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Indian Movements : Some Aspects of Dissent Protest and Reform

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THE VIRASAIVA MOVEMENTS*

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Prologue

THE VIRASAIVA movement, intimately associated with the name of Basavesvara, rose to unusual significance and power during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD. It grew into a social force to be reckoned with and continues to be one of the most militant and strident forms of socio-religious protest in Karnataka even in modern times. The movement appeared in north-western Karnataka during the reign of Bijjala II, the Kalachuri king. Basavesvara spearheaded this movement and was mainly instrumental in popularizing and spreading the faith in the Kannada-speaking region of Karnataka. It was the state religion of the Wodeyars from AD 1339 to 1610, of the rulers of Coorg, Kittur, Polygars of Chitradurga, Uchangidurga, Pavgada, Sira, Hosadurga, Hodigere and Santebennur, and of the Nayaks of Keladi, Ikkeri or Bednur from AD 1550 to 1763. It also enjoyed some royal patronage from the Vijaynagar kings.

Today the Lingayats or the Virasaivas are found all over the State of Karnataka where they constitute the largest single ethnic group, accounting for nearly 15.57 per cent of the State's population.[1] Constituting 40 per cent of the population of the districts of Belgaum and Bijapur, and 50 per cent of the district of Dharwar's population,[2] they are also found in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The followers of Virasaivism are properly called Virasaivas,[3]

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Lingayats,[4] Lingavants, Sivabhaktas or Sivachars. *Lingayats* has become a well-known designation for members of the Virasaiva community, though this name is not favoured by themselves; the name Sivachar of Sivabhakta being the one they generally assume.

Problems relating to the early history of the Virasaiva movement, and of the founder or originator of the movement have remained undresolved. This is a controversial issue which is like Pandora's box, which we will not open. But to illustrate, there is no way of precisely dating the emergence of the Virasaiva movement nor is there even a consensus about the issue whether Virasaivism was an innovation or merely a revival of the most ancient Saivite faith. If some scholars trace the origins of the Virasaiva movement to the hoary past, others opine that it was established long ago by the five prophets (*panchacharyas*), namely, Ekoramaradhya, Marularadhya (Marulasiddha), Revanaradhya (Renukacarya), Panditaradhya, and Visvaradhya. Still others have cogently argued that Basavesvara is the "founder-pioneer" of the movement. There are also scholars who say that it is fallacious to attribute the founding of Virasaivism to any single individual.[5] At any rate, the available evidence strongly indicates that in the twelfth century Basavesvara revived and reformed the Virasaiva philosophy and religion, and guided the destiny of the movement. He was primarily instrumental in giving the Virasaiva movement its present shape. Even if the movement's origin is obscure, it is fairly certain that it crystallized into a definite shape sometime in AD 1141 and gained momentum after AD 1162.

We shall confine ourselves to the Virasaiva movement as it flourished during the time of Basavesvara and down to the present day. The objective being to probe the elements of dissent, protest and reform which underlie the ideology of the Virasaiva movement. After all it was a dynamic social force which undermined the brahman's supremacy elbowing him out from most spheres of influence, such as the social, economic and political domains of Karnataka.

Ideology of protest : the blueprint of action

Social unrest during this period against brahman domination

in Karnataka was characterized by two salient features which made it possible for the emergence of the Virasaiva movement. One was its persistence and continuity, whereby even the passage of time did not weaken but intensified it. For instance, while the underlying causes of social unrest varied in the course of time, they followed each other in such rapid succession that they prevented any relief to the persistent atmosphere of conflict and tension. The second was that the singular cause of social unrest was the brahman and the social ethos associated with Brahminic Hinduism.

Basically, the Virasaiva movement was against the inequality of men prevalent in society. Inequalities were sanctified by all kinds of ritualisms that served as classic facades to camouflage the realities of exploitation. Society was enmeshed in a labyrinth of rituals tainted by animal sacrifices. By the time of Basavesvara, Brahminic Hinduism was in the iron grip of a rigid and grostesque caste system. The Virasaiva movement was especially against the subordination and exploitation of the lower castes by brahmans, and it was a forthright quest for equality, liberty and fraternity, i.e. a quest for equal access of the unprivileged sections to political power, economic share, and for limiting the arbitrary powers so long wielded by brahmans. The movement posed a serious challenge to time-honoured traditions and systematically rejected the core values and social institutions associated with brahmans. For instance, in its desire for "human relationships", it felt it was necessary to break down interpersonal barriers and conventional norms that prevented, interpersonal contact on issues like interdining and intercaste marriage, i.e. it discarded the notions of purity and pollution between brahmans and non-brahmans. It revealed the realities hidden by rituals, practices, conventions of brahmans, in order to be liberated from the oppression of brahman domination. In short, the Virasaiva movement was "a social upheaval by and for the poor, the low-caste and the outcaste against the rich and the privileged, it was a rising of the unlettered against the learned pundit..." (Ramanujan 1973: 21).

The significance of the movement's ideology lies in its creation of a growing conscience and sense of social awareness about social evils. The social evils it attacked were not new,

but they were definitely new in scale and social importance. Of course, earlier dissenters and protest movements had challenged established ideas and values. But this time the impact of the Virasaiva movement had a lasting effect against various forms of social inequalities. Unlike others, its notions of egalitarianism, liberty and fraternity received almost instant applause. The reasons are not far to seek. For example pristine Buddhism and Jainism had waged a relentless crusade against caste and its evils, as also the *varnashrama*, but it did so by being outside the ambit of Hinduism. Many other protest ideologies were "revolts from the outside", while the Virasaiva movement was a "revolt from within" (Nandimath 1942: 52). The Virasaiva movement not only challenged the legality of existing norms but also questioned the very legitimacy of these norms. Because the preamble of the movement was dominated by the egalitarian, libertarian and democratic values, the movement has continued to appeal. Thus, it aimed at establishing a society devoid of caste and class; i.e. it sought a fraternal community and universal brotherhood. Its egalitarian credentials have not only been the chief attraction for the masses, they have also caused new currents of thought which disturbed the ancient and comfortable verities.

The movement's ideology of protest is freighted with the notion of relative deprivation which is the result of a lopsided distribution of privileges and honours in the social, economic and political spheres. This is what provided the motivating force for all discontented sections of the people to join the bandwagon of the Virasaiva movement in a concerted effort to bring pressure upon the brahman community to change. The social discriminations tolerated for so long suddenly became the object of the deepest resentment and bitterness.

