

Shaheed Bhagat Singh: His works and Contribution In Indian Freedom Struggle

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Abstract

Shaheed Bhagat Singh's name figures among the most prominent personalities of Indian Freedom movement. He synchronized with revolutionary movement. Though he lived for 23 years and half, he left incredible imprints in the annals of history. His ideas and sacrifice inspire millions of people till today. He along with his compatriots shook the foundations of British Empire in India. Bravery, courage and sacrifice of these revolutionaries were extraordinary. They not only exhorted the contemporary Indians to fight for the freedom of the nation but presented a road map for free India where people will be able to earn their livelihood with dignity and will lead life on the basis of equality without any bias on the basis of class, caste, creed, colour or religion. That society will be nationalistic in its true sense.

Key words: Ghadar, HSRA, Naujwan Bharat Sabha, Bhajan, Sarfrosi, Tamanna, Creed, Caste.

Indian freedom movement had its uniqueness in its growth and development. Mainly originating from the origin of Indian National Congress after 1857 during the last decades of Nineteenth century, it transformed its nature in 1906 when Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal emerged as dominant figures on political scene. In this first decade of nineteenth century, Bhagat Singh was born on 28th September, 1907, at Lyallpur (now in Pakistan) in the family of S. Kishan Singh and Smt. Vidya Vati. During this time 'Pagri Sambhaal Jatta' lehar was in full swing under his uncle S. Ajit Singh.¹ However, the political scenario drastically changed with the onset of the First World War in 1914. The period is significant for three reasons: Firstly, the Ghadar movement on one hand challenging the British Empire and on the other hand Indian National Congress supporting British war efforts; Secondly, the unity among Hindus and Muslims; and thirdly, Montague's declaration promising Dominion Status after the war. After the war, Ghadar movement failed to achieve success and Britishers enacted the Rowlatt Act (Black Act), it resulted in the launch of the

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Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 17

Non-cooperation movement. Youth of India along with other participated enthusiastically in freedom activities. Influential figures like Mahatma Gandhi inspired the masses to non-violent protests, thus demonstrating the people's resolve. Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries witnessing these movements involved them in their own way. However, the unilateral decision of Mahatma Gandhi to recall the Non-Cooperation movement after the Chauri-Chaura incident shook the faith of the youth in Gandhian values of freedom movement, "There was a great shock to the minds of the young non-cooperators. In a nationwide movement like this, a few instances of violence could not be ruled out. Several youths among the non-cooperators, such as Chandra Shekhar Azad, Manmanth Nath Gupta, Bhagat Singh, Vishnu Saran and many more, thought that a non-violent movement even under the unique leadership of Gandhi could not succeed in India. They started thinking in terms of reviving the revolutionary movement to carry on the fight for India's freedom."²

The disenchantment of the youth with Congress programmes forced them to come out with alternative programmes. In 1926, Naujawan Bharat Sabha was established by Bhagat Singh and his compatriots like Chhabil Das, Yashpal, Bhagwati Charan Vohra, Sukhdev, Dhanwantri, Ranbir etc. Naujawan Bharat Sabha aimed at establishing complete independence-republic of the labourers and peasants in the whole of India. For this, they were to mobilize labourers and peasants and to coordinate with other economic, industrial and social movements of India with similar perspectives. Morale of the activists of Naujawan Bharat Sabha were kept high by great revolutionaries like Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt, S.A. Dange etc. and even leaders from British Communist Party Phillips Spratt. From INC Pt. J. L. Nehru also addressed their meetings. Naujawan Bharat Sabha along with Kirti Kisan Party continued to inspire the youth against the imperialist forces during the third decade of the 20th century. This period of world economic depression had already affected the employment of the youth. When Simon Commission came to India, Naujawan Bharat Sabha was at the forefront to organize protests at different places in Punjab. It played a key role in organizing a big rally at Lahore Railway Station on 30th October, 1929 on the occasion of the arrival of Simon Commission.³ Revolutionaries across the states were trying to establish contacts among themselves. They were aiming to coordinate their activities to make their viewpoint

² Dr. Kuldip Kaur Dhaliwal, Role of Revolutionaries in India's Freedom Movement: with special reference to North West India: 1907-1930, Writers Choice, New Delhi, 2014, pp-18.

