

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Sisters! I thank you with all my heart for the warm welcome you have given me this evening. I also thank you with all my heart for your enthusiastic participation in the mammoth meeting which was held opposite the Tokku Petsushi Building. In spite of the rain you stuck to your seats till the end, and this moved me and my friends who participated in the meeting. I also know that some of you took your children there. Your bravery and enthusiasm thrilled all of us. I have the least doubt in my mind that your mission which has started auspiciously will grow rapidly.

You know well the service which Indian women have been rendering in the national movement during the past twenty years. From the time of India's regeneration, Indian women have been vigorously taking part in public life. This change can be clearly noticed. Since 1921 when the Congress was regenerated under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, our sisters have performed great deeds not only in the Congress movements and the civil disobedience struggle but also in the secret revolutionary movements.

It will not be an exaggeration if I say that there are no public activities or departments of our national effort in which women are not participating. During the past many years of our national movement, women have been equal to men in undergoing suffering with joy and courage. The Indian women never lagged behind anybody in going from village to village, without food and water, addressing meeting after meeting, in carrying the message of freedom from house to house, in conducting election campaigns in taking our processions in spite of Government's bans and in the face of lathi charge by the merciless British police, and in putting up with the privations of prison life, torture and humiliations. Last but not least, our heroic sisters also took an active part in the secret revolutionary activities. Many a time they have demonstrated that they too, if necessary, could use fire-arms as well as their brothers.

When I express my confidence that you are today prepared to fight and suffer for the sake of your motherland, I do not mean only to cajole you with empty words. I know the capabilities of our womanhood well. I can therefore, say with certainty that there is no task which our women cannot undertake and no sacrifice and suffering which our women cannot undergo.

The time for launching the final campaign to liberate our motherland has now come. Only very rarely such opportunities occur in a nation's life. Surely such an opportunity will not come again in our lifetime, nor even in the next

hundred years. Only by God's grace have we got such an opportunity. If we seize it and sacrifice our all we can surely liberate our country.

I know some among us have been thinking that British Imperialism was immortal and had no end. But I know that history wills it otherwise. History has taught us that every empire will fall in the same way as it has arisen. Similarly, the time has now come for the exit of British Imperialism from the world. We have seen with our own eyes the destruction of the British Empire in this part of the world. We are also going to witness its disappearance from India and other parts of the world.

Some years back I read a book on the British Empire by an Englishman named Meredith Conrad. Referring to India he says that once the Indians become united, the British will not be able to rule over them. He has further said that the empire which came into being in a day will die in a night.

I have mentioned in my broadcast that it took just seven days to drive them out of the stronghold of Singapore which they had built in the course of twenty years. Of course, I do not expect that the British can be driven out of India within a week. But you can mathematically calculate how many weeks it will take to drive out the British once we launch our final military action.

Sisters! I think everyone of you believes that the time to begin our efforts for our salvation has come now. I also sincerely believe that you all wish this war to end in the defeat of Anglo-American Imperialism because India can gain her freedom only if it is vanquished. It is for this reason that I have often been saying that the liberation of India is dependent on the victory of the Axis Powers. Today India and the Axis Powers are facing a common enemy. We therefore have a common goal. We have to fight against our common foe; we should be prepared to make any sacrifice and win our freedom by sharing the joys and sorrows equally among ourselves.

If we get freedom without sacrifice and suffering it will be of no avail, because we will not be able to preserve the freedom which is gained so easily. We shall therefore get our freedom only through our suffering. I firmly believe that we can give adequate support to our motherland by our total mobilization. Therefore, sisters, you too must take your share in the coming struggle, you can serve in various capacities. Women have special skill in some specific fields. For example, you can serve in the hospitals. When our military campaigns have started, who will take care of our wounded soldiers? Will it not be shameful if our sisters do not come forward to comfort our wounded soldiers? Sisters this is only a part of your duty. You can also help us in the recruitment of soldiers and collection of funds and supplies. Sometimes you may even have to take up arms.

