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GRT

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE: A HISTORICAL REVIEW



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ABSTRACT

Women of India have contributed immensely to the enrichment of the various parts of life of their country. Their role in the struggle for Indian freedom has been unique. The Indian national movement was undoubtedly one of the biggest mass movements modern society has ever seen. It was a movement galvanized million of people of all classes and ideologies in to political action and brought to its knees a mighty colonial empire, consequently, along with the British, French, Russian, Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions, it is a great relevance to those wishing to alert the existing political and social structure. "As a mass movement, the Indian national movement was able to tap the diverse energies, talent and capacities of the large variety of the people. It had a place for all old and young, rich and poor, woman and men the intellectuals and masses. The people participated in it in varied ways : from jail-going

satyagrah and picketing to participation in the public meetings and demonstrators, from going on hartals and strikes to cheating the jatha's of Congress Volunteers from the sidelines, from various for candidates in municipal, district, provincial and control election process to participate in the constructive programme.

KEYWORDS : Ideology, Revolution,



Position, Religion, Struggle, Organization, Satyagraha, Freedom, Independence.

INTRODUCTION:

Helena Dutta a Bengali revolutionary said "we were like caged tigers, in explaining how she and other girls her age leapt in to education and politics. Women more constructive from liberal homes and conservative families, the Urban centers and rural districts women – Single and Married, young and old come forward and joined in the struggle against the colonial rule"2 Women's involvement was most important, women participates called in to question the British right to rule legitimized the Indian

nationalist movement and not for activist women, at least for a theirs the approval of Indian men.

Politics completely altered the goal and activities of organized women. Education Social reforms and women's rights appealed to some progressive women, but the movement to rid the country of its foreign rulers attracted people from all communities and ideological persuasions Nationalist leaders deliberately cultivated linkages with peasants workers and women organizations to demonstrate mass support to their positions women were amazed to find political participation approved by the men who wanted their wives in the religion kept. "Man Mohini Zutshi Sahgal, a freedom fighter jailed in Lahore in 1930. In 1905 British partitioned the province of Bengal, women men in protesting this by getting foreign goods produced in the provinces of Bengal. After that Bengali women were gone their support to the revolutionary organization. The women from the various parts of the country were actively participated in the struggle for India.

In 1915 Gandhi returned to India as the hero of the South Africa Struggle. soon after his introduction to Bombay Society, he met women who belongs to Women's social reforms organizations. He was invited to talk to one of these group, Composed to middle class women, about the poverty of the masses. "He told his audience India needed leaders who were 'pure firm and self controlled' like the ancient heroines: Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi" 3 women were inspired by his valuable speech. When Gandhi began to develop a program for women on April 6, the day marked for general strike throughout India, he addressed meeting of 'ladies of all classes and communities to join the Satyagraha movement.

The non-co operation movement began with the members or the reformed council withdrawing from this council. The next step was to boycotted the low court and schools. Congress accepted this program me at a special session held on August 20, 1920. Congress declared April 6-13, 1921. Satyagraha week, and women interested in politics held meeting to show their support. At one of the several meeting which Sarojini Naidu addressed, woman decided to form their own political organization Rashtriya Stree Sangh an independent women organization. In the first agitations, Basanti devi, Urmila devi, Suniti devi were arrested. Mahatma Gandhi argued women from all pans of the country to follow the brave example of Bengali women. At the All-India ladies conference in Ahmadabad 6 women listened to B. Amma.

The entry of Mrs. Annie Besant in to Indian politics in 1914 accelerates the process of women's association with freedom struggle. To the Home Rule agitation between 1914 and 1917, women began to awake up to a realization of their exclusion from political movement Mrs. Besant maintained that the progress of Indian Independent of their emancipation. She was the first president of the Indian women's Association in 1917 and she also the first president of Indian National Congress at the first day of the congress session and Sarojini Naidu was the first Indian Women to make Politics her full time of, Gopal Krishna Gokhale was her political 'Guru' then Sarojini Naidu become a prominent leader in the for Indian Independent. The year 1930 began with pledge of Independence and in March, Gandhi opened the new Phase of Satyagrah by that he would break the salt law "Gandhi had Sarojini Naidu to lead the raid on Dharasana after he had Abhas Tayabji were arrested."