³Inqilab (Jeevni: Shaheed-i-Azam Bhagat Singh), Dr. Tejinder Virli, Tarak Bharti Prakashan, Barnala, 2010, pp.71

more relevant and widespread. In U. P. Chandra Shekhar Azad, Jagesh Chandra Chatterjee, Ram Prasad Bismil and many others who had formed Hindustan Republican Association in 1924.⁴ Later on, word socialist was added and HRA was now called as Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). It had well defined constitution and manifesto. It had designed programmes and organized other structures from top to bottom at the level of masses. At the provincial level, it was to have different departments requiring four recruitment of men, collection of funds, community propaganda through secret press, public platforms, and appealing kathas, etc.⁵

First challenge came to these young revolutionaries when Lala Lajpat Rai succumbed to injuries on 17-11-1928 after the brutal lathi charge led by police led by Mr. Scott. At that time, there was terrible silence along with agony among the masses especially youth of India. On one side, Govt. refused to own the responsibility of the murder of Lala Lajpat Rai. 'Secretary of State Mr. Aral Vintertral said in the House of commons that there is no proof that Lala Lajpat Rai died due to injuries incurred on the spot. Rather Under secretary said that when Govt. is compelled to control the mob by force there is no need to feel sorry from the relatives of any common or privileged person.'⁶ Mrs. C. R. Das raised the issue in anguish, "Is country's youth and humanity still alive? Are they feeling its shame and insult? I, being a woman of this land demand clear and concrete answer?"⁷ The blood of revolutionaries ran through their veins. On 18-12-1928 a meeting was held which was presided over by Durga Bhabhi, wife of Bhagwati Charan Vohra. It was unanimously decided to avenge the killing of Lala Lajpat Rai by putting Mr. Scott to death. They were clear that a message must go to the masses that the country has not accepted the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. Durga Bhabhi volunteered herself for this purpose, but others did not agree to her involvement. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Chandra Shekhar Azad, and Jatin Das were given the task. They and other members were to act by 17-18 December, 1928. On December 15 1928, a rehearsal was conducted. The whole planning was based on the personal commitments of the members of HSRA. No doubt, a plan was made to escape after the incident but some lacunae were there.

⁴ Dr. Kuldip Kaur Dhaliwal, *Role of Revolutionaries in India's Freedom Movement: with special reference to North West India: 1907-1930*, Writers Choice, New Delhi, 2014, pp-18.

⁵ *The Biography of Bhagat Singh, Complete Judgement and other documents*, Edited by S. Malwinder Singh Waraich, Dr. Gurdev Singh Sidhu, Unistar, Chandigarh, 2005, pp- 196

⁶ *Inqlab (Jeevni: Shaheed-i-Azam Bhagat Singh)*, Dr. Tejinder Virli, Tarak Bharti Prakashan, Barnala, 2010, pp.73

⁷ *Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan*, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 246

For instance, Rajguru who was to identify Scott and provide signal had never seen him before and he seems to have never disclosed to anyone.⁸ That is why he could not identify Scott who was not present in the office on that day and mistook J.P. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police as Scott. Before they could identify that he is not Scott, Saunders was killed by the shot from Rajguru. Bhagat Singh too put bullets to his body and then they escaped via DAV compound and hostel. W.J.C. Fern was forced to return, who had come out after hearing the sound bullets, by Chandra Shekhar Azad's cover fire. But Constable Charan Singh came out to the help of Saunders and followed the revolutionaries. He too was shot dead despite they never wanted to kill an Indian. Posters of Saunders's murder was placed at many places in Lahore. It declared, "Really it is terrible to imagine that so lowly and violent hand of an ordinary police Official, J.P. Saunders, could ever dare to touch in such an insulting way the body of one so old, so revered and so revered by 300 million people of Hindustan and thus caused his death....and let the world know that India still lives, that the blood of youths has not been totally cooled down and they can still risk their lives if the honor of their nation is at stake."⁹

There revolutionaries had thrown a challenge to the Britishers that the force with which they are now ruling is not going to be an effective instrument in the coming years. It was not for the first time a British official was killed, but the strange thing was that police could not chase, find and arrest them. Their escape from Lahore and journey up to Calcutta and then coming back made a mockery of British police and intelligence. One thing needs to be taken care of Bhagat Singh and his comrades that they were unknown suspects. Only clue that the police got was that it is the handiwork of the revolutionaries as claimed in HSRA posters.

Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, and Rajguru managed to reach Durga Bhabhi's home, which was under police surveillance. Durga Bhabhi played a key role in the escape. At that time Bhagwati Charan Vohra was away in Calcutta to attend Congress. Chandra Shekhar Azad escaped to Aligarh as a member of Bhajan Mandli, singing Bhajans. Police could not identify him. Durga Bhabhi also provided the money which Bhagwati Charan had given to her before leaving to Calcutta for home expenses. Sukhdev had informed that they would

⁸ Kuldeep Nayyar, Without fear, The Life and Trial of Bhagat Singh, Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2004, p. 29

⁹ Bhagat Singh aur Unke Sathion Ke Sampuran Unpublished Dastavej, Edited by Satyam Rahul Foundation, Lucknow, 2006, pp. 293.

leave Lahore via Dehradun Express. Bhagat Singh as 'Ranjit' and Durga Bhabhi as his wife 'Sujata', her three-year-old 'Sachin' as their child in the hands of her servant Rajguru. They reached Lahore railway station, which was turned into fortress as heavy police force was deployed. Without any problem, they were able to take their seats as first-class passengers. They became more and more relaxed as the train left the station and picked up the speed. They stayed for a day at Kanpur from where Durga Bhabhi informed Bhagwati Charan via telegram that she is reaching Calcutta along with her brother, indicating many things as she had no brother.¹⁰

During journey, Bhagat Singh shared many thoughts and events linked to persons like Bhimsen Sachar and Yashpal. Reaching Calcutta Bhagwati Charan met them at railway station. Their stay was arranged at Alipore at the residence of Chajjoram & his wife Lakshmi Devi, sympathisers of revolutionaries. At Calcutta, three things are important in context of Bhagat Singh. First, he adopted his new name 'Hari', wearing Bengali dresses and even started learning Bengali from B.K. Dutta. Secondly, the session of INC which he attended could not inflame any interest in him towards Congress. Rather he was more disillusioned. Thirdly, his interactions with the revolutionaries of Bengal, e.g., Prafulla Ganguli, Jyotish Ghosh, Trilokyanath Chakraborti, Phanindrao Bhattacharya, Jatindra Nath Das etc.¹¹ One can see a deep impact on his interactions with Bengal revolutionaries in future events in the life of Bhagat Singh and his compatriots. Bengal revolutionaries were not more convinced towards socialism than the ways and means of terrorism. Bhagat Singh was also able to closely understand the role of religion in politics and the secular character of revolutionary movement. Many Bengal revolutionaries were inspired by Hindu rites and rituals. Even the members of Anushilan Samiti in the beginning had to read the Gita. Bhagat Singh was also impressed by the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. "As he admired Ramatirtha from Punjab, Bhagat Singh also praised Swami Vivekananda from Bengal. He felt proud that the both men had earned fame for propagating the glory of Indian metaphysics abroad. He woefully noted that Vivekananda's mission had become a permanent institution in Bengal, while Ramatirtha did not have ever a memorial in Punjab."¹² He used to recite a verse of Swami Ramatirtha:

¹⁰ Bhagat Singh Par Chuninda Lekh, Edited M. M. Juneja, Modern publishers, 2007, pp. 77

¹¹ Kuldeep Nayar, Without fear, The Life and Trial of Bhagat Singh, Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2004, p. 44

¹² Ibid., pp. 46.

