CHAPTER – I

A BRIEF PROFILE OF SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE-

THE INDIAN NATIONAL HERO

Subhas Chandra Bose, son of Janaki Nath Bose, was born in Oriya Bazar, Cuttack in Orissa on Saturday, the 23rd January 1897. This was the year when the might of the British Empire seemed to be at its height and Queen Victoria was celebrating her Diamond Jubilee. The history of the Boses traces back twenty-seven generations and they originate from the Kshatrias (the warrior class) of Mahinagar, fourteen miles south of Calcutta.¹ Mahipati Bose, the eleventh generation of Dasaratha, the founder of the Boses, was the Minister of Finance and War during the Muslim rule. Mahipati’s grandson, Gopi Nath Bose was appointed the Finance Minister and Naval Commander for his great ability and prowess during the reign of Sultan Hussain Shah of Bengal (1493 A.D. to 1519 A.D.). In the later part of the 19th century, Janaki
Nath Bose, 26th descendant, migrated to Cuttack\(^2\) Orissa and settled there as a lawyer.

Subhas Chandra Bose, who was a Hindu by religion, was also an admirer of the liberal teachings of Brahmo reformers and non-conformist Christians. He was the sixth son and the ninth child in the family. He was much closer to his mother, Prabhabati Devi, who, in spite of having no formal education, was instrumental in guiding the education of her children.

At the age of five, Subhas Chandra was sent to the Protestant European School run by the Baptist Mission in Cuttack. This school, where mainly European children of the town studied with a sprinkling of Indians, was an English medium school. No Indian language was taught there. Moreover, the European children were, if not racists, certainly arrogant and looked down upon ‘natives’ like Subhas Chandra Bose. Though very good at studies, he spent seven years in this school and said good-bye to it ‘without any regret.’ Many years later, in his unfinished autobiography,\(^3\) *An
Indian Pilgrim, referring to this period, Subhas Chandra wrote, that he lived in two worlds.

Recognizing his son’s intellect, Subhas Chandra’s father was determined that Bose should become a high-ranking civil servant. After leaving the Protestant European School, he went to study in the Ravenshaw Collegiate School in Cuttack and secured second position in his Matriculation examination. Bose later joined the Peresidency College, Calcutta from where he was rusticated due to giving lead to a students’ strike which was organized against Professor Oten’s abusive comments and physical assault to a native student of the College. Afterward, Bose graduated with Honours with flying colours from the Scottish Church College, Calcutta, securing first division with second position (in Philosophy) in the whole University. He also won the Pratap Chandra Majumdar Medal and the Philip Samuel Smith and William Smith Prizes. He was placed second in his University examination. Bose participated as a member of the India Defence Corps, then a newly formed military training unit at the University
of Calcutta. Afterwards, he travelled to England and attended Fitzwilliam Hall at the University of Cambridge.

At Cambridge Bose had an unusually large number of lectures to attend. The subjects for his Civil Service Examination were: English Composition, Sanskrit, Philosophy, English Law, Political Science, Modern European History, English History, Economics and Geography. Early in July 1920, eight months after he joined Cambridge University, Subhas Chandra sat for the Civil Service Open Competition in London and though he had worked hard, he was not very hopeful. To his surprise, however, he was not only successful in the examination, but came out fourth.

However, he resigned from that prestigious Service in April, 1921 and became an active member of India’s independence movement.

Bose soon settled down in Calcutta and began to take stock of the situation in the country. Unparalled enthusiasm throughout
the land had given a fair chance for the success of the “triple boycott” of foreign clothes, legislatures and courts and educational institutions. While certain intellectual elements, including the Indian liberals opposed the non-cooperation movement, and the Revolutionary Party opposed the cult of non-violence. Government announced that the Prince of Wales would visit India and land in Bombay in November. The Congress High Command immediately decided on a boycott of the visit. The boycott was so complete in Calcutta that the Bengal Government was goaded by the British-owned newspapers to declare Congress volunteers to be illegal. Thousands of students and factory workers began to enlist as volunteers and two big prisons in the city were filled with political prisoners: Bose had already become a member of the Congress and been placed in charge of this campaign. The Government resorted to drastic action to stem the growing tide of defiance and ordered the arrest of Deshbandhu Das and his close associates, including Subhas Chandra Bose; by the evening of December 10, 1921, they found themselves in prison. This was the first time in his political career that Bose was arrested by the British; by the time he disappeared from his home in 1941, that is, within a space of
twenty years, the British detained him as a political prisoner no fewer than eleven times.\textsuperscript{10}

