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Unsung Warriors of Independence

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Abstract

The long struggle for freedom movement came to an end with a victory in 1947. In the midnight of 15 august 1947 India attained its freedom from about two hundred years of vigorous destructive nature of the British supremacy. Thousands of people irrespective of their caste gender religion actively participated in the freedom movement. like all other states Assam too participated in the movement. Assam played an important role in India's independent movement. The Assamese people marked a noticeable contribution at every phase of the movement. With the feel of fire in their hearts the local people of Assam devoted their life for their motherland. Though many people played a vital role in the freedom struggle but their names never came into light. Their boundless contribution were never counted while reviving about our great freedom fighters. This research paper primarily deals with some unsung heroes of Assam who played crucial role in India's freedom movement

Keywords: Indian independence, Assam, Assamese people, freedom fighters, unsung warriors

Introduction

The Indian independence is all about tremendous struggle and sacrifices. It's independence has been a historic change for the citizen and also for the country. The British ruled in India nearly for two long centuries .Though it had its own significance and consequences but because of the exploitative nature of the British government citizens sternly protested against them.

Important places like Delhi, Bihar, Bengal and the North Eastern parts of India started agitating against the British government. Assam, a North Eastern state in India also played an important role in the history of country's freedom struggle. Around 19th century the anti-British upsurge made it's first appearance in the eastern part of India. Assam came directly under the British dominance after the "TREATY OF YANDABOO" 1826. The treaty paved the way for the British to control over Assam and its adjacent areas. Since then on, many freedom loving people belonging to both nobility and common masses began to feel the burning desire for freedom from the destructive foreign dominance. Thousands of civil masses came forward and joined in various revolts organized by our great leader Mahatma Gandhi. People from all sections including women and students actively participated in the movement to save their identity and motherland. The Assamese people marked their conspicuous contribution in every stage of freedom struggle. Though there were many people who played vital role in India's independence but their names never came into focus. So there is a need to highlight the noteworthy contributions of some unsung warriors of the freedom struggle. This research primarily focuses on the topic "UNsung WARRIORS OF INDEPENDENCE". Some of the important events like that took place in Assam were Non-cooperation movement (1920) Civil Disobedience movement (1930) and the Quit India movement (1942). Prominent personalities like Chandranath sarma , Nabin Chandra Bordoloi, Gopinath Bordoloi and many others led the right way to the common masses for attaining their rights and to enjoy freedom from the colonial rule. Despite of these renowned figures mentioned above there were many such personalities who's efforts and contribution remained hidden in the pages of Indian history, through this research paper the unrecognized contributions of such unsung warriors would come into light. Freedom fighters like BIRABALA KANAKLATA BARUA, KIRAN BALA BORA, MANIRAM DEWAN , KUSHAL KONWAR etc. were the unsung warriors of ASSAM whose brief discussion is mentioned below.

According to IANS Maniram Dewans popularity, his enterprising skills and other feats made him hostile to the British and by 1850, his relation with the British became worse. ICGS kanaklata Barua is named after a teenage freedom fighter. Assamese autho Arupa Patangia Kalita in her book mentioned about the untold story of a freedom fighter of Assam Durji Bhoomi

Methodology

The paper focuses on the unsung warriors of independence who were mainly from Assam a state in the north-eastern part of India. The paper was comprised of a review directed. The review was through an internet provided sources which assisted me in gathering various information on the topic. This research paper is written in the sequence of first their birthplace second initial days of their life and thirdly their contribution in independence. The

qualitative analysis and the various facts and stories stated are cited from various credible resources. The various resources used are books and articles written by eminent authors, various accountable sites and previous research papers written by acknowledged people. In this research paper secondary method is applied. The methodology used is by reading various journals, highlighting prominent personalities and selecting the personality which struck a chord within me and the belief that they too deserve a respected position in books and various media representation.

