

## Topic Page: [Naidu, Sarojini, 1879–1949](#)

Summary Article: **Naidu, Sarojini (1879–1949)**

From *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society*

Sarojini Naidu, born on February 13, 1879, in Hyderabad, India, was the eldest daughter of Aghornath Chattopadhyaya, a scientist-philosopher, and mother Varasundari, a Bengali poetess. Naidu became a national celebrity for entering Madras University at the age of 12. She later traveled to England, studying at both King's College London and Girton College, Cambridge. She returned to Hyderabad in 1898, and her intercaste marriage at the age of 19 to Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu was both groundbreaking and scandalous. Married by the Brahma Marriage Act of 1872, they were happily wed and throughout the course of their marriage had four children, Jayasurya, Padmaja, Randheer, and Leelamani.

Naidu has been highly praised for her poetry. Her first publication in 1905 was a collection of poems titled *Golden Threshold*. Her later publications include *The Bird of Time*, *The Broken Wings*, *The Magic Tree*, *The Wizard Mask*, and *A Treasury of Poems*. Naidu's poetry used such beautiful prose that it could also be sung, a key trademark of her writing. In addition to crafting vibrant imagery through her artistic use of the written word, her poetry served to revitalize the determination of her fellow Indians in the quest for freedom.

Naidu is well-known for her involvement in the freedom struggle and for being established as a strong proponent of women's rights. Her journey began after meeting Mahatma Gandhi in 1916. She had extreme enthusiasm for her work and focused on a quest to awaken confidence in all women. Over the years, she lectured throughout India. In 1919, Naidu was the Home Rule League's ambassador to England and in 1924, she was one of two Indian National Congress delegates at the East African Indian Congress.

Naidu brought Gandhi's message of nonviolence to the United States in 1928. Her arrest during the "Quit India" protest of 1942 kept her in jail for 21 months. Following independence, she became the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, on August 15, 1947, the first female governor in India. Naidu was in office when she passed away at age 70, on March 2, 1949. Her birthday is recognized as "Women's Day," resulting from her status as one of the most influential and famous female heroines of the 20th century.

### *See also*

Asaf Ali, Aruna; Gandhi, Indira Priyadarshini Nehru; Ramabai, Pandita

### **Further Readings**

- Gupta, I. (2003). *India's 50 most illustrious women*. New Delhi, India: Icon.
- Sengupta, P. (1966). *Sarojini Naidu: A biography*. New York: Asia Publishing House.

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### **APA**

Chicago

Harvard

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## APA

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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