

Impact of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian National Movement with a special reference to the Vision of Martyr Kanaklata Baruah of Assam**Guptajit Pathak**

Assistant Professor, Department of History
Kanya Mahavidyalaya
(Affiliated to Gauhati University) Geetanagar
Guwahati – 781021, Assam, India

Abstract:

Mahatma Gandhi's existence truly transformed the political uniqueness and societal impact in the Indian National Movement. Gandhiji concerned himself by way of the problems concerning to Indian people by inquiring existing different practices that limited the attachment of the people in the national awakening. Gandhi called purdah a tradition that did harm to the country and was a barrier to the enlargement and expansion for the women. The paper wants to glorify the impact of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian National Movement with a special reference to the visions of Martyr Kanaklata Baruah of Barangabari of Gohpur, Sonitpur district of Assam.

Key Words:

Impact, Mahatma Gandhi, Indian, National, Movement, Vision, Martyr, Kanaklata Baruah, Assam.

Statement of the Research Problem:

The Indian Independence Movement is a big question for the Indian people. Mahatma Gandhi assembled the dream of societal formation with peace and harmony, hence, his political leadership occupies a vital place. That is why, it is indispensable to study martyr Kanaklata Baruah of Barangabari of Gohpur, present Sonitpur District of Assam to fill the gap existing in the history of Indian independence movement with its contemporary relevance.

An Evaluation of Related Literature:

In this part of the research work, the historical knowledge and awareness of Mahatma Gandhi and his vision towards Indian Women's Movement are reviewed to attain a deeper understanding. At the moment, some studies are presented here with the perception of Martyr Kanaklata Baruah for its perspective.

In order to rationalize the statement of the problem following literature review has been done.

- (i) Dutta, A. (1991) in his book, **Assam in the Freedom Movement**, emphasizes briefly about the freedom movement of Assam.
- (ii) Dutta, K.N. (1969) in his book, **Landmarks of the Freedom Struggle of Assam**, highlights the various stages of freedom struggle of Assam.
- (iii) Ahmed. Eli (1993) in her book, **Asamar Birangana**, glorified different heroic leaders of Assam including Kanaklata Baruah.
- (iv) Bhagawati, B.K., (2003) in his book, **Amar Swadhinata Andolanat Asamar Sahid**, focuses about the different martyrs of Assam in the freedom movement.
- (v) Barua, D.K., (1989) in his book, **Buraluitar Parar Birangana Kanaklata**, highlights Kanaklata Barua and her contribution in the Quit India Movement of Assam.
- (vi) Pathak, G. (2008) in his M.Phil Research book (published), **Assamese Women in Indian Independence Movement with a special Emphasis on Kanaklata Baruah**, highlights about the role of different Assamese women in Indian Independence Movement with a special focus on Kanaklata Barua and her heroic role in this movement.

Rationale of the Study:

In the Indian Independence Movement the vision of martyr Kanaklata Baruah of Gohpur, Assam has its gigantic value.

Objectives:

1. To focus the concept of Mahatma Gandhi towards Indian Independence Movement.
2. To glorify the vision of Kanaklata Baruah in Indian Independence Movement.

Research Questions:

1. Is there any concept of Mahatma Gandhi towards the Indian Independence Movement?
2. What was the influence and vision of Kanaklata Baruah in Indian Independence Movement?

Research Methodology:

A historical and empirical method has taken to answer the research questions. The secondary sources are collected from different books, journals, edited volumes, periodicals, research papers, research articles, paper clips, news papers, internet etc.

Concept and Impact of Mahatma Gandhi:

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an Indian objector and activist who was the leader of the Indian independence movement against British regime who was known as Mahatma, "Great Soul". He was a national hero, political and spiritual leader of India. Operating non-violent and civil disobedience movement, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired the movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.

The three main qualities that identify Gandhi as a hero are strong leadership, straightforwardness and courageousness.

Apparitions of Mahatma Gandhi towards the Indian Independence Movement:

The main impacts of Mahatma Gandhi's are:

1. The Future of India
2. Unorthodoxy approach
3. Satyagraha
4. Mass civil disobedience
5. Vocalizing a transcendent message

Who was Kanaklata Baruah?

