

# Rethinking Linguistic Unification, Spanning Political Heterogeneity: Karnataka Ekikarana Across British India and ‘Princely’ Karnataka

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Heterogeneity: Karnataka Ekikarana Across British India and  
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*Abstract*

In the years after the Partition of Bengal in 1905, the consolidation of linguistic identities emerged as an important assertion of core democratic values positing that governance must be in a language intelligible to the majority. Like other linguistic movements in late colonial India, however, the Kannada Ekikaran movement did not progress either through a linear logic or follow a uniform yardstick. Even as it denoted great democratic potential, it was subject to the influence of clear majoritarian tendencies of visible in the nationalist movement. Attempting to reconcile elite ambitions, popular aspirations and sectarian, caste, religious, and spatial differences, the movement shifted gears through several phases as it worked across multiple territorial jurisdictions, including the demarcations of British India and territories under Princely rule.

Focussing on the period between 1860 and 1938, the paper examines the heterogeneous nature of the unification movement across British-Karnataka and two Kannada-speaking Princely States, namely, Mysore in the south and Jamakhindi state in the north of Kannada-speaking region. The analysis explores the ways in which the ruling family of 'model' Mysore sought legitimacy in embracing their Kannada heritage; in contrast, the Jamakhindi rulers resisted any concession to linguistic sentiments. The paper shows how, in arriving at mono-lingually indexed territorial entities, the bridging of 'internal' frontiers across these divergent political, spatial and territorial contours proved just as crucial as the claiming of dominance over other language groups within an intensely polyglot world.

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# **Rethinking Linguistic Unification, Spanning Political Heterogeneity: Karnataka Ekikarana Across British India and ‘Princely’ Karnataka<sup>2</sup>**

***Dr. Vijayakumar M. Boratti<sup>3</sup> and Veena Naregal***

*Karnatakatva as an ideology for the masses could only have been formulated by someone from Dharwar [Alur] acquainted with incipient democratic values under British rule rather than one from the monarchical state.<sup>4</sup>*

At the outset, we note the linguistic unification movements emerged in the impulses in administrative and territorial reorganisation of the Presidencies. Generally speaking, the historiography of the various regional linguistic movements that asserted greater visibility in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, regards the mobilisation as influenced by the aftermath of Bengal Partition in 1905.<sup>5</sup> The upsurge of nationalist fervour in the decade after Bengal Partition has been a structural framework highlighted within academic perspectives on linguistic unification movements in British India. The arrangement of available possibilities for the consolidation of linguistic identities emerged as an important means to assert majoritarian advantages within the limited scope for representative governance within colonial politics. Mainly for this reason, the history of linguistic unification movements or

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<sup>3</sup> This joint paper is the outcome of my engagements with ICSSR-sponsored project ‘Framing Inter-regional Comparisons’, carried out under the supervision of Veena Naregal, the Project Director. I am immensely thankful to her and other members of the project for shared materials and their meaningful insights.

<sup>4</sup>Mahesh Gavaskar, ‘Land, Language and Politics: Apropos 70th Kannada Sahitya Sammelan’ in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 38, No. 12/13 (Mar. 22 - Apr. 4, 2003), pp.1113-1116.

<sup>5</sup>Marshall Windmiller (1954) is one of the earliest to attribute the origin of linguistic movements in colonial India to the post-Bengal partition agitation and its subsequent success in 1911. ‘Linguistic Regionalism in India’ *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Dec., 1954), pp. 291-318.

the reorganisation of states in colonial India does not offer a linear and uniform trajectory. Premised on modern linguistic identities, linguistic movements assumed distinct dynamics influenced by social, demographic, historical, economic and political dimensions as they sought to claim dominance over a fluid, for now imaginary, spatial matrix cutting existing territorial demarcations.

Existing studies of nationalism and of linguistic mobilisation have focussed largely on mobilisation in British India, of which the three Presidencies were the three major administrative demarcations. However, as we know, an important index of linguistic ‘strength’ in the modern political world has been the *number* of speakers and the *size* of the territorial spread across which a language could claim ‘native’ speakers. As such the target audiences of linguistic mobilisation, and any imagination of territorial reorganisation along linguistic lines would, by definition, cut across the boundaries between British India and territories under Princely rule. Also known often as ‘Indian India’, very little is known about how linguistic movements played out in Princely Territories, or how linguistic movements straddled the governmental divide to enable native speakers to imagine a sense of belonging that transcended territorial contours of the political unit where they resided.

In considering these aspects with respect to the Karnataka Ekikarna movement, the present article argues that initial mobilisation and ensuing consolidation of linguistic identity on a territorial basis were defined and determined by local social dynamics and historical-political exigencies. Necessarily reflecting the subcontinent’s linguistic, economic, cultural, historical and social diversities, the history of unification movement in Karnataka had to consider heterogeneous time and spatial-frames, influences and aspirations. The existence of two distinct political/administrative terrains in colonial India, namely British India and ‘Princely’ India is a case in point. Exhibiting contrasting historical-political

legacies, the trajectories of the history of the Kannada unification movement as it negotiated developments across these two varied politico-administrative terrains demonstrated important differences. While British India emerged as a hub of colonialist and nationalist activities which also nurtured linguistic sentiments, in comparison, state authorities in Princely India were reluctant to encourage nationalist or political activities. Even so, the latter could hardly ignore the emerging aspirations and pressures regarding administrative reform, responsible government and participatory governance. Focussing on the period between 1860 and 1938, in the present paper examines this history with specific reference to Kannada identity formation and Karnataka unification movement in British and Princely States.

Mysore had come under British control when Tippu Sultan was subdued in 1799; the defeat of the Peshwa in 1818 saw the northern Kannada speaking tracts of what was to become Bombay Presidency pass under British control. The territory under present-day Karnataka was distributed across several administrative units,<sup>6</sup> which included more than twenty Princely States<sup>7</sup>, the largest among them being Mysore. Among these, Kannada enjoyed official patronage only in Mysore. Even as a significant segment of Hyderabad State had a Kannada-speaking population, the official language for what came to be termed 'Hyderabad-Karnataka' was Urdu, in keeping with the policy in the erst of the Nizam territories. While Kannadigas formed a numerical majority in the four 'Kannada' districts

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<sup>6</sup> John Roberts (1971) has shown administrative and sectarian dimensions of provincial divisions in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. See 'The Movement of Elites in Western India under Early British Rule', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Jun., 1971), pp. 241-262.

<sup>7</sup>The Princely states were Sangli, Meeraj (Senior and Junior), Kurandavada (Senior and Junior), Jamakhandi (ruled by Patwardhan family), Mudhol (ruled by Ghorpade family), Jat, Akkalkot (ruled by Bhosle family), Aundh, Ramadurga, Kolhapur and its feudatories and Savanur (ruled by the Nawabs). The British controlled these states indirectly by appointing Political Agents. In principle, the Princely states had internal autonomy; however the treaty signed with the British Crown gave the latter suzerainty and responsible control over External Affairs. In practice, even as the states were indeed ruled by *watandars*, *jaagirdars* and *inamdaars* who were mainly Marathi-speaking Brahmins, the British Resident exercised considerable influence.

of Belgaum, Dharwad, Bijapur and North Kanara in Bombay Presidency, the erstwhile political elite under Peshwa rule had been Marathi speaking, because of which Marathi enjoyed far greater prestige than Kannada in these areas. South Kanara district came under Madras Presidency where Tamil was the dominant language in public life. Lastly, the province of Coorg (Kodagu), with its distinct linguistic identity, was administered as a Commissionerate.

