



# সৃজনী

২০২২ বর্ষ



‘সৃজনী’ৰ এই সংখ্যাটি ভাৰতৰ স্বাধীনতাৰ পয়সত্তৰ বছৰ  
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চমু আলোকপাতেৰে সমৃদ্ধ

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# The other Rani of Jhansi : Jhalkari Bai and the dalit of contribution of the Indian Freedom Struggle

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*Macha Jhansi mein ghamasan, chahun aur machee  
kilkari thee,*

*Angrezon se loha lenein, ran mein kudee Jhalkari thee*

(Translation: Amidst the sound and fury of the battle at Jhansi,  
Jhalkari plunged herself into the battlefield to confront the British.)



Since many years ago, Dalit history has been hijacked and obliterated to serve the perverted concepts of the 'country' and 'national integrity.' A closer examination of the discussion around Dalit history asks questions like "Why and how has it been so simple to wipe out a whole past?" The people who gain from this erasure? Why is Dalit history not thought to be reliable? Who determines the true

definition of 'authentic'? The prevailing mainstream discourse has sought to eliminate the Dalit community's existence and importance



in India by erasing their past.

As has been correctly noted, Dalits were denied the right to read for a very long time, and once they were, they were forced to learn the history written by the upper castes, who have no desire to present the truth since they would lose control of the populace. Additionally, one should keep in mind that with changes in the administration, the information in history books has always been subject to debate, revision, and rearrangement. Every administration wants to promote its interpretations of true history, as well as its own Gods and heroes. The upshot is mostly the further erasure and relegation of history's forgotten heroes and warriors to the domain of the unimportant.

In the army of Queen Laxmibai of Jhansi, Jhalkari Bai, a famed Dalit woman fighter, made a key contribution to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 at the battle of Jhansi. She was raised as a soldier after being born into a Dalit household and finally rose to the position of valued advisor to Laxmibai. She is recognized for her bravery and selflessness, but what is most notably remembered about her is that she battled to free the queen from the fort by disguising herself as the monarch.

The tales of popular Dalit history and the life of Jhalkari Bai both prominently feature the insurrection of 1857. An alternate account of the revolution comes to light in this environment, skewing the popular upper-caste history of India. In many ways, the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is regarded as the first significant uprising against British rule in India. It is praised as essential to reimagining 1857 from a Dalit viewpoint. Because of this, Jhalkari Bai's tale is a significant aspect of Dalit reality. Her experience calls into question the nation's social historians' hazy interpretations and limited or biased histories.

The tale of Jhalkari Bai, a Dalit Virangana, demonstrates the need of examining how Dalit women were portrayed in 1857 history. Her experience clarifies the Dalits' social and political standing in India. Far more Dalit women than Dalit males



participated in extreme armed conflicts in 1857. Her narrative evoked political and public memories, which have since become the Dalit community's emblem of valor.

The Jhalkari Bai narrative has been the subject of poetry and stories by a variety of authors. Comic books, poetry, plays, novels, biographies, nautankis, and even publications and organizations bearing her name are examples of cultural invocations. Just a few examples include the comic book Jhalkari Bai, poems with titles like Virangana Jhalkari Bai Kavya, Jhansi ki Sherni: Virangana Jhalkari Bai ka Jeevan Charitra, and Virangana Jhalkari Bai Mahakavya, plays with titles like Virangana Jhalkari Bai and Achhut Virangana Nautanki, novels with titles like Virangana Jhalkar Several Dalit periodicals have written about her. We learn why it's important to include Dalit women's representations in the history of 1857 from Lkari Bai, a Dalit Virangana.

She made friends with Laxmibai and was given the responsibility of directing the Durga Dal, the army's female wing. The tyrants were not fighting for freedom when the 1857 uprising began; instead, their main concern was just maintaining their thrones. The independence fight was created by Dalits. Jhalkari Bai engaged the British when they surrounded the Jhansi fort in a furious battle. She was responsible for Rani Lakshmibai's successful escape from the palace. Jhalkari Bai fought the fight from Dantiya gate and Bhandari gate to Unnao gate while assuming the persona of the Rani.

When Jhalkari Bai learned that her husband had perished battling the British, according to legend, she turned into a "wounded tigress" and massacred several British soldiers. Before her actual identity was revealed, she was able to deceive them for a considerable amount of time. According to other accounts, she was suddenly hit by many bullets and killed. Some claim that she was freed, lived until 1890 and rose to fame during her day. According to legend,



Jhalkari Bai, who was fighting the British in the appearance of Rani, was martyred on April 5, 1857.

Due to the power of the upper caste and the predominance of Brahmanism, her life narrative has been overlooked in popular history textbooks. The numerous inspiring tales of struggle against colonial oppressors and the nation's social structure have long been disregarded by conventional discourse. However, alternative knowledge has always existed, just not as obvious as traditional knowledge.

The importance of Jhalkari Bai's participation in the Battle of Jhansi as an Indian soldier in the Rebellion of 1857 cannot be overstated. Her tale exposes the numerous Dalit historical individuals who were eliminated from the country's history in addition to offering a harsh critique of the dominant knowledge production of Indian history. A universe that contradicts textual, intellectual, and historical accounts of 1857 is revealed in the writings surrounding Jhalkari Bai. It also demonstrates how distinct Dalit women's lives and communities are characterized by resistance to prevailing notions about Dalit women.

Poems and songs as narrated here occupy a central place in these narratives.

khub lari jhalkari tu tau, teri ek jawani thi.  
dur firangi ko karne mein, veeron mein mardani thi  
har bolon ke much se sun hum teri yeh kahani thi.  
rani ki tu saathin banker, jhansi fatah karani thi....  
datiya fatah raund firangi, agge barh jhalkari thi.  
kali roop bhayankar garjan, mano karak damini thi.  
kou firangi aankh uthain, dhar se shish uteri thi.  
har bolon ke much se sun ham, roop chandika pani  
thi.

