

FORGOTTEN SONGS OF FREEDOM

OPINION

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Freedom struggle from the first war of independence in 1857 to the gaining of independence in 1947 was a glorious period in Indian History on many accounts despite the misery and struggles our people faced. It threw a galaxy of leadership whom we idealise till date, it generated ideas which we cherish, it made us a more progressive society in that we resolved to break caste barriers, we strove the path of emancipation of women, we made serious attempts to reduce communal tensions, we believed in the path of socialism and good for all. It was a great Nation in the making. It acted as a catalyst for Artists to create new words and songs and images. It activated cinema, theatre, Poetry and numerous artistic expressions. 'Indian peoples' theatre' gave us theatre of new voice of struggle and freedom. a large number of artists came under an umbrella and creativity sprouted all over in numerous languages. The 'progressive writers' launched themselves in 1936 and have given us an indomitable expression. A voice to the masses, It has remained an inspiration still.

These songs were written by various poets across the country as no part remained unaffected by wave of freedom. our leaders had connected to the masses and motivated them to rise to the occasion . Therefore these songs were sung by people full throated in utmost sincerity believing in each word they sang . The times were such , it was their only saviour, it was their only support , it was their belief , it was their saviour , it was what all they had, some sang alone some together but sang they all. Sometimes on special occasion we remember these songs and our heart swells, yet we know that now we are free and so sing routinely , but

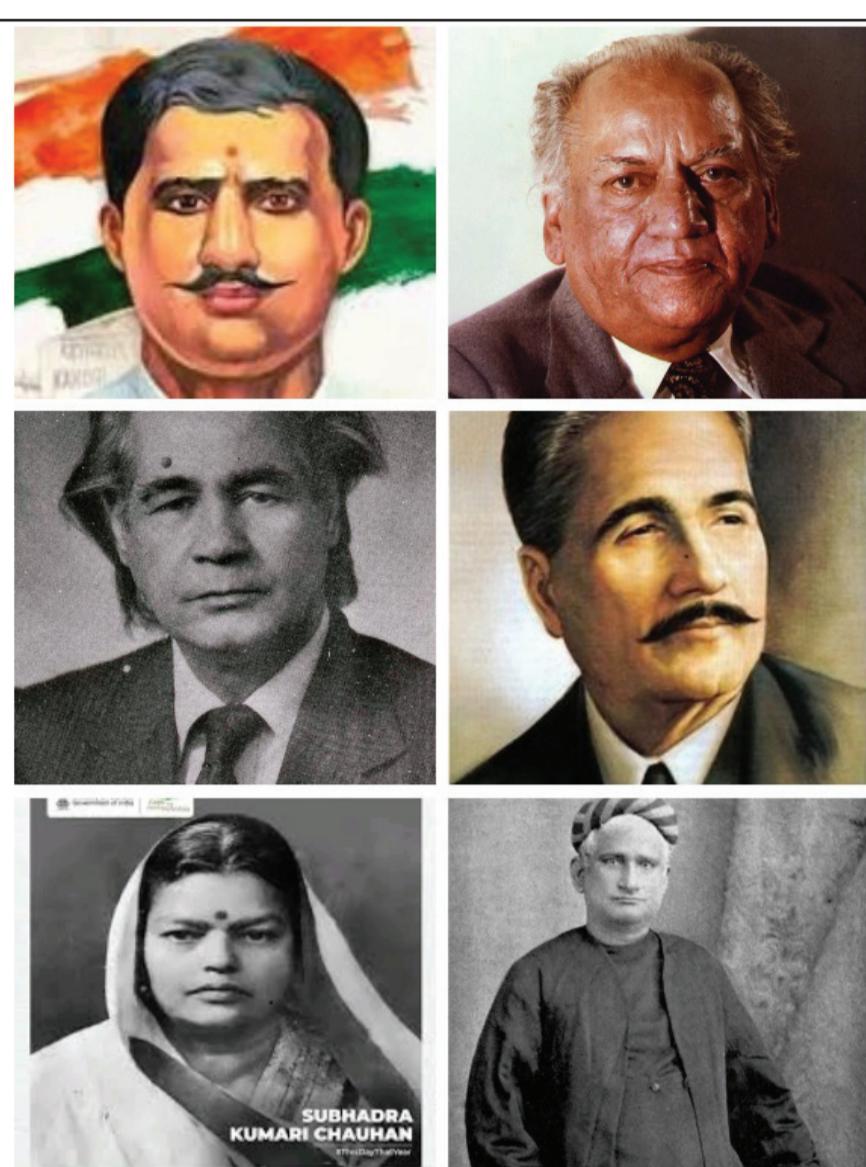
and an underground movement was active in keeping the fire of freedom alive by constantly communicating with people and so poetry was the safest means. Large number of these compilation were printed in printing press at Delhi, Dehradun, Lahore, Lucknow, Varanasi , Allahabad. What is extremely disheartening was that the people who were scrutinising these works were our own countrymen as an Englishmen would not know the meaning and content of these poems and in their overenthusiasm to please their masters they applied a blanket embargo on any song in praise of the Nation . It is a lesson to us that the enemy most of the time is within us and servility of people such as witnessed then cost us our freedom.

