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Footprints of Flag satyagraha in Karnataka before unification

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Abstract

In the face of British colonial rule, the Indian independence movement adopted the unique approach of Truth, non-violence, hunger strike, and Satyagraha, led by Mahatma Gandhi. Satyagraha, the "tool of the strong," aimed to transform adversaries through love and non-violent resistance, without aggression or physical force. The Flag Satyagraha, launched in 1923, exemplified this principle by challenging the British ban on hoisting the Indian tricolor flag. The Flag Satyagraha, though less prominent than the Salt Satyagraha, left an indelible mark on India's freedom struggle. It symbolized the nation's aspiration for sovereignty, unity, and integrity. The act of hoisting the flag, once strictly prohibited, became a powerful symbol of defiance and resistance. Despite facing lathi charges, firing, and imprisonment, the flag bearers remained steadfast, upholding the honor of their nation. Their sacrifice paved the way for the common people's right to display the flag, a right that was later codified in the flag code of 2002. The nation celebrates the centenary year of this prominent event this year i.e., 2023. At this moment it is our moral obligation to reflect on the flag satyagraha and its intense impact on freedom struggle of India.

Keywords: Footprints of Flag satyagraha, Karnataka before unification, British colonial rule, Indian independence

1. Introduction

To fight against the British colonialism the unique method we followed were Truth, non-violence, hunger strike and satyagraha. Gandhiji was the leader of the non-violent freedom movement. He believed that satyagraha is the tool of the strong where without being aggressive towards the opponent and not using physical force against the oppressor to destroy him, reforming the adversary by appealing to his conscious by burning with love will free the country from foreign yoke. The three forms of Satyagraha are Noncooperation, Civil disobedience, and Boycott. Satyagraha was launched to fight against the British injustice in various forms such as Peasant satyagraha, Ahmadabad mill worker satyagraha, Flag Satyagraha, Forest satyagraha, Toddy tree satyagraha, most importantly the biggest Salt satyagraha, Individual satyagraha, Viacom satyagraha etc.,

Among the different satyagraha, The flag satyagraha was held a century ago on 18th march 1923 in Jabalpur at the top of the Town hall by hoisting the tricolor at the top of the Town hall by Prem Chand Jain during a civic reception ceremony organized by the municipal committee to honor the civil disobedience enquire committee consisted of Hakim Ajmal Khan, vital bai Patel, DR. M A Ansary, Jamuna Lala Bajaj, Motilal Nehru, Rajagopalachari Set Chotani. Again, on 13th April 1923 on the occasion of fifth anniversary of Jallianwala Bhag tragedy Flag Satyagraha was held in Nagpur in which representatives from Gujarat, Central provinces, Bundel khand, South India including Ttiruvanantha puram. The nation celebrates the centenary year of this prominent event this year i.e., 2023. This act got very limited publicity. It was not as popular as the salt satyagraha yet undoubtedly it has left its footprints in the freedom struggle.

On 75th year of independence Government of India launched "Har ghar tiranga". programme, and selfie with flag. Today as per the flag code of 26th January 2002 we are free to hoist the flag at educational institution, factories, private or public organization including at our residence without violating the flag code but before independence hoisting tricolour flag was strictly prohibited and considered as an act of agitation against the British government.

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The people who violated and dared to unfurl the flag had to face lati charges, firing and imprisonment. Many people scarified their life while unfurling and upholding the honor of the flag because flag not merely a piece of cloth, but it is the symbol of the sovereignty of our nation, unity, and integrity the spirit of patriotism, hope and aspiration of the country men as well. The usage of the flag by the common people has become possible largely because of the amendment by an appeal made by Naveen Jindal to the supreme court. In the recent past we have witnessed many incidents both within the country and in foreign countries where attempts were made to pull down our flag and burnt to exhibit their opposition which is an act of challenging the sovereignty of our nation. At this juncture it is our primary duty to reflect on the noteworthy particulars of flag satyagraha and its intense impact on freedom struggle of India

2. Research Methodology

Investigator has followed “Exploratory research method” to prepare the present article. The Investigator has referred Secondary sources like published books, Interview, and internet sources.

