

Revisiting Women's Freedom Struggles in India: A Historical Analysis with Special Reference to Kanaklata Barua of Assam

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Abstract: The study examines the role of women in the anti-colonial movement, emphasizing the stories of those who emerged as potent agents of resistance by defying societal standards, gender norms, and colonial oppression. Kanaklata Barua of Assam is a powerful representation of young bravery and selflessness among these individuals. This study explores her role in the larger framework of women's nationalist involvement, looking at how her acts subverted patriarchal norms in Assamese society as well as British authority. Narratives about male leaders have long dominated the history of India's liberation struggle, obscuring the achievements of women, especially those who were less well-known and from the countryside (Sharma, 2010, p. 87).

In order to give Kanaklata Barua and other female freedom warriors their proper place in the national narrative, the article will explore archival materials, regional histories, and existing scholarship on women's engagement in the liberation movement. The analysis shows that their resistance was intricately linked to the mainstream nationalist movement rather than being on the periphery. The study emphasizes the need to incorporate women's perspectives into India's mainstream historiography through a critical reevaluation of historical narratives, so expanding our understanding of what national resistance entails.

Keywords: Women, Freedom, Struggles, India, Historical, Kanaklata Barua, Assam.

Introduction

Traditionally, the story of the Indian liberation fight has been told from a national perspective, emphasizing political organizations, large-scale activities, and important figures. These tales, however, frequently ignore the vital contributions made by women, who took part in a variety of revolutionary ways. Protests, picketing, espionage, underground operations, and direct conflict with colonial soldiers were all part of their resistance. The movement is not fully understood as a result of this vacuum in mainstream historiography, which calls for fresh scholarly study (*Chandra, 2000, p. 412*).

In regional settings like Assam, female freedom warriors performed crucial tasks that went beyond symbolic involvement. During the Quit India Movement, Assam experienced a powerful surge of nationalist enthusiasm, with women taking up leadership roles, organizing communities, and engaging in risky activities. Among these, Kanaklata Barua, a young lady of just seventeen, rose to prominence as a symbol of Assam resistance when she gave her life in a flag-hoisting protest at Gohpur. Her martyrdom marks an important turning point in women's political resistance to colonial rule as well as the region's patriotism (*Saikia, 2015, p. 56*).

Kanaklata Barua's story is still overlooked in popular historical discourse despite her bravery. Important insights into the relationship between gender, nationalism, and regional identity can be gained by delving deeper into her life and the sociopolitical climate of Assam in the 1940s. This study

attempts to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced view of the movement by placing her position within the larger context of women's participation in India's freedom struggle.

Background of the Study

Over the past few decades, researchers have significantly revised the historiography of India's independence movement, increasingly recognizing the underappreciated contributions of women. However, a large portion of this research still focuses on urban areas, leaving the experiences of women from northeastern India particularly Assam understudied. This neglected terrain gives rise to Kanaklata Barua's story, which symbolizes a gendered fight for independence as well as a regional identity. Her involvement in the Quit India Movement exemplifies the Assam resistance's highly nationalist yet confined nature. Examining Assam's sociopolitical climate in the 1940s, the emergence of youth groups like the Mrityu Bahini, and the changing involvement of women in political mobilization are all necessary to comprehend her role. This context lays the groundwork for examining women's contributions to the fight for national freedom as essential rather than incidental.

Statement of the Research Problem

With its extensive and intricate history, the Indian Independence Movement still raises important issues regarding the various contributions that influenced the country's fight for independence. Although India's nationalist narrative is centered around Mahatma Gandhi's principles of peace, harmony, and non-violence, mainstream historiography still fails to appropriately depict the sacrifices made by numerous regional and lesser-known freedom fighters. The life and martyrdom of Kanaklata Barua of Barangabari, Gohpur (now Sonitpur District, Assam) stand out among these as an important but little-researched chapter. Her efforts have received little thorough scholarly attention, which is indicative of a larger knowledge gap about women's activities in the liberation movement, especially in the northeast. In order to close this historical gap and emphasize her current significance in conversations about women's agency, regional nationalism, and India's cultural memory of independence, it becomes imperative to reconsider her involvement.

