

ROLE OF UNIDENTIFIED WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF UTTAR KANNADA DISTRICT

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Before 1850s Uttar Kannada district is identified of the administrative provinces of Bombay presidency. This region is known for diversified geographical conditions and culture. This region had glorious historical background. From 1st century BC to up to 17th AD this region was ruled by more than twenty-five dynasties and kingdoms were ruled over this region. In the 18th century this region was comes under the control of the British East India (Government of England). The oppressive rules and regulations and financial and revenue polices of British administration badly effected on the Agri-based industries, forest-based industries and agricultural actives which are the main lively hood of the people of this region. This act of British forced the people demand for freedom.

At the same time Wake-up call of national movement that was given by Balgangadhar Tilak, Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Mahatma Gandhiji created revolutionary changes in the peoples mind setup of Uttar Kannada District. Balagangadhar Tilak frequently visited Sirsi, Haliyal, Mundgod and Siddapur and established units of Home rule league. Visit and tour programme of Mahatma Gandhiji including Belgaum Uttar Kannada and other places of Karnataka are highly influenced on the common people of Uttar Kannada. In the support of Balagangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhiji thousands, lakhs together people of Uttar Kannada participated national movement (freedom struggle). Among these heroes, contributions of unidentified female freedom fighters are to worth mention and most remarkable.

Majority of to them are housewives, illiterates and agricultural bounded labours. They took major part in the movements started by the leaders like Balagangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Gopalkrishna Gokhale.

As call given by Mahatma Gandhi to participate in Non-cooperation and Civil disobedience movement, The people of Uttar Kannada were took active role is this movement. As a part of this movement many women freedom fighters namely Laxmibai from Hichhakad, Tippu Nayak from Suve, Bommakka from Kangil, Hanumakka from Basagod, Chandri from Vasare village, adopted anti british rule of

activities. Under the leadership of Yashodha Shyamrao Shenvi and Ananadibai Hanumattikar these women group started procession in front of Revenue office and started shouting Anti-British slogans. To control these activities British supported police started Lathi charge. In this incident hundreds of gathered women were injured. Though these freedom fighters were injured continued their protest. Sitabai a great lady inspired the gathered community to participate in freedom movement she said that we want tax free salt in my country which liberated from clutches of British rule. By listening this speech thousands of people started to sailing of self-manufactured tax-free salt and break the rule of salt tax.

Another great lady freedom fighter was Yashodha Shyamrao Shenvi. This lady was highly influenced by Swadeshi (home rule) movement of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Ghokhale and Mahatma Gandhiji, Yashodamma and women followers visited each and all places and houses and collected foreign made cloths and burnt them in the public places. At the same time, they requested to use Indian made goods and clothes. They met the cloth merchants and requested them not to sell or stock of foreign goods. Thus, as a part of freedom movement the swadeshi movement became most successful movement in the villages of Uttar Kannada.

Tippu Hammanna Nayak was another woman freedom fighter of Uttar Kannada District. As she belongs to peasant community she opposed imposition of heavy tax on peasants. She organized a march against taxation policy of British government. She openly challenged the revenue officers act. She blamed officer that do not become a slave under British Government. If you are a real Indian, then you must resign your post and join to freedom movement. She visited government office with her child and entered in to jail without any hesitation.

Under no tax campaign (Bardoli movement of Saradar Vallabhaji Patel) many peasants of Siddapur and its surrounding village are participated in greater number. They disobeyed the government order and refused to pay the land tax. But the British supported policemen and revenue officers started to confiscation of property of poor farmers. They seized the almost all movable and non-movable assets of the men and women including cattle ornaments cloths etc and locked their houses and set them to outside the house.

These poor women and their children were spent more than 15 to 45 days without food and water. Though these homeless people suffered miserably were not at all get ready to withdraw their fasting and protest. Gouramma Kallal, Laxamma, Mahadevi were the leaders of this movement lead the movement. At the same time policemen and Revenue Officers started torching action on these gathered people.

Hundreds of women participated in the no tax movement. Kani Bommakka was a great freedom fighter. She walks through forest route about 48km from Hichhakad Surve Village to district headquarter Karwar and started flouting of

Black flag in front of British Governor and shouted "Governor Go Back". At this juncture policemen arrested her and thrown in to jail.

As a congress leader and freedom fighter Nehru visited Siddapur to inspire the people to participate in the freedom movement. At that time Shreemati Mailamma, wife of Chauda Naik of Bedakani donated her precious gold chain (necklace) to Nehru in support of freedom fighters.

In the same way Haslar Devi a farm worker who protected almost all precious ornaments and assets of her master Doddamane Hegade family. He returned all these assets after their returned from British jail.

Conclusion:

Any how these unidentified freedom fighters fought for the nation's liberation. They need not want any name, fame and popularity. Really even today these freedom fighters are immortal in the villages and also in folk literature. They are the great people, and role model for all young generation of India. Through this small effort we will pay floral tribute these freedom fighters.

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