

Jhalkari Bai, the immortal warrior of 1857

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Abstract

Serious attempts have been made in the national context of the historical analysis of the Revolt of 1857. From the revolution of 1857 till the attainment of Swarajya (15 August 1947), Indian history is barred with one long tale of sacrifices. His enthusiasm and enthusiasm filled the soul of the country. The contribution of Indian women in spreading the voice of the revolution of 1857 all over India and making the movement active cannot be forgotten. The manner in which Maharani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Begum Zeenat Mahal, Sultana Jamani Begum Jhalkari Bai etc. cooperated in the freedom movement is still available as a pride saga among the people. Rani Lakshmi Bai has made a different identity for her heroic work in literature, folklore. Dalits had an emotional connection with the test revolution because most of the Dalits in the Jhansi army were 1857 soldiers. These people fought a war against the British for their motherland. Jhalkari Bai was a lso involved in the war with the army which was being led by Bhaubakhshi and Purankori. Who was born on 22 November 1830 AD in village Bhojla situated on Balaji Marg in Jhansi. As far as the historical sources regarding Jhalkari Bai are concerned, General Rose, who was the head of the English contingent that attacked Jhansi, has not mentioned Jhalkari Bai in his diary. There is no mention of him even in the Gazetteer of that time. But as a tourist, Vishnurao Godse has jinxed Jhalkari Bai in his book Manjha Pravas. Along with this, Vrindavan Lal Verma, Mohandas Naimisarai, Gangadhar Rao, Bhavani Shankar Visharad, Mata Prasad, Badrinarayan, Suresh Singh Bundela expressed their views on Jhalkari Bai in many books, magazines and proverbs and have tried to give them a place in the field of History.

Introduction

Dalits had an emotional connection with the revolution because Jhansi army's had the maxium population of them. These people fought a war against the British for their motherland. Jhalkari Bai was also involved in the war with the army which was being led by Bhaubakhshi and Purankori. The schedule caste of Bundelkhand holds 80.6 percentage in Uttar pradesh's total population.

In 1907, the history of the brave fighters of 1857 was reviewed by some enlightened Indians living in London. To make this freedom struggle memorable, a grand event was organized on 10 May 1907, which was called Memorial Day, to pay tribute to the martyrs of the freedom struggle. Veer Savarkar, as the leader of the Abhinav Bharat Krantikari Samaj, coordinated the entire event. In this exhibition of pictures of Nana Saheb, Lakshmi Bai, Kunwar Singh, Tatya Tope and Maulvi Ahmed Shah was organized and on the basis of the events of 1857 stories of heroism and nationalism were fabricated. He had composed a book in 1908 named – ‘Indian War of Independence’. Savarkar wrote about the purpose of all these events that he wanted to inspire Indians. After that came books like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s *Discovery of India*, Sunderlal’s *Freedom Struggle of India*, in which the characters of all the heroes of 1857 were glorified. But there was no mention of the role of any Dalit in the names of martyrs, heroes and heroines of 1857. The names of Dalits were missing from the pages of the history of 1857, due to which there was deep disappointment among the Dalits. Therefore, in the 1960s, Dalits took the initiative to write their own history. Dalits praised their heroes in the same way as the so-called nationalists.

As far as the historical sources regarding Jhalkari Bai are concerned, General Rose, who was the head of the English contingent that attacked Jhansi, has not mentioned Jhalkari Bai in his diary. There is no mention of him even in the *Gazetteer* of that time. But as a tourist, Vishnurao Godse has jinxed Jhalkari Bai in his book *Manjha Pravas*. Vishnurao Godse was touring the central part of India during 1857. He has written that Jhalkari Korin was a maidservant of Rani Laxmibai.

Vrindavanlal Verma has described Jhalkari Bai in detail in his novel ‘*Jhansi Ki Rani*’. In this novel written in 1951, Jhalkari Bai’s grandson has also been interviewed. Vrinda Lal Verma himself was also a resident of Bundelkhand region. He has addressed Jhalkari Bai as Jhalkari Korin. He further writes that Jhalkari was a Korin whose nose, eye colour, body texture resembled that of the queen. Her husband was Puran Kori who was not Laxmi Bai’s servant but was very close. The queen loved Jhalkari very much. That’s why she was learning archery, gun shooting, horse riding and many types of bravery from the queen.