3. Objectives of Study

1. As nation marks centenary of the Flag satyagraha, it’s our moral obligation to pay gratitude to those stalwarts who were all the part and parcel of the flag satyagraha despite prohibition order dared enough to pledge their life to protect the honor of the flag.
2. Though it was not as popular as salt satyagraha, it has left its footprints in the freedom struggle, let us trace them.
3. It is the high time to focus on flag satyagraha as both in India and in some foreign countries such activities are taking place which cause disgrace to our national flag and pose challenge to the country’s sovereignty, we need to encounter it.
4. To recall and pay homage to all those who were part of evolution of flag.
5. Now a days paying homage to the flag has become our choice, it is our one of the fundamental duties, so awareness must be created.
6. To locate the hot spots of Karnataka where flag Satyagraha took place and to shed light on the contributions of the unsung heroes of Karnataka.
7. To bring into limelight about those places where flag satyagraha was conducted even after independence and the reasons for it.

4. Discussion and Analysis

“I will either come back after raising the Indian Flag in victory or return wrapped in it”.

-Captain Vikram Batra, Paramveer Chakra The above words of Captain Vikram Batra reflect the spirit

of patriotism and reverence feeling of defense forces who have made supreme sacrifice to keep the tricolor flying with its full fame. Many Freedom fighters too laid their life while guarding the honor Tiranga like Tiruppur Kumaran of tamilnadu, Narayan Doni in Hubballi .What make the people of the country to take such extreme step for the sake of our flag is Tiranga is not merely a piece of cloth , It is the symbol of self-rule which accelerated the freedom struggle, it proclaims that we are free, it denotes the political development during the national movement, It denotes our national goals, It is the ornament of our mother land. It is known for inclusiveness; it has no communal significance hence it is like a diamond in the crown of India.

a. Historical background of Tiranga

Since from time immemorial there were the flags of different royal dynasties, India has no such official flag of its own until the partition of Bengal. On the first anniversary of partition of Bengal to boycott it on 7th August 1906 a flag was hoisted by Surendra Natha Banerjee to commemorate unity of India at Parsee began square called Calcutta flag or Lotus flag. in Bengal designed by Sachindra Prasad Bose and Sukumar Mitra. In 1907 forty years before the independence Madam Bhicaji Rustom Cama hoisted Indian flag at Stuttgart in Germany and there by appealed the people of Germany to support Indian’s freedom struggle. It was designed by Madam Cama, V D Savarkar and Krishna Varma. It was called the Berlin Committee flag as it was there in the socialist conference held in Berlin. In 1917 during the home rule movement flag was hoisted designed by Tilak and Annie Besant. In 1921 during the session of the All-India Congress committee an unofficial flag designed by pingali venkayya of Vijayawada was hoisted. Lala Hans Raj Sondhi suggested to add the symbol of spinning wheel to denote self-reliant of Indians. In 1929 December 31st on the bank of river Ravi Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the tricolor in the Lahore Congress session while taking the resolution of complete Independence Congress session. The year 1931 was a milestone in the history of flag as the tricolor called Swaraj flag was officially adopted through a resolution which is the predecessor of the present flag. It was Suraiya Tyabji, who specified the fabric and color shade of the flag precisely. The charka was replaced by Ashoka Chakra as per the suggestion of Dr. B R Ambedkar. On July 22nd, 1947, Tiranga was officially adopted by the Constituent Assembly as Our National flag.

b. Role of Karnataka in the flag satyagraha before unification

In 1923 under the leadership of Dr. N.S Hardekar a group of freedom fighters participated in Nagpur Flag Satyagraha. They were put behind the bars for violating the prohibitory order of the British government and hoisting the flag at the Town hall.

B. Marappa pakkala from Mangalore also participated in the Nagapur Flag Satyagraha. In Mysuru which was held for four months. On 26th January 1930 Swaraj flag was hoisted in Mysuru province to celebrate complete Independence Day. On June 2nd 1931, Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the tricolor flag in front of Bangalore Railway station amidst strict prohibition. It was like showing the red cloth before the raged bull. Flag satyagraha which was started as a mass agitation gradually developed as a part of the National movement. In 1924 at the Belgaum Congress

session presided by Gandhiji swaraj flag was also hoisted as a part of 'Salutation to the flag programme'. Hereafter the hoisting of the tricolor flag has become a part of congress meetings and sessions.

1. The Flag Satyagraha of Shivapura 1938 April 11th-13 In 1938 soon after the

Haripura Congress session, similar session was planned to be held by the Mysuru congress committee under the leadership of T. Siddalingaiah. Hoisting the tricolor flag to oppose the British imposed restrictions on civil freedom & also the legitimacy of British rule in India altogether as a part of civil disobedience movement. Around twenty-five thousand people gathered at the farmland donated by Thirumalegowda. Sensing the trouble Mysuru administration issued an order banning any public meeting to stop Flag Satyagraha. Despite the prohibition the people of valagara halli, gejjalagere, Sadolalu, kudara gundi and other villages of madduru participated with great enthusiasm.

