

UNHEARD VOICES

14 AUGUST 2022 | Year 2 | Vol. 5

CONGRATULATIONS INDIA



“

To save India from any future crisis, the basic requisite is unity. Unity cannot be achieved without equality. It is responsibility of all Indians to brush aside all narrow considerations and give up any kind of discrimination. It is the responsibility and duty of each Indian to think and act to demonstrate unequivocally that all Indians are equal and we have a deep sense of oneness.

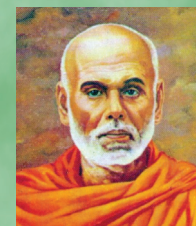
”



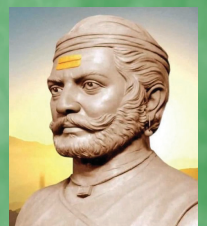
19th August
Sant Dyaneshwar
Birth Anniversary



20th August
Jaharveer Gogadev
Birth Anniversary



20th August
Sant Narayan Guru
Birth Anniversary



7th Sept
Umaji Naik
Birth Anniversary



Congratulations India!

It is a historic moment for India when it is celebrating 75th anniversary of its independence. Notwithstanding all the objections and criticism, which are mainly political in nature, we must accept the reality that India is growing strong and advancing despite several hurdles. Some of the obstacles are internal while others are external. India's success story is more laudable in sharp contrast to the countries which obtained freedom after the second world war along with us. We are witnessing the situation in those countries. All the Indians deserve to be congratulated. Nation is not a geographical concept but it is essentially known by the people. And the people are not merely moving bodies but they are live examples of their character, nature, virtues, ideas, emotions and philosophy. Indian success story needs to be viewed in this context. The success of India can be easily attributed to Indian temperament or mind set, which is fundamentally democratic, tolerant and open for new changes.

The outstanding feature of the Indian freedom movement is that it was a struggle for self-hood. It was not merely a political movement but encompasses all walks of national life. The Indian freedom movement was not restricted to getting freedom from colonial British rule but it was also mainly cultural, economic and social. The British never had mere commercial interests in India. They were equally interested in cultural and religious expansionism. British political rule went hand in hand with establishing their religious and cultural values in this land. Education system stands as an example in this regard. Objective of British rule was to weaken India. Their objective was to attack Indian oneness. To achieve this, British rule employed all the methods. Partition of India stands as a testimony of their strategy. But India overcame all the obstructions and gained freedom.

Struggle for liberation from British rule is a golden period for India as it brought a new awakening in this ancient civilization. India would have never achieved freedom if crores of Indians would not have participated or supported it. Credit for Indian freedom

goes to all these known and unknown people. Freedom movement brought new enlightenment among deprived people. It awakened Dalits, tribals and women, who are always considered as oppressed.

The August issue of Unheard Voices is an attempt to remind our readers of the contribution of freedom fighters from deprived class. Their contribution and role in the freedom struggle remained neglected for some reasons. By recognising their contribution, we are honestly trying to express our deep gratitude for them.

India is standing at a threshold. We have internal as well as external challenges. To save India from any future crisis, the basic requisite is unity. Unity cannot be achieved without equality. It is responsibility of all Indians to brush aside all narrow considerations and give up any kind of discrimination. It is the responsibility and duty of each Indian to think and act to demonstrate unequivocally that all Indians are equal and we have a deep sense of oneness.

This is challenging but the beginning begins from self. Let's go into self-introspection mode. It is a long way to achieve equality and fraternity but the situation is conducive to accelerate the process of change. We, surely, have some strong positive signs of big transformation. This can be experienced among the people across the country. It was a big historic moment to watch Ramnath Kovind handing over the baton to Droupadi Murmu, a tribal woman. Ramnath Kovind hails from Dalit community. Let us give up all the narrow considerations, which pushed us in slavery. They said that eternal vigilance is the price of democracy. Let us be vigilant as equality and fraternity can be achieved only in free democracy.

Dr. Ambedkar rightly said, "Freedom of mind is real freedom. A person whose mind is not free though he may not be in chains, is a slave, not a free man. One whose mind is not free, though he may not be in prison, is a prisoner and not a free man. One whose mind is not free though alive, is no better than dead. Freedom of mind is the proof of one's existence."

For feedback please click the below link : <https://forms.gle/XWQ19k9xC1CyNr6e7>

'Unheard Voices' monthly publication is owned by Social Studies Foundation, Printed and Published by Hari Sowani, Printed at Sanwad Trade Prints, Gowaikar Bldg, 595, Shaniwar Peth, Pune- 411030 and Published at 1196, Sadashiv Peth, Pune- 411030.

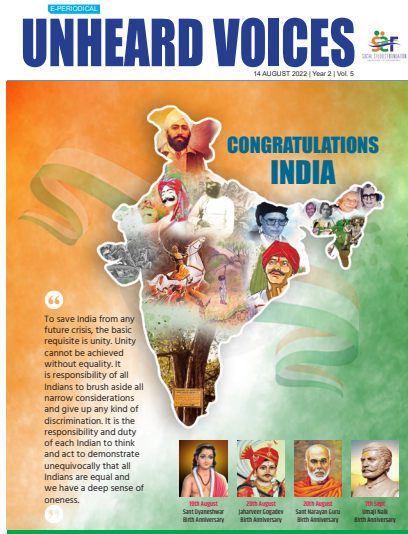
Editor : Vijendra Sonawane

Advisory Editorial Board : Dr. Aditi Narayani Paswan, Edward Mendhe, Prakash Raj

Disclaimer : The views expressed in the periodical are personal views of the author.

The editor & publisher may not agree to it.

CONTENTS



04 First Presidential address of Hon. Droupadi Murmu

07 12-year-old boy refused to obey and got killed

09 Role of Assam women in freedom struggle

12 Rani Gaidinliu and her underground life

15 Jhalkari Bai : the heroine of Jhansi

17 Ramji Gond : An unsung tribal warrior

19 Role of scheduled castes of Gujarat in freedom struggle

21 Rooplo Kolhi's supreme sacrifice for independence

23 Small organizations Big contribution

26 "I shall re-born in India"

28 Gangadin valmiki : martyred giant hero of 1857 revolt

29 Sankissa : Where the Lord descended from heavens

Appeal for financial assistance



Social Studies Foundation (SSF) is working with the prime objective of conducting social studies and research of the society in a multi-disciplinary fashion. SSF focus, however, is on those people, who have been facing discrimination and are deprived of benefits of the development and democratic process. SSF logo, thus says, "Knowledge for Empowerment".

"UNHEARD VOICES" is a small step in this direction. It provides a platform to all those people, who have to be listened to by the Indian citizens to make this country united and integral. We will raise the voice of these people fearlessly. Social Studies Foundation has currently a small set-up to carry out its objectives. We, however, need financial support from our well-wishers, who agree with our objectives. We appeal to the readers and well-wishers to donate generously to the foundation.

CIT EXEMPTION, PUNE/80G/2020-21/A/10158

Please contact : 9699644930, (020)29526979
or mail us to : uv@unheardvoices.co.in

For feedback please click the below link :
<https://forms.gle/XWQ19k9xC1CyNr6e7>



First Presidential address of Hon. Droupadi Murmu



Growth and progress mean continuously marching ahead, but equally important is awareness about one's past. Today, when the world is talking about a sustainable planet, the role of India's ancient traditions and sustainable lifestyle becomes more important. I was born in that tribal tradition which has lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years. I have realized the importance of forests and water bodies in my life. We take necessary resources from nature and serve nature with equal reverence. This sensitivity has become a global imperative today. I am happy that India is guiding the world in the field of environmental protection.

Johar!
Namaskar!

I express my heartfelt gratitude to all Members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies for electing me to the highest Constitutional post of India. Your vote for me is an expression of the faith of crores of citizens of the country. I humbly greet all the fellow citizens from this sacred Parliament, a symbol of the hopes, aspirations and rights of all the citizens of India. Your affection, trust and support will be my greatest strength in discharging my functions and responsibilities.

The country has elected me as the President at a crucial time when we are celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit

Mahotsav'. A few days from today, the country will complete 75 years of its independence. It is also a coincidence that my political career started when the country was celebrating its 50th year of independence. And today, in the 75th year of independence, I have been assigned this new responsibility.

It is my great privilege to be given this responsibility at such a historic time when India is engaged with full vigour in realising its vision for the next 25 years. I also happen to be the first President of the country who was born in independent India. We have to work at a fast pace in this Amritkal to fulfil the expectations of our freedom fighters from the citizens of independent India.



In these 25 years, the path to attain the goals of Amritkal will proceed on two tracks – Sabka Prayas aur Sabka Kartavya. The new development journey towards the bright future of India has to be undertaken by our collective efforts, following the path of duty.

We will be observing Kargil Vijay Diwas tomorrow i.e. July 26th. This day is a symbol of both-the bravery and restraint of the Indian armed forces. Today, I extend my best wishes in advance to the armed forces of the country and to all the citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I started my journey of life from a small tribal village in Odisha in the eastern part of the country. From the background that I come from, it was like a dream for me to get elementary education. But despite many obstacles, my determination remained strong and I became the first daughter of my village to go to college. I belong to a tribal society. I have got the opportunity to rise from serving as a ward councillor to becoming the President of India. This is the greatness of India, the mother of democracy. It is a tribute to the power of our democracy that a daughter born in a poor house in a remote tribal area can reach the highest constitutional position in India.

That I attained the post of President is not my personal achievement, it is the achievement of every poor person in India. My election is proof of the fact that the poor in India can have dreams and fulfil them too. And it is a matter of great satisfaction for me that those who have been deprived for centuries and those who have been denied the benefits of development, those poor, downtrodden, backwards and tribals are seeing their reflection in me.

This election of mine has the blessings of the poor of the country. And it reflects the dreams and potential of crores of women and daughters of the country. This election of mine also shows the courage of today's youth of India who is ready to walk on new paths and shun the beaten tracks. Today I feel proud to lead such a progressive India. Today, I assure all fellow citizens, especially youth of India and the women of India that their interests will be paramount for me while working in this position.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before me is such a great legacy of the Presidency of India which has continuously strengthened the prestige of Indian democracy in the world. From the country's first President Dr. Rajendra Prasad to Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji, stalwarts have adorned this post. Along with this post, the country has also entrusted me with the responsibility of representing this great tradition. In the light of the Constitution, I will discharge my duties with utmost sincerity. For me, the democratic-cultural ideals of India and all the citizens will always be my source of energy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our freedom struggle had prepared the roadmap for India's new journey as a nation. Our freedom struggle was a continuous stream of those struggles

and sacrifices which had nurtured so many ideals and possibilities for independent India. Pujya Bapu had resorted to Swaraj, Swadeshi, Swachhta and Satyagraha to show us the way for realising Indian cultural ideals. Countless personalities like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Nehru ji, Sardar Patel, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru and Chandrashekhar Azad had taught us to keep national pride as paramount. Many brave women icons like Rani Lakshmi Bai, Rani Velu Nachiyar, Rani Gaidinliu and Rani Chennamma had taken to new heights the role of women power in defending and building the nation.

From Santhal revolution, Paika revolution to Kol revolution and Bhil revolution, all these revolutions had strengthened the tribal contribution in the freedom struggle. We derived inspiration from the sacrifice of Dharti Aaba, Bhagwan Birsa Munda Ji for social upliftment and patriotism. I am happy that many museums are being built across the country dedicated to the role of the tribal communities in our freedom struggle.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 75 years as a parliamentary democracy, India has carried forward the resolve of progress through participation and consensus. In our country full of diversities, we are engaged in the making of Ek Bharat - Shreshtha Bharat by adopting many languages, religions, sects, food habits, lifestyles and customs. This Amritkaal, which commences with the 75th year of our independence, is a period of new resolutions

for India. Today I see my country inspired and ready to welcome this new era with new thinking. Today India is adding a new chapter of development in every field. The kind of capability that India has shown in combating the global crisis of the Corona pandemic has enhanced India's credibility all over the world.