Review of Related Literature

1. Dutta, (1969), "Landmarks of the Freedom Struggle of Assam", demonstrates the stages of Assam's freedom struggle in chronological order, from the Quit India era to the early protest movements. His analysis highlights significant occasions, influential figures, and pivotal moments that influenced Assam's political awakening. Women's participation is mentioned in a number of sections, but the emphasis is still primarily event-based. The book offers important historical background that is essential to comprehending local involvement in the nationalist struggle. Researchers can follow the development of regional resistance thanks to its methodical approach.
2. Barua, (1989), "Buraluitar Parar Birangana Kanaklata", thorough biographical analysis of Kanaklata Barua. It provides deep insights into her early life, socio-cultural background, and emergence as a young nationalist leader. The piece describes the events leading up to her sacrifice and highlights her involvement in the Quit India Movement. According to Barua's research, Kanaklata's bravery has symbolic meaning for Assamese identity. Understanding her historical significance and her position among India's female independence warriors requires reading this text.
3. Dutta, (1991), "Assam in the Freedom Movement", gives a comprehensive historical description of Assam's involvement in India's freedom movement. He describes how regional leaders, student organizations, and political organizations can organize resistance. The book makes a passing mention of women's participation, highlighting the necessity for more in-depth studies on female contributions. Dutta's story aids in placing the movement in Assam in the larger national framework. It is a fundamental literature for comprehending the sociopolitical environment that gave rise to individuals such as Kanaklata Barua.
4. Ahmed, (1993), "Asamar Birangana", honors the bravery of Assamese heroes who fought for India's independence. She provides in-depth descriptions of women like Kanaklata Barua, emphasizing their leadership and selflessness. The piece challenges the male-dominated historical narrative by

highlighting women's participation in local resistance. Ahmed highlights the social and emotional aspects of women's movement through biographical sketches. She has made a substantial contribution to feminist and regional historiography.

5. Chandra, (2000), "India's Struggle for Independence", this foundational work, which mostly chronicles domestic political events, has established itself as a classic resource for comprehending the story of India's independence. Although Chandra acknowledges the participation of women, particularly those from remote areas like Assam, she does not go into great detail about their experiences. His more comprehensive political framework aids in placing regional movements in the context of the country. Understanding the Quit India Movement's history is essential to comprehending Kanaklata Barua's activity. However, the need for more research on local engagement is highlighted by its narrow regional coverage. As a result, while Chandra's work offers context, it also highlights historical gaps.

6. Bhagawati, (2003), "Amar Swadhinata Andolanat Asamar Sahid", focuses on the Assamese martyrs who gave their lives in the fight for India's independence. The book details their martyrdom's conditions, ideological underpinnings, and personal histories. It offers a more inclusive view of Assam's resistance by incorporating both men and women. One of the pivotal milestones of Assam nationalism is said to have been Kanaklata Barua's sacrifice. The effort enhances the record of local martyrs and their accomplishments.

7. Sharma, (2010), "Women in India's Freedom Struggle", gives a basic overview of how women participated in different stages of the Indian nationalist struggle. The book focuses on how women overcame gender norms to participate in underground networks, public demonstrations, and revolutionary activities. According to Sharma, there is a gendered gap in history since women's achievements have not been sufficiently highlighted in popular historical narratives. Although northeast India is given less emphasis, her study contains a number of regional case studies. The justification for research on individuals like Kanaklata Barua is strengthened by this disparity. Therefore, the book is a crucial place to start when reevaluating women's agency in anti-colonial struggle.

8. Baruah, (2012), "Assam and the Freedom Movement", Assam's nationalist spirit began to grow in the early 20th century, according to historical accounts. Although Kanaklata Barua's position is very briefly mentioned, the book contains chapters on women's engagement. Baruah emphasizes how Congress-led mobilizations, village committees, and student engagement influenced Assam's political environment. His research sheds light on the conditions that fostered the ascent of young revolutionaries like Kanaklata. The book is especially helpful for comprehending the sociopolitical conflicts that existed in Assam prior to independence. It also emphasizes the necessity of conducting in-depth research on the state's female liberation fighters.