In that Session the leaders like T. Siddalingaiah, K T Bhashyam, H Siddhaiah, H C Dasappa, V Venkatappa who hoisted the tricolor flag got arrested & imprisoned. Ballari Siddamma also unfurled the tricolor Flag at the cost of her life. She called upon the people to attain eternity in order to protect the flag and the very next moment she too was arrested on April 13th 1938. She was the first lady to be arrested by the Mysuru State Police. She was imprisoned for 25 days.

This has become the top story in Samyukta Karnataka Newspaper on 14th April 1938 under the article of "KarnatakadaveeraMahileyaru". To commemorate this incident Sathyagraha Soudha has been built in Shivapura.

Sahukar channaih, Gopala shettru, M G Bandi Goudaru, H K Veeranna Gouda, Bla halli Seetha Ramaih, Tagaduru Ramachandra, Yashodamma Dasappa, Venkamma Seetha Ramaih, Subbamma Jois, Indira Krishna Murthy, etc., were also part of the Shivapura Flag Satyagraha.

2. Viduraswatha Tragedy 25th April 1938

As a part of statewide Satyagraha, under the leadership of Ramachar. T the president of the district congress committee ten thousand congress workers violated the prohibitory order of the government and hoisted the flag at Viduraswatha in Gouribidanuru Taluq, Chikkaballapura district. Some people tried to hoist the flag for the second time. The police arrested four of them, people began to tease the police, enraged by this incident, the police opened firing of 92 rounds in which 35 people were killed and more than 100 injured on 25th April 1938 due to this tragedy Viduraswatha has been compared to Jaliyanwalabag of punjab by Pattabhiseetharamaiah. Siddamma was an eyewitness for the police atrocities, torture & unspeakable barbarities. Hoisting the tricolor flag should be our duty to the nation, we need to protect its sanctity.

3. Flag Satyagraha in Shivamogga at Ramanna Shreshti park

On 02-05-1938 Devangi Manappa led the flag Satyagraha in Shivamogga. Where a large crowd has assembled to witness the historical movement after addressing the gathering Devangi manappa hoisted the flag despite the prohibition order for which he was immediately arrested and sent to jail along with H.N. Swami Rao, Manjunatha Upadhyay.

4. Flag Satyagraha in Karnataka during quit India movement

During quit India movement when Gandhiji called upon the people to 'do or die'. In response to his call-in different parts of Karnataka freedom fighters pledged their life to uphold the honor of the tricolour flag among them the most noteworthy incident took place in Shivamogga, Shikaripua Taluq the people of village called Isuru declared it as a free village. On 28th September 1942 by hoisting the tricolour on the top of Veerabhadra Temple despite the restriction imposed by the British at the cost of their life.

Laxmanagudi hoisted the flag on the Koppala fort and wrote quotes against the Nizams rule. His struggle continued against the Razakars even after 1947. In 1942 Ananthacharya

. V. Joshi hoisted the flag on the arches of Koppala fort and on the top of the post offices, He wrote the quit India quotes on the walls of the houses as well.

In 1945 at Kyathana halli in Panadavapura during All Mysuru congress committee meeting congress replaced the Union Jack by tricolor flag under the leadership of Veer Gowdaru, Pate Linge Gowdaru, Swamy Nanjunda, Nanje Gowdaru, Kapani Gowdaru, K R Pete S M Lingappa, Neele Gowda, Maduvina Kodi Kodi Sidde Gowda, Kagepura Subbe Gowda, Nagana hali Shiva nanje Gowda, A G Lingappa.

Maha Devappa Huchappa Doddamani established Kallinatha library at Kodikoppa, in Koppala because of which people learnt about the freedom struggle on September 12th 1947 he participated in satyagraha procession holding tricolour hence he was arrested and put before the bars in Aurangabad jail. After being released from jail he organised flag hoisting by Shiva murthy swamy Alavandi, - along with veerabhadrappe shirur, Mallappa vakeel humbala, Shankarappa, Shankara gouda theggimani.

5. Flag Satyagraha in the parts of Hyderabad Karnataka after Independence

Even after independence in the parts of Hyderabad Karnataka we were not allowed to hoist the tricolor flag as it was under the Hyderabad Nizam who refused to access with the union of India. The congress called upon the people of Karnataka to observe Accession Day in August 1947 in 354 places in the state. The student community boycotted the schools and colleges. On August 14th, M Nagappa and his comrades hoisted the flag on the district office.

