
THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF HANUMANTHA GOWDA, THE FOUNDER OF THE HAVANUR PRINCIPALITY

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Article Received: 22 October 2025

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Article Revised: 10 November 2025

Research Scholar, Dept of History and Archaeology, Karnatak University,

Published on: 01 December 2025

Dharwad – 580003. DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.3098>

ABSTRACT

This article describes the early and betrothed life of Hanumanthagowda. After purchasing Honnatti Vatan, he acquired titles such as Diwan, Mulki, and Faujdar. With the help of Harapanahalli Palegar, he eliminated the harassment of merchants in Bankapur Paragan. Further, with the assistance of Sarjakhana, he received seven mahals - Gutthal, Hadagali, Ranebennur, Hirekerur, Chikkerur, and Thilavalli - as jagir from Adil Shah. During his 14-year rule, Hanumanthagowda: Built forts and temples Established a strong foundation for the principality Ensured stability and security. Hanumanthagowda, a renowned warrior, earned the title "Sangrama Dhurina" (Brave Warrior) and adopted the Hanuman Flag as his emblem. Further this article helps to give information about his tragedy ending which was assassinated in 1595 CE due to a trivial reason.

KEYWORDS: Hanamanthagowda, Havanuru, Desagati,

In the History of Karnataka, Haveri district has chronologically been ruled by Satavahanas, Kadambas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara rulers and several feudatory dynasties such as the Kadambas of Hanagal, Chellaketans, Gutthas and so on. After the Battle of Talikote, the Vijayanagara Empire collapsed and most of northern Karnataka came under the rule of the Adil Shahis. During their reign, they appointed a number of *tarafdars*, *jagirdars* and *desagatis* to facilitate their rule and administration. One such Desagati was the Havanur Desagati of Haveri. This article provides a historical, analytical, and

critical account of the life and achievements of its founder, Hanumantha Gowda, through interviews with the descendants of his family and critical analysis of various primary and secondary sources on his life and achievements.

Geographically, Haveri district is located on the edge of plains and highlands and is characterised by natural beauty. During the medieval period, the district was home to several desagati families. Presently, Havanur is a village in the Haveri district of Karnataka, India. From 1581 to 1787 AD, about thirteen people ruled the region under Bahadur Desai. This article discusses the life and achievements of Hanumantha Gowda, the founder of this family.

The earliest known study of the Havanur Principality is the work *Karnatakavira, Sangramadhurina Hanumanthagowda* or *The History of the Havanur Kingdom* by Ramachandra Karpur, published in 1923 at Agadi on Anandavan River. This work details the origins of the Havanur dynasty and the challenges Hanumantha Gowda faced in establishing the family.

In 1924, M. S. Puttayya wrote *The Paleyagars of Chitradurga*, describing the political relations between the Havanur Desagati family and the contemporary Chitradurga leadership. The work recounts events such as the Nayaka of Chitradurga capturing Anaji with the support of the Havanur Desagatis in 1689, and the fort of Holalkere being granted to Hanumantha Gowda IV by the Nayaka of Chitradurga in 1709.

During the reign of the Adil Shahi dynasty, in 1514, Hanumantha Gowda's parents, Rangarasaiah and Godavari, moved to Gangelur village in the Shivamogga district due to a drought in Malkhed city. Gangelur was a modest village, and the couple, who lived near the Maruti temple, took on the responsibility of managing the temple's religious affairs. Their devotion and service at the temple were believed to bring them blessings, and after a long wait, they were blessed with a son, whom they named Hanumantha.

Mother Godavari introduced many mythological stories and legends to the young Hanumantha. He also learned to ride a horse. According to legend, a sage named Goggayya advised Hanumantha that it would be beneficial for him to have a darshan of the deity Mailara Linga. Following this advice, Hanumantha, with his parents' permission, visited Mailara Linga. Upon his return, he learned about the sale of the Vatana in Honnatti village by the Kulkarni. On the advice of passers-by, he went to Honnatti, where he stayed at a local house. He purchased the Vatana in 1542, marking the beginning of the political activities of

the Havanur Desagati family. After acquiring HonnattiVatana, he gained authority over the Dewani, Mulki, and Faujdari responsibilities of the village. On this occasion, he married Tulajamma, the daughter of Devagowda of Guthala Mahal near Honnatti village. Following this marriage, the administration of Gaudike in Guttal came under Hanumantha Gowda's control, further expanding the geographical reach of the Havanur family. Observing his growing influence and governance, Hanumantha Gowda attracted the attention of Sarja Khan, a prominent supporter of the Adil Shahi state and the Subedar of Bankapur. Hanumantha Gowda frequently met with Sarjakhan to submit reports on his administration and revenue. Impressed by Hanumantha Gowda's diplomacy and courteous behaviour, Sarjakhan developed a friendship with him.

