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Participation of Sirisi Siddāpura and Aṅkōlā taluks in the Indian Freedom movements

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Abstract: *After the British established their political dominance in India, they followed their system of governance and implemented various repressive laws and rules, which had both positive and negative effects on the political, economic, social, educational, and religious spheres of India. Many struggles were waged across the country against the measures taken by the British. Mainly after Gandhiji started the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920, Gandhiji's struggle was continued in various parts of the country. In Karnataka, along with the Non-Cooperation Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Forest Satyagraha, Tax Refusal Movement, Boycott of Foreign Goods and Khadi Satyagraha were started. Similarly, in Sirisi, Siddapur and Ankola taluks of Uttara Kannada district, the local people started Forest Satyagraha, Tax Refusal Movement and Anti-Drink Movement.*

Key Words: *Non-Cooperation Movement, Jungle Satyagraha, Tax Refusal Movement, Anti-Drink Movement. Ankola, Sirisi, Siddapura*

I. Introduction:

After 1858, India was officially considered a colony of the British government. As a result of English education, a nation was formed that embraced the ideals of freedom and brotherhood. Indians who received an English education got low-level posts in the British government and were exposed to the caste system. When this inequality was encountered, the National Council was formed and tried to instill a sense of nationalism among Indians. The National Congress, which was started in 1885, transformed into a political organization that comprehensively presented this objective. As a result of the efforts of elders like Dadabai Naoroji, Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the Congress emerged as a powerful political force in India. Gandhiji, who came to India from South Africa in early 1915, had the desire to join the Servants of India Society of his political guru, Gokhale. But as Gokhale said that knowledge of the aspirations of the common people is more important than book knowledge, Gandhiji travelled to every corner of India and gained world knowledge. But Gokhale had already passed away by that time. When Gandhiji started the Non-Cooperation Movement against the Cowley Acts implemented by the British government, he received Tilak's blessings. The Gandhi era began from 1919-20. Under Gokhale's guidance and taking Tilak's ideals, Gandhiji formed the Congress as a mass organization. His words about acquiring suitable morals and character to achieve *Swarajya* became firmly established in the minds of the Indian people. Such words created respect for Gandhiji across the country. The common people developed loyalty to Gandhiji. People were ready to follow the actions he said to achieve independence.

It was in such a situation that the Congress decided to intensify the movement. As part of this, political conferences were held in different parts of the country. One such district political conference was organized in Karwar in 1920. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who had been the president of the Congress session held in Lahore in 1900, was the president of this political conference. On this occasion, many issues were discussed and it was decided to create political awareness in the district. In 1914, the British government handed over the Uttara Kannada district to the Forest Department. To increase the forest cover in this district, the Forest Acts were made very strict. Accordingly, at that time, no one was allowed to take firewood, sap, etc. from the minor jungle without obtaining permission from the Forest Guard. No one was allowed to walk on the forest road with a sword, axe, or rope. If the farmers wanted to carry firewood, greens, etc. from their land to their homes, they had to inform the Forest Guard if the road passed through a forest area before carrying them home. If

they failed to do so, they had to pay the fine imposed by the Forest Guard to the Forest Department.

Early Struggles in Sirisi, Siddapura and Ankola Taluks: The government had made it mandatory for farmers to bring firewood, greens needed for making fertilizer for their gardens and fields, which was a daily requirement. This not only caused great trouble for farming and daily life, but also became a matter of survival. How can we get crops without giving fertilizers to areca nut plantations and paddy fields? How can we protect the crops from wild animals if forests grow near the fields and plantations? The question that haunted everyone was this. A farmers' meeting was held in Sirsi in January 1916 under the leadership of Sri Vasudevarao Kollali, a prominent lawyer there, to relax the forest rules. When its resolutions were presented before the government officials through appropriate representatives, some benefits were provided to the farmers of Sirsi taluk. Inspired by this, the Siddapur taluk farmers' meeting met at *Mudlagiri* Patanganam in Bilagi on 16 December 1916. *Mudlagiri* Sri Narayana Lakshman Pai was the leader. It was decided that the benefits provided to the farmers of Sirsi should also be given to the farmers of Siddapur taluk, and a petition was sent to the head of the Forest Department. After a year, the Forest Department did not respond, so in December 1917, the second *Vanadukha* Sabha was held in *Bilagi* under the leadership of Shri Vamana Dasappa Shanai. It was decided that some benefits should be provided to the farmers of *Siddapur* taluk under the government's rules, and a petition was prepared and presented to the District Collector in *Honnavar.* At that time, Shri Vasudevarao Kollali, a lawyer from Sirsi, was present there. The District Collector informed the Shishtamandal that seven acres of hill were released from the minor jungle for one acre of areca plantation as decided earlier by the government. He said that the farmers could bring firewood and greens from the plantation hill, but they could not cut trees.