We Indians not only faced this global challenge with our efforts but also set new standards for the world. Just a few days ago, India set a record of administering 200 crore doses of corona vaccine. The patience, courage and cooperation shown by the people of India in this entire battle is a symbol of our growing strength and sensitivity as a society. India not only took care of itself in these difficult situations but also helped the world. In the atmosphere created by the Corona pandemic, today the world is looking at India with a new confidence. The international community has high hopes from India for ensuring global economic stability, ease of supply chain and peace.

In the coming months, India is also going to host the G-20 Group under its chairmanship. In this grouping, twenty big countries of the world will brainstorm on global issues under the chairmanship of India. I am sure that the conclusions and policies that will emerge from this brainstorming in India will determine the direction of the coming decades.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Decades ago, I had the opportunity to work as a



teacher at Sri Aurobindo Integral School in Rairangpur. After a few days, we will observe the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's thoughts on education continue to inspire me. I have had an active association with educational institutions, serving in various positions as a public representative and then as a Governor.

I have closely observed the enthusiasm and self-confidence of the youth of the country. Our revered Atalji used to say that when the youth of the country progress, they not only create their own destiny but also shape the fate of the country. Today we are witnessing it come true. Moving ahead in every field - from 'Vocal for Local' to 'Digital India' - today's India, marching in step with the world, is all set for "Industrial Revolution Four Point. The youth of India have a big role in creating a record number of start-ups, in numerous innovations and in the adoption of digital technology in far flung areas. In the past few years, a new energy has been infused in the country due to the decisions taken and policies formulated for women empowerment. I want all our sisters and daughters to be empowered more and more so that they continue to increase their contribution in every field of nation building. I want to tell the youth of our country that you are not only building your own future but also laying the foundation of the India of the future. As the President of the country, I will always extend my full cooperation to you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Growth and progress mean continuously marching ahead, but equally important is awareness about one's past. Today, when the world is talking about sustainable planet, the role of India's ancient traditions and sustainable lifestyle becomes more important. I was born in that tribal tradition which has lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years. I have realized the importance of forests and water bodies in my life. We take necessary resources from nature and serve nature with equal reverence. This sensitivity has become a global imperative today. I am happy that India is guiding the world in the field of environmental protection.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my life so far, I have realised the meaning of life only through public service. There is a line from the poem of Bhim Bhoi Ji, a famous poet of Shri Jagannath Kshetra- "Mo Jeeban pachhe narke padi thau, jagato uddhar heu". That is, working for the welfare of the world is far greater than one's own interests. With this spirit of welfare of the world, I will always be ready to work with full devotion and dedication to live up to the trust you all have reposed in me. Let us all unite and move forward on the path of duty with a dedicated spirit to build a glorious and self-reliant India.

Thank you, Jai Hind!

The Verbatim speech of President Droupadi Murmu after her swearing in ceremony



The country has been, slowly but surely, realising the dreams of Dr. Ambedkar.

We must accept that, although much has been achieved yet so much more remains to be done to raise the living standards of the marginalized. The country has been, slowly but surely, realising the dreams of Dr. Ambedkar. I grew up in a mud house, but far fewer children have to live in thatched houses with leaking roofs now. More and more of the poor people have been shifting to pucca houses, partly with the direct support from the government. Our sisters and daughters walking miles to fetch drinking water is becoming a thing of the past, because it is our endeavour that every house gets water from the tap. We have also installed toilets in every house, which are

laying the foundation for building a clean and healthy India. Memories of lighting up lanterns and diyas after sunset are also fading as almost all villages have finally been provided with electricity connections.

I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to Smt. Droupadi Murmu who has been elected to the post of the President of India. Her election to the highest constitutional post is going to strengthen the cause of women empowerment and infuse ambition among the struggling segments of society. I am sure that her experience, wisdom and personal ideals will inspire and guide the entire nation.

From Ramnath Kovind's farewell speech.



Baji Rout, resident of Dhenkanal district of Odisha, is an inspiration as he became martyr when he was only 12-years-old. Baji Rout refused to ferry British soldiers, despite being thretned. Angry British soldiers mercilessly killed Baji Rout. The incident took place in 1938.



12-year-old boy refused to obey and got killed

Dr. Nirmal



October 11 is an unforgettable day in the history of India as it was on this date Baji Rout, a 12-year-old ferry boy from Odisha, was brutally killed by the British soldiers for refusing the British soldiers to ferry in his boat. The death that shook the nation and added fuel to the ongoing freedom struggle

made Baji Rout the youngest martyr of the freedom struggle in India. Baji Rout is quite unknown outside Odisha. But he is the youngest freedom fighter/martyr of our country. Nilakahthapur, a river-side village of Brahmani River in Bhuban of Dhenkanal district, where the teenage hero of freedom movement Baji Rout

was born in 1926. His childhood days were not so happy and joyful.

Unfortunately he lost his father Hari Rout very early in his childhood. He was brought up by his mother who used to do a rice-husking job in the neighborhood village. This 12-year-old boat boy was shot dead by British police when he courageously denied ferrying them across the River Brahman on the night of 11th



12 वर्षीय अमर शहीद बाजी राउत के बारे में,
उड़िया कवि कालिंदी चरण पाणिग्रही ने
अपनी एक कविता में लिखा है—
“आओ लछन, आओ नट, रघु, हुरसी प्रधान
बजाओ तुरी, बजाओ बिगुल,
मरा नहीं है, मरा नहीं है
बारह साल का बाजिया मरा नहीं है”

October 1938 at Nilakanthpur Ghats (Bhuban, Dhenkanal district). The cruelty of the then king of Dhenkanal Shankar Pratap Singhdeo was at the peak. Taxes had levied on the poor villagers and the soldiers of the king used to snatch the incomes of poor villagers. The people under his rule were looking for the end of this merciless ruling. It led to the Prajamandal Agitation under the leadership of Baishnav Charan Pattanayak. Baji Rout joined this revolt despite his tender age. British Police and the armed forces of the King were in search of Baishnav Charan Pattanayak. They had attacked the Bhuban village several times in search of him. It was around 8 pm on October 10, 1938, they attacked the village once again. They used all the means of torture and brutality on the public to reveal the information regarding Baishnav but all went in vain. They arrested some persons and took them to jail. But Prajamandal woke up and protested against this arrest. The soldiers opened fire at the agitators immediately to disperse them and killed two people named Raghu Naik and Quri Naik. The British forces arbitrarily arrested some people of Bhuban village and took them to the Bhuban Police station. Protesting against this injustice,

leaders of the Prajamandal gheraoed the police station, demanding immediate release of the arrested people.

However, after this incident the forces thought their life was in danger and tried to flee away. They wanted to go to Dhenkanal via Nilakanthpur Ghats, which was the shortest route. On the wee hours of the raining night of 11th October 1938, they reached Nilakanthpur Ghats of Bhamani River. They ordered Baji Rout, who was on guard of a country boat at that time. He was ordered by the troops to ferry them across the River Brahamani immediately. Baji, who had already heard details of the brutality of the troops, understood that if the British troops were to be obstructed, then they needed to be stopped from going across to the other bank. Instead of ferrying them, he started shouting and tried to warn the villagers about the presence of the troops. Despite their threat, the boy strongly refused to obey their order. The troop threatened to kill him if he did not ferry them across immediately. Baji however rejected their orders again.

One of the British soldiers hit Baji Rout's head with his gun but that fractured his skull severely. He collapsed, but he

rose again gathering whatever little strength and courage was left with him, and raising his voice to the highest pitch beyond even his strength, refused to ferry the British troops till he was alive. A soldier pierced his bayonet into the soft skull of the brave boy even as another started firing ruthlessly. While one of the bullets hit Baji and he lay dead, his other friends Laxman Malik, Fagu Sahoo, Hrushu Pradhan and Nata Malik were also killed. The incident shocked the entire nation. People from within and outside the state lauded the supreme sacrifice of the brave martyr. The funeral procession of Shaheed Baji Rout started from his native village of Nilakanthpur to Khan Nagar in Cuttack. At the very teen age of playing, Baji Rout has sacrificed his life for the nation. History doesn't tell much about him. But his patriotism and love for his country has made him a martyr at the age of 12 years in the freedom struggle of India. He is mentioned in the who's who of Indian martyrs being published by the Government of India. However the young martyr definitely deserves more.

*Author is Academic Counsellor
at IGNOU study centre Shyam
Lal College, Delhi University.
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Role of Assam women in freedom struggle

The Freedom Struggle led by women was not only limited to pushing back the Britishers but was a fight for their own emancipation, their share of the free nation called India wherein each woman would lead with her independent political beliefs and be empowered in her own right. Having been historically silenced and subjugated, Assamese women and by that example, Indian women, broke all such pre-existing notions and showed one and all that they are more than mere daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers in the lives of Indian men.

Ria



Assam, the state lying to the far east of India was increasingly drawn to the national mainstream in 1921 with the development of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee (APCC). Gandhiji's leadership of the Congress in 1920 and call for the non-cooperation movement drew a large number of men and women throughout the country to the national struggle for freedom. In 1921 Gandhiji visited Assam. It had an electrifying effect on the people of Assam. When Krishna Barua, a Congress worker of Guwahati was arrested, his mother came out to the street and began to tour village after village to spread the message of non-cooperation, considerably the first mouthpiece of Gandhiji's message.

During this period, Assamese women participated

in the movement by contributing their time and efforts to the Assam Chhatra Sanmilan (Assam Student Association) and the Assam Sahitya Sabha (Assam Literary Society) till the formation of the Assam Mahila Samiti (Assam Women Association) in 1926 which became a provincial women association. Some women, mostly from the urban districts and typically belonging to the families of Congress leaders and workers, came forward to take up organizational and publicity work with the rural women. Among these women were Hemanta Kumari Devi Bordoloi, Nalinibala Devi, Bijuli Phukan, Rajabala Das, Sumitra Bhattacharya, Kiranmayee Agarwalla and many more.

When Gandhiji visited Assam, Bar Raja, a native woman, had garlanded him with a finely woven, hand-spun cloth, prompting him to remark upon the gesture "Assam will soar to its full potential in all



that is Swadeshi. Its women can weave much more than enough for themselves." In a meeting held on August 18, 1921, in Guwahati, Gandhiji had appealed to the masses to boycott foreign goods and at the end of the meeting, proposed to light a bonfire to discard the foreign clothes. A large number of women participated in this boycott of foreign goods, including opium and alcohol.

Unique struggles of the women of Assam:

Tea garden workers were brought to the tea plantations of Assam as indentured labourers. Thousands of those recruited as labourers died of diseases and those who tried to flee were killed. Though they were neglected, several persons from among the tribal workers' community participated actively in the Indian Independence movement. Malati Mem alias "Mangri" Oraon of Tezpur Ghogara became the first ever woman martyr of Assam in 1921. She was one of the leading members of the anti-opium campaign in tea gardens and was killed by government supporters at Lalmati in Darrang district in a prohibition campaign as part of the non-cooperation movement. Another fighter woman, Dariki Dasi Baruah, an anti-opium worker of Golaghat

On 20 September 1942, the Bahini decided that they would hoist the national flag at the local police station. Undeterred by the police, the procession continued marching and Barua was fatally shot and the flag was taken up by Mukunda Kakoti who was shot too. Thunuki Das, Jaluki Kachariani, Golapi Chutiani and Kon Chutiani from Dhekiajuli were actively involved in the September 20, 1942 movement in Dhekiajuli.

was arrested on February 1, 1932, for taking an active part in an anti-opium picketing programme during the Civil Disobedience movement. She happened to be in an advanced stage of pregnancy during the time of her arrest and during her jail time, she suffered from dysentery and finally breathed her last due to a miscarriage.

The Second phase of Gandhi's Freedom Struggle in Assam:

During the period of Civil Disobedience movement in 1930, some girl students of Assam decided to establish a revolutionary organization called the 'Mukti Sangha' on the premises of the Kamrup Mahila Samiti (Women's Association) building. The girls were Pushpalata Das, the general secretary of the Students' Union at the Panbazar Girls' High School, Sarala Saxena and Jyotsna Mazumdar. After that, Sukumari and Parul Moitra, daughter of Suren Moitra,

the famous revolutionary from Rajshahi also joined the Mukti Sangha. Pushplata Das went on to lead the 1957 election campaign of Chandraprava Saikiani from Bajali constituency and was later elected to the Congress Working Committee.