9. Saikia, (2015), "Voices of Resistance: Women in Assam's National Movement." provides one of the most thorough scholarly evaluations of women's involvement in the independence movement in Assam. She records the rise of female nationalist networks in the 1930s and 1940s using interviews and local archives. The importance of young organizations like the Mrityu Bahini, which eventually included Kanaklata Barua, is emphasized in her article. Saikia emphasizes how Assamese women used public political arenas to challenge patriarchal systems. The study also explains how national histories progressively ignored their sacrifices. This study backs up the claim that a more thorough historical analysis of women's regional contributions is necessary.

10. Goswami, (2016), "Gender and Resistance: Women in Colonial India", work offers a gender-sensitive analysis of colonial Indian women's resistance tactics. She demonstrates how women navigated public roles in a movement dominated by men by examining both violent and non-violent kinds of engagement. Goswami notes regional commonalities in patterns of female resistance, despite the book's primary focus on mainland India. Her analytical paradigm, which is focused on nationalism, gender, and agency, is helpful in examining situations such as Kanaklata Barua. Her insight

contributes to the understanding of how women converted their personal identities into political ones. This work makes a substantial contribution to Indian feminist historiography.

11. Mahanta, (2017), "Regional Nationalism and Women Freedom Fighters in Assam", investigates the relationship between gender and regional identity in Assam nationalist movements. He highlights how local concerns influenced resistance tactics in the northeastern states, where Indian nationalism took on distinct forms. The essay emphasizes how women participated in civil disobedience, boycotts of foreign goods, and village-level mobilization. Mahanta also talks about how Kanaklata Barua and other female martyrs came to represent Assam's ethnic pride. He contends that their efforts were crucial in connecting the national movement with local goals. This study offers a crucial analytical framework for understanding Kanaklata's function.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are-

1. To study the contributions and involvement of women in India's liberation movement, with a focus on their historical relevance and sociopolitical influence.
2. To examine Kanaklata Barua of Assam's goals, objectives, and nationalist vision in light of India's larger independence movement.
3. To explore Kanaklata Barua's involvement, emphasizing her influence on Assam's resistance movement, leadership, and ideological objectives.

Research Questions

1. What contribution did women play in India's independence movement, and how did their involvement affect the country as a whole?
2. In the context of India's independence movement, what were Kanaklata Barua of Assam's goals and ideals?
3. What effects did Kanaklata Barua's activism, leadership abilities, and ideological convictions have on the resistance struggle in Assam?

Research Methodology

Primary Sources:

Personal interviews, site visits, and photographic documentation are used to gather primary materials in order to guarantee firsthand interaction with the field and local viewpoints. To track significant events pertaining to Kanaklata Barua, archival materials such as official records, government documents, and historical files are analyzed. Newspapers such as The Assam Tribune, oral interviews with Gohpur locals, local historians, and descendants of the liberation movement all offer first-hand recollections and lived experiences. Autobiographies, private letters, memoirs, and records pertaining to female Quit India Movement participants are examples of additional primary sources. These resources aid in reconstructing the sociopolitical setting and capture the genuine voices of the time.

Secondary Sources:

Secondary materials are obtained from academic discourses and scholarly publications that are pertinent to the nationalist movement in Assam and women's liberation battles. The secondary database is composed of books written by A. Dutta, K.N. Dutta, Eli Ahmed, B.K. Bhagawati, and D.K. Barua, as well as peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, edited volumes, journals, and verified digital archives. These resources offer the comparative perspectives, historical interpretations, and analytical frameworks required to place Kanaklata Barua's position within larger nationalist discourses. The comprehension of the historical developments is further enhanced by newspaper articles, paper clippings, and reliable internet resources.

