

Selected Women Freedom Fighters of Karnataka during Gandhian Era Asma K. Haliyal

Assistant professor, Department of History, Nehru Arts, Science &
Commerce College, Hubli.

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ABSTRACT:

The history of freedom movement would be incomplete without saluting the contribution of women. The women in Karnataka played a unique & vital role in the freedom struggle during the Gandhian Era. Mahatma Gandhi led the freedom struggle from 1920 to 1947. His leadership attracted people from all walks of life. The women of Karnataka actively participating in movements like the Salt Satyagraha, No Tax Campaigns & Quit India Movement. The women of Karnataka state have contributed a lot in the freedom struggle. Some of the women participated of this era are Umabai Kundapur, Bellary Siddamma, T.Sunadamma, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyia, Nagamma Patil, Krishnabai Panajikar Yashodara Dasappa Jayadevi Tai Ligade etc., Their courage resilience & unwavering commitment to freedom serve as a reminder of their sacrifices and shaping the Destiny of our beloved nation.

KEYWORDS:

Freedom struggle, Satyagraha, women's Bravery.

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Introduction:

The role of women in the freedom movement of Karnataka was unique. They dedicated their lives to the cause of freedom of their motherland. The freedom struggle during Gandhian Era in Karnataka roughly began from 1920.

This Article attempts to express the significance of woman in the freedom struggle of Karnataka. It also explains the sufferings and sacrifices for freedom movement Karnataka. Now let us remember the women of Karnataka during Gandhian Era who fought bravely for their motherland Karnataka and the Nation. It is very difficult task to list out all women freedom fighters and equally difficult to separate few among them.

Important women freedom fighters of Karnataka:

The women of Karnataka during Gandhian Era were remembered for their invaluable contributions to the history of freedom struggle. The role of women in freedom movement of Karnataka was unique and invaluable some among these were discussed here:

Ballary Siddamma:

Ballary Siddamma was born in 1903 in a traditional family in Dundasi village in Haveri district. Her father was actively engaged in the struggle for liberation, she had participated in Shivapura Congress Party in 1938, marking her initial entry into organized political activities. She continued her involvement by taking part in the Forest Satyagraha in Chitradurga district in 1939. This is one of the notable achievements of Siddamma, aimed to challenging the forest laws. People engaged in civil Dis Obedience movement by grazing cattle in the woodlands and cutting down valuable trees. Siddamma was the first woman in the state of Mysore to hoist the National flag, she was really a very Brave woman. she was soon recognized as a prominent state level leader in the Mysore state. She also participated in 'Mysore Chalo' or Aramane satyagraha and the Quit India Movement. Later she was elected as Davangere's MLA and suggested the women to start weaving and spinning. Mathrumandir was established for the safeguard and the health of rural women.

Ballari Siddamma remembered for her active participation in the freedom movement of Karnataka as a respected leader and an Influential figure that reminding us of her Bravery. Her Legacy as a trailblazer in the freedom movement and her Advocacy for women's rights continue to shape the History of Karnataka. In praise of her service to women and Nation a "Tamrapatra was awarded to her".

Umabai Kundapur:

Umabai Kundapur was an Indian freedom fighter from Karnataka, also known as Umabai Dabode, was from Kundapur as small town in present day Udapi district. She was born on 25th March 1892. Whose childhood name was 'Bhavani'. She started her married life in 1905 at the age of 13. She continued her education after married life. She attended the Annasaheb Karve School on Poona. At the age of 27 she completed her matriculation. At the age of 31 she lost her husband and she became a widow.

Achievement of Umabai:

She was a pioneer among the women freedom fighters of the Gandhian Era. She was a great social worker, who willingly gave her life for Satyagraha and the swadeshi movement with her husband & brother with great enthusiasm & started promoting Khadi besides going from door to door, she encouraged women to participate in the freedom movement. Umabai's service in creating national awareness among women on the eve of Gandhiji's visit to Belgaum Congress session in 1924 was highly commendable. The congress session helped Umabai connected with several national freedom fighters. For all these activities she was appointed as a chief leader of the Women's ring seva dal.

In 1932 Umabai was arrested by British Government and imprisoned for about 4 months. She kept in Yerawad Jail. Indirectly she is also participated in Quit India Movement in 1942 she stayed in their house and provided food, shelter, water to a number of freedom fighters. Umabai Kundapur's dedication to the freedom struggle did not go unnoticed by the British authorities. 1944 She was arrested and imprisoned in the Bel-lary Jail. She continued to inspire her fellow inmates and become a symbol of resistance against British imperialism. After Indian independence she dedicated her life for social and political cause. She promoted the welfare of women children and upliftment of other communities.