Subhas Chandra Bose was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation in March, 1924.\textsuperscript{11} For the first time the people began to feel that municipal officers and employees were public servants and not mere bureaucrats. For himself, Subhas Bose had accepted Rs. 1,500 per month as salary, instead of Rs. 3,000 per month attached to the post of Chief Executive Officer. The heavy responsibilities of his office absorbed all his time and attention, and yet he was arrested along with a number of other Congressmen in October in a desperate attempt by the British rulers ostensibly to scotch a revolutionary conspiracy but actually to stem the rising tide of \textit{Swaraj} Party’s (Bose’s political mentor, Chittaranjan Das’ Party) popularity throughout the country. The agitation over the arrest of Subhas Bose was the strongest as the public thought that the real object of the Government was to strike at the Swarajist administration of the Corporation. He was first lodged in jails in Bengal and then
removed to the Manadalay jail in Burma, which was then administratively attached to India. Bose remained in Mandalay for nearly two-and-a-half years till he was brought back to Bengal in May 1927 and released on health grounds. During his detention in Mandalay, Bose went on a six-week hunger strike as a protest against the British authorities’ refusal to facilitate the observance of religious ceremonies such as *Durga Puja*, which is the most important festival of the year for any Bengali.

Thereafter, Subhas Chandra became the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. At the historic session of the Calcutta Congress (1928), Bose worked as the Commanding Officer of the Congress Volunteer Corps. It was at the same session that Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru spearheaded the move for complete independence of India. Subhas Chandra Bose became President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in 1929 and he was elected as President of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1929. Bose became Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, the following year (1930). Bose was arrested for
the third time under the Regulation III Act of 1818. In jail, his health deteriorated so seriously that Bose was released on health grounds and immediately went to Europe for treatment. While in Europe, he made contacts with different European personalities who sympathised with the Indian liberation movement.\textsuperscript{15}

During his stay in Europe from 1933 to 1936, Bose met several European leaders and thinkers, including Benito Mussolini, Eduard Benes, Karl Seitz, Eamon de Valera, Romain Rolland and Alfred Rosenberg.\textsuperscript{16}

He came to believe that India could achieve political freedom only if it had political, military and diplomatic support from outside and that an independent nation necessitated the creation of a national army to secure its sovereignty. Subhas Chandra Bose was unanimously elected President\textsuperscript{17} of 51\textsuperscript{st} Indian National Congress in 1938, and was re-elected the following year. But soon he became alienated from the core Congress leadership due to his militant stand and opted to resign his Presidency in 29\textsuperscript{th} April 1939. To promote his political views, Bose founded the
‘Forward Bloc’ (03/05/1939) within the Congress in the same year, and tried to consolidate the revolutionary forces of India in general and of Bengal in particular.¹⁸

Subhas Chandra supported the Axis powers in the Second World War (1939-1945). The Congress Working Committee took disciplinary action against him for criticising the Congress Ministries formed in seven provinces after the election of 1937. He arranged an Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh, Bihar in 19⁹ March 1940 under the joint auspices of the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha.¹⁹ It was under his leadership that the Nagpur Session of the All India Forward Bloc, held in June 1940, placed the demand for the establishment of a Provisional National Government in India. In 2⁰ July 1940 Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested in connection with his involvement in the movement for the removal of the Holwell Monument in Calcutta. While in jail, he went on hunger strike and was released in December 1940. Over a span of 20 years, Bose was incarcerated eleven times by the British, either in India or in Burma (now in Myanmar).
In the mid-night of January 16, 1941, Bose secretly and mysteriously left Calcutta, popularly known as his ‘Great Escape’, crossed the border of India through the Northwestern Frontier and entered Russia through Kabul. After his arrival in Berlin on 2 April 1941, Bose enlisted German support to organize anti-British movements. He formed Indian Independence League on 9.12.1941 and began to propagate his ideas through regular broadcasts from Berlin. From Germany Bose also made contacts with Japan. Backed by the Governments of both Germany and Japan, he started his voyage from Kiel port of Germany to Singapore in a submarine and reached there on July 2, 1943.

