



Original Article

Mahadevappa Rampure and His Contributions to the Freedom Movement and Post-Independence Reconstruction of Gulbarga (Kalaburagi)

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Abstract

This study explores the life and contributions of Mahadevappa T. Rampure (1920–1973), highlighting both his involvement in the freedom struggle in the Gulbarga (Kalaburagi) region and his sustained efforts toward the area's socio-educational progress after independence. Drawing on biographical sketches, local press reports, institutional records, and commemorative publications, the paper contends that Rampure's importance rests less on singular revolutionary episodes and more on his long-term organizational work within the Gulbarga District Congress, his role as a parliamentarian, and his leadership in establishing educational and medical institutions under the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society. These initiatives translated the ideals of the national movement into concrete outcomes—education, empowerment, and regional advancement. The paper also points out the existing gaps in documentation and suggests directions for further archival and oral-history research.

Keywords: Mahadevappa Rampure; Gulbarga / Kalaburagi; Hyderabad-Karnataka; freedom struggle; Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society; institutional development; regional upliftment.

Introduction

Mahadevappa Yashwantappa Rampure (1 August 1920 – 6 February 1973) holds a prominent place in the history of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region of Karnataka as a political leader, freedom-era activist, and educationist who laid the foundation for several institutions in Gulbarga. Contemporary accounts and secondary writings generally present him as a freedom fighter, while also emphasizing three overlapping domains of his public life: his political activity at the district and national levels, his leadership in the Hyderabad-Karnataka educational movement through the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society (H.K.E.), and his role in establishing higher and professional education facilities, particularly a medical college later named in his honour.

This paper draws upon available literature to provide a concise and referenced overview of his contributions. At the same time, it seeks to distinguish between what the existing evidence clearly supports and what requires further archival investigation. In doing so, it positions Rampure as an influential regional figure whose work bridged political activism and institution building in the post-independence period.

Sources and Methodology

The study is based on a synthesis of information drawn from diverse secondary and institutional sources. These include short biographical profiles (both in encyclopedias and online references), regional newspaper reports on the founding of key institutions, commemorative publications issued by colleges and by the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society (H.K.E.), and public records of parliamentary activity summarized in biographical notes.

Since comprehensive archival materials such as personal correspondence, local Congress records, or district-level police files from the 1930s and 1940s remain either inaccessible or not digitized, this research primarily relies on already published accounts and institutional histories. At the same time, it explicitly acknowledges the areas where reliance on secondary evidence is limiting and where future work should consult primary documentation.

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Among the most significant sources used are Rampure's available biographical sketches, press coverage of the establishment of Gulbarga University and its postgraduate centre, and institutional brochures or PDFs commemorating the foundation of H.K.E. and the M.R. Medical College.

Brief Biography (Key Information)

- **Birth and Early Life:** Mahadevappa Yashwantappa Rampure was born on 1 August 1920 in Kumbhari, a locality in the Sholapur region. His later political and public activities, however, were centred in Gulbarga (present-day Kalaburagi).
- **Political Career:** Rampure held important legislative positions. He served as a member of the Mysore (Mysuru) Legislative Council between 1956 and 1957, briefly occupying the post of Deputy Chairman. Following this, he represented Gulbarga in the Lok Sabha for several consecutive terms from 1957 until 1970.
- **Organizational Engagements:** At the district level, Rampure was closely connected with the Congress Party. He worked as the General Secretary of the Gulbarga District Congress for nearly eight years and engaged with strands of progressive and democratic politics during the mid-twentieth century.

Rampure's Role in the Freedom Movement (regional perspective)

1. Freedom-era credentials and political activism

Biographical sketches and commemorative writings often describe Mahadevappa Rampure as a "freedom fighter" as well as a grassroots political leader. In most secondary accounts, this recognition is linked to his participation in anti-colonial politics during the 1930s–1940s, his organizational responsibilities in the Gulbarga District Congress, and his later involvement in the integration and reform of the Hyderabad state after the fall of Nizam rule (the Hyderabad Liberation/Police Action period and its aftermath).

Within this framework, Rampure is generally grouped among regional leaders who combined nationalist commitments with post-independence political and developmental work in Hyderabad-Karnataka. However, unlike nationally renowned revolutionaries, published material does not yet provide a detailed record of his protest activities, imprisonment, or underground roles before 1947. For this reason, although Rampure is consistently remembered as a freedom-era activist, a fuller reconstruction of his early political life requires systematic archival research, including district Congress records, British-era police files, and local newspapers from the 1930s–40s.