The fact that the farmers' cattle, oxen, buffaloes and sheep grazed on grass and other parts of the government forest, apart from the plantation hills, was never mentioned, along with the land revenue, the government would have to pay *'Hullu Banni*' tax. They had imposed a rule that 'Hullu Banni' should be paid every year at the rate of four annas for one adult cattle, two annas for one adult cattle, and that the tax that had expired would be paid along with a fine. The District Collectors hid the fact that the land revenue had been increased since 1915 and spoke to the Shishtamandala. Both of the above facts demonstrate the divide-and-rule policy of British officials. In 1920-1921, Mr. Hague served as the District Collector of the Uttara Kannada district. He was the son of a Bengaluru priest and spoke Kannada well. He behaved properly with the people. But his behaviour was different when he gave guidance to the government officials. Why do we need government permission to graze the grass that grows on its own in the hills, forests, and mountains? Why should we, who were born and raised in the same forests and mountains, give it to foreigners? Do we need the permission of a chieftain to bring water from a flowing river? There were no answers to these questions from the people among the government officials and village Patels. Thus, the village Patels, government officials, and employees, who lost their normal relationship with the people, became the cause of the people's jealousy. Mutual hatred and jealousy started growing day by day. While the tax collectors were a challenge, the government rules and regulations were a challenge to the people in a different way. Meanwhile, the Non-Cooperation Movement called by Gandhiji at the national level was having a profound impact. Many lawyers and government officials left their professions and joined the service of the country. College students left their classes and went to villages to spread Gandhiji's message. Five students from Uttara Kannada who were studying at Wilson College in Mumbai sailed to Gokarna at the end of April 1921. Among them, Shri Shankar Gulwadi came to Sirsi and met Shri Thimmappa Nayak Master. Under his guidance, he came to Siddapur. Under his advice, he met Shri Hariappa Chandraghatti and came to Bilagi and lived with Shri Vamana Dasappa Shanai. With the help and cooperation of Mudlagiri Narayan Pai of Bilagi, he formulated a campaign plan for the Jungle Satyagraha, the Non-Cooperation Movement, and obtaining Congress membership in Siddapur taluk. During the next four months, the Sri Shankar Gulwadi group achieved wonderful work. With the help of Sri Hariramkrishna Rajavaidya of Bilagi, Huwin Mane Thimmappa Hegde, Doddane Narayan Hegde, Kannalli Shivaram Hegde, and Siddapur Harappa Chandraghatti, it registered 1200 Congress members in the taluk and collected Rs. 600 for the Tilak Fund.

At the end of May, Shankar Gulwadi brought Sri Habibullah Khan from Peshawar, Punjab, to Sirsi. He was a Muslim youth who had been shot in the left hand in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He was good. He spoke simple, beautiful Hindi-Urma, and when people gathered, he would show his left hand and give passionate speeches, effectively reflecting the faults of the British government. He used to call government officials as hired dogs. His speeches made people erupt against the government. It was because of him that the Muslim brothers started participating in the national movement. After another month, the Gulwadis brought a kirtan singer named Sri Jayaramacharya of Koppal to Sirisi. He used to sing kirtan in temples during the rainy season. When Gandhiji went to jail, he went to the birthplace of Sri Krishna. He used to refer to the spinning wheel as Sri Krishna Chakra. He advocated non-violence and ridiculed the British administration as Kansa Darbar, thereby intensifying the spread of the national movement among the people. His kirtans and Habibullah Khan's public speeches were held in many places in Sirsi-Siddapur taluk. The patriotic songs composed and sung by Ashukavi Bettageri Tippayya Mastar of Siddapur were widely popular. As per Gandhiji's instructions, national schools were started in some centres of Sirisi-Siddapur taluk. The number of students who wanted to join national schools after leaving government schools increased day by day. Spinning and vegetable cultivation were taught as important subjects

in national schools and there was also a system of selling khadi. The well-educated youth of the village worked as teachers with a spirit of service.

