

Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949): A poet and profound patriot

Dr. Manish R Sharma

General Manager, Downtown Motors Pvt. Ltd. Anand. Gujarat, India

Abstract

The Nightingale of India Sarojini Naidu was dynamic women. Be its using poetry as a means to address social issues, fighting for the recognition of women's or braving the British Lathi Charge to stand front row in civil Disobedience Movement. Sarojini Naidu was celebrated Poet along with being instrumental part of Independence Movement. She made the acquaintance of Mahatma Gandhi and become the follower of his quest of a non- violent non- cooperation Movement. Naidu was petitioner for the empowerment of Indian Women whose role she believed was instrumental in fighting for Independence.

Country greatness lies in its undying ideals of love and sacrifice that inspire the mother of race: - Sarojini Naidu

Keywords: night angle, Golden threshold, national congress, swaraj, cripps mission

Introduction

Sarojini Naidu was born on 13th February, 1879 in Hyderabad- a city which was distinguished by its own composite culture. Her father, Dr. Aghornath Chattopadhyaya, was a remarkable scientist cum philosopher who was popularly acclaimed as the father of education in the Hyderabad state. Her mother Barada Sundari Devi was indeed a gentle poetess, half angel and half bird. Sarojini was both and patriot of the first order... a rare combination of uncommon attributes. Her towering personality loomed large, in the literary history and the history of Indian national struggle. She was both a gifted singer of songs and front-rank for freedom.

Sarojini Naidu was brought up in the milieu which was conducive to the flowering of her intellectual gifts which she inherited from her parents in an abundant measure. As it was the common practice among the well to do families of the age, she learnt more at home than at school. Right from her early days of childhood, she had inherited poetic legacy from her mother. At in early age of 12 years, in 1891 A.D., she came out with flying colours by securing first position in the matriculation examination in the whole of the madras presidency.

In 1896, Sarojini Naidu went to London for higher studies. She first joined king's college in London and then shifted to Girtor College, Cambridge Due to prolonged illness. She could not complete her studies in England. However, that was compensated, as it seemed, by her contact with the great literary masters of the time. In 1897, she happened to meet Edmund Grosse, She was equally fortunate to have the benefit of counsel and guidance in Symous. That was equally fortunate to have the benefit of counsel and guidance in English phrase and rhythm from an equally renowned literary critic, Arthur Symous. That was how her 'initiative English Lyrics' were transformed into melodious Indian poems. the desired fructification of her first book of lyrics and melodious Indian poems. "The Golden Threshold" in 1906. 'I must go on writing' became, hereafter, the goal of her life. Her another books of poems were published in 1912(The Broken Wing) and 1917 respectively.

On her return to Indian in 1898. Sarojini married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, a nor-Brahmin, under the Brahma Marriage Act-1872. Thus, she swept aside all the social and caste barriers and boldly set on ideal example of inter-caste marriage, much earlier to the rigorous social reform campaigns of the latter days.

The period between 1903 and 1917 came out to be a great turning point in her life. During this span of time, she came into close contact with almost all the leading personalities of the period viz Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Rabindranath Tagore, M. A. Jinnah, Mrs. Annie Besant, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and many others.

In 1906, Dadabhai Naoroji presided over the 22nd session of the unanimous opinions that the British government should extend in India the system of government prevailing in the self- governing Dominions, necessary steps should be taken for adequate representation of Indians in the council of secretary of state etc. Sarojini Naidu made fiery speech on the occasion pressing reforms to expand the representation of the people and larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country. Great stalwart like Gopal Krishna Gokhale was much impressed by her eloquence 'who saw in her oratory and brilliance the leader of the future.' It was in 1909 that M.F.O. Dwyer, Officiating Resident of Hyderabad, recommended her name for the award of a first -class Kaiser-I-Hind Medal for her work to relieve the suffering and distress by a disastrous flood overwhelming Hyderabad in September 1908. At the Lucknow session of the new Muslim League, 22nd March 1913, she strongly pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity like a great apostil. During the Home_Rule movement, she widely toured the country along with Mrs. Annie Besant and C. P. Ramaswami and delivered torrential speeches on the welfare of youth, dignity of labour women's emancipation and nationalism. the 31st session of the Indian National Congress was conveyed under the president ship of Babu Ambica Charan Mazumdar at Lucknow. There, she first met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In her speech on the occasion, she appealed the countrymen to give the maximum sacrifice for motherland and thereby achieve the priceless crown of

immortality. It was at the instance of Gokhale that she afterwards met Mahatma Gandhiji whose impact on her proved to be tremendous and overwhelming. On her part also, she stood by him as a tower of strength in all his trials and tribulations throughout the freedom struggle.

