

Resistance of Haryana in Freedom Struggle (1857 -1947) : An Analysis of Political conditions

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Sukhvir Singh

Associate Professor ,
Department of History ,
Ch. Bansi Lal Government College , Loharu, Bhiwani
Haryana (India)

Abstract

The History of Haryana has been very rich from earliest times. The state has great cultural and archaeological heritage. The first tool making man ventured in the areas of foothills of Shiwaliks and Aravalis. The great urban centers of Harappan civilization developed on the banks of Saraswati- Drishadwati rivers in Haryana. High profile urban center of Rakhigarhi of Hisar district is considered as largest urban center of Harappan civilization. The state of Haryana has been a part of Sapt-Sindhu kshetra. The continuity of cultural sequence of Haryana is more than 5000 years old. This paper focuses on the pace of freedom struggle movement in Haryana between 1857-1947. This paper will also highlight the political condition of Haryana region on the eve of 1857 revolt & key political activities in Haryana region from 1857 to 1947

I. INRODUCTION

The land of Haryana has witnessed many important battles of history of India. The famous battles of Mahabhart, Tarain and Panipat were fought on the land of Haryana. The state was under the influence of Buddhism from 600 B.C. to 1000 A.D. From 11th century Turk invaders started to plunder the region and ultimately Haryana became a part of Delhi Sultanate and later Mughal Empire. Later parts of Haryana remained under the control of Marathas, Sikhs and state of Bharatpur. After 1803, the region came under the supremacy of British East India Company. There were some princely states also in the region of Haryana. In 1857 1st war of independence was fought against British rulers. The rebellion against British rule started from Ambala. Along with the people of other states, the common people of Haryana also resisted British rule. Most of the district headquarters, towns and villages of Haryana joined hands with revolutionaries. After the defeat of revolutionaries, the people of Haryana had to face oppression and lot of people

were killed. In February, 1858 the region of Haryana was detached from United Province and it was annexed with the Punjab. After 1870 the spread of western education started in the region. In Haryana Arya Samaj also played a very important role in social upliftment and spread of education in Haryana. As a result, the people of Haryana played an important role from Non co-operation movement to Quit India movement. .

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of writing this paper are as under:

- [1] To study the political condition of Haryana region on the eve of 1857 revolt.
- [2] To study the pace of freedom struggle movement in Haryana between 1857-1947
- [3] To study the political activities in Haryana region from 1857 to 1947
- [4] To highlight the role of Haryana in freedom struggle of India from 1857 to 1947
- [5] To focus on unknown heroes of Haryana in Freedom Struggle

3. FREEDOM STRUGGLE MOVEMENT IN HARYANA:

The people of Haryana played an important role in resistance against foreign invaders from earliest times for the sake their independence and self respect. These foreign invaders include Indo-Greeks, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Mangols, Mughals and Afgans. As a result of these foreign invasions, the people of Haryana suffered a lot. But the constant struggle for existence made them very strong and self reliant. After the advent of Britishers in India the region of Haryana came under the occupancy of British rule in 1803. The British East India Company started to establish their supremacy on this region. Delhi, Ambala and Hisar became centers of East India Company's power in Haryana region. The spread of western education started after 1870 by the government. As a result there were schools in the periphery of every 10 miles.

The 19th century is considered very important period in awakening of people of India. It left a great impression on the people of Haryana also. There were many reasons behind this awakening as the spread of western education, the tyrannical British rule and their negative perspective for Indians and their ambitions against the solidarity of Indian people. These reasons affected Haryana also. For some time the Indian sensibility merged in every heart of India from east to west and north to south.

We cannot ignore the fact that literature and folk tradition of India stimulated national consciousness against brutal power. Haryanvi folk literature and newspapers of Urdu and English proved very important tools in political awakening of Haryanvi people. Pt. Deendayal Sharma published newspaper 'Haryana' and Rifaye Aam'. Haryanvi writer Balmukund Gupt portrayed conspirational capitalism as very harmful for people. He tried to give lessons on separatism, patriotism and exploitation through his poetic caliber. In totality we can say that Haryanvi folk literature awakened people to march from slumber sleep of dependency towards the bright sunshine of freedom through 'Jan Andolan'.

