

The Nervous Nineties (1857-1947) With Special Reference to Involvement of Women During Freedom Struggle

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Abstract

India's independence movement culminated in different regions, leading to historical events that ended British rule. The movement began in 1857, and it lasted up to 1947 A.D. The Indian nation should hold close to its Independence. The cloak of British rule, which sometimes fought violently, sometimes unfairly to suppress what all people consider their birthright for generations, finally fell after a great deal of effort. So, this nation's Independence was won by its people in unprecedented ways. Every section of society played an essential role in the freedom struggle. However, the participation of women in this process was no less critical, and they too became game-changers by becoming leaders from the front. In this article, the focus is on women's contributions towards the struggle for freedom. The sacrifices made by women represented the most significant hurdle on the road to freedom. In addition to this, they were suffering various forms of torture, exploitation, and hardship; they also displayed true spirit and calm courage.

Objectives of the Study: 1. To study India's Struggle for Independence.
2. To examine the role of women during the Freedom Struggle.

Methodology: The secondary data has been analyzed through a textual approach. These findings have been drawn from academic books by eminent historians and research and review articles, websites, and newspaper articles written by eminent teachers, scholars, and students.

Results and Conclusions: The study will help the historians, researchers, students, and other communities to understand the contribution of women who played a prominent role during the freedom struggle, especially those who were less known earlier but actively participated in the nationalist movement and gave a new direction towards the history of Independent India.

Keywords: Contribution of Women, Economic Hardship, Struggling Years, Unflappable Courage, Dawn of Independence.

Introduction

The struggle towards attaining freedom from the colonial empire was not an easy task for the people of India. Although joining hands together and coming in front to fight for their rights against the British Empire was very tough, the people of India made it possible by creating a feeling of oneness among themselves. However, the history of the Indian freedom struggle was one the most significant mass movement in the modern era that has ever been seen before. People from different sections of the society unite and throw out the British yoke from the nation finally in the year 1947. It would be unfair if we do not place the sacrifices made by Indian women to attain freedom. Despite facing various tortures, exploitations, and hardships, they fought with the true spirit of undaunted courage to achieve freedom. Most of us are unaware that many women fought alongside their male counterparts during the freedom struggle in the context of history. When most of the male sections of society were imprisoned, the women came out of their homes and took charge to run the mass movement. Their role was incredible in the freedom movement. They showed active involvement in the movement, which gave a new direction to the history of India. It was one of the remarkable progress in the Indian context. All women played an essential role during the mass movement, but they are less known in the context of history. There is no end to the stories of sacrifices and courage of women during the struggling years of Independence.

Involvement of Women in the Freedom Struggle Movement 1857-1947 A.D.

As India fought for Independence, women bore a heavy burden. Women's conditions are very deplorable during the pre-independence

period due to the dominance of the male section of society. Participating in National Movements and holding public meetings, picketing vending shops selling foreign alcohol and merchandise, and selling Khadi are their activities.

Their courage enabled them to face the baton of the police and go to jail. Finally, in 1857, the day came when the first war of Independence began. The involvement of women in India's freedom struggle started in 1817. Bhima Bai Holkar fought with Britishers bravely and gave them a tough defeat in Guerrilla warfare. Various women in the society fought against the British East India Company and the British Empire. Some of these are named Rani Chennamma of Kittur, Rani Begum Hazrat Mahal of Awadh showed their active participation in the 19th century, thirty years before the First War of Independence. The leadership qualities of Rani Lakshmi Bai have been discussed even today that how she set an outstanding example of genuine patriotism towards their nation. Some other women from India who belonged from educated and liberal families also occupied an important place in the context of Indian history as well as several women from rural areas joined the National Movement. But sometimes, we feel bad about those unsung women who participated in the national movement and worked for a noble cause.

III.I Women's who participated in the Nationalist Movement to attain Freedom

Bhima Bai Holkar

It is said that Bhima Bai Holkar was the first woman to point her sword at the British. It is widely believed that she inspired Queen Jhansi Lakshmi Bai to fight against British oppression. She was born on September 17, 1795. She was the granddaughter of the famous Queen Ahilya Bai Holkar and the daughter of the Prince

Yashwant Rao Holkar of Indore. As the Indore estate controlled by Holkar developed into a wealthy country, the British began to look for it. She was called Bhima because of her unyielding arrogance. In 1817, a Guerrilla war was launched against Colonel Malcolm through Bhima Bai Holkar, and he failed with his help. During the Mahidpur War, she led a 2,500 cavalry armed with swords and spears to fight the British in Mahidpur. Her actions as a soldier against the East India Company motivated the Queen of Jhansi named Rani Lakshmi Bai during the mutiny of 1857. She died in Indore on November 28, 1858.