*" Hum ruskhe tukde khayange Bharat par ware jayange
Hum sukhe chane chabyange, Bharat ka Haal Batayange
Ham nange Umar bitayange, Bharat par jaan mitayange."¹³*

After coming from Calcutta, these revolutionaries gathered in Agra to make further plans. They were short of funds, in spite of financial support from some prominent leaders of that time, even from Congress and Govt. officials. They learned how to make bombs and interestingly, held discussions on each and every issue related to politics, economic or social. Till now police had failed to trace the killers of Saunders even after approximately ten months. Viceroy himself admitted in his conversation with Secretary of State who expressed his disappointment over dissatisfying progress of investigation of Saunders murder case. Revolutionaries minutely analysed their tactics and future course of action. As Congress was not posing any threat to the Britishers, so the revolutionaries soon started taking hard decisions. The government of British India tried to counter this by carrying out rigorous actions against known members of HSRA. But revolutionaries were continuing their activities with full enthusiasm. Chandra Shekhar Azad was still operating from various parts of the country and Bhagat Singh was in touch with him regularly.

In 1929, Bhagat Singh and his comrades decided to plan something big, something that would shake the very foundations of the British Raj in India. In this light, British government decided to introduce two bills - Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill. Former was aiming at the total control of British govt over the masses with stricter norms. Latter was against the trading force, putting more restrictions on trade unions for raising their demands. Revolutionaries were of firm opinion that these bills will further embolden the British government in forcefully suppressing the masses. Two things were making them impatient. One, even after five months, there was no major upheaval after the Saunders murder. People were happy and had support for the revolutionaries. It made them think and reanalyse their strategies. So they were seriously pondering to chart out plans to convince the masses about their programs and actions. Secondly, they were completely dissatisfied over the functioning of assembly framing such laws which suits only to govt do rule with fascist force. They wanted to use this platform to kill two birds with one stone, that is, to expose the evil designs of the govt by framing such laws and to justify their programs with strong argument so as people should not consider them as terrorists but revolutionaries.

¹³ Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 32

In a meeting of HSRA, it was unanimously decided that these bills should be exposed and public resentment should be put in more focus. Ultimately, they planned that two revolutionaries will throw a bomb in the assembly hall which will not hurt anyone. It will straightaway put a question in the minds of the people that why these young men risked their lives in which no British official was killed but only to mark their strong protest against the dictatorial rule of the British. Initially, B.K. Dutt and Ram Saran das were assigned the responsibility. Later was replaced with Bhagat Singh due to the motive to use court room to convey the message and the purpose of throwing bomb. Chandra Shekhar Azad was not in favour of this as he was sure that once caught Bhagat Singh would not be able to free again. Sukhdev argued, "We should use this action or platform to present our view point. So we should send those revolutionaries who can strongly present our views. He suggested that Bhagat Singh can do this better than any of us."¹⁴ Ultimately, it was decided that Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt would throw bombs from the public gallery without hurting anyone.

Two days before the assembly session on April 8, 1929, both visited assembly hall to plan how to throw the bombs. They entered wearing brownish-khaki shirts and shorts to the public gallery.¹⁵ Another member of the assembly gave them passes at the entrance and then disappeared. In the assembly hall were present Sir John Simon, Motilal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, N.C. Kelkar, and M.R. Jayakar.¹⁶ First bomb was thrown by Bhagat Singh and the second one by B.K. Dutt. Leaflets were thrown in the hall along with shouts of 'Inquilab Zindabad!' and 'Long live Revolution!'. The notice by HSRA, declared "It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear!" ..and let the government knew that, while protesting against the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill and the callous murder of Lala Lajpat Rai on behalf of the helpless Indian masses, we want to emphasize the lesson repeated by history that it is easy to kill individuals but you cannot kill the ideas...."We are attached to sanctity of human life. We dream of a glorious future where man will be enjoying peaceful peace and full liberty. We are pained over shedding human blood. But the sacrifice of the individuals at

¹⁴ Inq̄lab (Jeevni: Shaheed-i-Azam Bhagat Singh), Dr. Tejinder Virli, Tarak Bharti Prakashan, Barnala, 2010, pp.92

¹⁵ Yug Paltau Chintak Shaeed Bhagat Singh, Dr. Gurdev Singh Sidhu, Information and Public Relations department, Punjab, 2009, pp. 148

¹⁶ Kuldeep Nayyar, Without fear, The Life and Trial of Bhagat Singh, Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2004, p. 70.

the altar of the great revolution that will bring freedom to all, rendering the exploitation of man by man impossible, is inevitable."¹⁷

Though both Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt were standing calm to be arrested, but policemen were staying away from them, fearing that two may be having arms. Bhagat Singh handed over his pistol used to kill Saunders and it became the highest proof of his involvement in the Saunders case. Two were caught, searched, and handcuffed. Interestingly, Bhagat Singh was taken to the main police station while B.K. Dutt was taken to Chandni Chowk police station. Police might be expecting more violent actions in its continuity. Viceroy in his statement declared it as an act of attack on the institution of Central Assembly. Congress leader Chaman Lal, having an image of progressive leader was the first to condemn this act as an act of madness. Britishers were trying to connect this incident with that of Madan Lal Dhingra's killing of Sir William Curzon Wylie in the Central Hall.

