

Sir Chottu Ram - Father of Bhakra Dam

Why in news?

PM Narendra Modi unveiled the statue of peasant leader Sir Chhotu Ram at his native village Sampla in Haryana's Rohtak district.

Who is Sir Chottu Ram?



- Sir Chhotu Ram was born on November 24, 1881.
- He graduated from St Stephen's College, Delhi in 1905 with a distinction in Sanskrit.
- He did his LLB from Agra College in 1910 and began his practice as an advocate in 1912.
- He was a prominent politician in British India's Punjab Province.
- He was the then revenue minister of Punjab Province.
- He was regarded as a messiah of peasants and was instrumental in empowering farmers in pre-Independence era.
- He also played a significant role on enacting pro-farmers law.
- He is a revered figure in Haryana's Jat community and also known as a champion of farmers' right during the British colonial era.
- Sir Chhotu Ram was knighted in 1937

What are his contributions?

- **Bhakara Dam:** He conceived of the Bhakhra Dam in 1923, to rid the farmers

of the economic plague-spots of erstwhile Punjab state.

- **Minimum Support Price:** He was also the originator of the concept of compensating the farmer for at least the expenses incurred by him on farming.
- **Agriuculture Leader:** Sir Chhotu Ram emerged as country's first big agrarian reformer who stood up and fought for the rights of agriculturists.
- He exhorted peasants to shed their inferiority complex and fatalistic outlook and become assertive and self-confident.
- He encouraged agriculture based industries as well as the development of cottage industries in the State to tackle the problem of unemployment both in rural and urban areas.
- He rightly recognized the problems of agriculture community such as burden of unfair taxation and high rate of land revenue, inability to secure fair prices for their production, crushing burden of indebtedness and expenses on litigation.
- He also noted that illiteracy and ignorance, under-representation of the class of peasantry in the public services, corruption and frequent occurrence of famines added to the woes of the farmers.
- He used to recite the following lines of the poet Iqbal quite often: **“Raise thyself to such a height that God may himself ask you what do you wish to achieve”**.

Source: Business Line