Kanaklata Barua was a freedom fighter and activist from Assam who vigorously participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942. Throughout the last phase of India's struggle for freedom the heroic ladies who came to the forefront and became immortal through martyrdom was "Birbala" Kanaklata Baruah. She was born on 22nd December, 1924 in Barangabari village under Kolongpur mouza in the present Biswanath district of Assam.

Kanaklata Barua's grand-father was Ghanakanta Barua who was popularly known as "Gahana Chikari" (Ghana hunter) and the name of his dynasty was "Dolakasaria Barua dynasty". Kanaklata Barua's father was Krishana Kanta Barua whom people called "Baga" (white). Kanaklata had two mothers. The name of the first one was Karneswari.

Vision of Kanaklata Baruah:

Kanaklata decided to fight for freedom from the core of her heart and joined the revolutionary meetings secretly. The nationalist Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's song and the multifaceted artist and revolutionary singer Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha's lectures attracted her much to make up as the soldier.

Jyoti Prasad Agarwala advised the congress volunteers to run the movement all non-violently and proceeded to the Police Stations of Tezpur District for hoisting the congress flag with the shouts of Quit India. He created the "Mrityu Bahini" (Death Squad) for the triumph of the programme of the movement with the mantra of "Do or die". The members of the "Mrityu Bahini" would hoist the flags in all the Police Stations of Tezpur Sub-Division with the non-violent programme.

Kanaklata was extremely satisfied with the guidance and motivation of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. As a female volunteer of the congress of Assam, she requested all the male and female leaders of the party to proceed to the Police Station with flags in their hands ahead of the groups of the young girls on the appointment day of 20th September, 1942.

The Main Events:

Kalayanpur camp under Kalanpur Circle (Mouza) was the main camp. Volunteers from Tezpur, Satia, Dhekiajuli, Kalyanpur and others gathered there and the various active leaders and volunteers namely Gahan Goswami, Biswadev Sarma, Mahadev Sharma from Tezpur, Bijoy Chandra Bhagawati of Satia, Amiya Kumar Das of Dhekiajuli and Jonaram Bhuyan of Kalyanpur and many others took energetic participation in Quit India Movement of 1942 against the Britishers.

Kanaklata Baruah joined the volunteers. In this camp it was decided to which death Squad Kanaklata would join and unfurled the tri colour on 20th September, 1942. Kanaklata proved the blood of Jayamati in her body, the bravery of Mula Gabharu in her heart and Spirit (Maha Mantra) of Gandhi in her mind.

Results and Discussion:

On the 18th of September 1942 meeting was held in the 'Kirtan Ghar' (Religious Prayer hosue) of Jeranial Satra at 2 P.M near Kanaklata's village under the Presidentship of Maghiram Bora.

Kanaklata requested Puspalata Das to get her name enlisted in the "Mrityu Bahini". Puspalata Das also enlisted her name. It was Kanaklata's desire to fight as a soldier for freeing her motherland and expressed her desire before her grandfather and promised him that she would keep the reputation to his dynasty while standing before the British Police-in-Charge of the Gohpur Police Station which was the main spot of the Britishers especially in moment of hoisting the flag.

On the appointment day, 20th September, 1942 Kanaklata led a big procession to the Gohpur Police Station to hoist the National Flag. Kanaklata and her force marched towards the Police Station and the police authorities prevented them from proceeding. Kanaklata and other precisionists were not daunted. They were determined and the spirit which inspired them was "Do or die".

The police Officer-in-Charge fired at Kanaklata and hit her right on the chest. She fell down on the ground. But Mukunda Kakati who was following her did not allow the flag to fall down and held it high, although, he was also shot at all, he died instantly. Kanaklata laid down her life for the freedom of our country in just 17 years of age at the time of her martyrdom.

Major Findings:

The Major findings of the research paper are:

1. The visions of Mahatma Gandhi towards India's Independence Movement are of great value.
2. As a revolutionary activist the contribution of Kanaklata Baruah in Women's Movement, Quit India Movement and Indian Independence Movement are of immense significance.
3. Martyr Kanaklata Baruah is acknowledged as a heroic figure as she contributed her life in just 17 years of age.
4. Kanaklata Baruah inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's spirit 'Do or die' for Indian Independence Movement.
5. The inspiration from Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Prasad Rabha was the backdrop for the revolutionary journey of Kanaklata.
6. Kanaklata sacrificed her life for the freedom and reputation of her motherland.
7. Kanaklata proved the blood of Jayamati in her body, the bravery of Mula Gabharu in her heart and Spirit (Maha Mantra) of Gandhi in her mind.

