



AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV-
A TRIBUTE TO COMMEMORATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 75 YEARS
OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

(ANTHOLOGY OF MULTI DISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH PAPERS BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS)



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Amrit **Mahotsav**

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FORGOTTEN HEROES; STORIES OF UNSUNG HEROES, FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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INTRODUCTION

As we are celebrating 75 years of Independence, I wanted to throw a limelight on the Forgotten Heroes of Our Freedom Struggle. Every time when the word freedom struggle is heard we always think there were only MEN, in the movement, but through this short work, I want to bring out the Women power during our freedom struggle, who were never noticed nor recognised by the people for their Great Sacrifice.

We know freedom struggle was started at the capital cities of our nation, yet the great foundations and influence was brought at the tribal areas and the small towns.

OBJECTIVES

Through this article, we wanted to bring awareness and spirit among the Girlchild and Women of our nation because real incidents are the live examples of Empowerment. Still at this age of Modernism there are people, who still consider Girl child a burden.

And today we are hear breathing and leading a peaceful life gaining success and progress only because of our freedom fighters, yet still we are unaware about the sacrifice made by them.

You might be thinking that I have been talking about the empowerment of women from the beginning its because today we are going to talk and learn about the Forgotten Women heroes of our freedom struggle

They are :

1. Lakshmi Sahgal
2. Bhikaiji Cama
3. Kanaklata Barua

ANALYSIS OF TOPIC :

1. **Lakshmi Sahgal** : She was born on October 24, 1914 at a village of Madras Presidency, British India to a Tamil brahmin family. As She was a Girl in their family she never wanted to give up on her dreams. That's the reason from the beginning she

had keen love towards education. Lakshmi studied gynaecology and obstetrics. She worked as a doctor in the government Kasturba Gandhi Hospital located at Chennai.

In 1940 she left to Singapore after the failure of her marriage to the pilot P.K.N.Rao. During her stay in Singapore, she met some members of Subhas Chandra Bose Indian National Army. It all started there, Lakshmi began her real life during her stay at Singapore.

In 1942, during the "Surrender of Singapore" by the British to the Japanese, Lakshmi aided wounded prisoners of war, many of whom were interested in forming an Indian independence army.

Lakshmi heard about the arrival of Subash Chandra Bose on 2 July of 1943, and requested for a meeting with him from which she emerged with a mandate to set up a Women's regiment. Women responded enthusiastically to join the all-women brigade and Dr. Lakshmi became Captain Lakshmi, a name and identity that would stay with her for life.

The INA marched to Burma with the Japanese army in December 1944, but by March 1945 with the tide of war turning against them, the INA leadership decided to beat a retreat before they could enter Imphal. Captain Lakshmi was arrested by the British in May 1945, remaining in Burma until March 1946, when she was sent to India - at a time when the INA trails in Delhi heightened popular discontent with and hastened the end of colonial rule. In 1971, Lakshmi joined the communist party of India and represented the party in the Rajya Sabha. During Bangladesh crisis, she organised relief camps and medical aid in Calcutta for refugees who streamed into India from Bangladesh. She was one of the founding members of "All India Democratic Women's Association" in 1981 and led many of its activities and campaigns. She led a medical team to Bhopal after the gas tragedy in December 1984.

Worked towards restoring peace in Kanpur following the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and was arrested for her participation in a campaign against the Miss World Competition in Bangalore in 1996.

In 1988, Sahgal was awarded the Padma Vibhushan by Indian President K.R.Narayan.

On 19 July 2012, Sahgal suffered a cardiac arrest and passed away on 23 July at the age of 97 at Kanpur.

Lakshmi Sahgal life shift from being a Doctor to Revolutionist and Women Indian National Army Officer is an inspiring journey whose works, brave steps have been forgotten.

2. Bhikaiji Cama : She was born in Bombay on 24 September 1861, in a large, affluent Parsi Zoroastrian family. She has unfurled the first version of flag of Independent India on August 21, 1907, when an international Socialist Conference was being held at Stuttgart, a city in Germany.

In October 1896, the Bombay Presidency was hit first by famine and shortly thereafter by "Bubonic plague". Bhikaiji joined one of the many teams working out of Grant Medical College in an effort to provide care for the afflicted and to inculcate the healthy. Cama subsequently contracted the plague herself but survived.