4. THE REVOLT OF 1857 AND HARYANA

The people of Haryana were already prepared for resistance against British rule because of their The resistance against company's rule started even before 1857 because of interventions by foreigners in social and religious life of people. The economic exploitation of people added to their injuries. The rebellions of Chhachhrauli, Rania, peasant revolts of Rohtak district, rebellion of Jind state's prince Partap Singh and Sangat Singh, murder of William Frazer and rebellion of Kaithal are some examples of resistances by people of Haryana before 1857. anger and unrest. In May, 1857 their unrest blasted and they stood against foreign rule. The soldier's revolt broke out from Bengal and it reached in Bihar, United Province and Haryana as well. This revolt resulted in the end of Company's rule from Haryana. This revolt was started by soldiers of Ambala on May10, 1857 against the use of Enfield rifles. Ambala was a major cantonment of north India in those days. Many important and strategic troops were deployed at Ambala. Many troops from Punjab and U.P. were also there for training of Enfield rifles. Indian soldiers were not satisfied with the introduction of new Enfield rifles because there was a rumor of using pig and cow's fat in the cartridges. . The soldiers from different troops assembled together and appealed before the officers to withdraw the new rifles as it was against their religion to use cartridges made from fat of cow and pig. The soldiers were disappointed as they failed to persuade the officers. Ultimately they were prepared to revolt and it was decided that they will occupy armory and attack on Europeans on May10, 1857. After execution their plan was to march for Delhi. But their plan was leaked and a soldier named Shamsingh reported it to the company officers. The company forces prepared themselves to destroy their plan. The 60th troop of Indian soldiers revolted at Ambala 9 hours before Meerut Cantonment's revolt but their plan was destroyed. Other troops also revolted but their attempt could not succeed due to preparedness of company's soldiers. Both Hindus and Muslim soldiers fought together against company's oppressive rule.

4.1 Spread of 1857 revolt in Haryana:

The mutiny at Ambala Cantonment and occupation of Delhi by revolutionaries affected Haryana region at a great level. A group of 300 soldiers of Delhi revolutionaries attacked Gurgaon on 13 May, 1857. The collector of Gurgaon William Ford tried to confront revolutionaries at Bijvasan but he could not succeed in his attempt. The revolutionaries succeeded to get Rs. 7,80,000 from Gurgaon treasury. After this incident revolt broke out in Mewat and Ahirwal against foreign rule. In Ahirwal Rao Tularam and Gopal Dev led the people against company's rule. The political agent of Jaipur Major W.F. Aden tried very hard in the month of mid June to suppress the revolutionaries in Mewat but even after a long and hard expedition he could not succeed.

In Rohtak also revolution broke out in the 3rd week of May, 1857. The people from all sections of the society joined hands with Delhi revolutionaries. The 60th battalion marched from Ambala to suppress the revolutionaries. But instead of suppressing

revolutionaries at Rohtak this battalion joined hands with the people of Rohtak. The English officers fled from Rohtak and Indian soldiers moved for Delhi. In July-August Lieutenant Hudson was sent to control the deteriorating situation in Haryana region. He succeeded in defeating revolutionaries at Kharkhoda and Rohtak but as the Hudson had to leave for Delhi, this area again came under the control of revolutionaries.

In Hisar district revolution started in the 3rd week of May from Hisar, Hansi and Sirsa. The local public fully supported revolutionaries. Very soon the villages of Hisar district also joined hands with revolutionaries. A big detachment of army was sent from Punjab under the Ferozpur deputy commissioner, General Van Courtland to deal with the worst situation in Hisar district. Shahjada Muhammad Aazim led the revolutionaries of Hisar district. In Hansi Hukamchand Jain organized a planned resistance against Britishers. Courtland tried to control the situation. He dealt with the people of Hisar district in a very harsh manner. Even after occupation of Hisar district by Courtland, the revolutionaries of Hisar district continued their fight against foreign rule till the recapture of Delhi by the English.

The revolution broke out in Kurukshetra and Panipat districts also. But with the help of military aid from Jind, Patiala, Kunjpura and Karnal the East India Company succeeded in maintaining control over G.T. Road in these districts. In Panipat people showed a great resistance against foreign rule. From the above description, we can say that revolution of 1857 affected all parts of Haryana region. After the failure of 1857's revolution Haryana region, then known as Delhi Territory, was annexed with Punjab in April, 1858. As a result, the region came under a new type of administration.

