

Freedom Movement in Undivided Dharwad District: Role of Adivappa Hasabi and Rajashekarappa Hoskeri Pulakeshi B. Kamannavar

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ABSTRACT:

The question that often arises is: what exactly constitutes the freedom movement? What is the contribution of freedom fighters to the nation and the people? Among them, what was the role of women freedom fighters, and how did classical Kannada culture encourage people to participate in the movement? This article focuses on a detailed study of the freedom struggle in the undivided Dharwad district of Karnataka, highlighting the contributions of prominent leaders such as Adivappa Hasabi and Rajashekarappa Hoskeri during the Quit India Movement of 1942. The study examines the differences in terms of place, person, and time among the participants of the freedom struggle, offering a local perspective on the national movement.

KEYWORDS:

Quit India Movement, Commemoration, Boycott, Countrymen, Triggered

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Introduction

During India's national freedom struggle, Dharwad district played a remarkable role, producing several freedom fighters, journalists, social workers, and intellectuals who actively participated in both the early nationalist movements and the Quit India Movement of 1942. Key leaders of the district included Mailara Mahadevappa and his wife Siddamati Mailar, Andanappa Doddameti, Sardar Veeranagouda Patil and his wife Nagamma Patil, Leelavati Magadi (wife of freedom fighter Venkatesh Magadi), Paramanna Hosmani, Siddappa Hosmani, Adivappa Hasabi, Rajashekarappa Hoskeri, Venkanagouda P. Shiriyappagoudar, Gadagayya Honnapurmath, Timmanagouda Menasinahal, Narasimharao Tato Dabade, Venkaraddi Hooli and his brother Govindararddy Hooli, Kariyappa Yereshime, among many others.

Prior to the Quit India Movement, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) working committee meeting was held in Dharwad on

4 August 1942. After the resignation of the previous office-bearer, D.P. Karamakar was nominated as working president. As per the directions of the All-India Congress Committee (AICC), preparations were made for a meeting in Bombay, and the struggle began in earnest. The British government had already prepared a list of leaders to be arrested. Following Mahatma Gandhi's speech on the night of 8 August 1942, many leaders in Mumbai were immediately detained. Congress was declared illegal, and all its offices were locked under police supervision.

In Hubli, leaders including Dr. N.S. Hardikar, DCC Secretary Sayyad Bandar, R.V. Kargudari, and Veeraktmath were arrested. On 9 August, despite it being a holiday, students organized a large procession; when the police tried to stop them, the protesters sang patriotic songs like Ramdhun. The District Collector intervened, allowing the procession to continue. In Kadapa Ground, Dr. Kabbur, who had delivered a public speech, was arrested. Processions by high school students took place in Hubli, while district leaders such as Paramanna Hosmani, G.V. Hallikeri, Andanappa Doddameti, and Veerangaouda Patil were arrested within two days. Bandhs and strikes were observed in major towns on 10 and 11 August 1942.

Strikes were also carried out in smaller towns following the directions of the Praja Sangha president, including Shigli near Shirahatti. In Gadag, public speeches were delivered by Mr. Haridas Rao and Alur Venkata Rao, while leaders like Advocate Jalihal were arrested. Processions in Hubli, Hanagal, Morab, Konnur, Ron, and Gajendragada continued on 12-13 August. These demonstrations persisted despite the arrest of key leaders, showing the movement's resilience.

The British government declared that Congress intended to conduct illegal activities, as announced by Parliamentary Minister Amery on 13-14 August 1942. Congress workers reacted by damaging telegraphic wires in Belgaum, Suldhal, and Gokak. On 14 August, processions from Lamington High School and Karnatak College, Dharwad, were interrupted by police. The death of Mahadevabai Desai on 15 August 1942 further intensified the movement. News of the deaths of national leaders, though not published in newspapers, spread through radio, enraging the public. In Hubli, a procession of 5-6 thousand people from Koppikar Road to Durgad Byle ended tragically when student Narayan Doni was shot dead and Ishwar Thakur was severely injured. Similar agitations were observed

in Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Hirekeruru, Ranebennur, Navalgund, Nargund, Konnur, and other towns on 15–17 August 1942.

Organization of the Quit India Movement in Dharwad District

After escaping arrest post-AICC meeting in Mumbai, R.R. Diwakar met other AICC members to discuss organizational strategies for Karnataka. A “Punch Committee” (Committee of Five Members) was established, with R.R. Diwakar as president and Channabasappa Ambali of Bijapur as secretary. Members included D.P. Karmarkar, R.S. Hukkerikar, and Shrinivas Malya of Mangalore.

