

## ROLE OF RAMACHANDRA VEERAPPA IN LIBERATION OF HYDERABAD-KARNATAKA REGION

Dr. Vidyasagar<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Chinna Ashappa<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract:**

From 1724 to 1948, Hyderabad State including Hyderabad-Karnataka region was ruled by the Nizam and there were frequent attacks to common people by Razakars in the area ruled by the Nizam. During this phase, many of the freedom fighters were fought against the Nizam's police and the Razakars. Arya Samaj united such freedom fighters in Hyderabad state. Ramachandra Veerappa was one of such freedom fighter, though born in an untouchable caste, he faced all the humiliations due to his caste during his childhood. He was fought against Razakars and the Nizam rule to liberate the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The paper described role of Ramachandra Veerappa in liberation of Hyderabad-Karnataka.

### **Introduction:**

Before independence, Hyderabad state was very big princely state with 82000 sq. miles of land. The state is inhabited by 1.6 Crore population. Of the total population, 80% were Hindus, 12% were Muslims and remaining population was belonged to other religions<sup>1</sup>.

The Nizams were ruled Hyderabad State from 1724 to 1948. The Hyderabad-Karnataka region constituting three districts, namely, Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur were under the control of the Nizams. In 1927, 'Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen' was established by Nawab Sadar-Yar-Jung to start religious movement of Muslims. He toured the state to strengthen the Muslims control in the

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor in History, Government Degree College, Gurmitkal, Dist: Yadgir

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor in sociology, Government Degree College, Gurmitkal, Dist: Yadgir  
Karnataka.

state. Nizam was also positively supported to the movement of the organization. Later in 1946, Kasim Razvi, a lawyer from Udgir was become President of Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. He was a fundamentalist and dreamt to convert the Hyderabad state to an independent Muslim state. With the co-operation of Nizam, he was terrorized the Hindu people of the state. He was organized a para-military force named as 'Razakars' to terrorize the Hindu people and increase Muslim population by conversion. The Razakars was suppressed the freedom movement by different means of violence that is murder, rape, robbery, etc with weapons like guns and swords. Unfortunately, many of the Hindu officers in the Nizam's government were positively supported the Razakars. Kasim Razvi highlighted the Razakars as angels to protect the religion in the minds of people. It has been said that even though in April 1947, Nizam was interested to join the Indian Union, Kasim Razvi was frightened him and told him to form an independent Muslim state<sup>2</sup>.

The Razakar movement was the creation of Nizam himself. It was a para-military force. During the last regime of Nizam practically the government was under Razakars. Sabliterated to all sorts of atrocities and properties were looted thousands of Hindus of state migrated to neighbouring states as refugees. Thousands of Hindus were killed.

At this time, the Nizam's Government Police, Razakars and landlords used to give torture to dalits. They use to make them to work day and night without paying any remuneration. The position of dalit women was too worst. The Razakars and landlords used parade the dalit women naked in public and were killing mercilessly. In the Nizams's rule, dalits have no social status, so they were fed up with the regime of Nizam. Due to these situations, the dalits were become weak and can't took leadership in freedom struggle. Those dalits who have took participation in freedom struggle, were even though done brave actions against the Razakars and police, they were sidelines by the authors, who wrote the history. Muslims were united in the state, but Hindus were divided in the society in terms of hundreds of castes and communities. Further, even though there are many brave dalit freedom fighters, they were suppressed due to the untouchability, that was practiced during those days. It is surprising to note that when the researcher was met few freedom fighters or their family members, they have hesitated to express

about their caste and community, due to the fear of social suppression, which they have suffered during their young age.

Establishment of Arya Samaj in Hyderabad-Karnataka region was become boon to all the dalits. Further, the preachings of Swami Ramanand Teerth were become guidelines for the dalits for the birth of nationalism in the hearts of dalits and prepared many dalit warriors to struggle for freedom and to give tough answers to the atrocities of Razakars.

As discussed earlier, the freedom of the region was gained by a united freedom struggle. United freedom struggle here denotes that people of all castes, communities and religions were struggled to gain freedom. As such, even though Hyderabad state was ruled by Nizam, many of the Muslim leaders were struggled against Nizam's rule. Among Hindus, the published literature revealed that to a greater extent the freedom fighters belonging to Brahmins and Lingayats were started freedom movement. But it is noted that the contributions of freedom fighters, who belongs to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes is also significant. Due to lack of adequate opportunities for leadership, social inequality, untouchability and suppression in the society, they have not led a big group. But it is emphasized that they also played an important role in increasing nationalism and organize successful movements. Ramachandra Veerappa is one of such significant fighter, who fought against the Nizam and Razakars.

#### **Ramachandra. Veerappa:**

Ramachandra. Veerappa is one of the rarest national level personalities. He was former Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Karnataka and Member of Parliament (MP) of Government of India and elected from Bidar district.

Ramachandra Veerappa was born in Humnabad town in Bidar district in 1908 in Scheduled Caste community. His father was Veerappa and mother was Revamma. The family was three brothers namely, Laxman Rao, Ramachandra and Veerapanna and three sisters, Sadamma, Kedamma and Vithabai. The family was poor as brother of Laxman Rao was rearing the cattle of people and they are living outside the town, due to untouchability practiced during those days.