In this way, Brahminic Hinduism with its traditional civic orientation was all but transformed in this new kaleidoscopic age. The existing social order was threatened by strategies of conflict accompanied by varying degrees of violence, competition, confrontation and combat. The Virasaivas were involved in a more militant kind of confrontation that brooked no compromise. Naturally, the brahmans, still wedded to tradition and attached to their way of life, tenaciously defended their institutions against the surging floodwaters of change. To illustrate,

the first symbolic protest against tradition came from Basavesvara when he refused to undergo the thread ceremony,[7] and later ate meals with Sivanagamayya (an untouchable convert). In this way Basavesvara and the others encouraged interdining and intermarriage and they reached the zenith of their expression of protest when there was the intercaste matrimonial alliance between Haralayya (an untouchable convert) and Madhuvayya (a brahman convert). This event evidently invited hostility from brahmans, who saw the movement as a social and political threat.

Thus, the Virasaiva movement brought in its wake the transformation of institutions, changes in the legitimacy of power, and coercive changes in the core values and dominant ideologies of the brahman community. This was accompanied by abolition of rituals, prohibition of certain symbolic behavioural patterns and destruction of symbols associated with brahmans. In the history of the Virasaiva movement, ritualistic and symbolic substitution has played a major role in their ascendancy to power. By questioning the very legitimacy of the existing order it prophesied the legitimacy of a new social order. It appealed not only as a critic of society but also as a positive programme of reform based on their consciousness of the injustices under which the masses lived.

Rituals belief system and objectives

The Virasaivas repudiated the entire system of values and beliefs associated with brahmans and evolved their own rituals and rites, equipped with a new content which were relatively simple to observe. Once the basic norms and beliefs of Brahminic Hindu society were weakened and destroyed, new social institutions and structures built on a different set of values appeared. For instance, they developed their own institutions fabric parallel to those of the brahman's canonical scriptures; they evolved an ensemble of symbols and ways to salvation as well as generations of religious virtuosos to uphold the Virasaiva traditions. This is because the Virasaivas believed that the corpus of beliefs, rituals and rites of the Brahminic cosmos had lost much of its original charm and meaning. They protested

against a religion which had tended to become a formal mechanism of animal sacrifices conducted and supervised by the sacerdotal class. It was this ritual complex that perpetuated social inequalities for members of all other castes, except brahmans who were the only ones permitted to perform rituals. Women of course were totally denied access to the performance of many rituals and seeking salvation on their own was not possible.

The Virasaiva movement shunned the brahman's elaborate ceremonialism and complicated ritual system. They rejected the authority of the later commentaries on the *Vedas* together with the caste system, pilgrimage, fasts, penance, child marriage, but permitted widow remarriage. The dead were buried instead of cremated and there was neither *shraddha* nor anniversary ceremony or festival for the dead. Basavesvara was impatient with those who argued that the performance of religious rites helped to realize God. He exclaimed often, "How can devotion to Siva and adherence to rites agree ?" He maintained that "Siva could be won over only by devotion and not either by music or by Vedic chants". He believed in the full surrender of oneself to God. Among the many pathways to *moksha*, Virasaiva saints (*sivasaranas*) advocated for the devotees (*bhaktas*) the path of devotion (*bhakti marga*) in preference to knowledge (*jnana*) and rituals (*karma*). On this path there is a gradual development of devotion and divine qualities. *Bhakti* is ubiquitous; it is found in all the six stages (*satsthalas*) where it assumes various forms. In *bhaktasthala* devotion is termed *sraddhabhakti*, in *mahesasthala* it becomes *nisthabhakti*, in *prasadisthala* devotion assumes the form of *avadhanabhakti*, in *pranalingisthala* it is *anubhavabhakti*, and in *aikyasthala* devotion is termed *samarasabhakti*.

The words *Om! Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama* comprise the creed of the sect which exalts work (*kayaka*) in the name of the Lord. It does not believe that religion is something one is born with or into, i.e., it is achieved and not ascribed to. Devotees acknowledge only one Supreme Godhead, Siva, and in all their *vacanas*, "they all speak of Siva and speak to Siva" (Ramanujan 1973 : 11). They advocate monotheism and the worship of *istalinga* because all worship is essentially a personal communication between the devotee and God.

The movement granted equality to women in the sphere of rituals together with the right to worship, instead of continuing with the social stigma of pollution (*sutakas*). For the Lingayats there was no pollution resulting from caste (*jati*), birth (*janana*), death (*preta*), spittle (*uchchista*) and menstruation (*rajasa sutaka*). There was great emphasis on family life which was not considered to be a disqualification for salvation, and the hypothesis of rebirth was not accepted for it believed that an individual soul (*jiva*) could attain *moksha* during one's own lifetime (*jivan-mukti*) without the renunciation of the world.

Thus, Virasaivism systematically challenged the core values and institutions so dear to brahmans and gave the right to all Virasaivas, irrespective of their former caste affiliations, to perform various rituals enunciated in the Virasaiva scriptures. It dispensed with the services of brahman priests and replaced them by the *jangama* priests in the performance of rituals and life cycle crises or rites of passage. The sacred lamp (*kalasa*) instead of fire or *agni* was used in the performance of rituals. They considered death to be a union with Siva or *Lingam* and a Virasaiva who died was considered to have attained *sivaikya* or *lingaikya*. They had also done away with elaborate mortuary rites and ritual mourning and image worship.

In their rituals water occupied a special place in the worship of Siva, and it was usually poured on the feet especially the toes of an officiating *jangama* priest. Most of the rites of passage also involved the worship of the priest's feet. There were two modes of their worship of Siva, the Supreme Godhead : each Virasaiva worshipped his own *jangama guru*, and he also worshipped the *istalinga* which he constantly wore on his body. One of the saints, Ambigara Caudayya, said that all the holy centres abide in the human body, hence, he reprimanded those who went in search of them all over and also for undertaking pilgrimages to holy centres.

Basavesvara declared that there was holiness when there was due regard for three things—the *guru* (the spiritual teacher), the *linga* (the symbolic emblem of Siva) and the *jangama* (his wandering mendicant). The trinity of the *guru*, the *linga* and the *jangama* were three, yet one. The saints declared that every Virasaiva must have a *guru* who was to be held in deep

veneration. Because, again, great importance was attached to inward and outward purification of the individual in Virasaiva texts, the saints prescribed five codes of conduct (*pancacaras*)[8] and eight aids (*astavaranas*)[9] and certain *samskaras* to help an individual in his spiritual pursuits.

