



## Parbati Giri - The Outstanding Women Freedom Fighter

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The women freedom fighters of Orissa played a significant role in the Indian Freedom Struggle. They have occupied a permanent place in the pages of Indian history. Among the notable women freedom fighters of Orissa Rama Devi, Malati Choudhury, Annapurna Maharana, Jambobati Devi, Prabhabati Devi and Parbati Giri were equally important. Some were born in aristocratic family and some in poor families of unknown and uncharted villages. But time and circumstances forced them to break the lofty ideals of the society and joined in the national stream of freedom movement.

Among the prominent women freedom fighters of Orissa, Parbati Giri the Mother Teresa of western Orissa was born at Samlaipadar village near Bijepur of present Bargarh district and undivided Sambalpur district in the year 1926. By the time Parbati Giri took birth, the message of the freedom movement of India had already reached the villages of Orissa. The voice of freedom movement was heard in the countless villages of Orissa. Samlaipadar village had great name and fame during that time was a centre of political activities. The freedom fighters like Laxminarayan Mishra, Durga Prasad Guru, Bhagirathi Pattanayak and his wife Jambobati Pattanaik, Fakira Behera went to Samlaipadar

to meet Ramchandra Giri, the uncle of Parbati Giri.

They had gone to Samlaipadar and discussed about the plans and programmes of Congress. Parbati Giri at that time was reading in the school. But she was interested to attend the meeting of freedom fighters and was inspired by their ideas. Her educational qualification was upto class three. In the minor age she moved from village to village and collected primary members of Congress. A Congress meeting was organized at Samlaipadar in the year 1937. In this meeting many freedom fighters requested the father of minor girl Parbati Giri to spare her for doing organizational work of Congress. Just after one year in 1938 a great assembly of Congress workers was held at Samlaipadar. Distinguished leaders like Malati Choudhury and Pranakrushna Padhiari gave their valuable speeches. Then the next day they pressurized the father of Parbati Giri to allow his daughter to join in the organizational work of Congress. After giving a difficult test Parbati Giri was allowed to go to the Bari Ashram of Rama Devi.

During the age of conservatism and dogmatism a girl of minor age left home and went to the Bari Ashram. It is undoubtedly a wonderful achievement. Her love and dedication to the



society forced her father to give permission. There was no good communication system at that time. So it was a daring feat by a girl who had gone from a small and insignificant village like Samlaipadar to Bari Ashram of Jajpur. Parbati Giri left home on 14th January 1938. At that time Prabhavati Devi, another girl (child widow) of Bargarh also agreed to go with Parbati Giri. The family members of Prabhavati also tried to convince both the girls to return home. But their efforts turned in vain. In spite of all such obstacles they proceeded to Bari Ashram. On the way, they halted at Arigaon in the home of Reba Roy. In the next day they reached the Bari Ashram. Both of them met Rama Devi, Gopabandhu Choudhury and others.

The Ashram of those days were established on high moral value system, which cannot be compared with modern Ashram. Those Ashrams were called "*Sangrami Sibira*" and "*Ahimsa tirtha*". Gopabandhu Choudhury was also a remarkable man. He resigned from the post of Deputy Collector by the call of Mahatma Gandhi and dedicated himself for the freedom struggle. So young Parbati Giri was directly inspired by the ideas of Gopabandhu Choudhury and Rama Devi and equally influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. During her life in the Ashram, Parbati Giri had done commendable work and extended her love and affection to all. She learned many things in Bari Ashram, which helped her in later stage. In the year 1940, direct *Satyagraha* started. All the Ashrams came to be known as *Sangrami Sibira* and the borders were the freedom fighters. Parbati Giri returned back to her village and did Congress work in Bargarh, Sambalpur, Padampur, Panimara, Ghens etc. At that time Parbati Giri did not stay in her home. She moved from village to village, and organized meetings against the alien rule. She gave training of weaving

and thread making in villages like Samlaipadar, Barpali, Panimora, Sarandapali and Dalaipara of Sambalpur town. When Parbati Giri came to Sambalpur she stayed with Kamala Devi, the mother of Sraddhakar Supakar. She actively participated in the *Khadi Andolon* of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Quite India Movement was started in the year 1942. The thunderous sound of this movement was reflected in countless villages of Orissa. The prominent villages where pioneers of freedom movement were born are Samlaipadar, Panimara, Ghens etc. The following persons such as Ramachandra Giri, Ujjal Giri, Dwitiya Giri, Kuber Giri, Mangal Giri and Dwadesi Rana were taken as prisoners and sent to Bargarh jail.

Once young Parbati Giri accompanied with a group of boys and gave anti-British slogans. But due to her minor age, the police personnels were unable to arrest her. Next day Parbati Giri with three boys arrived in the office of SDO at Bargarh during the time of Quite India Movement. Parbati Giri the young girl got up to the chair of S.D.O. and acted as a judge. Another boy played the role of an advocate and other became peon. At that time SDO entered into the office and young Parbati Giri ordered the peon to bring the culprit tied with a rope. The police personnels surrounded the young girl in the Court and tried to get her down from the chair. Due to her anti-government activities, she was imprisoned for two years. Her internal aim was to resist the imperialist and colonial rule of the Britishers.

Another remarkable event in the life of Parbati Giri occurred at Bargarh Court. She had gone to the Bargarh Bar where the lawyers had sat. The pre-matured girl ordered the lawyers to vacate the Court. Her aim was to non-cooperate the British officials in legal matters. Some lawyers



left the court and those who did not vacate were given two bangles (*chudi*) each as presentation. From that incident the valour and courage of Parbati Giri was clearly known. She has done so many reformatory work in her lifetime and has been inspired by the high ideals of Gandhi. She was a glaring star of Orissa.

Parbati Giri came from an unknown village of western Orissa. But by dint of her achievements, she has occupied a unique place not only in the history of Orissa but also in the history of India. She was not only a freedom fighter but also an ideal social reformer. Her service to the destitute and orphans has boldly established her name. She was not only an outstanding personality but also an institution by herself.

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#### ACTIVITIES OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

1. Establishment of a State-wide Communication Network under Gramsat Pilot Project linking the State headquarters with all the 30 district headquarters, 314 block headquarters and 1087 Gram Panchayat headquarters in 8 KBK Districts. Conducting more than 300 Interactive Training Programmes by the User Departments and NGOs. Commencement of broadcasting of evening transmission from 6.00 P.M. to 7.15 P.M. on developmental programmes since 27.7.2004 in all days except Sundays.
2. Preparation of a Directory of Oriya Scientists released by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Orissa on 19.7.2005.
3. Preparation of Advantage Orissa Document on Biotechnology through the Biotech Consortium India Ltd. (BCIL), New Delhi.
4. Organisation of an Investors' Meet on Biotechnology on 4.7.2005 in association with the Biotech Consortium India Ltd. (BCIL), New Delhi and I.I.T., Kharagpur.
5. Establishment of a Medicinal Plant Research Centre at Jeypore of Koraput district by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in collaboration with the State Government.
6. Establishment of a Renewable Energy Awareness Park at Bhubaneswar at Kharavela Park.
7. Establishment of 'Regional Hardening Facility' at the Regional Plant Resource Centre, Bhubaneswar with the assistance of Government of India.