

CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

TELI RAKESHKUMAR BHERULAL

PH.D REASERCH SCHOLER, SHRI GOVIND GURU UNIVERSITY

Abstract

The history of the Indian freedom struggle is incomplete without including the contribution of women in it. The sacrifices made by women have an important place in the history of the freedom struggle. Their bravery, selfless service and sacrifice are incomparable. Many of us are unaware of the fact that many women fought the freedom struggle shoulder to shoulder with men. Women fought the freedom struggle with their spiritual strength and full courage. To participate in the freedom struggle, women broke many ancient traditions and also left their traditional household responsibilities. Therefore, their contribution in the Indian freedom movement is commendable and admirable. In a male-dominated society, it was not very easy for women to fight the battle of politics like a brave man. But they broke the myth of people that women are only meant for doing household work. Most of the women sacrificed their lives in the movement, one of them is Rani Lakshmibai whose name is taken with great respect because she attained martyrdom while fighting the British, before attaining martyrdom she gave a tough time to the British. This research paper is dedicated to such women involved in the freedom movement.

Preface

The condition of women in Indian society was not very good before independence. Women were suppressed. The main reason for this was the male-dominated society. It was believed in the society that the main responsibility of women is to handle household chores, so they cannot be allowed to participate in other activities. They did not even have the freedom to express their views among men. The decisions of men were imposed on women. For example, child marriage, Sati system, not allowing widows to remarry, female foeticide etc. were very common. During the rule of East India, many social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar and Jyotiba Phule etc. struggled a lot to improve the condition of women in Indian society, during this period many women were trained in martial arts. Women entered the Indian freedom struggle in 1817. Rani Lakshmi Bai, Bhimabai Holkar, Madam Bhikaji Cama etc. fought for independence against the British. There is no doubt that there is a long list of women among the freedom fighters.

Women leaders who participated in freedom movement

There is no doubt that many women also participated along with men in the Indian freedom struggle. If we make a list of women leaders, it will be a long list. Sarojini Naidu, Rani Lakshmibai, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay and Mridula Sarabai are national level women leaders. Among the state level women leaders, Durgabai Deshmukh from Nadras, Rameshwari Nehru from Uttar Pradesh, Satyavati Devi and Subhadra Joshi from Delhi, Hansa Mehta and Usha Mehta from Bombay etc. Although it is very difficult to make such a division as to who is a regional level leader and who is a national level leader. Because many leaders started working at the regional level and reached the national level. Along with Indian women, the names of some Irish

women like Anne Valent and Margaret are taken. Who fought against the British to get freedom for India and raised their voice against the exploitation of the British.

Women Participant in Indian Freedom Struggle

- Sarojini Naidu: Her name is prominently mentioned among the freedom fighters around 1917. In 1925, she became the second woman president of the Congress. She participated in the freedom movement for the first time in 1905 during the Bengal partition. She was the only woman Satyagrahi in the Salt Satyagraha movement in Darshana. She led this Satyagraha. For this, she was sent to jail. She was also arrested during the Quit India Movement in 1942. She toured the whole of India and gave lectures at various places to empower women and awaken nationalism. She also contributed significantly in forming the Indian Women's Organization. She also went to London with a delegation to get women the right to vote.
- Rani Lakshmi Bai: There is no other example of a brave and powerful warrior like Rani Lakshmi Bai in Indian history. She is a living example of patriotism and national pride. She is a source of inspiration for many people. Her name is written in golden letters in Indian history.
- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay:- She participated in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930. She worked for handicrafts, handlooms and theatre.

Worked for development. The Indian government awarded him the Padma Vibhushan in 1955.

- Annie Besant:- She became the first President of the Congress in 1917. Her companion Margaret drafted the women's suffrage bill and also founded the All India Women's Organisation.
- Vijayalakshmi Pandit: Mrs. Pandit went to jail three times in 1932, 1940 and 1942 for her work in the national movement. During the Salt Satyagraha, she led the movement. She took out many processions to abandon foreign liquor and clothes. She was accompanied by her little daughter and sister. She fought many battles and also removed many obstacles for women.
- Durgabai Deshmukh: She was put in jail for three years for participating in the Salt Satyagraha. At that time, when famous South Indian activists Rajaji and T. Prakash were busy in other activities of the movement, Durgabai Deshmukh led a group and did Satyagraha at Marine Benth, Madras. At a very young age, she formed organizations named Andhra Mahila Sabha and Hindi Balika Pathshala.
- Mridula Saravai:- At the time of partition, she fought with all Hindus and Muslims to save refugees and girls kidnapped by the mob. In 1934, she was elected to the Gujarat delegation in the Indian National Congress.
- Vasanti Das:- She was an active agitator during the British Raj. She participated in many political and social movements. She actively participated in the freedom struggle movement and was also arrested during the non-cooperation movement. In 1973, the Government of India honoured her with the Padma Vibhushan.