With the beginning of the year 1917, a new phase of immense political activities was ushered in the life of Sarojini Naidu. It was the most dynamic start of her public life. To start with, she championed for the most-ford reforms, At a public meeting in Bombay, in 1919, she strongly supported the resolution condemning the Rowlatt Bills. She pointedly remarked that justice was the immortal inheritance not only of the white people of the world but of every human life. She further added that it was our utmost duty to make everyone of us a temple of indignation. In March, 1919, Sarojini Naidu signed the satyagraha pledge under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhiji, She expressed her deep faith in Gandhiji that he was possessed of that divine quality within him to model heroes out of common clay for the deliverance of Indian from her bondage. During the civil Disobedience Movement in 1919, she worked as the most faithful lieutenant of Mahatma Gandhiji. She displayed an excellent and exceptional courage at this critical juncture by quelling the riots, selling the proscribed literature and addressing tirelessly mammoth gatherings of Jallianwala Bagh and martial law in Amritsar. In the same year. She sailed for England as a member of the All-India Home Rule Deputation and led there a powerful agitation against sex-discrimination. Responding to the call of Mahatma Gandhiji, She returned the Kaiser-i-Hindi medal to the government in persuasion of the non-cooperation movement. She also headed the deputation to Mantagu. The secretary of state for India, and pleaded for the democratic reforms in India.

In February 1922, Mahatma Gandhiji suspended the civil-Disobedience movement to the great unpleasant astonishment of the political leaders and the people of India. At this critical hour in the life of nation, Sarojini Naidu sent to the people of stirring message on the unity of India which served as a great pacifying effect. In March 1922, Mahatma Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to six year rigorous imprisonment. However, Mahatma Gandhiji was released on the ground of ill-health in February 1924. After this great historic trial of Mahatma Gandhiji and his release from the jail, she gave up her luxurious silks in favour of Khadi. At a special session of the Indian National Congress in September 1923, she publicly observed on the civil-Disobedience Movement that it was the final weapon of the people and it should be taken out of the armory as quickly as possible.

Sarojini Naidu was elected as the president of the Indian National Congress session of Kanpur in 1925. In her presidential speech, she appealed to the Indian people to prepare themselves for all the progressive and ultimate stages of our united struggle for freedom. She explained that no sacrifice was too heavy, on suffering too great, on martyrdom too terrible that enabled us to redeem our Mother-India from the unspeakable dishonor of her bondage and bequeath to our children an imperishable legacy of peace. While addressing the delegates of the Hindu Mahasabha during that period of the congress session, she remarked that period of the congress session, she remarked that Swaraj was not possible as long as there was division among for the cause of Indian by all means. In 1929, while she was in America, she gave innumerable public lectures

justifying the claims of the Indian people for freedom. Moreover, she further added that the freedom of the Indian people for freedom. Moreover, she further added that the freedom of India was the guarantee of the peace of the world in ways more than one.

In February 1930 Mahatma Gandhiji started the salt satyagraha to enthuse the people of awake and arise and be not & Fallen in their Herculean efforts to achieve freedom for the motherland. Sarojini Naidu also actively participated in this historic fight and played her role to the utmost satisfaction of all the prominent leaders of the country.

The British Government called the First Round Table conference in November 1930, under the president ship of the British premier Ramsay MacDonnell, to solve the political problem of India. Sarojini Naidu attended this conference as an associate of Mahatma Gandhiji on behalf of the Indian National Congress. However, due to the stiff attitude of the British Government regarding granting of independence to Indian, the conference proved to be a great failure causing disgust and disappointed in the minds of the Indian people. On her return to Indian, Sarojini Naidu was arrested.

