

CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

History of education in India can be traced back to the ancient days. The nature of education and the educational system during ancient and medieval times differed from that of the modern system. Education plays a very important role in shaping the human personality and enables him to make the proper use of the talents and capacities. Right of education was limited to the particular classes of the society in ancient times as well as in medieval period. In the chaturvarna (four varnas) system education was restricted to the higher classes only. In Ancient Karnataka provision of education was made in the Agraharas, temples and the mathas or monasteries.¹

In ancient period education consisted of the learning of the vedas, vedangas, philosophy, grammar, astronomy, law etc. The medium of instruction, then, was mainly Sanskrit. In Karnataka also there were number of centres of learning such as Belligami, Vikrampur, Sudi, Annigeri,² etc.

The agraharas were the centres of learning in ancient and medieval Karnataka. The villages which were granted to the learned Brahmins for their maintenance and scholarly

pursuits were known as Agraharas. The Brahmins studied and taught Vedas, vedanganas, Itihasa, yogavidya, purana, mimansa (criticism)³ etc.

The temples were also the centres of learning and those had generally Mathas or nostels attached to them. 'Kodiyamatn' was one of the most celebrated math attached to the Kedareswar temple at Belligami.⁴

During 12th century there started a new chapter in the history of education in Karnataka. Basaveswara and other leaders of Veershaiva cult made their mother tongue the medium of teaching. Thousands of vachana^s were composed in Kannada by Veershaiva Sharanas. During this period in several villages Mathas were established which were the religious bodies and educational institutions. In the 12th and 13th century, Agraharas, Mathas and Temples were the centres of learning.⁵ During the 14th century northern part of Karnataka came under Bahamani rule. Hence, the muslim educational institutions like Maktabas and madrasas were opened and they were attached to the Mosques. The sultans not only encouraged the muslim education but they encouraged sanskrit and other studies also.⁶ Under the Vijayanagar rule, education was encouraged. After the fall of Vijayanagar, the Wodeyars of Mysore continued the glorious traditions of education built by the Rayas of Vijayanagar. Education continued to receive the state patronage.⁷

The beginning of modern education was made by the British in India. The North Karnataka including district of Bijapur, Belgaum, Dharwar and Karwar were then the part of Bombay Presidency and this was the area of Karnataka where the 'Karnataka Liberal Education Society' started its activities of the spread of education since the beginning of the 20th century.

Establishment of the British rule in India had far reaching effects on the Indian Society and Indian administrative system. The East-India Company's government encouraged the spread of education in India in the 19th century.⁸ There were two reasons for this. One was that the company government was in need of the people having the knowledge of English for their administrative purpose and secondly the Indian people had become eager to acquire the western knowledge especially after the christian missionary activities in India in the field of education. In this regard the Charter Act of 1813 was a turning point in the history of education. The Charter Act of 1813 pronounced that it was a part of duty of British government in India to impart education to the Indians.⁹

The Charter Act of 1813 says "It shall be lawful for the Governor General in Council to direct that out of any surplus which may remain of the rents, revenues and profits arising from the said territorial acquisitions, after

defraying the expenses of the military, civil and commercial establishments and paying the interest of the debt in manner hereinafter provided, a sum of not less than one lack of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for introduction and promotion of knowledge of the science among the inhabitants of the British territories in India."¹⁰

The Charter Act of 1813 shows that of the British intended to encourage the learned natives of India for scholarly pursuits and they also desired to teach western science to the Indian people who were yet ignorant of it. Thus the Act of 1813 was a turning point in the history of Indian education. To educate Indian people definitely included the duties of the company. A large amount was to be annually secured for educational purpose and as a result of this the missionaries began to visit India in large number. They established schools and thereby laid the foundation of modern education in India.¹¹

The year 1854 was another important year as far as the spread of education in India was concerned. In that year 'Wood's education despatch' was passed which became the Magna Charta of English education in India. With this despatch the British government in India accepted the principle that the education of Indian people was state responsibility, and

it was also made clear that nobody would be rejected admissions in the schools on the basis of caste. Thus educational facilities were made available to all classes of the society.