The historic Dandi march launched by Gandhiji on March 12, 1930, was supported through a symbolic procession of a large number of Assamese women who were taken out of Kaliabor to Nowgong through a distance of 30 miles for violating government orders. The participants were lathi-charged by the police upon their arrival at Nowgong. In 1929, after the historic Lahore Congress, the women of Kaliabor decided to join the celebration in the district headquarters town, Nowgong. More than 400 women proceeded towards Nowgong under the leadership of Guneswari Devi, Darbai Mech, Mohini Gohain and Kiranbala Bora. The police started attacking the rebels, the women among them were beaten up and the national flag was confiscated from them.

The removal of untouchability was another primary objective of the freedom movement. In Jorhat, Giribala Devi, an orthodox Brahmin woman, opened up her private family temple to the Harijans while Swarnalata Barua Devi from Jorhat, was hailed as the "Kasturba of Assam" due to her notable devotion to the cause of Harijan welfare. Seeing the participation of women, the Congress Working Committee decided to open a women's wing of the Congress in April 1940. As a result, the women's wing in Assam was opened in September 1940 with Pushpalata Das and Amalprava Das were elected as joint secretaries. In 1934, Amalprava became greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and established Maitri Ashram (later Kasturba Ashram) wherein she organised training for the womenfolk of the village in cottage industries. It was an important step in drawing more women to the national movement. The years leading up to the year 1942 saw Gandhi initiate his final movement to free India from colonial bondage.

The Third and last phase of Gandhi's Freedom Struggle in Assam:

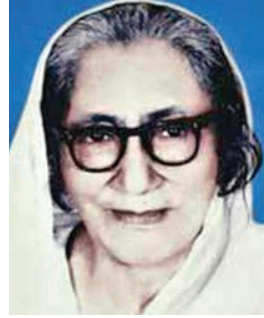
The Quit India movement was the third and final struggle wherein Gandhiji adopted the slogan 'Do or Die' as an ultimatum to the colonisers. In most urban areas, students, both boys and girls organised themselves into Death Squads known as Mrityu Bahini. Many Satyagrahi training centres for women were launched in different districts of Assam. Under the leadership of revolutionary Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, the Darrang District of Congress Committee of Assam decided to hoist the national flag on the police stations and the court buildings, which were concrete symbols of British authority. An instance of martyrdom in this regard came from the district of Nagaon. Led by Phukanani, the revolutionaries took control of the office and were celebrating their victory but the British army sent military force. Ratnamala Das and Bhogeswari Phukanani were at



Pushpalata Das



Kiran Bala Bora



Nalini Bala Devi



Kanaklata Barua

the forefront of the mob and Bhogeswari was shot in the head. She died three days later. Another plan for a flag hoisting was drawn under the leadership of Pushpalata Das on September 20 in Gohpur, Bihali, Dhekiajuli and Sootea. Upon seeing the process, police opened fire on the peaceful procession at Gohpur and Dhekiajuli. Processionists Kanaklata Barua, Tileswari Barua, Khahuli Devi and Kamuli Devi were all victims of the firing.

On 20 September 1942, the Bahini decided that they would hoist the national flag at the local police station. Undeterred by the police, the procession continued marching and Barua was fatally shot and the flag was taken up by Mukunda Kakoti who was shot too. Thunuki Das, Jaluki Kachariani, Golapi Chutiani and Kon Chutiani from Dhekiajuli were actively involved in the September 20, 1942 movement in Dhekiajuli. Thunuki, Golapi and Kon were injured in the lathi-charge and died a few days later while Jaluki received bullet injuries and succumbed to them soon after. Padumi Gogoi was also a part of the Quit India Movement from Dhekiajuli and was wounded and killed in the lathi attack. Amid such violence caused by the police, Tileswari Mahanta, a daring women volunteer, successfully hoisted the national flag at Bihali police station. Lila Neogoni was actively involved in the 1942 revolt and was severely beaten to death by the police at Lakhimpur in 1942. On October 15, 1942, eighty women from the villages near Teok attempted to attack the police station without any leader of importance while the women of Borpeta district attacked the Patacharkuchi police station and assaulted the police officer in retaliation to the police firing.

In the Sibsagar district, Aikan Bhuyan of Mudoijan near Teok took the lead in setting fire to the Amguri High School. She conducted several secret meetings where she reportedly instigated a number of congress youths to damage government properties.

The local Congress entrusted the task of carrying top secret messages from one place to another to Sudhalata Dutta and Reboti Lahon. While Sudhalata Dutta covered a distance of 142 km, walking with a child, Reboti Lahon breathed her last while walking from Boloma to Ghiladhari. In Nowgong district, Jaymati Saikia cooperated with the revolutionary group to burn the Bebejia road bridge on August 26, 1942. Girl rebels such as Pitrani Saikia and Dagati Bora worked for the security of the underground male workers while Gunawati Devi and Rakshada Devi helped underground party workers to carry on their sabotage activities by providing them with food and shelter. Ratnabala Phukan, a member of the death squad, also allowed her house to be used as a centre of underground activities. Another protestor, Budheshwari Hazarika took an active role in sinking British cargo boats carrying military supplies through the Brahmaputra River.

Conclusion

During the year 1942, absolute Police rule was instituted in Assam and the people were subjected to countless punishments and around 500 women freedom fighters had to bear the brunt of British atrocities in Assam in the movement for the country's liberation. Despite the initial and limited participation in the 1921 phase of the national struggle, the involvement of women in the subsequent phases of the movement grew majestically. It was for this reason that the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, announced in 1930 that they were not afraid of the nation's stalwart Mahatma Gandhi but the millions of women of India, their collective contribution being noted not only across India but the upper echelons of the foreign administration that had rendered India as their "feminine", "submissive" colony.

*Author is pursuing her Master in Political Science from University of Delhi
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Rani Gaidinliu and her underground life

Rani Gaidinliu once said in her memorandum that her people were an ‘unwanted child’ in the eyes of the state’s administration that various steps were supplemented to keep them ‘illiterate, uncivilized, half-naked and half-starved. Various ‘suppressive measures’ were taken to keep her people in the best possible way to be ‘isolated’ from the mainstream communities. There was no ‘English Middle School’ for Zeme of N.C Hills despite having a population of 20,541 until 1971.

The Zeliangrong population of Assam, Manipur, or Nagaland were pushed by the boundary to live in the interiors of the states which amounted to the least connectivity and other means that can deprive them of all the opportunities to be on the same footing and status at par with other communities in the states.

N. Haineube



Who is Rani Gaidinliu?

As a young girl, she grew up in difficult rugged hills and experienced hardships. She sensed what is right and wrong and was concerned about the loss of her freedom which ultimately made her a disposition to propel her to rise and oppose any kind that oppresses her rights and freedom. At the age of 13, she joined the Heraka Movement which was started by her cousin Haipou Jadonang which aims to establish self-rule and resist the conversion to a foreign religion. The freedom fighter Rani Gaidinliu went underground two times- first from British India during the 1930s and second from the Naga Nationalist Council (NNC) in the 1960s.

This is an attempt to lay out the narratives and the insights of the struggle Gaidinliu and her people had to go



through. Attempts have also been made to candidly highlight the nature of marginalization and oppression her people faced and how they are still facing today.

The conception of Movement and the trailblazing

Gaidinliu was under the mentorship of Haipou Jadonang, and their movement gained popularity among the Zeliangrong community so much so that the British started to perceive it as a significant threat to them. Jadonang was sentenced to death under false accusations in 1931. To ensure that the movement of Jadonang does not die down and go in vain, Gaidinliu took up the role of command. From April 1931, she took up the responsibility and led the rebellion movement by moving from village to village in the Zeliangrong area, and trailblazing the idea of rebellion. Her movement was concentrated in the western Tamenglong area, North Cachar Hills, and Southern Naga Hills. She started her own version of the Non-cooperation Movement by instructing the villagers to abstain from paying taxes. She popularized the idea of a national movement and the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi in the region. She composed a song, "Haipou Gandhi puna heigwang lemkhang patti khejo patti khejo" (Gandhi my Lord, come and be our king. Come soon!) This song became an anthem and chant during this time.

The Attack of Hangrum Outpost

On March 16, 1932, the Gaidinliu's rebels attacked the Assam Rifle outpost at Hangrum village. Their primitive weaponry of daos and spears with a handful of firearms was no match to the well-equipped band of Assam Rifles, but it was their courage, motivation and belief in the power of their leader Gaidinliu that they strategized this attack. She bewitched the sepoys' rifles and bullets so that they would turn into water and would not kill, and commanded the warriors to attack the outpost without fear. To an utter mystery, despite the matchless and unpremeditated fight, the number killed was just one-fourth. By then, Gaidinliu, along with her other cohorts, were ghosted to their secret hideouts. After this incident, her people were tortured, nine of their villages were burnt and a collective fine was imposed.

The Hunt

The entire operational area of Gaidinliu was kept in check in search of her under the supervision of J.P. Mills, the then Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills. Her photos were widely circulated throughout the Zeliangrong region. Any girls that bear the name Gaidinliu in the region were not spared from thorough scrutiny. The situation became so intense that Gaidinliu herself made her name change to Dilianliu for some time. A prize of Rs. 200/- was announced to the villagers or anyone giving the information of her whereabouts, and later raised to Rs. 500/- along with an offer of tax remission for ten years to any village providing the information. But Gaidinliu remained elusive. Her secret hideouts remain secret and well protected by her people. Meanwhile, an attempt of eluding her captors was made to the

extent that she possesses a supernatural power that can make her appear in dozens of places at the same time and that baffled the straining troops. However, this atmosphere of mystery was a deliberate effort of Mr. Masang, her trusted associate, a capable commander, who maintained the network of spies and a mastermind of maintaining the aura of myth in the surrounding of Gaidinliu to create a deceptive impression to befool the British.

In Her Secret Hideouts

The cave in mount Kisha of Magulong village (present-day Tousem subdivision, Manipur) was the secret place of her refuge. The locals considered Mt. Kisha was a sacred place where no strangers were allowed to pay a visit. In the history of Magulong, Gaidinliu was the first who, in great honour, showed it and made her stay. They maintained the secrets well with utmost sincerity and dignity. The mountain was a strong strategic point for the hideouts, and so also was Gaidinliu's sense of utilizing it meticulously. While one of the troops of her army was camping at the top of mount Kisha that maintained as a protective first layer outpost, the second layer was posted in the first cave (also the biggest cave) with a sentry point bunker built at the narrowest point of entrance that gave access to the entire caves therein. The cave where Gaidinliu was stationed was considered the core of protection from any angle because that

In 1966, Rani Gaidinliu came overground after signing the agreement between the Nagaland government represented by Kohima DC S.C Dev and her party. Her key demand on this particular event was – a separate district for Zeliangrong along with 2000 soldiers from Zeliangrong district to fight for the country.

particular cave hides somewhere in the middle of the precipice. The rations and other support were all provided by the nearby villages for this camp. There was no salary or allowance for any of the armies or caregivers because they do not collect any taxes. The armies do not have a uniform dress. There was no medical support. And most of all, only a few hold guns, and due to that in many cases, they face a lot of challenges. But the spirit didn't die yet despite so many limitations.

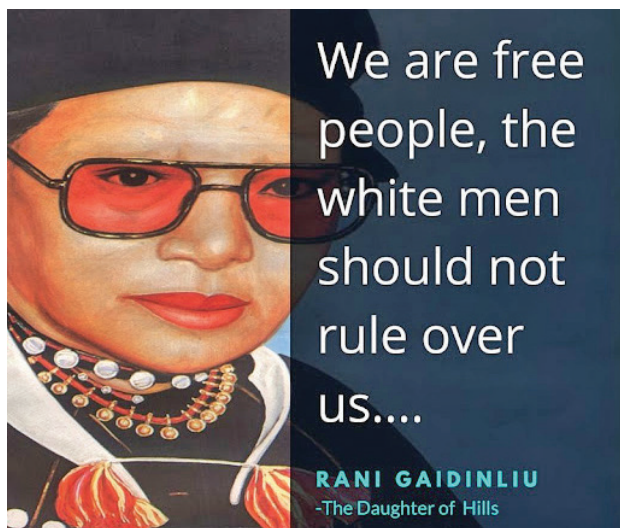
To PUILWA and her arrest

On October 7, 1931, she left Mt Kisha and started camping at PUILWA (present-day Nagaland). Moving towards PUILWA was a 'well-organized' strategy to attack the Kohima outpost. She planned that, by the fall of November which will be a time when



the harvest season is over, more men can spare their time to join the army from the surrounding Zeliangrong villages for the attack. Under the instruction of Gaidinliu, the wooden fortress was under construction. She asserted to her followers that the next two months will be a crucial time, for that will be the time to decide who will win – either she or the British.

