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Abstract:

The Struggle for Indian Independence forms an interesting phase of history having the feature of love, brotherhood, heartedness, betrayal and sacrifice. The Indians right from the inception of British rule, agitated against their policy and gradually moved to fight for independence. This freedom struggle story of many known and unknown Indians, their dedication and sacrifice, to the causes of freedom. India gained independence with a myriad of freedom fighters playing a crucial role in the movement towards freedom, and some even lost their lives for the country's liberation from colonial rule. The freedom fighters crossed all boundaries of age, gender and social hierarchies to live their dreams. The Struggle for Indian Independence forms an interesting phase of history having the feature of love, brotherhood, heartedness, betrayal and sacrifice. Not only men, but also women in the freedom movement is unique in Karnataka. Women participated very actively and sacrificed their lives for the cause of their mother land. Smt. Nagamma V. Patil very prominent freedom fighter. She played very important role in the Karnataka Freedom Struggle.

Key words: women freedom fighters, satyagraha, Haijan, Ashrama, Freedom Struggle.

Introduction:

The Struggle for Indian Independence forms an interesting phase of history having the feature of love, brotherhood, heartedness, betrayal and sacrifice. The Indians right from the inception of British rule, agitated against their policy and gradually moved to fight for independence. This freedom struggle story of many known and unknown Indians, their dedication and sacrifice, to the causes of freedom. India gained independence with a myriad of freedom fighters playing a crucial role in the movement towards freedom, and some even lost their lives for the country's liberation from colonial rule. The freedom fighters crossed all boundaries of age, gender and social hierarchies to live their dreams.

The role of women in the freedom movement is unique in Karnataka. Women participated very actively and sacrificed their lives for the cause of their motherland under the influent of great men and women leaders many brave woman of Karataka joined freedom movement. Women freedom fighters of Karnataka are not only the strongest but are also ones who fought till the last of their breath. Several women freedom fighters have their stories unsung, manu have gathered praises but their contribution towards the society is and will always be laudable.

The Struggle for Indian Independence forms an interesting phase of history having the feature of love, brotherhood, heartedness, betrayal and sacrifice. Not only men, but also women in the freedom movement is unique in Karnataka. Women participated very actively and sacrificed their lives for the cause of their mother land. Smt. Nagamma V. Patil very prominent freedom fighter. She played very important role in the Karnataka Freedom Struggle.

The struggle for Indian independence forms an interesting phase of history having the feature of love, brotherhood, and sacrifice. Not only men, but also women played a vital role in

struggle. The part played by women in the fight for freedom is also remarkable and glorious. They worked shoulder to shoulder with men for the cause of Freedom from foreign yoke and the upliftment of the downtrodden (or masses). M Smt. Nagamma Patil was one among them who walked with her husband's foot prints dominated in the social reconstruction and Freedom struggle among all other women Freedom fighters.

Smt. Nagamma V. Patil :

Smt. Nagamma Patil was born in an orthodox family. Her father Shri. Malleshappa Pattanshetty was a merchant. Verrangouda who was young widower when he proposed to marry young Nagamma. ¹ Smt. Nagamma Patil having completed her Primary Education in the Year 1923 married Veeranagouda Patil who was the founder Karnataka Liberal Education Society, one of the biggest educational institutions in Asia.²

When Mahatma Gandhiji came to Belgaum during his Karnataka tour in 1921. Smt. Nagamma Patil and her husband followed Mahatma Gandhiji to Hubli. Gandhiji asked her to teach young girls, she immediately replied that she did not now to read and write, as she had given up education at primary stage itself, Gandhiji told her "can't you be a mother to Harijan girls? can't you feed them ? Dress them? Comb their hair and give them a bath? take some girls into your fold and teach them, look after them like a mother³". Back home in Hubli, Smt. Nagamma Patil, who then already had two children of her own, started talking to little girls, those who had been outlasted by society for being Harijans.

Smt. Nagamma Patil participated in No-Tax campaign in Hirekerur along with and her husband Veerangouda Patil. Both actively took part in freedom struggle and she was inspired by Gandhiji⁴.

Smt. Nagamma Patil closely associated with her husband in the upliftment of Harijan girls and as well as backward women is socially, economically, and educationally. While Sardar Veerangouda Patil was the president of Karnataka Provincial Harijan Board. Thus Smt. Nagamma Patil started "Karnataka Harijan Balik Ashrama" at Hubli in the year 1934, which is second of its kind in India⁵, "All India Harijan Sevak Sangha" she at started a free hostel and primary school for the training of Harijan girls at Hubli.

Owing to her yeomen Social Service and Sacrifice, Smt. Nagamma Patil became so popular in the society that she was elected as the member of the Legislative Assembly of Bombay state from Ranebennur Constituency from the Congress Party in the year 1937, for her good fortune this was the only seat from A the four districts of old Bombay state reserved for ladies. A new chapter was opened in her life. From social work she then now plunged in to political carrier with a matter of pride to state, she was the first elected lady member of the Assembly from Karnataka⁶.