The ideas of liberty and equality seem to be interrelated to the movement's notion of work-ethic. It fiercely opposed not only the degradation of human labour but also the social stigma attached to some of its forms. Since its basic tenet attacked inequalities, it aimed at reasserting moral values for cooperation among men. It believed that this could be achieved through the dignity and function of work, and a harmonious society which would regenerate mankind, i.e., all kinds of work—noble or venal—must receive—without discrimination—and be accorded equal status. The movement attached great importance to a sense of duty rather than to the rewards a particular work had to offer, not even Siva was exempt from this! The values of industry, selfless service, devotion to work and freedom of thought were emphasized and given the pride of place in this work-ethics, which is epitomized in *kayakave kailasa* or 'Work is Heaven'. *Kayaka* literally means physical work, but in its wider connotation, it denotes an occupation, a profession, a vocation, work or duty undertaken as a means of self-realization. The Virasaiva saints, naturally, derided idleness and beggary which were heinous crimes for they had no place in their economic order. The vitality and stability of a society lay in the fact that every individual had a calling to attend to and this he had to perform assiduously. *Kayaka* exalts the dignity of man and the dignity of labour; virtues which were alien to Brahminic Hindu society, i.e. *Kayaka* was a spiritual view of labour and not materialistic. But in keeping with the true spirit of *Kayaka,* man had to sublimate his physical labour into a spiritual pursuit; or work must lead to self-realization through social service. Basavesvara cautioned the Virasaivas against undertaking any work with the sole object of earning money, for pecuniary gains or amassing wealth. *Kayaka* was, he stressed, to be done in the spirit of service (*dasoha*) and its earnings must be dedicated to the *jangama* who in turn would utilize it for the welfare and well-being of society.

The movement had its own symbols of protest. The principal insignia and symbols carried in their religious processions were the *makarathoranum* (a banner with a tortoise or whale embroidered on it), the *hagaludevatti* (holding torches during the day), the *swetachachatram* (white silk umbrella); the *nandidwajam* consisting of a long pole at the top of which floated a flag with a representation of Nandi, the bull, to which was fixed an image of Basava, his *avatar*; and the *Vyasahasta*, a long pole from which a wooden arm, believed to be that of Vyasa, was suspended. The Virasaivas carried a bell suspended from the flat end of a ladle, which was generally rung by the Chalavadhis (belong to the Holeya caste) with their feet. The hollow ladle represents *Brhma Kapala* or Brahma's skull (Nanjundayya and Ananthakrishna Iyer 1931: IV, 109).

Consequences and processes

Ridiculed and doubted, brahmans moved steadily away from the centre of the socio-religious life in Karnataka towards its periphery. The movement not only championed the cause of the relatively deprived sections of society, but itself predominantly had a lower-class following, albeit enjoying the support of the class of priests (collectively known as *jangamas*), traders, peasants and craftsmen.[10] Among them there were well-to-do merchants as well as weavers. The Statement at the end clearly depicts the social composition of the movement. Amidst the diversity and heterogeneity of its membership the common bond was provided by those predominantly of low social status. The socially discontended masses viewed the formation of the Virasaiva movement as some form of compensation for their inferior social status. In the early days of the movement, its leaders advocated and practised an open recruitment to its ranks, and caste was considered irrelevant to salvation. This openness and voluntariness of the vocation advocated by the movement brought together every strata of society on an equal footing. The main mode of recruitment of new members was conversion, especially groups or bloc recruitment in a bid to mobilize mass support for the movement's cause.

If the main recruiting grounds in the beginning were the lower castes, and the bulk of Lingayat saints outcastes, Basavesvara's death marked a turning point. Later Virasaiva leaders discouraged the impure castes from becoming members of the Virasaiva community. The doors of admission were slammed shut against the lower castes, and rules for recruitment made more stringent.

In any case, Basavesvara's religious zeal and missionary activities coupled with his piety and munificance played an important role in the spread of the movement to the masses within a short span of time. People from various cross-sections of society began embracing it. Basavesvara personally undertook the work of initiating the newcomers and converting them to Siva worship. Conversion of the people led to an increase in membership of the community. Later, the task of recruiting new members was entrusted to the mathas. Some of them played a prominent role in conversions, such as the Suttur, Mysore, Chitradurga Brhan, Taralabalu, Sirigere, Siddaganga, and the Tumkur maths. However, the Siddaganga matha had not evinced much interest in conversion. The conversion of the last twenty took place twelve years ago. (Sadasivaiah 1967: 205). The exact figures are not available but Malledevaru[11] mentions the conversion by the head of Suttur matha of some Tamilians about thirty years ago and that they were being made by Suttur matha and Taralabalu matha. In contrast, Sadasivaiah[12] points out that conversion had virtually come to a standstill, and during the last twenty years there have not been more than a dozen conversions.

If leaders are the agents of group mobilization and the architects of organization and ideology, Basavesvara who embodied these qualities is definitely a leader. He played a pivotal role in mobilizing the social discontent of the masses, and preferred the liberation of the many as against the oppression of brahmans. As the architects of the organizational apparatus, the mathas and the *jangamas* formed the major underpinnings of the movement and became the carriers of its ideology of protest particularly against brahmans. An extensive network of mathas (in charge of *jangamas*) was entrusted with the task of transmission, propagation and popularization of Virasaivism. This was to maintain social cohesion and solida-

rity within the community because they were powerful instruments of social control. Both the mathas and the allied order of *jangamas* (the wandering itinerants of Siva) were created with a view to reinforce their missionary activities. Thus was this sectarian movement able to attain a high degree of politicization for the confrontation—often adopting a military posture —brahmans. The development of an elaborate organizational network at all levels provided the necessary infrastructure for the formation of other non-brahman movements at the turn of the present century in an effort to restore parity in the vital areas of social existence.

However, the Virasaiva movement, in the course of time, succumbed to the process of institutionalization. This process may be visualized in two ways. First, there was regularization and routinization of the movement itself along organized lines. The movement codified its belief and value systems in order to provide institutionalized arrangements which would enforce the codes of conduct. Thus, the movement became highly routinized and institutionalized in certain aspects. But in many ways it is still dynamic especially in continuing the fight against the brahmans, for economic and educational advantages and the increased share in political power. Second, there has been the process of absorption by the social order following the partial achievement of its goals.

Protest ideology and the backward classes movement

The Virasaiva movement was guided and dominated by an anti-brahman ideology ever since its inception. It was this ideology which became the mainstay of non-brahman movements that began during the 1920s in the former States of Madras (Tamil Nadu), Mysore (Karnataka), and Bombay (Maharashtra). The Virasaivas once again have been in the vanguard of non-brahman movements and the Backward Classes movement in Mysore. In this section we shall examine the nature of the organizational experience of the Virasaiva movement as it engaged itself in the quest for new goals in the twentieth century.

In seeking new goals the pre-existing infrastructure enabled

the Lingayats to be in a commanding position over the Vokkaligas and the other non-brahman communities, to take advantage of the educational benefits being offered by the State. They agitated for educational benefits and reservation of seats in educational institutions and sought preferential treatment in government employment. One of the goals of Virasaiva associations has been for the general progress of the community by means of education, and for a guaranteed share in the modern political process.

