



Role of women in Indian Freedom Struggle: An Analytical study

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ABSTRACT

History of the Indian freedom movement is would be incomplete without hard core efforts of many women freedom fighters. The forfeit made by the women's of India shall take precedence and remarkable. They face many challenges like exploitations and tortures to make India freedom. When the majority of the men freedom fighters were imprisoned, the women come forth to lead the battle. Many remarkable women whose names have gone down in the past for their unwavering perseverance to India's service are extensive. The current paper studies various women freedom fighters during independence, role of women in Indian freedom Struggle which helps to understand the impact of women freedom fighters in Indian independence and discusses the various women's movements during the independence India.

Keywords: Role of women, Women, freedom movement, Independence India

Introduction

India is a country defined by rituals, caste, gender inequity and the people's traditional natural instincts. Women groups and individuals seized the initiative and played a crucial role in India's independence struggle. Without their support, independence would have remained a pipe dream for many years. Women were kept inside the four walls of their home, unaware of the outside world, and females were not educated. However, things changed during Gandhi's time, when we saw massive women participation in India's freedom struggle, leading to the modern era. Women were victims of dowry death, domestic violence, honour killings, child marriage, open harassment of widows, and purdah system dominance. During the East India Company's control, social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule, and Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar faced several obstacles in their efforts to improve women's position and abolish the sati system in India. (Bhattacharya & Sachdev, 2021)

Many renowned female freedom warriors, such as Rani Lakshmi Bai, battled for India's independence. We can trace women's engagement in the war for freedom back to 1817, when Bhima Bai Holkar fought for her country's independence from the British, and Madam Bhaikaji Cama fought for her motherland's independence following the 1857 revolt. Women have made a huge contribution to the anti-imperialist movement. To deliver independence to India's people, women were subjected to tremendous suffering, poverty, and exploitation. The sacrifices made by women in the battle for independence are astounding and must be honoured. The role he played in many events such as the First War for Independence (1857-1858), the Jalianwalabagh Massacre (1919), the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920), Civil Disobedience, the Dandi March (1930), and the Quit India Movement (1942). Women from all walks of life, from educated and liberal households, from all castes, faith communities, and rural life joined together to fight for the liberation of their mother nation. However, only a few names are included in the books, despite the fact that over 100 women freedom warriors took part and devoted their lives in defence of their homeland. India, as a predominantly male-dominated country, has paid little attention to the important role performed by women. (Bhattacharya & Sachdev, 2021)

Objectives

1. To study the various women freedom fighters during independence.

2. To study role of women in Indian freedom movement.
3. To understand the impact of women's freedom fighters in Indian independence.

Review of literature

The study conducted by (Bhattacharya & Sachdev, 2021) on "Impactful role of women for freedom struggle in India and their contribution" explains the unspoken, unheard, and invisible truths about India's battle for independence. The contribution of Indian women freedom movement warriors to the struggle for independence. Everyone talks about how important the role of the male freedom warrior is. However, building an independent India would remain a pipe dream without the contributions of female liberation warriors. Many individuals are unaware of how they went from being second-class citizens, victims of domestic abuse, ignorant populations, and adherents of the sati system to becoming great liberation struggle leaders. From participating in the non-cooperation movement to performing saytagraha, promoting Khadi, and picketing liquor stores, Indian women have played an important role in this journey. Usha Mehta, Rajkumari Gupta, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rani Lakshmbai of Jhansi, Rani Gaidinliu, Amal Prabha Das, Azizam Bai, Gulam Kaur, and Sarojini Naidu were among the many women who contributed significantly to India's independence from British control. Their contributions to the independence movement are important and well-received.