The Indian prisoners-of-war, held by the Japanese, showed tremendous enthusiasm on Bose’s arrival in Singapore. Meanwhile, Rashbehari Bose, an old Indian revolutionary in Japan, organized the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia and formed the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army). Rash Behari Bose (THE REAL FORGOTTEN HERO in the Indian struggle for independence. After various patriotic revolutionary
activities in India, he had escaped to Japan in disguise after First World War and he breathed his last there on 21st January, 1945 as Advisor of the Provincial Govt. of Azad Hind.) formally handed over the charge of the INA to Subhas Chandra Bose, who became its Commander-in-Chief on 25th August 1943 and declared the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind on 21st October of the same year. Bose’s Azad Hind Government was internationally recognized by various independent nations. He transferred the headquarters of the INA to Rangoon in January 1944. From Rangoon, Bose conducted military operations against the British forces on the Burma borders and began his onward march towards India. He captured two of the British outposts on the way towards Imphal and Kohima in 18th March 1944 and the flag of free India was hoisted.

Owing to the natural calamities in the hills of Kohima and Nagaland and also the change of War scenario due to the surrender of Japan after the atomic explosion in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Bose’s Indian National Army (I.N.A.) had to make a glorious retreat and it was reported by a news agency that Bose died in an
air-crash at Taiwan Airport\textsuperscript{28} on 18\textsuperscript{th} August, 1945. However, after conduction of a number of investigations and enquiry procedures by the Anglo-American secret agencies and later on by the Government of India, which conducted enquiry for three times, it has been proved by the last investigation that Bose had not died in the alleged air-crash and that he had maneuvered his so-called 'Death Story'\textsuperscript{29} to delude the Anglo-American forces.

Bose had a special aptitude towards journalism and he was a strong mass communicator during those days. At different times, he took off time to edit and organize newspapers, journals, magazines and authored a number of books, both in Vernacular and in English. He wrote many thought provoking articles in different journals in India and abroad. During his I.N.A. phase, Bose had established a number of Radio stations in Berlin, Huizen, Podiebrad, some secret places of Europe and in Souh-East Asia, namely Singapore, Bangkok, Saigon, Rangoon, Tokyo and many local broadcasting stations were also set up in Malaya, Thailand, Burma, Indo-China, Japan.\textsuperscript{30} First broadcast \textsuperscript{31} to the world over
Azad Hind Radio on February 19, 1942 from Europe was as follows:

"STANDING at one of the crossroads of world history, I solemnly declare on behalf of all freedom-loving Indians in India and abroad that we shall continue to fight British Imperialism till India is once again the mistress of her own destiny... I am confident that in this sacred struggle, the vast majority of the Indian people will be with us. No manoeuvre, intrigue or conspiracy on the part of the agents of Anglo-American Imperialism, however prominent they may be and to whichever nationality they may belong, can throw dust in the eyes of the Indian people or swerve them from the path of patriotic duty. The hour of India's salvation is at hand. India will now rise and break the chains of servitude that have bound her so long. Through India's liberation will Asia and the world move forward towards the larger goal of human emancipation." Bose's Provisional Azad Hind Government had a well-organized Department of Publicity, Press & Broadcasting, as follows:32
In Europe and East Asia, Subhas Chandra Bose was greatly honoured and called Netaji (respected leader) by his admirers and followers and from then onwards till this time Bose is revered and called as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
NOTES & REFERENCES


2. Ibid p.8.

3. Ibid p.52

4. Ibid p.57

5. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, October, 1962; p.8

6. Ibid. p.9

7. Ibid. p.9

8. Ibid. p.10

9. Ibid p.10

10. Ibid p.13

11. Ibid. p.14

12. Ibid. p.14

13. Ibid. p.15


17. Mukherjee Dr. Girija- Builder of Modern India- Subhas Chandra Bose; Publications Division, Govt. of India; p.26

19. Ibid. p.30

20. A short history of All India Forward Bloc, editor-Ashoke Ghosh, Dr. Rathin Chakroborty, published by All India Forward Bloc, 2nd edition, New Delhi, 2005. p.31


22. NETAJI A centenary tribute from Bengal Locomat Printers, edited by Dr. Rathin Chakraborty and Tandra Chakraborty, 8 December, 1995, Calcutta. p.47


24. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, October, 1962; p.20

25. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, October, 1962; p.21


