



# The Role of Karnataka in the Freedom Struggle: A Historical Perspective

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## Abstract

*India and Karnataka are said to have entered a golden period during the independence struggle of the twentieth century. At the start of the 20th century, Karnataka saw the emergence of a new national consciousness. The emergence of nationalism and patriotism within the Karnataka Freedom Movement can be attributed to various factors, including the dissemination of English education, the resuscitation of Karnataka's historical narrative, the nurturing of patriotic sentiments, the influence of revolutionary newspapers, the function of political gatherings, the consequences of British policies, the advancement of transportation, and numerous others. The literature on the Karnataka freedom movement, as well as the historical significance and contributions of figures like S. Nijalingappa and Kittur's Rani Channamma, are presented in this article. The essay attempts to address the nationalist movement's rise during the Karnataka Freedom Movement. Dr. Diwakar explains that when Karnataka laborers entered Indian politics between 1885 and 1947, they saw two objectives: they imagined two ideas; they had two maps in front of them: one showed a free India, and the other showed Karnataka's unification. This illustrates how the desire for unification and the development of opportunities remained closely related in Karnataka. Furthermore, the leadership and sacrifices made by independence fighters who not only benefited the Indian country but also led to long-lasting social and economic changes that shaped its history were examined.*

**Keyword:** Karnataka Freedom Movement, Mysore Dynasty, Role of freedom

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Like every other Indian state, Karnataka had visionary leaders and was affected by leaders at the federal level. This is shown by the fact that the little hamlet of Issuru, which was a part of a bigger region, was the first to proclaim its independence from colonial authority. When India gained its independence in 1947, Karnataka did not exist as a distinct state. After then, it was split up into twenty distinct departments, kingdoms, and administrative units. In one way or another, Karnataka leaders were essential to the Indian liberation struggle. Karnataka produced a large number of freedom fighters who were instrumental in the Indian independence movement against the British Raj. The greatest school in Bangalore, NPS Sarjapur, honours the millions of people who gave their lives in the liberation movement (Gowda & Saraswathi, 2014).

During the twentieth-century liberation struggle, the average man was brought to the forefront as the historical creator, voluntarily going through many trials and sufferings for a cause. Both the history of Karnataka and India are thriving at this time. Karnataka had a period of peace during the English Crown standard era (1858–1858) that lasted over thirty years. The Indian National Congress had its first meeting in Bombay in 1885, with Kolachalam Venkatarao, Bausaheb Bhate of Belgaum, two others from Bellary, and four more from Karnataka in attendance. In 1893, A. O. Hume traveled to Dharwad and Belgaum to propagate the ideas of the Congress. At Belgaum in 1895, Dinshaw Wacha presided over the Bombay State Political Conference. These were some of the first activities related to

Karnataka's opportunity development. Meanwhile, the 16th Bombay State Political Conference was held in 1916 in Belgaum, while the 18th was held in 1918 at Bijapur. Both Tilak and Gandhiji were present at these events. In 1920, Gandhiji also visited Bangalore and Mangalore. The national awakening in the Hyderabad, Karnataka area was mostly the work of the Arya Samaj, who also founded national schools like as Chincholi, Kalburgi, Raichur, and Kukanur. Pandit Taranath was ordered to leave the state of Hyderabad in 1920 in order to focus on his work in Raichur. Hardekar Manjappa also carried out a great deal of publicity in this area. Theosophical Society under Besant assisted in the dissemination of national principles in Old Mysore. The Bangalore National High School was founded by Theosophists in 1917 (T, 2011).

### 1.1 *Freedom Movement in Karnataka*

In the fight for independence, the state of Karnataka has made significant contributions. For their bravery and valor, Kannadigas are renowned. For them, freedom was more important than life, and they still do. The Karnataka monarchs, the Kadambas, the Hoyasals, the Chalukyas of Badami, and the Vijayanagar kings, are undoubtedly remembered when the topic of independence is brought up because of their passion and commitment to it (Shivarudrappa & Puttaraju, 2013).

For a long time, Karnataka has been regarded as a region of fearless men. The people of Karnataka could not accept the imposition of foreign authority and alien culture as British control gradually extended across India. Several courageous warriors from Karnataka, like Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, Rani Channamma of Kittur, Sangolli Rayanna of Bailhongal, Bheema Rao of Mundaragi, and many more, fought in several pivotal wars (Nagaratna.B.Tamminal, 2014).

