

Dadabhai Naoroji's Theory of the Drain of Wealth & Role of the Freedom Fighters

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ABSTRACT:

Each year as Independence Day approaches, there is a lot of writings that appear on the heroes of our struggle for Independence. Political speeches are replete with tales of sacrifice of our leaders but almost always the same names get all the attention and mention, while innumerable other lesser known names have been pushed into long forgotten pages of history. There is little or no awareness of their life, their struggle or their contribution to our struggle for independence. But they are still our heroes by any definition or standard and they too deserve a mention on our Independence Day.

KEYWORDS: Political speech, Independence day

INTRODUCTION:

Most of you would not even have heard of Allah Bux, a name long ignored on both sides of the border. This is the story of a man who personified everything that secular India values today but he remains an unsung hero. During the days of Quit India Movement in 1942, Allah Bux was the Premier of Sindh, now a part of Pakistan (in those days the Chief Minister was called Premier) and founder of the Ittehad Party. It was Allah Bux's initiative and belief of a united and secular India that kept the Muslim League from spreading its influence in Sindh. He vehemently opposed the Muslim League's position of the two-nation theory on the basis of religion. He was a staunch believer in a united India, one whose heritage belonged to both Hindus and Muslims, together. Being a popular leader and widely respected in his region, he managed to rally most Muslims to his point of view.

In 1940, he organised the Azad Muslim Conference in Delhi that was attended by over 1,400 delegates from all over India, where he strongly spoke of a united India for both Hindus and Muslims. He vociferously opposed Muslim League's stand on the creation of Pakistan.

In 1942, he protested Winston Churchill's criticism of the Indian National Congress and the Quit India Movement, by returning the Knighthood and the title of Khan Bahadur, which was conferred on him by the British. Unfortunately, he didn't find support from either the Indian National Congress or the Muslim League, which detested him for his opposition to their two-nation theory. He was murdered on 14 May 1943 by professional killers, apparently hired by elements within the Muslim League. His life and contribution to the freedom struggle is barely highlighted in Pakistan and largely ignored in India. Allah Bux Soomro lived and died for a united India and believed in an India that belonged to all...if only this 'unsung hero' had lived on...

AUROBINDO GHOSE (1872-1950): Aurobindo Ghose was born in a well-to-do family from Bengal. He was sent to England for studies and on his return from England he worked for the Maharaja of Gaekwad as his speech writer. He soon began to develop strong nationalist feelings and took to writing revolutionary text and poetry, to inspire and awaken the masses against British rule in India. He launched 'Bande Mataram,' a publication that he edited and used to propagate his message.

In 1908, he was arrested in the Alipore bomb case for overseeing the failed bombing attempt to kill Magistrate Kingsford. The bomb missed his carriage and killed two other British women. He was put on trial. It was the spirited defence put up by Chittaranjan Das that saved him from the gallows but he did spend one year in solitary confinement in Alipore jail. It was during the time in jail he began to turn spiritual.

He later shifted to the French colony of Pondicherry, where he spent his remaining life in spiritual thought. Sri Aurobindo's life and writings have inspired people both in India and overseas and his ashram in Pondicherry continues to remain a major destination for those seeking spiritual solace.

PEER ALI KHAN:

Very few would know of this fiery young man from Muhammadpur in Azamgarh District of UP who inspired a rebellion in Patna. At the age of seven, he ran away from home and reached Patna where he took shelter with the local zamindar, Nawab Mir Abdullah, who educated and raised him. On growing up, he opened a book shop in Patna where he sold hand-written books and literature. He resented the presence of the British in India and his shop soon turned into a rendezvous point for secret meetings amongst freedom fighters. His close proximity to native soldiers in the neighbouring Danapur Cantonment helped him develop friends within the soldier community and he was able to garner support against the British. His plan for a major uprising had to be preponed when two secret letters from Danapur Cantonment that bore his name and that of Waris Ali, fell into the hands of the police. With the arrest of Waris Ali, who was his associate and an officer in the British Army, Peer Ali had no choice but to prepone his uprising. He raised the blue and white flag that was similar to the one raised by Tipu Sultan and hurriedly gathered his group and distributed 50 guns which he acquired with the help of his associate Maulvi Mehdi. The Maulvi was subsequently arrested and hanged without trial on 20 June 1857.

The day was 3rd of July, 1857, when Peer Ali raised the flag of mutiny. He along with 200 supporters decided to storm Gulzar Bagh, the state administration headquarters. On their way, they encountered one Dr Lloyal, who was moving with a group of native soldiers. Dr Lloyal ordered his men to open fire. In the ensuing fire, Dr Lloyal was killed. On hearing this, the Commissioner of Patna, W.Taylor ordered his soldiers to open indiscriminate fire on the crowd. Several died on the spot and many were left wounded.

Peer Ali's shop was raided and he was subsequently arrested on 4th July along with 33 of his supporters, most of who were hanged, without trial, the next day. Peer Ali was tortured for three days with the police trying to get information on his other supporters, especially Lutf Ali. Despite enduring severe torture, Peer Ali never disclosed any information. He was hanged on 7 July 1857 and India lost its unsung hero. The list of unsung heroes in the fight for India's Independence is endless. The stories of their life and sacrifice are truly inspiring and it is indeed sad that history has not done justice to these unsung heroes.

