

Contribution of Jain Freedom Fighters of Madhya Pradesh in getting Independence (1857-1947)

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Abstract:

Like every community, the people of Jain community have also contributed a lot in getting freedom to India, but even today our country is unaware of their contribution, there is no mention of them even in our history books. The Jain community has never lagged behind in sacrificing their lives or even in giving financial aid to freedom fighters. Jain people also suffered the torture given by the British for freedom, were punished in jail, even hanged, if they wanted they too could have fulfilled their dreams but, leaving their dreams, they decided to liberate the motherland and by becoming a martyr, they became immortal forever (Jain S. , 2008). To highlight the contribution of such Freedom Fighters, Research Scholar did research on Jain freedom fighters of Madhya Pradesh and show the Jain freedom fighters of Madhya Pradesh and their Contribution in Indian independence through this research Paper. Some prominent Freedom Fighters were: Gopi Laal Jain, Amarchand Banthia, Chandra Sen Jain, Ratan Chand Jain etc. Research Scholar visit national and State libraries and also apply field work to complete research.

Keywords: Independence, Jain Community, Revolutionaries, Struggle.

• Objectives:

1. To highlight the contribution of Jain freedom fighters and their struggle in context of Madhya Pradesh.
2. To show how the Jain freedom fighters follow the Jain rituals and Sanskar even tolerating tortures of Britishers in the Jail.

• Study Area and Methodology

Researcher did research on Madhya Pradesh, especially Ujjain, Indore, Ratlam, Sagar, Jabalpur and Damoh. Jain freedom fighters, visited memorial of Jain freedom fighters and by books available in Jain libraries.

I. Introduction:

Madhya Pradesh, also known as heart of India (Pandey, 2014), was constituted on 1 Nov 1956, before established as a state, of as Central Province, later distributed some area to other neighbouring states. Since ancient times, Madhya Pradesh has been important in terms of its geographical, social, historical, political etc.

Madhya Pradesh name remained in the first five states with the highest number of Jain People, even today, according to the 2011 census, Madhya Pradesh comes at number 5, that is, population of Jain people is 0.4%

of the total population of country despite this, Madhya Pradesh secured good position in population of Jain. (<https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/madhya+pradesh.html>).

A very great example to show the incredible qualities of Jain people mentioned by Mahatma Gandhi in his autobiography, “my experiment with truth”, that, “When he was going abroad, his mother was not ready to send him, because the mother was afraid that her son would go abroad and started to eat non-vegetarian food.” Then a Jain monk came and Gandhi ji took vow from Jain Muni to not to eat meat and follow celibacy, then his mother believed him and he went abroad, such was the influence of Jain monks and Jain people in Gandhi ji’s life. Jain people have always been ahead in faithfulness, loyalty, performance of duty. (<https://www.jainsamaj.org>)

The main message of the people of the Jain community is that non-violence is the ultimate religion, but to free the country from slavery, to stop the unnecessary atrocities of the British, holding weapons in their hands, went to jail, like other revolutionaries, their Contribution is also exemplary. But today we do not find the names of even a single Jain freedom fighter in the history books. Through the research, researcher did research on this topic. Prominent Freedom Fighters of Madhya Pradesh are: Gopi Laal Jain, Chandra Sen, Chunni Laal, not only male, female fighters also participated in the struggle for Indian independence namely Govin Devi Patwa, Tarabai Devi, Pushpa Devi Kotecha etc. Amar Shaheed Lala Hukum Chand Jain and Fakir Chand Jain were openly hanged on January 9, 1858 by the British in India’s first freedom struggle from the British. (Jain D. J., 2003)

Apart from this, many Jain People also participated in the freedom struggle, there was a direct contribution of Jain people in Subhash Chandra Bose’s Azad Hind Fauj, important news of the national movement was prominently published in newspapers and magazines run by Jain People. Jain People have also contributed in the making of the Constitution of India, such as Ratna Laal Malviya, Bhavani Arjun Khim ji, Ajit Prasad Jain, Balwant Singh Mehta and Kusum Kant Jain. In this way, the contribution of Jain people is commendable not only in getting freedom to India, but also in building India. Besides this Vir Chand Jain was second Indian and first Jain person who gave speech in First world religions Conference in September 1893 in Chicago, his speech published on “History of Religion” Magazine (page no. 733-736). (<https://jaividya.com/2020/08/15/jain-freedom-fighters/>)

