

This paper chronologically documents the sacrifices of key martyrs and communities, highlighting their enduring legacy. It underscores the interplay between armed revolt, satyagraha, and local mobilization, showing that the freedom struggle in Karnataka was not merely symbolic but involved real risk, courage, and communal solidarity.

I. Dharwad: Flames of Defiance

1. Early Resistance: The 1857 Revolt

The seeds of anti-colonial sentiment in Dharwad were sown during the 1857 Revolt, which ignited widespread resistance across India. The British Doctrine of Lapse, which allowed annexation of princely states lacking a male heir, provoked fury among local rulers and warriors. Nar-gund and surrounding areas, historically linked with Dharwad, became epicentres of armed confrontation.

Basavanna of Navalagund fought valiantly at the Koppaldurg battle in 1858. Captured and tried by a British court-martial, he was executed by musketry, a grim reminder of imperial reprisals. Similarly, Bassya from Kundgul resisted the disarmament policies imposed by the colonial administration and was blown away by cannon fire in June 1858. These early martyrs exemplify the courage of local populations who faced systematic British suppression.

2. Non-Cooperation and the Jakani Bhavi Incident (1921)

Dharwad's resistance evolved from armed rebellion to organized non-violent protest by the 1920s. The Non-Cooperation Movement, inspired by Gandhian ideals, mobilized local communities to boycott colonial institutions, including liquor shops, which were a major source of British revenue. On July 1, 1921, a peaceful picket at Jakani Bhavi in Dharwad escalated into a tragic massacre. British police opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing three individuals: Maliksab (alias Mardansab), Goususab (alias Khadersab), and Abdul Gafar Chokathai. This "Mini Jallianwala Bagh" became a symbol of Dharwad's unyielding spirit, galvanizing further participation in nationalist movements.

3. Quit India Movement (1942-43)

By the 1940s, Dharwad contributed actively to the Quit India Movement. Narayan Doni, a young carpenter from Hubli, was shot dead at age 16 during a demonstration on August 15, 1942. These acts of rev-

olutionary defiance disrupted colonial administration and inspired widespread public support for independence.

II. Gadag: Echoes of the 1857 Thunder

1. Mundargi Uprising

Gadag district, with its agrarian backbone and ancient temples, became a centre of revolt during the Great Revolt of 1857. Unlike prince-led movements, Mundargi's rebellion was spearheaded by commoners resisting British taxation and disarmament. Bhim Rao Nadgowda (also known as Mundargi Bhima Rao), Kenchan Gowda Sirnagowda, Bala Saheb, Baramappa, Basayya, Channappa, and Daud Saheb were among more than fifty martyrs executed in the Koppaldurg battle on June 1, 1858. Their deaths, often by cannon or musketry, highlighted the brutal colonial suppression of grassroots resistance.

2. Nargund Revolt and Baba Saheb Bhaskar Rao Bhave

The aristocratic revolt in Nargund (1858) reinforced Gadag's legacy. Bhaskar Rao Bhave, the Zamindar of Nargund, rallied 2,500 fighters, including Bhimaraya of Mundargi, to ambush British forces. Though initially successful in killing officer C.J. Manson and capturing Koppaldurg fort, Bhave was betrayed, captured, and hanged in Belgaum on June 12, 1858. His clerk, Gangadhar Chintamun (Anna Sahasrabudhe), and associates like Govind Narayan Parachure also faced execution, demonstrating the risks assumed by local leadership in resistance efforts.

3. Legacy of Peaceful Resistance

The Gadag region continued contributing to freedom struggles in the 20th century. Figures such as Venkosa Bhandage participated in satyagraha's, bridging early armed rebellion with non-violent Gandhian activism. These long-term commitments illustrate Gadag's sustained engagement in India's independence movement. During the Quit India Movement, uprisings in villages like Koganur (in Shirhatti taluk, Gadag district) saw revolutionaries like Virayya Hiremath and Tirakappa attempt a treasury raid to fund resistance efforts but were gunned down by police in 1943.

III. Haveri: Quit India's Fiery Vanguard

1. Mailara Mahadevappa and Revolutionary Activism

Haveri emerged as a hotbed of anti-colonial fervour during the

Quit India Movement. Mailara Mahadevappa from Motebennur, a veteran of the Dandi March, led the Kara Nirakarane campaign, encouraging farmers to withhold taxes. He conducted 72 acts of defiance, including destroying liquor shops, cutting telegraph lines, and raiding treasuries. On April 1, 1943, Mahadevappa, Veerayya Hiremath, and Tirukappa Madiwalar were martyred during a treasury raid at Hosaritti, symbolizing the district's revolutionary zeal.

2. Menasinal Timmanagoudar and Local Resistance

Timmanagoudar, inspired by Mahadevappa's activities, torched police quarters and raided colonial treasuries. Injured in a bomb blast during a tax raid on February 10, 1943, he later succumbed to his wounds, cremated amid public mourning. Leaders like Gudleppa Hallikeri nurtured Haveri's revolutionary spirit through institutions such as Gandhi Grameen Gurukul, blending Gandhian non-violence with revolutionary mentorship.

3. Leadership and Organization

Lawyers and Congress leaders like Siddappa Hosamani Karajgi and T.R. Neshvi organized farmers' councils, providing both ideological and logistical support to Haveri's martyrs. Their guidance ensured that grassroots action aligned with national objectives, demonstrating the interplay between local leadership and mass mobilization.

IV. Conclusion

The martyrs of Dharwad, Gadag, and Haveri represent the unheralded backbone of India's freedom struggle. Their sacrifices ranging from armed resistance in 1857-58 to non-violent protests and revolutionary action in the 20th century demonstrate the diversity of anti-colonial strategies. Over 100 documented lives were lost in these districts alone, leaving a lasting imprint on Karnataka's political consciousness. Memorials such as Jakani Bhavi, commemorations of martyrs and institutions like Gandhi Grameen Gurukul ensure that their legacies endure.

These unsung heroes illustrate that India's freedom was forged not only in the corridors of power but also in the fields, villages, and small towns where ordinary citizens risked everything. In remembering them, Karnataka honours the local courage that helped secure national independence, reminding us that true swaraj is rooted in unity, sacrifice, and enduring defiance.

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