As a result of 'Wood's despatch' the department of education was established in every province under British government. Thus along with the efforts of the missionaries, the government also took interest in the spread of education. The Charter Act of 1813 and Woods' Despatch of 1854 were land marks in the spread of education.¹² The provisions of these acts were naturally implemented in the Bombay presidency too¹³ and efforts were made to establish the educational institutions in different parts of the Bombay presidency. The efforts for spread of education were made in north Karnataka as well as in other parts of the presidency. The Karnataka Liberal Educational Society worked for it in the 20th century. But it is essential to understand the developments in the 19th century¹⁴ when the government as well as the missionaries made attempts to open educational institutions as per the provisions of Charter Act of 1813.¹⁵

In the district of Belgaum the first government primary school was opened in 1813 which was a Marathi medium school and afterwards in 1838, a Kannada school was also

opened. Four more schools were opened at Bailhongal, Soundatti, Beedi and Sampagaon in 1838 and afterwards another school was established at Gokak in 1840.¹⁶ In 1835 the very important decision was taken by the Bombay government regarding administration of the Southern Maratha Country. It was decided that as the Southern Maratha Country was a Kannada region the administration as well as the education would be conducted in Kannada. Naturally after this decision a number of Kannada medium schools were opened at several places.

Kannada text-books like 'Isopan Neetikategalu' 'Ganit Pustak Pravanka' and 'Shala Padhati' were printed at the mission press of Bellary in 1833. From 1836 Kannada books were printed at Bombay also. A Committee was appointed for the production of the books, Shri Balshastri Jambhekar was the Chairman and Shri K.B.Gadgil of Hubli and Shrinivas Subhanji of Kittur were the other members of that committee.¹⁷

'A book of Kannada Grammar' which was published by Wesleyan Mission of Mysore, was also used in this region. Even the provision was made for the English education and the first institution imparting English education was the Anglo-vernacular school, which was founded in Belgaum in 1832 by Reverend Taylor of the methodist London mission. A Board of education was founded in 1840 by the Bombay government to supervise the educational activities in the Bombay presidency.¹⁸

The Southern Maratha Country was not only a Kannada region but Marathi speaking population was also considerably large. Hence, the Bombay government had to take care to start Marathi medium schools at various places. Marathi medium schools were opened at Sadalaga (Chikodi Taluka) in 1841 and at Khanapur in 1843. Gradually, in Bombay Karnataka there was growth of educational institutions both in Kannada and Marathi medium during the 19th century. In 1843, at Itagi a Kannada school was started and in 1850, a Government High School was opened at Belgaum.¹⁹ By that year, Belgaum District had 12 government schools and two years later number rose to 50 with the total strength of 1,498 students. In 1868 there were 56 schools with 4,380 pupils on roll. By 1873 there was 190 primary schools in Belgaum district with 8,153 students. In 1883, there were 202 schools of which 187 were government schools and remaining aided. Of these 156 were the Kannada medium schools, 42 Marathi medium schools and 4 of Urdu medium. The strength of students on roll increased to 16,380. In 1900 there were about 291 schools with the total strength of 11,702 students.²⁰

The first school for girls was opened at Belgaum in 1856 A.D. which was known as 'Maruti Galli Marathi Girls' School' which was started by Mrs. Seton Carr. 'The convent Girls' High School' was started by a Roman Catholic Priest and ten girls were enrolled in 1882. In the year 1883,

there were 9 schools for Girls in Belgaum district with the total strength of 512 girls.²¹ In the year 1884 the Bombay government passed the Act by which the 'Local Bodies' were required to maintain primary schools within their area and be responsible for the extension and implementation of primary education of boys and girls with separate school funds. The government made the provision of education for scheduled castes and tribes also by providing the student-ships, scholarships,²² etc.

