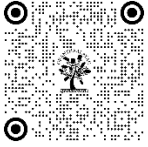


# INDIANNES AND KANNADATVA IN THE EYES OF KUVEMPU AND DR. SIDDHALINGAYYA

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## ABSTRACT

Nationalism acted as a unifying factor in the Indian independence movement during British rule. However, nationalism includes a policy of separating us from other people. Our writers, intellectuals, and activists have been influenced by this. Numerous works of literature are inspired with a sense of nationalism. However, the renowned Kannada poets Kuvempu and Dr. Siddalingaiah have argued that the inclusion principle is different from the idea of division. This article makes an effort to comprehend this.

The lyrical phrases 'Jai Bharat Jananiya Tanujate, Jaya Hey Karnataka Maate'<sup>i</sup> and 'Jaya Bharathi, Karunada Saraswati; Visva-Bharatige Kannadadaarati'<sup>ii</sup> illustrate how the Navodaya poets of Kannada, who have seen both the freedom struggle and post-independent India, viewed the world, India, and specifically Karnataka. It is from time immemorial; the feminine form has embodied the land and nation. They perceived the nation as an integral part of the world and the state as an integral part of the nation. There are poems that support nationalistic discourse, and we can also find poems that serve as ears beyond the nationalistic discourse and for the voices of the people of the land.

People all over the world perceive the earth as a mother. During India's freedom struggle, the nationalistic discourse of treating the country as a mother and preparing brave sons to fight against the enemy and protect her emerged. At the height of India's freedom struggle, the idea of 'Bharat Mata' spread widely through the literature and discourses of Bengal and Maharashtra, influencing the literature of all languages and the psyche of the people. During the unification of Karnataka, the ideas of Kannamma and Bhuvaneshwari Devi became prominent in our lives. These ideas emerged during a period when the battle against foreigners was intensifying. The ideas exhibit a fierce character, a call to fight against the enemy, a clear division that separates us from others, and a reference to Kshatra's bravery. There is no objection to the stance that we should fight for freedom from the British. However, this division between us and others carries within it the seeds of intolerance toward certain communities that continue to be part of our country. There is a clear division between us and them. Despite its heroic phrasing, the unrelenting violence within it strikes us. The idea that a son is the protector of "Mother India" is a patriarchal notion. The burden of preserving the

culture was placed upon women. We fight against them because there is a clear division between us and others, and instead of focusing on self-reflection and overcoming our own limitations, we constantly point the finger at others. This crisis has turned into a blessing for those who have benefited from it.

The Kannada World has responded to this in a unique way. In this context, the present article aims to comprehend how the two Kannada poets, Kuvempu and Siddhalingayya, despite their praise for Bharathambe (Mother India) and Kannadambe (Mother Kannada), attempt to unravel the harsh realities of the lives of people. An attempt is made to trace how their poems are different from the nationalistic discourse mentioned above and the reasons behind them. In the pre-independence era (1931), Kuvempu wrote his poem 'Indina Devaru' (Today's God). The title of the poem itself is such that it shows us who should be our God and what should be our priority in the present context. When the first line says, "Leave a hundred gods far away," it looks like an iconoclast and shocks. This line seems maverick at first and shocks traditional readers. The second line, 'Come, let us worship Bharat Matha as our God,' indicates what should be our priority. The poet, bitterly highlighting centuries of servitude and ignorance, describes the condition in which Bharathambe is today and tells us what to do. When the poet refers to Bharathambe as "the goddess of life," "vishwarupini," and "vishwamukhi," people perceive her as the mother of all. She never discriminates against her children, and she never alienates others to help a few. In this way, Kuvempu has seen Bharathambe as an inclusive image.

The final line demonstrates the poignancy and clarity of thought, elevating this poem to a new level. "Our mother embodies us all; our mother's happiness lies in the freedom of her children." This line diverges from the divisive ideology, illustrating that each unit is a distinct part of the mother. The freedom mentioned here includes not only freedom from foreigners but also freedom from all forms of slavery and anti-human acts that surrounded us. Each of us must be free to make the mother happy, a great philosophy embodied in poetry at the time.

Dr. Siddalingaiah's poem, "Kande Nannavala Ondu Divasa,"<sup>iii</sup> from his anthology "Saviraru Nadigalu" (1979), depicts the present suffering of a mother who, like Kuvempu's poem "Chaliya Maleyali Naveva Thai,"<sup>iv</sup> is shivering amidst the cold. The situation depicted here mirrors that of our country's women. It's as if someone has placed the sun and the moon in a box of money; the Indian flag gagged into her mouth with force, exposes the harsh reality of her voice being snatched away by the rhetorics of patriotism. Those who claim to be her foot soldiers have left her in a precarious situation. Her condition resembles someone who has lost their voice. The situation we have reached after independence is, in a way, self-destructive.

The poet writes about the procession of 'Belli Baku' (Silver Dagger) throughout the streets of India. The world of violence and cruelty pierces us, leaving us wounded. The country is our mother, we are her children, and her plight is no different from ours. It goes beyond pointing out the silences and discriminations that impede inner freedom; it makes the voices of the oppressed, which still live with a raw wound, heard. This dance of money and pseudo patriotism binges us till today and makes us deaf to this voice. The same people uphold the image of Mother India promoted by nationalism and continue to use the words of patriotism, excluding those who are their brothers and sisters.

Another poem by Dr. Siddhalingayya, "Kannadavvanige,"<sup>v</sup> appears in the collection "Holemadigara Hadu" (1975). This illustrates the contradiction inherent in the construction of the 'Kannada Mother,' which emerged with Karnataka's Unification and subsequent period. The poem commences with the poet posing a question to the mother, revered as the "Sarvahrudaya Samskari." The poet inquires, "How can I praise your strength?" The words, "The rich people who used to weigh pearls and gems in the vessels are decorating you with golden ornaments; your virtue is beyond words," show us the values so far that have gained importance in our land.

This country has witnessed the plight of women as sexual objects. The poet's description of mother Kannada as 'The landlord's companion, who licked the sweat of the farmer,' makes us shudder. Dr. Siddhalingayya highlights the paradox of blinding one's eyes to the harsh reality while expressing gratitude for the mother. After gaining freedom from the British, those in power are now working for their own benefit, while those who endured oppression in the past continue to suffer. This poem exposes those who engage in self-deception, concealing the truth behind the rhetoric glorifying the Kannada Mother. In this context, it makes sense for an oppressed person to ask, "How can I salute you?"

When we think about the values that have been taught and ingrained under the phrases of Indianness, Indian culture, and the Kannada language, we are sure that we need to leave these beautiful stories behind, which hide true oppression. Kuvempu, born into a backward community was well aware of the evils manifested in the name of religion. Siddhalingaiah is a poet who awakened Dalit consciousness and, in a broader sense, touched humanity. Both of them were able to comprehend the inherent contradiction between the concepts of nation and Kannada land. If Kuvempu tries to cover the mother shivering in the cold rain, Siddhalingaiah identifies himself with the wounded mother. The poems are important because they expose the flaws in patriarchal myths, question them, and reflect who we are.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- <sup>i</sup> Hail to Mother Karnataka who is the daughter of Mother India  
<sup>ii</sup> Hai to Bharathi and Kannada Mother (Karunada Saraswathi)  
<sup>iii</sup> I saw her one day  
<sup>iv</sup> Mother shivering in cold and rain  
<sup>v</sup> To Mother Kannada