Thus, Karnataka as a whole has been essential to India's liberation movement. Karnataka's top fighting races, the Bedas and Kodagas, have retained their stellar reputations throughout history. Balaji Nimbalkar led the Halagali Bedas in their fight against the British. The son of Chidambara, Diwakar Dixit, gave them a lot of support. Dixit of Murgod, but the conflict claimed Nimbalkar's life. Jadyappa, 3alappa, and nineteen other individuals were hung during the conflict. A well-known Kannada folksong that celebrates the courageous acts of the Bedas chronicles the emotions of the Bedas of Halagali as they confronted an order from the East India Company to give up their weapons.

### 1.2 *Mysore Dynasty*

People who were used to leaving matters of governance unnoticed that they were gradually but surely being succeeded to the position of slaves under a foreigner during the second half of the 18th century as the British very shrewdly continued their operations as vassals of the Mughal Emperor. Mysore was deeply defended by the valiant opposition against the British that Hyder and Tipu put up. After subduing the Wodeyars and taking control of Mysore, Hyder had become weary of the British expansionist strategy. He had previously had cordial relations with the British. However, as time went on and he learned of the British empire's plans to expand into India, he attempted to curry favor with the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad in an attempt to quell their lust. However, he was unable to do so since the British had discreetly gained the backing of Nizam and the Marathas at that point. Hyder passed quite young and had a brief life. Then Hyder's son Tipu carried on the battle with the British. He engaged in combat with the British in 1792 in an effort to expel them. However, Tipu was well outclassed and found himself in serious danger. Later Tipu fought valiantly and died in the Fourth Mysore War (1799). As a result, the father and son rebelled against the British.

### 1.3 *Role of freedom fighter*

The following are a few well-known Karnataka leaders (Minch, 2013):

#### 1.3.1 *Rani Channamma*

The first Indian lady to rebel against the British was Rani Channamma of Kittur, even before the 1857 insurrection. In Bailhongala, India, on February 2, 1829, she passed away. In the Princely State of Kittur, Karnataka, she held the title of queen. Despite her lack of success in overthrowing the British, she served as an inspiration for several female freedom fighters to take up weapons against the British in India. This little principality deserves all the glory for raising the flag of independence. To battle the British, the Rani were joined by valiant warriors like as Sardar Gurusiddappa, Balappa, Sangolli Rayanna, Bicchugatti Chanabasappa, Gajaveer, and others.

#### 1.3.2 *Tipu Sultan*

November 20, 1750, was Tipu Sultan's birthplace at Devanahalli. He passed away in Srirangapatana on May 4, 1799. Mysore Tiger is another moniker for him. From 1782 to 1799, Tipu was the monarch of the Kingdom of Mysore.

He was a superb soldier, poet, and scholar. Tipu is the first child of Hyder Ali, the first monarch of Mysore, and his first spouse. Tipu originally received assistance from the French and engaged in several fights with the British.

### 1.3.3 M. Krishna Rao

In 1879, in the Madras Presidency, Krishna Rao was born. On June 25, 1945, he died away. With his words and ideas, this well-known journalist helped to raise awareness and foster unity among the people of Karnataka. He has written editorials in the past alerting readers to the policies of the British government and criticizing them.

### 1.3.4 R.S. Hukkerikar

Birthplace: Bangalore; October 22, 1886. Birthplace: Belgaum. Journalist and social worker professorship. R.S. Hakkerikar was among those who contributed to the growth of the state of Karnataka. Apart from his work, he was also a skilled orator.

### 1.3.5 Abbakka Chowta

Rani lived from 1525 till her death in 1570. Several distinct factions attempted to conquer India prior to the British colonization. Rani was among the first female liberation warriors to take on the Portuguese as one of those organizations. Because Ullal was in an excellent location, the Portuguese attempted to conquer it in the 16th century, but Abbakka repelled them for more than 40 years.

## 1.4 Impact of Gandhi Ji in Karnataka

The Karnataka freedom struggle was greatly influenced by Gandhiji, which completely altered the landscape of the Indian National struggle. In 1920, Gandhiji traveled across Karnataka, spreading the message of non-cooperation and raising funds for Tilak's Swaraj Fund. The Kannadigas gave their all in their contributions. The ladies distributed their jewelry. Many Kannadigas quit their positions with the government. In addition, the students joined the liberation movement, and the attorneys boycotted their profession. Karnataka is home to several national institutions and schools. Picketing of booze stores was underway, and several foreign clothing malls were set on fire. There were 23 penalties and three injuries. Diwakar Rangarao and Deshpande Gangadhar Rao received one-year and six-month sentences, respectively, for betraying the British (Salagare, 2017).