Quoting the *Gazetteer*, Mohandas Naimisarai has written in his book *Veerangana Jhalkari Bai* that Jhalkari Bai was born on 22 November 1830 in village Bhojla situated on Balaji Marg in Jhansi. His father’s name was Mulchand and mother’s name was Dhaniya. In 1843 he was

married to Purankori of Nayapura Jhansi. At that time in Jhansi, Twelve Before the time of Gangadhar Rao, there were as many artisans of the Dalit society. He lived outside Jhansi. Later, by the order of the king, a colony was built for them inside the city, which was named Nayapura. After the death of Raja Gangadhar Rao in 1853, the pressure of British officials started increasing on Jhansi, due to which recruitment of women along with men in Rani's army seemed necessary. Most of the women of the city started participating in war exercises, in which Veerasan, Motibai, Juhi, Sundar and Munderbai and Jhalkari Bai were prominent. These women were taught malkham, wrestling, javelin, horse riding, riding a running horse, using the sword by holding the reins with the teeth, shooting with a gun, etc. in the huge courtyard outside the fort. Jhalkari Bai soon became the commander of the Rani army on the strength of her hard work and dedication.”

Vrindavan Lal Verma has also written that Jhalkari encouraged her husband Puran to fight for Jhansi and die for his motherland. Because of which Purankori became a gunner and was posted at the main gate of the fort.

During the war, the British started besieging Lakshmi Bai. Jhalkari dressed like a queen and decorated himself. British Commander General Rooj Jhalkari was deceived thinking she was a queen and arrested him. Suspicion remained for a week. A week later when the British. This came to light when he left Jhalkari. Verma in his novel addresses Jhalkari as equal to Corin while other women are treated with a bye, although Jhalkari's position in the women's squad is similar to that of these women. Was equivalent to this thing bothers Dalit historians. The first biography of Jhalkari Bai was written in 1964 by a Dalit intellectual Bhavani Shankar Visharad, in which Jhalkari Bai is shown childless. His gotra was Ladiya and his childhood name was Jhalariyo. In 1966, Parikshit Hari wrote a book on Jhansi's Veerangana Jhalkari which was published from Delhi. He has paid tribute to Jhalkari Bai through poetry: “ Jhalkari Korin you shine in the aura of every female form. Shine bright like the awakening light of India, what is the rest for those who walk on your path in this glory of India? Keep only your own land, Corin, take a glimpse of it.”

During the 1990s, many plays, songs and stories were written by Dalit social workers, writers and politicians. A campaign to rewrite and re-read Jhalkari Bai's character was started so that her character could be brought before Lakshmi Bai. Archana Verma wrote this song in 1997:

- "There was an uproar in Jhansi, there was hue and cry everywhere. There was a glimpse of jumping into the battle to take iron from the British." In 1990, Mata Prasad was the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, he composed a play named 'Jhalkari Bai Natak'. In 1995, Bihari Lal Harit composed a song named 'Veerangana Jhalkari'. Mata Prasad wrote in his book that Puran Kori's wife Jhalkari Bai fought against the British along with Lakshmibai. At the main gate of Jhansi's palace, where Puran Kori was appointed, the people of Kori caste had surrounded him. Jhalkari Bai was as courageous a woman as Lakshmi Bai and both were close friends. Weapons to Jhalkari Bai, operations were taught by Lakshmibai herself and she was made the head of the women's squad 'Durga Vahini'. Jhalkari Bai advised the queen to go out of the fort with her adopted son Damodar and decided that she herself would fight with the British. Jhalkari Bai fought bravely with the British army and was arrested.

Most of the Dalit writers have raised the character of Jhalkari Bai from Vrindavanlal Verma's play. D.C. Dinkar has written a very interesting story in the contribution of untouchables in the freedom struggle that Jhalkari had inspired Rani Lakshmibai to fight with the British. Initially the Rani did not want to clash with the British. It is untrue that Rani Lakshmibai attained Veer Gati on June 16, 1858. Actually, she had gone underground in the dense forests of Nepal with the help of Maharaja Pratapgarh after escaping from the Company's army. The truth is that Lakshmi Bai lived a long life and died at the age of 80. Dinkar showed a picture of Lakshmi Bai which he had obtained in 1941 from a magazine called Sudha.