The people of each centre decided to collect a fist fund in the village and run the school. A fist fund means that each household keeps a separate pot in front of the deity. A fist of rice or a coin is put in that pot every day in the name of each member of the household. Twice a week, the coins and rice collected in that pot were delivered to the responsible person, or the school staff had to come and collect it. In some centres, the school teachers took the responsibility of collecting the fist fund, while in some centres, the members of the 'Vanara Sena' (monkey army) performed this work. In this way, national schools were run for 5 or 6 years in many towns. In some towns, reading rooms were started near the national schools. Along with the Marathi Kesari newspaper, the Kannada Rajahamsa and Vijaya newspapers, Kannada Vritta and Kannada Dhureena newspapers were brought from Kumta. The expenses of the reading room were met by the contributions made by the readers of the newspaper. In this way, the report of the good response to the educational activities being carried out in the Sirsi-Siddapur taluk reached the Belgaum Congress Committee. From there, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, Hanumantharao Kaujalli, Kashna Rao Mudavida, Dattopant Majali, R. V. Karigudri traveled to the Sirsi-Siddapur taluk and held secret meetings. There was an arrest warrant against all of them for speaking against the British.

The Tax Avoidance Movement: The elders of Bilagi in Siddapur taluk, heeding Gandhiji's call, decided to celebrate 6 April 1922 as Hindu-Muslim Unity Day as a tribute to those who died in the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. It was decided that Hindus and Muslims would gather and offer prayers at the Bilagi mosque and the Sri Seetharamachandra temple. That evening, Hari Rajavaidya Ramdas Pai, Vamana Shenoy, Ranga Acharya, Srinivas Acharya, and Ganapat Rao arrived at the Byndoor Jumma Masjid. They sat silently in a single row inside the mosque. Because they did not know how to perform Namaz. Then, along with 15-20 Muslim relatives who came in numbers, everyone came to the Sri Seetharamachandra temple in the middle of the village. Ahmed Ibrahim Saab, Qasim Nasrusaab, Ibrahim Saab and Nanya Saab were the prominent ones. Raghupati Raghava Rajaram, Patita Pavana Sitaram, Ishwar Allah Terenaam, Sabako Sanmati De Bhagwan Everyone prayed together. Shankar Gulwadi, Jayaramacharya and Habibullah Khan were the ones who were very happy to know this. The rains that started in June 1922 poured continuously for four months and the kitchen crop was severely affected by blight and the crop was reduced to less than 1/3. On the third week of December, a meeting of farmers of Siddapur taluk was held at Itagi Sri Rameshwara temple near Bilagi. This time the areca nut crop was severely affected and less than 1/3. According to the government's guidelines, if the crop is reduced to less than 1/3, the farmers of this section should be forgiven. Since the crop was very low, it was decided to request the District Collector to postpone the period for paying the loan installment for one year. The Shishtamandal included Dodane Narayan Hegde, Bilagi Hari Rajya Vaidya, and Bilagi's Ramnarayan Pai Mudlagi and met the District Collector and accepted the request. But this was impossible; the instalment had to be paid regardless of the blight. Otherwise, the District Collector behaved arrogantly, saying that they would take action to recover the money by force.

The government officials, who were expecting the same, took action to recover the money from the house of Narayan Pai of Bilagi and seized 6 bags of areca nut, i.e. 30 manas, for arrears of Rs. 30. Similarly, a seizure was made at the house of Ganapati Thimmanna Bhatt, Nelamava of Siddapur. Seizure was taken at the house of Doddalli Krishna Hegde of Sirsi and seized Rs. 600 worth of areca nut, for an arrears of Rs. 122. In Siddapur taluk, Ganapat Rao Byndura, Govinda Pai Mudlagiri, Ganesh Thimmaiah Hegde, and Thimmappa Manjaiah Hegde of Huivanamane resigned from the Patel. In Sirsi taluk, Doddalli Thimmaiah Anant Hegde, Narayan Nagappa Hegde Hegde Katta, and Manjunath Devar Hegde Makkalayathane resigned from the post of Patel. In protest against the government's tax collection measures, a non-cooperation movement, picketing in front of saree-sendi shops, and a boycott of foreign clothes and goods took place throughout Sirsi-Siddapur taluk. Congress workers were taking a pledge to spin and wear khadi clothes as part of their education program.

