

An Extensive Overview of Associations and Organizations' Function in Karnataka's Independence Movement

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Abstract

An in-depth analysis of the function and significance of groups and organizations in the Karnataka independence movement is provided in this study. This study explores the ways in which different groups participated in the independence movement by looking at their goals, histories, and methods of operation. This paper examines the strategic roles played by prominent associations like the Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee, the Karnataka State Rajya Sabha, and regional bodies like the Bangalore Political Conference in rallying public support, promoting political reforms, and opposing colonial policies. The study sheds light on the crucial moments, important personalities, and organizational tactics that shaped the Karnataka movement and provided insights into their roles in the larger Indian independence movement. This study attempts to highlight the significance of these organizations in forming the socio-political landscape of Karnataka during the colonial era and their enduring legacy in the Indian independence movement through an extensive review of historical documents, archival records, and scholarly sources.

Keywords: Karnataka Independence Movement, Political Associations, Freedom Struggle, Nationalist Organizations, Colonial Resistance

1. INTRODUCTION

- **Overview of Karnataka's socio-political landscape during the British colonial period.**

Karnataka, which was formerly a part of the larger areas known as the presidencies of Mysore, Bombay, and Madras, underwent substantial socio-political changes during the British colonial era. With the overthrow of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the British took control of Karnataka early in the 1800s. The state was made up of a combination of areas under direct British administration and princely states, most notably the Kingdom of Mysore. New crops and the commercialization of agriculture were brought about by the restructuring of land ownership patterns, revenue collecting methods, and administrative structures brought about by British administration. A new class of elites emerged during this time, including moneylenders and landlords, who profited from British policies at the expense of the people. The rise of a middle class with Western education, which became more vociferous in the Indian nationalist movement, further changed the socio-political scene. Missionary schools and government agencies played a key role in the expansion of English education, which gave rise to a class of intellectuals who questioned colonial practices and promoted self-governance. During this time, social reform groups emerged that aimed to promote social fairness and challenge caste inequalities. Notable leaders of these movements were the Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities. Karnataka's population took an active part in the non-cooperation and civil disobedience campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s, including prominent figures such as D. V. Gundappa and Karnad Sadashiva Rao. The establishment of groups like the Hindustan Republican Association was one of the state's many revolutionary initiatives. Karnataka had established a strong socio-political identity by the time India gained independence in 1947, with a strong history of political action, social reform, and a dedication to maintaining its language and culture.



Figure1: Karnataka during the British colonial period

- **The significance of associations and organizations**

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of groups and organizations in the Indian independence struggle because they were crucial in influencing public opinion, promoting nationalist feelings, and coordinating activities among various societal segments. These organizations were the backbone of the movement, offering forums for discussion, debate, and mass mobilization against British colonial rule. Such societies and organizations played a particularly important role in Karnataka, helping to close the gaps between the educated elites and the general public, the urban and rural populations, and the many language and cultural communities.

An important change in the organization of resistance to British authority was brought about by the emergence of associations in the late 19th and early 20th century. These organizations first concentrated on social and cultural issues, advocating for social reform, vernacular education, and the preservation of native customs. But when nationalist feelings intensified, a lot of associations started to become more obviously political. These societies were given a national platform when the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, and numerous regional associations were inspired by or linked with the Congress's principles.

Public support for the independence struggle was greatly aided in Karnataka by groups like the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha, the Mysore Praja Mitra Mandali, and the Karnataka State Congress. These organizations coordinated boycotts, strikes, and protests to oppose British rule and promote individual liberty. Through writings, speeches, and the planning of public events, they also significantly contributed to the dissemination of nationalist ideals. The movement's base was further expanded by the participation of trade unions, women, and students in various initiatives, turning it into a real mainstream movement.

These groups were important in ways that went beyond their direct political influence. They supported the development of a regional identity that was strongly associated with the larger Indian nationalist movement by helping to bring disparate organizations in Karnataka together and give them a shared goal. These organizations made guarantee that the fight for independence was focused and continued despite obstacles and persecution by offering an organized and disciplined method of resistance.

2. EARLY ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS IN KARNATAKA

Karnataka's early groups and activities laid the groundwork for the state's involvement in the Indian independence movement. The foundation for subsequent, more coordinated and broad nationalist activity was created by these early initiatives. The need to address local concerns, advance social reform, and cultivate a sense of collective identity among Karnataka's populace propelled the establishment of these early groups, all of which were essential in establishing the wider resistance against British colonial rule.

Established in Dharwad in 1890, the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha was one of the state's most important and oldest organizations. This organization's main goals were to promote education, especially in the Kannada language, and to increase locals' knowledge of their rights and cultural heritage. In order to create a literate and politically aware society that would eventually take an active role in the independence fight, the Sangha's efforts to support vernacular education were essential. The focus on Kannada was also essential in creating a distinct but united regional identity with the larger Indian nationalist movement.