The court proceedings were started on May 7, 1929. British crown was represented by Rai Bahadur Surya Narayanan. Magistrate was a Britisher P.B. Pool. Parents of Bhagat Singh were also present. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt entered the court with slogans 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Samraj Murdabad'. Next day they raised the slogans 'long live Revolution' and 'down with Imperialism!' The court framed the charges under section 307 of IPC and section 3 of the Explosive Substance Act 1888. Prosecutor alleged they fired shots which they denied again and again and were rather annoyed at this false allegation. They made a statement which was read by their advocate Asaf Ali, "... Our sole purpose was to make the deaf hear and give the heedless a timely warning... It was the only effective method of solving the great social problem of the times... None whose heart bleeds for them, who have given their life-blood in silence for the building up of the economic structure could repress the cry which this ruthless blow had wrung out of their hearts... The elimination of force at all costs is Utopian, and the new movement which has arisen in the country, and of that class we have given a warning, is inspired by the ideals which guided Guru Govind Singh, Shivaji, Kamal Pasha, Riza Khan, Washington, Garibaldi, Lafayette and Lenin... we mean the

¹⁷ Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 251

ultimate establishment of an order & society... is which a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of Capitalism and misery & imperial wars... " ¹⁸

However, the judge was convinced that what they have done once they will do twice. Though reluctant, Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt were persuaded to file appeal which was rejected & were sent to life imprisonment i.e. 14 years jail. At the same time, Bhagat Singh was charged with another case of killing of Saunders. Life sentence was kept in abeyance till the outcome of murder trial. Police was having a lot of evidence against Bhagat Singh. Many bombs, pistols and bomb factories were traced. Important point was that two of their team mates Jai Gopal and Hans Raj Vohra turned approvers. Bhagat Singh was sent to Mianwali Jail while B.K. Dutt to Borstal Jail in Lahore & were deported by train in different compartments on March 12, 1930.

Though both were kept in different jails but they managed to have close understanding regarding future course of actions. Perhaps they planned it much earlier knowing that they may not be meeting again. Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt chose the method of hunger strike to take the message of revolution among the masses. Issue taken was jail conditions regarding amenities provided to European and Indian prisoners. Even bare necessities are being denied to them. He wrote a letter on June 24, 1929, to Home member, Government of India demanding better diet, all books irrespective of prescribed, toilet necessities, daily newspaper etc. after he raised the issue, he was shifted to Lahore Jail. Hunger strike has the desired effect. Protests started all over the country. Newspapers were carrying daily health bulletin of the hunger strikers. Govt. tries to break the strike but in vain. Ultimately Govt. appointed Punjab Jail Enquiry Committee gave an undertaking for special diet and other facilities.

Trial started on July 10, 1929. Bhagat Singh's weight fell from 133 pounds to 119 pounds. Jatinder Nath Dass's condition too deetiolated. Though Jail committee recommended his release but Govt. put a condition of bail on release which he refused. Govt. argued that he was 'demanding that all the hunger strikers including the ones chargesheeted be released unconditionally.'¹⁹ After fast of 63 days, he died on September 13, 1929. Subhash Bose sent Rs. 600/- to transport his body from Lahore to Calcutta. Others too contributed. His death

¹⁸ Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 255-56.