Broadly speaking, existing approaches to linguistic unification and/or to the major or 'rival' movements campaigning for the linguistic reorganisation of states can be divided into three categories. The first grouping would include accounts that eulogise the movements, often showering uncritical praise upon its pioneers and leading lights, whose contributions are often viewed in ways that valorise the self-representations of the nationalist/ sub-nationalist movement in the region<sup>8</sup>. Studies of the second variety have attempted to move beyond the celebratory mode to interrogate the links between language unification movements and nationalist frameworks through an attention to sites of literary activities, development discourse and caste politics subsumed under the vernacular sphere<sup>9</sup>. The latter approach has made available a multifaceted and complex picture of the efforts and outcomes to mobilise linguistic identities into movement for cultural, regional, political and territorial unification. A third group of studies have focussed on the complexity of the unification movement through an exploration of its varying trajectories in spatial terms. Work under this last category has been sensitive to the differentiated trajectories of the movement across sub-regions of the Kannada-speaking realms. It has examined the historical

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<sup>8</sup> For instance, every year Karnataka Rajyotsava is celebrated on November 1<sup>st</sup> by Karnataka government officially. Scores of Kannada Sanghas, auto-rickshaw associations, schools, colleges, trade unions and *mazdoor* associations partake in the celebrations

<sup>9</sup> T.S. Sathyanath's 'Nadu(s) and Desa: On the Construction of Regional and National Identities' in *Modern Kannada Representations* in *Indian Literature*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (249) (January/February 2009), pp. 209-219 and Janaki Nair's 'The 'Composite' State and Its 'Nation': Karnataka's Reunification Revisited' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 46, No. 47 (November 19, 2011), pp. 52-62.

conditions for the trajectories of linguistic mobilisation in British-administered territories and Princely States.<sup>10</sup> Taking a cue from the third approach, the present paper advances efforts to show the spatial dimensions of linguistic mobilisation and Karnataka Ekikaran movement. These dimensions merit nuanced study as little is known about the differentiated trajectories of the movement exhibited across the ‘Princely’ Karnataka. The following discussion is premised on the belief that unification movement in colonial Karnataka was based on not simply ‘invoking’ linguistic and cultural identity, but rather located within ‘sites where language and politics interact’ (2018: 14).<sup>11</sup> The existence of heterogeneous social and institutional dynamics, political legacies and historical experiences obtaining in different regions of Karnataka render such a framing of the Ekikaran movement within the the matrix of language and politics especially important. These factors defined the extent, scope and nature of possible mobilisation along linguistic lines in advancing the valorising claims of the dominant/majority language distributed across spatial clusters displaying varied and even contrastive political logics and temporalities.

In unravelling this history, it is critical to keep in mind that any understanding of linguistic mobilisation along majority lines would necessarily be subject to the enduring implications of the asymmetrical relationship between English and vernacular languages established in the colonial period. Additionally, however, our analysis to analyse efforts to consolidate such linguistic majorities seeking now to imprint ‘their’ linguistic identity as the marker of monolingually indexed province, would need to factor in the asymmetries of

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<sup>10</sup>John R. Wood’s discussion on the differentiating political trajectories in British Gujarat and Princely Gujarat gives us a better outlook on this aspect. See ‘British versus Princely Legacies and the Political Integration of Gujarat’ in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Nov., 1984), pp. 65-99.

<sup>11</sup>Asha Sarangi quoted in “Introduction” in *Language Politics and Public Sphere in North India (Making of the Maithili Movement)* by Mithilesh Kumar Jha, OUP: New Delhi, 2018.

the relationships between the different ‘rival’ vernacular languages within the region, such as Marathi and Kannada in the northern pockets, or say, Tamil and Kannada in the southern districts, or Telugu and Kannada in the north-eastern belt. Given the recent and strong links with the erstwhile Peshwa state, of the area roughly between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers in the Maratha division known as the Carnatic, Marathi enjoyed special privileges as durbar/official language in several Princely States created in this region by the British after 1818. Although Kannada was the language of the majority in these regions of Princely Karnataka spatially embedded within Bombay Presidency, it remained marginalised in all areas of public life. Linguistic assertions within demographics of multi-lingual tracts outlined above created elaborate intricacies that were variously amplified or suppressed by the systems of governance prevailing in these areas. Thus the political contrast between a modern public sphere as it emerged variably around structures of colonial representation or in the context of institutions committed to monarchical rule in the Native States introduced an additional layer of complexity. This aspect has been hitherto almost entirely neglected in available analyses of linguistic mobilisation and consolidation across different regional spheres in the decades following the Bengal Partition. The divergent negotiation of limited avenues of representative government available in British Karnataka under Presidency rule on the one hand, and under Princely States administered by Native Rulers through an allegiance to dynastic rule and monarchic values, on the other hand, impel a focus on how the unification movement responded to and evolved to span across these divergent spatial and political logics.<sup>12</sup>

Primarily, this paper explores these aspects in relation to British Karnataka and the two Princely States of Mysore and Jamakhandi to gauge how the possibilities of linguistic

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<sup>12</sup>Sajal Nag gives a comprehensive account of rivalry between languages during colonial period in the context of blooming of unification movements across India. See ‘Multiplication of Nations? Political Economy of Sub-Nationalism in India’ in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 28, No. 29/30 (Jul. 17-24, 1993), pp. 1521-1532.



mobilisation played out in terms of the social and political structures of two contrasting geographical and cultural regions. Though both states were ruled by Hindu sovereigns, a the major contrast lay in the embracing of its Kannada heritage by the Mysore state, while the Jamakhandi ruler remained stubbornly reluctant to make any concessions in offering Kannada any cultural or political legitimacy in the public life of Jamakhandi state. Given these disparate linguistic-political circumstances, both these states offer fertile scope for a study of how the unification movement worked across diverse spatial trajectories. The article is divided into two parts. Following a brief account of how the mobilisation of a modern linguistic identity for Kannada assumed the form of a political movement, the second part dwells on the heterogeneous nature of the unification movement in British-Karnataka and two Kannada-speaking Princely States, namely, Mysore in the south and Jamakhandi in the north of the Kannada-speaking territory, respectively.

### **Kannadatva: Linguistic Hierarchies and Consolidation**

Linguistic unification movement in colonial Karnataka gained visible political overtones after the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A brief account of linguistic/literary activities and awareness over the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Bombay Karnataka, will illuminate the key moments in the transition of Kannada identity before its culmination as a unification movement in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Three stages of this linguistic transition can be identified: The first stage, falling approximately between 1860 and 1890, saw both British and Kannada intellectuals participating to create an enhanced public consciousness and avowal of the intellectual and cultural possibilities of modern Kannada made available through contact with colonial education. Following this, between 1890 and 1905, the second phase saw Kannada intellectual elites take initiatives to promote Kannada linguistic identity and culture through formal and organisational means. Spanning the years between 1905 and 1920, the third stage saw the politicisation of Kannada identity,

when Kannada linguistic identity was foregrounded as the basis for political action and acquiring political advantages that would be supposedly available equally for the benefit of all Kannadigas. In actual terms, all three stages were inter-linked, as the social and linguistic challenges encountered in the first two stages were sought to be addressed in the third. In course of time, the demand of the movement to unite Kannada speaking regions scattered across several provincial administrative units of British India on the basis of their common language and linguistic identity was projected as politically rational and justified in terms of providing for better governance.