On October 17, 1932, while the fortress was under construction, the rebels were caught on the hop by a surprised attack of Captain N. Macdonald and his troops. Gaidinliu was captured and taken to Imphal for trial in the court of Political Agent Mr. Higgins, and she was sentenced to life imprisonment. She was barely a 17-years-old girl then. She spent fourteen years in jail until she was released after the independence of India in 1947.



After India's Independence

For propagating the Heraka Movement and her demand for a separate Zeliangrong district under the union of India, she was branded as the persecutor of Christians and anti-Naga, and her life was threatened by the underground elements of the Naga Nationalist Council. She was even arrested and threatened at gunpoint to surrender her Freedom Fighter title given by the government of India. Her life was threatened and she decided to go back underground. The only place she could think of her safety is Mt Kisha cave of Magulong. In the late sixties, she fled back to Mt Kisha once again. It is yet another fight similar to her previous anti-British resistance, the only difference this time was the approach.

Upon leaving her village to Mt Kisha, she left a letter to her villagers that contained, 'Today, I am going underground not because of the Indian government, but because of NNC.' For NNC, their fight was to finish off any obstacles or irritants that come along their way and to achieve their goal of complete sovereignty as an independent Naga nation. For Gaidinliu, it was a fight to have a separate district or statehood for Zeliangrong and to defend

her cultural identity against anyone whether it came in the form of British colonialism or the hegemonistic approach of NNC.

On her Second Refuge

She gained several armies including helpers up to 700 during a short period. She set up various outposts in many strategic points and villages and Mt Kisha remains elusive. Each camp has about 50 soldiers, including helpers. In their camps, the supply of ration was irregular and not systematic. They depend on donations and collection from the nearby villages. An ex-Rani Army aged 84 mentioned that "We eat a lot whenever we receive good ration, or else, we go empty stomach even for four days." Inside the Mt Kisha cave, they do the traditional job of pounding rice and grains as well. The same pounding kit is still found lying in the cave today.

Comes Overground

In 1966, Rani Gaidinliu came overground after signing the agreement between the Nagaland government represented by Kohima DC S.C Dev and her party. Her key demand on this particular event was – a separate district for Zeliangrong along with 2000 soldiers from Zeliangrong district to fight for the country. The present state of Zeliangrong people and the marginalization of the state of the suppressive situation to Zeliangrong people can be traced back to the treatment as a 'colonial subject' by the respective state government. Rani Gaidinliu raised the same question many times in this regard. She once said in her memorandum that her people were an 'unwanted child' in the eyes of the state's administration and that various steps were supplemented to keep them 'illiterate, uncivilized, half-naked and half-starved. Various 'suppressive measures' were taken to keep her people in the best possible way to be 'isolated' from the mainstream communities. There was no 'English Middle School' for Zeme of N.C Hills despite having a population of 20,541 until 1971. The Zeliangrong population of Assam, Manipur, or Nagaland were pushed by the boundary to live in the interiors of the states which amounted to the least connectivity and other means that can deprive them of all the opportunities to be on the same footing and status at par with other communities in the states.

Conclusion

The two phases of her going underground clearly signify that she stood firmly on her original idea-freedom from injustice and freedom from dilution of identity. But this movement of reformation turns out to be paid for heavily by her and her people. She is one of the pioneers who fought all her life against any form of injustice, oppression, and exploitation. But till today, her people are yet to be truly free from all these bondages. Her people are still divided by the artificial boundaries, fragmented and secluded from gaining political power, and systematically marginalized and discriminated against.

*Author is Ph.D. Scholar in JNU
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Jhalkari Bai

the heroine of Jhansi

Kolhi woman warrior Jhalkari Bai made an exemplary contribution to India's struggle for independence as she put up a fierce fight against the British and did the supreme sacrifice to protect our motherland. Her life and ideals can be a guiding light for us.

Dr. Manoj Kumar

Folklore of Bundelkhand goes that General Hugh Rose himself had praised Jhalkari Bai's courage saying, "If even one per cent of Indian women were like Jhalkari; the British would soon have to leave India."

A poem penned by celebrated writer Maithili Sharan Gupt on Jhalkari Bai's bravery and courage reads:

"Jaa Kar Ran Main Lalkari Thi, Woh To Jhansi Ki Jhalkari Thi |

Goron Se Ladana Sikha Gai, Hain Itihas Main Jhalak Rahi ,

Wah Bharat Ki Hi Nari Thi | "

(Jhalkari of Jhansi was the one who went roaring to the battleground. She was the woman of India who taught how to fight against the British and made her name in history.)

Biharilal Harit, a famous folk poet too wrote a poem praising Jhalkari Bai for her military preparedness, bravery and patriotic feelings. He sings:

"Laxmibai Ka Roop Dhar, Jhalkari Khadag Sanwar Chali |

Veerangana Nirbhay Lashkar Main, Shastra Astra Tan Dhar Chali ||"

(Looking like Laxmibai, Jhalkari armed herself with a sword. The brave and bold woman warrior walked carrying her weapons on her.)

Early Life

Jhalkari Bai was born in a poor family belonging to the Kolhi community at Bhojala Village in the erstwhile princely state of Jhansi on November 22, 1830. Jhalkari Bai's father was Sadowar Singh and her mother was Jamuna Devi. Jhalkari Bai's mother passed away at an early age of the former. Jhalkari Bai's father brought her up like she was his son.

Military Training

Jhalkari Bai's meticulous and arduous training in horse riding and use of weaponry began in her childhood. She could not pursue formal education due to the adverse social conditions prevailing in those days. However, she became a good warrior. Since her childhood, Jhalkari started displaying her courage and commitment.

Display of Valour

Besides tending to household chores, Jhalkari bai would work hard looking after the cattle and collecting firewood in the forests. Once, when she came across a leopard in the forest, Jhalkari Bai killed the beast with her axe. On another occasion, a band of dacoits attacked a businessman from her village. Jhalkari Bai went to the rescue of the businessman and fought with the dacoits with such valour that they were forced to retreat. Impressed her Jhalkari Bai's bravery, the villagers married her off with Pooran Kori, a brave soldier in the Army of



Rani Laxmi Bai, the queen of Jhansi. Pooran Kori was a braveheart and had earned fame and respect for himself for his valour and courage.

Jhalkari Bai's First Meeting with Rani Laxmi Bai

Once, Jhalkari had gone to pay respect to the queen of Jhansi along with other women of her village on the occasion of Gauri Pooja. When Rani Laxmi Bai saw her, she was left astonished because Jhalkari Bai looked just like her. Rani Laxmi Bai was impressed by hearing from other women about the incidents in which Jhalkari Bai had shown extraordinary courage.

Appointment as Chief of Durga Brigade

Influenced by the bravery and courage of Jhalkari Bai, the Queen of Jhansi asked her to join the Durga Brigade. On joining the Durga Brigade, Jhalkari Bai trained herself in using guns, swords and even cannons along with other women warriors. Those were the days of adversity as the entire Princely State was facing troubles due to Lord Dalhousie implementing his infamous Doctrine of Lapse Policy to overthrow the rule of Indian kings and princes. The famous Army of Women raised by Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi needed brave woman warriors having the courage to fight back against any bravado by the British. Therefore, Rani Laxmi Bai focussed on enabling and empowering Jhalkari Bai and many other women soldiers.

Lord Dalhousie applied his Doctrine of Lapse policy and refused permission to an issueless Rani Laxmi Bai to adopt her successor with the intention to take over the State. Infuriated with Lord Dalhousie's design to grab the power, the entire state of Jhansi protested. Resolved to wage a war against the British, the Royal Army, its generals and all subjects united and decided that instead of submitting themselves and allowing subjecting their queen to the humiliation of surrender, they will stand up in arms against the British and the British Army. They thought it was high time they held the flame of independence high. In April 1857, a fierce war for independence started between the Royal Army of Jhansi and the British Army. Camping in her fort, Rani Laxmi Bai led her Army to war. The Royal Army foiled several attempted attacks by British Army. However, a backstabbing General of the Royal Army, Dulherao, turned traitor and opened a gate of the fort to let the British army enter inside. Once the British soldiers sneaked inside the fort, they began killing the occupants and launched a massive hunt to capture Rani Laxmi Bai.

Jhalkari Bai's Loyalty

On noticing that the British Army had succeeded in entering the fort, Jhalkari Bai and other generals of the Royal Army sensed that fall of the fort was inevitable. They apprehended the possibility of the queen of Jhansi getting captured by the enemy. During such trying conditions, Jhalkari Bai and others felt it was their duty to protect the queen. The decision was taken that the queen should leave

the fort and take refuge at a safer place. In a bid to protect the life of Rani Laxmi Bai, Jhalkari Bai and a few other woman soldiers escorted her to a secret spot outside the fort. Displaying unmatched bravery and courage, Jhalkari Bai took the initiative to protect the queen.

Living to The Motto of Nation First

Jhalkari Bai's husband Pooran laid down his life while fighting to protect the fort of Jhansi. Any woman could have broken down after facing such a loss. However, when Jhalkari Bai came to know about the martyrdom of her husband, she did not allow the grief to overcome her sense of duty. Instead of mourning for her slain husband, she displayed her commitment and busied herself in preparing a scheme to fight back against the British and protect the queen by employing the strategy of decoy.

Daring Visit to General Hugh Rose

In a bid to deceive the British to gain passage for Rani Laxmi Bai outside the fort, Jhalkari Bai dressed up in the costume of Rani Laxmi Bai and took command of the Royal Army in her hands. Displaying unmatched courage, she left the fort alone and went to meet the British General Hugh Rose in his camp. On reaching there, she confidently said she wants to meet General Hugh Rose. Hugh Rose and other officers of the British army mistook her for Rani Laxmi Bai and felt delighted thinking that they had already taken over Jhansi and now the queen too was in their hands. When she was taken to General Hugh Rose, he asked Jhalkari Bai as to what does she think should be done with her. Jhalkari Bai replied, "Hang me." On hearing this, General Hugh Rose was highly impressed and asked Jhalkari Bai to go back. However, according to some historians, Jhalkari Bai laid down her life in the war. Folklore goes throughout Bundelkhand that impressed by her display of courage, General Hugh Rose praised her saying, "If even one per cent of Indian women were like Jhalkari; the British would soon have to leave India."

Several poets and writers have found their inspiration from the courage and patriotism displayed by Jhalkari Bai in the freedom struggle. The Government of India issued a Postal Stamp in memory of Jhalkari Bai in the year 2001.

Kolhi woman warrior Jhalkari Bai made an exemplary contribution to India's struggle for independence as she put up a fierce fight against the British and did the supreme sacrifice to protect our motherland. Her life and ideals can be a guiding light for us. India has several unsung heroes, whose historic contributions were either wiped out or suppressed. At a time when India is celebrating the platinum jubilee of its Independence, it is our national duty to remember the brave freedom fighters.

*Author is Principal, Government College, Amet
Rajasmad, Rajasthan
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Ramji Gond : An unsung tribal warrior

The wounded Ramji Gond could not run far away. After scorched earth military strategy, the Nizam British army eventually caught him along with his men.

Ramji Gond was hanged along with a thousand Gond revolutionaries during the mid-September 1860 to the branches of a banyan tree on the outskirts of Nirmal which came to be known as ‘Banyan of Thousand Nooses’.