Result and Discussion

Kiran Bala Bora

Kiran Bala Bora was a freedom fighter and a social activist from Assam. She played an active role in the Civil Disobedience movement in the early 19th century, which contributed in the India's struggle for independence. The patriotic feeling of young Kiran led her to involve in various movements or riots organized for freedom from the British government. She devoted all her time to attain independence for her motherland. She also worked alongside leaders like Purna Chandra Sharma , Mahidhar Bora , D.K. Barooah. Kiran worked for social causes and the welfare of the Assamese society which was then a backward community. During the phase of Non –cooperation movement Kiran bala bora was among the people who sternly protested against the use of foreign goods and clothes , she even burnt all her household foreign goods to aware the common illiterate people. She along with her associates took a bold step to aware the locals about the side effects of opium consumption they also protested against the use of narcotic substances such as opium, bhang and kani.

In 1929 , the Lahore congress resolved to celebrate 26 January 1930, as Purna Swaraj or complete independence. More than 400 women in Koliabor, led in part by Kiran Bala Bora, joined in the celebration. Despite of being a mother of five children she never failed to join the movements. Around 1931 she was arrested by the British government for violation of laws sever times. During her days in shilling jail she lived in a dire condition.

Kiran is a perfect example of women empowerment. She maintained her personal as well as her professional life. In 1930s, Mahatma Gandhi had started the civil disobedience movement to end the monopoly by the British

Birabala Kanaklata Barua

Kanaklata Barua an eighteen-year-old brave soul who set an indelible mark in the history of Assam. Kanaklata was born in a small village of Assam named as Borangbari, Gohpur to a mediocre family. She had a tough childhood which

eventually impacted on her education, and she had to drop her studies only in the third grade.

In the meantime, around 1942 the flame of “Quit India Movement” started gaining local masses attention and in no time, it spread all over the country. The All-India Congress Committee had passed the Quit India Resolution on 8 August 1942 at the Bombay session, demanding complete independence for India or which is famously known as “PURNA SWARAJ”. The impact of Quit India movement started to reflect in Assam too. Thousands of people stepped forward and participated in the movement.

With the arrival of Gandhi in Assam in 1921 people were more enthusiastic regarding the movement. Gandhi’s speech pushed the national spirit among the masses, and they gave their soul into the movement. Assamese social activists like Kiran Bala Bora and Ambika Kakati, among others, led the groups and inspired young girls to throw themselves into the freedom movement. Kanaklata Barua was among those girls and thus was primed for her heroic journey. People were encouraged to hoist the national flag across Assam.

During the period of Quit India movement, a large camp of revolutionaries was set up near Kanaklata’s home. She was so moved by the speeches of Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a freedom fighter that she was determined to join the movement. The patriotic songs, poems and speech fuelled her patriotic feelings. Soon after this, Kanaklata secretly started attending the meetings at the camp. It was her first step towards freedom movement. Though her decision was not supported by her grandfather, but it would not stop her from taking part in the movement. Initially the movement against the British government were quite peaceful in Assam. But on the later part of 1940s Assam Provincial Congress Committee established the “SHANTI BAHINI” and entrusted with the work of guarding the villages at night and to maintain the peace of the protest.

Renowned writer and an active member of freedom movement in Assam Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, instructed the volunteers of Shanti Bahini to peacefully move towards the police station in Tezpur district, to hoist the Indian tricolour while raising the “Quit India” slogan. He also formed the “MRITU BAHINI” or the (Death Army) for this mission in the line of Gandhi “DO OR DIE”. Despite of knowing the outcome that death could be imminent Kanaklata actively devoted her life by joining in the freedom movement. The Mritu Bahini indeed was a threat for the British officers.

Under the leadership of Kanaklata Barua a group of youths organized a protest towards the Gohpur police station. It was decided that Kanaklata would hoist the NATIONAL FLAG on 20th September 1942. As they approached towards the station the officer in charge warned them about the deadly consequences. Ignoring about their warnings with a hope in their eyes the enthusiastic youths moved forward towards the station. After multiple

warnings at the end the police suddenly opened fire on the procession. Kanaklata Barua, tricolour in her hand was shot. She died on the spot. A local villager took the national flag from her hand and hoist it high in the air, he too was shot dead by the police. Though In this tragic moment kanaklata lost her life but she became an unforgettable name in Assam. She not only brought pride to Assam but also spread great awareness about feminism. An Coast Guard Fast Patrol Vessel was named after her in 1997, she also had an monumental statue of her in 2011 in rock garden called as “KANAKLATA UDYAN” in Gauripur Tezpur. EPAAH PHULL EPAAH XORIL is a well-known biopic on Kanaklata Barua. Kanaklata till day remains as an icon for ASSAM.