From 1860 onwards, efforts of Education Department officials in Bombay-Karnataka W.A Russell, Walter Elliot, Fleet and ‘Deputy’ Channabassappa led to an increase in the number of Kannada schools in Bombay Karnataka. On the one hand, the ensuing stimulus in the form of the preparation and publication of textbooks, grammars, dictionaries, school readers, translations into modern Kannada of literary works from English and Sanskrit as well as the emergence from several large and small towns of new Kannada journals, periodicals and newspapers, all made for great cultural and intellectual ferment. The spread of Kannada medium education also created avenues for the pursuit of modern professions and prospects of government employment. Revered by Brahmin and Lingayath students alike, officials like Channabasappa were instrumental in drawing in greater numbers of Lingayaths into colonial schools and channels of public debate. The establishment of Karnataka Vidyavardhak Sangh [KVS] in 1890 in Dharwad, and the emergence of similar institutional spaces such as libraries, reading rooms and debating platforms elsewhere, heralded a great step forward in encouraging Kannada writers, translators, publishers, public speakers.<sup>13</sup> With Brahmin elites of Dharwad and surrounding

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<sup>13</sup>Krishna Shripada Deshpande, Appendix 3, *Kannada Gudi*, 1994, Dharwad: Shri Hari Prakashana. KVS instituted many awards for the budding writers in Kannada and started a Kannada journal *Vagbhushana* for encouraging their creativity; passed resolutions to prevent Marathi influence in Kannada schools, etc.

towns at the forefront, the institution provided a much needed institutional platform in integrating the Kannada speaking population in their avowed public-political goal of challenging the influence of Marathi.<sup>14</sup> Modelled procedurally on the Gujarat Vernacular Society (1848), the activities of the KVS signified the growing confidence of Kannada cultural nationalists in their articulation of Kannadatva as the basis on which they sought to consolidate a representative public opinion to the British government.<sup>15</sup> Notwithstanding its key role in imagining the contours of a modern Kannada identity and an enlarged territorial entity called Karnataka, significantly as an institution, the KVS did not take an official stance on united Karnataka until 1917.

### **Linguistic Unification and Political Reform in British-Karnataka**

It is generally believed that the Bengal Partition in 1905 and the mobilisation of Bengali linguistic identity and sentiments in its aftermath created the momentum for assertions by several linguistic groups across India to seek separate political provinces foregrounding the common linguistic identity of the dominant languages. As elsewhere, arguments towards integrating the ‘divided’ Kannada speaking areas into a unified region/entity had emerged in the 1890s. Implicit in the call for cultural and regional unification were concerns about integrating groups across sectarian and caste lines. Writing in 1899, a school teacher from Alur village in Hangal taluka, V.H. Tatti, pointed to the lack of public consciousness and awareness about Kannada culture and history, and for steps to foster such awareness in the Kannada public. Specifically, he mentioned the bigger role awaiting the Lingayath community. Even though the community could boast of ‘flourishing

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<sup>14</sup>Concrete steps taken by KVS were more concerned with creating linguistic consciousness of Kannada than deriding or distancing Marathi.

<sup>15</sup>Out of eight office bearers of KVS in 1890, six were Brahmins and two were Lingayaths. Most of them were in government service.

without the contact of other languages, he regretted that they had hitherto remained more preoccupied with ‘adventures of wealth and commerce’ instead of ‘promoting Kannada book culture’ (ibid)<sup>16</sup>. While the community had shown an interest in accessing modern education and vernacular publishing, unlike their Brahmin counterparts, the orientation of Linghayat elites had remained towards community reform rather than nursing aspirations towards regional domination or leadership. Around the same time, a few Kannada elite intelligentsia had begun weaving nationalist narratives around the emerging identity around modern Kannada identity.

Areas around Dharwad in north Karnataka had seen vociferous protests against Vanga-bhanga or the Bengal Partition of 1905. Then onwards, there were efforts to ensure strong representation from north Karnataka in the annual gatherings of the Indian National Congress. A series of associational activities initiated outside of state patronage sought to propagate a consciousness of united Karnataka, for which Dharwad became an epicentre. Successive meetings of the Karnataka Granthakartara Sammelana held in Dharwad over in 1907-08 showed attempts to mobilise and unite like-minded Kannada writers across Kannada speaking areas. The third meeting of Kannada writers in Mysore in 1915 saw the birth to Kannada Sahitya Parishat. Similarly new arenas of cultural and social action seeking to enlarge the regional scope of influence were launched, including the *Karnataka Prantika Parishat*, *Karnataka Ekikarana Parishat*, Kannada school for Lambani speaking population (Bijapur, 1936)<sup>17</sup> and *Kannada Amateur Natya Sangha* (Dharwad, 1933).<sup>18</sup>

Subsequent political changes in the wake of constitutional reforms under the Acts of 1909, 1919, and through the proposals and debates around the Nehru Report of 1928

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<sup>16</sup>*Kannadigara Janma Saarthaka*, Dharwad: Karnataka VidhyavardhakaSangha, 1985 (Reprint).

<sup>17</sup>See ‘KannadadaMunnade’, *Jaya Karnataka*, vol.14, no. 8, 1936, p. 702

<sup>18</sup>See ‘Mundariva Kannada’, *Jaya Karnataka*, Vol. 11, no. 3, 1933, p. 374.

resulted in heightened levels of linguistic consciousness and provincial mobilisations in different regions of British-India. After a separate provincial Andhra Congress Committee was conceded at the Lucknow Congress of 1916, Andhra leaders like Patabbhi Sitarmayya helped Kannada nationalists in their efforts to influence Congress leadership to accord more legitimacy to the Kannada movement and give it greater visibility within the Congress structure by accepting the demand of Kannada nationalists for a separate Karnataka Provincial Committee within the Indian National Congress.<sup>19</sup> The first resolution in the Bombay Legislative Assembly on the issue of separate Karnataka province was moved by A.B. Lathe in 1921. Efforts were also made by north Karnataka representatives to table “memorials from residents, public institutions and local bodies of the Karnatak districts demanding a separate province for the Karnatak on linguistic basis”.<sup>20</sup> The Annual Conference of the Congress in 1924 held in Belgaum under the presidentship of Gandhi was crucial as it witnessed the first Karnataka Unification Conference under the leadership of Siddappa Kambli and Kadapa Raghavendraraaya, the Secretary of Karnataka Sabha. Subsequently, between 1926 and 1929, the issue was raised on several occasions in the BLC by representatives Sidappa Kambli and V. N. Jog of Dharwad and S. A. Sardesai of Bijapur, all from the north Karnataka districts; similarly, U Ramarao moved it in the Council of State between 1926 and 1928. Significantly, such resolutions on a separate Karnataka were well supported by members from Gujarat, as they too had begun demanding a separate Gujarat region that they claimed should be inclusive of Bombay. In 1920, as

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<sup>19</sup>Letter from the Secretary, Karnatak Sabha Dharwar dated 20.09.2018:“Dear Sir, on behalf of the Karnatak in AICC which met at Calcutta in Dec 1917, Dr. Patabbhi Sitaramayya of Masulipatnam moved a resolution that the Kannad area in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and Coorg be formed into a separate Congress circle. It was seconded. The AICC however referred the question to the provincial Congress Committee for opinion.”AICC Papers 1918/IIInd Part/Page, pp. 47-49.

