

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Asia > India > Fundamentalism, communalism, extreme right, secularism (India) > **India: Karnataka Hijab Row: Now, School Students in Saffron Scarves Chant (...)**

India: Karnataka Hijab Row: Now, School Students in Saffron Scarves Chant 'Jai Shri Ram' in Protest

Friday 4 March 2022, by [The Wire \(IN\)](#) (Date first published: 5 February 2022).

At least three major incidents have been reported from Karnataka since January where students have been denied entry into the premises of educational institutions for wearing 'hijab'.

New Delhi: Protesting against students wearing hijabs inside the classroom, a section of students in Karnataka have started coming to some schools and colleges wearing saffron scarves.

According to [NDTV](#), videos from Kundapur in the Udupi district show boys and girls donning saffron scarves over their college uniforms and raising slogans of "Jai Shri Ram (praise Lord Ram)" while going to college.

Hindu students in Karnataka, India wearing Hindu Right-wing's saffron scarves opposing Muslim women students' wearing of hijabs! A nation has lost its mooring!
pic.twitter.com/omEGyMSuX1

— Ashok Swain (@ashoswai) [February 4, 2022](#)

In the video clips shot, Muslim students can be seen in a separate queue wearing headscarves over their uniforms. A police vehicle is also seen stationed near the college.

On February 4, Friday, around 40 students protested against their college in Udupi district of Karnataka for refusing them entry unless they took off their hijabs. The students of Bhandarkars Arts and Science Degree College in Kundapur [missed their classes](#) for the second day on February 5 too, [NDTV reported](#), adding that they demanded to know why the administration had banned the hijab when the rules allow it.

The students on February 3 argued that they have been coming to the college with hijab for a long time and they must be permitted, but the principal locked them out, [The Wire](#) reported.

The protesting students cited the college manual that says: "Girl students are permitted to wear the scarf inside the campus, however the colour of the scarf should match with the dupatta, and no student is allowed to wear any other cloth inside the campus including the college canteen."

Around 40 Muslim boys also sat outside the college and protested in solidarity with the girls, the report said.

According to ANI, state education minister B.C. Nagesh has said, "They were not wearing the hijab earlier and this problem started only 20 days ago."

However, according to the news agency, a student said: "Hijab is part of our life. Our seniors studied in the same college wearing hijab. How did all of a sudden this new rule come into force? What is the problem if we wear hijab? There were no issues until recently."

[#WATCH](#) | Students wearing hijab denied entry to Govt PU College in Kundapur area of Udupi, Karnataka amid a row on wearing the headscarf in classrooms

"They were not wearing the hijab earlier & this problem started only 20 days ago," State Education Minister BC Nagesh has said. pic.twitter.com/3pT418rb0y

— ANI (@ANI) [February 4, 2022](#)

On February 3, Thursday, another college in Karnataka denied entry to 20 girls for wearing the hijab. A video that emerged on social media showed them arguing with the principal who had asked them to remove their headscarves before entering the college, *NDTV* reported.

"Why are you stopping us? Is there any rule that stops us from wearing a hijab?" a student asked, [according to the report](#). One of the students appealed that they have only two months left for the exams.

This incident happened after around 100 boys on Wednesday arrived to school in saffron shawls, in protest against the girls who refused to remove their hijabs.

To avoid escalation, the college administration met with the BJP MLA from Kundapur, Haladi Srinivas Shetty, who is also a member of the board. They decided that there should be no discrimination, that there should be one rule for all.

Last month, [another similar incident](#) was reported from the Government Women's PU college in Udupi, Karnataka, where six students were denied entry to classrooms for wearing a hijab. One of them [has moved](#) the Karnataka high court seeking a declaration that wearing a hijab is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 14 and 25 of the Constitution of India and is an essential practice of Islam.

'Won't allow Talibanisation of the education system': BJP

Meanwhile, the BJP state chief Nalin Kumar Kateel on Saturday said the state government will not allow 'Talibanisation' of the education system. "There is no scope for such things (wearing hijab in classrooms). Our government will take stringent action. People have to follow the rules and regulations of the school. We will not allow Talibanisation (of the education system)," he told reporters in Bengaluru.

To a query on Lord Ganesha being worshipped in educational institutions and people entering schools and colleges sporting vermilion on their forehead, Vijayapura BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal told PTI, "This is India and our country is founded on the Indian culture. We have already given them Pakistan on the basis of religion for them to wear Hijab."

Commenting on the hijab row, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi wrote on Twitter: "By letting students' hijab come in the way of their education, we are robbing the future of the daughters of India. Ma

Saraswati gives knowledge to all. She doesn't differentiate."

By letting students' hijab come in the way of their education, we are robbing the future of the daughters of India.

Ma Saraswati gives knowledge to all. She doesn't differentiate. [#SaraswatiPuja](#)

— Rahul Gandhi (@RahulGandhi) [February 5, 2022](#)

The Karnataka government had on Friday asked educational institutions to follow existing uniform-related rules, until the high court comes out with an order in this connection.

With the issue snowballing into a major controversy, spreading to other educational institutions, and the matter coming up before the High Court, chief minister Basavaraj Bommai had held a meeting with primary and secondary education minister B.C. Nagesh and top government officials.

The Wire Staff

(With inputs from PTI)

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