The Virasaivas established new associations with a view to promote and safeguard their interests, and created new social links that bypassed the old. They felt that "only a united caste consciousness could act as a saviour of the Lingayats and extricate them from the depressed state they were in" (Harrison 1960 : 112). Towards the turn of the century the idea of revitalizing the Virasaiva movement formed the focal point and provided the motivation for the creation of an All-India Virasaiva Mahasabha in 1904. The chief architects of the Mahasabha were Sri Hanagal Kumaraswamy, Tyagavira Sirsangi Lingaraju, Sir K P Puttana Chetty, and Beechnahalli Basavaradhya. The Mahasabha which has now branches spread all over the State at the district, taluka and village levels became the new vehicle of the movement's protest ideology. It not only played an important role in the electoral process but gave a fresh lease of life to the Virasaiva movement. From its very inception the Mahasabha envisaged the formation of an unified Karnataka which would include the Kannada speaking areas that were a part of the erstwhile princely state of Mysore. If this happened, it would provide the Lingayats a lever for domination. The desire for unification provided a rallying point for the Lingayats to mobilize themselves under the banner of the Mahasabha. They campaigned actively and vigorously for unification which was intensified after the Bangalore session of the Mahasabha in 1927, and actively supported by the Lingayat religious organization (Harrison 1960 : 112).

Today, the Mahasabha has district committees in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala and of course in Karnataka. Taluka committees have also been formed in the districts. Bangalore (where it has its headquarters), Belgaum, Gulbarga, Raichur, Mysore, and Shimoga.[13] It has

also constituted the following committees : The Constitution Revision Committee; Committee to consider the question of setting up a Finance Corporation; the Industries Committee; Committee to consider the Registration of the Mahasabha; and The Dharma Grantha Committee.[14] The working committee is compiling a census, through its district units of the Virasaiva population in Karnataka. It is also planning to bring out an authenticated and authorized "Dharma Grantha", designing an emblem, a flag and compose an anthem. These proposals are to be referred to the Dharma Grantha Committee. Efforts are being made to set up effective organization in each of the State Universities, namely, Mysore, Bangalore and Karnataka (Dharwar) with a view to impart training to brilliant students of the community aspiring for a job in the All India Services and other competitive examinations. The Working Committee has appreciated the fact that Basava Jayanthi has not been declared a holiday either by the State or the Centre, and this objective is also being actively pursued.

Another association which has been set up is the Basava Samiti. Its headquarters are at Bangalore, and its branches in various districts are known as Zilla Basava Samitis that work under the guidance of the Rajya Basava Samiti. The Kendriya Basava Samiti situated at Bangalore controls the Zilla and Rajya Samitis.

Apart from the Mahasabha and the Basava Samitis, the other associations are; Annana Balagas, Akkana Balagas, Virasaiva Tarun Sanghas and welfare associations like Sri Virasaiva Kare-Kul Samaj, Bijapur; Sri Mad Virasaiva Kuruvinashetti Samaj, Rabkavi; Sri Virasaiva Kuruvinashetti Samaj, Banhatti; Sri Virasaiva Sajjan Samaj Sudharana Sangh, Bevur; Sri Mad Virasaiva Sivayoga Mandir, Bagalkot; Sri Virasaiva Vidyalaya Association, Almatti; Sri Lingayat Samaj Sudharana Sangh of Hubli; Sri Nandikol Basavesvara Devasthan Sanstha, Dharwar; Sri Sadguru Muppinendra Mahaswami Dharmadev Fund, Byadgi; Sri Ulavi Basavesvara Dharma Fund of Dharwar; Sri Virasaiva Mahasamaj of Hirekerur; Sri Virasaiva Pattasali Sangh of Hubli. The aim of these associations, like before, is to protect, promote and safeguard the interests of the Virasaiva community, to gear activities towards their uplift and progress in the spheres of religion, education, culture and

other social activities. To illustrate, they celebrate festivals and birth anniversaries of Virasaiva saints, act as the agents of social mobilization and social control, help in creating a collective caste consciousness among Virasaivas, and keep alive a social awareness of the depressed plight they were once in.

Educational aims and activities

Many Virasaiva leaders strongly influenced by the course of the development of the movement and noting that formal education was essential to society, urged the mathas to embark upon a massive drive to rapidly promote education within their ranks. To implement this programme effectively the mathas undertook the task of instituting Sanskrit *pathshalas* at various places. The rationale of establishing these *pathshalas* was that a basic grounding in Sanskrit was necessary, on three counts. First, many of the texts like the *Saivagamas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas* which the Virasaivas accept are in Sanskrit. Second, to bring about a better appreciation of the Virasaiva tenets, philosophy and texts. Third, to enable them to break up the monopoly of the brahmans in Sanskrit learning.

The *virakta* monks and mathas had been the mainstay of the movement's drive towards education, and were actively engaged in this venture since 1900. Their efforts have had a great impact on the Virasaivas in particular and the society in general since 1920. This period heralded the proliferation of the activities of the mathas. There was a mushroom growth of educational institutions under the aegis of various heads of mathas and various Virasaiva members who combined to form and promote educational societies.

By virtue of their training in English the brahmans were able to monopolize many of the clerical, administrative, educational and political positions in the State services. The Virasaiva movement directed its efforts at undermining this brahman dominance in the field of education. The *matha-jangama* axis was reinforced by the establishment of caste associations and educational societies to accelerate the proliferation of education. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the

Lingayats "formed a special educational association at Dharwar, which raises funds to advance the education of their own sect. The association gives scholarships to Lingayat boys to enable them complete their education at the colleges at Poona and Bombay; and in 1888 it collected over Rs 15,000 for the purpose of sending a Lingayit student to England to compete for the Covenanted Civil Service or to read for the bar. As an instance... of the educational zeal of this sect, it may be noted that in 1887 fourteen Lingayit gentlemen of Belgaum raised a sum of money... to be paid to the first Lingayit MA and the two first Lingayit LLB's, who may obtain those degrees from the University of Bombay" (Hunter 1892 : 180 81). The Lingayat Education Association was started in 1883. Its objectives were to promote education among the Lingayat community by awarding scholarships, establishing schools, colleges, libraries and hostels, and to promote the development to Lingayat Literature, culture, and history.