<sup>20</sup>D.R. Patil on behalf of S.A. Sardesai (Bijapur, MLC) in Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1927, p. 616. Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council, 23 July, 1928 (p. 132) give details of the District and taluk local bodies, city municipalities and local associations which passed resolutions for creating a separate Karnataka province in the four districts of southern division of the Bombay Presidency.

Gandhi emerged as foremost leader of the Indian National Congress, it was decided at the Nagpur session that the Congress organisational structure from now on would comprise of units determined as majority linguistic groups. Up until 1928, the official policy of the affairs of the Princely States was one of non-interference. Significantly, as the Motilal Nehru Report, adopted in the contentious Annual Session of the Congress at Lucknow in 1928, proposed linguistic provinces as the defining territorial unit of the incipient federal nation, this approach of non-interference towards the Princely States was withdrawn, allowing the possibility of linguistic unification to emerge fully and supersede distinctions of British India and Princely States.<sup>21</sup> These efforts at defining radical territorial dimensions for linguistic dominance thus began to give concrete shape to Alur's early aspirational vision of Kannadatva, where language, culture and politics should complement each other.<sup>22</sup>

To Alur and his associates, who mainly hailed from British-Karnataka in the Bombay Presidency, the Princely States of Mysore, Nizam Karnataka, or even those of Bombay Karnataka did not figure in their imagination of culturally and politically unified Karnataka. For a long time a united Karnataka envisaged the redrawing of boundaries around the Kannada districts of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, combined with Coorg. Even a monograph on Karnataka Unification prepared jointly by KUS and Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, Dharwad, concedes,

Since we are considering the problem of the states here as subject to the treaty relations of those states with the government of India, let us only be satisfied with

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<sup>21</sup>See "Some Responses of the Princely State to the Freedom Movement and Popular Demands" in the Indian History Congress, Vol. 62 (2001) by S.K. Pachauri, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 62 (2001), pp. 531-540.

<sup>22</sup>See Alur's "Nanna Karnatakawada Jeevana" (My Life of Kannadatwa) in *Jaya Karnataka*, Vol. 19, No. 5, 1941, pp. 261-269.

saying, that they should be attached to the future province of Karnataka so far as those relations allow them be so attached (1928:XX)<sup>23</sup>.

Under these circumstances, the progress of constitutional reforms corresponded with growing attempts within and by the Congress to push for the acceptance of linguistic boundaries as the progressive yet politically neutral marker of provincial boundaries within the emerging federal nation-space. These debates had a greater traction in the political atmosphere of British India, as compared to the Princely states. Political debates over and contestation over colonial policies between the British administration and nationalist elites had made for avenues of public participation that seemed lacking in the more placid political waters of the Princely states that remained relatively untouched by the debates over demarcations of territorial boundaries, electoral constituencies or franchise. Thus even in 1944, S.S. Malimath, Chairperson of the Reception Committee of the 9<sup>th</sup> Karnataka Ekikarana Parishat in Dharwad, spoke strongly for the inclusion of the native states of northern Karnataka in the scheme of larger Karnataka, suggesting that until this time, the native states had not figured seriously under the purview of the unification movement<sup>24</sup>.

## II

### **Linguistic Consciousness, Ekikaran, Princely States**

All major and minor Princely States in India had accepted the Paramountcy of the British Government. The Princely States had to walk a wary path with respect to political developments in British India as they were expected to steer clear of support to any political

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<sup>23</sup> 'Introduction' in *United Karnataka or A Case for Karnataka Unification* ed. by Secretaries of Karnataka Unification Sabha and KPCC, Dharwad. Published at Gadag, 1928. P.p. I to XXXIV

<sup>24</sup> It was post-1940s that a united Karnataka, inclusive of the Princely States, was envisaged in the political discourse of Karnataka unification movement. Also see H.S. Gopala Rao's *Karnataka Ekikarana Itihasa*, 2011 (4<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 72), Nava Karnataka Prakashana: Bangalore, p. 109. Patil Puttappa, makes it very clear that in the early stages of the unification movement, the Princely States were not a part of the Karnataka imaginary. (PaPu, in H.S. Gopal Rao, 2011, p. 310).

movements not sanctioned by the British government. Being under constant surveillance of the British Residents, especially as the national movement gained momentum, native rulers found themselves cast in the role of “bulwarks of reaction” (Bipin Chandra, et al., 2016: 356)<sup>25</sup>. A consequence of such restrictive political structures often showed as failure to develop administrative skills and political leadership or nurture new organisations like was the case of the British-India. Constitutional reforms in the Princely States followed only an uneven trajectory both in terms of the guiding pace and intentions within individual states, as well as in terms of the variable approaches followed by different states. The sovereign king decided if the political reforms were needed in the state or not. For example, while Mysore state was one of the foremost to establish a representative Assembly, *Praja Pratinidhi Sabha* in 1883, in Jamakhandi state, opportunities towards empowering subjects through a representative Assembly were opened as late as 1932, and only under growing demand from below. The general view among both among Indian nationalists and the relatively sparse academic work that hitherto exists on cultural politics in the Princely states was that but for a few ‘enlightened’ exceptions, these principalities under ‘native’ Princes were typically administered as uncontrolled autocracies in the hands of whimsical rulers and their coteries. Typically a contrast between the ‘open’ liberalism of British India and the seething intrigue of palace rule in the Princely States was drawn up,

...less internally differentiated and less open than those of the British Gujarat districts. Decision making in the durbar (Princely court), which was the preserve of the prince and a restricted, ascriptively recruited elite, was carried out through private, consensual procedures (1984: 71).

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<sup>25</sup>“The freedom struggle in Princely India” in *India’s Struggle for Independence*, ed. by Bipin Chandra, et.al. (Revised and Updated), Penguin Books: Gurugaon, 2016 (fourth edition).



As the account below will elaborate, similar scathing attack on the Jamakhandi ruler, published in *Jaya Karnataka*, published from Bombay Karnataka, endorses the above view, even as it presents an interesting contrast with the prevailing perceptions in Mysore of their Princely ruler<sup>26</sup>. Interestingly, the patronage received by Kannadigas in the royal court of Mysore becomes a rallying point and a touchstone for Kannada activists in other Kannada-majority Princely states to demand Kannada to be made *darbari* (courtly) language in the Princely states<sup>27</sup>. And yet, the available patronage to Kannada also meant that the conditions in Mysore did not allow the language issue to become a ready ‘grievance’ upon which north Karnataka activists could build alliances with Mysore intellectuals that may have yielded steady inroads into the public life of Princely Mysore. Under these conditions, possibilities for the furthering of the Kannada unification movement in Princely States were impacted by specificities of internal politics as also by the relations with provincial and national politics.

