

Title:Sarojini Naidu : The Nightingale of India

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Abstract

Sarojini Naidu was a dynamic Indian poet, a feminist, a political activist and a freedom fighter who helped shape India by fighting for India's Independence. She was an empowering woman due to the resilience and the strength she showed and how she never looked back and stayed true to her goal even when she was repeatedly thrown in jail like other freedom fighters. She was the face of the civil disobedience movement and the quit India movement during India's struggle for independence.

During her dynamic Literary career, she received the honour to be chosen as a member of the Royal society of Literature. Mahatma Gandhi gave her the title of the "Nightingale of India" because of her flawless and beautiful poems which highlighted topics like patriotism, romance, tragedy and education.

She paved the way for women in Indian politics in the dominion of India. She was the first woman to be appointed as the president of the Indian national congress in 1925 and was the first woman to hold the office of governor in 1947. Regrettably she succumbed to cardiac arrest. Nevertheless she is one of the most empowering and inspiring women that lived in India in that time

Key words

Young prodigy, Brilliant student, suffrage movement, active literary life, flawless poems.

Her early life

Sarojini Naidu was born on February 13, 1879 in a Bengali family in Hyderabad Telangana. She was the eldest daughter of her father Aghorenath Chattopadhyay and mother Barada Sundari Devi. Aghorenath Chattopadhyay was the principal of Nizam's college at that time, a philosopher and a scientist who held a doctorate from Edinburgh University Scotland. Her mother Barada Sundari Devi was a well accomplished Bengali poetess. The family valued and were an inspiration in the field of education and arts.

Sarojini Naidu being a brilliant student was liked by her family. She showed interest and fascination in poetry writing and public speaking. She was proficient in multiple languages including English, Bengali, Urdu, Telugu and Persian. Her father wanted her to be a mathematician or scientist but she was attracted to literature and poetry.

Sarojini Naidu was a young prodigy and studied in England from 1895 to 1898. At the young age of 12 she passed her examination for the University of Madras. After completing her early education in India she set a path abroad for her further studies which was an exemplary achievement for girls at that time. She continued her education at King's college London and later studied at Girton college Cambridge with a scholarship from Nizam's college. She excelled in her studies and later graduated in 1898 earning a degree in History and Political sciences. She met her husband Dr Govindarajulu Naidu, a non brahmin physician who she married at the age of 19 in . One of her daughters, Padmaja Naidu followed in her footsteps. She was an Indian freedom fighter and a politician and was appointed as the 4th governor of west bengal.(Tikkanen, Amy. "Sarojini Naidu | Biography & Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Poetic life

Sarojini Naidu led an active literary life. She displayed an exceptional talent and passion for writing in the very early days of her education. At the young age of 13 she had written a significant essence of literary work. Her education in England enriched her understanding of literature and honed her skills as a writer. Her first ever compilation of poems, "The Golden Threshold" was published in London in 1905. This was named after her family home in Hyderabad and was infused with rich Indian culture and heritage and with her time in England, her poems had rich English verses. The collection consists of 63 poems. These poems feature daily scenes of Indian lives often from markets or streets. One of the most famous poems in the Golden Threshold, is "In the Bazaars of Hyderabad." This poem is renowned for its vivid imagery and portrayal of the bustling marketplaces of Hyderabad. It captures the essence of daily life in the city, showcasing its vibrant colors, sounds, and cultural richness. "In the Bazaars of Hyderabad" is often anthologized and celebrated for its evocative depiction of Indian culture and tradition. It remains a beloved piece in Indian literature and is frequently studied in schools and universities.

Sarojini Naidu wrote poems for diverse audiences like children, and youth, and impactful themes like patriotism, romance and tragedy.

She then in 1912 published another volume of poems called “The Bird of Time”. This collection of poems expressed her deep love, affection, compassion and patriotism for her country.

In 1914 Sarojini Naidu was chosen to be a member of the Royal Society of Literature. This was one of her greatest achievements in her poetic career. Her other poetic volumes that were published were “The Broken Wing” which contains her most prominent poem called “The Bazaars of Hyderabad”, “The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India.” was another collection of poems that was published after her death. Before her passing she was working on another collection of poems which was then edited by her daughter Padmaja Naidu and published in 1961. (Team NEXT IAS) Sarojini Naidu had written many more notable literary works that still flow through the hearts of the people in India. Her poems were known for their imagery, lyrical quality and rhythm. Sarojini Naidu’s fervour for writing poems helped India by serving as the rallying cry in the Independence struggle by inspiring hope and resilience in the people of India .

Mahatma Gandhi believed that her poems, her language, her style and themes were very motivating and a good source of inspiration so he decided to give her the title of “The Nightingale of India”.

Now the people of India celebrate the poems for their lyrical beauty and patriotic fervour. Her poems remain a testament to her enduring legacy as “The Nightingale of India.”

Political Career

Sarojini Naidu was an active, passionate and dedicated freedom fighter. She started her political career when she came across a suffrage movement in England. She became an active campaigner. She tried persuading the British government to allow Indian women living in England to vote. Through the motion she became close allies with Indian national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Annie Besant (Team, King's College London *Sarojini Naidu*) She was drawn to the Indian Congress movement and Mahatma Gandhi's Non Cooperation movement. Gopal Krishna Gokhale played a crucial role in drawing Sarojini Naidu closer to the freedom movement. Inspired by his ideals and dedication, she decided to dedicate her life to the cause of India’s independence

She toured Africa in the interest of Indians there . She helped Mahatma Gandhi with the Indian independence struggle and was the face of the civil disobedience and quit India movement. The following year she was appointed as the President of the Indian National Congress, Kanpur session

1925. She was the first woman to ever hold this position preceding Annie Besant by 8 years. Throughout the fight for independence she was thrown in jail repeatedly in the years (1930, 1932, and 1942–43) but she remained strong and followed up to her goal which was freedom from the British. (“Indian National Congress” Sarojini Naidu 13th February)

Her poetry was a powerful medium of propagating nationalism. She took active participation in movements organised for freedom. She accompanied Mahatma Gandhi to London for the Round Table conference. She was appointed as Governor of the United Provinces (present day Uttar Pradesh) in 1947. She was the first woman to hold office as Governor in the dominion of India. This position was held by her till her death. She expired on March 2nd 1949 due to a cardiac arrest.

Reason for Empowerment

Sarojini Naidu was a woman ahead of her time and was a pioneer in the field of women's rights and empowerment. She was a strong advocate for women's education and was an inspiration to many young women of her time. She encouraged women to participate in the independence movement and worked tirelessly to empower them.

Sarojini Naidu was a true patriot who dedicated her life to the cause of India's independence. She was a woman of many talents and was a true inspiration to all those who knew her. Her poetry and speeches remain a testament to her passion and dedication to the cause of independence. To commemorate her legacy let us remember her not only as The Nightingale of India but also a trailblazer who helped shape the destiny of our nation.

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