After the Battle of Talikote, the Adil Shahi dynasty expanded its territory to cover most of present-day northern Karnataka. Bijapur, the capital, had a population of 90,000 in the sixteenth century, making it a significant city in India at the time. There was a high demand for cereals in Bijapur, which were supplied by the major towns of the Adil Shahi kingdom, including Bankapur. Bijapur served as an important market for Bankapur's traders.

When a group of traders from Bankapur was transporting grain by bullock cart to a market in Bijapur, they were attacked and looted by a gang of robbers. On learning of this, Hanumantha Gowda offered his help, and with the support of leaders from Harapanahalli, he successfully defeated the robbers. This act quickly came to the attention of the Badshah of Bijapur and the Subedar of Bankapur. After resolving the traders' issue, Hanumantha Gowda developed a good rapport with them and involved them in his family's business.

In 1577 AD, Fateh Khan Kadar attacked Guthala Mahal with his army. Hanumantha Gowda, utilizing his knowledge of the local geography and strategic planning, defeated and drove out Fateh Khan, thereby safeguarding the area of Guthala. Sarjakhan, the Subedar of Bankapur, was credited with aiding the traders and suppressing the attack by Fateh Khan Kadar. He promptly informed the Badshah of Bijapur about Hanumantha Gowda's assistance. In recognition, the Badshah advised Sarjakhan to grant some estates to Hanumantha Gowda as a jagir.

With Sarja Khan's recommendation, Hanumantha Gowda visited the Badshah in Bijapur, accompanied by JathigeraBasayya. The king, already familiar with Hanumantha Gowda's accomplishments, granted him seven estates: Guthala, Hadagali, Ranebennur, Hirekerur,

Chikkerur, Chouti, and Thilavalli. Following the Battle of Talikote in 1565 AD, the Adil Shahi king issued an important decree mandating that traditional village administration, which had been managed locally, should continue unchanged. Two decades later, Hanumantha Gowda was officially granted the jagir and appointed revenue officers to manage all revenue areas within his jurisdiction.

The Reign of Hanumantha Gowda (1581-1595)

Hanumantha Gowda's annual income was four lakhs. Leveraging this financial advantage, he established the geographically secure town of Havanur, situated on the banks of the Tungabhadra River, as the centre of his administration. In 1588, he constructed a fort at Havanur and appointed officials to manage administrative affairs. This establishment became known as the Havanur Desagati family

Hanumantha Gowda maintained good relations with many small desagati families of his time and had a particularly close relationship with the leaders of Harapanahalli. He helped settle a property dispute involving the children of the Harapanahalli leaders. Bheemappanayaka of Harapanahalli arranged for his sister, Padmavathi, to marry Hanumantha Gowda, marking Hanumantha Gowda's second marriage. This union demonstrated both his political influence and his standing in society.

Hanumantha Gowda later assisted Sarja Khan of Bankapur in quelling a long-standing riot in the shipyard region. In recognition of his services, the Badshah of Bijapur, who had observed these actions from afar, awarded Hanumantha Gowda the title of 'Sangramadhurina.' He also granted him permission to use the 'Hanuman Flag' as the official seal of his family. Understanding the social importance of his status, Hanumantha Gowda invited Brahmins to settle in his Desagati territory and granted them land as fiefs. In return, the Brahmins praised him as 'HanumendraBhoopa, Sarpapuravadheesha'. The temple of Dyamavva, the presiding deity of present-day Havanur, is believed to have been built by Hanumantha Gowda.

Hanumantha Gowda ruled the region of Havanur for fourteen years. A tragic incident ultimately led to his demise. A man from Handiganur had been arrested for deceiving Sarja Khan, and the man's wife approached Hanumantha Gowda, pleading for her husband's release. Hanumantha Gowda traveled to Bankapura to intervene on her behalf, but the accused was executed before he arrived. Hanumantha Gowda is said to have been implicated in the incident, and he was killed in 1595.

Research on the Havanur Desagati dynasty, which ruled much of what is now Haveri district from approximately 1588 to 1786 CE, is sparse, and much of its history remains unclear. Although the family line continues, records of their heritage have largely been lost among various family members.

After the decline of the Adil Shahi dynasty, the significance of the Havanur Desagati and its relationship with other contemporary desagati dynasties waned, especially with the invasion of Tipu Sultan. Hanumantha Gowda, recognizing the times, had firmly established his family. The following twelve Bahadur Desais governed the state through their various contributions.

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