The following section offers a comparative perspective on the significantly divergent trajectories and developments with respect to the unification movement in two Princely States, Mysore in southern present-day Karnataka, and Jamakhandi in northern Karnataka, respectively. The Princely States of Mysore, and Jamakhandi showed many interesting similarities but also many striking contrasts. For one, as a small state, Jamakhandi could not measure up to the resources that the demographically and

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<sup>26</sup>In a report, ‘Jamakhandiya Adhalitada Nirankusha Vritti’ (Autocratic rule in the administration of Jamakhandi) in *Jaya Karnataka* Vol.15, no. 4. 1937, the autocratic regime of the Jamakhandi ruler and neglect of local Kannada-speaking people in administration are severely criticised. Ascriptive nature of recruitment in the state administration, *darbar* and judiciary, with preference shown to Marathi-speaking relatives and their networks, is vehemently objected to.. As a result, the local population, who were a Kannada-speaking majority were denied any significant patronage in the palace and administration. See ed. Belagavi Ramachandra Raya, p. 302

<sup>27</sup>Implicit in this demand for adopting Kannada as official language was the ambition to privilege the language in all walks of life in the Princely-Karnataka.

geographically large state of Mysore could marshal. This had a vital bearing on the volume of revenues that both states could generate for the imperial exchequer, with important implications for relations with the British<sup>28</sup>. On the other hand, strikingly, in the initial stages of the unification movement Kannada nationalists stayed aloof from both states. Firstly, let us see the case of Mysore.

### **Language Politics in ‘Model’ Mysore**

Ruled by the Wadiyar dynasty since the thirteenth century, the kingdom of Mysore had been a part of the Vijaynagar empire. After the fall of Tipu, parts of its territory were annexed and added to the Madras Presidency and Nizam’s Karnataka, and a minor scion of the Wadiyar family, was restored at the helm of Princely state carved out from the rest of erstwhile kingdom of Mysore. In 1831, Mysore was put under direct rule of a British Commissioner. Fifty years later, in 1881, the Mysore throne was ‘restored’ to Wadiyar rule under the surveillance of a British Resident, so that Mysore became yet another vassal state under the patronage of the British.<sup>29</sup> Changes initiated under Tipu’s administration followed by fifty years of Commissioner’s rule had laid the foundation for the modernisation of the state’s political structures. Steps initiated to make the regime more people-centric, included the establishment, in 1883, of representative institutions like *Mysore Praja Prathinidhi Sabha*, the first of its kind in native states. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the Princely state of Baroda, Mysore was frequently referred to as one of the best administered

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<sup>28</sup>This also impacted various department of the states especially revenue, military, tax, etc. While Mysore enjoyed the special privileges of the imperial government (state of 21 salutes) which contributed to exchequer and military of the imperial government substantially, Jamakhandi was a non-salute state and compared to Mysore it did not contribute much to the imperial government in the above departments.

<sup>29</sup> Districts of this state were Bangalore (including cantonment), Chitradurga, Mysore, Shimoga, Kolar, Tumakur, Hasan and Kadur.

native states in India<sup>30</sup>. Several social and political initiatives in the Mysore state earned it the label of a progressive ‘model’ state; later, in Gandhi’s words, ‘Rama Rajya’.<sup>31</sup>

Going by the 1921 census records for the state, approximately 85 % of the total population of 5,978,892 was Kannada-speaking.<sup>32</sup> Many newspaper reports and editorials echoed the views of a sizeable chunk of Mysoreans who had virtually deified the King as Raja Pratyaksha Devata, protector of Kannadigas and their culture.<sup>33</sup> Thus as Gopal Rao, a historian of the Kannada unification movement remarked, Mysore Kannadigas often did not realise the feelings of insecurity felt by their fellow-Kannadigas in the states of Nizam Hyderabad, British Madras and Mumbai Presidency<sup>34</sup>.

Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar (1894-1940), the non-Brahmin, Hindu ruler, is identified as the force behind modernising Mysore and a torchbearer of patronage for Kannada language and culture.<sup>35</sup> In his individual capacity, Nalvadi Krishnaraja Odeyar, a litterateur himself with several Kannada and Sanskrit poetic compositions to his credit. Under him the pre-colonial legacy of patronage towards Kannada and Sanskrit poets found

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<sup>30</sup> Views of W. Leel-Warner, described as one of the ‘most knowledgeable and severely critical of British observers, quoted in James Manor, “The State-Level Political System, 1917-1935” in *Political Change in An Indian State*, Manohar: New Delhi, p.12.

<sup>31</sup> Though this label was not accepted universally in Mysore and there were many criticisms against excessive bureaucratic hand in administration, it had become a commonsensical idea that Mysore was a role model for other Princely states in governance.

<sup>32</sup> [http://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_And\\_You/old\\_report/census\\_1921.aspx](http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/old_report/census_1921.aspx) Seen on 3rd, April, 2020 at 17.02 PM.

<sup>33</sup> An editorial in *Kannada Nudi* praises the safe and secure position of Kannada in Mysore compared to other states. See “Samsthanagalalli Kannadada Sthiti” (Condition of Kannada in Princely states) *Kannada Nudi*, Vol. 8, No. 18, 1945, P. 80. This editorial further states that the rulers in other states have not done much to promote Kannada in their regions. Several articles in *Prabuddha Karnataka*, one of the earliest Kannada journals of Mysore University, too contain articles which project the state in celebratory note.

<sup>34</sup> *Karnataka EkikaranaItihasa*, H.S. GopalaRao, (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Nava Karnataka Prakashana: Bangalore, 2011, 56.

<sup>35</sup> He was a non-Brahmin Hindu and Kannadiga. The state under him is believed to be the heyday of Mysore in all fronts.

continued support at the Mysore court. Modern organisations along associational lines such as the Kannada Sahitya Parishat were also established for the promotion of Kannada literature and culture during Vishweshwaraiah, the first local, Kannada speaking Dewan in Mysore. Additionally to the Pratinidhi Sabhe, in 1907, the Mysore Legislative Council was established during his rule with a view to associate a certain number of non-official persons with the requisite administrative knowledge and experience to assist the Government in making laws and taking conducive measures for Mysore's development.<sup>36</sup> The proceedings of the Assembly and Council were largely carried out in English with a Kannada translation provided as the mechanism through which the government sought to reach out to the people and print media.<sup>37</sup> Such linguistic elitism and the monopoly of English over official channels caused the administration to be unduly bureaucratic and allowed the reforms to have only a limited impact.<sup>38</sup> This state of affairs with respect to Assembly and Council continued until A.R. Banerjee's tenure as the Diwan between 1922–26. Perhaps echoing the practice of making available the proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council into the principal languages of the Presidency, namely, Marathi, Kannada and Gujarati, the Mysore state appointed translators to make available translated accounts of the Assembly debates in Kannada. In this regard, it is noteworthy to mention the employment of well-known

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<sup>36</sup>Janaki Nair's article "The Licit in the Modern: Protecting the Child Wife" elaborates on this point. See *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule*, Orient Blackswan: Hyderabad, 2012. Pp.219-244.

