

India: Farmers' Struggle: Women's Struggle Fire (Flame of Women Struggle)

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Throughout history, women have struggled for their rights, along with their struggles for people, land, nature, and the environment. Indian women do not come out suddenly. History has shown that once on the field, they will not retreat easily.

Recently, there has been an increase in the need to take to the streets and fight against the state. Women across the country took to the streets last year to protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. Launched by a small number of women in Delhi, the protest took the form of a day-to-day struggle involving millions of people.

Women are still embroiled in a similar struggle. Farmers from various states, including Punjab and Haryana, have been rallying in Delhi to demand the abandonment of the Agriculture Amendment Bill. A significant number of women are participating in these struggles.

Most women are over the age of fifty. They have been traveling long distances, packing food and medicine in the bitter cold of December. They have set up tents in the open and are holding protests. They say we are ready to withstand the onslaught even if the struggle lasts for six months. We will not rest until the Agriculture Bill is withdrawn. The world is amazed at the determination of these women to say that even if our lives are lost in this struggle to restore the rights of future generations, we will be proud of it.

Gandhi showed the world that fasting is the greatest form of struggle in a non-violent way. The woman who led Gandhi's 'hunger strike' for a long time! There is no one in the world like Irom Sharmila who has been on a hunger strike for 16 years. Women with such determination can make a huge difference when they participate in struggles on a large scale. Our agrarian fighters stand in the same background. It is not uncommon for women to take part in struggles when there is a threat to nature and the environment. Indian women have waged many struggles before. Notable among them are:

Chipco movement

The Chipko Movement was started in 1973 to protect trees. When the private company came to cut down the trees with the permission of the government, the women hugged the trees and prevented them from cutting them down. 'This forest is our mother house. The women fought with the slogan 'It is our duty to protect it'. It spread across the country. As a result of the Chipko protests, the then Uttar Pradesh government banned logging in the Himalayas in 1980 for 15 years.

Bhopal accident

An accident at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal in 1984 caused poisoning and killed about 20,000 people. Many were affected. Initially, men took part in a series of protests. Undeterred, women have

been fighting international organizations for 36 years. They have also received some compensation.

Narmada Dam Struggle

Mehta Bhatkar started the struggle in 1985 against the construction of a dam across the Narmada River and demanded compensation for the 32,000 displaced families. A large number of women took part in this struggle. They have also been fighting for a long time and proposing alternative projects to save the environment.

Kudankulam Nuclear Power Station Struggle

A large number of women took part in the protest against the construction of a nuclear power plant at Kudankulam in Tirunelveli district. Since the opening of the nuclear power plant, women have largely participated in the ongoing protests over security arrangements.

Farmers Struggle 2020

Tens of thousands of women are participating in the Delhi peasant struggle. Leading them, Harinder Bindu said, "The three laws brought by the government are not only against agriculture, but also against women. The minimum reference price is no longer available to farmers. Large employers will have to shell out labor and products. Women work harder and earn less. Children may not be able to get an education or good food. If incomes fall, women will be forced to move to non-agricultural urban jobs.

"We work on our land and live in peace with what we have. When large plantations enter agriculture, they will over time exploit our labor and make them their employees. Those who own the land can never accept becoming mercenaries," said Jasbir Kaur, one of the protesters.

Bilkis Banu, 82, who has been featured on the BBC's list of 100 women and on Time magazine's list of influential men, took part in the struggle. He was arrested by police and remanded in custody.

Women from different states and from different agricultural organizations cook together. They provide food and tea not only to fellow protesters but also to the police. They exchange their thoughts even though they do not understand the language. They gather crowds. They take to the stage, ask for justice and speak loudly. These women, who are the backbone of the struggle, will soon regain their rights.

Wame Handa

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