ABSTRACT

This paper is all about unsung women heroes in Indian Freedom Struggle with specific reference to Rajasthan State in India. It is an effort by the author to acknowledge those women heroes who participated in the Indian Freedom Movement even though all of them belong to very poor and mediocre family background. Still they have shown courage and confidence to come forward and made a significant contribution in the Freedom Movement and Bijolia Kisan Andolan against Jagirdar Pratha started in Rajasthan in the leadership of Vijay Singh Pathik, Manikaya Lal Verma and Sadhu Sita Ram. They have made women class awakened for their rights against the royal state. In future, this development contributed in producing many women leaders in Rajasthan State.

In this paper the author is going to present unsung stories of women heroes like Ganga Bai, Nayarani Devi Verma, Bharti Devi Vajpayee, Santa Trivedi, Smt. Gorya Devi, Smt. Anjana Deve Choudhary, Shakuntala Trivedi, Bhagvati Devi, Durga Devi, Ratan Shastri, Nagendra Bala, who participated in the Indian Freedom Struggle and left their footprints of their sacrifice and success in getting freedom in India. Briefly mentioning the contribution of one out of eleven women like Narayani Devi Verma inspired by Bijolia Andolan, who had worked for women education and social work. In 1942, she went to jail in Parjamandal Movement. Later on, she established a women center in Bhilwara to make women aware about their rights.

In my view it is a great effort to present the biography of all women unsung heroes and acknowledging their tiresome efforts, sacrifice and dedication in the Indian Freedom Struggle. On behalf of all the historians, I personally acknowledge their presence and contribution and pay a salute and tribute to them.

Key Words: Bijoliya, Jagirdar, Parjamandal, Freedom, Struggle, Heroes.
India is one of the largest democratic countries in the world. It is very interesting to know the facts about the history of India in various aspects. The author has made an attempt to do a research about the unsung women heroes in the State of Rajasthan.

If you want to know about any country's culture and progress, it is necessary to know about the status of women in the society. There was continuous deterioration in the status of women. To understand the status clearly about women we need to go through the four ages namely 1. Vaidic era, 2. Middle era, 3. Modern era and 4. Present era- period of this also.

The Vaidic era is divided into four parts Rigvaidic, Uttar Vaidic, Sutar Samart and Mahakavay. Period of four Kal. During vaidic period women were given equal status and right to men in the field of education, freedom. There were no child marriage and no covering of face in family and public life. On local language there was no Parda Partha in society to cover the face. The women commanded a very high position in the society. On the contrary during the regvaidic period the status of women got changed to a lower position the birth of girl child was considered as a sin. The girl children were given education in the house only. The freedom of women was restricted to a greater extent. In the period of smarti and mahakavay. The girls education was not given any importance the concept of covering the face was in force due to this tradition the women were further subject to suppression.

During the middle of this period. The covering the face and sati (wife subject to cremation in the event the husband dies) were on its peak. The women lose total independent and were controlled by men for example the daughter were controlled by father, wife by her husband and the mother by her son.

During the period of middle age there were so many restrictions imposed on women and all rights were taken away from the women in the name of saving Hindu Dharma and culture. Generally the women were not allowed to have even primary education but in the high class society the women had the privilege of getting education. The women were confined to for walls. Remarriage for widow was prohibited while men were permitted to marry more than one time. In nutshell, we can say the women were completely dependent on men for anything and everything.

In modern age (20th century) still the situation of women continued to be worse than earlier. But efforts were continuously taken by the social reformers to librate the women from all
clutches. Due to this many changes are happening in the society and the women slowly started gain
their freedom further all the social evils against the women were removed and ways open for girls
education. In a broader way, women’s position started improving. To all efforts were taken to
improve the quality of life of women and also gained respect in the society. This led to active
women’s participation in the Indian National Movement.

India got freedom on 15th, August, 1947, from the rule of British Empire, means in India
colonial rule existed and it became a colony of England. Britishers entered in India in 1600 A.D in
the form of East India company for trade purpose. But over a period of time the East India
company controlled by British empire and slowly-slowly British rulers had started to control trade
as well as the administration of India. The Queen appointed Governors as Viceroys in India to
control administration before independence. There were two power centers as British Rules and
local Kings. Some area of India governed by the local kings like madhav Pradesh, Punjab,
Rajasthan, Maharastra etc. generally we call these areas as Riyasat. If we talk about Rajasthan, it
was divided in amongstdesi Riyasats. These Riyasats governed by local Rajas in their respective
areas. They have their own rule and regulation to run their stales.

