

BANGLES BEHIND THE BAR: ROLE OF WOMEN IN INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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Abstract

Society of India addressed a clashing place of women wavering between limits of male as well as female-centric society. In this Indigenous culture, the advent of British rule again prompted the utilization of women's existence which was marked exceptionally in their interactional pontificates. The British society was viewed as "feminine" in behavior, rather than "provincial manliness" which was proved to be a defense for its forfeiture of freedom. The venture of conflux and struggle of sexual category and nationalism in India was complex and multifaceted. Women of India clogged for their genuine space in the public arena testing the overall male-centric setup and furthermore partook in the battle for attaining freedom. The role of women, in the venture of freedom struggle, stretched the space of women's development in India. The battle for freedom saw the cooperation of women from inactive to dynamic to a dissident's job. The participation of a truly huge number of women in the venture of independence started with Gandhi's arrival in the Indian political arena, who gave the unique job to them. The contribution of women in open space came into notice since Non-Cooperation Movement, when Gandhi activated countless women. However, the indigenous circle and its shackles demonstrated negative for women to partake openly space yet this very isolation assisted with getting sorted out their exercises in the indigenous circle. When most of the political leaders were there behind the bar at that time there were women who become the basic reassurance in the National movement. The active role of women in India was started to be noticed from the Non-Cooperation movement but in Civil Disobedience and in the Quit India movement, it was fundamentally most remarkable. Though, the list is too long to share since the contribution made by women from the whole country was unique and tremendous but still the contribution made by some women pioneers like Satyawati, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kriplani, Subhadra Joshi,

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Received: 16.02.2022

Approved: 16.03.2022

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Article No.15

RJPSS Oct.-Mar. 2022,

Vol. XLVII No. 1,

pp. 137-142

Online available at:

<https://anubooks.com/rjpss-2022-vol-xlvii-no-1/>

<https://doi.org/10.31995/rjpss.2022.v47i01.015>

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Kamla Nehru, Lado Rani Just, Bi- Amma from Delhi were unforgettable and extraordinary too. . "It holds that the struggle for freedom itself is the highest tutor of freedom which, if it can once possess the mind of a people, shapes itself the life, the character, and the social and civic institutions of the people, to its own proper ends".¹ The saga of their heroic deeds would always be remembered in our hearts. These women were the real source of inspiration, who taught us how to remain strong even in hard days such as despite knowing the fact that Satyawati who was a patient of Tuberculosis still moved on and did not stop contributing in any way for the national cause. Similarly Aruna Asaf Ali too, even after knowing that her entire property was seized by the British government she still carried on with her underground national activities. Being suffering from different unsuitable scenarios these women could not stop themselves in fact dragged thousands of women in the venture of Independence.

Keyword

Women in Indian Freedom Struggle, British rule , Non-Cooperation Movement, National Movement, Women in India.

Indian National Movement was a milestone (landmark) in the history of the modern world. This National movement could engulf all the sections of society in it, wherein women were also included. It would be fair to state that the History of India is rich with the contribution made by women in the field of politics. Since the beginning of the struggle women had played an incredible role. When most of the men were behind the bars, then women came out from their isolation and took the charge of struggle and it was realized by the elite class too that until the all sections of society come forward to fight against the British Raj, it would be difficult to attain the designed goal of earning Freedom.

Independence played an important role in the starting of a new journey for women in terms of equality and liberty. Though there were elite women who were participating in the Nationalists activities since 1885 but rest of the women were still at home.

The participation of women in political processes acted as a milestone. According to Elonear Roosevelt, "woman is like a teabag- you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water". This statement was truly proved by women of whole India as when the Nation demanded to call both the genders together at that moment women from all corners of the country came in frontline viz. no one lag behind.

Conventional accounts of patriotism have to a great extent been composed according to male viewpoint. nevertheless, prospecting of new sorts of sources like women's works, analogy, anecdotal writing, interviews just as the improvement of more abandoned recorded archives hierarchical and confidential or private papers, official reports and journalists broadened the stretch and extent of women's set of experiences. Women in India challenged for their authentic space in the public eye testing the overall man-centric setup and furthermore took an interest in the independence venture. It was a one-of-a-kind difficult exercise, wherein they had

now and again to think twice about the console itself with the incomplete products of their long and passionate battle and different occasions to forfeit it by and large.

The battle that started from indigenous life to the political field was and is a since a long time ago drawn fight for women. Their role in the Indian public development extended the base of their development in India. The incredible role played by them in the battle of Independence, reinforced not just the public battle for opportunity; it additionally gave the gathering to women to deliver the contestation and compressions of the man-centric culture. The Independence journey became the witness and saw the interest of women from inactive to dynamic to an extremist's job. Initially, in the nineteenth century, the liberal reformers or the evangelist made women as the beneficiary of social change. Though many social reformers like Raja ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule and many more did a lot to improve women's status where in some associations and organizations were established like Brahmo samaj and Prathana Samaj particularly accomplished significant work in teaching women and gave them their first involvement out in the openwork. "Thus, by the 1920s, two quite different rationales for women's rights were being expressed : the one that women's rights should be recognized because of women's socially useful role as mothers; the other that women, having the same needs, desires, capacities as men, were entitled to the same **rights**"² They were considered not as a right holder but rather as serving the greater male-ruled local area. Before the finish of the nineteenth century, women began taking upon themselves the job of liberators and fought for individual changes and political freedom.