The founding of the Sarvajanic Sabha in 1892, which sought to address social and economic issues impacting the local populace, was another significant early movement. The Karnataka people's complaints were brought to the attention of the British government through the arranging of petitions and representations made by the Sabha. These included issues pertaining to land income, education, and public works. The Sarvajanic Sabha primarily concentrated on regional concerns, but over time it grew more active in the nationalist movement and allied itself with the more general calls for democratic rights and self-governance.

Another important group that made a significant contribution to the early nationalist struggle

in Karnataka was the 1917-founded Mysore Praja Mitra Mandali. Inspired by the principles of the Indian National Congress, a group of progressive activists and thinkers in the princely kingdom of Mysore created this organization. The Mandali were instrumental in pushing for political changes in the princely state, such as more populace participation in the executive branch and the creation of an accountable government. Additionally, it organized demonstrations, gatherings, and campaigns to increase awareness of the need for political reform in order to mobilize public opinion against the oppressive policies of the British and the local authorities.

In Karnataka, a number of social reform initiatives also emerged in the early 20th century; these were inextricably tied to the larger nationalist movement even though they were not overtly political. Social reformers like Sree Narayana Guru and Basavanna spearheaded movements aimed at uplifting vulnerable people, ending caste prejudice, and advancing education. These movements were essential in dismantling social barriers and bringing people together across caste and community divides, laying a wider and more inclusive basis for the independence movement.

- **The rise of early social and cultural organizations.**

In Karnataka, the emergence of early social and cultural groups was a significant step toward the region's independence. These groups came into being as a result of the socioeconomic difficulties and the effects of British colonial policies on customs and culture. These organizations' main goals were to combat social injustices, preserve and revitalize cultural heritage, and advance education. For example, the 1890-founded Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha was instrumental in advancing Kannada literature and language, which in turn helped the people feel more united and culturally distinct. These groups also aimed to raise public awareness of the value of education, especially in the vernacular language, which was essential to developing an informed and politically aware public. These early groups established the foundation for a larger nationalist movement in Karnataka by planning cultural events, releasing books, and pushing for social change. They also assisted in reawakening a sense of pride and responsibility among the populace towards their political rights and cultural heritages.

- **Contributions of local leaders and their influence on the masses.**

In Karnataka, local leaders were crucial in inspiring the populace and spearheading the movement against British colonial control. These leaders, who came from a variety of backgrounds including politics, social reform, and education, took the lead in the region's independence campaign. Prominent individuals like Karnad Sadashiva Rao, D. V. Gundappa, and Aluru Venkata Rao played a crucial role in galvanizing public sentiment and coordinating demonstrations, work stoppages, and advocacy efforts against colonial practices. They concentrated on social change as well as political activity, tackling topics including women's rights, caste discrimination, and the advancement of society's underprivileged groups. These leaders' profound knowledge of regional concerns and their capacity to express the goals of the populace allowed them to establish a connection with the general public. Thousands of people were motivated to join the independence struggle by their speeches, writings, and deeds, which helped build a groundswell of support that was essential in undermining British authority. These leaders had a significant impact on Karnataka's sociopolitical environment in the years following independence, in addition to their direct contributions to the independence movement.

- **Role of religious and cultural revival movements.**

During the British colonial era, religious and cultural revival groups played a vital role in the socio-political awakening that occurred in Karnataka. These groups aimed to restore and revitalize native cultural and religious customs that had been damaged by Western influence and colonial power. The Lingayat movement, which gained traction in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is among the most prominent instances of this. The Lingayat movement, led by reformers like Basavanna, pushed back against the strict caste system and traditional

customs that dominated Hindu culture. Instead, they promoted social justice, equality, and a rejection of ritualism. Parallel to this, the Arya Samaj—which was quite prominent in Karnataka—sought to advance social change, especially in the fields of women's rights and education, as well as the resuscitation of Vedic customs. These religious and cultural revival movements were very important in creating a feeling of common identity and purpose among individuals from various castes and communities. These movements made a substantial contribution to nationalist sentiment in Karnataka by endorsing the ideas of independence, social justice, and cultural pride. This helped lay a solid foundation for the independence movement.