In 19th century, first time Indian people started disobeying the British rule. In Indian
society people worship the cow and the new bullets were given to Indian army people to use in
their rifle and were made of cow’s leather which was objectionable by Indian army people. This
happened in 1857 historian says this was the beginning of first Indian freedom struggle moment.
Mangal pandey was the first hero to initiate this struggle. That struggle started in Meerut in Uttar
Pradesh. At the end of 19th century, some people of India went for higher education in England.
They have seen different environment over there. When they come back to India, they have
started demanding their rights and freedom. The educated Indian people came to know about
democracy and started demanding democracy in India. British government was not ready for that
process. These educated people decided to boycott the British rules and demanded that they
should leave our country.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Mahatama Gandhi led the freedom struggle. Under
Mahatama Gandhi’s leadership entire country united to fight for freedom and this was known as
“Freedom Struggle” as well as Indian National Moment. India became independent country on
15th August 1947.

After independent Mahatama Gandhi is known as the father of nation. Now India is a
largest democratic country in the world. But the sad part was after getting independence India
was divided into two countries Hindustan and Pakistan. Pakistan became into existence from 14th
August 1947.

My focus in this paper is that when Indian people was disobeying British rule and
demanding rights at that time in Rajasthan, some women have decided to disobey the local kings
order. In the process of disobey the order they have decided not to pay agriculture taxes to the
Jagirdar. Who was appointed by the local kings to collect the agriculture revenue. There were the
two main moments namely Praja Mandal and Bijolia Kisan Andolan started in Rajasthan. Rajasthani
women vigoursly participated in the above moment. In my study all these women also actively
participated in the Indian National moment.

Though there were good number of women aggressively participated in the national
moment in all parts of country, only a few royal educated women names are remember all in the
history. Whereas a few women hailing from poor and uneducated family, who actively participated and sacrifice in their lives are still unknown and described as unsung heroes.

The purpose of this article is to bring to and highlight the story of these unsung women hero of Rajasthan. To name a few are Shanta Trivedi, Smt. Shakuntla Tripathi, Narayani Devi Verma, Gorja devi Joshi, Anjana Devi Joshi, Smt. Nagendrabala etc. A brief profile about them and their active roles are worth mentioning in this paper.

1) **Smt. Bharti Devi Vajpayee** - She participated in the “Prajamandal Satyagraha”. She and her family were containing national ideology. Containing Congress ideology, this woman kept in Jaipur central jail for 3 months during independence.

2) **Smt. Narayani Devi Verma** - She was “Prajamandal” leader Manik Lal Verma’s wife. In the Era of Bijolia Movement, Narayani worked for social reform and women education development. In 1942 AD during Prajamandal movement he was put in to the prison. During the time he was in the prison, Verma Ji led the Prajamandal movement. She established a women Ashram in Bhilwara(Rajasthan) and propagated woman awareness campaign through this ashram. She also established hostels for Tribal. After independence she played a key role in Indian politics for a long time as a Member of Parliament.

3) **Smt. Shanta Trivedi** - Socialist Leader Parasram Trivedi’s wife, Shanda Trivedi was a freedom fighter. In struggle against feudalism, she led to women members. She was an active member of Rehabilitation Board. She founded Women Council in 1947 in Udaipur(Rajasthan). She led Socialist movement from 1951 to 1964. She worked for improvement of backward caste women.

4) **Smt. Gorja Devi** - In Jodhpur(Rajasthan), Gorja was first Women freedom fighter. In 1942 she took part in Satyagraha Movement. She at that time sacrificed the traditional dresses and took the Tri-colour hand on street to demonstrate their solid support of the Satyagraha movement. She got the fame as ‘Choti Bai’ and ‘Baa’ name. During movement she was in jail for 9 months. After freedom, she worked for the women awareness for her life span.

5) **Smt Sushila Tripathi**. - In Jodhpur, Smt. Tripathi participated in movement and got arrested and was in jail for 6 months.