Results and Discussion

Unveiling Women's Pivotal Roles in India's Freedom Struggle: Historical Insights into Their Sociopolitical Impact:

The goal of the historical research done to examine women's contributions and participation in India's liberation movement is to identify the various roles they played and the sociopolitical effects of their involvement. This investigation reconstructs women's experiences using a qualitative historical method by looking at letters, memoirs, personal narratives, archival documents, and current newspapers. Through an analysis of these sources, the study demonstrates how, during the freedom movement, women impacted nationalist ideals, mobilized communities, and opposed patriarchal norms. In addition to recording their acts, the study analyzes their importance in relation to colonial resistance and societal change. This study highlights the frequently disregarded voices of women by methodically analyzing and cross-referencing historical data, proving their crucial significance in influencing India's journey to freedom.

Expanding Horizons: Contributions of Assamese Women

Contrary to popular belief, Assamese women's involvement in the Indian independence movement was significantly more varied. In addition to participating in nonviolent protests and political events, many women assumed leadership roles in khadi spinning, fundraising, opposing social injustices, and advancing Hindi as a national language (*Mahanta, 2017, p.214*). The capacity of Assamese women to strike a balance between Gandhian nonviolence and more assertive revolutionary actions when necessary was a remarkable aspect of their involvement. They coordinated covert gatherings, served as Congress messengers, protected male activists, disrupted colonial infrastructure, and participated in anti-opium operations. These contributions demonstrate that Assamese women were active contributors to the development of the political culture of the area rather than passive recipients of national orders. Their sacrifices, which range from physical torture and incarceration to social exclusion, highlight their crucial role in bolstering India's independence movement.

Dynamics of the Quit India Movement in Assam

Assam became one of the most active regional centers of resistance after the Quit India Movement of 1942 drastically changed political engagement throughout India. Assam's youth, students, and rural communities found great resonance in Gandhi's exhortation to "Do or Die," and they mobilized through volunteer groups and village committees. Despite harsh colonial policies, the movement's influence grew quickly, demonstrating the strength of nationalist fervor in the area. Assam's role is especially noteworthy since the state saw a spike in widespread engagement without substantial organizational resources, indicating that the fight was community-driven (*Sharma, 2010, p. 112*). Young revolutionaries like Kanaklata Barua emerged as potent icons of sacrifice because of the historical context this grassroots rebellion generated (*Dutta, 1991, p. 87*).

Kanaklata joined the 'Mrityu Bahini', a volunteer group of teenage activists in the Gohpur area dedicated to nonviolent revolutionary action, during the Quit India Movement in 1942. Despite repeated warnings from the officer-in-charge, Rebati Mahan Som, she led a group of unarmed villagers to raise the Indian national flag at the Gohpur Police Station on September 20, 1942. Kanaklata was shot while carrying the flag when the police opened fire on the parade. Another young volunteer, Mukunda Kakoti, was also slain while attempting to raise the fallen flag. Kanaklata's sacrifice at the age of seventeen became a potent emblem of bravery and patriotism in Assam (*Barua, 1989, p. 31*).

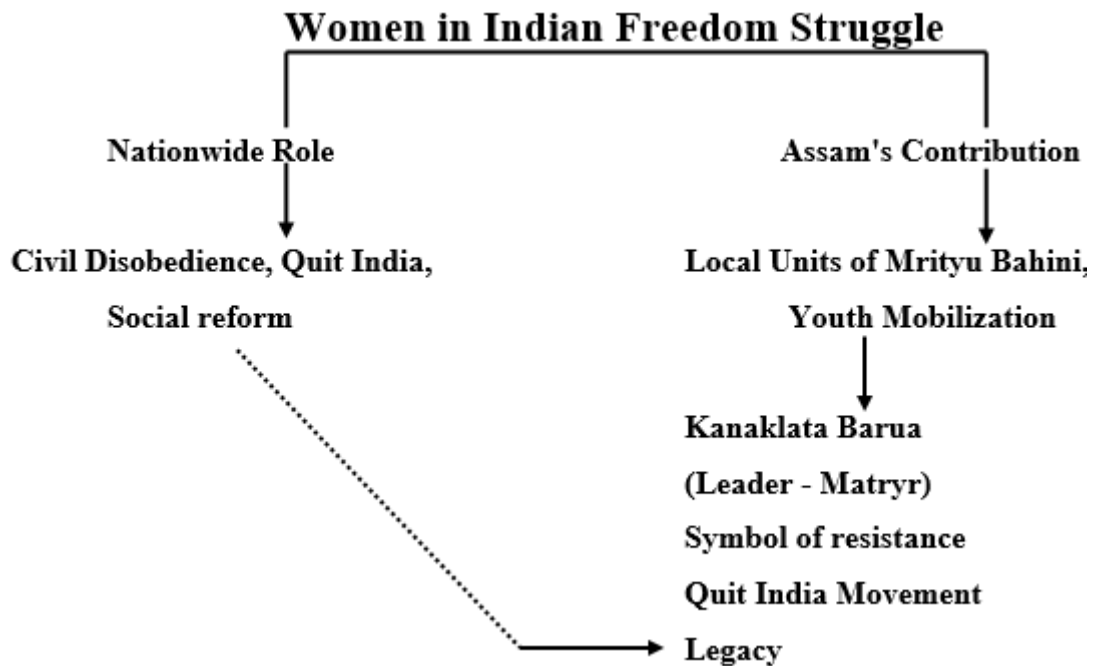
Early Life and Background of Kanaklata Barua