The committee faced challenges in implementing its objectives. In northern Dharwad, Shirang Kamat and Govindraddy Hooli oversaw underground activities, while Venkatesh Magadi and associates coordinated local activists in Navalgund, Nargund, Konnur, and nearby villages. Teams of activists were organized under local leaders: Shivappa Kubsad in Gadag, Venkanagouda Shiriyappagoudra in Konnur, Kariyappa Yareshimi in Hirekerur, Timmanagouda Menasihal in Ranebennur, and Mailar Mahadevappa in Haveri.

The movement involved a variety of actions aimed at disrupting British administration, including:

1. Cutting communication lines, telegraphs, and telephone wires.
2. Derailing and halting rail transport.
3. Burning village account records, post offices, public buildings, and railway stations.
4. Sabotaging police operations and revenue records.
5. Snatching mail bags and arms from authorities.

Underground volunteers travelled on foot, sheltering in hills, forests, and crop fields during the day, and operating at night without medical care. They remained constantly under threat, as police offered bounties ranging from Rs. 1,000 to 5,000 for information leading to their arrest.

Role of Students and Teachers

The Quit India Movement in Dharwad was heavily supported by students and teachers. Schools and colleges were completely boycotted, with teachers such as K.G. Joshi of Karnataka High School, Dharwad, going underground to organize protests in North Kanara (Uttara Kannada). Teachers from other institutions encouraged students to participate,

leading to widespread involvement.

On 10 September 1942, students faced mass arrests in Dharwad. By Dasara vacation, schools reopened but student participation remained high. Karnataka College offices were burned on 25 September 1942. Students, including Vimala Gulwadi and Shinolikar, hoisted the tricolour flag in the District Court and were sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Processions continued across Hubli, Haveri, Shiggaon, Naragund, and Navagalund. For the first time, localities such as Kundagol, Shirahatti, and Laxmeshwar actively participated in the movement.

Underground activities included burning railway stations, post offices, and public buildings. Postal services were disrupted on 30 September 1942, buses stopped on 2 October, and public works bungalows burned. The British administration faced severe challenges due to these actions.

Major Freedom Fighters of Dharwad District

Adivappa Siddappa Hasabi

Adivappa Siddappa Hasabi (B. 17 June 1890) was born in a farmer's family in Naragund, Dharwad. Educated locally, he developed exceptional oratory skills and was inspired by leaders such as Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. He abandoned family agricultural work to participate in the freedom struggle.

Hasabi actively engaged in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932, the Forest Satyagraha, and campaigns for the upliftment of Harijans. He organized a successful "No Tax Movement" in Naragund, modeled after Gujarat's Bardoli Satyagraha, leading to his arrest. During the Quit India Movement of 1942, he rallied troops for freedom in Naragund, vowing not to wear his Gandhi cap until independence was achieved.

Roaming from village to village, he encouraged people to resist British rule. Activities included cutting telephone wires, burning police stations, and sabotaging government offices. Arrested in 1942, he was imprisoned in Hindalaga Jail until 1943. After release, Hasabi continued his underground operations until he was ultimately killed by a British officer in 1943, becoming a martyr for India's freedom.

Rajashekarappa Gurusangappa Hoskeri

Rajashekarappa G. Hoskeri (b. 1908) was born into a wealthy fam-

ily in Naragund. Influenced by Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, he developed nationalist sentiments early and actively participated in the Non-Cooperation, Forest, Hullubanni, and Civil Disobedience Movements.

Hoskeri contributed to the demolition of police stations and post offices, incited tax boycotts, and was imprisoned multiple times, including a six-month term in Hindalaga Jail. He actively attended conferences presided over by Mahatma Gandhi in Balgaum (1924) and Byadgi (1939), and listened to speeches by Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, which inspired him to organize local movements in Dharwad.

During the Quit India Movement, Hoskeri was arrested and imprisoned in Visapur Jail for nine months with a fine of Rs. 100. After independence on 15 August 1947, he distributed sweets to villagers and continued contributing to social welfare. He established a textile mill in Naragund, providing employment to thousands. Hoskeri promoted values such as truth, non-violence, and social equality, becoming a respected figure in Karnataka even at the age of 96.

Conclusion

The Quit India Movement of 1942 witnessed intense participation in Dharwad district, with underground activities, student mobilization, and local uprisings disrupting British administration. Leaders such as Adivappa Hasabi and Rajashekarappa Hoskeri exemplify the courage, organizational skills, and personal sacrifice that characterized the freedom struggle. Their leadership inspired countless villagers, students, and activists to resist colonial rule, leaving a lasting legacy in Karnataka's history. The Dharwad district's freedom movement reflects the broader Indian struggle for independence, demonstrating how local initiatives contributed significantly to national objectives.

The efforts of underground volunteers, students, teachers, and community leaders in Dharwad created a "Karnataka pattern" of organized resistance that rivaled even the larger districts of Belgaum and Mumbai State. These activities underscore the critical role played by local heroes in sustaining the momentum of India's independence struggle, and the enduring values of courage, patriotism, and social service that continue to inspire future generations.

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