

Assessment Of The Contribution Of Indian Women In Freedom Struggle

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Abstract:

The contribution of women in freedom struggle is noteworthy to mention that without which study of the history of Indian freedom struggle will be incomplete. Women were participated valiantly and strengthen the movement. They provide all support to men to achieve success in struggle. The history of freedom struggle reflect with the saga of sacrifice, selflessness and bravery of women. Hundreds of women were fought side by side with their male counterparts. They fought with true courage and spirit. The women broke all the restrictions and got-out of their traditional home oriental roles and responsibilities. That was so praiseworthy. But it is not easy for women to fight as warrior in the male dominating society. Female tried to change the perceptions of such orthodox people who thought women are meant to do only household works. Moreover women not only sacrifice their lives but also combat such issues. Laxmi Bai is a great who fought valiantly, Sarojini Naidu strive hard to bring unity among different communities, Aruna Asaf Ali is an ardent soldier of the army freedom fighter in 1942. Suchita Kripalani left her jobs university and plunge into struggle Mridula Sarabai participated in the salt Satyagraha in 1930. This paper try to highlight the contribution of Indian women in freedom struggle.

Key words: Freedom, women, strengthen, counterparts, Orthodox, Valiantly.

Introduction:

The history of Indian freedom struggle would be incomplete without mentioning the contributions of women. The sacrifice made by women of India will occupy the foremost place. They fought with true spirit and undaunted courage and faced various tortures, exploitations and hardship to gain freedom. Women's participation in freedom struggle began as early as in 1817. Bhima Bai Holkar fought bravely against the British Colonial Molcolm and defeated him in Guerilla warefare. Many women including Rani Channamma of Kittur, Rani Begum, Hazarat Mahal of Avadh fought against British East India Company in the 19th century, 30 years before the first war of Independence 1857." The Indian women who joined freedom struggle belonged to educated and liberal families as well as those from rural areas and from all walks of life, all castes, religion and communities, Sarojini Naidu, Kasturuba Gandhi, Vijaya Laxmi Pundit and Annie Besant were those which are remembered even today their contribution in freedom struggle and in political field.

Objectives:

1. To assess the freedom movement of India

2. To explore the role played by women leaders in freedom struggle.
3. To create awareness among women community.
4. To highlighted the Indian women sufferings and valour during freedom struggle.
5. To create among women community the spirit of courage, consciousness, emancipation from all barriers irrespective of caste, creed, economic positions etc.

Methodology:

In writing this paper data were collected from secondary sources of textbooks, journals, internet sources etc. In writing this paper both descriptive and explanatory methods are used.

Discussion:

Mile stones of Indians freedom struggle

1. The first war of independence (1857 to 85)
2. Partition of Bengal (swadeshi movement (1905)
3. Non-cooperation movement (1920-22)
4. Civil disobedience movement (1930)
5. The quit India movement (1942)

Women leaders of the National Movement:

There is no doubt that women participated in the freedom struggle in large numbers. If we recall these women leaders in freedom struggle we will find that the list is very long. Among them Sorojini Naidu, Rani Laxmi Bai, Vijaya Laxmi Pundit, Kamaladevi Chattapadhyaya and Mridulla Sara Bai at the national level, the provincial level leaders like Annie Besant, Rameswari Amman in U-P, Satrawati Devi, Subhadra Joshi in Delhi, Hansa Mehta and Usha Mehta in Bombay and Several others. The nature of struggle was different to distinguish between regional level and all India level.

Indian women leaders of freedom struggles

Aruna Araf Ali: she participated in civil disobedience movement and individual Satyagraha in (1930-40). She had to be imprisoned for struggle. She edited 'Inquilab' which aimed at mass mobilization.

Suchitra Kripalini: She was appointed as the secretary of the women's wing of the AICC (All India Congress Committee) in 1939. She worked at Noakhali in East Bengal when communal riots broke out after the Muslim League's call of Direct Action on 16 August 1946.

Jyotirmoy Ganguly: Resigned from the government services in response to Gandhi's call for civil disobedience Movement and participated in agitation organized by the forward block in 1945 against the imprisonment of the INA soldiers.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: She was impressed by Gandhi. She involved in the activities of Congress and participated in the CDM. She was imprisoned during QIM.

Rani Gaidinliu: Led the Naga Movement in 1931-32 Against the British and supported the CDM.

Pritilata, Bina and Kalpana were the members of Indian Republican Army founded by Surjya Sen. They were also involved in the Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930)

Sarojini Naidu: She was the first Indian woman to preside over Congress in 1925. She was a member of Congress working committee for many years. She represented women during the second round table conference in 1932. She was imprisoned in 1932, 1942 as participant in the CDM, QIM.