At his childhood, Ramachandra was become orphan and lost his mother and father<sup>3</sup>. As stated by Ramachandra Veerappa he was born in 1920<sup>4</sup>.

After the death of his parents, maternal aunty (Doddamma) Laxmi bai looked after Ramachandra and his brothers and sisters. Only 5 acre land was there to live for them and for which they have bounded to pay tax Rs. 12 annually to the government. If taxes were not paid, the land should be occupied by the government. To pay the taxes of the government, Ramachandra was to work under the landlord of the town.

Apart from poverty, there were also attacks from Razakars in the town. There was danger of British autocracy in the shadow of Nizam's exploitation and violence of Razakars for Hindu people. The Hindu women, may be daughter, sister, wife or mother, there were atrocities of Razakars in terms of Rape, violence, etc. Hindu society was divided into many communities and castes. Above all due to untouchability, the forward caste people also exploiting dalits.

During this time, Arya Samaj movement was started in Bidar district. In Bidar, Shamlal Bhai, Bansi Lal, Mama Dattatreya Prasad, Pandit Gokul Bajakar have started movement to include the dalits and backward classes in freedom movement. Consequently in Humnabad, Arya Samaj was established its branch. Prominent leaders namely, Shivachandra, Laxman Rao, Ramachandra Rao, Ravaji Rao, Balaram, Gangaram, Datturao, Govindrao Dantakale, Shankar Rao Chidri, Shivalingappa Arya, Shivaprasad and such others were took initiation to strengthen Arya Samaj in Humnabad taluk in 1935.

The government was banned and restricted ringing bells in temples, singing patriotic songs and organizing religious functions by Hindus. Inspired by the Arya Samaj leaders, Ramachandra and his brother Laxman Rao were joined Arya Samaj. Later Ramachandra along with other leaders started publicity on the Arya Samaj and nationalism by wandering village to village, town to town by walk. Ramachandra and Laxman Rao were not cared for even hunger or poverty during their movements. There was also fear of attack of Razakars on them.

During the leisure time, Ramachandra was learning Carpentry. Further, he was also started to sell Balloons near temples. At the evening, Ramachandra was also started to learn reading and writing. He was also learnt Bhajans.

Gorampalli was a village 5 kilometre away from Humanbad. At night, there was meeting of villagers on Chawdi to plan for an organized struggle against Nizams and Razakars. After the meeting, many of the forward caste people, were started shouting on Ramachandra and other Arya Samaj members, that the place, in which they were conducted meeting was become dirty and untouchable. At this time, B. Shankar Rao of Arya Samaj threatened forward caste people that 'go and run, otherwise, we will shoot you' and the forward caste villagers ran away<sup>5</sup>.

In Nandigaon, Jilani Miya Patel was exploiting people, by threatening them as he was Razakar soldier. He bounded a dalit (harijan) farmer named as 'Daulya' with rope for 2-3 days without food and water. Ramachandra was went there and threatened Patel with his gun and released Daulya and also announced in the village, that if anybody exploit or make atrocities on people, then nobody will be spared and will be killed<sup>6</sup>.

In Handikera, a small village Laxman Arya (Brother of Ramachandra) and Pandit Siddaram were went to start Arya Samaj movement. The Razakars in the village were bounded these people and beaten overnight and throw out of the village. After hearing this news, Ramachandra along with the people of Hallikhed, Dubalgundi, Humanabad and Sultanbad Wadi were rushed to Handikera and beaten the Razakars like animals and thrown them out of the village<sup>7</sup>.

In another incident, young women in Humnabad town went to clean the cloths of her family near river. About 5-6 Razakar goondas were kidnapped her and went to a land near the river. The news was informed to Ramachandra by a women. Ramachandra was rushed to the spot with a stick in his hand. But, the Razakars were many in number. He beat 2-3 Razakar goondas, and gave his dhoti to that women and women ran away. Later, all the Razakars were attacked Ramachandra and beat him and thrown him by assuming that he was dead. Later, a Muslim women, who was on the way informed the people. Ramachandra was admitted to Humnabad government Hospital, but Doctor was not assured that he will live and advised them to send

Ramachandra to Gulbarga Hospital. Finally, the people were arranged for a truck and brought Ramachandra to Hospital at Gulbarga and as stated by Ramachandra, he was got reincarnation<sup>8</sup>.

Nagappa alias Dharma Prakash was teaching physical exercise, use of lathi, sticks, sword to youth in Basava Kalyan was attacked by Razakars under the leadership of Salar and Salar was killed Nagappa. The leaders of Arya Samaj with Ramachandra went to Basava Kalyan and finished his after death rituals. Later, Ramachandra was collected amount from all people and built 'Dharmaprakash Balidan Bhavan' on the place, where he was dead.

