**Vice President pays tribute to the bravehearts of Kunja Bahdurpur**

**Syllabus subtopic:** Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present - significant events, personalities, issues

**News:** Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu today suggested that the Union government should encourage states to **research upon and compile the history of local heroes of freedom struggle from across the country**. He also emphasized on publishing this history in local languages so as to reach the maximum people.

**Prelims and mains focus:** Battle of Kunja Bahadurpur and its importance in the freedom struggle of India

**Context:** Speaking at an event organised in the remembrance of Shaheed Raja Vijay Singh and his brave men at the village Kunja Bahadurpur in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand, the Vice President Naidu recalled the heroic story of the people of Kunja Bahadurpur who rose against the British with their king Vijay Singh.

**About the battle of Kunja Bahadurpur**

- The Britishers had occupied a significant portion of India by the year 1824 when King Vijay Singh declared freedom. He gathered an army of one thousand men from nearby areas such as Garhwal, Kumaon, Bijnor, Saharanpur and Meerut and stopped paying taxes to the British. He eliminated all symbols of British occupation from the area.

- The British in turn attacked the fort of Kunja Bahadurpur. Around 40 Britishers were killed in the fierce battle that ensued and **hundreds of Gurjar soldiers were martyred.**

- The British inflicted innumerable atrocities over the people. They hanged hundreds of people from a single tree. The bodies of Raja Vijay Singh and his brave general Kalyan Singh were mutilated and displayed in front of Dehradun prison.
Remarks of the Vice President

- The Vice President said that Raja Vijay Singh and his men made supreme sacrifice for the cause of freedom in 1824, three decades before the first war for independence in 1857, but it is an irony that the stories like Kunja Bahadurpur remain ignored in our history. “Our history is incomplete without the bravery of these heroes,” he said.

- Mentioning the names of legendary warriors from Uttarakhand such as Ram Pyari Gurjar, Rani Karnawati, Shahmal Singh Tomar and teenage warrior Shivdevi Tomar, Vice President Naidu said that our history has been witness to many a struggle wherein people rose against the invaders under the leadership of local heroes to defend their freedom, honour, culture and property. “But these resistances hardly find any mention in our history”, said Vice President Naidu adding that “we need to rectify this mistake”.

- He also stressed the need to make such stories mandatory part of our school syllabus so that the new generation can draw inspiration from them.

- The Vice President also called for developing a nationalistic approach to our history and research new sources for it. History does not belong to just the rulers, rather it belongs to the people and communities as well, he said emphasizing the need to study local cultural, literary and social history.

- He said that heroic stories of local communities are transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition and form an inseparable part of their being. “Local educational institutions, civil society organizations and media should do serious research on these oral traditions of history telling and to make the whole country aware of them”, he added.

- Saying that our history is indebted to the great sacrifices made by our ancestors such as Raja Vijay Singh and his general Shaheed Kalyan Singh, he appealed to the younger generation to respect and follow their ideals.

- Talking about the 70th Constitution Day celebrated earlier this week, the Vice President also called for equal respect for Fundamental Duties along with the Fundamental Rights. He reminded the people of fundamental duty ‘to strive towards excellence in all spheres and said that country’s progress depends on each one of us excel in our respective fields.

- He also urged people to spread awareness about fundamental duties in their community, educational institution and professional circles. This will be a true tribute to our brave ancestors who sacrificed their everything so that we could breathe in a free India, he said.
Putting national integrity above everything else, the Vice President appealed to all citizens to rise above caste, creed, religion and region and to work together for the progress of the country. On the occasion, he also appreciated the unity displayed by all communities after the Ayodhya verdict by the Supreme Court of India.