NAME	CONTRIBUTION	DEBT IN INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT
Kiran Bala Bora	Played an active role in civil disobedience movement and also established the women empowerment in Assam.	Boycotted the foreign goods and clothes. Actively participated in civil disobedience movement and led local masses.
Kanaklata Barua	Youngest martyr of Assam, led thousands of people to hold The Tiranga Infront of British govt.	Active member of Quit India movement and mrityu bahini that aware the women's of assam to join in the movement.
Maniram Dewan	First assamese to establish a tea garden in assam and demanded for reforms in administrative sector of assam.	Started revolt in the land of assam to over through the British from Assam.
Kushal konwar	Aware the common people of assam about the ideologies of Gandhi like Ahimsa.	Devoted his life for the independence of India by actively participating various movements.

Maniram Dewan

“SIRA CHENEHI MOR BHASA JANANI” means (My mother tongue is my mother who is never affectionate) is the famous motto introduced by Maniram Borbhondor Barua. He was a famous personality of Assam who made tremendous efforts for attaining freedom for his motherland but unfortunately all his contributions remain unrecognised. Maniram Barua was one of the first Assamese who established a tea garden industry in Assam. Today Assam is known for its tea leaves, it was Maniram Dewan who first informed the British cultivator Major Robert Bruce and his brother about the growing tea leaves in some hilly regions of Assam.

Maniram Dewan was a loyal noble of the British East India Company. At the young age of 22 Maniram was appointed as a tehsildar of Rangpur under Deputy Captain David Scott. Maniram had cultivated numerous tea

leaves and he also owned many tea gardens in different parts of Assam. But by the mid of 1850s he created a hostile feeling against the British government as he was facing various problems regarding the establishment of tea gardens as there was strong opposition from the European cultivators. Captain Charles Holroyd the chief officer of Sibsagar confiscated all the special provisions of Maniram in 1851. Maniram Dewan along with his 185 family members faced a serious financial problem. Under the Ahom rule Maniram was made the Dewan or the Prime Minister by Purandhar Sing the then Ahom ruler. Maniram dewan started his journey of freedom movement along with Purandhar singha's son kamleshwar singha and grandson kandharpeshwar singha.

In 1853, the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court Moffat Mill visited Assam to investigate the economic as well the political situation in Assam. Maniram Dewan presented him two petitions. One of the two applications he mentioned about his service towards the British Government and requested for some remuneration. In the other, he requested to reinstall the Ahom royal prince Kandharpeshwar Singha the grandson of the former Ahom ruler Purandhar singha as the successor ruler of the Ahom dynasty and he also highlighted about the miseries and sufferings of the aristocratic class of Assam. In his application Maniram pointed on both the positive as well as the negative impacts of British government. He mentioned about the positive effects of the British rule in Assam like the introduction of English literature in the schools of Assam and also the administrative reforms. But he also pointed that British administration is offering pension to the undeserving people, reducing the elite high officers to the rank of a common man by depriving them of all their privileges.