¹⁹ Kuldeep Nayyar, Without fear, The Life and Trial of Bhagat Singh, Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2004, pp.94.

stunned everyone. Lacs of people joined his funeral procession. In Calcutta gathering was more than six lacs. The walls were filled with posters like 'Let my son be like Jatin Das.'²⁰ Viceroy's message to Secretary of state via telegram was, "the procession in Calcutta is stated to have been of record size and to have consisted of five lacs of people.... the crowd was undoubtedly enormous....Meetings of sympathy with Das and of condemnation of Govt. have been held at many places but no report has yet been received of any clash with authorities."²¹ Reactions came in the form of resignations also by Mohammed Alam, and Gopichand Bhargav. Moti Lal Nehru's censure motion was passed with majority vote in the Central Assembly.

However, it strengthened the resolve of Bhagat Singh and others to expose the fairness of Britishers. They adopted different strategies like not attending the courts, raising slogans only or singing patriotic songs only or will speak only what they wished to convey to the masses. Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt ended their hunger strike at the request of Congress party's resolution.

In the court, Hamilton Harding SSP, Lahore, filed the complaint alleging the hatching of conspiracy to wage war against the King. Govt. sanctioned the prosecution under Explosives Substances Act and sections 1221, 121A., 122 and 123 of the Penal code relating to sedition. Lahore Conspiracy case got publicity, not only in India but in other countries also. Many leaders and even a Raja of a small state in UP, Kalakankar, visited court on May 1, 1930. Case was transferred to a tribunal court set up by an ordinance by Viceroy Lord Irwin, and the case was shifted to a tribunal of three judges without the right to the accused to appeal except to Privy Council, for two reasons; seriousness of offences and conduct of the accused in the court. Bhagat Singh rejected the charges through this letter dated May 2, 1930, and claimed this ordinance as their victory. Three judges of the tribunal were Justice Cold Stream, Justice Agha Haider, and Justice G. C. Hilton. Bhagat Singh and his compatriots entered the court on May 5, singing '*Sarfroshi Ki Tamanna Ab Hamare dil Mein hai*' Regarding the issue whether they would like to be represented at the expense of the Crown, out of nine accused, five did not reply and four said yes (Des Raj, Prem Dutt, Ajay Kumar Ghosh, Jai Dev). Bhagat Singh and his five compatriots decided to boycott the court

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 96.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 96.

proceedings. In the statement presented in the court on May 5, 1930 they declared that this government is neither based on justice nor has any legal sanctity.²²

The court proceedings passed through many phases. When the tribunal passed unfair orders of not removing the handcuffs, the accused boycotted the proceedings and refused to come to court unless taken forcefully. This even led to replacement of two judges Cold Stream and Agha Khan with J. K. Topp and Abdul Qadir. Even though the accused were not taking part in the proceedings, still 457 witnesses were examined by public prosecutor including the approvers. Bhagat Singh's father submitted a petition on September 20, 1930 stating that Bhagat Singh was not in Lahore on the day of killing of Saunders. Bhagat Singh got angry and disowned the petition. Rajguru and Sunder Pandey were discharged while Case agent B.K. Dutt was withdrawn as he had already been assigned life imprisonment in Assembly Bomb Case. Bhagat Singh wrote to B. K. Dutt, "Those revolutionaries who have escaped the gallows should live and show to the world that they can not only embrace the gallows for their ideal but also bear the worst type of tortures in the dark dingy prison cells."²³

On October 7, 1930 final judgment was delivered. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were sentenced to death. It was a great shock to the people whose anger erupted in hartals and processions were held over the country. British govt. retaliated and even women and students were not spared. An appeal was sent to privy council but it was dismissed. Bhagat Singh Day was observed throughout the province of Punjab on Feb 17. There was partial bandh in Lahore, but all the colleges were affected.²⁴ A meeting of the Muslims of Lahore was held on February 27th in the Sheenawala Gate Mosque after the Jumma (Friday) prayers. It was decided to ask Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad to prevail upon Mahatma Gandhi to get the Sentence commuted by the Viceroy. Subhash Bose appealed from public meetings at Delhi to commute the death sentence. Now only hope was Mahatma Gandhi who tried within the domain of principle of non-violence, through interaction and conversation with Viceroy, orally as well as via letters but in vain.

²² Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 305.

²³ Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 319.