The turn of the present century signalled a spurt in equcational activity in another direction for the Virasaivas saw such potentialities which would enable them not only to combat brahman domination in the educational arena but also saw in it the key to strategic centres, to the instruments of political power. It was during the interlude between the two World Wars that the Virasaiva educational system was transformed. They responded to the new realities of the time by moving away from their preoccupation of establishing Sanskrit *pathshalas*, and opened schools and colleges where English was the medium of instruction. This shift carried with it a multitude of implications. It enabled the movement to join the mainstream of non-brahman movements, and the Backward Classes movement in Mysore. This association necessitated the gearing of its organizational apparatus towards the promotion and advancement of education among the Virasaivas.

Thus, the numerous mathas and educational societies with their extensive network of educational institutions spread all over Karnataka served to promote education both among the Virasaivas and non-Virasaivas. The latter were included owing to the secular demands and pressures of the State. Another reason for the Virasaiva educational institutions catering to the educational needs of non-Virasaivas was the involvement of

the Virasaivas in the non-brahman movement and the Backward Classes movement. However, the Virasaivas dominated their educational societies and institutions, in the management, staff and students. For instance, the president, the four vice-presidents, and fifteen members on the managing committee of the KLE society were Lingayats. Even the teaching staff in the Lingayat run institutions were dominated by them; accounting for 55.6 and 60.4 per cent of the teachers in their institutions in Belgaum and Dharwar districts respectively, during 1965-66 (Madan and Halbar 1972 : 139). Lingayat students also dominated, constituting 35.7, 52.9 and 31.9 per cent, the institutions managed by the Lingayats in the districts of Belgaum, Dharwar and Mysore respectively (Madan and Halbar 1972 : 137). In the twenty-five secondary schools in the districts of Dharwar and Mysore there are forty-six Lingayats who are members of managing boards. In five colleges, of which three are in Dharwar district, twelve Lingayats are members of managing boards. They do not figure on the managing boards of the two colleges in Mysore district as these colleges are managed by Mysore University, a stronghold of the brahmans (Madan and Halbar 1972 : 137). In the institutions run and managed by the Lingayats themselves, the percentage of their own castemen as members of managing boards is 75.0 per cent (Madan and Halbar 1972 : 135).

It may be pointed out that in order to encourage education among Virasaivas, the mere establishment of educational institutions was not sufficient. The Virasaiva leaders were aware of this. They supplemented it by instituting scholarships, freeships for the deserving and needy students and setting up free boardings and hostels for Virasaiva students. The Mysore Lingayat Educational Fund Association, Bangalore, was established in 1905 to "stimulate a desire for education among the Virasaivas of Mysore, to build and maintain Homes for Virasaiva students in Bangalore and other places, to help poor students by awarding scholarships and generally look after material, moral and social advancement of the community".

We thus see that in this way of the Virasaivas have wrested the initiative from the brahmans in the field of education

which, along with power, wealth and status, was legitimately monopolised by a small elite. Today, the Virasaiva movement has expanded its scope to include the norms of mass access to social, economic as well as political power. In all this education has played a vital role. Current trends exhibit tendencies towards a shift in emphasis; from Sanskrit to English as the new medium of instruction and from the sacred to the secular in the mode of education. This demonstrates an awareness of the changing needs and demands of the times, especially of acquiring education in English because it holds the key to economic and political progress. This has immense potentialities of wresting the initiative from the brahmans, and to enable them to become a force to be reckoned with in society. The accent now is also on providing education in science, engineering and technology for which various educational societies—including mathas—help each other in order to establish institutions to cater to these needs as well as promote welfare programmes. For example, they began raising funds for various facilities which would enable Virasaiva students to obtain a formal education so that, by 1921, the number of Virasaiva literates in English headed the list of non-brahmans. This was an advantageous position for them, as they benefited them more than any other community by the Backward Classes conscessions which were adopted in that year.

Educational movement and political power

In Mysore the brahmans had gained considerable power in higher appointments during the three or four decades prior to the appointment of the Miller Committee in 1919. Naturally, the distribution of political power favoured the brahmans. Perceiving this, the non-brahmans mobilized themselves in a bid to pressurize the Mysore *Durbar* to grant concessions particularly in the modern political process. They did not want clerical jobs. The clamour was for guaranteed and preferential treatment in education, government jobs, and a share in political power. The Virasaivas cogently put forward these demands and became the spokesmen of the non-

brahman movement; they agitated for educational benefits and reservation of seats. For a brief while it appeared that the organizational apparatus of the Backward Classses was oriented towards wresting power from the brahmans. Following a non-brahman deputation to the Maharaja, His Highness appointed a "committee to consider steps necessary for the adequate representation of Backward Communities in the public services" under the chairmanship of Sir Leslie C Miller on 23 August 1918. This is popularly known as the Miller Committee, which submitted its Report in July 1919, but was released to the public only in 1921.[15] It had made twenty-nine recommendations of which ten related to public services, while the rest were concerned with the problem of education. Nearly all the recommendations on education were accepted by the Government Order of 25 May 1921.

The Committee employed the criterion of literacy in English to determine which community was 'backward', i.e. those communities in which the literacy rate in English was less than 5 per cent. The Committee did not dwell upon the problem of "adequate representation of communities" at length. On the matter of what representation was "adequate" it proposed a minimum target of adequacy to be accomplished in seven years.[16]

> If by the end of this period not more than half of higher appointments, administrative and ministerial, be held by Brahmans, and not more than one-third of the subordinate appointments, we think that the question of adequate representation will be answered for the time.

The Government Order of 1921 accepted this recommendation, except that the target of 50 per cent was for lower, as well as for higher appointments.

The rejection of the substantive recommendations made by the Miller Committee as well as the time limit advocated by the Committee to facilitate the entry of non-brahmans into the public services virtually demolished the validity of the target. The Government also refused to abandon the system of competitive examinations for jobs, to recruit non-Mysorean non-brahmans if qualified Mysorean non-brahmans were not

available, or to reserve posts in every grade and adjust those reservations annually to make sure that efforts were made to maintain a fifty-fifty parity. In deference to these recommendations the government followed the policy of preferring a non-brahman candidate to other candidates who had better qualifications, even if the former had just the bare minimum qualifications specified. It persisted in maintaining this preferential treatment until the required parity was obtained. Recruitment rules to various jobs were relaxed in favour of candidates of the Backward Classes. But the concessions granted applied only to initial recruitment and not to promotions. Most of the upper grade posts were promotional posts. This hurt the non-brahmans most, for they felt that they were being deprived of advantageous positions. The brahmans had dominated most of the posts in the superior services of Mysore State in 1918 when they were measured against the yardstick of salary grades.[17] For all the salary grades—ranging from under Rs 25 to Rs 800 and upwards—the Brahmans had held 69.3 per cent of the posts in the superior services of the State, while the corresponding figure for the three largest non-brahman communities, consisting of the Vokkaligas, Lingayats and Kurubas, was 6.3 per cent.[18]

During the time when the Government Order on the Miller Committee was in effect, the major thrust of the non-brahman movement was to influence the policy that was education oriented rather than concentrate on influencing policies relating to government recruitment. Education—both its achievement and promotion—occupied the top place on the agenda of most caste associations interested in promoting the welfare of their respective communities. The various caste associations worked to secure grants for student's hostels, and for an increase in the amounts allotted to Backward Class scholarships.

