



Role of Subhash Chandra Bose in Indian Freedom Movement

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Abstract: Nobody can deny the fact that Subhash Chandra Bose was a well-known freedom fighter and considered as one of the most influential personality with extraordinary leadership skills and was a charismatic orator. He was also called Netaji by his followers. During his young days, he was strongly influenced by Swami Vivekananda's teachings and was known for his patriotic zeal as a student. Therefore, he adored Vivekananda as his spiritual Guru. He visited many countries and on some occasion, he returned to India and came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Meanwhile, Non-Cooperation movement in India was on its full swing. He joined Non-Cooperation Movement started by Mahatma Gandhi who made Indian National Congress (INC) as a powerful non-violent organization. Although, in 1938 he was elected president of the INC. But, his vindication came in 1939, when he defeated Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya a Gandhian rival for reelection. That is why, due to his opposition by Gandhi and his followers, he left INC and formed the All India Forward Bloc in 1939 as a faction within the Congress. For the sake of Indian freedom, he raised the first Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj in 1943. He started an armed coup and inspired thousands of Indian youths to join the struggle for independence from the British colonial rule. During this time, his famous slogans were 'tum mujhe khoo do, main tumhe aazadi dunga', 'Jai Hind', and 'Delhi Chalo'. The present research paper highlights the role of Subhash Chandra Bose in Indian Freedom Movement.

Keywords: Indian Freedom Movement, Patriotic Zeal, INC, Forward Bloc, Azad Hind Fauj.

Introduction: It is a well-known fact that Subhash Chandra Bose was a very brilliant student and he passed ICS exam. Although, he was selected as an ICS officer but he resigned from his civil service job and returned to India. The reason behind it was that he was a truly patriotic personality of Indian freedom movement. Keeping the fact in view, he started the newspaper 'Swaraj' and took charge of publicity for the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. His mentor was 'Chittaranjan Das' who was a spokesman for aggressive

nationalism in Bengal in those days. Furthermore, in the year 1923, he was elected as the President of All India Youth Congress and also the Secretary of Bengal State Congress. Meanwhile, he was also the editor of the newspaper 'Forward', founded by Chittaranjan Das. Here it is noteworthy that when, Chittaranjan Das was elected as Mayor of Calcutta Municipal Corporation in 1924, Bose worked as its CEO. Furthermore, in a roundup of nationalists in 1925, Bose was arrested and sent to prison in Mandalay, where he suffered from tuberculosis disease. But, in 1927, he was released from prison and he became general secretary of the Congress party. Now Bose worked with Jawaharlal Nehru for the independence of country. In late December 1928, Bose organized the annual meeting of the INC in Calcutta and the most memorable role of Bose was as the General Officer Commanding of Congress Volunteer Corps.

Here it is to say that the towering charisma of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose as a military leader, put him at the fore front of Indian freedom movement. Now, being a great orator, prolific writer and an epitome of simple living and great thinking, he was always known as a man who always practiced, what he preached. Most of the scholars agree with the fact that Bose was the first Prime Minister of India in exile and supreme commander of INA. He observed party organisation and saw communism and fascism in action. In this period, he also researched and wrote the first part of his book 'The Indian Struggle', which covered the country's independence movement in the years 1920–1934.

As a Congress Leader: By 1938 Bose had become a leader of national stature and agreed to accept nomination as Congress President. He stood for self-governance, including the use of force against the British. This meant a confrontation with Mahatma Gandhi, who in fact opposed Bose's presidency, splitting the INC party. On the contrary, Bose appeared at the 1939 Congress meeting on a stretcher. But in spite of heavy opposition by Mahatma Gandhi and his followers in INC, he was elected president once again by defeating Gandhi's supported candidate Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

Meanwhile, due to Bose's opposition within the party, he resigned from INC and on 22nd June 1939 Bose organized the 'All India Forward Bloc' a faction within the Indian National Congress. Meanwhile, Bose advocated a campaign of mass civil disobedience to protest against Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's decision to declare war on India's behalf without consulting the Congress leadership. He was thrown in jail by the British but was released following a seven-day hunger strike. Now, he had to face house arrest in Calcutta by the criminal investigation department. Bose's arrest and subsequent release set the scene for his escape to Germany, via Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. In spite of sharp political differences between Subhash and Gandhi, Bose had deep respect for Gandhi in his heart. In August 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi launched the 'Quit India movement', Subhash Chandra Bose was in Berlin. It is recorded that reading this news in Berlin, Subhash Chandra Bose told his close associate C. N. Nambiar that he needed to be with Gandhi. In his Azad Hind Radio message from Berlin, Subhash Chandra Bose had called the Quit India

Movement of Mahatma Gandhi, the 'non-violent guerilla warfare'. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi also admired the courage and resourcefulness displayed by Subhash Chandra Bose in making his escape from India.