Non-Cooperation Movement and Jungle Movement: In the meantime, due to the burning of several policemen in Chauri-Chaura in Uttar Pradesh and the revolutionary measures instigated by Bhagat Singh's followers, Gandhiji decided to suspend the national movement for 5 years from 1923. But the national movement progressed slowly and non-violently. The Uttara Kannada Congress Committee called for all the Patels in the district to resign from their jobs as part of the non-cooperation movement. In Siddapur taluk, Hari Rajavaidya, Doddane Nagesh Hegde, and Shiralagi Subraya Bhatt campaigned throughout the taluk. As a result, 70-80 Patels in the taluk resigned. Patel Annaji Gowda filed a complaint with the government, saying that this would cause problems for the government in tax collection. He complained that no one had resigned voluntarily, but that resignations had been obtained under duress and intimidation. The police, who acted immediately, arrested Bilagi Hari Rajvaidya and Tarakhand Sitaram Hegde and kept them in Siddapur jail for 10 days.

As a few days passed, Hari Rajvaidya's elder brother, Vamana Shanai, who was found to be unpaid, took seizure action at their house and found that Rs. 5 was outstanding and confiscated a copper pot. Vamana Shanai was also arrested for tax evasion. As the confiscated goods were being taken out of the house, Vamana Shanai's son Ramachandra was seen sitting across the door and was taken to the police station. Vamana Shanai was sentenced to 6 months in prison during the trial. He was sentenced to another 6 months in prison for refusing parole. In Sirsi, Vasudeva Dhakappa, Sridhar Bailur, S.N. Keshavina, Kadave Ramakrishna Hegde, Kamalakara

Sonde and Dattatreya Isalur tried to propagate the non-cooperation movement, and 42 Patels resigned from their Patel posts. Taragoda, Isalur, Banavasi, Dasanakoppa, Bisalakoppa, Mundagesar, Sirsi, Sampakhand, Sonda. They organized forest satyagraha camps in 14 places, including Hulekal and Hegdekata.

II. Conclusion:

There were many changes in the new ideas, organization of parties and the struggle against British rule. In the last part of the 19th century, new dimensions were found in the anti-British struggle. The educated class who received English education stood up for the farmers and took up the understanding of the struggle. Sometimes it can be seen that the leader who took over the leadership of the struggle fought with the support of the farmers to realize his wish. Then the course of the peasant struggles changed due to the influence of the Congress. Gyanendra Pandey, by 1919-22, the peasant freedom movement was widespread in the Audhya region. He also started the movement in Sirisi, Siddapur, and Ankola taluks. In the initial stage, the peasants had shown their strong opposition to the landlords there. Later, they focused their movement against the British. The conflicts against the landlords were violent. In the final phase of the movement, the middle-class nationalists led by Gandhi and Nehru tried to weaken the peasant movement to strengthen "national unity" and the "Gandhian non-violence movement". Gyanendra Pandey has tried to document how they finally tried to suppress the violent movement of the peasants against the landlords. Gyanendra Pandey's research on the Devi movement in South Gujarat in 1922-23 provided additional information for his research. In the case of Gujarat, it was an independent, autonomous movement led by the Adivasis. The Adivasis there had waged a fierce struggle against the Parsi landlords and the liquor sellers. Its impact was seen in Sirisi, Siddapur and Ankola taluks. By telling the tribal farmers about Gandhi's ideals, they tried to cool down the voices raised by the farmers against the zamindars. Through this, they made an unprecedented attempt to protect the interests of the Parsi zamindars. Overall, new dimensions can be seen in the small farmer protests in the Kannada regions in the latter part of the 19th century.

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