T. Dheeraj



As early as the first war of Independence in 1857, the tribal tracts in the north of Godavari saw an uprising to fight the British residency and the Nizam’s government. Marsukola Ramji Gond, hailing from the Gond community, had successfully organized Gonds, Rohillas and Deccanis against the rulers.

The Gonds and their Origins

Gonds are one of the largest tribal groups in the Indian subcontinent, and perhaps the world. They are spread across central India and the Deccan plateau, mostly living in the hilly and forests areas. The Gonds as a community have a much more varied social profile. While a significant section of this community still lives a close-to-nature life involving hunting, some forms of agriculture and pastoral activity, some sections are no strangers to political and economic power since as early as the 15th century.

The Gonds formed many kingdoms of historical significance. The Chanda Kingdom at the present Chandrapur in Maharashtra, founded in 1400 CE, traces its origin to Sirpur, a region now part of northern Telangana. The most illustrious rulers from the Gond Community were the iconic queen, Rani Durgavati, from the Kingdom of Garha-Mandla. She is known for fighting the Mughal emperor, Akbar. The clout of the Gond kings came to an end in the 18th century after the rise of Marathas.



The Gonds, The British and the Nizam rule

After winning over the Maratha Kingdom in the Third Anglo-Maratha War, The British annexed most of the remaining Gond Zamindaris and took over the revenue collection. The Gondwana Kingdom in Hyderabad region came under the Nizam rule and the region was known as Berar Subah. The British Government signed a treaty with the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1853, under which the territory came under the administration of the British, although the Nizam retained formal sovereignty over the province.

Leading up to the 1857 Revolts

The Mughals, long lost in the wars against the Marathas were restricted only to the outer walls of Delhi and the defeat of Marathas in the Third-Anglo-Maratha war resulted in the British seizing control of most of the Indian subcontinent. The imperial policies of the British, like the Subsidiary Alliance, Doctrine of Lapse, harsh land taxes and other factors caused seething discontent among the people. It led to the rise in the number of rebellions, insurrections, and movements against them.

The Banyan Tree, a symbol of atrocities and an oppressive regime at Nirmal, fell down around a decade ago, erasing along with it the memory of Ramji Gond and his army from collective memory, making him an unsung hero. Remembered for his extraordinary courage and heroism, Ramji Gond stood as an inspiration to the rise of another Gond leader, Kumaram Bheem.

By June 1857, the whole of North India was ablaze with the fever of independence. It spread like wildfire from one station to another. The Peshwa Nana Saheb had risen against the British at Kanpur, Tatyia Tope and Rani of Jhansi became accredited leaders of the mutinous soldiers and captured the fort of Gwalior.

Rumours about the reverses suffered by the British troops in the northern part of India were lapped up in great pleasure by the people of Hyderabad. Gradually, the mutiny spread to the south. Ranga Rao, an emissary of Nana Saheb, was sent to influence the Muslims of Hyderabad in his favour but failed in his objective as they had been estranged by the Marathas by bitter memories of the past.

The Rohillas, considered adherents of Nana Saheb, infiltrated the Deccan and carried out insurrections. Rohilla concentrations took place at Ajanta, Basmati, Latur, Makthal and Nirmal. However, the people of Hyderabad always had a strong current of anti-British feelings from 1800 onwards. All sections of Hyderabad also felt the loss of Berar. The disaffection among the people in Deccan came to the fore when

the contingent troops of Hyderabad rebelled in Aurangabad in June 1857.

As the news of the outbreak in North India reached Hyderabad, The Moulwis and Arabs in the city exhorted the Muslims to start a holy war against the British infidels and re-establish the Delhi throne. The circumstances later led to the attack on the British Residency by the Rohillas led by Moulvi Allaudin and Rohilla leader Turebaz Khan, but it was soon repelled with the help of Nizam and British troops. Other parts of Deccan too saw insurrections by princes and zamindars in the likes of Raja Venkatappa Naik of Shorapur, Bhim Rao Desai at Kopbal and Bhaskar Rao, Zamindar of Nargund.

To suppress the revolt, all possible measures, including the marching of contingent troops, the 47th Regiment NI (North India) forming part of the Bellary column and the posting of a detachment under subsidiary force under colonel Roberts at Hingolee were taken. For aiding the British in suppressing these revolts, the British government amply rewarded the Nizam with the principality of Shorapur, and the Knighthood was conferred upon him in recognition of his faithful services.

The Revolt in Nirmal

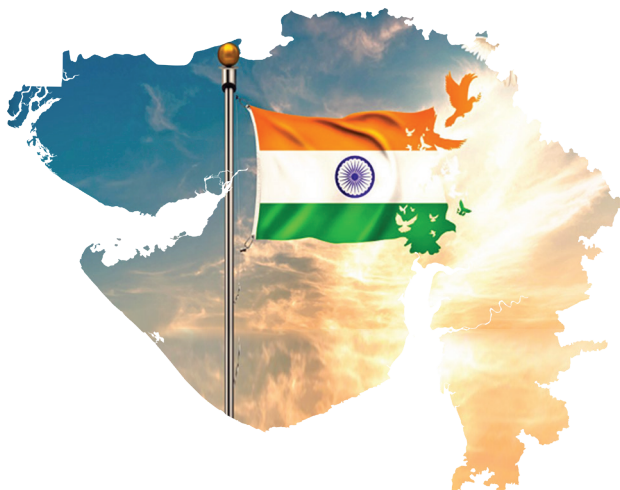
The British allied with the Nizam of Hyderabad heavily bore down on the Gonds by restricting their access to the forests and plundered the wealth of the forests. The Gonds were marginalized by the colonial forest policies and prohibitive taxes were imposed on the forest products used. They had to face many hardships and misery, which created havoc in their lives but never gave up. The spark of revolution began with Marsukola Ramji Gond.

By 1858, the Rohillas and Bhils spread themselves over the Deccan and caused widespread disturbances against the British. At Nirmal, the Gonds, under the leadership of Ramji Gond, joined hands with the

Rohillas under the leadership of Haji Ali Nusrat. They trained the young fighters in guerrilla warfare and intensified the fight against the British. The guerrilla warfare and familiarity with the rugged terrain and forest in the Nirmal Ghats gave them an upper hand over the British. Ramji Gond was initially successful with his guerrilla warfare techniques for over two years in the large forest tracts spanning from Nirmal to Narayankhed in the west, Chennur in the east and the Godavari in the south.

On April 1, 1860, the collector of Nirmal received information that Ramji Gond and his band were sheltering at a mountain at a distance of 15 km from Nirmal. The place they camped was not easily accessible. The situation was that two people could hardly pass side by side and even daily necessities were not available there. Irrespective of the hostile terrain, the collector proceeded with the available force.

By noon they came face to face with Ramji's army comprising about 200 Rohillas and 300 Gonds and Deccanis. **(On page 20)**



Role of scheduled castes of Gujarat in freedom struggle

While Gujarat is mainly known for Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, several men and women vigorously supported and participated in the freedom movement. Significantly, participation of women was noteworthy in the movement.

Dr. Mahesh



Laxmi Behen:



Dudabhai Maljibhai Dafda was born in a family belonging to a Scheduled Caste living in Devraja village in Amreli district of Gujarat in 1889. The area was under the Wadia kingdom of Kathi Darbar Surajwala Ji in Kathiawar region at that time. Dudabhai lost his parents in his childhood. Orphaned, he

grew up at an orphanage run by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad got Dudabhai married to Dani Behen. Later on, Dudabhai came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi and got influenced by him. Such was the influence of Gandhian thoughts on Dudabhai that he lived the ideals upheld by Gandhiji throughout his life. He came to be known as the "First Associate of Gandhiji". Gandhiji adopted Dudabhai's daughter Laxmi Behen. Consequently, Laxmi Behen grew up in Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram. Later, she got married with a Brahmin youth at Gandhiji's Ashram. Laxmi Behen wholeheartedly participated in the Independence struggle launched by Gandhiji and was even arrested and sentenced to jail term. Tributes to Honourable Freedom Fighter Laxmi Behen.

Dodia Brothers:

1. Tulsibhai Dodiya : (Village Digsar, Tehsil Muli, District Surendranagar)

Tulsibhai was attracted to Mahatma Gandhi's campaign to promote use of Khadi and went to live in Gandhiji's Ashram in 1938-39. He worked as Trade Trainer there and thus made his invaluable contributions to the Swadeshi movement. Mahatma

Gandhi had laid down the principle 'Je Gharma Rotlo Chade, E Gharma Rentiyo Fare' (Let the spinning wheel rotate in every house where Rotis are baked.) Once, Tulsibhai told Gandhiji, "Bapu, I am willing to do any work that you would assign me as a part of the greater cause of attaining independence."

Bapu replied to him saying, "Tulsibhai, the feeling you are expressing are similar to the feelings of tiny lamp penned in a poem by Tagore. Light of a lamp shines like sunlight in the darkness of night. In same manner, the struggle for Independence needs thoughts of lamps like you. It is essential that you campaign to promote use of Khadi. I bear unwavering faith that the Sun of Swaraj will rise through the strings woven from cotton."

Tulsibhai inculcated Gandhian thoughts in himself and joined the freedom struggle. He participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942 and was jailed for his role in the protest. He lived by the Gandhian thoughts and fought incessantly against social evils. A great and brave son of Mother India, he passed away on July 22, 1998 the day of Guru Purnima.

2. Mansangbhai Dodiya:

Mansangbhai was Tulsibhai's younger brother. He arrived at Gandhiji's Ashram along with Tulsibhai.

Following footsteps of Tulsibhai, Mansangbhai too participated in the Quit India movement. He was arrested along with Vishnuprasad Vyas (Son of Ravishankar Maharaj), Narayanbhai Desai (Son of Mahadevbhai Desai) and Chhaganbhai Joshi. Mansangbhai was just 18-year-old at that time.

Ramjibhai Jeevabhai Rathod: (Village Naliya, Tehsil Muli, District Surendranagar)



Ramjibhai settled down at Karnavati (Ahmadabad), where he found employment, along with his family. His father used to weave Khadi. Ramjibhai worked with a cotton mill. The family was living happily when Quit India movement was launched. Ramjibhai was influenced by the slogan 'Kareng Ya Mareng' (Do or Die) and joined the movement. He suffered injury on left leg during brutalities meted out by the British against the protestors. Besides, he was tortured in jail too.

Later in 1947, Ramjibhai participated in the struggle for freedom of Diu-Daman and Goa too.

The then Chief Ministers of Gujarat Chhabildas Mehta and Keshubhai Patel awarded Ramjibhai

with honour and citation in the years 1994 and 1999 respectively.

Ramjibhai Kalidas Rathod:

Ramjibhai was born in a village in Lakhtar tehsil of Surendranagar district. Gandhiji was organising various movements to awaken masses and invoke their participation in the Independence struggle. People would throng the venues of Satyagraha to participate in the protests. Ramjibhai had participated in the protest organised at Bhavnagar port. He was arrested and restrained in jail for two months without any trial in the court.

*Author is Lecturer in medical college
Amdavad Gujarat.
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

An unsung tribal warrior



Memorial at Banyan Tree of thousand Nooses Ramji Gond

(From page 18)

At first, firing was exchanged between them and was soon followed by sword fighting. The offensive warfare by the Nizam and British forces was designed to strike a quick and focused blow. Many of the rebels were wounded, and a few others were killed. The invading army found 30 dead bodies of the rebel Rohillas and others. Some Jamedars of the rebel forces identified the dead body of Miyasahb Kurd, a chief of the Rohillas who came from Narayankhed.

Though the Collector's army was successful in rounding up the rebels, their chieftains Ramji Gond and Haji Ali managed to escape. The British Resident at Hyderabad was apprised of the details of this ambush and he appreciated the services of the collector, urging the arrest of Ramji Gond as soon as possible.

Fateh Ali Khan, Thanedar of Chennur, was deputed to assist the Thanedar of Adilabad. In his capacity as an administrator, he appears to have taken action against the rebels of that region by certainly chasing them, rounding them up and bringing them to book as promised to the British resident at Hyderabad, according to his letter number 155, dated

April 9, 1860. The wounded Ramji Gond could not run far away. After scorched earth military strategy, the Nizam British army eventually caught him along with his men. Ramji Gond is said to have been hanged along with a thousand Gond revolutionaries during the mid-September 1860 from the branches of the banyan tree on the outskirts of Nirmal which came to be known as 'Banyan of Thousand Nooses'.