A research article on "Role of women in Indian Freedom Movement" by (Rani, 2020) briefs by highlighting women's contributions, the history of India's liberation movement would be incomplete. The sacrifices made by women in India's new line will take precedence. The tale of the sacrifice, selflessness, and bravery of women may be found throughout the history of the independence movement. Many of us are unaware of the hundreds of women who fought alongside their male colleagues. They battled with zeal and unwavering courage. Indian women broke free from a variety of constraints and stepped away from their customary domestic duties and obligations. As a result, women's engagement in the independence struggle and national awakening is truly remarkable and commendable. However, in a male-dominated culture, it is difficult for women to fight as warriors. Despite the fact that females attempted to influence the perceptions of such traditionalists who believed women were exclusively intended to do domestic duties. Furthermore, ladies not only put their lives on the line, but they actively fight against such situations. Rani Laxmi Bai was one of those women who defied all barriers to fight against the British, and so this paper aims to showcase the legacy that women have left in history by demonstrating their strong character.

A journal article by (Mushtaq, 2020) without highlighting the contributions of women to the Indian Freedom Struggle, the history of the Indian Freedom Movement will not be completed. The sacrifices done by the women of India shall take precedence. They battled with unwavering fortitude and bravery in the face of different tortures, exploitations, and sufferings in order to secure our independence. When the majority of the men freedom fighters were imprisoned, the women come forth to lead the battle. The bunch of remarkable women whose identities have gone down in the past for their unwavering perseverance to India's service is extensive.

The study conducted by (Singh, 2014) on "Role of Women in India's Struggle for Freedom" This article discusses the Indian Freedom Struggle and the role of Indian women in the struggle for independence. The article discusses the role of Punjabi women in the nationalist struggle from 1901 to 1910, 1911 to 1920, 1921 to 1930, 1931 to 1940, and 1941 to 1947. In the years 1901-10, political changes in Bengal impacted Punjabi women, and few women expressed compassion for Bengali people. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and, as a result, the martial law of 1919 worked as a catalyst for raising females' awareness of the need to struggle for India's independence. Then, in 1920, these woman victims and supportive women rushed right into the Non-Cooperation movement. Girls from Punjab were directly involved in the liberation fight from 1921 to 1930, and these ladies came into touch with M.K. Gandhi. The decade 1931-40 was marked by direct action, as women in the Punjab area did not stay at home and were engaged in defying the government by emulating Gandhi's nonviolent methods from 1930 to 1934. Between 1941 and 1947, the women of Punjab province stepped forth and fought alongside males, suffering the same repercussions as the men. These revolutionary women were so engrossed in the battle that they ignored or ignored gender concerns until independence was attained, and after independence was secured in 1947, the women of Punjab were awarded credit for their acts.

The research article on "Role of Women in India's Struggle for Freedom" by (Kaur, 2013) During the time of independence Women were not relegated to the back of the line in the motherland's struggle. Women had an important role in the liberation struggle, and they also took part in the Indian struggle for independence. The women in the brigade were confident that the same preparation was provided to males as well. Even still, their uniforms were equivalent to those worn by men fighters. The list of amazing women whose names will go down in history for their unwavering commitment to the liberation movement in India. Bhima Bai Holkar battled British Colonel Malcolm in guerilla warfare and beat him. Jhansi's Rani Rani Lakshmi Bai, whose bravery set an example for all Indian independence fighters! It has been born! Begum Hazrat Mahal was a prominent Indian freedom warrior who was instrumental in the country's first war of independence. In the Quit India Movement, Arun Asaf Ali played a pivotal role. Annie Besant was the first woman to serve as President of the Congress, and she was a major leader in the Indian women's movement. India eventually gained independence on August 15, 1947, after a century of revolutions, bloodshed, Sathyagrahas, and

sacrifices. Future generations of women freedom warriors will be grateful. The Indian National Congress has elected Sarojani Naidu as its president. She was an outspoken supporter of the Montague Chelmsford Reforms, the Khilafat problem, the draconian Rowlett Act, and the Satyagraha. Kasturba Gandhi was a woman's Satyagrah leader. In 1907, at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart, Germany, Madam Cama unfurled the first national flag. "The Indian Flag," she stated.

Methodology

The relevant data is collected from secondary sources like various research articles, books, journals and internet sources.

Women freedom fighters of India:

Several thousand women's have been participated in Indian freedom movement it is difficult to list out their contribution to the independent India. Listed below are few important freedom fighters of Indian freedom movement.