To those who say that it will not be proper for our women to carry guns, my only request is that they look into the pages of our history. What brave deeds the Rani of Jhansi performed during the First war of Independence in 1857! Similarly, many brave women like the Rani of Jhansi are required in our Last war of Independence also. It is not important how many guns you can carry or how many cartridges you can fire. It is the spiritual force which will be generated by your heroic example that is important. Indians-both common people and members of the British Indian army-who are on the border areas of India will, on seeing you march with guns on your shoulders. Voluntarily come forward to receive the guns from you and carry on the struggle started by you. I do not have the least doubt about this. Therefore, I can say with certainty that the time has come for every Indian-man and woman, boy and girl-to come forward and make great sacrifices for liberating India.

Sisters, your energetic activities will not only inspire our country-men living in Malaya, East Asia and Siam but also those living within our country. I have no doubt that the 388 million Indians, on hearing about your efforts and your preparations for the fight will be greatly inspired. I wish all your efforts are crowned with success. Your task is the same as ours. In this common task, in this struggle, in this suffering and sacrifice, all of us—without any distinction of man or woman, boy and girl, poor or rich, young or old-should stand shoulder to shoulder, should start the final struggle and should hasten the day of India's deliverance. I once again thank you for the welcome you have given me today and for your enthusiastic participation in the public meeting the other day. I also thank you for the purse you have presented me today. I wish that all our activities for the liberation of our motherland end in victory. As I told you earlier, the time for preparing ourselves for the final struggle has come. I have already announced to the world the formation of the Azad Hind Army. It is also preparing itself for the war of liberation. I hope that the time will come for me to announce to the world that the Jhansi Rani Regiment is also preparing for the struggle. This work should be started immediately. I therefore request all those who want to join the Jhansi Rani Regiment to come forward and give your names.

- Subhas Chandra Bose

About the Essay

The essay is Subhas Chandra Bose's address to the women's section of the Indian Independence League, Singapore on July 12, 1943. Bose emphasizes the need of women's participation in the National Movement. He says that there is no task which Indian women cannot undertake and no sacrifice and suffering which they cannot undergo. He gives a clarion call to them to participate in the final campaign to liberate India. He criticizes those who do not want women to come out of the four walls of the house. He wants that in the war of Independence all

the Indians, without any distinction should work for India's deliverance. He appeals to women to forge ahead and give their names so that he may announce to the world the formation of the **Jhansi Rani Regiment** on the pattern of the Azad Hind Fauz.

Subhas Chandra Bose, a famous freedom fighter founded Azad Hind Fauz to liberate India from the British. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna award posthumously.

GLOSSARY

privation	: a lack of the basic things that people need for living
humiliation	: insult
cajole	: make someone to do something by being nice to them
imperialism	: system in which one country controls another country
vanquished	: defeated
liberation	: freedom
energetic	: having a lot of energy

Activity 1: COMPREHENSION

A. Tick the correct alternative:

- 1) Sisters! I thank you with all my heart for _____
 - a) the warm welcome you have given me this evening
 - b) your enthusiastic participation in the mammoth meeting
 - c) the purse you have presented me today
 - d) the purse you have not presented me today
- 2) Name the founder of Azad Hind Fauz-
 - a) Mahatma Gandhi
 - b) Subhas Chandra Bose
 - c) Mangal Pandey
 - d) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- 3) The Indian women never lagged behind
 - a) in going from village to village
 - b) in addressing meeting after meeting
 - c) in carrying the message of freedom from house to house
 - d) in carrying the message of poverty

B. Answer the following questions in not more than 30-40 words each :

- 1) How long have the Indian women been taking part in public life?
- 2) Where did the women participants perform great deeds?
- 3) How did the merciless British police torture women during national movement?
- 4) What did Meredith Conrad say on the British Empire referring to India?
- 5) What will happen if we get freedom without sacrifice and suffering?
- 6) Why did Bose give a call to every Indian to come forward to receive the guns?
- 7) What is the common task in the struggle of freedom?

