





Women Heroes of India's Freedom Struggle

For Prelims: Nari Shakti, Indian Freedom Struggle, Rani Laxmibai, Jhalkari Bai, Durga Bhabhi, Rani Gaidinliu, Begum Hazrat Mahal

For Mains: Contribution of Women in Indian Freedom Struggle

Why in News?

Recently, [Prime Minister](#) in his Independence Day Speech paid tribute to women freedom fighters.

Role of Women in Freedom Struggle	
Name	Contribution in Freedom Struggle
 Rani Laxmibai //	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The queen of the princely state of Jhansi, Rani Laxmibai is known for her role in the Indian Independence in 1857.▪ Born Manikarnika Tambe in 1835, she married the king of Jhansi.▪ The couple adopted Damodar Rao as her son before the king's death. She refused to accept as the legal heir in accordance with the Doctrine of Lapse.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The Doctrine of Lapse was an annexation policy followed widely by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General from 1848 to 1856.▪ Refusing to cede her territory, the queen decided to rule on behalf of her son and the British in 1857.▪ Under General Hugh Rose, the East India Company's forces had been ordered to capture Jhansi in January 1858.▪ She single-handedly fought with the British, riding on a horse, tying Durgawati Devi's name to her.▪ She conquered the fort of Gwalior with the help of Tatya Tope and Khandao Balaji.▪ Cornered by the British, she escaped from Jhansi fort. She was wounded and died in a forest where she later died.
 Jhalkari Bai	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A soldier in Rani Laxmibai's women's army, Durga Dal, rose to become one of her most trusted advisers.▪ She is known for putting her own life at risk to keep the queen safe.▪ Till date, the story of her valor is recalled by the people of Bundelkhand as a representative of Bundeli identity.▪ Many Dalit communities of the region look up to her as an incarnation of Goddess Durga every year in her honour.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Durgawati Devi, who was popularly known as Durga Bhabhi, was a re



struggle against colonial rule.

- A member of the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha**, she helped **Bhagat Singh** in the 1928 killing of British police officer John P Saunders.
- During the train journey that followed, Durgawati and Bhagat Singh protected their servant.
 - Later, as revenge for the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Ashfaqulla Khan, she attempted to kill the former Punjab Governor, Lord Hailey.
- Born in Allahabad in 1907 and married to **Hindustan Socialist Republican Army** leader Bhagwati Charan Vohra, Durgawati, along with other revolutionaries,

Durga Bhabhi



- Born in 1915 in present-day Manipur, Rani Gaidinliu was a **Naga spirit leader** who rebelled against the **British**.
- She joined the **Heraka religious movement** which later became a major force in the region.
- **She rebelled against the Empire and refused to pay taxes, asking for independence.**
- The British launched a manhunt, but she evaded arrest, moving from village to village.
- Gaidinliu was finally arrested in 1932 when she was just 16 and later sentenced to life imprisonment.
- She was released in 1947.
- **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** described Gaidinliu as the “daughter of the soil” and “Rani” for her courage.

Rani Gaidinliu



- After her husband, Nawab of Awadh Wajid Ali Shah was exiled after the 1857 Revolt, she, along with her supporters, took on the British and wrested control of Lucknow. The British colonial rulers recaptured the area.

Begum Hazrat Mahal

- Many years **before the revolt of 1857, Velu Nachiyar waged a successful revolt** against the British in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.
- **Born in Ramanathapuram** in 1780, she was married to the king of the Kingdom of Sivagangai.
- After her husband was killed in battle with the East India Company, she led a rebellion against the British and the rulers of neighbouring kings.
- She went on to **produce the first human bomb** as well as establish a government in the region.



the late 1700s.

- Her army commander Kuyili is believed to have set herself ablaze and

Velu Nachiyar

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, Usha Mehta is well-known for (2011)

- (a) Running the secret Congress Radio in the wake of Quit India Movement
- (b) Participating in the Second Round Table Conference
- (c) Leading a contingent of Indian National Army
- (d) Assisting in the formation of Interim Government under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- Usha Mehta was one of the most prominent Gandhians in India. Born in 1920 in Surat (Gujarat), she joined the freedom struggle when she was just eight years old, when she marched against the Simon Commission.
- On 14th August 1942, Mehta along with her associates started the secret Congress Radio. **The radio broadcasted the voice messages of Gandhi and several other leaders to the public.** The station changed its place after every broadcast to avoid capture by the government. The secret radio was also assisted by veteran socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia. **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer**

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