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KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

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PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Speaker

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Deccan Herald ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 05/03/2020

After criticism, Speaker Kageri amends Constitution speech

It made no mention of freedom struggle or Nehru: H K Patil

BENGALURU, DHNS ^{5/3/20}

Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri on Wednesday decided to amend a portion of his speech on the Constitution after members of the Opposition Congress pointed out that it appeared to depreciate the role B R Ambedkar played in its framing. This was an inaugural speech Kageri made to the Assembly on Tuesday as part of a special discussion on the Constitution. While recounting the contribution made by several Karnataka leaders in the drafting and

framing of the Constitution, Kageri referred to civil servant Sir B N Rau, a Mangaluru native and that it was his "draft copy" of the Constitution that was submitted to the Ambedkar-led drafting committee, which went on to make several revisions to it. Subsequently, Kageri hailed the "great contribution" of Ambedkar in the framing of the Constitution. "It looks as though the Speaker's remarks on the Constitution are heavily influenced by his political parentage," senior Congress legislator H K Patil said. A six-time BJP legislator, Kageri identifies himself as a swayamsevak of the RSS.



Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri speaks in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.

Pointing to the "contentious" portion of the speech, Patil said: "There is no mention of the freedom struggle, the Congress or India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. No one can discard the Congress' contribution." This then led to a brief debate on who played what role

in drafting the Constitution. "The drafting committee had seven members. While one of them died and one left for the US, the others did not attend the meetings regularly. Ultimately, it became a one-man show with Ambedkar," former Speaker K R Ramesh Kumar of the Congress said.

BJP's P Rajeev rose to say that it was M N Roy, who came up with the first draft of the Constitution, which Congress' Priyank Kharge challenged. "Roy did come up with a draft, but it was on the aims and objectives of what the Constitution should be, not the Constitution itself," he said.

With members contesting each other, JL(S) MLA Shivalinge Gowda frowned: "Who wrote the Constitution and who didn't, it doesn't matter. Let's talk about the current state of the Constitution."

At this point, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa rose to tell the Assembly that Ambedkar's role in framing the Constitution is undisputed. "It's known world over and none can change or dispute that," he said, which members across party lines welcomed.

After all this, Kageri told the Assembly that he will amend his speech.