On December 22, 1924, Kanaklata Barua was born into a middle-class family in Barangabari, Gohpur, Assam. Her mother ran the household while her father worked as a teacher. Kanaklata showed incredible fortitude by taking care of her younger siblings and fostering a strong sense of justice and social responsibility despite losing her father at the age of thirteen and her mother at the age of five. Her early exposure to Mahatma Gandhi's principles of civil disobedience and nonviolence motivated

her to actively take part in protests, demonstrations, and neighborhood projects against British colonial rule (*Ahmed, 1993, p. 42*).

Legacy and Recognition

Numerous others were motivated to join the Indian freedom movement by Kanaklata Barua's martyrdom, which also increased popular support for the cause. She became a timeless representation of young grit and tenacity, honored in plays, songs, and literature. A statue was unveiled in Gohpur in 1992, and the Government of India posthumously gave her the "Tamrapatra" in 1959 in appreciation of her contributions. In order to ensure that her narrative continues to inspire future generations, filmmaker Chandra Mudoj portrayed her life in the Assamese film "Epaah Phulil Epaah Xoril," which was then released in Hindi as "Purab Ki Awaz" (*Dutta, 1991, p. 87*).



Visions and Missions of Kanaklata Baruah

Kanaklata Barua's strong feeling of patriotism and personal connection to India's liberation served as the foundation for her resolve to join the freedom movement. As part of her own moral mission, Kanaklata assimilated nationalist beliefs, motivated by the revolutionary spirit of Bishnu Prasad Rabha and the songs of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala (*Ahmed, 1993, p. 42*). Her choice to become a member of the "Mrityu Bahini" was an affirmation of women's legitimate position in politics as well as a protest against colonial oppression. Kanaklata's youth became a symbol of unadulterated bravery and purity of purpose, in contrast to many who were older or more experienced. Despite social restraints, she demonstrated extraordinary leadership abilities by organizing young volunteers and spearheading the march to the Gohpur Police Station (*Kalita, 2019, p. 118*). In the end, her steadfast determination to fly the national flag despite impending danger demonstrates her profound political maturity and symbolic importance in nationalism of Assam (*Barua, 1989, p.31*).

Kanaklata discreetly joined the revolutionary meetings after deciding to fight for independence from the bottom of her heart. She was drawn to make up like the soldier by the song of nationalist Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and the lectures of multidimensional artist and revolutionary vocalist Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha. After advising the party volunteers to conduct the movement peacefully, Jyoti Prasad Agarwala went to the Tezpur District Police Stations to raise the congress flag while shouting "Quit India." With the motto "Do or die," he established the "Mrityu Bahini" (Death Squad) to help the movement's program succeed. All of the Tezpur Sub-Division's police stations would have flags raised by "Mrityu Bahini" members as part of their nonviolent mission. Kanaklata was really pleased with Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla's leadership and inspiration. On the day of the appointment, September 20,

1942, as a female volunteer for the Assam Congress, she asked all party leaders, both male and female, to go to the police station with flags in their hands before the groups of young girls.