Every year, there were celebrations of Arya Samaj in Shri Manik Prabhu Manik Nagar by the leaders. As such, Bansi Lal, Shamlal, Pandit Shivachandra, Pandit Sidram, Pandit. Dharmaprakash and such other Arya Samaj leaders were participated in the nationalism awareness programmes. Ramachandra was become aware that the Razakar goondas were planned to attack the function. He went to the place with his gun. Razakars were started their attack on Arya Samaj leaders. Ramachandra shoot many Razakar goondas and few ran away. Shamlal was wounded by Razakars and was treated.

Deendar Siddiqui was building up the Razakar army in Bidar district. About 1000 Muslim youth were participating in training to join Razakar army. Their main aim was robbery of Hindu houses, rape of Hindu women and murder of youth and children. Bhau Rao Patil was also organizing Hindu army to counter attack the Razakars. He killed Hisamuddin, a leader of Razakars and went to underworld. Razakars were planned for revenge and attacked the Hindu people in villages. Razakars attacked many villages, killed youth, aged and children of Hindu religion and raped the Hindu women. Laxman and Ramachandra was become angry and attacked Razakars and killed many Razakars.

In Hallikhed, one of the Muslim leader was telling that he is relative of Kasim Razvi, President of Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. He used to give loans to farmers and in turn he used to mortgage their lands. He paid loans to a dalit farmer by mortgaging his lands. Later, the farmer was unable to repay the interest and loan. The Muslim leader was took his wife and told the farmer that he won't send the farmer's wife until the loan is refunded. It was come to the notice of

Ramachandra. Ramachandra was rushed to the house of Muslim leader and threatened. There were arguments between both. Finally Ramachandra was brought the farmer's wife by threatening the Muslim leader with his gun and later the loans borrowed by the farmer was returned by Ramachandra by collecting money from people<sup>9</sup>.

Above discussed incidents are only few, still there are many incidents, in which Ramachandra was fought against the untouchability, atrocities and violence of Razakars. Bheemanna Khandre, Ex-Minister of Transport, Government of Karnataka was stated that "As a youngster, Ramachandra jumped to join the Quit India Movement of 1942 and fought for the country's Freedom. He organized rebellion against the Nizam of Hyderabad and attempted a Bomb-attack on the Nizam's life. Consequently, he was arrested and sentenced to suffer 'Kalapani'- a punishment for 30 years Imprisonment. One can imagine the strength of his character and the courage of his conviction at such a young age... one more example of his courageous action that he displayed in his youth. During Nizam's regime in Hyderabad State, some Razakar's in Humnabad town were forcibly carrying away one young girl belonging to an upper caste, making her naked, through the main Bazar Road of the town. On witnessing the incident the Bazar people put down their shutters and closed the doors of the shops and houses out of fear. But these two aforesaid brave brothers, Ramachandra and Laxman, who were returning from their fields with their cattles, on seeing the plight of the Girl in distress, they pounced upon the culprits with their parashu (axe) and Koyata (long seekle) and got the girl freed from the clutches of the dare-devil Razakars. In their fight with the Razakars, Ramachandra and Laxman had suffered grievous injuries on their bodies and where considered to have breathed there last"<sup>10</sup>.

After release from Jail, Ramachandra was become Member of Legislative Council in 1956. He has joined politics and gained many of the political positions, Member, Municipal Council, Bidar, Karnataka (1947-48), Member, Karnataka Legislative Council (1948-52), 1957-62 Member, Karnataka Legislative Assembly (1957-62), Elected as Member of Parliament (MP) to 3rd Lok Sabha (1962), Vice-President, Bidar District Congress Committee, Karnataka (1962-67), 1962-84 Member, Karnataka Congress Committee (1962-84), Re-elected to 4th Lok Sabha (2nd term) in 1967, Member, Karnataka Legislative Assembly (1980-85), Re-elected to 10th Lok Sabha (3rd term), Vice-President, Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) (1991-94), Member,

Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution; and its Sub-Committee-B on Department of Sugar and Edible Oils Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Communications (1998-99), Re-elected to 13th Lok Sabha (6th term), Since 1962 to till death as on July 18, 2004, he was elected Member of Parliament (MP) from Bidar district. He died on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2004 at Hyderabad Hospital due to kidney dysfunction at the age of 96 years. Ramachandra was a leader of the masses as he was very near to all the Prime Ministers from Jawaharlal Nehru to Atal Behari Vajapayee.

### Concluding Remarks:

When biographies of many of the freedom fighters are analyzed, it is found that, they were faced many of the humiliations and depression due to their castes and in spite of such difficulties faced in society, they were fought against the Nizams and the Razakars, so as to protect the land and regain the freedom of people. It is appreciated that though not gained education and faced obstacles and difficulties due to lower castes, still Ramachandra Veerappa was brave to face all the threats and attacks of Razakars and his contribution in liberation movement of Hyderabad-Karnataka is remembered forever. After liberation of the region, though he was served in many of the higher political positions, he was simple and spend his life with all the types of people, he used to listen to the problems of people and tried to solve their problems. In this regard, the contributions of Ramachandra Veerappa in the freedom movement, liberation of Hyderabad-Karnataka and service given to people is always appreciated.

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