<sup>37</sup>Recounting the initial idea of naming the Kannada Sahitya Parishad as the Canara Akademy, the presidential speech of Mudavidu Krishnaraya in the 24<sup>th</sup> Kannada Sahitya Sammelana reminisces the dominance of English among the Kannada and official elites in Mysore. See *Kannada Sahitya Parishat*, Vol. XXV, No.1., 1940, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup>The following works discuss the general displeasure at the way officialdom worked in the Mysore government: J. Manor, ed., 'The State-Level Political System of Princely Mysore', in *Political Change in an Indian State* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1977), 8–27; S. Chandrashekar, 'Emergence of Native Politics: Mysore 1881–1920', *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* LXXIV, no. 2 (1983): 128–48; K. Veerathappa, 'Growth of Public Opinion on Administration in Mysore State', *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* LXX, nos. 1–2 (1979); J. Nair, ed., 'Introduction', in *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region Under Princely Rule* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2012), 1–26; and M. Bhagawan, 'Mimicry, Modernity, and Subversion', in *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Kannada writers such as M.V. Putanna as Official Translator by the Mysore durbar to assist in making available translated accounts of the Assembly debates in Kannada towards securing a wider circulation for the administrative and development measures being undertaken.<sup>39</sup>

Established in 1915, the Kannada Sahitya Parishad [KSP] paradoxically remained an organization of Kannada elites who had bilingual command over English and Kannada. The ironical implications of this are both implicit and evident in the fact that as chief architect of the move and first Kannada-speaking Dewan of Mysore state, Vishweshwaraiah is said to have not written in Kannada; all his communicative energies were committed to English. The initiatives of KSP were confined to upper-caste elite circles—often Brahmin-- comprising literary writers, government officials, renowned lawyers and traders. Unlike the KVS in Dharwad, the agenda of KSP did not extend to the spread of education among the Kannada speaking communities, because of which demand for primary school education in Kannada or the establishment of Kannada schools did not emerge as a prominent focus therein.<sup>40</sup> Though the KSP signified a radical intervention towards promoting Kannada literature, language and culture, it steered clear of any show of support towards the unification movement. Alur and his associates tried to involve KSP in the movement but in vain. Believing it to be a ‘political’ issue, the Mysore durbar did not encourage any discussion or debate on the Ekikaran campaign.<sup>41</sup> That Alur and his associates were actively involved in

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<sup>39</sup>For more discussion see Tharakeshwar V.B.’s Unpublished article. “Language, Public Sphere and Democracy in a Princely State:M.S. Puttanna on Mysore”, 2019, p.10.

<sup>40</sup>Establishment of IISc (1909), Government Science College (1921) and Mysore University (1917)are some of the notable achievements of the Mysore government. These institutions played an important role in organised educational base in the state. For in-depth details on the progress of education under royal patronage in Mysore see B.N. Naidu’s *Intellectual History of Colonial India: Mysore (1831-1920)* Rawat Publications: Jaipur, 1996. But primary education seems to have lagged behind. If we follow Mysore assembly debates (1920s), the members have focused more on higher education and we do not come across elaborate deliberations on expanding primary education which could have hastened universal literacy and education in Mysore.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

the Indian National Congress must have been weighed heavily with the Mysore administration. The government was keen not to encourage nationalist activities in the state as nationalist influence and the National Congress were in fact perceived as a threat to the survival of the Princely order.<sup>42</sup> This approach by the Mysore court earned the dissatisfaction of many Kannada writers. Writing in *Karnataka Digdarshana*, P. Chandrashekar Hegde echoes this viewpoint regretfully,

Though the Mysore public does not lag behind (their) British Karnataka (counterparts) in education, broadminded and progressive political sentiments have not progressed much in Mysore state. Majority people are not interested in external affairs. Internal matters are their world. Such narrow-mindedness is apparent in all patronised states.<sup>43</sup>

Despite its reputation as model state, the people were largely indifferent to the question of Kannada beyond the territories of their state. Significantly, only a handful of Kannada writers like Kuvempu spoke in favor of Mysore extending support to the unification movement for a larger Karnataka. There was a perceivable lack of warmth between nationalists and Congress workers in Bombay Karnataka and Mysore.<sup>44</sup> This resulted in the establishment of a separate Provincial Congress Committee of Mysore in 1937, which only distanced itself from the idea of unification movement as proposed by nationalists in Bombay Karnataka. In the 1940s, these attitudes were further heightened by anxieties about possible dominance of Lingayaths if Mysore were to throw in its lot with a united Karnataka. These

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<sup>42</sup>James Manor, 1977, p. 83.

<sup>43</sup>Here ‘patronised states’ refers to native Princely states. See ‘*Karnatakada Digdarshana* (Whither Karnataka?)’ by P. Chandrashekar Hegde, Madras: I.C. Syndicate, 1939, p.49.

<sup>44</sup>S. Chandrashekar in *Adhunika Karnatakada Aandolanagalu*, 2002P. 95.

fears were especially strong among the prosperous Okkaligas, who did not want to share the economic prosperity of their community and that of Mysore with rest of Karnataka.<sup>45</sup>

### **The ‘Other’ Within: Politico-Linguistic Aspects in Jamakhandi State.**

One of the erstwhile southern Maratha states, the rulers of the small native state of Jamakhandi in north Karnataka were Marathi speaking Patwardhans, who were Chitpawan Brahmins allied with the Peshwa elite under whom they had acquired their political influence. After the fall of the Peshwas in 1818, having concluded a treaty with the East India Company in 1820, the Patwardhans ruled Jamakhandi from 1818 until 1948, when Jamakhandi merged into the state of the Indian Union.<sup>46</sup> According to 1921 census, Jamakhandi had a population of 1, 01, 195.<sup>47</sup> The state consisted of two talukas, Jamakhandi and Kundgol and three *thanas* namely, Wathar, Patkal and Dhavalpuri.<sup>48</sup> Majority of the total population consisted of Kannada speaking people in the state. Like other Princely states, the state owed allegiance to British rule and this meant it also sought to curb any nationalist activities in the state. The general perception was that unlike Mysore or Baroda, the state had not made much progress under its Marathi-speaking rulers. Its transport connections with the rest of India were poor as were its links with trade or tourist circuits. Also no independent newspaper or periodical was published in the state.

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<sup>45</sup>Okkaliga community is a large, dominant and non-Brahmin, peasant community in south Karnataka. S. Chandrashekar in *AdhunikakarnatakadaAandolanagalu*, 2002. P. 98 and Janaki Nair, 2011, pp. 52-62.

<sup>46</sup>The last ruler of this state was Shankar Rao Appasaheb Patwardhan(22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1947 to 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1948) under whose reign the state merged into the Indian Union on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1948.

<sup>47</sup>Annual Administration Report. of the Jamkhandeli State for the Fasil year 1335, ending 5<sup>th</sup> June 1926, p. 1. <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10973/38037/GIPE-014545-02.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>, Accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, at 11:11 AM.

<sup>48</sup>The details are largely drawn from D.R. Nidoni’s unpublished Ph.D. thesis entitled *History of Jamakhandi*. This thesis was submitted to the History department of Shivaji University, Kolhapur, in 1996.

The issue of linguistic unification does not seem to have been raised in Jamakhandi for a long time. Although it had adopted the trappings of a modern political system and institutional apparatus, these were not flexible and open enough to accommodate political reforms and constitutional values as had gained expression in Bombay Karnataka. As a result, even as they implicitly imagined Princely states to be part of the map of larger Karnataka, Kannada nationalists of British-Karnataka did not intervene in the political affairs of the state for a long time. During the Non-Cooperation movement of 1921, restrictions on the opening of *khadi bhandars* and making political speeches were imposed. Unless prior permission was sought and granted, stiff fines upto Rs. 200 and prison sentences of upto six months could be levied upon organisers.<sup>49</sup> Even so, there was a significant nationalist lobby that was discreetly active in Jamakhandi. Some nationalists at the forefront of the demand for democratisation and constitutional reforms included Ananta Vasudev Sabaade, Daamu Anna Hylyalkar, Shivaji Rao Kulakarni, Vaman Rao Bidari. Eshwarappa Gattariki—all Marathi-speaking Congressmen, with active links to Congress units beyond Jamakhandi. Their political differences with the Jamakhandi rulers, notwithstanding, these men would never consider espousing the cause of Kannada as part of their political activism. In fact, to them, the issue of Kannada unification was seen as antithetical to furthering their own position nationalist movement.<sup>50</sup> Their nationalist activities overshadowed the Kannada cause. Given this disjunct between political elites in Jamakhandi across courtly and nationalist circles on the one hand, and popular consciousness, signs of political awareness or a mass national consciousness remained at a low ebb until the state was forced to

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<sup>49</sup>See Umapathi K, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, “Role of the Bijapur district Karnatak in the Indian Freedom Struggle” submitted to Department of Political Science, Karnataka University, 1992.