6) **Smt. Anjana Devi Choudhary** - At age of 20, she abandoned the veil, took oath for the country service, fully supported by her husband Raj Narayan Choudhary in political work. Anjana Choudhary was the first congress lady who was arrested from local rulers. In 1921-24 at Mewar and Bundi, she generated and created awareness among women for Nationalism and Social development. She was arrested again from Amergarh and from Bundi. About 500 women joined her for Satyagrah and also led in “Bijoliya Kisan Movement”. This movement led to the liberation of all the farmers who were sentenced to jail. All the farmers were liberated. Again during 1932-35, twice she was imprisoned during National Satyagraha. She also worked for “Biehl” services.

7) **Smt. Shakuntala Tripathi** - Banswara freedom fighter Bhupendra Nath Tripathi's wife ‘was Shakuntala. From childhood she kept emotional attachment with Liberation Movement. When Jai Narain Verma raised the flag of revolt in Marwar, she at that time supported her, got imprisonment for 3 years by the state government of Marwar. After that she joined hand in the work of her husband in Bombay. Due to her son’s separation shock she died.
8) **Smt. Bhagwati Devi** - In 1938 AD she participated in “Pragamandal”. She was arrested in Udaipur police station for 10 days and liberated at the border of Ajmer(Rajasthan). She had a key role in the Quit India Movement in 1942. At that time; she was arrested and detained into Udaipur Central Jail. She did proper work for women’s education and social development.

9) **Smt. Durga Devi Sharma** - Her public life began when she started taking part in Non-Cooperative Movement with her husband Chandra Bhan Sharma. She started her public life at the time of “Salt Satyagraha”. She burned her valuable wedding cloths in public. She was in Jail for 3 months in 1932-33.

10) **Smt. Ratna Shastri** - She was among the top line women freedom fighters of Rajasthan. Her husband Pandit. Heera Lal Shastri was the first Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Her role at “Pramandal” was very effective. She supervised Banasthali Vidyapeeth. Banasthali Vidyapeeth was centre for women’s education. She gave inspiration and permission to girl students of Banasthali Vidyapeeth to participate in Quit India Movement in 1942. Contribution of Banasthali Vidyapeeth for women education is being remembered forever. After Women’s University in Bombay, founded by Prof. Karve, Banasthali Vidyapeeth was only centre for women’s education having affiliation equivalent to any other University.

11) **Smt. Kamla Shatriye** - She played a leading role in independence struggle and in Women’s Education. She was a Member of Legislative for a long time.

12) **Smt. Nagendra Bala** - She played the bugle of awareness in Hadoti. After independence she also became the Member of the Legislative Assembly. She was from the family like revolutionary leader ‘Kesar Singh Barot’.

   From the above historical data it is clear that in Independence movement women participation is very much revealed. We understand that at national level many women participated from different parts of the country in Freedom movement. It was not a miracle incident, but at Rajasthan level participation of women in the independence movement was very important event. Because, against backwardness and feudal ruler in Rajasthan women’s participated in this movement introduced courage. It’s true that, Rajasthan never had nationally famed women like Hansa Mehta and Kamla Chattopadhyay. But those women who participated from Rajasthan had excellent presence at State level. So it can be said, in 21st Century Rajasthan women were relieved from Orthodox practices, superstition and illiteracy. The situation before independence can be guessed. At that time, lower caste women abandoned the veil and participated in movement was an important event. Though it is sure that number of participation of those women from Rajasthan was quite low, the participation in the movement was an appreciation step.

13) **Smt. Mohan Devi Verma** - She was a freedom fighter. She established a institution in Udaipur named “Mahila Mandal” for the betterment, upliftment and self reliance of poor, tribal and needy women she’s started to produce edibal things like Paper, Bari and Chips etc. She started to developed women entrepreneur after independence. She established this small industry from handmade to mechanized she was avoided for her work from precedent of India.
Conclusion

Except Vaidic period in ancient time before independence it was a male dominated society, generally the women were suppressed and put into lots of social evils in 20th century. Social reformers started to uplift the women status. They started a moment to educate girl child and stop social evils. Mahatama Gandhi encourage women to participate in Indian National Moment. In 1920, during the Non Co-operation Movement a large number of women participated.

Remembering all these unsung heroes, we all can feel that how these women had participated in the Indian National Movement and come to know their dedication, courage, confidence, patriotism and a zeal to do something for their country as women.

After independence also, the active participation of women in Rajasthan continued in various spheres of life. The women got educated and entered into politics, administration, sports, judiciary, social activity etc. Still the fight for women empowerment is in progress through various means like Government policy and Non Governmental organizations.

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