order to relish her music, he build what is now popularly know as Mount Joy (then know as Naraharaarayara Gudda). D.V.G. also portrays many individuals who were famous musicians such as violinist Aiyangarya, Venkataramaiah of Rudrapattanam, Veene Gopala Rao, Tayappa, Puttappa Alasur Munivenkatappa etc.. The readers here have the opportunity to know some biographical details about these unknown personalities. While describing their lifestyles, D.V.G. unknowingly throws light on the social as well as cultural sine rio of the time. He gives unique details about the beginning of the hotels in Bangalore. It was Avani Narasimha Rao Who first started hotel in Bangalore [13]. The personalities described here are both his preseders and contemporaries.

Such details are not documented in history generally. All the details in this book need not be valid and factual. This, as a limitation is known to D.V.G. himself and he has admitted it in the introduction. Nevertheless, the illustration of social life in Bangalore in these volumes is unique. The details can be historical document for us on the history of Bangalore as well as on the history of princely state of Mysore.

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5. Ibid. 22-23.
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