### 1.4.1 Ankola Satyagrahi

To express his opposition to salt, Gandhiji launched the Dandi March in April 1930. Mylar Mahadevappa of Motebennur participated in this march along with a large number of volunteers from Hubli and Belgaum. The Ankola people disobeyed the law and made salt since there was a fee on salt. The leaders who were engaged were Ramakrishna Kamath, Talacherikar, N.S. Hardikar, R.R. Diwakar, Mylar Mahadevappa, and Kamad Sadashivrao, among others. The lathi charge caused several deaths. Karnataka's northern regions were the birthplace of this movement. It then extended to the southern region as well. The leaders of this movement were Hardekar Manjappa, B. Shivamurthy Shastri, Kamad Sadashiv Rao, R.R. Diwakar, Timmappa, Kadapa Raghavendra Rao, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande of Belgaum, and Shrinivasrao Koujalagi of Bijapur.

### 1.4.2 Civil disobedience movement

As a result of the Karnataka people's participation in Gandhiji's 1930 Civil Disobedience Movement, the state of Karnataka was dubbed "Gandhi Province." The British governor of Bombay then delivered his report, in which he said that Karnataka was moving more quickly than Gujarat. At the start of the Dandi Satyagrah on April 6, Deshpande Ganga Dhar Rao was the first person to be arrested nationwide.

### 1.4.3 Quit India movement

The Quit India Movement led to Gandhiji's incarceration in 1942. Under the direction of Chanabasappa Ambli of Bijapur, Ranganath Diwakar, D.P. Karmarkar, and others, this movement was also launched in the Bombay, Karnataka region at the same time. The districts of Bijapur, Dharwad, Belgaum, Bangalore, and Mysore saw extreme violence during this campaign. Instead of attending class, the students began protests by burning down public and government buildings, slashing telephone cables, and removing fishplates from railroad tracks. The British killed hundreds of civilians with guns and detained thousands more. Among them was Mylar Mahadevappa as well. Two revolvers and eighty-five rifles were taken by the militants in the Quit India Movement from police personnel. Nineteen railway stations, thirty-four government inspection bungalows, two hundred village chavadis, two hundred village daftars (papers), sixty-two arrack stores, and the police station were all entirely destroyed by fire.

#### 1.4.4 Kodagu movement

The leaders of the Kodagu Zamindar Association were K.C. Kururribayya, P.T. Kumarappa, Nidte Subbannayya, I.P. Belliyappa, and C.N. Venkatayya. Additionally, this Association joined the National Movement. Karnataka's national leaders, including Dr. N.S. Hardikar, Hanumanthrao Koujalagi, Karnad Sadashivarao, R.R. Diwakar, and Gangadharrao Deshpande, had interactions with the leaders of this Zamindar Association. 1930 saw their enlistment in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Students and farmers were arrested in 1932 for their involvement in this campaign.

It was prohibited to read the weekly national newspaper, Kodagu. Owing to this ban, "Veera Bharathi," another cyclostyled hand bill, has been initiated. The primary goal of this essay was to educate readers on social and economic issues. The British Chief Commissioner found it annoying that Rohini had stories regarding the Jallianwalabaug disaster published in this paper. Belliyappa, the editor, was made to apologize. He refused to go. Threatening the paper's board of directors was the British Chief Commissioner. Because the Board maintained the editor's position, the British Chief Commissioner was forced to remain silent.

#### 1.5 Establishment of Karnatak Pradesh congress committee

Following the approval of language-based provincial division, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee was established. Prior to opening locations in Bangalore, Mysore, Tumkur, Kadur, and Gadag, it operated out of those locations. With the help of Venkata Krishnayya of Mysore, Tagadur Ramachandrarao, and others, the Congress Committee's programs were carried out quickly.

#### 1.6 British impact on society and culture

Following the British conquest of India, several modifications were made to Indian civilization. Some social behaviors, including as female infanticide, child marriage, polygamy, sati, and a strict caste system, grew increasingly common in the 19th century. These actions were against moral principles and human dignity. Women were the underprivileged group in society and faced discrimination at every turn of life. They were not able to take advantage of any possibilities for progress to elevate their standing. Just a few males from higher castes had access to education. The Sanskrit-written Vedas were available to Brahmins. The priestly class included costly rites, offerings, and customs after birth or death.

