



Sri Aurobindo National History Essay Competition 2025-26



Agrim Sinha

Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi

GRADE 7
FIRST PRIZE

Chosen Freedom Fighter: Sheikh Bhikhari

Sheikh Bhikhari: The Hero Who Got Lost in the History of 1857

The history of the world sees often those heroes who were not recognized properly during their time of life and Sheikh Bhikhari is one of them. He was born in 1819 in the villages of Lotwa-Khudia of the Ranchi district. Bhikhari was even 38 years at the time of the great revolt of 1857. So, he was already a local leader by then who had a sharp eye and was very loyal to his motherland.

When the revolt burst, Bhikhari did not delay in his response lot. He was the one who supported Tikait Umrao Singh and other heroes in the fight. They were hunted hard by the British but they could not trap them in the hills of Ranchi — Bhikhari was the reason for it. He did not stop at just organizing ambushes leading guerrilla raids and staying vigilant. He led the way and got the action going. Finally, British convicts apprehended and executed him. In that moment, he became a martyr. People talk about his sacrifice in Jharkhand but not many know beyond the spirituality.

The life story of Bhikhari is one of the examples of absolute love for one's country courage to defend it, one's community, and rights in the most difficult time of the life. While d most narrations are about personalities Bhikhari proves that neither famous people nor leaders were the sons of the independence movement in India but farmers, tribals and common villagers were the real heroes. The journey of Bhikhari proves that love for one's country does not necessarily mean that a person will get famous. Sometimes courage means putting everything at risk without anyone watching.

His story really resonates with the youth of Jharkhand as he was hardly older than them when he made a decision to revolt. Think of Birsa Munda-Jharkhand supports him with festivals, museums, and Janjatiya Gaurav Divas. Why should Bhikhari be less acknowledged? The story of his life is one of those traditions that the students must learn to accept that Jharkhand is full of heroes while the rest of India hardly recognize.

Are we able to remember the story of Sheikh Bhikhari? First of all, bring his story into areas. Students will be more willing if they have to draw his picture, perform a play on his life, or write an essay about his values. That is how history comes to life.

What if we committed a day to him- Sheik Bhikhari Divas? Let the days be filled with celebrations, parades, and street performances celebrating courage and sacrifice.

It would be equally, if not more, significant to create a museum or a memorial that bears his name- like the Birsa Munda museum, in Ranchi- having his stories, pictures, and videos that give the visitors a chance to really get to know him.

Why don't we have youth groups such as NCC, NSS, or any other youth organizations that carry out community service activities in honour of Bhikaris? They can plant trees, clean areas, and help the needy. Associate all these activities with Bhikaris dedication to courage and service. But in truth, it isn't about flowers and monuments. It is about living like he did- standing for what is right, staying united, and showing courage. That is the tribute.

According to Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo, freedom meant much more than just getting rid of British rule. He was more concerned with building the nation on the basis of truth, love, and real courage i.e. Sanatan Dharma.

He believed that three things were the most important: First, a nation should be based on strong morals. Second, every person should grow- not just academically but also in self-discipline and morals. And third, education is not only for tests; it should develop a person (physically, mentally, and spiritually) Bhikhari is that figure. He never asked for fame. He fought for justice bravely and responsibly- just like Aurobindo advised.

Just talking is not enough if the intention is to honour Sheikh Bhikhari. Schools can hold lectures where students are introduced to his life and get an insight into Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of responsibility and nation-building. Participation in such events in terms of characters, dances and speeches will bring to life Bhikhari's existence and emphasize the importance of his example. Lastly, Bhikhari is not a story to be remembered but lived. His courage, honesty, and instinct can be the source of inspiration for a whole new generation. That is the way you keep a hero's legacy not by just words but through actual deeds.



Sri Aurobindo National History Essay Competition 2025-26



Suvigya Tandon

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GRADE 7
SECOND PRIZE

Chosen Freedom Fighter: Nanki Devi

Freedom is never the work of one person; it is the result of the sacrifices of many.”

The freedom struggle is not led by a single person but by collective efforts of millions of people who come together to raise their voice and fight for it. A prominent example is of the freedom struggle in India against the Britishers, people from all castes, genders, creeds, religions had gathered together with one aim of Free India. There are personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh and many more who are familiar with people but there are also some lesser known freedom fighters who have played very crucial roles. One such name is Nanki Devi from Delhi. She proves that women also have the right to raise their voice and fight for freedom.

