



The mutiny of 1857 is considered as India's first battle of Independence. But two years before that, on June 30, 1855, another uprising took place. It was fought by the Santhal tribals for their rights, and it is in their honour that the area of Jharkhand is now called Santhal Pargana. In Santhali language Hool means 'rebellion' and June 30 is celebrated every year as Hool Diwas in commemoration of the 1855 rebellion.

It is ironical that the Santhal rebellion, which Karl Marx had referred to as India's first organised 'mass revolution' in his book *Notes on Indian History*, is almost forgotten.

Therefore, this series of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav will focus on the Santhal rebellion and its heroes, four brothers Siddho, Kanhu, Chand, Bhairav and their two sisters, Phulo and Jhano, remembering whom Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said, "The courage and valour with which the Hool rebellion was led by many brave heroes, including Siddho-Kanhu, Chand-Bhairav and Phool-Jhano, had caused a stir in the British rule. Thousands of tribals lost their lives in this revolt, but they did not bow down to injustice".

Hool Diwas: June 30

The Beginning of Mass Rebellion for Freedom

India's freedom from more than 200-year-old British shackles did not come easily.

There was a long struggle behind it, the innumerable sacrifices in which a lot of blood was shed. There are many whose names were written in golden letters, while many others who were buried under the pages of history, and whose heroic tales, when told, will leave the people awestruck

**Siddho, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav:
Whose heroic tales were mentioned
by British historians**

Jharkhand is rich in minerals and forest wealth. It was 1855, the area was then under the Bengal Presidency. Tribals lived in this inaccessible part of Jharkhand. Entire trade during those days was based on barter system. When East India Company came here, it started collecting tax in cash. When the gullible tribals, who depended on the money lenders for money, were unable to repay loans, their land were confiscated and auctioned to the private landlords. The four brothers Siddho, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav raised their voices against this exploitation by the British. Information was conveyed to all nearby villages. About 60,000 tribal youth are believed to have gathered in Panchkathia on the night of June 30 with traditional weapons such as bow-arrow, sickle and spears. They took a

Sisters- Phulo and Jhano

Two sisters were also involved in the Santhal rebellion- Phulo and Jhano. The lines of a Santhali language song are: *Phulo Jhano Aam Do Tir Re Talrar Rem Sakida*



Meaning Phulo, Jhano you have taken up arms. It is said that taking advantage of the darkness, these two sisters entered the British camp in Sangrampur near Pakur, and killed 21 British soldiers with their axe. Both the sisters were martyred during this struggle, but they left behind an immortal tale of bravery. Phulo and Jhano fought against the British alongside their brothers Siddho, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav. While the brothers' leadership encouraged the rebellion, the two sisters worked to spread the cause of the rebellion among the masses. They

travelled far and wide to spread the message of the rebellion and make people aware about its need and importance. The two brave sisters spread the rebellion from Bhognadih village to the surrounding areas, and it eventually reached Kolkata, the headquarters of the East India Company. Phulo and Jhano are still remembered with respect in Santhali folk songs and stories. It is said '*Aam Do Lattu Bodhya Khoalhare Bahaduri Udukeda*', that is, you grew up to be braver than your older brothers.

resolve to free themselves from exploitation. The news of the uprising spread like wildfire all over the region and it escalated to a large scale war. Apart from the Pakur division of Jharkhand, Murshidabad and Purulia areas of Bengal also came under its influence. However, Chand and Bhairav were killed on July 9. On the night of July 26, 1855, when Siddho-Kanhu came to their village to discuss the future strategy, the British soldiers suddenly attacked and arrested them. They are said to have been tied to a

horse, dragged to Panchkathia and hanged from a tree. The Santhal rebellion was brutally suppressed by the British supposedly killing about 20,000 tribals. The tribals sacrificed their lives while shouting slogans such as- 'My rule', 'Do or Die', 'British, Leave Our Soil' and 'It is Our Farms'. British historian William Wilson Hunter wrote in his book *The Annals of Rural Bengal* that there was not a single soldier of the British army who was not ashamed of the killing of the tribals. ■