In March 1932, Sarojini Naidu was elected as the acting president of the Indian National Congress During this tenure of office, she made all the possible efforts together momentum in the struggle for freedom. She personally, wrote to all provincial workers of the congress to arouse the people to fight the battle to the finish. She also vigorously started a campaign for full participation of the women and youth in the public life of the country. When the Cripps mission came to India in March 1942, she took leading path in the discussions and deliberations for upholding strong and undivided India. When all the pious and peaceful efforts to pursue the British Government to grant freedom to India failed, the Indian freedom struggle took a new turn in its policy and method of action. All India congress committee met in Bombay on 8th August 1942 and passed the historic Quit-India Resolution. It also appealed the Indian people to start a nation-wide movement on peaceful lines for the realization of the national goal of independence. The next day i.e. on 9th August 1942, all the front rank Indian National leader like Jawaharalal Nehru, Vallbhbai patel J.B. Kruplani, Asaf Ali and G.B. Pant were arrested and put behind the bars. Sarojini Naidu was also sent to jail and detained with Mahatma Gandhiji at the Aga Khan Palace at Poona.

On 23rd March 1937, First Inter-Asian Conference met at Purana Quila, New Delhi. Pandit Jawaha Nehru inaugurated the conference while Sarojini Naidu chaired that historic session which was attended by delegates from 40 countries. In her presidential speech she most sincerely and seriously of Asian countries.

We shall move together, the people of Asia un defected by disaster..... a common ideal of peace, not the peace of negation, not the peace of surrender, but the peace of a militant creative human spirit that rises to exaltation.” She furthered added.

“To rise and rise so high as to reach the skies and bring the Moon down to the diadem of Asians freedom.”

As a member of the Constitution Assembly of India, Sarojini Naidu eulogized of 22nd July 1947 the Indian National Flag and explained the significance of

Dharmachakra. She remarked that the wheel in the national flag stood as a symbol for every national and national activity and that it represent eternity. She further observed that under the Indian national tri-coloured flag, that was no peasant, no rich and no poor. There was no privilege, ledge, the was only duty and responsibility and sacrifice.

In the independent India, Sarojini Naidu was adorned with uncommon honor of being the first woman governor of U.P. and she brilliantly proved herself equal to the onerous task imposed on the head of India's largest province. It has been rightly proclaimed that as first woman governor, she brought beauty, grace and dignity to the high office. Thus, with a deep and Devine satisfaction of doing her duty at her best, she breathed her last on 2nd march 1949 at Lucknow. Her long and varied career of ceaseless activities thus constitutes an integral part of the saga of Indian struggle for freedom.

Pandit Jawahralal Nehru, the first Prime minister of independent Indian paid he solemn tribute thus-“ Here was a person of a great brilliance-vital and vivid. Here was a person with so many gifts, but some gifts which made her unique. she infused artistry and poetry into our national struggle.”

C. Rajgopalachari, first Indian Governor General mourned her sad demise

“She carried peace and compassion and good will wherever she went..... she could plead with play with and chastise anybody in the word.”

sardar vallabhbhai patel, first Indian Deputy prime Minister and also Home Minister his deep sorrow in the following word-

“Sarojini Naidu's charm and the magic of her words endered her to millions..... Thoughts came to her like verses..... She represented in her personality the grim determination and the heavy sacrifices of Indian womanhood.”

“The Times of Indian” paid her a great tribute on 3rd march 1949-

“She was a versatile and an unusually gifted woman. To the younger generation in particular, she symbolized a spirit of perennial youthfulness.

The London correspondent of the TRIBUNE offered a glowing tribute on her debut before the Joint Parliamentary Committee as follows:

“Mrs. Naidu made a striking picture as she eloquently pleaded the cause of Indian Women and that her oratory would have done credit to some of the great masters of parliamentary eloquence.

Reference

1. Sarojini Naidu- A preface to poetry – Sharma Kaushal Kishore
2. India 50 most illustrious women – Gupta Indra
3. Sarojini Naidu- Markand Paranjape
4. Sarojini Naidu – The Nightingale and Freedom Fighter- Anu Kumar
5. The Golden Threshold – Sarojini Naidu
6. Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu – Sarojini Naidu