Not only fought with Britishers, many Jain people gave their cooperation financially, spent their time in building nation and also in social service to needy people during tough time of struggle with Britishers i.e. especially during war and partition. (Jain D. J., 2003)

II. Prominent Freedom Fighters from Madhya Pradesh

1. Dal Chand Jain: Dal Chand Jain, born on 11th of Sept. 1928, is the son of Renowned Social Worker of National Ideology, Late Seth Samaj Bhushan Bhagwan das ji Jain. He has been a Freedom Fighter, an Ex-Member of the Legislative Assembly and currently, a Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha). He started political activities at the age of 14 and was arrested several times for active participation in the liberation struggle in 1942, but was released after one day of detention because he was a minor. Unfortunately, his

name was removed from the school roll because of his active participation in the freedom struggle movement. He is currently the President of Madhya Pradesh Freedom Fighters Sangthan.

2. Amar Chand Banthia: Although Rajasthan is his birthplace; but his work area has been Gwalior of Madhya Pradesh, because he was appointed chief treasurer of King Sindhia's treasury at Gwalior. The treasure was known as 'Gangajali' and even the Sindhia did not know how much money was in it. It was a tradition in the kingdom of Gwalior that no king could take money from Gangajali on sight. Previously, only the treasurer knew about this vast fortune. A soldier asked Amarchand Ji to fight for his mother's guidance on the battlefield. Amar Chand ji said that his physical features prevent him from fighting with weapons, but he is engaged in a cause that promotes the courage of freedom fighters. When Rani Laxmi Bai went to battle with the British forces, her forces ran out of food and ran into trouble. The soldiers were not paid for five months. At that time Amarchand Ji opened the vault to the soldiers. He knew what the consequences would be, but the plight of the soldiers would be unimaginable if he didn't help them. After a four-day sacrifice by Rani Laxmi Bai, Amarchand Ji was hanged by the British on 22 June 1858 in the bustling market of Lashkar. His body was hung from a neem tree for three days to warn the people. A statue of Amarchand Ji Banthia was placed at the same place in Gwalior.

3. Singhai Prem Chand Jain: Amar Shaheed Prem Chand was born at the home of Singhai Sukhlal in Semra Buzurg, a small village of Damoh. Singhai Prem Chand Jain was an enthusiastic, passionate, fearless, talented and promising young man since childhood. Sukhlal ji's financial condition was not very good. Nevertheless, he gave primary education to the boy Prem Chand. After that he was sent to Maharana Pratap High School in Damoh to study in secondary classes.

In 1933, When Mahatma Gandhi came to Damoh. Prem Chand Ji travelled 10 miles (16 km) to Damoh to hear him and stayed in Damoh to participate in the freedom struggle. World War II has begun. Assistant Director Sagar Farooq came to Damoh and started informing about 6000 people to enlist. During the lecture, Prem Chand Ji came out and started saying that these troops were fighting for the British and he did not want to help them.

The Deputy Commissioner became aggressive and arrested Prem Chand Ji. However, the crowd was very outraged by this action. Seeing this, Deputy Chief Prem Chand Ji called him to the podium and said, "He will not be arrested. I invited him to speak".

"This war is being fought for the safety of the British Government," said Prem Chand Ji. This is a trick in English. Therefore, no one should be allowed to go to the army and help them in any way. The Deputy Commissioner had to leave that day due to lack of police security.

Prem Chand Ji was arrested on 14 January 1941 for speaking against the British Empire. He was sentenced to 4 months in prison. After a few days in Sagar Jail, he was transferred to Nagpur Jail. Unfortunately Deputy Commissioner Farooq was also transferred to Nagpur Jail. Seeing Prem Chand Ji, he remembered his humility in Damoh. He asked for food on the last day of Prem Chand Ji's sentence. Prem Chand Ji knew

that the food served was his death. He got a ticket from Nagpur to Damoh. When he reached home with a weak body, the doctors said that he had poison in his body. He could not be saved & died (1941).