²⁴ Role of Revolutionaries in India's Freedom movement with special reference to North-West India: 1907-1930, Dr. Kuldeep Kaur Dhaliwal, Writers Choice, New Delhi, 2014, pp 189

Bhagat Singh in his last letter to Kultar, wrote, "Dear Kultar I was deeply grieved to see tears in your eyes, your tears were full of pain, I cannot bear your tears. Darling go on pursuing your studies, with determination and take care of your health. Don't lose heart."

'Meri Hawa mei Rahenge Khayal Ki Bijli,

Yeh Musht-e-Khaq hai Fani rahe na rahe

Chirag-e-sehar hun bhuja chalata hun,

*... Khush Raho Ahle Watan, Hum to Safar Karte Hain....*²⁵

Bhagat Singh knew that his end is certain and was convinced that now at that time his death will be more beneficial than long life and he shared this in one of his letters. On March 23, 1931, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were hanged in the early morning hours a day before the day of execution and their bodies were taken to Hussainwala and attempts were made to cremate them without prior information. There was a day of national mourning. Pt. J. L. Nehru was the first one to pay tribute to the martyred heroes and his companions. Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Bhagat Singh and his compatriots have been executed and have become martyrs, their deaths seem to have been a personal loss to many. Many attempts were made to save their lives but it was all in vain."²⁶

However, the general mood of the public was full of anger. Even in the Congress session at Karachi on March 29, 1931, there was disappointment among the delegates especially youth who were feeling that not enough had been done to save their lives. Every speaker tried to address their feelings but the temper was very high. Ultimately a resolution was adopted admiring their bravery and sacrifice but disassociating from the political violence of any kind.

The execution of Bhagat Singh and his fellow beings also put an end to the terror revolutionary terrorism. Henceforth except a few bomb blasts, all organised terrorist activities ended. Though already in an article "The philosophy of the Bomb", Bhagat Singh and his comrades had clarified, "Terrorism is a phase, a necessary and inevitable phase, in the phase of the complete revolution and the revolution is not complete without terrorism."²⁷ Later he even declared that he was never a terrorist. Bhagat Singh further clarified that "By revolution

²⁵ Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ate Unnan De Sathian Dian Hast Likhtan, Editor, Jagmohan Singh, Chetna Prakashan, Ludhiana, 2005, pp. 320.

²⁶ Kuldeep Nayyar, Without fear, The Life and Trial of Bhagat Singh, Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2004, p. 172

²⁷ Shaheed-i- Azam Bhagat Singh, The Man and his Philosophy, G. S. Deol, Deep publications, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 125

we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society which may not be threatened by such breakdown and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognized and a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and misery of imperial wars. For the success of this faith, we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned..."²⁸

Revolutionaries did not hesitate for supreme sacrifice. They were ready to die for the country's liberty. They were dreaming of new India and new era based on the principles of freedom and socialism, independent republic of the labourers and peasants & the whole of India. Bhagat Singh said, "To win the country's freedom, we have to embark upon big projects. The country is to be made free and after freedom a new India is to be built up. Palatial buildings are to be constructed in place of huts. The naked and hungry are to be provided with food and clothing."²⁹ The concept of revolution should not be taken into consideration from the police point of view i.e. the armed rebellion. If any party has the scope of less expensive and comparatively safer measures and even then it adopts the methods of rebellion then it will be called as madness only.³⁰

Conclusions:

Bhagat Singh and his compatriots were chief architects of revolutionary movement in India. Though their activities spread over a few years only, they were able to infuse a new life among the people of all streams in their struggle for freedom. With their ideas and will to sacrifice everything for the motherland, they convinced the people that freedom will be reality one day. They were not extremists but were dynamic and vibrant revolutionaries. On one side they took revenge of the murder of national leader as matter of self respect, on the other hand they excellently used the weapon of hunger strike to compel the British govt. to accept their genuine demands. The legacy of Bhagat Singh remains strong to this day. His ideas of revolution, his sacrifice, and his courage continue to inspire millions of people. He remains a symbol of resistance against oppression and a beacon of hope for those who seek justice and freedom.

²⁸ An encyclopaedia of Eminent Thinkers, The Political Thought of Bhagat Singh, Ashu Pasricha, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2000, pp 54

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 76

³⁰ Bhagat Singh Di Jail Diary, S. Kulbir Singh Memorial Foundation, Punjab, pp. 91