In Bombay, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Awantikabai Gokhale were among the first women to break the salt law. Kamaladevi recalls that on 6th April 1930 thousand of women strode down to the sea like proud warriors. But instead of weapon they bore pitchers of clay, brass and copper; and instead of Uniforms, the simple cotton saris of village India. One watched then fascinated and awestruck. How they broken their age old shall of open warfare? What had stirred their ancient quietude and turn then in to militant rebels? The women turned them in to a beautiful epic. When the police raided the Bombay Congress House where salt pans had been prepared, they found their way blocked by mr Parin Captain, Mrs Jamnaben Ratnaben and for other women volunteers. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay also stood by the police superintendent who politely asked her to move away she refused Kamaladevi, Sarojini Naidu, Haseena Mahalia, Jaishri Rajani, Maniben and others organized a process on 1st August on the death anniversary of Tilak. Since processors are banned in Bombay Fort area the police would not let them proceed, they sat

through the whole might in the open in purring rain. Hansa Mehta and others formed Desh Sevika Sangh 'which played an important role in organizing picketing in Bombay. Their picketing was so effective that government declared it illegal.

In Gujarat, where women's participation was perhaps the largest special classes were started in Sabarmati Ashram to train women Satyagrahis and sent to Belgaum Jail. The Rashtriya stress Sabha carried on an intensive propaganda for use of Swadeshi. Kasturba, Saraladevi Sarobai, Mridule Sarabai, Madumati Seth, Mithuben, Nandubev Kanunga, Khurshadben Naoroji were among the leaders in Ahmadabad.

Most of the women joined the freedom Struggle because were the man, they were inspired by patriotism and would to see end of British rule from their mother land. An important factor was family influence. Women from families such as those of Lala Lajpat Rai, naturally wanted to share the privations and suffering on their men folk. where the atmosphere at home was nationalistic, homes also imbibed it. "The general environment also favored women's participation in the struggle. Hansa Mehta and their women leaders were played active role for participation of women in Indian freedom struggle".⁵ Kasturba Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Nivedita, Madam Curie, Kamala Nehru, Mataji Chaudhari, Sucheta Kriplani, Vijaya laxmi Pandit, Pournima Banarji, Kamala Chaudhari and Begum Aizar Rasul, lila Ray, Begum Ikramulla, Usha Mehata, Hansa Mehta, Maulaben Patel, Kamala das Gupta, Prabhavati Devi, Kamala devi Chattopadhyay are the active leaders of women in various events in the Indian freedom struggle. Apart from this activist and wonders many of the women workers were actively participating in the freedom struggle.

CONCLUSION:

The Indian National Movement was based on an Immense faith in the capacity of the Indian people in Many sacrifice as a mass movement the Indian national movement was able to top the adverse energies, talent and capacity of the large variety of people. In the Indian history large number of men and women actively participated in the Indian freedom movement. Women organized there selves in to groups and were willing to join procreation to face police firing and go to jail. in the Non-cooperative movement, civil disobedience movement and quit India movement women were dearly participations and lend the movement. Mahatma Gandhi inspired them to involve the struggle for India. Young women and girls in their teens and women with children went to prison were dark, dirty places with dump air musty smell and bats hanging, they were confined in solitary cells and often interrogated for hours to make them confess the names and where about of their colleagues.

Indian women helped their own struggle for libration. In India, feminism and nationalism were enter-linked. As the national movement gained momentum, the goal of Independence became the only concern for the both the men and women antagonism characteristic of women's movement in the west. In India women were accepted s political comrades and given equal opportunities for participation in the Indian freedom struggle and they have a record of which they might well be proud.

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