3. FORMATION AND GROWTH OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

- **The emergence of political associations in Karnataka.**

One of the most significant developments in Karnataka's involvement in India's independence movement was the formation of political associations in the province. The people of Karnataka started to join these associations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as they grew more conscious of the social, political, and economic inequalities brought about by British colonial control. At first, the main concerns of these societies were regional ones, such as cultural heritage preservation, social reform, and education. But when nationalist feelings intensified, these organizations started to play a more overtly political role. Karnataka's regional political groups were encouraged to form by the national framework that the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, provided. These organizations were essential in organizing opposition to colonial policies, promoting political reforms, and expressing the goals of the populace. With the formation of these political groups, there was a notable change from non-participation in the nationalist movement to active involvement, which set the groundwork for the larger fight for Karnataka's independence.

- **Key Associations Like the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha, And Their Contributions.**

The Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha was established in Dharwad in 1890 and quickly became one of the most important political organisations to arise in Karnataka. The Sangha was first founded as a cultural and educational institution, but it soon grew to be known as a hub for local political activities. While promoting Kannada literature and language was its main goal, it also significantly contributed to the development of a feeling of regional identity and political consciousness among Karnataka's populace. Public gatherings, cultural occasions, and educational initiatives were arranged by the Sangha to advance nationalist beliefs and the Kannada language. It played a crucial role in bringing together social reformers, educators, and intellectuals who would go on to play important roles in the independence movement. Beyond cultural rebirth, the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha became a crucible for political leaders and activists who would be essential in the struggle against British authority.

- **Role of these organizations in spreading nationalist ideas and mobilizing people.**

The propagation of nationalist ideas and public mobilization were greatly aided by the political associations in Karnataka, particularly the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha. These groups offered forums where concepts of civil rights, self-rule, and resistance to colonial tyranny could be discussed and debated. They disseminated books, periodicals, and pamphlets outlining the people's complaints and urging group action in opposition to British policies. These societies provided platforms for reaching out to a wider audience, particularly the rural populace, who was frequently left out of political conversation, through public meetings and cultural activities. The nationalist movement in Karnataka gained more support when workers, women, and students got involved in these initiatives. Through linking regional concerns to the overarching objectives of the Indian independence struggle, these groups successfully stimulated extensive backing and involvement. Their work had a significant impact on the development of an informed and engaged populace that was prepared to oppose British rule and fight for the independence of India.

4. IMPACT OF ALL-INDIA ORGANIZATIONS ON KARNATAKA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

- **The influence of the Indian National Congress and other national bodies.**

Established in 1885, the Indian National Congress (INC) played a pivotal role in the freedom struggle of Karnataka by acting as a bridge between the province and the larger national campaign for independence. Karnataka's populace was greatly moved by the Congress's advocacy of self-rule, civil rights, and nonviolent resistance. The state's independence movement had already begun to gather steam thanks to local clubs and organizations. As the INC grew in power throughout India, Karnataka emerged as a significant hub for nationalist movements. Renowned Karnataka leaders like S. Nijalingappa, C. Rajagopalachari, and Karnad Sadashiva Rao were instrumental in shaping the Congress's tactics and policies. Karnataka was a stronghold of the Congress's call for non-cooperation and civil disobedience, with people engaging in rallies, swadeshi (indigenous) product promotion, and boycotts of British goods. Additionally, the INC gave Karnataka's leaders a national forum to address their concerns, ensuring that the region's unique problems were incorporated into the broader independence campaign. Due to the Congress's influence, Karnataka's many linguistic and cultural communities were able to come together for a common goal and develop a sense of national identity and purpose that cut over regional divides.

- **Role of Other National Bodies in Karnataka's Freedom Struggle**

Karnataka's freedom movement was greatly influenced by a number of other national organizations in addition to the Indian National Congress. For instance, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) played a significant role in the organization of labor unions and workers in Karnataka, especially in the industrial hubs of Bangalore and Mysore. The working-class movement became more in line with the larger nationalist cause as a result of the AITUC's attempts to organize workers and address their complaints against unfair working conditions. In a similar vein, the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), which aimed to advance women's rights and education and enable them to participate actively in the independence fight, had a big influence on Karnataka. By emphasizing the connection between social justice and political freedom, the AIWC's campaigns for gender equality and social change complimented the nationalist agenda.

The All India Students' Federation (AISF) was another noteworthy organization that was instrumental in energizing the young and students of Karnataka. In order to inspire students to take part in the independence movement and oppose colonial education policies, the AISF planned demonstrations, marches, and strikes. By uniting workers, women, and students against British rule, the involvement of these national entities contributed to the expansion of the Karnataka independence movement. These groups made sure that Karnataka's liberation struggle was an essential component of the greater Indian independence movement by tying local efforts to national goals.



Figure 2: Karnataka's freedom struggle

- **Collaboration between Karnataka-based organizations and all-India movements.**

The region's involvement in the larger Indian independence movement was greatly enhanced by the cooperation of Karnataka-based groups and all-India movements. The unification of national strategies with local initiatives to oppose British colonial control was a defining feature of this cooperation.