4. Udai Chandra Jain: Shaheed Udai Chand Jain was born on 10 November 1922 in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh. In August 1942 everywhere there was voice of Quit India movement lead by Gandhi ji, at that time only 14 years of age Udai Chandra took the responsibility to lead the Quit India Movement in Mandla and decided to hoist Country's flag at official Building. In the presence of hundreds of people carrying the torch of the movement, Udai Chandra Jain was taking out a procession in Mandla on 15 August 1942, when the British lathi-charged the protesters, warning them to stop the procession. If they kept moving forward, the British threatened to shoot the protesters, but the protesters' protest continued and their rally to drive the Britishers out of nation. Amar Shaheed Udai Chandra of Mandla district, who was a school student and was 14 at that time, started challenging the British soldiers by unbuttoning his shirt. The English army shot the boy in the chest and killed him. At the age of just 14, (16 August 1942) Udai Chandra became immortal forever in the history of India by sacrificing his life for the freedom of the country.

5. Sabulaal Jain: The name of the immortal martyr Mr. Sabulaal Baisakhia of Gadhakota, District Sagar, Madhya Pradesh is prominent among the martyrs who paved the way to free Mother India from the shackles of slavery by sacrificing their lives on the altar of freedom. Sabulaal was born in 1923 at Gadhakota in Sagar district. Sabulaal studied till the fifth standard in the local school itself. The financial condition of the father was not very good, so he left studies at an untimely time and started doing homework. Due to this, the feeling of patriotism that had awakened in him did not dim, it kept increasing day by day. Quit India Movement of 1942 was the decision. There was a place of strikes in the offices all over the country, there was no less participation of the cinematographers, they left school and jumped into this freedom struggle. On August 22, 1942, it was unanimously decided in Gadhakota that the police station, the symbol of British rule, is here, so the tricolor flag should be hoisted on it only. Immediately that meeting took the form of a procession. There were about two and a half thousand men and women in the procession. This number may seem small for a big city, but a town like Gadhakota rarely sees such a large procession. Sabulaal also had a flag in his hand, he knew that moving forward even a little, is an invitation to death, but the one who has left home with a shroud, the love of life cannot stop him, Sabulaal went ahead with his four-five companions, they were engaged in trying to hoist the tricolor flag. But three consecutive shots were fired and he fell there, many people were arrested. Sabulaal, Kunji Laal and Mr. Dhaniram Dubey were hit by bullets, so they were immediately sent to Sagar Hospital. Dhaniram and Mr. Kunji Laal survived but Sabulaal died and became immortal even after death.

6. Magan Laal Oswal: Amar Shaheed Magan Laal Oswal was born in 1906, Jaora Madhya Pradesh. He was only son of his father, when in 1942, Quit India movement started in the whole nation, till that time he become married & also father of a child, but true nation lover never grab in the affection of family and Magan Laal Oswal was one of them, so he left home to participate in Quit India Movement and for this he took out a procession in Indore on 6th September 1942, he was at the forefront raising slogans of “Bharat Mata Ki Jai”, “British Quit India” Police lathi charged and fired bullets, he injured badly and sent to tukoji hospital, but due to so huge injury, doctor told it never be fully recovered and after tolerating pain he died on 23 December 1945, leaving behind his dream to free nation from clutches of Britishers, in the last days of his life he told that ,”Had this wound not happened, I would have sacrificed my life only after driving the British out of the country”.

7. Anand Rao Jain: Shri Anand Rao Jain, son of Shri Narayan Rao of Multai, District. Betul (M.P.) was born in 1914. In 1938, you left the British service and joined the movement. From 25-9-1941 you remained in Betul Jail for one month. You were under house arrest for 15 days even during the 1942 movement.

8. Anandi Laal Jain: Mr. Anandi Laal Jain, son of Mr. Shaitan Mal ji, of Indore (M.P.0) was born on 20th April, 1926. He obtained the degree of M.A. (Economics). Mr. Jain, an active activist of the freedom struggle, was arrested for participating in the Quit India Movement and was sentenced to imprisonment for about 15 months. Your elder brother Shri Genda Laal ji also went to jail.

9. Mrs. Tarabai Jain Kasliwal: She was the wife of famous freedom fighter Mr. Nemichand Jain Kasliwal of Mahidpur district Ujjain, who went to jail with her husband even when she was pregnant. When Mr. Jain was arrested in the movement of 1942, wife Mrs. Jain also insisted to go along; she was pregnant at that time. At the police station, when the Thanedar accepted to keep Mr. Jain in jail but asked Mrs. Jain to go back, Tarabai sat on hunger strike in the police station itself to get arrested, then she was also kept in jail.