While working for the general upliftment of backward class women, Smt. Nagamma Patil with the help of her husband developed her "Ashrama" into Institution for imparting education to all women in general without making any distinction of religion, caste or creed etc. The result of which, gave rise to the establishment of "Mahila Vidya Peeth" which is running a number of educational institutions at Hubli even till this day⁷. Responding to the call of "Mahatmaji" for the freedom movement, Smt. Nagamma Patil submitted her resignation to the legislatorship and entered freedom movement but unfortunately she was arrested in the year 1938, and was kept in the jail at Belgaum, Hindalaga jail for 3 months. It was first test of her jail life. There to she carried on her social work by educating the inmates (non-political) imparting lessons in reading writing music and so on⁸.

Smt. Nagamma Patil of Hubli did not lag behind in observing individual satyagraha. She started Harijan Balik Ashrama in 1937 at Byadagi and used in for covert freedom fighting activity. She created the band of cheerful volunteers. As she was determined to oppose British rule she decided to undergo a jail term for 3 months.⁹

Mean while in August 1942, when Gandhiji gave the final call to the British to Quit India she participated in freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhiji and her husband was participated in underground activities by distributing the bulletins under the food parcel to the other participants. The whole country was in the grip of tension. Smt. Nagamma Patil was arrested once again and kept in Yarawad jail for 13 months along with eminent ladies like Smt. Krishnabai Panjikar and others. Smt. Nagamma carried her youngest ladies Sundari, who was just four years old. Then there was no home as such where she could leave her child. Therefore Smt. Nagamma had to take her daughter Sundari along with her to the jail for 10 months.¹⁰

Smt. Nagamma Patil was attracted by Bhoo-Dan movement' and joined Sant Vinoba Bhave along with other eminent ladies like Smt. Mahadevamma Hegde (elder sister of Shri, Ramakrishna Hegde) and other. Vinoba Bhave used to stay in this Ashram during his visits in this area. Smt. Nagamma Patil took active part in the fund collection of Kastruba Nidhi during 1945-46 and inspired others by donating her own A golden ring from her finger.¹¹

Smt. Nagamma Patil next converted the Harijan Balikashram in to an as Educational institution and named it as the Mahila Vidya Peeth. The young Harijan and girls in the Ashram were inspired by Nagamma's activities and they also joined in the procession, raised anti-British slogans and offered satyagraha in two batches and courted arrest.

The whole atmosphere in the city of Hubli was tense. The youngest girl arrested was hardly nine years old! Nagamma had inculcated in them a sense of patriotism and spirit to agitate for freedom against the British. After ten months imprisonment, she was released and she came home to find everything in disorder. Boldly she faced the situation and carried on in the absence of her husband.¹²

In the year 1963 the Government of Kamataka, recognizing the service and sacrifice of Smt. Nagamma Patil, hounoured her with the State Award' and earlier to this Sardar Veerangouda was awarded with a title of "Padmashree".¹³

It is historical even to note the Pandit Jawararlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, during his visit to this Institution in the year 1951, changed the name of Harijan Balikashram as "Kasturba Balikashram" and the group of educational institutions as "Mahila Vidyapeeth".¹⁴ All the national leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri. Lal bahadur Shastri, Kamaraj Nadar and others participated in laying the foundation stones and inaugurations of one or the other institutions of Mahila Vidya Peeth.¹⁵

During the Golden Jubilee year of independence the Govt. of Karnataka honoured Smt. Nagamma Patil with a cash award of Rs.10,000/- and citation recognizing her as "Freedom Fighter" and a "Social Worker". Recognizing the service of Smt. Nagamma Patil in the field of upliftment of Harijan and downtrodden women and children and establishing a number of educational institutions. The prestigious M.G. Sorogi Foundation of Calcutta honored Smt. Nagamma with Smt, Gangadevi Sarogi Award in 1999 with Rs. One Lakh cash award and citation and 14 July 1999.¹⁶

She expressed in her own humble words that whatever she said "There was no choice in the matter. It was something I had to do, as my husband did. There were many ladies in Hubli

who did not participate. We never felt annoyed that they did not join the movement. However it was enough for us, that we were doing it".¹⁷ Now the society and folk look forward to her as symbol of sacrifice and regards her as 'Avva' (mother).

Nagamma Patil wife of Sardar Veerana Gowda also laboured hard in bringing about an awakening among women and in carrying on the constructive programme of the Congress, especially Harijan cause. Scores of other women leaders devoted all their talent and energies to the national cause.¹⁸

Than by her noble deeds in the cause of nation Smt. Nagamma Patil showed the British and the world that Indian women also do not lag behind in any field of struggle and service. She proved the old saying that women is the back bone of society and she can also work shoulder to shoulder with her man. Not only herself but by her doing acts she brought the women folk of all castes and creeds into one umbrella to assist in the movement for freedom of motherland from foreign yoke and stood as a pillar in the freedom struggle and social reconstruction. She passed away on June 6.2002.

Thus Smt. Nagamma Patil stood as a "symbol of sacrifice" and her untiring services were recognized both by the society as well as the women folk and was entitled as "Avva" i.e.. mother. The Beloved.

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