Bhima Bai Holkar (1795-1858)

In 1817, Bhima Bai Holkar engaged in guerilla warfare with British Colonel Malcolm and defeated him. At a crucial time for our country, when the British East India Company was rapidly expanding its realm in India, when Tipu Sultan was massacred (1799), and the Marathas were defeated (1815), Chennamma, the widowed ruler of Raja Malla Sarja, defied British ruses to add her kingdom Kittur, a small territory in what is now the Belgaum District of Karnataka. She fought a powerful British military force and earned her first accomplishment. (Mushtaq, 2020)

Rani Lakshmi Bai (1828-1858)

Jhansi's Rani Rani Lakshmi Bai, whose bravery and exceptional leadership set a high standard for all subsequent generations of female liberation warriors. Married to Gangadhar Rao, the state of Jhansi's chief minister. The British forbade her from adopting a successor after his death, and Jhansi was annexed. She became resolved to fight back when the Revolt broke out. She used to dress up as a guy and go into war. She wielded the blade with both hands while holding the reins of their horse in her teeth. Under her command, the Rani's warriors displayed unwavering courage and fought back shot for shot.

The British considered him to be the greatest and bravest military leader of the rebels, and he died a hero's death on the battlefield. The first person who springs to mind is Jhansi's famed Rani Lakshmi Bai. She led her forces to fight against the British while dressed in men's clothing. Even her foes loved her bravery and boldness. She battled heroically and, while being defeated, refused to submit and died like a warrior should, battling the enemy till the end. Her incredible bravery motivated many men and women to battle the enemy to the last end. Her incredible bravery encouraged many Indian men and women to rise up against foreign domination. (Venkatraman, 2017)

Sarjoni Naidu (1879-1949)

She is known as India's Nightingale, a notable poet, extraordinary independence warrior, and orator. She was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1925 after crusading for the Khilafat and the Quiz India movements. Around 1917, she became a renowned Nationalist. In 1925, she was the company's second female president. During the 1905 protests against the partition of Bengal, she became involved in the national movement. She was one among the women protestors at the Dharsana salt works during the Salt Satyagraha. She was imprisoned for playing a key part in civil disobedience. She was arrested in 1942 during the "Quit India" agitation. She travelled around India giving talks about women's empowerment and patriotism. She was also involved in the creation of the Women's India Association and accompanied a delegation of women's voting rights to London. (Rani, 2020)

Annie Besant (1847-1933)

Annie Besant, an Irish woman who founded the Theosophical Society, became a member of the Indian National Congress and gave it a new direction. She was the congress's major female leader and a pivotal figure in India's women's movement. She quickly rose through the ranks to become the principal work coordinator, strike leader, and reformer. She became involved with Indian nationalism as well, and in 1916 founded the Indian Home Rule League, which she rose to become President of. She started "New India," a daily newspaper that opposed British rule and was imprisoned for insurrection. She became involved in political and educational activities, founding a number of schools and institutions, the most important of which was the Central Hindu College and School in Banaras, which she founded in 1913. (Mushtaq, 2020)

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1903-1988)

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was a freedom warrior, actress, social activist, art aficionado, politician, and feminist all wrapped into one, but her contributions to Indian culture are hardly recognised and she is nearly unknown outside India. Most Indians, however, know Kamaladevi as a lady who revitalised Indian handicrafts and fostered the bulk of the country's national institutions dedicated to the development of dance, theatre, art, theatre, music, and puppetry. Kamaladevi also played an important role in the worldwide socialist feminist movement. Kamaladevi served as an envoy for Indian women and political freedom from the late 1920s through the 1940s and beyond. She also pushed for transnational issues such as racism and international political and economic fairness. In Berlin in 1929, she also attended the International Alliance of Women. (who is kamadevi chattopadhyay, 2022)

Kamala Nehru (1899-1936)

Jawaharlal Nehru's wife, Kamala Nehru, aided her husband in his desire to contribute successfully to the liberation cause. She organised demonstrations, attended rallies, and drove picketing of alcohol and distant fabric stores near the Nehru main house in Allahabad. She played a significant role in organising the United Provinces No Tax Campaign (now Uttar Pradesh). She organised women's assemblies in Allahabad during the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921 and promoted the use of Khadi fabrics. When her significant other was apprehended, she went to his location to read it to prevent him from delivering a "rebellious public talk." British experts apprehended her twice. (Mushtaq, 2020)