Forward Bloc: In 1939, after resignation from INC, Bose formed the Forward Bloc and announced that the party would work within the Congress. However, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution by which he was disqualified to be a member of any Congress Committee for three years. The immediate objective of the Forward Bloc was to liberate India with the help and support of the workers, peasants, youth and all the other radical organizations. Meanwhile, it was laid down that after attaining independence, the party would work for establishing a socialist society in the country by adopting the following measures:

- To abolish the zamindari system in India.
- Making the right to work the fundamental right of citizens.
- To provide several medical and economic benefits to workers.
- To introduce a new monetary and credit system.

Actually, most of the scholars agree with the fact that Bose was a patriotic personality. Therefore, he was arrested by the government because of his radical ideas and for propagating anti-government feelings among the masses. While being in prison, he went on a hunger strike. On the seventh day of his fast, the government released him and put him under house arrest at Kolkata. In January 1941, he managed to escape the house arrest by dressing in disguise. He crossed the Indian border and reached Russia via Afghanistan. He then flew from Moscow to Berlin in March 1941. There he met Adolf Hitler and expressed his desire to free India from the British rule. From Berlin, he ran propaganda against the British rule in India. A Free India Centre was set up in Berlin in November 1941. Meanwhile, he also became the Editor-in-Chief of the English monthly Azad Hind. In Southeast Asia, during the Second World War, the Japanese troops had occupied the British colonies of Singapore, Malaya and Myanmar. As a result, a large number of Indians fell into their hands as prisoners of war. These soldiers wanted to free India from the British rule. Consequently due to Subhash Chandra Bose's efforts and under the guidance of Rash Behari Bose, the Indian Independence League was formed. The main aim of the League was to mobilize the Indian soldiers and community for securing independence.

Indian National Army (INA): Subhash Chandra Bose had a great desire to free Indians from the British rule. That is why; he founded the Indian National Army. However, during the World War 2nd the Indian Army found itself in a peculiar situation because the composition of the rank and file was fully Indian, but that of the officers was totally different. There were some Indian officers at the junior level, a few at the middle level and none at the senior level, all of whom were British. Yet the Indian Army acquitted itself gloriously. The soldiers of Indian Army fought and died for the honour and glory of their regiments. That is why; upholding the proud regimental tradition, of bravery and courage in battle, became the paramount issue. When the same army became India's army after Independence, its earlier oath of allegiance to the King was not held against it and rightly so anyhow in the country.

Now on the contrary, the INA was different from its very inception. Its composition, both rank and file and officers, was totally Indian and its purpose was to make India independent. Yet the Indian Army prisoners of war, who renounced their allegiance to the King upon joining the INA, were declared renegades even by the Indian Prime Minister after Independence. By the end of 1941, India had started featuring prominently in the Japanese policies. Meanwhile, an organization was set up by the Japanese Government, headed by Major Fujiwara Iwaichi. His initial contact was with Giani Pritam Singh, and after the Malayan invasion, with Captain Mohan Singh. Between the three of them, they started recruiting from amongst those captured by the Japanese in Malaya prior to the fall of Singapore. Thus was born the nucleus of what later came to be known as the INA which played a crucial role in Indian freedom.

During this time, Captain Mohan Singh reasoned that, if the Japanese could be persuaded to make the INA a part of their invading force, the INA would overcome the British and topple the Raj. To accomplish this, men were needed desperately. They had to be induced to join and fast. Mohan Singh was not particular about how this was done. Consequently many events took place, which would threaten the INA's good name. The British exaggerated instances of ill treatment into gross atrocities, but could not substantiate them at the Red Fort trials. The INA under Mohan Singh never really got going. He had neither the stature nor the qualities of leadership necessary. Meanwhile by late 1942 disillusionment set in and Indian volunteers felt like pawns in the hands of the Japanese and in December 1942 Captain Mohan Singh ordered the INA to disband. Now, he was arrested and exiled to Pulan Ubin. Rash Behari Bose tried to keep the India Independence League and the INA going but with little success. But in spite of this weakness, Netaji's appearance changed everything and took everyone by storm. That is why no cases of ill treatment were reported thereafter. Even at the Red Fort trials none was even alleged. In fact there was no lack of volunteers.