Local Karnataka groups, like the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha, first concentrated on social and cultural reforms before realizing how crucial it was to support all-India movements



in order to advance political objectives. In order to highlight regional issues and incorporate them into the national agenda, these organizations began working with national bodies such as the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the Indian National Congress, and others. Karnataka's local movements gained momentum and credibility with the assistance of national leaders and organizations, which made sure that the region's unique difficulties were addressed within the larger framework of India's freedom struggle.

This cooperation took many different forms, including as coordinated demonstrations, involvement in nationwide movements such as the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Non-Cooperation Movement, and sharing of resources and ideas. Karnataka leaders who participated in these national movements did more than just promote Indian independence; they also made sure that the state's distinct political and cultural character was maintained. Along with strengthening the resistance to British rule, the cooperation of local and national movements also helped to create a feeling of solidarity and togetherness across India's various regions, which helped to pave the way for a more inclusive and cohesive independence movement.

- **Notable events and campaigns driven by these alliances.**

Karnataka-based groups and all-India movements worked together to produce a number of noteworthy campaigns and events that greatly enhanced the region's role in the country's independence movement. These partnerships made it possible to adopt a coordinated strategy that integrated regional efforts with federal plans, producing significant outcomes that affected Karnataka and the entire nation.

1. The Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922)

One of the first national campaigns in which Karnataka-based organizations actively participated was the Non-Cooperation Movement, spearheaded by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. Local leaders in Karnataka, such as Karnad Sadashiva Rao and Kudmul Ranga Rao, inspired the people to shun British institutions, products, and services. This movement was greatly aided by Karnataka's educational institutions, especially those that were influenced by the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha, which encouraged students to abandon British-run colleges and schools in favor of indigenous education. Karnataka's involvement in the Non-Cooperation Movement was the state's first significant contribution to a pan-Indian movement, demonstrating the value of cooperation between regional and national organizations.

2. The Salt Satyagraha (1930):

A major turning point in India's struggle for independence was the Dandi March, also known as the Salt Satyagraha, in which Karnataka was heavily involved in the civil disobedience movement. Political leaders in Karnataka staged salt marches and parallel protests around the state, drawing inspiration from Gandhi's refusal to comply with the British salt tax. Notably, leaders like Karnad Sadashiva Rao and S. Nijalingappa organized the march from Ankola to Mirjan, which turned into a symbol of resistance in Karnataka. The campaign inspired a broad range of people to get involved, including women and students, and demonstrated the value of coordinated action between local organizations in Karnataka and the broader national movement.

3. The Quit India Movement (1942):

Another significant occasion that demonstrated the cooperation between organizations based in Karnataka and the all-India movement was the Quit India Movement. Gandhi's demand for rapid independence sparked a wave of anti-British demonstrations, strikes, and uprisings in Karnataka. Peasants, laborers, and students were among the diverse groups of people who participated in the campaign, which was spearheaded by prominent local figures like H. S. Doreswamy and Gopalakrishna Rao. To make sure that the Karnataka movement was in line with the national objective, these leaders collaborated closely with the Indian National Congress. The magnitude and ferocity of the Karnataka Quit India Movement demonstrated the deeply ingrained nationalist fervor that had been fostered over years of cooperation between regional and national groups.

4. The Mysore Chalo Movement (1947):

The collaboration of national and local groups in Karnataka led to a historic movement known as the Mysore Chalo Movement, which took place shortly before India gained her independence. The movement opposed the Maharaja's initial reluctance to join independent India and sought to incorporate the princely state of Mysore into the Indian Union. Karnataka leaders, along with the Indian National Congress, planned demonstrations and meetings calling for the state to become a member of the Union. The Mysore Chalo Movement's triumphant conclusion proved the resilience and cohesion of Karnataka's nationalist forces, as well as its capacity to impact India's political landscape more broadly.

Karnataka-based organizations and all-India movements have collaborated to produce noteworthy events and campaigns that highlight the region's crucial role in the Indian independence fight. For Karnataka's contributions to be substantial and long-lasting, local and national leaders needed to act with unity of purpose.

5. LEGACY AND CONCLUSION

The political and social climate of the state in the years following independence was greatly influenced by the associations and organizations that were essential to Karnataka's independence fight. Their combined efforts were crucial in igniting nationalist feeling and gaining local support, both of which aided in the larger freedom struggle. These groups shaped Karnataka's political landscape and social mores by laying a solid foundation for democratic government and social reform. When one considers their legacy, it is clear that working together was essential to gaining independence and establishing a sense of national identity. In conclusion, the long-lasting influence of these connections emphasizes how crucial cooperative activism is in forming both historical and modern social systems.

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