SONGS AND INSTRUMENTS

Songs and instruments have played a central role in peoples' movements to motivate and mobilize people - American war of Independence , French Revolution and Russian revolution are replete with examples . So was it in our country which had deep rooted tradition of music and therefore the culture and concept of 'Prabhat Pheri' was born and in many towns and villages early morning before the sunrise groups of people walk the streets singing with harmonium etc bhakti and national songs. These 'prabhat-pheris' were popular during the struggle and thereafter too.

The two words made famous during the period were- 'Vandematram' and 'Inqilab Zindabad' primarily by the poets. 'Vandematram' (salutation to mother/ I bow before you my mother) was the famous poem written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in late eighteenth century and later incorporated in his novel 'Anandmath'. It is now our 'National Song'. 'Inqilab Zindabad' was the slogan coined by the poet Hazrat Moham and made famous by Bhagat Singh. Another phrase made famous by the poet and revolutionary Ram Prasad Bismil was ' Sarfaroshi ki Tamanna' from the famous Gazal of the poet Bismil Azimabadi - ' Sarfaroshi ki Tamanna ab hamare dil mein hai, dekhnai hai zor kitna basue kaitil mein hai' .

Many eminent poets such as Iqbal, Faiz Ahmed Faiz , Jaan Nisar Akhtar, Brij Narayan Chakbast, Maulana Shibli, Akbar Ilahabadi, Ismail Merhi, Maulana zafar Ali Khan, Majaz, Ali Sardar Jafri, Ram Prasad Bismil , Mirza dabang have written verses which were banned and are listed in the collections. However the name of



(Top) Bismil and Faiz, (Middle) Sardar Jafri and Iqbal. (Bottom) Subhdra Kumari Chauhan, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

the poet in the Hindi compilation is not listed, only the name of the printing press and compiler are stated.

NOTEWORTHY VERSES- IQBAL

Some noteworthy verses are listed below. We normally know of the four famous verses of 'Sare Jahan se Achha' but there are nine verses in the original the ones which we do not know are given below with explanation, It is interesting to note that this song is both in Hindi and Urdu compilation . In the Urdu compilation it is titled - 'Tarana e Hind' and in Hindi - ' Hindostan Hamara' :

'Gurbat mein hon agar bum , rehta bai dil watan mein Samjho hamen wabin par dil ho jahan hamara'

(If we are away from our country and our heart is in our country

Consider me there only where my heart resides)

'Aye aabe roude Ganga wab din bai yaad tujukko

Utra tere kinare jab kar waan hamara'

(O Ganga river do you remember the day when our Caravan

Arrived by your side)

'Unaan Misra Roma sab mit gaye jahan se

Ab tak magar hai baki namon Nishan hamara'

(Greece Egypt and Rome civilizations exist no more

But our existence and name is still alive)

' Kuch baat ke hasti mitti

Nahn hamari
Sadiyon raha hai dushtman
daure jahan hamara'

(There is something in us that our name is not wiped away

Since centuries the world has been against us)

'Iqbal koi mabram apna Nabin jahan mein
Maloom kya kisi ko darde ni-han hamara'

(Iqbal there is no person so close to us

What do the people know of our deep and internal pain)

SAR FAROSHI KI TAMANNA AB HAMARE DIL MEIN HAI - BISMIL AZIMABADI

The above though original Urdu song is the first song in the Hindi songs compilation indicating that the difference between the language was that of only the script.

'sarforishi ki tamanna ab
bamare dil mein hai'

Dekhna hai zor kitna bazue
katil mein hai'

(the desire to sacrifice my head is in my heart

Let us see how powerful are the arms of the killer)

'Rabware rabe muhabbat reb
na jana raab mein'

Lajete sehra naavradi dooriye
manzil mein hai'

(the love of the country should remain do not be lost on the way

Do not worry of uniform and headgear the destination is far away)

'Waqt aane de bata denge tu-

jbe e aasmaan
Hum abhi se kya batayen kya
bamare dil mein hai'

(let the time come we shall let you know O sky

How do we tell now what is in our heart)

'AAZAADI KI DEVI' - SUBHDRA KUMARI CHAUHAN

'Bundele harbo ke mukk bame suni kabani thi'

Khoob ladi mardani wab to

Jhansi rani thi

Singhasan bil gaye, Raajwan-

shon ne bbrukti tani thi

Budhe bharat mein bbi aayi

phir se nayi jawani thi

Gumi bhi aazadi ki keemat sabne pehchan thi

Door phirangi ko karne ki

sabne man mein thani thi

Chamak bhi san sattavan

mein wab takwar puran thi'

RASHTRIYA JHANDA- BY SHYAMLAL GUPTA IN 1924

'Vijayi Visvra Tiranga Pyara

Jhanda Uunchi rabe Hamara

Sada shakti Barsane wala ,

Prem Sudha Barsane wala

Veeron ko barsbene wala ,

Matri Bhoomi ka tan man sara

Iski Shaan na Jane paaye ,

chabe jaan bhale bi jaaye

Visheva vijay karke dikhhayen

tab boye pran poorn hamara

Jhanda Uunchi Rabe ha-

mara...'