10. Ishwar Chand Jain: Mr. Ishwar Chand Jain Stopping a moving train and hoisting the national flag on its engine, Mr. Ishwar Chand Jain was born in Pipariya Kalan, district- Jabalpur. His father's name was Mr. Kanchedi Laal Jain. He was in civil disobedience since 1930 Dada Badrinath actively supported under the leadership of Dubey. During the violation of the salt law, his body was badly injured & continuously flowing of blood from the body due to the merciless lathi charged of the police, but he never take rest and again participated in the Jungle Satyagraha and Foreign Textile Boycott Movement. By boarding the train and pulling the chain near Gadarwara station, stopped the train and raised slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'. With the tricolor flag in hand, you speed up the engine and become Successful in hoisting the tricolor flag on it. Curiosity among train passengers spread like a fire. The police ran and arrested him as 'rebel' youth. Arrested and sent to Jabalpur Central Jail Gaya, where you have been since 30 September 1932. Till March 8, 1933, harsh tortures had to be suffered.

III. Some such facts about the martyred heroes:

This facts will completely shock the countrymen, Jain freedom fighters served the nation but they forget to follow the principles of Jainism (never forget Jainatva Sanskar)

- Kamalchand Jain Advocate of Sanawad had a rule not to eat food without having Devdarshan. He was in jail during the days of Paryushan festival, he went on a fast and got permission to bring Pratimaji in the jail itself. He used to recite Tattvartha Sutra in the afternoon along with Abhishek Pujan and in the evening he used to share with his other Jain companions. He used to prepare food with his own hands and eat Jain food once a day.

- Similarly, in the Central Jail of Indore in 1943, M.P. Former Chief Minister Shri Mishri Laal Gangwal Bhaiyyaji and Padma Shri Babulalji Patodi also celebrated the festival while staying in jail, doing all the daily activities according to the festival and eating Jain food.

- The great revolutionary Arjun Lal Sethi protested against not being given Jinendra statue for darshan-worship while fasting for 56 days in Belur Jail.

- Martyr Chhote Laal ji Jain, who was born in a village near Khajuraho, was forced to eat and drink in the jail, while fasting, he proclaimed his determination that he would not consume even a drop of food and water until Dhovan Paani and pure food were available. Ultimately the government had to bow down.

- The story of Singhai Jawaharlal Jain, born in Panagar, Jabalpur, is also similar. He was in jail along with his 40-50 Jain companions during the Paryushan festival, he made a vow in the jail that he would only eat pure and pure food made by his own hands during the days of the festival, in which he got success and celebrated the festival for ten days with Bhajan & pure food made by his hands only.

- Mr. Dalchand Jain, who was a Member of Parliament from Panna- -Damoh region and adorned the famous social political positions, arranged pure food in the jail for all those Jain fighters who participated in the freedom movement.

- Mr. Ramsharan Das, father of Mr. Ayodhya Prasad Goyalija, who was the conch shell of Jain awakening and editor of many Jain letters and magazines, also ate roti mixed with salt in water for 6 months while in jail, because onion was found in the vegetables available in the jail. His silent Satyagraha finally won and the jail authorities approved the preparation of a separate dish without onion for him.

1. Prominent scholar of Jain philosophy, Pt. Banshidhar ji Vyakarancharya also did not lag behind in giving independence to this motherland. Right from the beginning of youth, he was active in the sacrifice of service to the country. Even in the tortures of Sagar, Nagpur, Amravati etc. Jails, his Jainism (Jain Sanskars) remained unbeatable. (<https://jainsanskriti.com/multi-blog-detail/162>),

(<https://jaindivya.com/2020/08/15/jain-freedom-fighters/>)

IV. Conclusion:

Similarly, there were many precious gems in the Jain community, who, while following Jain religious rituals, made their invaluable contribution in the struggle for freedom, some helped the heroes financially, while many themselves entered the war, endured the tortures of the jail. But never strayed from their goal, because those who has supreme love towards country, for them their family is a stranger, they proudly accept the tricolor shroud, moving away from the bonds of family and relationships.

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