(Jhalkari you fought, your youthfulness was unique.  
You were a man among the brave in ousting the  
British.



We heard your story from the mouth of warriors.  
You pledged for Jhansi to be victorious by being a  
friend of the queen.

Jhalkari, you rode from the Datiya gate, trampling  
the British.

You were like Kali, and your strike was like lightning.  
As soon as a British raised his head, you struck  
immediately.

We heard your deeds from the warriors, reciting tales  
of your bravery.)

Jhalkari was born to Sadoba Singh and Jamuna Devi  
in the village of Bhojla, close to Jhansi, on November 22,  
1830. Jhalkari was the only child of her parents, and when  
her mother unexpectedly passed away when she was still very  
young, her father was left to raise her alone.

She was unable to attend a school or receive a formal  
education because her family was impoverished and a  
member of the disadvantaged Kori caste of Dalits. However,  
she had received instruction in horseback riding and weapon  
handling since she was a young child. Jhalkari Bai was one  
of Rani Lakshmibai's most dependable counselors and she  
was a commendable soldier. She is thought to have started  
learning how to use weapons and ride horses at a very young  
age. Her husband Puran Kori, a soldier in the army of Rani  
Lakshmibai's husband Raja Gangadhar Rao, taught her  
archery, wrestling, and shooting as well.

Her gallantry earned her a position in Queen  
Lakshmibai of Jhansi's army as a low-ranking soldier. She  
immediately gained respect as one of the Queen's top  
advisors, though. She also rose through the ranks of Rani  
Lakshmi Bai's women's army, the Durga Dal, where she  
frequently presided over crucial decisions on the monarch's  
behalf.

She assumed the queen's identity at the height of the



conflict, risking her life to fight with the queen while allowing the queen to covertly flee the fray. She is best known for this. What is less recognized is the important part she and Lakshmbai played in the study and planning of the actual war.

The people of Bundelkhand hold this tale of Jhalkari Bai in their collective memory. She is still remembered today, and stories about her valiant deeds continue to circulate. She is revered as an incarnation of God by several Dalit communities in the area, and Jhalkaribai Jayanti is held annually in her honor.

Jhalkaribai was wed to a Jhansi army soldier. When Rani Laxmbai saw her at a festival in the Jhansi fort, she was delighted to see how strikingly like Jhalkaribai looked to her. When the queen learned about Jhalkaribai's heroic deeds, she immediately enrolled her in the women's division of her army and began furthering her military training.

When British Field Marshal Hugh Rose assaulted Jhansi in 1858, Rani Laxmbai defended her fort from the British invaders with a 4,000-man army. She was, however, deceived by one of her commanders, and she lost.

Laxmi Bai rode away from Jhansi discretely on the advice of her generals. However, Jhalkaribai remained in place, fought like a tigress, killed numerous British soldiers, then headed out in disguise for general Roses' camp and proclaimed herself queen. Because of confusion brought on by her incorrect identification, Laxmbai had all day to go away.

On April 4, 1858, Jhalkaribai lost her life while defending her motherland and her queen. Even today, Dalit groups in Bundelkhand revere her as a deity and observe Jhalkaribai Jayanti each year.

Her bravery has created a great legacy. In 2001, a monument honoring her was erected in Gwalior. In honor of Jhalkaribai, a warrior who lived and died protecting her people and her nation, the Indian government issued a



stamp. Stories of her bravery are still told in many Jhansi homes. It is believed that Jhalkari once single-handedly chased away a group of robbers who were attempting to break into the home of a local businessman. She is also rumored to have used her axe to slay a tiger that once tried to attack her in the bush.

This deliberate attempt to keep Jhalkaribai silent is arguably because Rani Laxmibai was married to Raja Gangadhar Rao of Jhansi, a Peshwa (Brahmin) King, and was born into a Brahmin family in Varanasi. Ramachandra Pandurang Tope, better known by his stage name Tatyā Tope, was likewise born into a Brahmin household. There were many additional Brahmins, but these are the most well-known figures from history who are recognized throughout the nation. Mangal Pandey was another one. In contemporary India, a variety of films, TV series, and other forms of media frequently promote the cultural endeavor of imparting future generations' stories about these warriors.

The Bahujan Samaj Party's Dalit-Bahujan mobilization, which emphasized the importance of Jhalkaribai, helped remove the misconceptions propagated by the prevailing Brahminical ideology. By honoring the contributions made to the nation's independence by Dalit martyrs, it has also challenged preexisting knowledge hierarchies. The birthday of Jhalkaribai is observed in Uttar Pradesh as "Gaurav Diwas" (Day of Pride), although Brahminical academics, media, and popular culture disregard it.

The initial Jhalkaribai evidence came from the local population, and later, historians and scholars found further Jhalkaribai evidence. Similar to Udadevi and Mahaviridevi, other Dalit Virangana has been overlooked in popular history texts due to Brahmanism's domination.

The historical narratives of Jhalkari Bai refute Rani Lakshmibai's authority. Lakshmibai is said to have not only escaped to the forests of Nepal with the assistance of the



monarch of Pratapgarh, but she also lived until the age of 80, dying in 1915. The true Viragana and martyr is Jhalkari Bai. She should be given the utmost respect, and her name should be immortalized in gold on the pages of our history. The person who fought boldly and without self-interest was a Dalit woman who had no kingdom or palace, no rich jewellery, no flashy clothes, and who was neither a queen nor a daughter of a feudal lord. Her selflessness is well above anyone else's.