'Pyara Hindostan Hamara'

- compiled by Aksir Si-

ylkoti. The Tarana of Iqbal

had immense popularity and

it influenced other poets too

who wrote in a similar fash-

ion as below:

'Bulbul bein hum watan ki,
yeh gulistan hamara
Pyare hum uske pyara Hind-
ostan hamara
Mit jayaenge wab khud bi ,
bumdum' jahan ke baton
Jo chabte mitana namon Nis-
han hamara'

Hindu Muslim Isayi gora boy-
kala
Nirbhav dharamvir ban jata
iska pinewala
Dara Nabin sakte phir isko
toup tamancha bhala

BHAGAT SINGH

There were many heroes of the period but the name of Bhagat Singh since his sacrifice at an early age was among the top martyrs and many poems were composed in his name , one such is produced below:

'Phansik a Jhoola jhool gaya
mardana Bhagat Singh
Duniya ko sabak de gaya mas-
tana Bhagat Singh
Kabbi wab din bhi aayega ki
jab swaraj dekhenga
Jab apni bai zamin bogi jab
apna aasman hoga'

HAI WATAN KE WASTE AKSEER VAN- DEMATRAM

Like Iqbal's Tarana e Hind Bankim Chandra Chattopadhy's song 'Vandematram' was an inspiration for many songs , one example is below:

'Hai watan ke vaste akseer
vandematram
Desh ke khadim ki hai jagir
vandematram
Jalimon ko hai agar bandook
par apni garur
Hai idhar hum bekason ka
teer Vandematram'

KHADDAR

Khaddar and Charkha were the symbols of freedom struggle established by Mahatma Gandhi . There were songs written on the theme of 'Khaddar' and 'Charkha':

'Gulami se Humko Chudaeja
khaddar
Jalim ko jad se mitaega khad-
dar
Bharat ki izzat hai ismen bi
Bhanu
Bharat ke tan par ho bharat
ka khaddar
Hamen yeb bharosa hamen
ye yakeen hai
Ki aazadi humko dilayega
khaddar

CHARKHA

Charkha se Swaraj

Karenge mulk mein kayam

swaraj charkha se

Milega hind ko phir takhto

taaj charkha se

Banegi bigde bue kaam kaaj

charkha se

Rabega desh kea lam mein laj

charkha se

Apne azada ki miras se maa-
jur bein hum

Jism par kaid hein jazbaat pe

zanjirein hein

The above songs of freedom reflect the feelings of the society and the poets during that glorious period when we were so good and benign energies flowed in our veins . The role of writers, poets, journalists was tremendous in keeping the people together and achieving the onerous task.

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caster.

Reaching out to China will have its blowback but the USA is hardly proving to be a reliable ally?

And so, in a nutshell, smart economics & a tactical foreign policy remain the biggest challenges for the Modi Govt in 2026. For the Congress - and the rest of the opposition - the challenge is to make its presence felt in domestic politics.

PRIYA SAHGAL

PERSPECTIVE

IN THE END, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ECONOMY

The road map for 2026 was already in place before the year was ushered in. The first challenge of the new year is always the Union Budget and this year it shall be presented on a Sunday since the established budget presentation date of 1st February falls on the weekend. This also underscores another message from the Modi Government - there are no holidays or time offs. Apart from that, the more

important messaging will be in the budget statement itself as the government has to revive the economy stalled by Trump Tariffs, lack of enthusiasm from foreign investors and jobless growth. The needs of the salaried class were taken into account in the last budget but a lot more needs to be done. Will the government address these? Will it increase taxes or try to increase spending by putting

more money in the hands of the people? And where will it get the funds for the slew of welfare schemes? The other challenge is political as there are some crucial state elections slated for 2026 including West Bengal, Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The BJP is in power in only one but fan- cies its chances of making some sort of a power play in West Bengal where current CM Mamata Banerji

is holding on to her basi- tion. But after Orissa and Bihar the BJP is hoping for a win in this state and has been working hard for it. Will Mamata Banerji hold on to her citadel for her popularity remains. Another high profile fight is to be expected in Assam where the BJP's Himanta Biswa Sarma is being challenged by Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress. Also, to make things a bit more

exciting Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has been given charge of this state. Expect a lot of face offs between the two with some very catch soundbites. Both these states promise to be media delight in terms of headlines and personalities. As for Kerala - the Congress is hopeful of wresting this state from the LEft but this is also another state where the BJP is making

its presence felt. Will Rajeev Chandrasekhar do to Kerala what Amit Shah has done to West Bengal ie edge out the Left and emerge as the single most dominant Opposition party. As for the other southern state of Tamil Nadu the BJP is riding piggy back on its alliance partner the AIADMK. However here it is the Congress that needs to be watched. While the party still cannot make it on its