Later when she was planning to return India in 1904, there she came in contact with Shyamji Krishna Varma, who was well known in London's Indian community for fiery nationalist speeches he gave in Hyde Park. Through him, she met Dadabhai Naoroji, then President of the "British Committee of the Indian National Congress, and for whom she came to work as private secretary. Together with Naoroji and Singh Rewabhai Rana, Cama supported the founding of Varma's Indian Home Rule Society in February 1905. In London she was told that her return to India would be prevented unless she would sign a statement promising not to participate in Nationalist Activities. But she refused.

The same year Cama was relocated to Paris where she co-founded the Paris Indian Society. Together with other notable members of the movement for Indian sovereignty living in exile Cama wrote and published and distributed revolutionary literature for the movement, including "Bande Mataram" and later "Madan Jalwar" - these weeklies were smuggled into India through the French colony of Pondicherry.

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On 22 August 1907, Cama attended the "Second Socialist Congress" at Stuttgart where she described the devastating impact of the famine that had struck the Indian subcontinent and her appeal for the human rights of the people. She called the "The Flag of Indian Independence". It has been speculated that this moment has been an inspiration to African American Intellectuals. Cama's flag, a modification of the Calcutta flag, was co-designed by Cama and later serve as one of the templates from which the current National Flag of India was created.

With the outbreak of World War I, the French and British became allies and the members of Paris India society except Bhikaiji Singh Rewabhai Rana left the country. Rana were briefly arrested in October 1914, they tried to agitate among Punjab Regiment that had just arrived in Marseilles on the front.

Cama remained in exile in Europe and when gravely ill and paralyzed by a stroke she had suffered earlier that year.

We lost the lady legend at the age of 75 on August 13, 1936 in Paris general hospital.

When a common women turns into a revolutionist the story would be inspiring. **Kanaklata Barua :** she was born on 22 October 1924, Darrang district of British India. She lost her parents at an early age. She started schooling to take care of younger siblings. She joined the Quit India movement Barua joined the Mrityu Bahini, a death squad comprising young youth from the Gohpur sub division of Assam. On 20 September 1942, the Bahini decided to hoist the National Flag at the Local post office. A procession of unarmed villagers were led by Barua to do so. The police under Rehman Som, the officer in-charge of the police station, warned the procession of dire consequences if they proceeded their plan. Undeterred by the warning, the procession continued marching ahead. The police fired upon the procession. Barua and the flag she was carrying with her were killed. Barua and Kakoti were killed in the procession. Barua was only 17 years of age at the time of her martyrdom.

The Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Kanak Lal of the Indian Cost Guard, commissioned in

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named after Barua. A life size statue of hers was unveiled at Gauripurin 2011. Her impassioned speech before her death, remains a source of inspiration for many. She laid down her life for the freedom of the country at the age of 17 years.

She was an Indian independence activist and AISF leader.

"She had joined the MrityuBahini just two days before the incident" said Sheila Bora, retired professor of Dibrugarh University, who has authored a monograph on Barua, "the squad strictly admitted members aged 18 and above but Kanaklata was an exception. She wanted to lead the procession and after much persuasion she was allowed to".

Even as Barua fell to bullets, she did not let go of the flag. "she didn't want it to touch the ground. Another woman volunteer behind her - MukundaKakoti - came and held the flag and she, too was shot" said Bora. "The fact that she was a young girl - that captured the national imagination of the time", said Avinibesh Sharma who runs Vintage Assam, a website on Assam history... "it was also a time where you saw a lot of women coming to the fore, leading processions, patriotic

fervour was its peak - and Kanaklata was a product of this time". Kanaklata was an epic figure in the freedom struggle who gave her life at the age of 17 years for the Nation's Independence and peace.

Her life shift from the backdrop of school to a Freedom fighter is a story to be heard by everyone to lead the life

Just imagine at the age of 17 years, she decided to work for the progress of nation and its peace. When she could sacrifice her life at that age why cant we work for our nation progress in 21 century.

CONCLUSION:

We are at the end of the article, I don't feel empty now because we have gone through the Legends who were not known to the world, during this research I have learnt that we the women are not less than Man, our dedication, our will power, and our decisions are wiser that could our life into a progress, I urge for women progress..

Wishing all the Women a success ahead and Remembering the Legendary Woman Freedom fighters on the occasion of 75 years of our Independence.