Rani Chennamma of Kittur

Chennamma was born on October 23, 1878, and later became the Rani of Kittur. Kittur was a princely state in Karnataka. She was trained in archery, swordsmanship, horse riding and quickly became known for her courage and skill. She had a son and heir to the throne when her husband died in 1816. Her son lost his life in 1824. Shivalingappa was the adopted son of Chennamma that inherited the throne.

Nevertheless, the East India Company annexed the Kingdom and refused to recognize the adopted heir. Despite being codified by Lord Dalhousie in later years, the Doctrine of lapse had long been practiced by society. Queen of Kittur, Chennamma, rejected this illegal doctrine and denied admitting the British sovereignty. After acquiring the arms, she fought against the company with weapons in 1824. Kittur has more than 20,000 soldiers and about 400 guns. They tried to ambush Kittur and recover her jewellery and treasure (worth 1.5 million rupees) but failed. She was one of the first Indian women to rebel against the British. She was one of the first native to declare war against the British; she led the first armed rebellion. India's foremost feminist and

freedom fighter is revered for her exemplary life and work.

Rani Avanti Bai

The grittiest and most courageous young lady in Indian history, her unflagging fortitude and mind-boggling soul is equivalent to the legendary Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi or Rani Rudramma Devi of Warangal and Rani Abbakka Chowta of Ulala. Avanti Bai was born in 1831 in Ramgarh (presently in Mandla in Madhya Pradesh), and she married King Vikramaditya Lodhi of Ramgarh when she was just 24 years old. Fiercely unbiased as a young lady, she became skilled adequately in sword prevention, archery, cavalry, military strategy, diplomacy, and all different topics of statecraft. Since

Vikramaditya could not function, Avanti Bai stepped up and took charge of Ramgarh's management. Even after the king's death, the Lodhi country endured flourishing under its queen's skilled steering. Avanti Bai's enchantment sparked a wave of revolution in the provinces that mattered.

By 1857, the whole area had joined the outfitted uproar. Fundamental from the front, the brave sovereign herself raised a naval force of 4000 and, as far as it matters for me, drove it contrary to the British soldiers. Her first fight occurred inside the town of Kheri. Avanti Bai's mind-blowing fight approaches guaranteed that the British soldiers had been given a tremendous loss. The stung British gathered their total power and dispatched a massive attack on Ramgarh, setting the bastion on the hearth, expecting a simple triumph. This way, the sovereign changed into compelled to move along with her own family to the thickly forested slopes of Devharigarh. However, Avanti Bai changed into not being the one to surrender without a

battle. The use of hit-and-run combat techniques assaulted the camp of notable British Waddington, diving the camp into tumult. Nonetheless, sadly, her stunning forestalling soul transformed into no counterpart for the might of the British military gadget in the entirety of its relentless power. Encircled by British soldiers and managing the possibility of catch, Avanti Bai chose to forfeit her life in inclination to give up to the foe. As a result of her actions, she killed herself on March 20, 1858.

Rani Lakshmi Bai

Rani of Jhansi, Rani Lakshmi Bai, whose heroism and brilliant administration laid an exceptional case for each future age of ladies opportunity warriors. A legend in her own right, Lakshmi Bai is an icon. Her quality among the Indian mind is well-trying by the fact that not solely is she the foremost well-known leader; however conjointly, an oversized variety of people songs and ballads are composed in her contemporaries' reminiscences also presently by some illustrious poets. She is the theme of contemporary poems, novels, dramas that became famous everywhere in the country.

No other lady warrior within the history of India has had such a significant effect on the minds of Indian individuals like Lakshmi Bai. She was the spouse of the ruler of Jhansi Raja Gangadhar Rao, who dissented against the 'Doctrine of Lapse.' She denied yielding Jhansi and battled bravely as a male amid the Revolt of 1857. She kicked the bucket on the front line battling the British strengths. Her boldness propelled numerous Indians to rise against the outsider running the show. In no time after starting the revolt in 1857, which broke out in Meerut, Lakshmi Bai has broadcasted the official of Jhansi, and she ruled on the sake of the minor

beneficiary. Joining the rebellion against the British, she quickly organized her troops and accepted the charge of the rebels within the Bundelkhand region. Double-crossers within the neighboring zones headed toward Jhansi to offer her support. Patriotism and self-respect were symbols of her bravery. The Rani indeed breathed last on the battlefield, but her name becomes immortal among the society. Even it has been said that the enemies of Rani were also very admired by seeing her bravery, strength, and warriors.

Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu, widely known as "Indian Nightingale," was elected leader of the Indian National Congress. She participated in protesting the national movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905. A sensory encounter with Gokhale, recognized as a pioneer of another time in 1906, made her life. It was a change forever. His reaction to her fiery discourse brought the influence of foresight on her life, who found boundless forerunners in her premature splendor. Around 1917, she emerged as a prominent nationalist. From 1917 to 1919 was one of the most unique of Sarojini vocations.

Meanwhile, she participated in various reforms, such as the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, the Khilafat issue, and the Rowlatt Act. She became INC's second female president in 1925. She played a leading role during civil disobedience and was imprisoned. She also went to London with a delegation of women's voting rights, which was closely related to forming the Women's Association of India. She turned over the composition poems and devoted herself entirely to women's liberation, guidance, and Hindu-Islamic solidarity. She became a follower of Gandhi and went to England with him.

Everywhere in Britain, she blamed the British lead in India, which attracted the eyes of researchers and intellectuals. In 1942 she was arrested during the “Quit Movement.” She traveled throughout India to lecture on women’s approval and nationalism.

Abadi Bano Begum

Abadi Bano Begum is just one of many children in Uttar Pradesh. Their families have also become victims and suffered the trauma of the 1857 rebellion while participating in the rebellion. Although one might think that the injuries caused by the foreign invaders on his land would kill the young Abadi Bano, this is not the case. Although she is still very young, this inspired his desire to free this country from British rule.

Abadi Bano Begum, later known as “Bi Amma” in Indian history, is critical in the fight for freedom. At the time, she was one of the first Muslim women to participate in politics actively. Unfortunately, due to her contribution to the freedom struggle in India, she continues to be ignored and largely forgotten. The British arrested all significant leaders, including the Gandhi and Ali brothers, to disrupt the movement. Even when her children were imprisoned, Bi Amma did not stop. She shoulders the responsibility of disseminating information about the struggle for freedom, traveling all over the country, speaking to the masses, and seeking them to participate in the struggle for freedom.

She believed in the strict purdah for most of his life. But she broke the restrictions on masked women and became one of the first Muslim women to speak at political gatherings in a burqa. In 1917, she joined the agitation to help Annie Besant and her two children get out of prison. At this time, Mahatma Gandhi told her about the possibility of obtaining female support in

the free movement. Her speech during 1917 All India Muslim League Conference inspired all the people of the Khilafat movement. Although the struggle for Independence continued, what he said to his son Maulana Mohammad Ali continued to resonate throughout India.

Annie Besant

Annie Besant, who was by birth an Irish lady, came to India in 1893. She is a pioneer of the Theosophical Society and has given another meaning by attending the Indian National Congress. She was an essential representative of women in Parliament and made an essential contribution to the development of women in India. Her contribution to the Hindu revival movement is recognized as a high honor. Despite her deep religious belief, she believed Hindu culture and religion were superior to the Western tradition. In her way, she tried to popularize Hinduism. Together with Maharishi Aurobindo’s, Bal Ganga Dar Tilak, and Swami Dayanand Saraswati, her name is associated with the revivalist movement of Hinduism. She remained the type of Hindu blindly following the West, regardless of the greatness of their heritage and spirituality. She transformed into a significant work organizer, strike pioneer, and reform after a short time. She was also connected with Indian nationalism and, in 1916, developed the Indian Home Rule League and promoted it to become president. She was detained in disobedience, starting a daily newspaper called “New India,” condemning British control. She founded various schools and colleges drawn in political and intelligence activities. The most basic was the Central Hindu University and Bararas School, which started in 1913. Her great charm and power combined with her eloquence and intelligence made Annie Besant a great orator and writer. One

of her most valuable capabilities was working continuously to benefit India.