In Koppala Shiruru Virabhadrappe was imprisoned on 15th August. On 15th August 1947 G Madhwa Rao and two others have undergone satyagraha at Raichur. Sda Shiva Rao

Desai did satyagraha by hoisting the flag in Mandalageri. He was jailed for six months, kept in the jails of Raichur and Gulbarga.

On August 15th, Aniruddha Desai along with students organised a large Procession in the midst of heavy rain, carrying the flag in Gulbarga, and were arrested. In 1947 during the Hyderabad Satyagraha Prahallada Rao Desai Dyampura got imprisoned for three months for hoisting the flag and demanding the responsible government in Kalluru village 12 km away from Raichuru along with Shrinivasa, Mallikarjunappa, Shankrappa, Shantappa, Basaiah.

Veera bhadrappe shirura from Koppala Yalaburgi Taluq Organised Flag Satyagraha to oppose Nizams Government on 15th August 1947 in the parts of Kinnala, Alavandi,

Kataraki, kavaluru, Kukanuru, Yalaburgi, Sangana Halu, Chekkena Koppa. He got imprisoned in Koppala along with Laxmacharya vakeela and Hampi Master for rendering salutation to the flag. Shankarappa Bangara Shetti was arrested in Kataraki on 15 August 1947 for participating in a flag hoisting ceremony. Shrinivas Desai and Anardhana Rao vakeela were also jailed for being part of flag satyagraha in yalaburgi and koppala respectively.

5. PRESENT SCENARIO OF NATIONAL FLAG

A century ago, people of India suffered from lack of liberty to hoist our flag and rejoice. At the cost of their life, amidst of lathi charge Imprisonment and forgoing we upheld the dignity of our flag.

Our flag is flying high not only on the earth but also on the moon and Mars. We feel proud when Athletes like Abhinav Bindra, Niraj Chopra ect., hoist our flag at international arena when they won Gold Medal.

In the recent past our National Flag has been used for exhibiting protest and frustration. On October 2nd at Indian Embassy in London the khalisthani protesters attempted to pull down our flag. In some parts of Canada our Flag has been burnt by the sikh protesters. Similarly on September 25, 2023, our flag was burnt by Sikh protesters in Canada at Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto. In Australia also on many occasions our flag has become the object of humiliation. On one hand it's an appreciable attempt that an Indian Sathyam Surana, a student of London School of Economics raised our national flag which was laying down in London and protected the honour of our flag in London on the other hand in our country, unfortunately the number of students attending the flag hoisting ceremony has been reducing considerably. It is a matter of concern that one of our fundamental duties is to respect our national flag, which the present generation is least bothered about. It is the time of hour that we need to recall their duties towards the nation.

6. Findings

The above analysis reveals that the Flag satyagraha which began as a protest the British imposed restriction on civil liberty gradually converted into nationwide mass movement which was continued even after independence until the Hyderabad got accession with Indian union.

It was the movement in which home maker women too dared enough to fight for their right to hoist tricolour and protect its honor more than their life to proclaim their freedom.

The role of innumerable freedom fighters of the remotest villages of Karnataka including Hyderabad Karnataka were brought into limelight.

6. Suggestions

- Similar studies can be conducted to learn about various types of satyagraha such as fasting satyagraha, saltsatyagraha, forestsatyagraha palace satyagraha toddy tree satyagraha.
- Similar studies can be done about the first women to hoist National tricolour flag at Stuttgart by Bhikajicama on 22nd August 1907 in Germany, Aruna Asaf Ali first women to hoist national flag at Gowalia Tank Maidan Bombay on 9th august 1942 during Quit India movement.
- A study can be done about the supreme sacrifice done by Kodikkatha Kumaran while protecting the honor of the flag in 1932.

8. Conclusion

From the above discussion reveals the fact that Karnataka has participated actively in the flag satyagraha for which the award it got is the responsibility of production of national flag by "Karnataka Khadi Gramodyoga Samyukta Sangh [Federation] Bengeri Hubli". since 2005. It's pride for kannadigas that the flag made in Hubli is being hoisted not only in prominent places like Red Fort, Rashtrapathi Bhavan but also in the foreign countries.

In the flag making section the women have lion's share. The workers will not wear slippers, every day after the all-faith prayer they start the manufacturing of flag. This indicates the devotion we have towards the flag. The tallest flag pole measuring 361 feet is in Belagavi with 9,600 sq feet wide flag flying also adds feather to the cap of Karnataka. The highest duty of the citizens of India is to protect and preserve the dignity of our flag

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