Independence struggle opened a new door of opportunity for women which showed another aspect of legislative partnership too. Women were there in less number before the arrival of Gandhi's in India. Though, the participation of women could be noticed since the establishment of Congress (1885) but they were there in a limited number like in the Swadeshi movement. But as soon as Gandhi entered into the political arena of India, soon after his speeches, his clarion call, his beliefs invited women to come and take the charge of struggle. On the other side, the revolutionary speakers like Madam Bika Ji Cama, Aruna Asaf Ali, Prakash Vati Pal, Durga Vati Vohra have attracted more people of society in the venture of attaining Independence. In one of her speeches, Madam Cama said, "that the hands that rock the cradle is the hand that molds the character, that soft hand is the chief factor of national **life**"³ The dramas, folk stories and poetic works also created a lot of work to inspire all sections of society in which the name Premchand, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's (Khub ladi wo to Jhansi wali Rani Thi), Ram Prasad Bismil are

remarkable. These such works inspired many people to plunge into the struggle. These words engaged more and more number of women in the struggle.

You can barely be incorrect, if your development goals are logical and set.

Trouble and downfall were experienced by women in the past. But their wellness and strive for equality did not let it last.

The Inner Strength of Freedom Struggle:

Though, women from all India participated in the Indian National Movement but the significant role which was played by the women of Delhi can be categorized under the following five headings:

1. Persuasive.
2. Call to- Arms.
3. Encouraging
4. Supporting.
5. Constructive workers.

Non-Cooperation Movement: Housewives from rural and urban areas organized themselves for carrying out the congress programs and action plans based on Non- Violence. They cut off the rituals and practices that had been in existence for centuries and gradually, the freedom struggle started taking over. Boycott & picketing board, swadeshi prachar board, taking out Prabhat pheries, these were some areas of their contribution. The tendency, with which these women worked to connect other women with them on a large scale, not only shook the British Empire but also shook the Hindu structure of society. This was all done with the significant efforts made by these women that the women's involvement from the whole of India in the Nationalist movement could be seen in a big way.

Civil Disobedience Movement: Women from all corners of the country in India joined the movement as proudly and went ahead to achieve their goal in attaining each destination. They continuously went on going out without thinking of heat and weather in the different parts of the city. They used to go to each house, each area of the city to convey- the civil defense message. Their contribution to the cause of the country earns a special place for themselves in the mass mind. Mrs. Parbati Devi, Jai Rani and Mrs. Kohli were the women who were also prominent in the meeting held in Rang Mahal, Delhi. At Kashmere Gate, a batch of two hundred women led by Satyawati, went to the District of Qutab Road for showing their resistance towards British Raj. Behan Satyawati, held meetings, led processions, picketed foreign good cloth shops not only in the marketplace but also on the river Jumana where usually the Marwadi ladies in their foreign clothes came to bathe²⁴

Quit India Movement: Once the ground was set, no woman could sit behind especially women of Delhi to contribute themselves for the national cause. The purpose of constructive workers was to demonstrate the use of Charkha and Taklis, which could be done by helping spinners to get in touch with weavers for the yarn spun by them. For fulfilling the same purpose-They established Ashrams also where little girls and boys were instructed to spin yarn. Sucheta Kriplani, who trained Delhi women for self-protection and for first aid too. She offered herself for Individual Satyagraha, for which she was arrested too and after realizing from jail in 1941 she thought of going underground and directing the activities from there only. Another work undertaken by her was to organize volunteer corps. “Aruna, however, could not reconcile herself to surrender and kept on working in spite of her bad health. She came out in the open when warrants against her were canceled on January 26, 1946”⁵

Conclusion

It is believed that all the positive changes that have been brought in Indian society today, not only men, but women also contribute equally behind them. To prove this, what was the status of women since ages, their changing status with the changing of time, what was their role in Indian Freedom Struggle is still a subject of deep study. Though Social security beneficiaries accepted this thing, that if we really want to discuss or to talk about how did we attain the Independence? The discussion would be incomplete without mentioning the contribution of women.

The patriot articulations of women in the Independent venture should be broken down in the following outlooks:

Those women drew in with patriot governmental issues notwithstanding requirements of aboriginal tradition such as the purdah framework, reluctance and less favor of female education.

Those women partook in Indian National Movement at 2 equal cycles:

a) The taming of the open arena – women partook in the roads without thinking twice about their indigenous qualities.

b) The politicization of the indigenous circle – women took care of circumstances in their families when patriotism entered families through the exercises of their spouses and children.

That woman utilized the representative collection of the INM and the political language of Gandhi to work with their own support.

It is believed that Freedom Struggle presented itself fruitful at two levels. The first one is which India could succeed in attaining the Independence whereas, on the other hand, such political and socio condition of society could also be changed.

It is believed that the shackles of orthodoxy were broken with the arrival of women's own efforts which they kept on trying to break as much as they could.

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