C. Answer the following questions in 60-80 words each :

- 1) How did women play their role during Indian national movement?
- 2) What are the views of Subhas Chandra Bose regarding 'the exit of British Imperialism from India'?
- 3) Why does Subhas Chandra Bose say that the liberation of India is dependent on the victory of the Axis Powers?

D. Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false in the brackets.

- 1) There is no task which our women cannot undertake and no sacrifice and suffering which our women cannot undergo is the firm belief of Subhas. []
- 2) History has taught us that every empire will fall in the same way as it has arisen. []
- 3) Bose says that the empire which came into being in a day will die in a night. []
- 4) Bose says that women have special skills in some specific fields. []
- 5) Bose wishes that all our activities for the liberation of our motherland end in victory. []

Activity 2: VOCABULARY

A. Match the following words in column 'A' with the meaning in column 'B':

Column 'A'

- 1) thrilled
- 2) participation
- 3) humiliation
- 4) mammoth
- 5) motherland
- 6) revolutionary

Column 'B'

- something that is very large
to make one feel very ashamed
to feel very excited or happy
to persuade someone to do something
to defeat completely
the act of participation

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 7) confidence | the process of damaging |
| 8) vanquish | the feeling of being one is certain or true |
| 9) cajole | the country where one is born |
| 10) destruction | relating to the great and complete change |

B. Give one word each for the group of words given below:

- 1) An organized military force equipped for fighting on land
- 2) The person who leads or commands a group or organization
- 3) The fact or state of being independent
- 4) One's native country
- 5) Used to greet someone in a polite or friendly way
- 6) A native or inhabitant of India

Activity 3: GRAMMAR

Subject -Verb Agreement

Read the following sentences and discuss amongst yourselves why the sentences given below are ungrammatical –

- x He and Mohan is coming tomorrow.
- x Sunayana have talked to me just now.
- x There are a blind person sitting in the corner.
- x What they say are not true.
- x A list of ancient were prepared.

Now compare the following sentences with the sentences given above and discuss amongst yourselves why the sentences given below are grammatical –

- i. He and Mohan are coming tomorrow.
- ii. Sunayana has talked to me just now.
- iii. There is a blind person sitting in the corner.
- iv. What they say is not true.
- v. A list of ancient remedies was prepared.

Therefore, remember that–

- ÷ Singular goes with singular and plural with plural
- ÷ 'There' has no number; its number is decided by the context.
- ÷ A subordinate clause (whether it conveys singular or plural meaning) when it occurs as a subject is always considered singular.
- ÷ In case a phrase that occurs as subject, contains more than one word, the verb is used in accordance with the main word.

Now study the following set of sentences –

- i. A. The President and Secretary is coming tonight.
B. The President and the Secretary are coming tonight.
- ii. A. The family has left for the USA.
B. The family are going to their respective work places.

All the above sentences are grammatical. The sentences explain the following complexities –

- ÷ Use a singular verb when a conjoined phrase (The president and secretary) refers to a single entity. A plural verb will be used when it conveys a plural meaning (The President and the Secretary).
- ÷ Use a singular verb for an undivided Collective noun (such as committee, family, staff, culture etc.) and a plural verb when it shows separation or division.

Study the sentences given below and ask your teacher about the underlined usage –

- iii. A. Either Mohan or some students are coming to me.
B. Either some students or Mohan is coming to me.
- iv. A. One of the principal reasons is the utter darkness.
- v. B. I know one of the persons who are here.

Therefore, remember that–

- ÷ In a conjoined phrase, joined by either.... or, the verb is determined in accordance with the subject closest to the verb.
- ÷ A relative pronoun such as who, which, etc. has no number; their singularity or plurality is determined by the element or noun that closely precedes it.

Ask your teacher to explain to you more about subject verb agreement.

Activity 4: SPEECH ACTIVITY

You must have heard that Subhas left Indian Civil Services to join Indian National Movement for freedom. Subhas lived and died for the country. Organize a discussion on Subhas's role in the Indian National Movement for freedom.

Activity 5: COMPOSITION

Enlist at least ten heroic deeds of Subhas Chandra Bose which speak of Subhas' great patriotism.