



Mangal Pandey

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Mangal Pandey literally fuelled the fire of Indian freedom struggle. He gave rise to armed revolution against the British rule. His biggest contributions to Indian freedom struggle is that he gave belief to fellow fighters that British can be revolted against and they can be defeated as well. He led the first mass movement against the cruel British rulers. Not much is known about the childhood of Mangal Pandey. According to historians he was born on July 19, 1827 in the Nagwa village in the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh. Though, this fact is often debated by the historians for its authenticity. Mangal Pandey was a sepoy working under the British East India Company. He instigated the famous Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 which is also referred to as the India's First War of Independence. Mangal Pandey was an extremely courageous revolutionary who fought for a cause. The main cause of the mutiny was the rumour that cartridges used by Indian sepoys were greased with the fat of pig and cow. This led to turbulence in religious belief of Hindu and Muslims sepoys. Mangal Pandey could not stand the injustice and attacked his senior British officers.

Till the date, the history books refer Mangal Pandey as Shaheed Mangal Pandey. The word Shaheed is basically an Urdu word meaning martyr. He was a member of the 34th Regiment of the Bengal native infantry of the East India Company. He woke up the Indian masses to fight for the nation and against the injustice caused by British army. Mangal Pandey was a devout Hindu. The cartridges as rumoured were greased with tallow and lard. The sepoys were asked to bite off these cartridges to remove the cover prior to use. This affected the religious sentiments of Hindus and Muslims alike. On the other hand, it was believed that British officers had made this greasing mandatory in order to hurt the religious sentiments. Mangal Pandey could not stand this and fired the first salvo of revolution.

Mangal Pandey attacked the British Sergeant on the parade ground. The native soldiers stood beside his actions. But soon, he was captured by the British army and sentenced to death on April 8, 1857. However, Mangal Pandey ensured that Indians kept the flame of freedom struggle alive.