



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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BIRSA MUNDA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Birsa Munda". The topic "Birsa Munda" has relevance in the Modern History section of the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance:

For Prelims:

Who is Birsa Munda?

For Mains:

GS 1&4 : Modern History and Ethics

Legacy of Birsa Munda?

What can we learn from Birsa Munda today?

Why in the news?

Birsa Munda, the legendary freedom fighter, social reformer and a revered tribal leader sacrificed his life for the nation on 9 June, in 1900.

Who is Birsa Munda?

Birsa Munda was a prominent tribal leader and freedom fighter from India. He was born on November 15, 1875, in Ulihatu village, in what is now the state of Jharkhand. Birsa Munda played a crucial role in the tribal resistance against British colonial rule during the late 19th century.

Birsa Munda led the Munda rebellion, also known as the Ulgulan movement, which aimed to challenge the oppressive policies of the British government and protect the rights and autonomy of tribal communities. He mobilized the tribal people, particularly the Munda tribe, and organized them against the exploitation of their land, forests, and resources by the British authorities and local landlords.

Despite facing significant challenges, Birsa Munda's rebellion gained momentum and disrupted British administration in the region. However, he was eventually arrested in 1900 and died in captivity on June 9, 1900, at the young age of 25.

Legacy of Birsa Munda?

- **Tribal Resistance:** Birsa Munda emerged as a powerful symbol of tribal resistance against British colonial rule. He fought against the exploitation, marginalization, and cultural oppression faced by tribal communities during that time. His rebellion, known as the Munda Ulgulan or the Munda Rebellion, challenged the British administration and inspired other tribal leaders and communities to rise up against oppression.
- **Advocacy for Tribal Rights:** Birsa Munda fought for the rights and autonomy of tribal communities. He sought to protect their land, resources, and cultural heritage from encroachment

and exploitation by external forces. His efforts focused on preserving the customs, traditions, and identity of tribal people, emphasizing their right to self-determination and a dignified existence.

- **Social Reforms:** Birsa Munda's movement was not limited to resisting colonial rule but also aimed at bringing social reforms within tribal communities. He fought against social evils like alcoholism, witchcraft accusations, and caste-based discrimination prevalent among tribal groups. He promoted unity, equality, and justice within his community.
- **Symbol of Tribal Pride:** Birsa Munda is regarded as a symbol of tribal pride and identity. His courageous leadership and relentless struggle against injustice have inspired generations of tribal communities in India. He instilled a sense of pride in their cultural heritage and a determination to assert their rights and protect their interests.
- **Inspiration for Tribal Movements:** Birsa Munda's legacy has served as a source of inspiration for subsequent tribal movements in India. His fight for tribal rights paved the way for the recognition and protection of tribal communities' interests. His rebellious spirit and advocacy for social justice have influenced many subsequent leaders and movements working for tribal welfare and empowerment.
- **Commemoration and Remembrance:** Birsa Munda is commemorated and celebrated in various ways to honor his contributions. His birth anniversary, November 15, is observed as Birsa Munda Jayanti, during which people pay tribute to his sacrifices and remember his ideals. Statues, memorials, and institutions have been established in his name to ensure that his legacy endures.

What can we learn from Birsa Munda today?

- **Upholding Justice and Equality:** Birsa Munda fought against injustice and inequality faced by tribal communities during the colonial era. He stood up against exploitation, marginalization, and discrimination. His struggle teaches us the importance of standing up for justice and equality for all individuals, especially those who are oppressed or marginalized.
- **Preserving Cultural Identity:** Birsa Munda emphasized the preservation of tribal customs, traditions, and cultural identity. He fought against cultural assimilation and worked towards the empowerment of tribal communities while respecting their unique heritage. This teaches us the significance of valuing and preserving diverse cultural identities in an inclusive society.
- **Empathy and Solidarity:** Birsa Munda's leadership was marked by his empathy and solidarity with his fellow tribal community members. He understood their struggles and worked towards their upliftment. This teaches us the importance of empathy and solidarity with marginalized communities and individuals, promoting inclusivity and social cohesion.
- **Courage and Resilience:** Birsa Munda displayed immense courage and resilience in his fight against oppression and exploitation. Despite facing numerous challenges, he remained determined and resilient. This teaches us the value of perseverance, courage, and resilience in pursuing ethical goals and overcoming obstacles.
- **Ethical Leadership:** Birsa Munda's leadership was characterized by his commitment to the welfare and empowerment of his community. He placed the interests of his people above his own, leading by example and inspiring others to join the struggle. This teaches us the importance of ethical leadership, which involves acting with integrity, selflessness, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others.
- **Non-violent Resistance:** Birsa Munda's rebellion, although armed, primarily focused on non-violent resistance against oppressive policies. His approach highlights the effectiveness and ethical dimension of nonviolent means to bring about social change and fight against injustice.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Birsa Munda advocated for the protection of tribal lands and resources from exploitation. His movement emphasized the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature. This teaches us the significance of environmental stewardship and sustainability in our ethical considerations and actions.

Source:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/birsa-munda-quotes-jayanti-death-anniversary-freedom-fighter-tribal-rebellion-death-of-birth-and-death-trending-twitter-101686291305332.html>

Q.1 Who among the following tribal leaders played a significant role in the Ulgulan Rebellion against British colonial rule during the late 19th century?

- (a) Tantia Bhil
- (b) Birsa Munda
- (c) Rani Gaidinliu
- (c) Alluri Sitarama Raju

Answer: (b)

Q.2 Which state in India is associated with the birthplace of tribal leader Birsa Munda?

- (a) Odisha
- (b) Jharkhand
- (c) Chhattisgarh
- (d) Madhya Pradesh

Answer: (b)

Q.3 Discuss the life, contributions, and legacy of Birsa Munda as a tribal leader and freedom fighter in the context of India's struggle for independence and the empowerment of marginalized communities. Analyze the significance of his socio-cultural reforms and his role as a symbol of resistance and unity among tribal communities.

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