In 1883, the night school was established at Belgaum for those who could not attend the day classes. Thus we find that the Bombay government had made some efforts for the spread of education in the Bombay Karnatak region. There was awakening among the masses also about the importance of education in the changing times.²³ Only the efforts of Government were not sufficient for a rapid spread of education among the masses. The society also had some responsibility for the upliftment of the common and poor people. This was realised by some of the learned people of this region. Some veteran social workers of this region thought that it was their duty to do something for spread of education because it was the only means to help common masses in overcoming their sorrows and miseries.²⁴ With this intention, in the second decade of the 20th century, a new educational institution was started by some people in Bombay Karnataka region. This institution came

to be known as 'The Karnatak Lingayat Education Society' which later on was named as 'Karnatak Liberal Education Society'.

In Bombay Karnatak, Dharwar district stood sixth as regards literacy among the 24 district of the Bombay presidency. At the end of the 19th century six percent of the population of District was able to read and write. In 1881 there were 364 schools in the district with an attendance of 21,262 pupils. The number of pupils rose to 30,025 in 1901. During 1903-04 there were 564 educational institutions with 23,577 pupils of whom 3,666 were girls. The 542 institutions classed as public included 527 primary, 10 secondary and 3 high-schools. Besides two training institutions (one for males and one for females at Dharwar town) 4 institutions were maintained by government, 410 were managed by the district of municipal boards, 125 were aided and 3 unaided. The total expenditure on education was more than 2.3 lakhs of which Rs.43,000/- were derived from fees and Rs.57,000/- were contributed by local funds.²⁵

In remaining parts of Karnataka also efforts were made for the spread of education during the 19th century. The districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Karwar and Dharwar then were attached to Bombay Presidency. The most of remaining part of present Karnatak was under the Mysore State until mid 20th century. In Mysore State there were about 907

primary schools with 33,295 pupils at the end of 1881. Ever since there was a steady rise in the number of institutions and the strength of students attending the same clearly testifying the growing consciousness among the people about the benefits of education.²⁶ The question expansion of elementary education through the agency of indigenous schools was taken up in 1894-95 when the government introduced a system of grant-in-aid which gave an impetus to the starting of a large number of aided schools which stood at 2,556 at the close of 1915-16. Further, a system of compulsion was also introduced in certain selected centres by the passing of the elementary education regulation V of 1913.²⁷ The scheme was introduced in fifteen selected centres during 1914-15. In 1916 this scheme was extended to 12 new centres and in the following year it was extended to 41 new centres thus making a total of 68 centres. At the close of 1918-19 the number of schools both government and aided increased from 4,512 in 1915-16 to 8,966.²⁸

In the state of Mysore in 1921-22 there were about 18 high-schools of which 11 were government, 6 aided, 1 unaided with a strength of 7,690 students. In 1879-80 there were 12 schools for girls but number of public institutions for girls since then had a steady rise and in 1915-16 there were 515 schools for girls with a strength of 27,959. The percentage of girls under instruction with the total female population of school going age was 9.7 in 1915-16.²⁹

Thus efforts were made for spread of education in Bombay Karnataka and in the Mysore State in the 19th century. However, much more efforts were required to educate the masses. In Bombay Karnataka region Veershaiva Lingayat Community was large in number and Kannada was their mother tongue. They mainly depended on agriculture for their livelihood, and stayed in the villages. They were ignorant about the modern education and the english language. Realising the need to educate them some veteran social workers of Lingayat Community made efforts for spread of education in the 19th century.

In 1866 Shri Channabasappa was appointed as the Deputy Educational Inspector for Belgaum District.³⁰ He provided for free lodging and boarding facilities for poor deserving students from Lingayat Community. He sent a circular to all the primary schools stating that those who were willing to study English would be given admission in the Boarding. He also requested the school masters to convey the message to the village headman and other prominent people. The Boarding was run with the kind help of Shri Durgad Mahaswamiji of Belgaum. This boarding was situated at Kelkar Bag in Belgaum city. It is noteworthy that after the death of Mahaswamiji of Durgadmth financial assistance to the boarding was stopped. During this critical period too Mr.Channabasappa continued the lodging and boarding facilities inspite of financial stringency.