Policy Implementations:

"Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change. Education is essential to change, for education creates both new wants and the ability to satisfy them".

Henry S. Commager

Various policies can be adopted to preserve Self Help Groups in empowering rural women of Assam.

1. The educational institutions should provide the topics relating to women's movement and Indian independence movement to its classes of primary, high school, higher secondary and college levels.
2. Workshop, seminar should be organized in educational institutions relating to Indian Independence Movement.
3. Study of history related to independence is a topic of Academic level.
4. Government should put into practice methodical education so that rural women and general people also feel attention on the concept of Indian Independence.
5. Martyr Kanaklata Baruah should be honoured in regional as well as national paradigm so that people should aware about her contribution.
6. Kanaklata Baruah state award should be provided to the heroic women who effort only for the state of Assam.

Eye-catching Suggestions:

The important suggestions of the research paper are:

1. The impact and influence of Mahatma Gandhi is of great value, hence, Gandhian study should be provided in each level.
2. Seminars, workshops relating to the topic of Mahatma Gandhi should be organized in each educational institution.
3. 2nd October as Gandhi Jayanti should be celebrated and organized in such a methodical way so that every students from every level aware the visions of Mahatma Gandhi.
4. An existence sculpture of Kanaklata must be remembered by each and every Assamese for the glory of India's identity.
5. Martyr Kanaklata's sacrifice towards India's Freedom Movement was not only the contribution of Assam but also India's perspective.
6. Kanaklata Baruah's wide-ranging topics and questions should be provided for each level of schools and colleges.

Some Photographs:



Kalicharan Baruah the youngest brother of Martyr Kanaklata Baruah



Researcher Guptajit Pathak with the statue of Kanaklata Baruah and Mukunda Kakati at Present Gohpur Town

Concluding Remarks:

In addition to the martyrdom, a large number of female activists were seriously injured, while facing the police and military bullets. Around five hundred women freedom fighters had to bear the brunt of British atrocities in Assam in the movement for the country's liberation. Their names will always be remembered by the people of the nation.

Kanaklata Barua sacrificed her valuable life for the sovereignty and respect of her native land. For this reason, Kanaklata's sacrifice made her a martyr and an immortal soul in the hearts of every Assamese.

Bibliography:

Primary Sources: Official Records and Documents

- Report of the enquiry committee of Freedom Fighters.
- Government of Assam, 1979

Annexure:

1. Martyrs of the 1942 Revolution in Assam.

Persons Interviewed:

1. Mr. Kalicharan Barua, youngest brother of Martyr Kanaklata Baruah, Barangbari, Biswanath District of Assam
2. Mrs. Mary Barua, Barangbari, Biswanath District of Assam
3. Late Thuleshwar Rajkhowa, Barangbari, Biswanath District of Assam

Secondary Sources:

1. Dutta, A., Assam in the Freedom Movement, Culcutta, 1991,
2. Dutta, K.N, Landmarks of the Freedom Stuggle in Assam, Guwahati, 1969
3. Bhattacharjee, A., Assam in Indian Independence, New Delhi, 1990.
4. Parihar, A.K.S., Mahatma Gandhi and his Social Wok, Swastik Publications, New Delhi, India, 2014.
5. Parihar, A.K.S., Mahatma Gandhi and his Social Wok, Swastik Publications, New Delhi, India, 2014.
6. Gandhi, M.K., Women and Social Justice, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1954.

Assamese Books:

1. Ahmed, E, Asamar Birangana, Guwahati, 1993.
2. Bhagawati, B. K., Amar Swadhinata Andolonat Asamar Shahid, Guwahati, 2003.
3. Barua, D. K., Barluitar Parar Birangana Kanaklata, Golaghat, 1989.
4. Sharma, A. K., Swadhinata Samgrami Puspalata Das, Guwahati, 2005.

