ARUNA ASAF ALI

During the time period of freedom struggle a prominent freedom fighter had emerged In mid 20th centuary which popularly known as Aruna Asaf Ali. She was also known by her other name 'Grand Old Lady of Indian Independence ' for her pragmatic role in the freedom struggle

**EARLY LIFE OF ARUNA ASAF ALI**

Aruna Asaf Ali was born in 16 July 1909 at the Kalka district of Punjab which is a part of haryana state now .Her real name was Aruna Ganguly .Her mother Ambika Devi was daughter of Trailokyanath Sanyal who was a prominent leader of Brahmo Samaj . Her father was Upendranath Ganguly

Aruna completed her education at Sacred Heart Convent in Lahore and All Saints College in Nainital. When she worked as a teacher at Gokhale Memorial School in Calcutta where she met Asaf Ali who was a prominent leader Indian National Congress. Despite having strong opposition in her family she married Asaf Ali

**ROLE OF ARUNA ASAF ALI IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE**

Participation of Aruna Asaf Ali was seen in a number of public processions during Gandhiji's famous Salt Satyagraha and she was also arrested a number of time.

After Gandhi Irwin's pact despite of promised release of political prisoners, she was still not released in 1931. However, the agitation by many freedom fighters, and women and the direct intervention of Gandhiji ensured Aruna's release at a later date.

During her judicial custody at Tihar Jail, she protested against the severe and disgusting treatment of political prisoners by authority and launched a hunger strike in support of political prisoners. However, as a result of it, she was shifted to Ambala and placed in Solitary Confinement

After her release from jail, she was not politically active till 1942 and she became an active member of the Underground movement

**Contribution to the Quit India Movement**

With the enactment of the Quit India Resolution on August 8, 1942, by the All India Congress Committee. As a precautionary measure, the British government arrested many mainstream leaders in a single sweep. Despite the arrest of mainstream leader, Aruna Asaf Ali led the flag of Congress and unfurled it at Gowalia Tank Maidan which started the beginning of the Quit India Movement

To control the situation British Government used violent methods to stop the movement. Police were ordered to shoot the protestant but Aruna Asaf Ali stood her ground in the face of danger which made her popular as The Grand Old Lady of the Independence movement. The lack of senior leadership led the movement to distract from its aims and as a result protests and demonstrations broke out throughout the country.

An arrest Warrant was issued in her name and the British Government awarded a bounty over her head of rupees 5000 but she went underground and active in the underground movement. She started editing the magazine Inquilab, which influenced the youth to become a part of active revolution, not passive activism. In 1946 when the British Government fell to their knees, the Arrest Warrant in her name was withdrawn

**Aftermath**

After the Independence Aruna's belief shifted to Communism which is visible through her participation in the Congress Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India in the 1950s, National Federation of Indian Women (the women's wings of CPI but left the party in 1956 ). In 1958 she was elected as first mayor of Delhi. She died at the age of 87 on 29 July 1996