Shri Channabasappa died in 1881 A.D.³¹ After the death of Shri Channabasappa other persons who came forward to continue the work of spread of education among Lingayat Community were Shri Gilganchi Gurusiddappa and Rao Bahadur Artal Rudragouda.

Gilganchi Gurusiddappa (1841 to 1891)

The exact date of birth of Rao Bahadur Gilganchi Gurusiddappa is not known but probably he was born in 1841 A.D. He was first person from the Veershaiva Lingayat Community to receive English education. He joined Revenue Department of Bombay Government and within a very short period he secured high post in that department. The government of Bombay appointed him a secretary of the Legislative Council and bestowed the title of 'Rao Bahadur' upon him. He thought that Veershaiva Lingayat Community was educationally backward because of the lack of modern education.³²

Another person who had joined the same department was Artal Rudragouda. Shri Gilganchi and Shri Artal called a meeting at Dharwar in 1883 to discuss the problems of educationally backward Lingayat community and about 3,000 rupees were collected for educational purposes in 1883. With this amount the Lingayat Education Association was established at Dharwar in the same year.³³

The main aim of this association was to render financial support to poorer section of the society for their

education. Even now this association awards number of prizes to good students in the names of community leaders like Sirsangi Desai, Raja Lakhangouda Sar-desai, Deputy Chemabasappa etc. Gurusiddappa did number of social works and died at an early age in 1891.³⁴

Rao Bahadur Artal Rudragouda (1851 to 1932)

Another great personality of Lingayat Community and one of the founders of Karnataka Lingayat Education Society was Rao Bahadur Artal Rudragouda. He was born on 21st March 1851 at Artal Village in Dharwar district. At the age of eleven he joined 'Dundasi Primary School. In 1872 he passed matriculation and joined Revenue Department of Bombay Presidency.³⁵

As already mentioned above, Shri Artal and Shri Gilgarchi formed Lingayat Education Association in 1883. For the collection of funds he travelled through districts of Bijapur, Dharwar and Belgaum and a total amount of Rs.2,10,391/- was thus collected. We find that many of the founder life members of the K.L.E.Society completed their education with the support of Lingayat Education Association. The association also awarded 'Victoria Jubilee Gold Medal' for those from Lingayat Community who completed M.A. and LL.B.degrees. In 1901 Sidramappa Pavate completed law degree and in 1915 Mr.S.S.Basavanal and Mr.M.R.Sakhare were awarded prizes for completing their M.A.degrees.³⁶

He alongwith other young enthusiastic people was responsible for the foundation of K.L.E.Society which opened educational institutions in the educationally backward region of Bombay Karnatak. He was the President of the society for 12 years since its inception.³⁷

In 1906 Lingraj Desai of Sirsangi and Navalgund (Taluka Saundatti) donated all his property for the development of education. He made a will by which all the property of the Sirsangi and Navalgund was to be utilised for the educational purposes. This will was made in consultation with Shri Rao Bahadur Artal.³⁸ After the death of Lingraj Desai his sixth wife went into court for cancellation of the will but it was of no use. A trust was made and named as 'Sirsangi Navalgund Trust' and the whole property of Sirsangi-Navalgund Desai came under this trust. Poor and deserving Lingayat students received monetary help from this trust.³⁹

Thus the background was prepared for the establishment of a bigger educational institution. The formation of Lingayat Education Association in 1883, and Sirsangi Trust in 1906 were the earlier attempts made by the veteran leaders of the Veershaiva Community to initiate the grand-cause of spread of education among their poor and backward brethren. Only the governmental efforts were not sufficient

to do this work and realising it the social workers such as Gilganchi Gurusiddappa and Shri Artal Rudragouda came forward to do something for the growth of education by providing the lodging and boarding facilities to the deserving students. The rich landholders like Sirsangi Desai and Raja Lakhangouda Sardesai also decided to contribute to this holy cause by donating their properties and with financial assistance. Thus the educational activities of the Lingayat Education Association and Sirsangi Trust firmly paved the way for the establishment of 'Karnatak Lingayat Education Society' in 1916 which later on was named as 'Karnatak Liberal Education Society'.

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