An issue which created great resentment and led to repeated agitational protests by the non-brahmans, related to the question of admission to Government Sanskrit colleges. For the Lingayats particularly, these restrictions against studying Sanskrit were unbearable. The entire organizational network of the Lingayats went into immediate action for a massive agitation which was supported by other non-brahmans. The Government then agreed to admit them in the Government

Sanskrit College at Bangalore, in 1925, and not the one in Mysore city. Since this proposition was unsatisfactory, complaints, demonstrations and protests were renewed. The issue of admission to Sanskrit Colleges seemed to have been guided by the need to improve status, rather than any strong urge to study Sanskrit.

At any rate, soon, the non-brahmans began to seek a share in the political process. There was a shift in their emphasis to an electoral charter. The year 1923 signalled a series of constitutional reforms which paved the way for the expansion of franchise and the extension of privileges of the elected representatives. The younger non-brahmans attempted to build power bases in the districts. It resulted in a demand for more electoral reforms and, in 1930, they sought responsible government. Until the 1920's the brahmans had enjoyed power and dominated all higher appointments. But they suddenly found themselves forced to share various forms of government employment, political influence, educational opportunity and high status life styles that had previously been their monopoly, with the non-brahmans. This was in 1923, after the constitutional reforms were implemented.

The 1930s witnessed the take over of the non-brahman movement by a younger generation of non-brahmans. This decade also saw a spurt in the availability of political opportunities for these young non-brahman leaders who were willing to exploit them to their advantage. The sudden acceleration in the availability of political opportunities was due to the implementation of political reforms. The new Government Order issued in 1927 on the recommendation of the Miller Committee clearly demonstrated that the *modus operandi* for gaining power through preferential treatment in government employment, had limited utility.

In the early years of his tenure as Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail tried to whet the political appetite of the non-brahman leaders by providing them State patronage conducive to building up a power base in the districts. Towards the close of the decade, these very same leaders at the district level began challenging the authority of Sir Mirza Ismail himself. The young non-brahman leaders in their bid to build their political image

operated on two axes. First, they endeavoured to build a base for electoral support at the level of the district by exploiting the new opportunities of the district and municipal boards. Secondly, they aimed at capturing power from the state-level representative bodies. By now the anti-brahman ideology was articulated in a more militant tone than it had been earlier.

The period between 1930 and 1937 was a transitional phase for the non-brahman movement, because after this period there was a shift of emphasis in their political objectives, ideology, and degree of mass politics. The post 1930s saw both the brahmans and non-brahmans altering their perspectives and priorities on communal issues. They made adjustments in order to pursue a common set of objectives under the banner of the Congress.

There was a remarkable lessening of tensions between the brahmans and non-brahmans during the period between 1930-1973 on the issue of education. Two factors account for the decline in the intensity of conflict and confrontation between them. First, on matters of educational policy and budget priorities, political divisions seldom coincided with non-brahman-brahman alignments. Second, it was the manner in which the educational provisions of the Backward Classes were implemented.

During the 1930s the main focus of the non-brahman movement in the field of education was on admission to medical and engineering colleges. Immense pressure was exerted on the selection and scholarship committees to get a satisfactory communal distribution of and to establish quotas for admission. The period witnessed an increase in the competition for government jobs particularly in the clerical and administrative cadres.

The decade of the 1940s was characterized by an expansion of facilities and enrolments which profoundly affected both the non-brahmans and the brahmans than any caste related benefits to the development of the non-brahman movement after independence. There was an increase in the enrolment of Lingayat students at all levels. During the year 1940-41 there were 63,477 Lingayat students enrolled in various educational institutions, out of which there were 312 students enrolled in colleges, 1,211 in high schools, 7,944 in middle schools,

48,907 in primary schools, and 5,053 in special and vocational education and private schools. The corresponding figures for the years 1947-48 are; out of 113,374 students, 1,223 were in college, 4,594 in high school, 16,099 in middle school, 87,753 in primary, 3,705 in special and vocational education and private schools.[19] The figures for the total enrolment of the Lingayats at the high school and college level, during the years 1940-41 and 1947-48, had more than trippled.

The decade of the 1950s witnessed the Central Backward Classes Commission Report ending in a fiasco. It was repudiated by its own Chairman. In Mysore there were special problems relating to the Backward Classes following the reorganization of the State in 1956. The merger of the districts which were governed by different administrations brought in its wake a medley of communities—each receiving preferential treatment or benefits of some sort or the other.

In 1958 a writ petition led to quashing a Government Order extending the old Mysore list to the whole of the newly organized State.[20] The High Court once again struck at another Government Order when the Government proposed another list.[21] This resulted in the appointment of the Mysore Backward Classes Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr R Nagan Gowda in 1960, for the purpose of determining the criteria for the classification of Backward Classes in the State. In its Interim Report the Committee recommended that "backward classes should be listed only on the basis of their caste or community and their backwardness judged on the basis of the percentage of literacy in their community and their representation in government service".[22]

The Interim Report deprived the Lingayats of being classified as a backward community. Much to their chagrin they found that the Vokkaligas had retained the status of a backward community. This exclusion from the category of the Backward Classes led to acrimonious debates, and the Lingayats sought to use their political power to exert pressure on the State Govarnment to have their community retain the status of a Backward Class. Lingayat associations throughout the State passed a series of resolutions denouncing the Interim Report and called for an immediate reinstatement of the community among the "Backward Classes". The State Government yielded

to this pressure and the Lingayats were able to retain their status as a Backward Class.

In 1963 the Mysore Government adopted the yardstick of a non-caste-cum-occupation to determine backwardness for the purpose of giving benefits. However, this criterion was misused by those who had effective power in society as it was amenable to manipulation. The State was soon reprimanded by the Court for not including the caste-criterion along with income and father's income, in order to curb abuses.

In 1973 a New Mysore (Karnataka) Backward Classes Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of L G Havanur to work out a rational criterion for backwardness, and to recommend a workable system of distributive justice. The Commission submitted its Report's to the Government of Karnataka in late 1975. It has evolved certain criteria for determining backwardness—economic, residential, occupational, educational, and so on. Applying two or more tests, it has found backward elements among the two dominant communities in the State—the Lingayats and the Vokkaligas.

