

**BELLARI SIDDAMMA: A REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE****Basavaraja B.****Research scholar, Department of History,
Davangere university, Davangere.****Abstract:**

Bellari Siddamma was a revolutionary freedom fighter and social activist who dedicated her life to the struggle for independence and social justice in India. She was a vocal advocate for the rights of oppressed communities and played a key role in organizing the Raitha Sangha movement in Karnataka. Despite facing numerous obstacles, including arrest and imprisonment, Siddamma remained steadfast in her commitment to the cause of freedom and social justice. This article explores her life and legacy as a courageous fighter for the marginalized communities and sheds light on her contributions to the Indian independence movement.

**KEYWORDS:** *Bellari Siddamma, freedom fighter, social justice in India.***INTRODUCTION**

Bellary Siddamma was an active participant in the Indian freedom movement. She was born in 1903 in the Dhundasi village located in Shiggon taluk of the Haveri district. Her father kindled in her the national spirit. She also had a spiritual bent of mind. She was married to Shri Bellary Murigeppa who was a staunch nationalist and follower of Gandhiji. The first important event which shook Bellary Siddamma and drove her to public life was the death sentence passed on Mallappa Dhanashetti and his comrades. Despite the efforts of leaders of the state, they were hanged. This incident inspired many more youngsters to participate in the freedom movement. It was at this time that Siddamma declared that the British should be driven out of India and independence should be gained at any cost.

A woman who had not so long ventured out of the four walls of the house, Bellary Siddamma became an inspiring speaker and a good organizer. She was a very brave woman. She toured all the neighboring villages of Davangere and Chitradurga and addressed men and women in their own language and sought their cooperation in the fight against the colonial regime. Because of her excellent work in organizing women volunteers, she was soon recognized as a prominent state-level leader in Mysore. Her association with Sardar Veeranagouda Patil, K.F. Patil, Nagamma Patil, S. Nijalingappa, and T. Siddalingaiah enabled her to enlarge her activities.

The first important public activity of Bellary Siddamma was her participation in the memorable Shivapur Congress session held in April 1938. It was the first session of the princely Mysore State Congress. In that session, the leaders who hoisted the National Flag was arrested and imprisoned on 12 April 1938. Siddamma sang in her beautiful tone the song 'Vande Mataram', which led to her coming to prominence among the participants. It was women like T. Sunandamma, Yashodamma Dasappa, Bellary Siddamma, and Subbamma Jois who struck a serious nail in the conflicting conditions among the

organizers of the Shivapur event. They declared that they were ready to face the consequences and hoist the Tricolor. This was considered a mark of the outstanding courage of women. The Sivapur Flag Satyagraha was an important milestone in the struggle for national freedom. Bellary Siddamma unfurled the National Flag and at the very next moment, she was arrested. She was the first lady to be arrested by the Mysore State police. The news spread throughout the region. The reaction of the public was, "A brave lady, a truly brave lady, an ideal Satyagrahi, indeed. Anybody else in her place would have run to the Maharaja". After her release, she travelled widely all over Karnataka and Mysore State. She mainly concentrated her activities in rural areas. Bellary was indeed a mass leader.

Bellary Siddamma advised the women to take up spinning and weaving. She popularized Khadi. She tried to dissuade the young and the old from consumption of alcohol. Her second major political activity was her participation in the program of cutting toddy trees in Turuvenur, Chitradurga district, under the leadership of S. Nijalingappa. She actively participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942. Though, this time she did not court arrest but was helping the underground workers throughout. The police kept an eye on her. But she managed to fool them on a number of occasions. She was very active in providing underground assistance to freedom fighters. In recognition of her service to the nation, a Tamra Patra was awarded to her by the government of India.

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