Impact of Mahatma Gandhi's Principles on Assam's Participation in India's Struggle for Independence

Assam's freedom struggle was significantly shaped by Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent, morally upright, and civil disobedient worldview. His early 20th-century excursions to the area encouraged common people, particularly women, to see their everyday deeds as a part of a greater moral struggle against colonialism (*Chandra, 2000, p. 344*). Assam's rich weaving traditions and community-based customs made Gandhi's emphasis on khadi, prohibition, and village upliftment particularly relevant. By connecting their household skills with national duty, women were also able to confidently enter public life thanks to the acceptance of Gandhian principles (*Devi, 2018, p. 65*). However, the movement also exposed inconsistencies, as many young Assam revolutionaries eventually shifted to more forceful, even militant, forms of protest, demonstrating that greater local urges for resistance coexisted with Gandhian influence (*Saikia, 2015, p. 53*).

Kanaklata Barua as a Revolutionary Icon

One of the most enduring symbols of Assam's liberation movement is Kanaklata Barua, who was martyred at the age of seventeen. Her involvement in the Quit India Movement served as an example of how young women in rural Assam used political activity to challenge gender stereotypes (*Goswami, 2016, p. 101*).

The horrific event at the Gohpur Police Station, when she was shot while waving the tricolor, came to represent the sacrifices made by innumerable unidentified and unarmed combatants throughout India. The event's symbolic significance was heightened by the following murder of Mukunda Kakoti, who tried to raise the fallen flag (*Bhagawati, 2003, p. 97*). Regional literature, songs, and memorials are still influenced by Kanaklata's story, which reinforces her status as a freedom warrior and a heroine whose bravery defied patriarchal constraints and colonial authority (*Bordoloi, 2021, p. 76*).



Photograph 1: Statue of Indian independence fighter Kanaklata Baruah, a martyr from Gohpur, Assam

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kanaklata.jpg>



Photographs 2: *The researcher at the memorial statues of Mukunda Kakati and Kanaklata Barua, Gohpur Police Station.*

Source: *Image Captured by the Researcher*

Major Findings of the Study

1. Assamese women took part in active political mobilization, protests, and underground operations in addition to supportive responsibilities like boycotts, fundraising, and khadi work, according to regional memoirs and archival documents. This calls into question the conventional narrative, which frequently restricts women's participation to domestic or symbolic forms of resistance. It emphasizes how women's grassroots activity, which is frequently overlooked in national histories, greatly supported the liberation movement in Assam and consequently, India.
2. Kanaklata's life shows that gender and age did not prevent effective political participation. In a brave act of defiance, she led a march to raise the tricolor at a police station at the age of just seventeen. Her bravery dispels myths that young women lacked agency or that older male leaders were the only ones capable of successful resistance. Her story thus offers a potent counter-narrative to prevailing histories from the colonial era and the post-independence era.
3. The combination of local cultural movements, social customs, and newly formed youth organizations produced an environment that was conducive to grassroots activism. Local concerns and colonial oppression sparked engagement, while cultural figures and revolutionary songs motivated both women and young people. This shows that in order to comprehend how nationalist agitation developed differently throughout British India, regional dynamics are essential.
4. Gandhi's focus on civil resistance, khadi weaving, and boycotting foreign goods struck a strong chord in Assam, enabling women to participate in public life through social reform, lobbying, and weaving. But when the situation worsened, many Assam's activists including women turned to more forceful means of protest, suggesting that Gandhian nonviolence was more of a moral inspiration than a rigid dogma in Assam.
5. A comparative study shows that only a few token names of Assamese women are mentioned in key histories of India's independence. As a result, the national narrative is distorted, giving central and western India's contributions more weight. This disparity demands for a more inclusive rewriting of history and lessens the perceived national significance of northeastern contributions.
6. The memory of people like Kanaklata Barua has been preserved through oral histories, local music, folk theater, sculptures, and regional films—often with greater vigor than scholarly

writings. By providing alternative archives of resistance that merit scholarly consideration, this cultural preservation shows how communal memory can combat historical neglect.

