

# Ch. Chhotu Ram: A Great Reformer

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**Abstract – Ch. Chhotu Ram joined the All India Congress party in 1916. He played a major role as the president of rohtak distt. Congress committee. He was the 'MASIHA' of oppressed community. When he became a minister of Punjab govt. he passed a lot of acts to improve the condition of peasant class. Punjab agriculture produce marketing act, Punjab sugarcane act, Bakhra dam project was major acts which was passed only by the efforts of ch. Chhotu ram. Two canals in rohtak and hisar district was very great contribution in the irrigation of Haryana. He was an active supporter of Arya Samaj which was a great socio-religious reform movement at that time. He emphasized on opening school in rural areas.**

**Key Words: Peasant, Reform, Suppressed, Agriculture, Down Trodden**

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Deen Bandhu Ch. Chhotu Ram was born on 24Nov1881 at Village Garhi Sampla in rohtak district. Economic condition of his family was not so good. Debt and intigation compounded the problem of his father, Ch. Sukhi Ram. His father was passed away in 1905, living behind a heavy debt. Which he paid later Ch. Chhotu ram was undoubtedly one of the great leader of Punjab of his time. He rendered distinguished services as lawyer, as a publicist, as a legislator, as a minister but his main contribution was in his championing the cause of the peasant and downtrodden(1). Earlier he bestowed the title of rao sahib in 1916, of Rao Bahadur in 1930 and knighted as sir in 1937. (2)

Sir Chhotu Ram joined the all India congress party in 1916 and played a major role as the president of Rohtak district, congress committee. Chhotu ram was also active in socio religious reform movement of Arya Samaj. He became a prominent politician in British India Punjab who belonged to Jat community and championed the interest of oppressed class. He left congress party in 1920 because the Punjab provincial congress committee supported the urban and commercial class and had ignored the interest of suppressed class. He was emerged as the sole spokesperson of Jat interest by this time of 1920's and 1930's. After the end of first world war Chhotu Ram extended his activity beyond rohtak. In 1925 he organized all India jat mahasabha at Pushkar, Rajasthan, A historical event in jat history. In 1934 he organized a rally of farmers to start an anti-rent campaign. This rally was a major milestone in his political carrier and as a reformer. After separation from congress party he formed in new party, unionist party mainly concerned with the interest of peasant class.

Ch. Chhotu Ram is one among the leaders whose ideology are relevant even in today's time. Peasant class will always indebted to him. He started green revolution and was a great reformer in all fields but he was emerged as the prophet of agricultural reforms. There was no field in life of common people that was not touched by him. Some days ago a statue of Ch. Chhotu Ram was unveiled by the prime minister of India in sonipat. Even PM said that Ch. Chhotu Ram was one among those social reformer who made an important contribution to India. He described him as a strong voice for the oppressed class

## AGRICULTURAL REFORMS

Ch. Chhotu Ram is the hero peasant class. Even in today's time his ideology for peasants and common people are relevant .He always worked for the upliftment of peasant and suppressed class. When he became a minister in Punjab govt. he passed a lot of acts to improve the condition of peasant class. The following acts were passed by the legislature under his guidance after the unionist came to power from 1937 to 1945.(3)

1. The Punjab Restitution of Mortgaged land act 4th, 1938
2. The Punjab Alienation of land Act 5th 1938
3. The Punjab Alienation of land ( amendment) Act 2nd 1938
4. The Punjab Debtors Protection act 1939
5. Punjab Alienation of land Act 10th 1939

6. Punjab Agriculture Produce Markets (Amendment) act 5th 1939
7. The Punjab Debtor Protection act 1939
8. The Punjab Relief of indebtedness(Amendment) act 12th 1940
9. The Punjab Weight and Measure act 12th 1941
10. The Sugarcane Punjab (Amendment)act 1942

Most of the scholars agreed with the one thing that Ch. Chhotu Ram as a common man and as a minister always wanted to provide fair prices of commodities to producer. Punjab Agriculture Produce Marketing Act was the milestone in this series. The Punjab Weight and Measure Act 1941 declare that no one can use false weight and scales. It would be a criminal offence. The Punjab sugarcane act declared that the income from this act would be spent roads to leading sugarcane factories and providing shelter or peasant cart. He was familiar with the problem of drought in Rohtak and Hisar district. To sort out this problem two canal were dug in 1941-42 and credit of these canals goes to Ch. Chhotu Ram. Bakhra Dam project was another ambitious project of him. This dam could solved the problem of irrigation of Haryana. But British govt. never showed interest in this project. Ch. Chhotu Ram knows very well, Bakhra Dam will become a life line of irrigation of Haryana. He made a lot of efforts. He had signed the agreement before the one day of his death in 1945.

Ch. Chhotu Ram provided relief to peasantry class and made special efforts for progress of rural and downtrodden society. He started Jat Gazette in 1916 as weekly newspaper. He wrote that its main objective was to find out means for the betterment of suppressed class. He said govt. should pass more act to improve the condition of peasant class.

### EDUCATIONAL REFORM:-

Ch. Chhotu Ram was born in village in a very common family. He knew the condition of education in villages of Haryana. On that time literate rate was very low and the condition of girl's education was very worst. Number of school in rural areas was very low. After resigning from congress party, he joined the Punjab Unionist Party in 1924. After election he became an education minister. He emphasized on opening in rural area and providing reservation to the student of agricultural and poor families. He established the anglo-sanskrit Jat high school in 1913 and jat hero's school 1921 in rohtak district. After joining ministry as agriculture minister 1924 and later the minister for development, he enhanced the budget for education in rural areas. In 1924 an act

was passed in Punjab legislative council to provide special concession in fees to the student of agricultural families in professional college. After this act, a remarkable increase was noticed in admissions. Ch. Chhotu Ram always understand the importance of women in society. He took keen interest in women education and in opening of women educational institute. Punjab Primary Education Act was result of his efforts. Due to this concern towards women education some scholars call him a champion of female education.

### SOCIO- RELIGIOUS REFORMS:-

When he entered in public life he began as a social reformer Ch. Chhotu Ram was a great reformer who played an important role in the formation of India. He became a member of Arya Samaj movement which was a leading movement a socio religious reform in south east Punjab. This movement was the leading revolutionary religious movement against social and religious evils of society. Chhotu Ram was staunch Arya Samajist and did not believe in distinguishing between people on religion base. Arya samaj work in social welfare appealed to Ch. Chhotu Ram to join the movement and worked for it seriously.(4)

### CONCLUSION:

To conclude,we can say that ch.Chhotu Ram was the prophet of peasantry reforms.He is the hero of Haryana agricultural community.As a minister,he worked a lot for the upliftment of peasant class.Bakhra dam project,Punjab Sugarcane Act ,two canals in Rohtak and Hisar district was his great contribution.But he was not only the masiha of peasant class,he was a great socio-religious reformer.He never believed on religious discrimination.He worked a lot for girls education.Even in today's time ,his ideology is very relevant.

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