<sup>50</sup>Siddhanavalli Krishnasharma, who toured many Princely states during this time, noticed how these nationalists and social reformists ‘woefully’ lacked knowledge of Kannada. He observed that their activities and communication were mostly in Marathi language. See his article “Kannada Samasye” (The Problem of Kannada) in *Jeevana*, vol. 2, No. 5, 1941, p. 272.



concede the growing demands for a representative Assembly in 1932. As a result, strict restrictions could be placed by Palace authorities on nationalist activities, so much so that even nationalist newspapers were barred from libraries in the state which carried nationalist news<sup>51</sup>. Similarly, in the seven out of eleven libraries in Jamakhandi that were managed by the samsthana authorities, restrictions against the use proscribed books were strictly enforced.<sup>52</sup>

Culturally, Marathi had expanded its influence in the urban areas of Jamakhandi. Marathi had become a language of elites, whom the Kannada-speaking population, especially middle class literates, sought to emulate.<sup>53</sup> Needless to add, this enormous influence of Marathi emanated from its identification with the ruling family, and this cultural preference influenced decisions and patronage affecting many spheres of life. The ruling family of Jamakhandi had consistently favoured aesthetic and cultural practices echoing Marathi ethos and traditions. Ruling Jamakhandi between 1897-1924, and as an ardent patron of Marathi art and culture, Parashuram Bhau founded a drama troupe, the Abhinava Natya Samaj in 1921. Under his tutelage, a number of Marathi dramas were performed and the palace did much to propagate the cause of Marathi Sangeet Natak in northern Karnataka and Maharashtra.<sup>54</sup> In the same vein, Marathi medium schools outnumbered Kannada schools: out of seventy two vernacular boys' schools in the state, forty six schools taught through

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<sup>51</sup> Jayavant Kulli mentions this point in his biography of Tammanappa who, apparently in an effort to encourage Kannada reading, sponsored the availability of national newspapers in the Shri ShankaraLinga Vaachanalaya, started by him. See Tammannappanavar Chikkodi: a biography by JayavantKulli, Virashaiva Adhyayana Samsthe: Gadag, 1983, p. 32.

<sup>52</sup>See *Annual Administration Report of the Jamakhandi State for June 1926*.

<sup>53</sup>*Tammannappanavar Chikkodi*, a biography by JayavantKulli, Virashaiva Adhyayana Samsthe: Gadag, 1983, p.2. Kulli draws our attention to Marathi's influence in commercial field too, especially in trade and business.

<sup>54</sup>The details are largely drawn from Chapter 10 in D.R. Nidoni's Ph.D. thesis, *History of Jamakhandi* (Chapter 10), submitted to the Department of History, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, 1996.

Marathi as against twenty four Kannada schools. Administrative reports show Marathi was given prominence at the elementary and higher primary school levels.<sup>55</sup> Further, when Parashuram Bhau's successor, Shankar Rao Patwardhan, who ruled from 1926 to 1947, donated Rs 2 lakhs to New Poona College, in return, the Trust renamed the college after the memory of late Sir Parashuram Bhau Patwardhan. This drew derisive comment from Kannada intellectuals, who scathingly described it as a money-laundering venture by the ruling Patwardhan family.<sup>56</sup> Legal and administrative business were conducted in Marathi. The pre-eminence of Marathi in public life was so stringently maintained that it was reported that in the meeting of the Jamakhandi Praja Pratinidhi Sabhe held on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1935, the ruler categorically ruled out the use of Kannada as *Daftar* language.<sup>57</sup> Another instance of the bias against Kannada were reports of the alleged release of voters' list in Marathi language in 1946.<sup>58</sup> The Jamakhandi Gazette was published in Marathi and English. It would be interesting to find evidence to show if arrangements existed for translating announcements or contents of state policies or programmes of governance into Kannada. As most of the intelligentsia, elites and the educated public knew Marathi, they did not demand Kannada translations.

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<sup>55</sup>Prior to this, in 1882-83, the ratio between these two was disproportionately in favour of Marathi: of twenty four schools, Marathi schools were seventeen in number, while there were only four schools in Kannada. For details, see *Tammannappanavar Chikkodi*, a biography by JayavantKulli, Virashaiva Adhyayana Samsthe: Gadag, 1983, p.3 See also Administrative report of Jamakhandi, 1920, pp. 1-26. The report was prepared by K.V. Hasanbis, the State Karbhari.

<sup>56</sup>Prominent Kannada writer and respected publisher from north Karnataka, Burli Bindu Madhava makes this allegation in his article "Karnataka Ekikarana" in *Karnataka Darshana*, Dharwad: Minchina Balli, 1937, 51-78.

<sup>57</sup>See *Jaya Karnataka*, vol. 13, no. 6, p. 426. Any discussion on this matter in the Assembly was ruled out completely. Needless to say, the court language was Marathi. See Annual Administration Report of the Jamakhandi State for the Fasil year 1335, ending 5th: June 1926, p. 12. Accessed <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10973/38037/GIPE-014545-02.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>, seen on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, at 11:20 AM.

<sup>58</sup>See 'Samstaaganagalalli Kannadada Sthiti' (the condition of Kannada in Princely states) in *Kannada Nudi*, Vol. 8, No. 18., 1946, p. 80.

Such measures for the promotion of Marathi led to many complaints about the step-motherly attitude towards Kannada. Many Kannada-leaders felt that Kannada was not given its due share in the state educational system. In this backdrop, KVS had passed a resolution in 1901 to ask the Jamakhandi state to start Kannada medium schools and appoint Kannada teachers.<sup>59</sup> Resented as attempts to subjugate Kannadigas under the Marathi rulers, until 1940s, responses against such measures took the form of resolutions, appeals and newspaper reports, all mostly initiated from beyond the confines of Jamakhandi state. Here, the role of Tammannappa Satyappa Chikkodi (1862-1933), a well-known writer, Kannada activist and Lingayath leader in the Princely State is important. Tammannappa was a member of a committee formed at the 4<sup>th</sup> Kannada Sahitya Sammelana held at Dharwad in 1918 to apprise the Maratha rulers to encourage Kannada medium schools and implement Kannada in the administration.<sup>60</sup> Later through successive meetings of the Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Tammannappa persistently proposed resolutions towards including Jamakhandi, Mudhol, Savanur and other Princely States in the proposed united Karnataka.<sup>61</sup> Kannadiga intellectuals and nationalists from beyond Jamakhandi persistently and vociferously asked why a majority linguistic community, must wait for so long to assert their linguistic identity in within Jamakhandi and other neighbouring Princely States. Editorials, reports and articles in several Kannada journals, newspapers and magazines blamed the ‘pathetic’ condition of

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<sup>59</sup>Krishna Shripada Deshpande, *Kannada Gudi*, 1994, Dharwad: Shri Hari Prakashana, p. 30. I have not ascertained if the resolution was passed on to the Jamakhandi state. This indicated KVS’s wish to extend its scope to include Princely states though originally it was restricted to British-Karnataka in the beginning. This was also an attempt to expand its base of influence.