Aruna Asaf Ali

Aruna Asaf Ali participated in many non-violent movements during Satyagraha and was soon arrested by the colonial authorities. The Gandhi-Irwin Treaty was signed in 1931, promising to release all those arrested during Satyagraha, but only when other female freedom fighters and Mahatma Gandhi protested strongly that Aruna Asaf Ali was released. After her release, she did not show any political activity, but at the end of 1942 became an active participant in the underground movement. The Indian National Assembly passed the Indian resolution on August 8, 1942. In response, the colonial government arrested the movement's prominent leaders for destroying the movement preventively. Despite the imprisonment of senior leaders and many party officials, Aruna Asaf Ali led other party members to unfold the Congress flag on the Maidan tank in Gowalia, Initiating the Quit India Movement. The police opened fire on the crowd, but Aruna resisted the threat. When protests and demonstrations broke out across the country, the lack of top leadership did not stop the wave of nationalism. An arrest warrant was issued in his name, but he evaded arrest and went into hiding. He edited the Congress Party magazine *Inqilab* and urged young people not to use passive activities to fight for Independence but to use positive actions.

Usha Mehta

Dr. Usha Mehta was a freedom fighter and a distinguished proponent of the Gandhian idea significantly younger. She took part in the protest against Simon's commission when she was just eight years old. She was inspired by using her father, who became a judge, and therefore,

she started her studies in regulation but left it in mid-manner to take part inside the freedom movement. The decision which was taken by her proved becomes a turning point of her lifestyle and career. In 1942, soon after the statement of the Quit India movement, the British officials arrested the significant leaders, which included Gandhi, to nip the uprising in the bud. However, the motion couldn't be stopped since the project to carry on the movement was entrusted to a collection of junior leaders and workers. These junior leaders were a hit in hoisting the national flag on August 9, 1942, at Gawalia tank ground in Mumbai, renamed August Kranti Maidan marking the commencement of the movement. To satisfy this challenge, she launched to advocate and unfold Gandhi's call and light a spark by using the slogan "to do or die" for complete Independence from British tyranny. She even turned imprisoned for four years on account of not disclosing any facts about the movement. She played a considerably critical position inside the quit India movement. Usha Mehta is known for walking a mystery Congress Radio at some stage in the freedom battle. She labored secretly with Babu Bhai Prasad and hooked up a secret Radio Transmitter. She was repressed through the British to disclose the names of her colleagues' names but refused to achieve this.

Vijay Lakshmi Pundit

Vijay Lakshmi Pandit was the first Indian woman appointed as a cabinet minister earlier than Independence. The enlightenment of the Queen of Jhansi, Lakshmi Bai, and the inspiration of Sarojini Naidu were particular influences on the princess. Her goal was to fight back against the British run the show through the Non-Co-activity Movement. In many international conferences, Vijay Lakshmi spoke on behalf of India. By doing so, she testified about the British

commanded delegate's right to speak to India in public. It is no wonder she was such a great fighter and part of so many freedom movements during her lifetime. She is actively participating in national movements to contribute to the cause. M. K. Gandhi greatly influenced her, and she joined the struggle for Independence. The British imprisoned her from 1932-1933, 1940-1942, and 1943-1943. She was elected to the Provincial legislature of the United Provinces. The United Province's representative elected her to the constituent assembly in 1946.

Dawn of Independence

India escaped British rule and became an independent state on August 15, 1947. It was indeed a historic day. Unfortunately, India's slavery, which began in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, was finally closed in 1947. After a long struggle, our dreams have taken shape. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the heroes of the ethnic struggle for their precious blood and many sacrifices. India always remembers her great son with gratitude and pride. Let's check here the supporting factors that have led India to its goal. The nation usually obtains freedom by force, not by begging. Freedom never rides on a silver platter and is taken from a disappointing hand. This is a unique event. Imperialist countries like England have agreed to renounce power without much bloodshed in world history. History cannot cite another example, when the country won its Independence in such a short period and non-violent way, even at many sacrifices.

Conclusion

The accounts of ladies' investment within the Indian opportunity battle solely decide on striking decisions, ending up within the city, prison, and organization. Indian ladies partook within the public opportunity development against the East

India Company before the principal battle of Independence (1857-58). They additionally added to the 1857 revolt and had a functioning job within the opportunity battle of 1905-1947. When most male political dissidents were in jail, the women assumed responsibility for the battle. After countless such endeavors, India accomplished Independence on the holy day of obligation, 1947. Many Indian ladies committed their lives to accumulate the chance of their homeland.

Notwithstanding their job, they didn't get merited mainstream rearrangement in Indian history within the opportunity battle. The peaceful development that acquired India her opportunity took ladies along further as it was reliant for its prosperity on the dynamic support of women. Maybe for the primary and therefore the only time in world history, the force of a robust worldwide realm on which the sun never set had been tested and overwhelmed by the great may of a bunch equipped just with harmony, thoughts, and grit. Thus, we ought to not fail to recollect their commitment to our country.

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