The quest for political power involved the Lingayats in a conflict, which was intense and bitter, and a direct confrontation with the Vokkaligas and the brahmans. The rivalry for political power between the Lingayats and the Vokkaligas was thus eclipsed by the rivalry between the Lingayats and the brahmans.

Prior to the reorganization of the State of Mysore the political scene was dominated by the Vokkaligas. However, this dominance was undermined by the Lingayats following the State's reorganization. The emergence of a unified modern Karnataka brought in its wake a large influx of Lingayats. This altered the balance of power in the State. In the Bombay-Karnataka area the Lingayats were involved in a fierce struggle to oust the brahmans from power. In this area, the brahmans taking advantage of the various educational, social, religious, cultural, and political opportunities available, they were able to extend their hegemony on the Congress organization, and even assume its leadership. In this area the Ramdurg incident precipitated the confrontation between Lingayats and brahmans.[23] On the eve of the First General Elections the Lingayats had managed to displace the brahman domination in the Congress organization, and assume its control.

The political scene in Hyderabad-Karnataka was a replica of the Bombay-Karnataka scene described above. The Lingayats displaced the brahmans in the Congress organization but themselves were suffering from intra-group factionalism.

In the old Mysore area, State politics prior to independence was dominated by the Vokkaligas. They ruled the roots until the reorganization of the State in 1956, which changed the complexion of the political scene. Then, the Vokkaligas began to slowly lose their political dominance to the Lingayats.

We thus see that in the realm of politics there has been a significant growth of political elites among the Virasaivas, whose members have held positions of importance at all levels of political life. At the State level we find that from 1957 to 1972 four Chief Ministers belonged to this community. In the Mysore Cabinets there were 27 per cent Lingayat cabinet members in 1962, 35 per cent in 1967, and 23 per cent in 1972.[24] In the legislative assembly there were 61 Lingayat MLAs in 1957, 56 in 1963, 74 in 1967 and 56 in 1972. Members of the Lingayat community have also been presidents of District Congress Committees all over the State. Their members have been chairmen of the Khadi Board, speakers in the Assembly, members of Parliament, governors of States, presidents of Indian National Congress, chairmen and members of Public Service Commission, Mysore State Electricity Board, Coffee Board and so on. B D Jatti, a staunch follower of Virasaivism, holds the high office of Vice-President of India.

Virasaiva scholars who today have enriched the field of education include such literary stalwarts as Dasappa Sastry, Turamuri, S S Basavannal, P G Halkatti, Hardikar Manjappa, B Sivamurthy Sastri, R C Hiremath, S C Nandimath, S S Bhoosnurmath, Channavira Kanavi, H Thipperudraswamy, S S Malwad, R R Diwakar, B Puttaswamiah and others.

Epilogue

From its early beginnings, the Virasaiva movement did not merely tinker with the institutional system but brought about a radical transformation in Karnataka society and its culture. The experiences and pressures that Virasaivas suffered generated a whole series of concerted efforts to remove some of the most crippling legacies of the Brahminical system. The efforts

on the part of Virasaivas to bring about social change were pervasive and encompassed many aspects of society and culture.

The new circumstances made a mockery of all Brahminic forms of rituals, rites, beliefs and values. The Virasaivas repudiated the entire value system and belief system associated with the brahmans and replaced them by a parallel set of their own institutions. The non-recognition of pollution, may be considered as a major break from tradition. It is the anchor point of the movement's drive towards diversification of economic activities among the Virasaivas. The preamble of the movement is dominated by an egalitarian, libertarion imagery, which is at the heart of the movement's continuing reformatory appeal.

Critics point out that the social impact of the movement has not been significant, and that many of the social ideals envisioned at the time of its inception have not been realized. It is said that the varying degrees of hierarchical relationships within the Virasaiva community are familiar enough to require little or no commentary. It is alleged that the movement failed in its attempt to establish a casteless society and hold it responsible for further proliferation of the caste system. In this way, they also point out, the movement failed to achieve any kind of lasting egalitarianism.

There is an element of truth in these criticisms. The idea of caste lingered on, and soon it assumed the rigid form of the caste system, which process of rigidification seems to have set in around the close of the seventeenth century.[25] Ironically, introduced as a protest against the caste system and the "ecclesiastification" of culture, the Virasaiva movement quickly developed its own form of extreme clericalism. Today, within the Virasaiva community one finds not only "separate and distinct castes, but castes that are touchable and castes that are untouchable".[26] Recent trends show that the Virasaivas attempted to apply the four-fold classification of Manu, viz. brahman, kshatriya, vaishya and the shudra, within their community. They are now inclined towards styling themselves as Virasaiv Hindus, and exhibit a distinct tendency to revere Brahminic Hinduism.[27] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, that is, in 1891, "there were numerous representations

from Lingayats claiming the right to be described as Virashaiv Brahmans".[28] But in 1931 they made representations to the Government to be classified as a separate religious category like the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists in the Census Reports. They were accorded the status of a separate religious group in the Census Report of 1931 outside the ambit of Hinduism.

Viewed in the context of a sectarian movement, the Virasaiva movement does exhibit tendencies towards change and moving away from its original programmatic aims, i.e. away from eventual denominational status. It later was manifested with the characteristics of an organization from which it originally withdrew and repudiated.

These criticisms do not dwarf the Virasaiva movement's achievements. It did provide a parallel system of beliefs and rituals in which the lower castes could participate. This undermined the monopoly of the brahmans, because it advocated the egalitarian principle of devotion and a different concept of ritual pollution. It provided a suitable work ethic (*kayakave Kailasa*) for the lower occupational categories. It also employed those employed in lower and manual occupational categories to gain self-respect and dignity.

For nearly five centuries, until the seventeenth century, the Virasaiva movement exhibited the tendencies of a fullfledged sect, without cleavages. Thus the criticism that the Virasaiva movement did not overcome the limitation of social stratification based on the criterion of caste holds good only for the post-seventeenth century Virasaiva society. Internal divisions were not pronounced until the seventeenth century. These crept in following a great deal of routinization and bureaucratization. The authority structure of the movement became more and more centralized in the mathas and their heads. Formal rules of recruitment and rules of conduct came to be formulated and enforced upon the Virasaivas with greater vigour than before.

The Virasaiva movement effected a redistribution of power, wealth, education and status on the principle of equal access. The ideology of protest of the movement undermined the basic principles of birth, hierarchy, purity and pollution underlying the caste system, through protest, challenge, competition, conflict and aggression. Seen in the context of the Backward

Classes movement the Virasaivas as a part of the Backward Classes movement relegated the position of the brahmans to the background in the religious, economic, educational spheres and even in politics.