- Sucheta Kriplani:- She entered social life in 1937 and entered political life in 1939 and joined the Indian National Congress. In 1940, she did Satyagraha in Faizabad and was put in jail for two years. During the Quit India Movement, she remained underground and silently contributed to the movement against the British.
- Kamaladas Gupta: She was a capable and intelligent woman among the women who participated in the Indian freedom struggle. She was an active member of the Jangtar Party. Due to her involvement in the Quit India Movement, she was arrested in 1942 and put in the Presidency Jail.
- Indira Gandhi: A famous woman of modern India. She became a member of the Indian National Congress in 1938. She also took an active part in the freedom movement and after independence in 1947, the responsibility of managing the Prime Minister's household fell on her. At the same time, she tirelessly worked for the economic and social progress of minorities. She fought a fierce battle against communism.

Women's movement during Gandhi's time

- Gandhiji was undoubtedly a living example of Indian culture. People of the country respectfully call him Mahatma. He was a social reformer, economist, politician, philosopher and worshipper of truth. He connected the Indian National Congress with the common people of the country. He made the freedom movement a movement of the masses. He taught people to fight against injustice. Mahatma Gandhi's contribution in the Indian freedom struggle is considered to be the most important. At that time, he single-handedly led the movements for India's independence. His main technique was to take the movement forward against the British with peace and non-violence. Between 1918 and 1922, many civil disobedience movements were launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji for the independence of India. The aim of the civil disobedience movement was to weaken the British government through non-cooperation. Gandhiji used to say that complete independence will not be considered until women stand at par with men. Women should realize their power in the freedom struggle movement.
- Women freedom fighters under the leadership of Gandhi
- Gandhiji encouraged women to fight against casteism and child marriage. He encouraged women's education. He encouraged women to participate in the freedom struggle in large numbers.
- Many educated and middle class women like Aruna Asaf Ali, Sarala Devi and Muthu Lakshmi etc. Participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement.
- After Gandhiji was arrested, Sarojini Naidu, influenced by Gandhi, led the Civil Disobedience Movement. She fought for women's suffrage and was elected the first president of the Indian National Congress. > During the Quit India Movement, activists like Usha Mehta and Aruna Asaf Ali led the movement by remaining underground.
- Provided leadership. In 1920, most women participated in the freedom struggle movement. At this time, many women activists came forward. At that time, Indian women broke all kinds of social and economic constraints and participated enthusiastically in the movement for India's independence.
- Conclusion: When we look at the role of women in the Indian freedom struggle, we come to know how women courageously protested from the streets to the jail and from the jail

to the legislature. There were many struggles and After a lot of efforts, India finally became independent on 15th August, 1947. Thousands of women sacrificed their lives in the freedom struggle for the freedom of their motherland. If it is said that freedom was not achieved only by non-violent movement but due to the active contribution and sacrifice of women, then it will not be an exaggeration. Perhaps for the first time in the history of the world, freedom was achieved by challenging a mighty ruler in whose kingdom the sun never set, peacefully and non-violently. In the end, we can only say that the contribution of women in the freedom struggle is incomparable.

References

1. अग्रवाल एम०जी०, Freedom fighter of India Vol IV, Gyan Publishing house 2008
2. Thaper Suruchi, Women in the Indian National Movement:-unseen faces and unheard Vices (1930-32)
3. Ralhan O.P., Eminent Indian women in politics, Anmol Publication Delhi 1995.
4. Agrawal R.C., Constitutional Development and National Movement of India, S.Chand Publishing limited New Delhi 1999.
5. Raju Rajendra, Role of women in India's Freedom struggle, south Asia books 1994.
6. Mody Nawaz, women in India's freedom struggle, Allied publication 2002
7. Chand Tara, History of freedom movement in India Vol IV, Publication division Govt. Of India 1961.
8. www.newworldencyclopedia.org