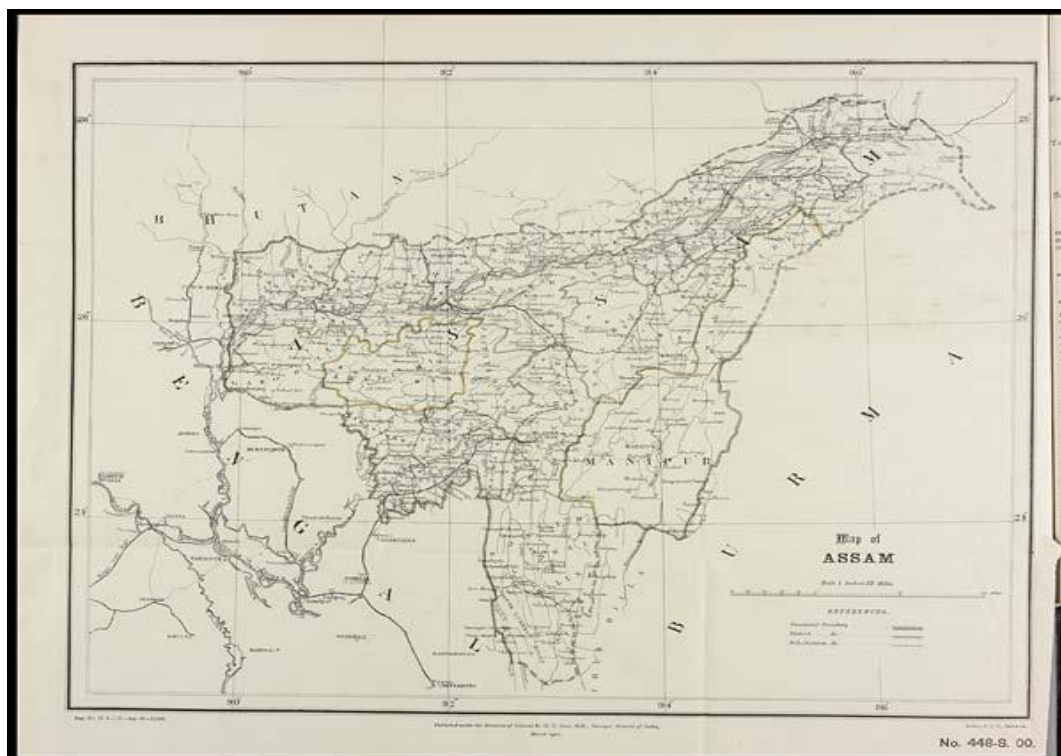
Mill minutely examined both of his applications but despite of mentioning both the sides of British government Mill solely focused on the negative aspects of the British and did not show any sympathy towards Maniram. Infact he insulted Maniram and declared him to be a conspirator for the state.

The report was the last hope of Maniram to settle the differences between the Assamese and the British but in his return he received ill treatment and hatred from British. Which made him to completely turn against the British government. After the incident he decided to avoid direct confrontation with the British but he continued his appeals to reinstall Kandharpeshwar singha in the Ahom throne. During the period of 1857, he even went to Calcutta with the same hope. Though he did not succeed in his goal but while his visit to Calcutta he came to know about the revolt of the Indian soldiers in the British army in northern part of India. It was the famous "Sepoy Mutiny" of 1857. Witnessing the flame of revolt in Calcutta Maniram dreamt of overthrowing the oppressive British from the land of Assam. He immediately made a plan to defeat the British government and send some secret letters to kandarpeshwar singha in Jorhat and some other trustworthy

persons. He made them aware about the situation of north India and also discussed about the execution of the British through letters. He planned to include the Indian soldiers of British army to help them to start revolt in Assam. He mainly wanted to involve the soldiers of Dibrugarh and Golaghat to join in the revolt. In his letters he mentioned that he would come to Ujoni Axom or Upper Assam with arms and ammunitions during the Durga puja time. As it was not an easy matter to control a revolt through letters with the chief organiser far away from the actual scenario. During the upsurge unfortunately many of such conspiratory letters fell into the hands of the British officers of Sibsagar district. Immediately the then officer in charge of Sibsagar Captain Holroyd ordered to arrest Maniram Dewan and his associates. Accordingly Maniram Dewan was arrested from Calcutta as well as Kandharpeshwar singha and his supporters were arrested from Jorhat and the revolt was suppressed with an iron hand.

Though Maniram Dewan had been an able administrator but he lacked the expertise to be the leader of the revolt as a result of which the revolt did not last for a long time. He was shifted to Jorhat central jail and on 26th of February 1858 he along with Piyali Barua or pali was hanged in the jorhat's central jail. Though his dream to start a mutiny against the British government did not fulfil but the strong steps taken by him was able to generate the nationalist feelings in the hearts of thousands of Assamese people.

In his regard, the former Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University Debo Prasad Baroo mentioned that "MANIRAM DEWAN and PIYAI BARUA became martyrs to the cause of freedom of assam and their sacrifice and the sacrifice of their compatriots made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of Assamese people who remembered with pride these heroes of 1857 at every stage of freedom struggle.



<https://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/browse/archive/91526326>

Kushal Konwar

Kushal konwar's journey of freedom movement started from the mid of 1925 under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. He followed the ideologies of Gandhi and things started to change in his life. Kushal konwar was decedent from the Royal family of Ahom kingdom and used the surname "KONWAR" which was later abolished. At a very young age he adopted the path of AHIMSA, and he accepted the SRIMAD BHAGAWAD GITA as his sole companion. Gradually he started to involve himself in the revolts protest which were organized by the local masses.

