

LIFE & WORK OF WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTER
KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY

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Abstract:

Kamaladevi was a well-known political and social worker during the Indian Independence. She was a great women freedom fighter during Mahatma Gandhi's mass movement. When Gandhiji announced his satyagraha, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was one of the two women (along with Avantikabai Gokhale) chosen for inclusion in the front line unit of seven volunteers at Bombay. Kamaladevi's motto behind founding the Family Planning Association in 1930 was to "wage a war" on women's sexual dependence. This research paper glimpse about the life and work of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay as a Freedom Fighter.

Key Words: Freedom Fighter, Family Planning Association, Satyagraha, Motto

Introduction:

Kamaladevi was born in Mangalore. She was a child widow. She remarried to Harindranath Chattopadhyay. He was educated in England at 'Bedford College' and 'London School of Economics'. Around that time, she returned to India to participate in the Non-Cooperation Movement led by M. Gandhi. He was also particularly interested in agricultural issues. She was a member of the Congress Party; But he did not like that party's policy of agrarian reform and left the party in 1948 to join the Congress Socialist Party. Kamaladevi was awarded by Ramon Magsaysay Award, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan awards.

Meeting Gandhiji:

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was a multifaceted personality who has worked in various fields like involvement in freedom movement, efforts to revitalize traditional arts, writing, social work and so on. She persuaded Gandhi to allow women to participate in the freedom movement. Along with that, he also pursued the issues of women's basic rights and economic, religious and social freedom.

Women work:

In the following year, she became a founding member of the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC) and was its first Organizing Secretary. She tried to inculcate the cooperative movement among handicraftsmen by establishing two organizations namely Central Cottage Industries Emporium and Craft Council of India. The Awakening of Indian Women', 'Japan - Its Weakness and Strength',

'Uncle Sam's Empire', 'In War Torn China', 'Towards a National Theatre' are some of his popular and discussed books.

During her tenure, she travelled extensively to many European nations and was inspired to initiate several social reform and community welfare programs, and set up educational institutions, run for the woman, and by women. Another shining example in this series was the formation of Lady Irwin College for Home Sciences, one of its kind colleges for women of its times, in New Delhi.

During World War II :

When World War II broke out Kamaladevi was in England, and she immediately began a world tour to represent India's situation to other countries and drum up support for Independence after the war. While on this tour she journeyed across the southern United States. In 1941 she boarded a segregated train.

In Louisiana, a conductor tried to remove her from a car reserved for white passengers. Upon realizing that she was not a Black American, the conductor reportedly grew confused about how he should proceed and asked her where she was from. To her first answer, "New York," he pressed to learn "which land [she hailed] from," to which she reportedly responded: "It makes no difference. I am a coloured woman obviously and it is unnecessary for you to disturb me for I have no intention of moving from here." The conductor left her sitting in that train car.

Post-independence work:

Independence of India, brought Partition in its wake, and she plunged into rehabilitation of the refugees. Her first task was to set up the Indian Cooperative Union to help with rehabilitation, and through the Union she made plans for a township on cooperative lines.

The township of Faridabad was set up, on the outskirts of Delhi, rehabilitating over 50,000 refugees from the Northwest Frontier. She worked tirelessly in helping the refugees to establish new homes and new professions; for this they were trained in new skills. She also helped set up health facilities in the new town.

Thus began the second phase of her life's work in rehabilitation of people as well as their lost crafts. She was considered singlehandedly responsible for the great revival of Indian handicrafts and handloom, in the post- independence era, and is considered her greatest legacy to modern India.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay: Know About This Feminist Freedom Fighter Who Built Entire City From Scratch:-

While Faridabad and its vibrance are known to many, the woman who envisioned this city based on cooperative policies with the refugee communities is a story less remembered. On her death anniversary, here's revisiting the contributions of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. A name that has had very few mentions in the Indian history books but continues to impact the artistic and feminist movements in

the country is Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. During her lifetime, she has donned multiple roles, from a freedom fighter, theatre actor, social activist, art enthusiast, and politician, to a feminist.

Concluding Remarks:

The most fitting award offered to Kamaladevi was the Charles Eames' Award as the one individual, who had contributed to the Quality of Life in India in this era. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was one such person, who emerged as an active participant in the political, socioeconomic and cultural life of India. Hers is a story of courage to live in the world, to participate in it fully – to take up every challenge and meet it boldly.

She is not only remembered the world over for being responsible for building the crafts world, for encouraging artists in all spheres of life, but also as a humane person, who wanted to enrich the lives of people irrespective of caste, creed or nationhood. She fought for the rights of young and old to live with dignity? She espoused the cause of the have-nots, the neglected, the forgotten and those who languished in prison for want of someone to fight for their rights and for justice. She shared her knowledge, her experience with innumerable persons and helped them to achieve their goals.

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