Mahatma Gandhi established a trust in the memory of Kasturba in 1945, to empower economically and socially backward women. To fulfil this objective Gandhiji appointed Umabai in 1946 as the administrator of the Karnataka branch. She was elected as the first women member of the Kundapur panchayat in 1954. & later served as a member of the Karnataka legislative council. She passed away in 1992 in Hubli.

Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya:

She was born in Mangalore in 1903, her marriage to Harindranath Chattopadhyay, Brother of Sarojini Naidu, caused a stir in the religious community & moving her to national fame and acclaim through the stage. She had numerous opportunities to meet great leaders like M.G. Ranade, Gokhale, Ramabai & Annie Besant. Due to this Kamaladevi became a member of swadeshi movement at a very young age. Even during her stay in London, she heard about Mahatma Gandhi's call for the Non-cooperation movement. She returned to India and joined the Sevadal. She played a role in the founding of the All-India women's conference (AIWC). She

served as the first organizing secretary of AIWC. Throughout her life Kamaladevi remained committed to feminism. She was also a part of Salt Satyagraha. Her work was so successfully. She was the first women in India to run for a legislative position. She received many awards like Raman Magsaysay award in 1966, Padma Bhushan in 1955 and Padma Vibhushana in 1987 from Government of India.

Yashodhara Dasappa:

She was an Indian Independence activist. She was a Unique place among the first generation of women freedom fighters of Gandhian Era. She was born on 28th may 1905. She was deeply influenced by the ideas of Gandhiji and freedom movement of India. She took active part in Shivapur congress session held on 10th April 1938. Her home was a meeting point or underground Satyagrahi activity. Later she participated in 1942 Quit India movement. In 1944 she was in Sevagram, Gandhiji advised her to take constructive works. In 1947 she laid the foundation of Karnataka mahila seva samaja, which focused on empowering the lives of women and children in the state. She served as the first women minister in the Karnataka Government holding the position of social welfare and labour. She was also received the third highest civilian award “Padma Bhushan”.

Nagamma Patil:

Nagamma Patil popularly known as ‘Avva’. She was born on December 16th 1905. She was married to Padmashree Sardar Veeran Gowda Patil who was the founder of Karnataka liberal education society and veteran freedom fighter. In 1924 when Gandhiji visited to Belgaum, it made a deep impression on Patil family and both were the followers of Gandhiji. She was a social worker who worked for uplifting the conditions of the Harijan Children in Karnataka. During 1930 she joined Sardar Veerangouda and established Hubli’s Harijan Balika Ashram. The hostel was based on Gandhian principles and it became the only place other than Mahatma Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram serving the Harijan children.

In 1938 responding to the call of freedom struggle by Gandhiji both Nagamma and her husband joined the freedom movement. In the same year she imprisoned in Hindalga Jail in Belgaum for three months. In 1942 she was again arrested for 13 months and sent to Yerawada Central Jail at Pune. Nagamma followed her Husband in all the activities of social

works like Harijan upliftment, bringing of the orphans, establishment of the Institutions, freedom movement etc.,

T. Sunandamma:

She was a prominent figure in the history of Freedom movement in Karnataka. She was born at Kolar in 1915. T. Sunandamma was married to N. Narasimha ayyengar, an advocate of Doddaballapur, in 1932. She was very closely associated with the leaders like T. Siddalingaih and T. Narasimha ayyengar when the Niggers Youth League was founded in 1936. Later with the Merging of the justice party with the Congress, there was a significant turn in the Political affairs of Mysore stats. T. Sunandamma and her husband were closely associated with its functioning in Shivapura Congress session. She was a leader of Volunteers. Each function on those days starts with her prayer & with her 'Vande Mataram'. She also participated in Quit India Movement. Later on, Palace Chalo Movement.

In addition, she was also a social activist and worked hard for women's right. She raised her voice against the social injustice that women faced like Child Marriage and Dowry and in favour of Education, women Empowerment and Gender Equality. After Independence in 1947 she continued to work for social and political cause. She served as a member of Karnataka legislative Council and worked to promote Social and Economic development in the state. She passed away in 1987.

Conclusion:

The role played by women in the freedom movement is so remarkable and glorious. The bravery and sacrifices of these remarkable women freedom fighters from Karnataka have left an unforgettable mark on the history of India's Independence. Many women from Karnataka took up leadership roles in the Indian freedom struggle. The women freedom fighters of Karnataka were an eye opener in the masses. Some important among them were Umabai Kundapur, Bellary Siddamma, Krishnabai, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Yashodhara Dasappa, Nagamma Patil etc., Their stories serve as a constant reminder of resilience, determination and strength of women in shaping the Destiny of the Nation.

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