The Quit India Movement resolution was passed on 8th august 1942 by the congress working committee in the meeting held in Bombay. The resolution demanded complete withdrawal of the British from the Indian soil. During the movement Mahatma Gandhi gave the famous slogan "DO OR DIE" to the people of India. In its reaction the British officers arrested hundreds of people including Gandhi and his associate. People from all walks of life's joined the movement shouting the slogan "Vande Mataram ".Though Gandhi asked the people to protest peacefully but I some arts of India the movement is seemed to take an violent nature by destroying govt offices railway lines etc.

People from Assam also took active part in the movement. Two of the leaders who had the maximum role was Gopinath Bordoloi and Siddhinath sarma, who were later arrested by the British in Dhubri while returning from Bombay after attending the congress working committee meeting. Like all other parts

of India Assam too burned ,many people left the path of ahimsa and engaged in the violence.

Hidden in the thick layer of fog in the early morning of 10th October 1942, the Indian independence activist removed sleepers from a railway line near sarupathar in golaghat distric. A military train carrying over one thousand army soldiers suffered as avictim in the horrifying incident. The police immediately searched for the culprits meanwhile the Magistrate of Jorhat C.A.Humphrey , issued an arrest warrant to all Indian national congress members in the adjacent areas. The police declared Kaushal konwar as the main leading conspirator behind the incident and immediately arrested him from the spot. Kaushal was innocent as he has not been priorly informed about the incident because he was known as the devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Kaushal always adopted the path of non violence or Ahimsa. Despite of being an innocent Konwar accepted the false fact to be the mastermind behind the train accident.

Konwar was lodged in the Jorhat central jail on 5th November 1942. In the court of C.A.Humphery Kaushal konwar's case was heard and he was declared guilty., though thee were no solid evidence against konwar. He was sentenced to death by hanging. . With ample dignity konwar accepted the verdict. During his days in Jorhat jail , his wife Prabhavati visited him and he expressed his feelings with her by saying that he was happy that God has selected him among thousands of pisoners to give the supreme sacrifice for the country. After this Konwar passed the rest of life in the death cell of Jorhat jail by reading GITA and praying to GOD.

At the dawn on 15th June 1943 at 4:30 am , Kaushal konwar was hanged in the Jorhat jail. He sacrificed his life knowing as Mahatma : "he alone can be a true satyagrahi who knows the art of living and dying".

CONCLUSION

The partition of India was also the partition of the British India in 1947 which marked the zenith of the India's movement of freedom struggle. The period of freedom struggle not only united the people of India but also encouraged our feelings of nationality. The freedom movement manifest us that "Unity lies in strength". People from all walks of life have actively joined in the movement irrespective of gender, religion, caste,class etc. In the freedom movement not only the man but the local women of Indian society to energetically took part. They challenged the stereotypical ideas that prevailed during the early 90s society and marked their contributions not only in the pages of history but in the minds of every Indian. The youths of India played a vital role In the freedom movement they were the active participants in various meetings, procession, hartals etc undertaken by our leaders.

The struggle for India's independence did not confine to one state or place it spread nationwide. Places like Bihar, Delhi, Bombay, parts of south and the north eastern area of India had a major contribution in our freedom.

Assam played a significant role in the freedom movement; it flamed the spirit of the movement. The local masses of Assam devoted their life for the independence of India. Lakhs of people joined in the movements some of them were recognised but there were many such freedom fighters whose contributions towards their nations remain unrecognised. Though they played important part during the phase of freedom movement but their offerings remain hidden in our great and vast history. The unsung freedom fighters too helped in the establishment of new and transformed India. They gave a push in the freedom movement in Assam as well as in India to remove the British from India, they set up a new India at the conclusion of Indian wars. The great warriors of India inspired and educated the masses about the British policies and made them aware of the harsh reality of their motives.

Today India is a democratic country with a proper laws and rules and a constitution which was set up for improvising the condition of India all this is possible only because of the contributions of our freedom fighters. The freedom fighters struggle of India gave a new colour of India.

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