Badrinarayan believes that while Dalit writers were highlighting their national characters on the one hand, on the other hand they were also rewriting the characters of the mainstream national movement in such a way that their characters could not remain as lofty. On the other hand, on the 143rd anniversary of Jhalkari Bai, by organizing 'Martyr's Day' in Allahabad, making Jhalkari a national leader, they were presenting her martyrdom as a national sacrifice. "On the basis of Dalit folk memory and myth, M.R. Vidrohi presented the story of Jhalkari Bai in a very heroic manner in the Gadar of 1857 in a Dalit document." Tales of Jhalkari Bai's bravery of 1857 are replete with folktales and folk songs of Bundelkhand. This is discussed even today in kirtan circles in village chaupals and in Dalit gatherings. Dalit society today believes that Jhalkari was a goddess who was born to serve this country. Member Rajkumar Kori says that "U to Durga Rahi. This hymn is sung in the kirtan circle: 'Jai Jhalkari Durgakali Jai Jai Maa Angrejan Ka Garv Tune Chur Chur Kiye'.

Suresh Singh Bundela has been discussed in Vadrinarayan's book. Badinarayan believes that despite Jhalkari being a historical character, her myth is different in the memory of the public. The story of Jhalkari Bai has been continuously reconstructed and refined, but in the upper class of the society, the matter seems to be just the opposite. According to Ramnarayan Shukla of Kachnara village of Bundelkhand, Jhalkari Bai was not special. She was Corin and Lakshmi Bai's maid. By calling Jhalkari Bai as Korin, the upper class shows its neglect and indifference.

The Kori caste is low in the social classification of Bundelkhand. It is a scheduled caste. Whose occupation is weaving cloth. Including Bundelkhand, Rohilkhand and other areas of Uttar Pradesh, the total population of this caste is 23 lakhs. The word blank is derived from the word kora which means cloth without any colour. For example, Kora Dhoti is prevalent in our country. Koris were the people who used to make thick cloth like Khaddar. The Kori caste is also associated with agriculture and hard labour. Apart from Kori, Koli, Kamal, Kamal Vanshi, Ghiman Aharwal, Shankhwar and Gupta are also called in some areas of Ruhilkhand. Nowadays, using the myth of Jhalkari Bai, the Kori caste is engaged in making itself proud. Jhalkari Bai Jayanti is celebrated every year by them." The myth of Jhalkari Bai is being used only by Dalits, such a thing not there. When the demand for a separate Bundelkhand arose, the image of Jhalkari Bai was used to give respectability and Bundeli identity to the movement and to gain the support of Dalits and women. The Postal Telegraph Department of the Government of India has also issued a postage stamp in the name of Jhalkari Bai.

Among the divisions, 1806 percent of the population of Bundelkhand is scheduled caste. That's why all the parties have strengthened their base gradually and Bahujan Party has strengthened its base by making the character of Jhalkari Bai the most. Today, in the democratic era, the Dalit castes have started recognizing their power. On the other hand the politicians also have to reach out to them for their own benefit. In such a situation, the relevance of Jhalkari Bai has increased. Jhalkari Bai's memory has intensified in the public mind, so Dalits themselves have to come forward to create their own history in view of their own neglect.

Subaltern historiography started in India after 1982. Can Dalit historiography be kept in the category of subaltern? This is worth considering. Edward Said has agreed that the rewriting of Indian history is an extension of the struggle between the subaltern and the elite, and between

the Indian masses and the British state. Poverty and starvation were mentioned. The effort of Savalturn scholars is to reach the thinking of common people, poor farmers, shepherd workers, laborers, Dalit castes, women's society, etc., without being limited to the liberal state. Folk tales, folk songs and folk memory can be helpful to them. But Kancha Ilaiah, a Dalit historian, has invalidated the claim of right-wing Hindus to represent Dalit Bahujans who are outcasts and untouchables from history. History writing is changing.

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