THE ROLE OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS:

The freedom fighters of India played an extensive role in getting independence for the country. The 'Revolt of 1857' was the first war of independence of India. The revolt started as a mutiny by the sepoys of the East India Company. The Muslim and the Hindu sepoys together began this revolt. Rani Lakshmibai, Mangal Pandey, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Nana Sahib and Tatya Tope were some of the active leaders and freedom fighters who fought in the revolt. Mangal Pandey is considered as the hero in the modern India because he had played a pivotal role in beginning the revolt against the British. Rani Lakshmibai is considered as the symbol of resistance to the British rule and was one of the leading figures of the rebels in 1857.

In 1876, another movement started against the British rule. It was the foundation of the Indian National Congress (INC). Surendranath Banerjee laid the foundation of the party. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Dadabhai Naoroji, Chittaranjan Das and Jawaharlal Nehru were active leaders of the INC. It was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who gave a push to the party and raised the struggle for freedom in a non-violent way. His Non-Cooperation Movement was a great success and a stepping stone for Indian freedom struggle.

While on one side Gandhi was following the ideologies of non-violence and peace, on the other there was a group of youth who wanted to attain independence by hook or by crook. These revolutionaries were quite influential in the nation and inspired many. Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee were some of the revolutionaries who executed the Kakori conspiracy. Bhagat Singh, Batukeshwar Dutt, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru threw bomb in the assembly house. After the incident, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged to death and are considered as martyrs today. These young men got ignited after the death of Lala Lajpat Rai who died after protesting against the Simon Commission. Subhash Chandra Bose was also a dynamic leader in the freedom struggle of the country. His role in making the Swaraj Party a strong national party in the country paved way to gain independence. There were many other freedom fighters who had fought for the nation and sacrificed their lives.

ROLE AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

With the contribution of these freedom fighters and their freedom struggles and movements, India attained independence on 15 August 1947. The hardships they faced and the sacrifices they made (which even include many lives) led to the freedom of the country. Mahatma Gandhi, who is considered to have played a very important role in the struggle, is known as the 'Father of the Nation'. Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first President of the Republic of India. Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of independent India and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel became the first Deputy Prime Minister. B. R. Ambedkar became the principle architect of the Constitution of India.

INDIA AT PRESENT:

It has been almost seven decades since India gained independence and the country has progressed at a faster pace. The nation has been growing economically and socially and is heading towards development. If these freedom fighters had not contributed in the freedom struggle, the current situation of the country would have been different. India, the democratic republic, might not have headed for success. We are independent and free today only because of the efforts and sacrifices made by our country's freedom fighters.

THEORY OF THE DRAIN OF WEALTH:

Dadabhai Naoroji was the first man to say that internal factors were not the reasons of poverty in India but poverty was caused by the colonial rule that was draining the wealth and prosperity of India. In 1867, Dadabhai Naoroji put forward the 'drain of wealth' theory in which he stated that the Britain was completely draining India. He mentioned this theory in his book Poverty and Un-British Rule in India. Further in his book, he stated the loss of 200-300 million pounds of revenue to Britain. Dadabhai Naoroji considered it as a major evil of British in India. On the footsteps of Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutt also promoted the same theory by keeping it as a major theme of his book Economic History in India. The drain of wealth was the portion of India's wealth and economy that was not available to Indians for consumption.

Dadabhai Naoroji gave six factors that caused external drain. These are:

1. External rule and administration in India.
2. Funds and labour needed for economic development was brought in by immigrants but India did not draw immigrants.
3. All the civil administration and army expenses of Britain were paid by India.
4. India was bearing the burden of territory building both inside and outside India.
5. India was further exploited by opening the country to free trade.
6. Major earners in India during British rule were foreigners. The money they earned was never invested in India to buy anything. Moreover they left India with that money.

Not only this, but through different services such as railways, was India giving a huge amount to Britain. On the other hand, trade as well as Indian labour was deeply undervalued. Along with this, the East India Company was buying products from India with Indian money and exporting it to Britain.

CONCLUSION:

Dadabhai Naoroji was respected both in Britain as well as India for his loyalty towards British and services for Indians. For this reason, he was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress, not once or twice but for three times i.e. in 1886, 1893 and 1906. Dadabhai Naoroji was a greater supporter of free education especially to women and children in India as his mother had to struggle a lot to provide the same to him. He was very keen in providing education and making it free. He also wanted to uplift the condition of women in India. For this, he laid the foundation of Jyan Prasarak Mandal, the only girls' high school in Bombay (present day Mumbai). His contribution to politics were also immense. He was the founder of Bombay Association and established it in 1852. Further, the London Indian Society was established by him along with N.C. Banarjee for the betterment of relationships between Indian and Englishmen. His entire life was dedicated to the cause and betterment of India. Dadabhai Naoroji died in 1917 at the age of 92.

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