Till the end, Ramji Gond demonstrated valour in his fight against the Nizam and the British. After all these years, the punishment meted out to the captured men can send a shudder down one's spine. The Banyan Tree, a symbol of atrocities and an oppressive regime at Nirmal, fell down around a decade ago, erasing along with it the memory of Ramji Gond and his army from collective memory, making him an unsung hero. Remembered for his extraordinary courage and heroism, Ramji Gond stood as an inspiration to the rise of another Gond leader, Kumaram Bheem, who fought against the Nizam-British forces and attained martyrdom in 1940.

*Author is Sub Editor
for Nationalist Hub, YouTube
channel
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

Rooplo Kolhi's supreme sacrifice for independence

Rooplo Kolhi, the Tiger of Sindh, who fought against the British keeping the flame of Independence burning, needs to be remembered by us along with other national heroes who did the supreme sacrifice for the freedom of the Country because we owe our future to them...



Dr. Manoj Kumar

Rooplo Kolhi, a warrior from the erstwhile Sindh province, is a national hero for the people of Sindh. Rooplo Kolhi displayed unmatched courage by refusing to accept the domination of the British and waging incessant struggle against the foreign rule. His struggle for independence dates back to the year 1848 when Sindh was a part of India. At a time when the freedom fighters from all over the country were struggling to oppose the foreign rule, Rooplo Kolhi stood shoulder to shoulder with them and waged his battle for independence in Sindh. That was the time when the Rajputs too had rebelled against the British in their adjoining region.

Early Life

Rooplo Kolhi was born in 1818 in a family of Kolhi agriculturists at Kundhari village, about 18 km from Nagarparkar town in Sindh province. His mother was Kesarbai. Although his real name was Rupaji Kolhi, people affectionately called him Rooplo. Rooplo Kolhi was brought up according to the traditions of the martial Kshatriya community. In accordance with the traditions of his Kolhi clan, he was imparted training in using weapons in a strict and disciplined manner during his childhood. He was meticulously trained in using various lethal weapons including bow and arrow, spear, and javelin. Rooplo Kolhi, who had courage, bravery and nimbleness personified, soon mastered the fighting techniques. In his adolescent years, Rooplo Kolhi earned fame for himself by slaying several brutes infesting the hilly areas and the deserts in the Sindh region. This not

only brought fame to him but people also started loving the handsome and invigorating young man. Thanks to his virtues, people started treating Rooplo Kolhi with respect. This affection of the people he had won became Rooplo Kolhi's major strength when he started his struggle for independence.

Rooplo Kolhi's Conflict with British

Under the leadership of the British Army General Charles Napier, the British brought down the flag of independent Sindh and unfurled the Union Jack to subjugate the province. Thus, Sindh, which took pride in its independence was forced into slavery under the British rules. Infuriated, Rajputs belonging to Kolhis and Sodha clans in the Tharparkar area came together and rebelled against the British in the ridges of Kurunjer. Alarmed with the rebel in Sindh, the British government appointed Lord Dalhousie, the father of the Doctrine of Lapse Policy as the Governor of Sindh.

Raising of Kolhi Army

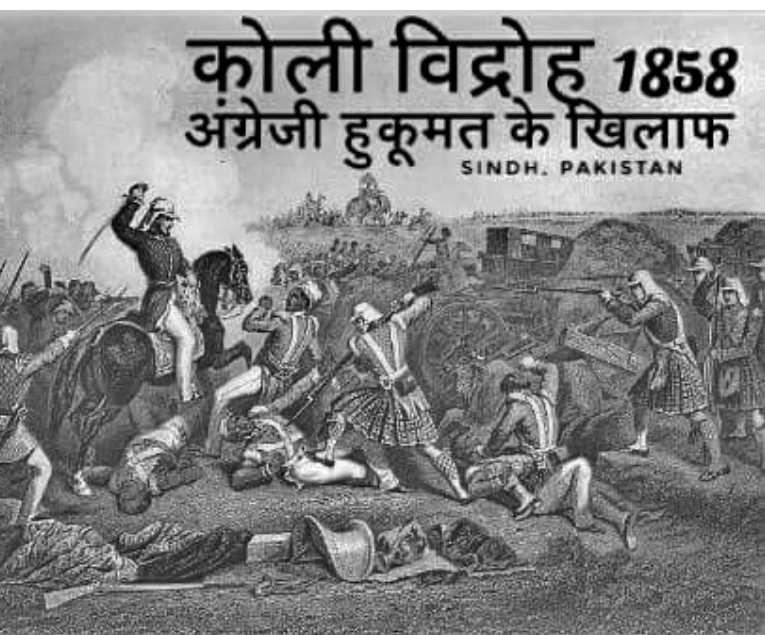
Master of war strategies, Rooplo Kolhi raised a fearsome Army of 8,000 Kolhi warriors. Many chieftains such as Karna Singh Sodha, Thakur Ladhu Singh, Sodo Kasmi too joined forces, giving strength to him. All these Kolhi warriors were renowned for their bravery, courage, and mastery of warfare. The Kolhi Army waged a fierce fight against the British. The army of 8,000 Kolhi warriors led by Rooplo Kolhi, brought them under their control British-controlled police stations, revenue offices, and telegraph offices. This virtually left the then British government



crippled. Vengeful, the British government let loose the reins of its officials and gave them a free hand to strike back most brutally – by attacking and looting the people.

War With The British

In retaliation to the rebel, a column under the leadership of General Tyrwhitt launched a counterattack against Rooplo Kolhi's strong army of 8,000 men on the night of April 15, 1859. This resulted in an all-out war in Sindh. Charged with patriotism, Rooplo Kolhi's army badly defeated the British army. Many British officers and soldiers were killed. General Tyrwhitt himself managed to escape. He fled to Hyderabad. Once he landed there, he met Col. Avenes and prepared a platoon of guerrilla fighters to avenge his defeat.



Treachery And Backstabbing

Taken by the lure of land, wealth and high positions, the Rajputs of Bhodesar turned treacherous against Rooplo Kolhi, the furious tiger of Sindh and joined hands with the British to sell off their motherland Sindh. On May 3, 1859, the joint forces of British and Rajput armies surrounded Nagarparkar where Rooplo Kolhi and Ladhu Singh were camping with their army. Ladhu Singh was captured, but Rooplo Kolhi was too smart to fall into the hands of the enemy. He made good his escape and sought refuge in the hills of Kurunjer. Emboldened, the British lured some Rajputs of Nagarparkar with promises of wealth. Some local Brahmins of Nagarparkar were promised attractive charity and assigned to spy on Rooplo Kolhi. The greedy traitors tipped off the British about Rooplo Kolhi's base. The folklore goes that Rooplo Kolhi was drawing water from a well to quench his thirst when the British surprised and captured him.

In a bid to compel Rooplo Kolhi to accept their

dominance, the British subjected him to brutal torture. However, a patriot to the core, Rooplo Kolhi remained brazen. When he was produced before General Tyrwhitt, the British tried to buy him off with offers of wealth and the position of a Jagirdar if he sold out on other Kolhi warriors and Thakur Karna Singh Sodha and spied on their future activities. The British General also insisted that he tenders a public apology for launching the rebellion and refrains himself from getting involved in any anti-British activity in future. When Rooplo Kolhi stuck to his pride, his fingers were doused in oil and set on fire. However, such was the patriotism of Rooplo Kolhi and his love for the motherland that he did not waver. Instead, he roared, "Leave my pious land. I will never sell off my motherland."

Patriot Wife Meenavati

Rooplo Kolhi's wife Meenavati too was no less courageous. When she went to meet him at the jail, the British asked her to convince Rooplo Kolhi to give up on his rebellion and accept their rule. However, she did not budge. Keeping her head high, she walked inside the jail, embraced Rooplo Kolhi and told him, "I am not at all worried about you. Whatever the price, do not ever betray your allies and associates. If you die as a traitor, no other Rooplo Kolhi will be born to protect his motherland. But if you will die the death of a patriot, I shall beget you a son who will keep your flag high." No doubt such patriotic and encouraging words of his confident wife kept the flame of freedom burning in Rooplo Kolhi.

The Martyrdom

Rooplo Kolhi was hanged to death along the Sardharo River in the ridges of Kurunjer near Nagarparkar on August 22, 1958. Thus, he attained his place as a foremost freedom fighter in the glorious history of the struggle for independence.

The Revered Hero Of Sindh

People of Sindh sing folklores of Rooplo Kolhi's bravery, courage and patriotism till this date and take inspiration from him. Several functions and rallies are organised in Sindh province of present-day Pakistan, the land where Rooplo Kolhi ruled on his birth and death anniversaries. Thousands throng the place where Rooplo Kolhi was hanged to pay homage to him. Sindh Tourism Development Corporation built a resort at Nagarparkar on August 26, 2017 to commemorate Rooplo Kolhi and named it Rooplo Kolhi Resort.

At a time when we are celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of our independence, we need to remember all brave fighters like Rooplo Kolhi who did the supreme sacrifice during the freedom struggle. It is our national duty to remember all these heroes because they were the founding fathers of our great nation. We owe our future to them!

*Author is Principal, Government College, Amet
Rajasmand, Rajasthan
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Small organizations Big contribution

Inspired by the principle of equality and justice, India saw a great amount of awakening among Dalits. As a result, we had several organizations working in their respective fields. This was the natural outcome of the awakening. Their contribution is significant as it reflects not merely contemporary situations but also commitment to the cause. Many of these organizations are lesser known. This is an attempt to recognize these organizations.

The objective of the Dalit movement was obviously to liberate untouchable classes from the most oppressive practice of untouchability observed unscrupulously by the caste Hindus and to bring the former at par with socio-cultural level of the privileged classes so that they could be brought to the national mainstream. Thus, the basic idea involved in this process was the reconstruction of the society on the basis of new values. It is therefore, necessary to ask ourselves - who were those leaders, what were their ideologies and approaches to social reconstruction, what was their mode of operation, how could they mobilize the ignorant masses along with them; how they could politicize them, what strategy they had adopted to raise the involvement of the Dalits in their liberation and in getting the things done at government level; which path or process of social change they had adopted, either

Sanskritization or Desanskritization, westernization or modernization, dialectic of the cognitive historical process; and lastly, how far they became successful in their mission?

For this purpose, it is necessary to identify the leaders to consider their cognitive background, their individual and collective contribution to the movement and their achievements. Dalit liberation movement is, of course an inseparable part of the Politico-cultural history of India. It is true that the Indian national movement was determined to liberate the country from the yoke of foreign imperialism, but this process was not going to complete and final unless all the sections of the society, including the so-called untouchables were to be free from the stigma of untouchability. This uphill task of liberation of the Dalits was fulfilled by the Dalit leaders. They can be considered as a real precursor of liberty, equality and





social justice of India—they commanded attention to the national politicians by their vociferousness and influenced and shaped the national politics in a befitting manner. Their role in setting up the universal human values, narrowing the social distance between the touchable and untouchables. Unfortunately, the history of Dalit liberation movement has not been properly interpreted and duly recorded in a consolidated and comprehensive manner. This article is an attempt to give a brief account of the Dalit movement in India and portray their contribution.

Ad Dharm Mandal

The organisation named Ad Dharm Mandal was founded by Shri Mango Ram in November 1926. The Mandal was based on a firm philosophic foundation. It is believed that all the so-called untouchables were the inhabitants of India. Their religion was Ad Dharm. The principles of the Mandal were:

- 1) In the beginning when nature created human beings there was no discrimination.
- 2) The philosophy of Ravidas ought to be respectfully followed.
- 3) They should engage in Satsang (worship services) on the pattern of the Sikhs.

The Mandal tried to bring about a new awareness among the people of the depressed classes. The Ad Dharm Mandal was active from 1926 to 1946 in some parts of our country.