In the early 20th century there were many mass movements by the Indians against the Britishers which included movements like - Swadeshi Movement, Non - Cooperation movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, Quit India Movement and Home Rule Movement.

During this time, the involvement of women in national activities increased despite the stereotypes against women and the restrictions for them.

She had played an active role during the Civil Disobedience Movement. She had put multiple efforts at the grassroots level. She took the charge and played a vital role in the freedom struggle, locally in Delhi rather than holding leadership positions at the national level. She participated in non - violent protests against the Britishers. She mobilised women and communities to support the freedom fighters. She encouraged people to boycott foreign goods and move to the Indian alternatives - Swadeshi Apnao

She played the role of a messenger between the local level and the prominent leaders. They provided moral support and brought people together at the local level. Everyone became united and silent sacrifices like those of her are not documented but are of great significance. "Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land."

She had done all this despite the social barriers and restrictions on women at that time. There was also a risk of arrest, harassment and punishment by the British authorities but she gave up her comfort and safety and decided to take a part in the freedom struggle. Her life represents dedication, courage and discipline rather than fame. This also tells us that she was also very patriotic and a nationalist figure who wrecked day and night for freedom. The stories of these unsung heroes are not found in textbooks but were very crucial.

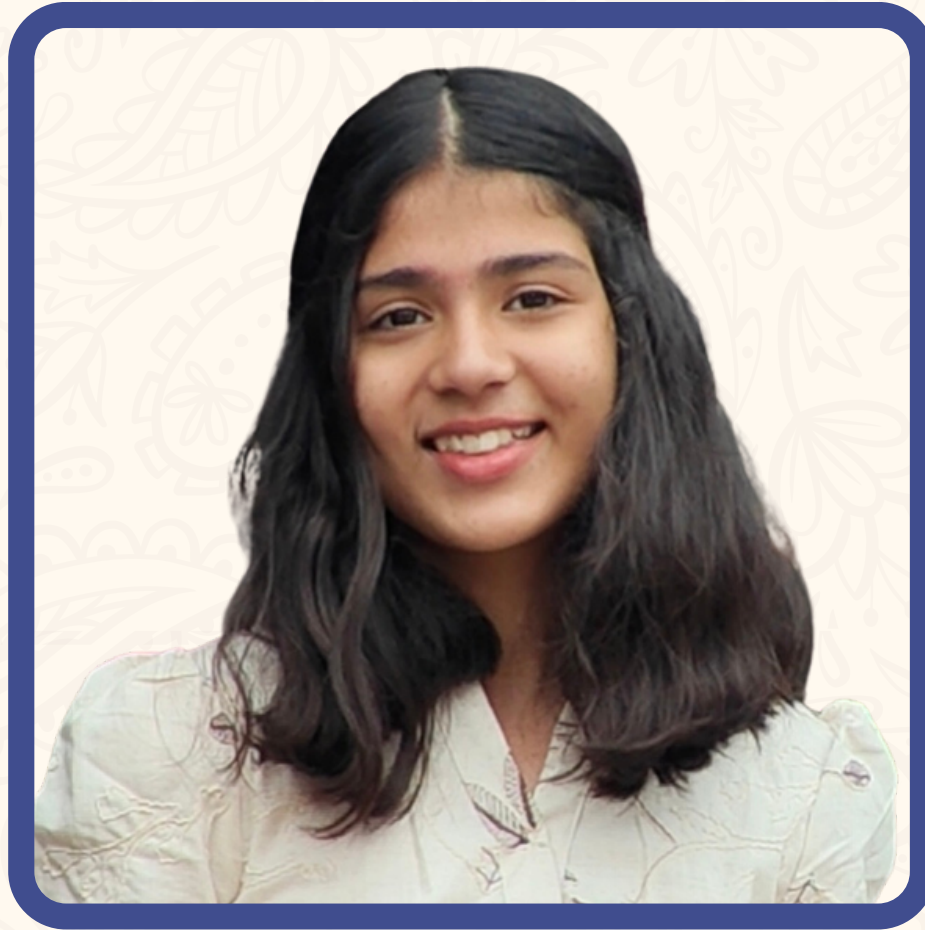
Today, it is very important to celebrate the sacrifices and efforts of these freedom fighters rather than just the prominent ones who have always been there in our textbooks and the documented historical sources. This also illuminates the spirit of patriotism in ourselves. It also teaches us about the courageous and fearless stories of the great personalities. Now, we know that there are also many unsung heroes of our country, so it is of paramount importance to educate people about them.

