

Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Chattopadhyay Naidu was a key figure during India's independence struggle. Her work as a poet earned her the title of 'Nightingale of India' from Mahatma Gandhi.

Along with this, she is also remembered for activism regarding women's emancipation, civil rights and anti-colonialism.

This article will give details about Sarojini Naidu within the context of the IAS Exam.

Early Life of Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu was born on 13 February 1879 in Hyderabad to Bengali parents, Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya and Barad Sundari Devi Chattopadhyay. Her father administered the Nizam College in Hyderabad while her mother was a prolific writer in poetry.

She was the eldest of eight siblings. Sarojini Naidu graduated from the University of Madras and the Nizam Charitable Trust founded by Mahbub Ali Khan gave her chance to study at Girton College at Cambridge.

Sarojini married Pradipati Govindarajulu Naidu after completing her education. The couple would have five children, one of them - Paidipati Padmaja would join the independence struggle and become a part of the Quit India Movement.

Role during the Independence Movement

Following the partition of Bengal in 1905, Sarojini Naidu began to play an active role in the Indian independence movement. Her meeting with leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (Born on May 9 1866) and Rabindranath Tagore spurred her on to work against the British Colonial government and towards social reform.

Between 1915 and 1918 she travelled the length and breadth of the country to deliver lectures on social welfare, the emancipation of women etc.

In 1917 she helped in the formation of the Women's Indian Association (WIA). Later that year she would accompany her colleague Annie Besant, the president of the Home Rule League, in presenting the universal suffrage for India in front of the Joint Select Committee in London.

Sarojini Naidu took part in the Salt March with Mahatma Gandhi and was arrested by the British authorities along with all the Congress leaders in 1930. The arrests prompted Congress to stay away from the First Round Table Conference taking place in London. Following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931 however, Sarojini Naidu and other leaders would participate in the Second Round Table Conference.

Naidu was one of the significant figures to have led the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement led by Gandhi. She faced repeated arrests by the British authorities during the time and even spent over 21 months in jail

Following the Indian independence, Sarojini Naidu became the first governor-general of Uttar Pradesh

Legacy of Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu passed away on March 2, 1949, on account of Cardiac Arrest. To this day she is regarded as one of independent India's leading poet

The "Feather of The Dawn" which contained poems written in 1927 by Naidu was edited and published posthumously in 1961 by her daughter Padmaja Naidu. Moreover her poem The Gift of India is also noteworthy for its patriotism and the actual environment of 1915 India.

The Golden Threshold is an off-campus annexe of the University of Hyderabad. The building was the residence of Naidu's father Aghornath Chattopadhyay, the first Principal of Hyderabad College. It was named after Naidu's very first collection of poetry. Golden Threshold now houses Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication of the University of Hyderabad.

During the freedom struggle, Chattopadhyay family's residence, it was the centre of many reformist ideas in Hyderabad, in areas ranging from marriage, education, women's empowerment, literature, and nationalism. Specifically, the reformist ideas included more power for women in a time where politics in India, especially regional politics, was dominated by men. It also included ideas for involvement for women in the arts field.

In her quest to liberate India from the clutches of the British, Sarojini Naidu also sought to uplift its women from archaic notions regarding women which had traditionally held back Indian society in its development. Her ideals would take shape eventually and would have a profound effect on contemporary Indian society for years to come.