It is erroneous to say that as part of the sectarian movement the Virasaiva movement did not bring about any change in society. It would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of the movement and the values it stood for and advocated. The movement is not dead but a living one. Its form has undergone a change from a purely sectarian movement to a Backward Classes movement, gaining increasing access to educational and economic opportunities and political power.

STATEMENT

SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF VIRASAIVA COMMUNITY

Priestly order 1	*Trading/Commercial* 2	*Agricultural* 3	*Functional* 4	*Miscellaneous* 5
Jangama	*Banjiga*	Ahir Lingayat	Ambis (Ferrymen)	Aidugadaya-
Aradhya (Linga-	Adi Banajiga	Gauda Lingayat	Ganiga:	davaru
yat Brahmin)	Badagalava	Gauda Mane	1. Bile Ganiga	Gavinga
Ayya	Bania Lingayat	Gauliga	2. Diksavant Ganiga	Hirehasube
Chikkamath	Banna Dava	Gurikara	3. Kare Ganiga	Janagonda
Ganacari	Basale	Gurusthala	4. Rasawant Ganiga	Kambe
Ganadhisvara	Bavani	Mallava	5. Silavant Ganiga	Koriavarn
Hiremath	Gada Lingayita	Nonaba	Jadar:	Pavaliyoru
Hugar	Gaddigeyava	Panchachara Lingayat	1. Bile Jadar	Sajjana
Math apati	Joti Banjiga	Panchamasali Totiga	2. Kare Jadar	Sthalavada
Puja[r]	Kaikola	Lingayat Reddis:	Koshtis (Hatkars)	Tamadi
Sthavara	Kannadiga	1. Narada Lingayats	Lingayat Agasarus	Virabhande
Swami	Kanthapavade	2. Pakanati Lingayats	Lingayat Goulis	Wara Bande
	Kori Setti	3. Pasubumati Lingayats	Lingayat Holeyas	
	Linga Banajiga	4. Renati Lingayats	Lingayat Jyandras	
	Lokavant Banajiga	5. Yellamma Kapus	Lingayat Kapus	
	Melpavade	6. Yellamma Reddis	Lingayat Kumbaras	
	Nirumelinava	Sadarus	Lingayat Kurumas	
	Panchamasale Banajiga	Lingayat-Vokkaligas:	Lingayat Mangalas	
	Pattana Setti	1. Hande-Kurubas	Lingayat Nayandarus:	
	Pavda Setti	2. Kuda-Vokkaligas	1. Non-Silavant Nayandaru	
	Petemane	3. Pakanaka-Reddis	2. Silavant Nayandaru	
	Silavant Banajiga		Lingayat Panchalas	

1	2	3	4	5
	Toga Setti Turukane Banajiga		Lingayat Parit (Washermen) Lingayat Simpis : 1. Nagalik Simpis 2. Shiva Simpis Malis Mochi Nhavis Neygi 1. Bilimagga 2. Devanga Sale 1. Pattusale	

NOTES

1. *Mysore Backward Classes Committee* (Nagan Gowda) *Final Report* 1961, pp. 43-6.

2. Nandi (1975 : 33).

3. Interpretations of the term "Virasaiva" are to be found in religious works like *Siddhanta Sikhamani* and *Kriyasara*. The *Siddhanta Sikhamani* provides two interpretations. According to it, the term "Vi" denotes knowledge about two things; first, knowledge of the identical nature of the individual (*jiva*) and Saiva. Those devotees of Saivism who revel in such a knowledge are called "Virasaivas". Second, it also refers to the knowledge acquired from the study of *Vedanta*. Hence, "Vira" is one who finds peace of mind in it.

There is yet another connotation of the term "Vira" as given in *Kriyasara*. According to it, "Vi" means "doubt" (*vikalpa*), and "ra" means "without". Thus, the term "Vira" means the Saiva faith and philosophy which is free from all doubts (Sadasivaiah 1967 : 13-14).

4. The term "Lingayat" is the anglicized word for *Lingavant*. The Lingayats derive their name from the Sanskrit word *linga*, the phallic emblem, with the affix *ayta*, and are the people who bear the *linga* habitually.

5. Thipperudraswamy (1967 : 381) opines that it is fallacious to attribute the founding of Virasaivism to any single individual, for Virasaivism is an offshoot of Saivism and the latter (Saivism) is in its turn one of the main branches of Hinduism. Though its early history is shrouded in mystery, scholars subscribe to the view that it is certain that most of the principal tenets of Virasaiva system as enunciated in the *Saiva Agamas* have been imbued in the Indian culture since early times and have left their indelible imprint on the nation's culture.

6. See Desai (1968 : 182).

7. The narration regarding this ceremony is not the same in all the versions of Basavesvara's biography. For a discussion of the different versions, see Hiremath (1967 : 14-16).

8. The five codes of conduct (*pancacaras*) are *lingacara*, *sivacara*, *sadacara*, *brthyacara* and *ganacara*.

9. The eight aids (*astavaranas*) are *guru*, *linga*, *jangama*, *padodaka*, *prasada*, *bhashma* or *vibhuti*, *rudraksa* and *mantras*.

10. Nandi (1975 : 32).

11. Interview with Dr H P Malledevaru on 1 November 1975 at Mysore.

12. Interview with Dr H M Sadasivaiah on 28 October 1975 at Mysore.

13. *Annual Report* 1974-75, p. 7.

14. *Proceedings of the General Body Meeting of the All India Virasaiva Mahasabha held on 20 June 1975*, p. 13.

15. Government Order No. 1827-80-E.A.G. 308 dated 16 May 1921.

16. *Miller Committee Report* (1919), p.3.

17. Refer to Government Order No. 1827-80-E.A.G. 308 dated 16 May 1921 and Annexure 3: *Miller Committee Report* (1919).

18. Figures taken from the documents mentioned in note 17.

19. *Report on Public Instruction in Mysore for the year ending 20th June 1941*, and also the *Report on Public Instruction in Mysore for the year ending 20th June 1948.*

20. See *All India* (Law) *Reporter* 1960 Mysore 338 for writ petitions 363, 370 ff of 1958.

21. See *All India* (Law) *Reporter* 1960 Mysore 338.

22. *Mysore Backward Classes Commission* (Nagan Gowda). *Interim Report*, p. 3.

23. See Halappa (1964: II, 470-481).

24. Source: Glyn Wood and Robert Hammond (1975: 151), Table IV: 1.

25. Thurston (1909: IV, 249-50).

26. *Census of India* 1921, Bombay, Vol. 8, pp. 67-8.

27. *Census of India* 1901, Bombay, Vol. 9, p. 58.

28. *Census of India* 1901, Bombay, Vol. 9, p. 183.

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