We can inform people about them by incorporating their stories and tales in the school curriculum system, this will teach children and educate them. There can be essay or poem writing, drawing competitions on the National festivals. There should be exhibitions set up about the local heroes in their birthplaces. The government can launch magazines and newspapers in their name. There can be public places like parks, gardens, metro stations, or airports named after them. We can celebrate the birth and martyrdom days of such personalities. There can be Nukkud Nataks (Street Plays), storytelling competitions and theatre performances teaching about the lives of these famous personalities. There can be light and sound shows in monuments about freedom fighters and India's freedom struggle. Museums can be built up by the government. Similar to how two states are paired in the EBSB Initiative each year, there can also be a freedom fighter given to the students of each state every year. Like this, students can prepare presentations and make projects about the freedom fighters. After all, with the collective efforts of the government along with the citizens of India we can preserve the stories of freedom fighters like that of Nanki Devi.

Ultimately, the story of Nanki Devi is the story of India's moral backbone. Our responsibility now is to move these names from the shadows into our collective memory. Recognizing her legacy isn't just about the past; it's about inspiring a better future.



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Anvi Udainiya

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GRADE 7

SPECIAL MENTION FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH

Chosen Freedom Fighter: Rao Tula Ram

RAO TULA RAM
THE LION OF HARYANA
How Tula Ram Shook the British Empire

When we think of the great revolt of 1857, our minds often go to the battlefields of Jhansi or the streets of Delhi. However, hidden in the heart of Haryana is the thrilling story of a king who didn't just fight with swords, but also with a brilliant mind and a global vision. This hero was RAO TULA RAM, the "Lion of Haryana." His life reads like an action movie, filled with daring captures, secret weapon factories, and a dangerous journey across the world to save his motherland.

Rao Tula Ram was born on December 9, 1825, in the village of Rampura located on the outskirts of REWARI in Haryana. He wasn't just a typical prince; he was an incredibly bright student who mastered languages like PERSIAN and ENGLISH. When he became the King of Rewari at a young age, nobody knew that this studious young man would become the biggest nightmare for the British in South-West Haryana.

The real excitement began in May 1857. While the rest of the country was rising up against the British, Rao Tula Ram moved like lightning. On May 17, he led his men to the British headquarters in Rewari, chased the officials away, and took control of the entire region. But he didn't stop there. He knew that to win a war, you need more than just courage—you need supplies. He turned his place into a busy war zone, setting up workshops to manufacture guns, cannons, and gunpowder. He even sent thousands of grains and large sums of money to Delhi to help the main Indian army. For a few months, he had completely wiped out the British from his land.

The most legendary moment of his life was the Battle of Nasibpur. Imagine a dusty field near NARNAUL where a small Indian army stood face-to-face with the mighty British forces. On November 16, 1857, Rao Tula Ram's soldiers charged with such fury that the British ranks were broken. It was a fierce and bloody fight. Even though the British had better technology and more cannons, Rao's bravery was so great that the British commanders wrote about how difficult it was to defeat him. He didn't lose because of lack of courage; he lost because the enemy had more advanced weapons.

After the battle, the story of Rao Tula Ram took a mysterious and heroic turn. Most rebels at that time either went into hiding or were captured. But Rao Tula Ram had other plans. He realized that to defeat a global power like the British, India needed friends from other countries. He escaped through the desert and mountains, travelling through Iran and all the way to Kabul in Afghanistan. He was like a 19th-century secret agent, trying to meet the SHAH of Iran and the TSAR of Russia to ask for their help in freeing India.

Sadly, his journey had a tragic end. While working hard in Kabul to gather an army to return to India, he fell very ill. On September 23, 1863, the Lion of Rewari breathed his last in a foreign land. He was only 38 years old. He died far away from his home, but his heart was still beating for India's freedom.

Today, we celebrate September 23 as "HARYANA VEER SHAHIDI DIWAS" in his honor. Rao Tula Ram teaches us that a true hero never gives up, even when the odds are against them. He was a king who lost his throne but won a permanent place in the hearts of millions. His story is a reminder that the fire of freedom burned just as brightly in the villages of Haryana as it did anywhere else in the world.