2. Political representation as continuation of freedom goals

Rampure's long parliamentary career, beginning in 1957, along with his earlier leadership in district-level Congress structures, can be seen as an extension of the objectives of the independence movement. Many regional leaders transitioned from street-level activism to legislative

and developmental politics after independence, seeking to transform political freedom into tangible socio-economic change. By representing Gulbarga in the Lok Sabha and participating in the Mysore Legislative Council, Rampure carried forward the nationalist agenda by advocating for the uplift of a historically disadvantaged region.

Institution-building and Socio-educational Contributions (the most concrete legacy)

One of the most enduring aspects of Mahadevappa Rampure's public life lies in his commitment to education and healthcare development in Gulbarga. His institution-building initiatives directly targeted the chronic backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, where educational opportunities and health services had long lagged behind other parts of the state.

1. Founding of the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society (H.K.E.)

Rampure was among the founder-leaders of the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society, created to broaden access to higher education across the districts of Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur, and neighbouring areas. At a time when state-led educational expansion was limited, H.K.E. became a crucial vehicle for setting up colleges and professional schools. Local histories and institutional commemorations consistently highlight Rampure's role in providing vision and leadership during its formative years.

2. Mahadevappa Rampure Medical College and other campuses

A landmark initiative under H.K.E.'s banner was the establishment of a private medical college in Gulbarga in 1963, later named the Mahadevappa Rampure Medical College. This institution addressed the shortage of medical education in the region and simultaneously improved healthcare delivery. Accounts from institutional records stress the strategic importance of situating the medical college in Gulbarga at a time when alternative locations were being considered by government planners. The college remains one of Rampure's most visible legacies, linking his name to both education and public welfare.

3. Advocacy for higher education expansion (Gulbarga University / PG centre)

Press reports and institutional notes from the late 1960s suggest that Rampure was actively involved in advocating for a postgraduate centre under Karnatak University, which later became the nucleus of Gulbarga University. His efforts to promote higher education infrastructure reveal continuity between his political responsibilities and his developmental vision, ensuring that government policies translated into concrete educational benefits for the region.

Assessment: How Rampure's Work Related to the Freedom Movement's Aims

Although the most tangible evidence of Rampure's contributions lies in his post-independence initiatives—such as institution-building and parliamentary service—these efforts can be meaningfully interpreted as extensions of the goals envisioned during the national movement. The freedom struggle in India was not limited to political independence; it also emphasized social reform, educational

advancement, and the dismantling of colonial and feudal obstacles to development.

In the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, where deep-rooted social and economic backwardness limited the immediate benefits of independence, leaders like Rampure played a crucial role in translating political victory into practical community development. By establishing educational institutions, promoting professional training, and expanding opportunities for disadvantaged populations, Rampure carried forward the spirit of the independence movement into everyday civic life.

His career therefore exemplifies the pattern of regional activists who bridged the freedom era with the developmental state, using their political influence to lay lasting foundations for social progress.

Gaps, Limits, and Directions for Further Research

1. **Need for archival evidence:** While available summaries consistently refer to Rampure as a “freedom fighter,” they rarely provide detailed accounts of his specific activities before 1947. To build a more precise chronology of his involvement, scholars should examine district-level Congress records, British administrative and police files, and contemporary newspapers from the 1930s and 1940s.
2. **Oral history as a resource:** Interviews with surviving contemporaries, family members, and early associates of the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society could provide valuable first-hand perspectives. Such narratives may shed light on Rampure’s motivations, decision-making, and the challenges faced during institution-building.
3. **Institutional documentation:** Records from H.K.E., files related to the establishment of Gulbarga University, and founding documents of M.R. Medical College represent underutilized sources. Although commemorative pamphlets and institutional publications provide useful leads, systematic access to these archives would strengthen historical reconstruction of Rampure’s role.

Conclusion

Mahadevappa Y. Rampure’s enduring legacy in Gulbarga and the broader Hyderabad-Karnataka region is most evident through his institution-building and organizational leadership in the post-independence period. By founding the Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society, establishing a medical college, and advocating for higher-education infrastructure, Rampure translated the ideals of the freedom movement into tangible improvements in education, healthcare, and regional development.

Although secondary sources consistently recognize him as a freedom-era activist and outline his district-level political roles, detailed archival records of his pre-1947 activities remain limited in publicly accessible formats. A comprehensive scholarly biography would therefore require focused research in archival materials, institutional records, and oral histories to supplement the existing published accounts.

Through these efforts, Rampure exemplifies a class of regional leaders who extended the objectives of the

national struggle beyond political independence, shaping the social and educational landscape of their communities.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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