<sup>60</sup>The committee was formed during the.

<sup>61</sup>The presidential speech by Bellave Venkatanaranappa in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Kannada Sahitya Sammelana held at Jamakhandi makes reference to this point of Tammanappa who relentlessly brought forth the issue of Kannada in the Princely state. See his speech in *Sharana Sahitya*, Vol. 1. No. 2, 1938. Pp. 79-97. Also see Resolutions passed by Tammannappa in 7<sup>th</sup> Karnataka Sahitya Sammelana at Chikka Magaluru in 1921 (Kannada Sahitya Parishat Patrike, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 67; at 15<sup>th</sup> Karnataka Sahitya Sammelana at Belagavi in 1929, (Kannada Sahitya Parishat Patrike, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 77). At the Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in 1925, his speech was as the president of Reception Committee.

Kannada and the Kannadigas in states such as Jamakhandi, Mudhol and neighbouring states. Blame was put upon the autocratic rule and indifferent attitude of the Marathi rulers of these Princely States. Highlighting the inadequate representation of Kannadigas in the Pratinidh, a 1937 report in *Jaya Karnataka* alleged that the Kannadigas were not consulted in governance of the state.<sup>62</sup> Against this backdrop, pressure was steadfastly mounted towards the use of Kannada as a language of *raj darbar* and in support of inclusive constitutional reforms needed to restore Kannada to its rightful and legitimate place in these Princely States.

The state of affairs concerning the ‘pathetic’ condition of Kannada and Kannadigas in Princely States beyond Mysore gave rise to new narratives relating to the history of Karnataka under several Kannada rulers before the ‘unfortunate’ onset of Maratha rule in the eighteenth century. Within this narrative, the idea of Karnataka is traced steadily onwards from the earliest dynasties in the southern and northern Karnataka regions when Kannada was apparently promoted without any hindrance until this apparent historical unity was supposedly first broken in the 13th century under Malik Kafur. Further within this narrative, efforts to unify Kannadigas through the Vijayanagar period were seen as receiving a ‘setback’ through rule of the Bahamani kings in the Deccan. Such disruptive tendencies were said to have only gained momentum under Tipu’s ascendance; as such the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799 was initially celebrated as a final blow to ‘the territorial disintegration and dismemberment of the Kannada people’.<sup>63</sup> However, repeatedly in this narrative, the

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<sup>62</sup>See a report namely ‘Jamakhandiya Adhalitada Nirankusha Vritti’ (Autocratic rule in the administration of Jamakhandi) for criticism on Jamakhandi published in *Jaya Karnataka*, Vol.15, no. 4. 1937, ed. Belagavi Ramachandra Raya, p. 302.

<sup>63</sup>“Giving the State a Nation: Revising Karnataka’s Reunification” in *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule*, Orient Blackswan: Hyderabad, 2012, p. 246. However, equally Maratha rulers were equated with Muslim invaders such as Ghazni Mohammed for occupying Kannada territories and imposing their language and culture on the Kannadigas. See B. Shrikantaiah’s article “Maharashtra Rajaroo Kannada Prajegalulu” (Maharashtra Kings Kannada Subjects) in *Sharana Sahitya*, Vol. 6, No. 12, 1944, p. 494-496.

installation of Marathi rulers in and their rule for over a century in the southern Maratha states is noted to have resulted in the amnesia of Kannadigas about their hoary past.<sup>64</sup>

It was against this background that the articulation of a political consciousness around Kannada identity gradually emerged in Jamakhandi. Significantly these initiatives were carried under Lingayath leadership. Beginning on a humble small note, a Kannada night school in Jamakhandi for adult illiterates was established by the Basaveshwara Sangha in 1936.<sup>65</sup> Tammannappa worked hard to assert the linguistic rights of Kannadigas and demand justice for their state of victimhood under Marathi rule.<sup>66</sup> Exhorting Kannadigas in Jamakhandi to rise above their allegiance to the present rulers and commit to the higher cause of Kannada unification, Tammanappa's activism in 1920s provides a compelling contrast to the deification of the Wadiyar ruler in Mysore.

As the demand for responsible government by Congress nationalists grew in strength and shift of power appeared as an increasingly imminent possibility, by the late 1930s, the Jamakhandi ruler, Shankar Patwardhan, had softened his approach in becoming more open to public opinion.

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<sup>64</sup>See a small note entitled 'Jamakhandiyu matte tirulgannadanadaagali' in *Jaya Karnataka*, 1938, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 19-20. Similarly, reports in 1937 in *Jaya Karnataka* point out the absence of civil society institutions and organizations to promote the cause of Kannada and Kannadigas in Jamakhandi and Mudhol. These reports lament that the people in these Princely states were dependent on nationalists in the British India for inspiration and encouragement

<sup>65</sup>See a small report on this 'KannadadaMunnade', *Jaya Karnataka*, vol.14, no. 8, 1936, p. 702. According to this report, there was a large number of illiterates among Kannadigas.

<sup>66</sup>All his activities happened in Rabakavi and Banahatti, two important regions of Jamakhandi. He was also a member of Jamakhandi Samsthan Praja Parishad held at Pune in 1927. Tammappanna is said to have written many dramas in Kannada. See *Tammannappanavaru Chikkodi*, a biography by JayavantKulli, Virashaiva Adhyayana Samsthe: Gadag, 1983, p. 37. He was one of the few Kannadigas who wrote in Kannada while the literary field in the state was dominated by the Marathi writers who also wrote in Sanskrit and majority of them were Brahmins. See the list of Marathi writers and journalists of the state in D.R. Nidoni's Ph.D. thesis entitled *History of Jamakhandi*. Chapter 12, pp.196-197.

## Concluding Remarks

The above discussion has amply shown that the varying nature of unification movement in Bombay Karnataka and Princely Karnataka owed much to the changing dynamics of social forces, divergent and political possibilities vis-a-vis colonialism and nationalism across multiple territorial jurisdictions. Like other linguistic movements in late colonial India, the Kannada Ekikaran movement did not progress either through a linear logic or follow a uniform yardstick. Attempting to reconcile elite ambitions, popular aspirations and sectarian and spatial differences, the movement shifted gears in dealing with social forces differences first between Brahmins and Lingayaths and then with caste calculations among Lingayaths and Okkaligas in the later phases.

On the one hand, possibilities of linguistic mobilisation in the late colonial period were bolstered through the enunciation of core democratic values positing that governance must be in a language intelligible to the majority. However, the prospect for the realization of these values were subject to severe pragmatic limitations through the realities of constitutional reform in the late colonial period on the one hand, and to the rise of clear majoritarian tendencies within the nationalist movement on the other. Such paradoxical tensions had important implications upon the ways in which key social categories of language, region and identity were articulated and contested across 'internal' frontiers that proved just as crucial in the process of claiming dominance over monolingually indexed territorial entities within an intensely polyglot world.

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