Adi Andhra Mahajan Sabha

The Adi Andhra Mahajan Sabha came into existence in November 1917 at Vijayawada in a conference of the depressed classed people held under the presidentship of Shri Bhagya Reddy Varma. It was convened by Shri Guduru Ramchandra Rao. The Conference resolved to call the untouchables as Adi- Andhra in the Andhra region. This Sabha was very much active in Andhra region till 1940.

All India Shudra Mahasabha

It was founded by Bansilal Ramteke at Rajnandgaon in Madhya Pradesh (In Chhattisgarh region), along with others. The objective of the Mahasabha was to make efforts to bring a new social awareness among the Scheduled Castes in Madhya Pradesh.

All Travancore Pulaya Mahasabha

It was founded in 1938 in Trivandrum. Its President was T.T. Kesavan Sastry and Secretary was Ayyan Kali. It came into existence to work for economic and political upliftment of the Pulayas in Travancore. The Mahasabha contributed to a great extent for the liberation of untouchables in Travancore.

Anarya Dosh Parihar Mandali

Shri Gopalbaba Walangkar founded Anarya Dosh Parihar Mandali at Dapoli, Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra in 1886. The main objective of this organisation was to bring about social awakening among the Dalits and unite them to struggle for their human rights. He used to exhort the people to maintain moral and material standards. He used to preach to them that they should not drink and eat beef. He toured throughout Maharashtra and asked

the people to unite through Bhajans or Kirtans.

Jammu-Kashmir Harijan Mandal

The Jammu and Kashmir Harijan Mandal was organised on the pattern of All India Scheduled Castes Federation founded by Dr. Ambedkar. Babu Milkhi Ram was its leader. He worked throughout his life for the mission of Dr. Ambedkar. It was because of the Ambedkarite mission under Babu Milkhi Ram's leadership that the Scheduled Castes were treated as eligible to all the safeguards under the Constitution of India.

Jat-Pat Todak Mandal

Jat-Pat Todak Mandal (Organisation to break caste) was founded by Shri Sant Ram in 1922. The main objective of the organisation was to break the caste system by arranging and promoting inter-caste marriages. Previously the Mandal was under the influence of Arya Samaj. But it later came out of its shadow. The Jat-Pat Todak Mandal was very popular in Punjab. Once its leader Shri Sant Ram invited Dr. Ambedkar in 1936 delivered his presidential address in the annual meeting of the Mandal.

Marwar Mehtar Sudhar Sabha

This organization came into existence in 1945. Shri Prabhu Das Gharu was its President. Bhagwan Das Gund was its Vice-President and Shri Ram Sarvate was its secretary. The Sabha prepared a chapter of demands in 1946.

Accordingly, Its objectives were confined to the Mehtar Community of the Marwar region of Rajasthan. The main demands of the organization among others, were as follows:

- 1) They wanted to be treated as permanent servants.
- 2) They wanted to get brooms for sweeping.
- 3) They demanded one month leave in a year with full salary.
- 4) They wanted to have pucca houses and separate wells to be dug for them.

The demands of the Sabha were very genuine, but due to the apathetic attitude of the government, they had to go on strike for six days to press for their demands.

Meghwal Sudhar Sabha

Meghwal Sudhar Sabha was founded to reform the Meghwal community in Rajasthan. Shri Barupal Pannalal was President of the Sabha.

Mehtar Kamgar Union

It was established by Shri Chouthmal at Nagpur in 1944. The main purpose of this union was to solve the basic problems of the Mehtar community and inspire them to take up education. He led a strike of thousands of people to press for the demands of the Union.

Mushar Sevak Sangh

The organization was formed by Shri Somar Ram in 1953 with its headquarters at Ranchi in Bihar. He was the President for seven years. The objective of the organization was to awaken the Mushar community in Bihar.



Namasudra Welfare Association

Guruchand Thakur, son of Harichand Thakur started Namasudra Welfare Association. He called an All-Bengal Namasudra Conference at Duttadanga in the district of Khulna (at present in Bangladesh) in the year 1881. Guruchand Thakur was the President of the conference. Guruchand Thakur advised his people to start schools in the areas densely populated by them. His next movement was to remove the disgraceful term – Chandal, (which was then attributed to Namasudra by the higher caste Hindus) from the census report. He was successful in the same. The term Chandal was removed from the census report of 1911. In 1907 he appealed to the then Governor of Bengal and Assam for employment of the Namasudras in government services.

Nav Yuvak Kala Mandal

It was started by Shri Jawahar Lal Gund at Udaimandir Bustee in the year 1950. Its main purpose was to reform the Bhangi community in Rajasthan by undertaking artistic performances at various places.

Panchama Kalvi Abhivarthi - Abhimana Sangh

This was an organization of the untouchables in Madras Presidency. The organization appealed to Montague, the then Secretary of India when he visited India in 1917, that the untouchables should be saved from the yoke of Brahmins.

Karnataka Bahishkrit Sangh

It was founded by Swami Deorai Ramji Ingle, School Board Member, Belgaon, in 1922. He used to propagate among the depressed classes people, especially those who are living in the villages that they should struggle for human rights. He used to propagate among all the untouchables including Mahar, Mang, Chambar and Dhor, and tried to unite them for all social activities. The sangh was active till 1930.

Khet Mazdoor Sabha

The Khet Mazdoor Sabha (Agricultural labourers Organization) was founded by Shri Babu Jagjivan Ram in the state of Bihar in the thirties. It was one of the first agricultural labour organizations in the country. Its main base was among the agricultural labourers belonging to the Dalits in Bihar. The khet Mazdoor Sabha aimed to protect the interests of the

agricultural labourers. It, however, turned against the All Indian Kisan Sabha which was working under the left leadership and posing a great challenge to the Congress.

Lokseva Natya Mandal

Shri Deenbandhu Shegaonkar (1926) founded Lokseva Natya Mandal in 1942 at Akola in Maharashtra. It was an association to undertake cultural activities like staging dramas, organizing bhajan parties and bringing a new awakening among the Dalit masses. The Mandal was active till 1953. Thereafter it was named as Deenbandhu Kala Pathak. The kala Pathak tried to spread the message of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar through cultural Programmes. The kala pathak was very much popular in Akola and the neighbouring districts.

Mahabodhi Ashok Mission

The Mahabodhi Ashok Mission was founded by Mrs. Quin Moi Rahul and Rahul Suman Chhawara at Ajmer in the year 1955. They had built a big Mahabodhi Ashok Mission Vihara at Ajmer. The Mission runs a school in Vihara and a monthly - Right View from Ajmer. The mission is spreading Buddhism among all the depressed classes, especially the koris or kolis in Rajasthan.

Mahanubhav Panthiya Asprushya Samaj

It was established in the month of January 1935. Its President was Raosaheb Thaware. The main objective of its samaj was to organize the untouchables converted to the Mahanubhav sect.

Mahar Dnyati Panchayati Samiti

It was founded by Sambhaji Tukaram Gaikwad in 1942 in Bombay. It has been renamed as Boudh Jan Panchayat Samiti. It is still in existence. The Mahar Dnyati Panchayat Samiti strove to propagate the thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the society.

Mahar Tarun Mandal

The Mahar Tarun Mandal (Mahar Youth League) was founded by Fathuji Bapuji Shende (1880-1922) at Nagpur in 1904. On behalf of the Mandal, he opened a school for boys and separate for girls. The Mandal strove to root out the old bad customs and habits of the Depressed Classes.

*Team Unheard Voices
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



“
I Am Dying For
My Country.

”

UDHAM SINGH

26 December 1899-31 July 1940

“I shall re-born in India”



Addressing a recent two-day national Seminar on Marginalization and Inclusion: Role of Marginalized Communities in India’s Struggle for Freedom, Shri Karnail Singh, descendant of freedom fighter Shaheed-E-Azam Sardar Udham Singh Ji recalled the dreams of the martyr about building India into a free, independent, and prosperous nation.

Karnail Singh



Today is an extremely auspicious day. Shaheed-E-Azam Saradar Singh Sahib, who took revenge for the country after entering into the other country, after entering inside the house of the enemy. In the 2019 elections, the slogan that we shall kill the enemy after entering his house was given. Origin of that slogan is traced back in his act. Our country accepted the slogan of killing the enemy after entering inside his house. This was the destiny of Sardar Udham Singh. He entered inside the house of the brutes and took revenge.

Sardar Udham Singh was born on December 26, 1899 at Sunam. His mother was Narain Kaur and father was Sardar Tehal Singh. They had two sons. The elder son was Sadhu Singh and Udham Singh was the younger one. It was a very poor family. The father worked as a railway crossing watchman near village Upali. Both sons were brought up there in a small room. Udham Singh was five-year-old when his mother passed away. A short time thereafter, his father

too passed away. Both siblings were orphaned and were admitted to an orphanage at Amritsar in Punjab, where, according to the orphanage register, they were allotted the numbers 121 and 122. They studied and grew up there. By God’s will, the elder brother too passed away and Udham Singh was left all by himself.

Later on, when the British passed the Rowlatt Act, our patriots assembled in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar on April 13, 1919 to protest against it. Since Udham Singh was a service-oriented child, he was assigned by the orphanage to serve water to the patriots with buckets. You are all aware about the brutalities that were witnessed there. Sardar Udham Singh was an eyewitness to all those brutalities. His entire being was shattered due to it. A young girl _ a newly-wed bride from Multan City, which was then in Punjab Province and which is now in Pakistan, who had got married only four days ago had been visiting Amritsar on a pilgrimage. She and her husband too reached Jallianwala Bagh to hear speeches being delivered by the patriots. That girl was still wearing the Chooda worn by her for her wedding. Her husband too was shot to death there. She sat near the dead body,



weeping in her tearing grief. Sardar Udham Singh asked her, "Behen, what happened to you?" She said, "My husband has been gunned down. We had come from Multan. This incident hurt Sardar Udham Singh to the core. He thought, "Why this had happened? What was her fault? She had just arrived here with her husband to pray." A tormented Sardar Udham Singh lifted a handful of bloody soil from the site and took oath that those who caused the bloodbath will pay for it by their own blood. He resolved, "I shall not go the brutes unpunished. I shall follow them wherever they may go. I shall not allow the flame of revenge in me go cold till I ensure that the wives of the brutes who did this bloodletting are widowed."

As the time passed on, Sardar Udham Singh reached USA. He obtained a passport, stayed there and kept on making preparations with the help of the Ghadar Party. Then he returned to India. On his return to India, he was arrested. After being released from jail, he boarded a ship and went to England. He pursued his pledge to take revenge for 21 years. Kartar Singh Sarabha was martyred at the age of 17 years. Bhagat Singh did the supreme sacrifice at the age of 23 years. Sardar Udham Singh sacrificed 21 years hunting the enemies. These days, one forgets his words within a couple of days. But Sardar Udham Singh kept his mind fixated on taking revenge against the brutes who had dishonoured the nation for 21 years. He wanted to kill the enemy at a time and place that the entire world will remember forever. Sardar Udham Singh took up a job at the stud farm of Michael O Dwyer in those days. He would take care of the horses on a daily basis, but he did not kill Michael O Dwyer there. He thought, "if a dog is killed on the street, nobody pays attention towards it. I shall kill him at a place and time which the entire world will remember forever and think that Udham Singh has done the supreme sacrifice."

The right time that Sardar Udham Singh was waiting for arrived on March 13, 1940. Sardar Udham Singh fitted a pistol in a voluminous book and reached the Caxton Hall, carrying it on him. Stringent security arrangements had been made there. Sardar Udham Singh offered a silent prayer to Guru Gobind Singh, "Oh My Guru, the True Emperor, you did the supreme sacrifice for the nation. This son of yours too is going to sacrifice himself for the country."

After offering his prayer, he reached inside the hall. When Michael O Dwyer rose to deliver his address, he started boasting about what he had done with the Hindostanis. Sardar Udham Singh rose and roared, "Beware! I have arrived here to take revenge on you." He opened fire at Michael O Dwyer. Three bullets were still left in the pistol when a woman standing next to Sardar Udham Singh caught him, asking, "What have you done?" Sardar Udham Singh dropped his pistol saying, "I have no enmity with anybody else. I have nothing to do with any white person. I shall not kill any innocent. The sinner who committed the brutality has been killed by me." With these words, he courted his arrest wearing a smile on his face.