7. Kanaklata's passing sparked intense public indignation and inspired young people as well as regular people, both men and women, to join or support the cause. Her sacrifice's symbolic significance gave anti-colonial actions, recruitment, and protests throughout Assam more impetus. This demonstrates how symbolic martyrdom can have a significant impact on the level and reach of political mobilization.
8. Assamese women were not only political agitators, but also social reformers: they took part in campaigns against social evils like opium and liquor, supported khadi weaving and self-reliance, and promoted education and social welfare. This dual role blurred the lines between nationalist resistance and social upliftment, reflecting a comprehensive vision of liberation both from colonial rule and social inequalities.
9. The rise of the Mrityu Bahini suggests that many young Assam's felt that nonviolent protest was insufficient and that they needed to make more audacious claims. Assam's liberation struggle cannot be cleanly categorized as either totally non-violent or moderate, according to this parallel radical stream of activism, which also demonstrates ideological variety within the movement.
10. Many women in Assam defied expectations by actively participating in protests, underground operations, and police confrontations despite widespread patriarchal norms, social conservatism, and the dangers of colonial punishment. Their readiness to be arrested, physically attacked, or killed shows that Assam liberation struggle opposed both colonial control and long-standing gender hierarchies.
11. By highlighting Assamese experiences, the study demonstrates that the Indian independence movement was not uniform; rather, it was made up of numerous local and regional conflicts with unique social, cultural, and political characteristics. Acknowledging this diversity challenges the dominance of centralized narratives based around large urban areas and enhances our understanding of nationalism.
12. The recognition of women like Kanaklata Barua confirms that women have always shaped political change as agents rather than as passive bystanders. Furthermore, by affirming regional identities, including northeastern contributions into mainstream history promotes national cohesion. Lastly, this reexamination supports current initiatives for youth activism, gender equity, and regional representation.

Historical Relevance

Reexamining women's freedom fights, particularly with regard to Kanaklata Barua of Assam, is historically significant because it sheds light on the sometimes disregarded roles played by women in the Indian independence movement. The study questions the male-dominated narratives of nationalist history and emphasizes the regional aspects of anti-colonial struggle by looking at Barua's life and the wider involvement of Assamese women. It emphasizes how women demonstrated agency, bravery, and leadership by organizing movements, taking direct action, and even facing martyrdom, regardless of their age or socioeconomic status. Additionally, examining these contributions enhances our comprehension of the Quit India Movement and the sociopolitical structure of Assam, offering a more inclusive, gender-sensitive, and regionally nuanced view of India's independence movement.

Conclusion

The bravery, tenacity, and patriotism of Indian women in the fight for independence are exemplified by Kanaklata Barua's story. She led the 'Mrityu Bahini' march in Gohpur, Assam, at the age of just seventeen, displaying incredible bravery by giving her life while raising the national flag. In addition to inspiring the Assamese people, her martyrdom came to represent women's pivotal role in the independence movement and youth-led action. Her activities' historical significance highlights the fact

that women were active participants in the freedom of India rather than just passive observers (*Barua, 1989, p. 34*).

The study reveals that Assamese women, alongside Kanaklata Barua, challenged social and colonial barriers, engaging in non-violent protests, boycotts, fundraising, and even radical underground activities. Their involvement was multifaceted, incorporating political resistance, cultural activism, and social reform. Importantly, the research demonstrates that characterizing women as needing to replicate masculine attributes to engage in the independence struggle is false and sexist; instead, women demonstrated that courage, intellect, and leadership are not gender-specific (*Ahmed, 1993, p. 57*).

Finally, this historical research highlights how important it is to recognize and incorporate women's contributions into popular accounts of India's independence, especially those from areas like Assam. The legacy of Kanaklata Barua is a constant source of inspiration for modern society, serving as a reminder that one's gender does not limit one's capacity to behave honorably, and with a dedication to justice. Scholars and citizens alike are inspired to acknowledge the pivotal role women played in attaining national freedom and in forming India's sociopolitical structure by revisiting such tales (*Dutta, 1991, p. 88*).

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