The British introduced new concepts to India, like liberty, equality, freedom, and human rights, which they had learned from the European revolutions, the Reformation Movement, and the Renaissance. A number of reform movements emerged throughout the nation as a result of these concepts, which resonated with certain segments of our society. Visionary Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Pandita Ramabai were in the forefront of these movements. These movements pursued liberty, equality, and fraternity while searching for societal cohesion. To raise the position of women, several legislative initiatives were proposed. For instance, the Governor General at the time, Lord Bentinck, outlawed the practice of sati in 1829. A legislation enacted in 1856 allowed widows to remarry. An 1872 statute authorized marriages between members of different castes and communities. In 1929, the Sharda Act was enacted, outlawing child marriage. The ordinance made it unlawful to marry a male younger than 18 or a girl younger than 14. Every movement expressed strong disapproval of the caste system, particularly the untouchability policy.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Sreedhara, 2021) [7] The essay attempts to explain the Karnataka Freedom Movement's rise of nationalism. Dr. Diwakar emphasizes that the demands for unification and freedom went hand in hand in Karnataka. The workers from Karnataka who entered the Indian political arena between 1885 and 1947 saw two dreams, conceived two ideas, and had two maps before them: one was a free India, and the other was the unification of Karnataka. The twentieth century, marked by the liberation struggle, is considered the greatest age of Indian and Karnataka history. In Karnataka, a new National Consciousness started to form around the start of the 20th century. The Karnataka Freedom Movement experienced a rise in nationalism and patriotism due to a number of factors, including the spread of English education, the revival of Karnataka's history, the creation of patriotic feelings, the contributions of revolutionary news papers, the role of political conferences, the impact of British policies, the development of transportation, and more.

(Virupakshappa, 2020) [8] Central Karnataka's Davanagere District, known for its thriving economy, sociopolitical life, and rich cultural legacy, was a major player in India's liberation struggle. After becoming a significant textile hub during the colonial period, Davanagere—which was formerly a part of Chitradurga—earned the moniker "Manchester of Karnataka." With



significant assistance from figures like G. R. Ramaiah and Rangappa, the district actively engaged in important movements like the Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India Movements. Women played an important part in this as well; individuals like Kamamma, Gowramma, and Ballari Siddamma were among them. Local crafts and industries were encouraged by the liberation movement, which helped to establish economic self-sufficiency and build the groundwork for growth after independence. Davanagere's thriving cultural traditions, educational establishments, and commercial ventures are now well-known, and they are a testament to the people's energy and tenacity.

(Somanatha et al., 2020) [9] the Kalyana Karnataka liberation movement, with a focus on the districts of Koppal and Ballari. The territory known as Kalyana Karnataka, or Hyderabad Karnataka, is located in the current division of Kalaburagi, one of the state of Karnataka's four divisions, along with Bangalore, Belgaum, Mysore, and Kalaburagi. When the new state of Mysore (now Karnataka) was founded in 1956, the region that had been a part of the former Hyderabad province was dubbed Hyderabad-Karnataka. As everyone is aware, the country has celebrated Independence Day on August 15th every year since 1947. However, since 1948, the residents of Kalyana Karnataka, or Hyderabad, Karnataka, have also observed the holiday on September 17th. Hyderabad, Karnataka was ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad even throughout the Indian independence movement. Hyderabad, Karnataka's citizens had to battle not only the British but also Hyderabad Nizam, who backed the Razakars, in order to achieve their freedom. The region's liberation struggle was just as serious as that of other sections of the nation, and it was by no means low key. Unfortunately, no one has drawn attention to this part of the liberation movement's history. Bidar, Gulbarga, and Raichur (and more recently, Koppal district) were the three districts that made up the Hyderabad state until they were amalgamated into the Karnataka state. The state's Gulbarga division is made up of these districts and Bellary, notwithstanding Bellary's distinct culture. One of the biggest and wealthiest princely republics in India, Hyderabad was a holdover from the autocracies of the Middle Ages.

(Virupakshappa, 2019) [10] The sociopolitical environment of the area was greatly influenced by S. Nijalingappa, a well-known leader in the Indian independence movement and a crucial political figure in Karnataka after independence. This study looks at his early years, his participation in significant anti-British activities,

and his achievements as a political figurehead in the years after independence. Nijalingappa's commitment to social change and independence is evident in his work as a chief minister of Mysore State and in his active involvement in the Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India campaigns. His contributions to the advancement of learning, rural development, and economic independence have had a long-lasting impact, making him a significant historical figure in Karnataka. Understanding his achievements helps us to comprehend the larger story of contemporary Karnataka's growth and India's fight for freedom.