Kasturba Gandhi (1869-1944)

Mahatma Gandhi's wife, Kasturba Gandhi, accompanied her husband in South Africa and worked with him for many years. She was imprisoned for her role as a leader of women's Satyagraha. In the cases of the Indigo worker in Champaran, Bihar, and the No Tax Campaign in Kaira, Gujarat, she assisted her husband. She was detained twice, first for picketing liquor stores and another for participating in the Rajkot Satyagraha in 1939. (Kaur, 2013)

Aruna Asaf Ali (1909-1996)

Aruna Asaf Ali, an outspoken nationalist, played a pivotal role in Mahatma Gandhi's historic Quit India Movement, which began on August 9, 1942, and was a forerunner of the underground movement. She disseminated releases, moved from place to place, and even saw Mahatma Gandhi while avoiding being apprehended. She tampered with an Indian National Congress month-to-month journal kept by Inqilab. (Mushtaq, 2020)

Vijay Lakshmi Pandit (1990-1999)

Vijay Lakshmi Pandit is the daughter of Motilal Nehru, the head of Congress and brother of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi influenced her, and Sarojini Naidu impressed her. She joined the Non-Cooperation Movement in order to protest British control. Vijay Lakshmi has represented India in a number of international conferences. She attended a number of public talks and questioned the rights of the British-dominated delegates to represent India. She was a fierce combatant who participated in several independence movements. She was caught in 1932 and condemned to a year of hard labour. She was arrested twice: once in 1940 and again in 1942 during the Quit India Movement. (Kaur, 2013)

Savitri Bai Phule (1831-1897)

She is regarded as an early feminist who opposed child marriage and stood against caste and gender discrimination. She founded the first women's school at Bhida Wade in Pune in 1848, she recognised the untouchables and opened a home to help young widows, and she worked to transform the lives of widows and eradicate child marriage. (Bhattacharya & Sachdev, 2021)

Begam Hazrat Mahal (1820-1879)

Begam Hazrat Mahal was a prominent Indian freedom warrior who was instrumental in the country's first war of independence. She was also known as the Begum of Awadh and the wife of Lucknow's ruler, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. She rallied a group of her supporters against the British and even took control of Lucknow. She collaborated closely with other leaders of India's First War of Independence, such as Nana Sahib. Begum was not just a thinker, but a combatant as well. She was forced to flee when British soldiers recaptured Lucknow and a large portion of Awadh. When her armies were defeated, she escaped Awadh and reorganised her army elsewhere. The British overlords offered her pardon and benefits, but she refused them down. Finally, she sought sanctuary in a Nepalese asylum, where she died in 1879. On May 10, 1984, the Indian government released a stamp to honor her unwavering efforts in the battle for the country's independence. (Kaur, 2013)

Indira Gandhi (1917-1984)

In modern India, she is a wonderful woman. In 1938, she was elected to the Indian National Congress. With India's independence in 1947, she began a new career of public service. She assumed responsible for overseeing the Prime Minister's residence. She fought relentlessly for minorities' social and economic growth. She envisioned a contemporary, self-sustaining, and dynamic economy. She resisted communalism, revivalism, and religious extremism in all forms with zeal and tenacity. She became an indestructible emblem of India's self-assurance. (Rani, 2020)

Conclusion

India gained independence on August 15, 1947, after many centuries of revolutions, struggle, bloodshed, Satyagrahas, and sacrifices. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and all the other heroic sons and daughters of India battled side by side to drive the British out of India. Perhaps for the first and only time in world history, the moral force of a people armed solely with peace, principles, and bravery had challenged and defeated the supremacy of a huge global empire "on which the sun never set." During this period men and women struggled equally in order to save their territories and in order make India free from British. Even

though women facing tough socio-cultural customs many women's break that stereotype cultures and come forward and witnessed many social changes and made India independent.

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