Furthermore, it is assumed that Netaji's stirring speech on 5 July 1943 at Singapore on assuming charge of Indian Independence League from Rash Behari Bose, reignited the flame of liberation of the motherland from the British. Netaji told the INA men that Gandhiji had paved the way by making Indians conscious of their bondage. Moreover, armed struggle was the next necessary stage and it was up to them to take it. Now, if we talk about the role and impact of Indian National Army in Indian freedom movement, it was significant and immediate. It had given a new life to the movement. Besides the prisoners of war, local civilians with no military experience, from barristers to plantation workers, joined the INA and doubled its troop strength. Therefore, an Officers Training School for INA officers and the Azad School for civilian volunteers was set up. A group of 45 young Indians, personally chosen by Netaji (known as Tokyo Boys) was sent to Japan's Imperial Military Academy to train as fighter pilots and army officers. Japan always considered Netaji as its own, due to which the responsibility of protecting him was held by the Japanese military commander till the last moment. In other words we can say that Netaji's role is considered very important in making India, independent from the British rule.

For the first time, outside the USSR, a women's regiment, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment under Captain Lakshmi Swaminathan was raised as a combat force. Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan (as she was then) gave up a prosperous practice as a gynecologist in Singapore, to join the INA. The clarion call of INA was 'Jai Hind' and 'Chalo Delhi'. The immediate effect of the clarion call was observed and many young men joined the INA which gave a vital force to Indian freedom movement.

Now, another incident took place and it was observed by many scholars that the siege of Imphal was the turning point in the saga of the INA. It was not the British army, but monsoon, which became the biggest adversary. Logistics became the major problem as American B 29 bombers disrupted the lines of supply. Outbreak of malaria and dysentery in the face of lack of medical facilities and supplies took a heavy toll. Netaji was forced by circumstances to issue instructions to INA to withdraw. The losses during the long withdrawal were significant and had a serious impact on the INA. But in spite of adverse conditions, Netaji did not give up and the task of rebuilding the INA continued in Burma. They continued to provide stiff resistance to the Allied advance, but the tide turned inexorably. On the Western front on 6 June 1944, Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy and the thrust towards Berlin began, just as the thrust towards Rangoon had already started on the Eastern front.

Furthermore, on 7 May 1945, Germany formally surrendered following the death of Hitler. Japan continued, but it was a lost cause. On 7 August 1945, the first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima followed by the second bomb on 9 August 1945 on Nagasaki by the US. As a result, Japan surrendered immediately. Meanwhile, Netaji announced that, "Japan's surrender is not India's surrender. The INA would not admit defeat". Actually, Netaji wanted to stay on in Singapore but under extreme pressure from his cabinet

colleagues, decided to leave. He travelled to Saigon and from there to Taiwan and then he disappeared. Nobody believed the story that he died in an air crash. The remnants of the INA were to surrender when the Allied forces captured Burma. A battle had been fought and lost in the jungles of Burma. But the campaign was not over.

Recently, the Government of India opened many files in the year 2020 and Netaji mystery saga was composed by Anuj Dhar and Shri Chandrachud Ghosh, where those letters are also mentioned, which were issued by the Government of India after the plane crash of Netaji, and how an attempt was made to put question marks on the subject concerned. Netaji is believed to be safe after 1965 and continued to. Today, Subhash Chandra Bose is alive in the heart of Indians.

Concluding Remarks: Now, we can point out that Subhash Chandra Bose played a vital role in Indian National Congress. He was elected twice as the president of INC. But due to opposition by Gandhiji he had to leave INC and he organized Forward Block in 1939. Nobody can deny the fact that Bose had a great patriotic zeal. For the sake of Indian freedom he visited many countries and he formed the INA which played a crucial role in Indian freedom movement. Actually, Subhash Chandra Bose was one of India's greatest freedom fighter and patriotic personality in Indian history. As far as the history of India's independence struggle against the British is concerned Subhash Chandra Bose will always remain a key figure. To commemorate his contribution to India's struggle for independence, every year on 23rd January, Bose's birthday is celebrated across various parts of the country. Today Bose is alive in our hearts and his followers are not ready to accept the incident of his death. Although, the Government of India has opened some files, but there no concrete evidence was found to prove that he is alive.

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