5. RESISTANCE OF HARYANA AFTER 1857

As we have seen, the feeling of political consciousness started with the spread of western education. Due to the policies of foreign rulers this area was ignored in spreading education because the people of Haryana region had played very important role in the revolution of 1857. The literature was also ignored in such an environment of distress and frustration among the people of this region.

Some individuals and organizations played very important role in political awakening of people. Pt. Dindayal Sharma and Babu Balmukund Gupt (1764-1907) awakened the peoples through their works. The role of middle class was also a very key factor in the political awakening of peoples.

Babu Murlidhar (1848-1922) from Palwal was a famous poet and leader of masses. He was founder member of Indian National Congress. His works were source of inspiration for the peoples of other states also. Arya Samaj played very important role in social and political awakening of Haryana region. Swami Dayanand visited Haryana in 1880. He stayed for many days at Rewari and Rohtak and propagated principles of Arya Samaj. Swami Dayanand founded branches of Arya Samaj in Rewari and Rohtak. But leading role behind propagating the principles of Arya Samaj was played by Lala Lajpat Ray in Haryana. He was basically from Jagraon (Punjab). But his public life started from

Haryana. His father joined as a government school teacher at Rohtak. Lala Lajpat Ray started the work of Arya Samaj with a new zeal. Ch. Piru Singh, Ch. Matu Ram and Ch. Ranpat Singh were his close companions. In 1886 Lala ji shifted to Hisar as an Advocate and founded Arya Samaj Hisar. In Hisar also Lala ji propagated principles of Arya Samaj and worked for political awakening of people. Ramji Lal, a doctor from Sanghi village also worked for political awakening of people in the rural area of Rohtak and Hisar districts. Sanatan Dharam Sabha Jhajhajar, Bhiwani, Hisar, Sirsa, Karnal, Panipat and Rohtak also worked social and political awakening of people. Many Muslim and Sikh societies like Anjuman Ithana Ashahar, Central National Muhammadan Association, Anjuman Rifa-a-Aam, Anjuman-i-Islamia and Singh Sabha were also working at the same time for social and political awakening of people in Haryana region.

With the foundation of Indian National Congress on 28th December, 1885 the spread of political awakening started with a great enthusiasm at national level. Raybahadur Murlidhar from Ambala was one of 72 founder members of Indian National Congress. In 1886 Raybahadur Murlidhar founded local branch of Congress which was first branch in north-western India. In 1887 Lala Lajpat Ray founded Hisar Congress. With the efforts of Lala Ji first public meeting of Rohtak Congress organized on 12th October, 1888. Ray Bahadur Murlidhar and Lala Lajpat Ray continuously represented Haryana in annual sessions of congress.

6. SWADESHI MOVEMENT IN HARYANA

In the 1891 annual session of Congress Lala ji called for boycott of foreign goods and use of local goods. He exposed the free trade policy of the government openly. Swadeshi movement left a great impression in Haryana. Lala ji became national leader of congress party. Raybahadur Murlidhar also propagated for boycott of foreign goods and insisted on the use of local goods.

i. Revolutionaries Activities in Haryana:

Ambala was major centre of revolutionaries' activities. The Deputy Commissioner of Ambala was very cruel and oppressive against the freedom fighters. The revolutionaries of Ambala made an attempt to kill him but he was lucky enough to escape. After this incident government alerted all the agencies and strict vigilance started over revolutionaries activities in Haryana.

ii. 1st World War and Haryana:

The congress decided to back the government in 1st world war. The congress leaders of Haryana also extended full support to the government on the issue of recruitment in army and other aid to the government in world war.

iii. Home Rule Movement and Role of Pt. Neki Ram Sharma:

The idea of Home Rule movement was given by Irish lady Annie Besant. She founded Home Rule League at Madras. This idea was adopted by extremist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He founded Home Rule Leagues at Bombay, Berar and Central Province. He worked very hard and visited many parts of the country for

the success of Home Rule movement. In Haryana a great follower of Tilak Pt. Nekiram Sharma led the movement. He was born on 8th December, 1877 at Kelanga village of Bhiwani district. He completed his education from Sitapur and Banaras. He was a great orator and true nationalist. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was very impressed from Pt. Nekiram Sharma. Pt. Ji propagated principles of Home Rule in Berar and Central Province also on the call of Tilak. Pt. Nekiram Sharma gained popularity at national level in the Calcutta session of 1917. Tilak ji also learnt Hindi from Pt. Nekiram Sharma. After Calcutta session of 1917 Pt. Nekiram concentrated on propagation of Home Rule in Haryana. He started his work in Rohtak and Bhiwani area. The people of this area were very impressed from him. The Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak tried to stop him but he failed to convince him. Ultimately, Deputy Commissioner Rohtak imposed a ban on the visit of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Rohtak. Although, Home Rule movement could not left a big impression in Haryana due to strict vigilance of administration but Pt. Nekiram Sharma continued his struggle for freedom.

iv. Anti Rowlett Bill Movement:

There was a great protest against Rowlett Bill in Haryana region. A big public rally was organized on 11th February, 1919 in the leadership of Sr. Jhanda Singh in Ambala. On 28th February, 1919 another public rally was organized at Hisar. A long protest movement was seen in Haryana on the call of Gandhi ji from 30th March, 1919 to 19 April, 1919. Government reports reveal that approximately 2000 to 10000 peoples joined these public meetings. A great feeling of unity was there between Hindus and Muslims against government.

v. Khilafat Movement and Haryana:

In Haryana Khilafat Movement was a great success. Khilafat Committees were founded at all district headquarters, cities and at tehsil levels. Approximately 15000 activists became 'Khilafat Sipahi' from Haryana during this movement.

vi. Non Co-operation Movement in Haryana:

In response to Non Co-operation movement at national level, the people of Haryana also reacted. In October, 1920 first political conference was organized at Panipat which was Presided over by Lala Lajpat Ray. On 22nd October, 1920 divisional level political conference was organized at Bhiwani in which Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and other senior leaders participated. In this conference 2000 delegates and 8000 common people were present. A big conference was organized at Rohtak also on 6-8 November, 1920. Sh. Milkha Singh led the Non-Cooperation movement in Karnal area very effectively. After this conference Non Co-operation movement became very popular in villages also.

vii. Civil Disobedience Movement in Haryana:

The impact of Civil Disobedience Movement was noticed at Jhajjar and Rohtak at very mass level. Sh. Rati Ram led the protest march in Rohtak. He was arrested in

February, 1932. In Rewari and Hisar people disobeyed new salt laws of the government at many places. The other areas of Haryana were also affected from civil disobedience movement.

viii. **Quit India Movement and Haryana:**

The people of Haryana actively participated in Quit India movement. Many railway stations, post and telegram offices were targeted by the people. As a result of mass movement in Haryana police oppression was at very high level in all the districts. Rohtak was second after Lahore in number of arrests by the government.

ix. **Indian National Army and Haryana:**

The role of people of Haryana in I.N.A. was appreciable. As per study a total of 2715 soldiers and officers were from Haryana. Lieutenant Colonel Ransingh was from Haryana who commanded battalion No.2 of Subhash Brigade. Sh. Puran Singh, Sh. Attar Singh, Sh. Ershad Ali, Sh. Ujagar Singh, Sh. Amar Singh, Sh. Ami Lal, Sh. Udami, Sh. Udamiram, Sh. Kanyaram, Sh. Kanhaiya Ji, Sh. Kaliram, Sh. Kasam Ali, Sh. Kundanlal, Sh. Kuraram, Sh. Khajanram, Sh. Khushiram, Sh. Gangaram Sahay, Sh. Ganpatram, Sh. Chandgiram, Sh. Gulab Singh, Sh. Ghasiram, Sh. Mouji Ram, Sh. Dayanand, Sh. Daulat Ram, Sh. Nathuram, Sh. Nahar Singh, Sh. Shivrulal, Sh. Lokram and many other soldiers from Haryana showed a great courage in I.N.A.

7. CONCLUSION

From the above descriptions in detail, it is clear that people of Haryana were not behind in freedom struggle of India. The revolt of 1857 started from Ambala six hours before Meerut revolt. Many people of Haryana from towns and villages joined hands in struggled and martyred their lives against foreign rule. The revolutionary's activities were also noticed in this region. The Haryanvi people actively participated in all the movements of freedom struggle on the call of national leaders. We can say that people of Haryana have played a great role in freedom struggle from 1857-1947.

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