Annie Besant: She was an Irish lady who arrived in India in 1893 as member of theosophical Society. In 1898 she founded the central Hindu College which became the Hindu Benaras University in 1916.

Rani Laxmi Bai: Revolt in Jhansi against annexation of Jhansi, by Lord Dalhousie in 1854s, when Lord Dalhousie occupied Jhansi by the rule of controversial Doctrines of Lapse.

Kasturba Gandhi: She provided moral support to her husband. She became the political activist and fought for civil rights against the British both in South Africa and India. She was imprisoned in 1942 for her involvement in OIM and died at Aghakhan Palace in Poona.

Role of women in Indian Freedom struggle:

The establishments of the Indian National Congress opened the way for the women to participate in freedom struggle. The Swadeshi movement in 1905 also observed the entry of women in the freedom struggle. Annie Besant accelerated the process of women's entry in Indian politics in 1914. M.K. Gandhi made serious efforts to arouse political consciousness in all levels of women to take part in freedom struggle. M.K. Gandhi urged both men and women to take equal part in struggle as women are equally strong mentally, physically and spiritually. Thus women in the very beginning of the freedom struggle against the British rule from liberal and conservative families, urban and rural women, both young and old joined hands to gain freedom.

In Satyagraha and Civil disobedience movement also women equally participated in freedom struggle. Gandhi's view and opinion about women in freedom influenced women's positions in the freedom movement. Large number of women participated in non-cooperation movement, salt Satyagraha. In different parts of India during non-cooperation movement women joined processions, propaganda, propagated the use of khadi and self-weaving. In salt Satyagraha in 1922-24 and Bardoli Satyagraha in 1928 women outnumbered men in political gatherings. Many women also followed Gandhi in Dandi March in 1930 to break salt law, Sarojini Naidu, Mridula Sarabai, and Kamaladevi Chattapadhyaya were some of the prominent women associated with the salt Satyagraha. During civil disobedience movement of 1940 also women participated and courted arrest in large numbers. During quiet India movement of 1942 also, women from all parts of India including

Assam took parts in processions, holds meeting, demonstration, organizing strikes etc.

Kanaklata Boruah an Assam girl led procession of five hundred and was killed in the police firing, Usha Mehta operated an underground radio station. Aruna Asaf Ali led the women in 1942 movement. She published bulletin and edit newspapers and circulated among the people. Some women were not believed the non-violence movement. So they adopted the revolutionary movement. Preeti Wadkar, Kalpana Joshi were associated with Chittagong armoury raid. The Chachati Sangha was started in 1928 to give training and recruiting of women for revolutions in future. Those are the few examples of women joined in freedom struggle. During freedom struggle women were active in both in the moderate and extremist persons.

Women also participated in politics. In 1937 election 42 women were elected from the reserved constituencies and when the provisional cabinet was formed they become ministers. In U.P Vidyalaxmi Pandit becomes minister for local self-government. J.T Sipah and Absuyabi were appointed deputy speaker respectively. In Bombay Hans Mahta and Begam Shah respectively. They were 14 members in the constituent assembly which met in 1946 December, 16 were women in 1922 AICC meeting, 13 in 1937, 5 members in constituent assembly.

Results and Findings:

Studies shows that women who were actively participated in freedom struggle belongs to wealthy and high class families. They were supported by husband and families. This being followed even after independence. But there were also a large number of unknown women who participated in the freedom struggle. It provided women endless opportunities to enter into politics which was not seen earlier. They were willing to join processions and to go prisons. Women joined revolutionary groups help in distributing newspapers and others activities that strengthen freedom struggle. Women provide support to freedom fighters by looking after their families. Studies shows that women also participated in election and get representation and became ministers. Participation of women in freedom struggle let India unity and integrity. Most importantly it legitimizet their claims to a place in the governance of India. It also shaped movement for women's right. But in the study it is seen that the participation of women had some drawbacks.

Those demonstrating claims to represent all India women in the groups (AICC) involved, other than upper and middle class Hindu women were never larger.

But at all, participation of women in the freedom struggle strengthens freedom movement directly and indirectly exemplified that women are capable of strengthening the political movement. The participation of women in freedom struggle had its impacts on the society, family and on women themselves.

Conclusion:

After struggling hundreds of so many years India gain freedom. To gain freedom with their male counterparts women were also made bold choices, activities, finding themselves on streets, Jail and in legislature. India achieve independence in 15 August 1947. Thousands of India women dedicated their lives for obtaining freedom their motherland. The nonviolent movement that gained India her freedom not only took women along but was dependent for its own success on the active participation of women for the first and only times on world history the power of mighty global empire come to an end. Indian overcome by the moral might of a people armed only with peace ideas and courage.

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