(R.G, 2019) [11] In the Karnataka liberation fight, women played a special role. Women did not take up the cause of their nation and devote their life during either the pre-Gandhi or Gandhi eras. Gandhi started the Karnataka liberation movement around 1920 or thereabouts. Gandhi's visit to Belgaum in 1924 had a profound effect on the rebel leader. They also took part in the No Tax campaign, Salt Satyagraha, and Self Satyagraha. Women's liberation fights with males for socioeconomic gains and the dissemination of libertarian ideals. The Indian age of resistance against the British was launched in by Queen Chanama of Kittur.

(Virupakshappa., 2018) [12] Every region of the nation produced heroes for our independence movement. They were not monolingual. They were not members of any one caste or religion. They overcame these limited allegiances and concerns, and they were intensely passionate about achieving the independence of their homeland. That was the one thing that brought them all together. The foundation of free India is the incalculable sacrifices made by countless people. The goal of the freedom movement was not only to force the British out of India; it also aimed to elevate our country's standing in the eyes of the world's developed countries. The maxim was, "Indians should be the Masters of India." The fundamental goal was for Indians to have the same rights as global citizens. This might be referred to as the freedom movement since it has to do with human existence, including customs, economic endeavors, a rich cultural history, and objectives. Gandhiji had a dream of Swaraj. Swaraj implies "We Indians are very poor, the wealth of the nation is being washed away" in this globe. We ought to escape poverty. Despite India's wealth, the country's population is plagued with deadly illnesses. We shall not be able to sleep well till the British are forced out of India.

(Murthy, 2015) [13] Students played a significant and admirable role in the fight for Indian independence. The

struggles took place throughout that time. The government and the freedom fighters were engaged in a never-ending conflict for several reasons. Students were encouraged every day to read the speeches and writings of great leaders like Gandhiji. These young people's main goal in joining the fight was to force the British out of India. Gandhiji's outspoken criticism of the British in 1942 sparked a young movement known as the Leave India Movement.

(Vijaykumar, 2017) [14] The present-day Karnataka was divided into as many as twenty administrative units following the fall of Tipu Sultan in 1799 and the period of British rule. The most significant of these were the princely state of Mysore, the territory of Kodagu, the Madras Presidency, Nizam's Hyderabad, and the Bombay Presidency. The Wodeyar rulers of Mysore did not govern over roughly two-thirds of what is now Karnataka. Consequently, despite their substantial population, the Kannadigas in these areas lacked administrative patronage. For instance, the Kannadigas of the Hubli-Karnataka area were ruled by the Bombay Presidency, which made Marathi the national language. Urdu was the primary language of those living under the Nizam's authority in Hyderabad and Karnataka. Under these circumstances, a movement that had first begun as a protest against linguistic persecution started calling for the formation of a distinct state that would include all Kannada-speaking territories. This was referred to as the 'Unification' or Ekikarana movement. Two The 1956 creation of numerous Indian states by redrawing boundaries based on linguistic demography resulted in the creation of the Indian state of Karnataka, formerly known as Mysore State. This event is referred to as the Unification of Karnataka. The first calls for a state with a population based on Kannada had been made decades earlier, under British administration.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Karnataka has a rich history of contributing to India's freedom struggle, with iconic freedom fighters who played pivotal roles in resisting colonial rule. The participation of districts like Davanagere in the national movement is a testament to the collective resilience and patriotism of its people. Figures like S. Nijalingappa, Rani Channamma of Kittur, Tipu Sultan, Krishna Rao, and R.S. Hakkerikar exemplify the region's legacy of leadership and sacrifice. These leaders not only contributed to the Indian National Congress but also spearheaded social and economic reforms that left a lasting impact on the nation's history.

The involvement of women in the freedom movement, particularly in campaigns such as the Salt Satyagraha and the No Tax Campaign, underscored their commitment to popularizing democratic ideals and advocating for socio-economic justice. They fought alongside men for representative governance and the broader goal of national independence.

During the early 20th century, a new wave of national consciousness swept through Karnataka, driven by factors such as the spread of English education, the revival of Karnataka's history, and the role of revolutionary newspapers. Political conferences, the impact of British policies, and the development of transportation also fueled the rise of nationalism and patriotism. The freedom movement in Karnataka during this period represents a golden chapter in the region's history and its critical role in India's quest for independence.

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