Thereafter, he was sent to jail. An 11-member-jury was constituted to conduct a trial against him. In our country, the case is sent to the court directly. However, their jury system prevails and the cases are tried before the jury. The jury set to hear the case against Sardar Udham Singh was composed of five women and six men. The verdict passed by the jury was exemplary. Sardar Udham Singh revealed all designs in his statement to the jury. He said, "My country has been enslaved. My countrymen are rotting in jails. Several have been hanged. For which fault of his, Veer Savarkar has been sentenced to a prison term? For which wrong, Madanlal Dhingra has been kept in jail? You have made my country a colony of yours. We will not tolerate it."

Jury recommended hanging him. The court pronounced the death sentence for him in its order. On July 31, 1940, Sardar Udham Singh was hanged. Fifteen days before he was executed, on July 15, 1940, Sardar Udham Singh wrote an open letter addressed to his nation. I would like to quote what Sardar Udham Singh wrote to his fellow countrymen. The original letter is in Punjabi but I shall translate it in English,

He wrote, "My dear fellow countrymen, brothers, and sisters! Let Akal Purukh protect you. I hand over the steering of our nation to you as I am entering into the last phase of my life. I shall soon be reborn in India to complete the work left incomplete. I hope you shall be advanced in age by the time I shall be reborn. India is the land of saints and sages. Several great people, Gurus and saints have toiled to nurture her. Revolutionary patriots have laid down their lives for her prosperity. The history has witnessed her children doing the supreme sacrifice to maintain her glory. Youths have sacrificed themselves at a young age for my nation. Elders of the country too should not refrain themselves from joining the struggle for freedom. They should not think of their future. I firmly believe that the diabolic British would not be able to keep my country enriched by Ganga and Jamna Rivers enslaved for a long time. I request you not only to continue the war launched by me on, but to make it fiercer. I bear full faith that we shall win. My heart cries out and my mind is full of thoughts but I am short of words to express my feelings. Driving the British out of our nation is our pious duty. After that We have to build harmonious relations between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs after that. Challenges like starvation, death, poverty, illiteracy that plague our country are to be dealt with. We have to ensure justice for all, provide food for everybody including farmers and labourers, good schools and colleges for students, beautiful playgrounds, picnicking places for elders. I wish people would spend their money on education instead of lavish weddings. My pleasure lies in this. I have firm belief that people will adopt these ideas! May my country progress.

Pentonville Jail, London. July 15, 1940. Shaheed-E-Azam Udham Singh.

uv@unheardvoices.co.in



Gangadin valmiki : martyred giant hero of 1857 revolt

Adv. Brujesh



Gangadin also known as Gangu Pahalwan was a giant, not only figuratively but also literally! He was six feet tall, barrel chested man with fair complexion and long arms. He was born in a family from Jewar village which was known for producing courageous, honest, loyal and dutiful men and sending them to serve the Peshavas as warriors. Following the military tradition of his ancestors, Gangadin and his brother Matadin mastered skills as wrestlers and grew up to become fearless young men before they joined the service of Peshava Bajirao II and were assigned the duty of guarding the members of the royal family. Besides, they would play musical instruments during various festivities and military exercises.

Impressed by the bravery and loyalty of the sibling duo, Peshava Nana Saheb re-designated them as sepoy in the Royal Army and assigned the duty of working as a spy for him. Impressed by their mastery of wrestling, Peshava Nana Saheb, who aspired to build an army of strong men started Akharas to encouraged them to train young soldiers. Thus, Gangadin, who trained the Peshava soldiers of various castes not only in wrestling but also in other martial skills such as using weapons like spear, sword, bludgeon and sticks, came to be known as Gangu Pahalwan. Pleased with their dedication and skills, the Peshava had also gifted them several Bighas of agricultural land in Bithoor. Besides, Gangadin was also appointed as Kotwal and assigned to ensure law and order in Bithoor. He would wear his smart uniform consisting of a Pagri, Lungi, Kurta and patrol the town.

An unfortunate incident wherein Gangadin's brother Matadin was shot down by a Bithoor in full public view at a square to the north of Valmiki Ashram angered Gangadin. He could not retaliate due to the adverse situation prevailing at that time. When Peshava Nana Saheb came to know about the assassination of his military man, his blood boiled. Seething with anger against the brazen murder of their colleague, the ranks and files of the Royal Army decided to revolt against the British. This prompted generals of the Royal Army as well as the citizens including Tika Singh, Awadhanush Dhari, Dal Bhajan Singh, Gangu, Azizan Bai and others

revolt against the British. On 4th June 1857, they proclaimed Peshava Nana Saheb as their leader and an independent king and waged war against the British. Subedar Gangadin was appointed Colonel-in-Command of the 374th Platoon of the Peshava Army and Dal Bhajan was given the rank of Colonel of the 53rd Platoon of the Royal Army.



In a short time, the Peshava won Kanpur, the seat of his kingdom. Womenfolk and children of British camp were captured and kept in the Bibi House complex. Still seething with anger, Azizan Bai hatched a secret plan to kill the British prisoners without knowledge of Peshava Nana Saheb and reached Kanpur where she took over Bibi House with the help of Tika Singh and Dal Bhajan and slayed the British captives. Conspirators of the slaying dispersed to various cities after the incident. However, the British managed to ascertain their identities and declared reward of Rs 1 Lakh for bringing them in, alive or dead. Gangadin was returning to Bithoor after the massacre at Kanpur when he was apprehended by the British at Channiganj and hanged against a Neem tree. Later on, his memorial was constructed there and the local resident's worship Gangadin as Pir Gangu Baba.

*Author is Secretary, All India Parisangh Mahadalit sanghatan, Avadh
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

People forgot about Sankissa over the period of time and the sculptures and architecture fell into disuse and were neglected by the local people. Today it has ruins of old monasteries and Buddhist monuments. It is rarely visited by people as it is difficult to access, and there are hardly any facilities.

After a long time, Alexander Cunningham discovered the place in 1842. Eighty-seven years later Sir Anagarika Dharmapala (Sri Lanka) came here on a spiritual quest. In 1957 Panditha Madabawita Wijesoma Thero (Sri Lanka) came to Sankissa for a few years and started a Buddhist school (Wijesoma Widyalyaya) for poor people.



Sankissa : Where the Lord descended from heavens

Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao

Among the most important Buddhist pilgrim places, Sankissa (Pali version) is considered as one. It is variously known as Sankashya or Sankshya (Sanskrit versions). Today Sankissa is in the Farrukhabad district of Uttar Pradesh. This is a hardly known place among the Buddhists too. The importance of the place is highlighted through the sculptures depicting the event that took place at Sankissa and the remains of the Ashokan pillar over there.

The event associated with this site is described in the Tipitakas - the most sacred Pali Canons. After the enlightenment the Buddha wandered spreading his religion. His lectures were becoming very popular. He moved to modern Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and gave

numerous lectures. We already know that after the birth of the Buddha, his mother expired and went to the Tavatimsa (Pali) or Trayastrimsha (Sanskrit), the 33rd heaven where the Gods resided including Brahma and Shakra (Indra). Gautama wanted to share his knowledge with this mother. Hence, he went to the 33rd heaven. It is believed that he met his mother there and stayed there for three months and taught her the Ahidhamma philosophy.

After three months, when he decided to go to the earth, he descended to this place called Sankissa. It is recorded in the Pali canons that when he came to earth, he was accompanied by Brahma and Shakra. The people saw three tall ladders coming down from the heavens. It is considered as a miracle and hence is known as the Miracle of Sankissa. This event was witnessed by the local people. The memory of this event was also retained during the times of Ashoka when he erected a pillar at this site with the



capital of an elephant. He also constructed a stupa and a temple over there. The beautiful elephant capital and the broken pieces of the pillar have been preserved over there. Even though there is no certain information about what happened later at this site, the celebrated Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang visited India in the 7th century C.E. At that time he had visited all the important places associated with the Buddha and other famous sites. He wrote a detailed account of what he saw then, in his travelogue Si-Yu-Ki. There he gave very important information about Sankissa. He wrote that he saw the ruins of three ladders, which had been built of brick and stone by Ashoka, to commemorate the Buddha's descent, but the ladders were nearly sunk in the earth. Thus, we have got another evidence of Ashoka's devotion towards and efforts to promote Buddhism in a concrete form.

This was not enough, as this event of Sankissa was considered as a Miracle and was remembered and was reminded to people again and again through various media. One of them was the sculptures on the railings of the stupas. The stupas at Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodh Gaya carried the sculptures of the Descent of the Buddha to earth at Sankissa are explicitly shown. The first depiction of this scene occurs in one of the sculptures at Bharhut (M.P. 2nd century B.C.E.). As one would know, the early Indian Buddhist art was aniconic. There Gautama Buddha was not shown in the human form but his presence was suggested through certain symbols like his foot prints, stupa, Bodhi tree etc. Here at Bharhut, the artist has depicted three ladders and has suggested the presence of the Buddha through his footprints with Dharmachakra that are shown descending the central ladder. The rest of the two ladders are reserved for Brahma and Shakra, as per the story given in the canon. At the end of the ladder a tree is shown decorated with garlands and people are shown worshipping it. This is another symbol used to suggest the presence. In fact, there are two divine flying beings showering flowers on the Bodhi tree. The event is witnessed by the devotees on Sankissa and they are shown with folded hands. The depiction of this event at Bharhut was replicated at Sanchi (1st century B.C.E.) also. However, the pillar with elephant capital was erected by Ashoka in 3rd century B.C.E. That pillar was probably shown in one of the sculptures at Bodh Gaya. Here the elephant is shown as the capital of a pillar. But at Sanchi, due to the crunch of the space, only one ladder was shown and there are no symbols of Gautama shown on the ladder. On the contrary one Bodhi tree is shown at the top and another one is shown at the base of the ladder, suggesting the completion of the descent. By this time the narrative must have become so popular that the beholders probably did not need the minute details that were shown in the sculpture at Bharhut. Later on, when after 1st -2nd centuries C.E., the Buddha was shown in the human form, the

elaborate sculptures made in the Gandhara region (i.e., modern Pakistan and Afghanistan). One such sculpture (5th century CE) showed three separate ladders with three separate figures descending the ladders, the central one of course being the Buddha himself. The person with the attire of an ascetic is Brahma and the one with a crown is Shakra. At every level, there are devotees shown watching the event and some are showering flowers and others are ready with the garlands. Such was the importance of this event at Sankissa that it was depicted at many stupa sites far and wide in the country. Unfortunately, people forgot about it over the period of time and the sculptures and architecture fell into disuse and



were neglected by the local people. Today it has ruins of old monasteries and Buddhist monuments. It is rarely visited by people as it is difficult to access, and there are hardly any facilities. After a long time, Alexander Cunningham discovered the place in 1842. Eighty-seven years later Sir Anagarika Dharmapala (Sri Lanka) came here on a spiritual quest. In 1957 Panditha Madabawita Wijesoma Thero (Sri Lanka) came to Sankissa for a few years and started a Buddhist school (Wijesoma Widyalyaya) for poor people. Let us hope that the present scheme of the Buddhist tourism circuit will bring back its ancient grandeur !

*Author is Associate Professor of Indology,
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

Two days National Seminar on "Marginalisation and Inclusion : Role of Marginalised Communities in India's Struggle for Freedom"



Hon. Sh. Loganathan Murugen, Minister of State (Central Govt.) addressing at inaugural session



Smt. Baby Rani Maurya, Minister, Women's welfare, Child Development & Nutrition Govt of Uttar Pradesh addressing at inaugural session.



'Vanchit in Nation Buidling' book launched at seminar



Panelist of symposium on 'Idea of Nation and Freedom struggle' along with SSF team.



..... Felicitation of Descendents
 An honour to Social Studies Foundation



Shri. Karnail Singh,
 Descendent of Sardar Udham Singh



Shri. Shalin Poddar,
 Descendent of Putli Maya Devi Poddar



Shri. Tulsiram,
 Descendent of Gangubaba



Smt. Meena,
 Descendent of Nand Ram Kangda



Smt. Swati Kumar,
 Descendent of Babu Jagjivan Ram