TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

The Scheduled Tribes (STs) constitute 8 per cent of the total population of the country. Tribals are ethnic groups. Different tribes have their own cultures – dialects, life styles, social structures, rituals, values, etc. – differing some-what from those of the dominant non-tribal peasant social groups. At the same time, most of them are settled agriculturists and social differentiation have developed among them.

The tribal movements are both agrarian and forest based, because the tribals’ dependence on forests was a crucial as their dependence on land. The tribal revolts were directed against:

- zamindars,
- moneylenders and
- petty government officials

The tribal revolt against the colonial rule had two important reasons:

- they exploited them
- they were aliens.

The tribes down south are too primitive, too small in numbers, and too isolated in their habitat to organise movements, in spite of their exploitation and the resultant discontent.

The tribal movement can be divided into three phases:

1. The **first phase** was between 1795 and 1860. It coincided with the rise, expansion and establishment of the British Empire. During this phase the tribals not only began to launch the so-called ‘separatist’ movements, but at the same time participated in nationalist and agrarian movements.
   a. The Santal Insurrection of 1855-57
   b. Bhumij revolt in 1832-33
   c. Kol insurrection of Chhota Nagpur during 1831-32

The Kol insurrection of 1831-1832 was born out of frustration and anger frustration with the new system of Government and laws, and anger at the people who either enforced them or took undue advantage of them.

2. The **second phase** covers the period between 1860 and 1920. It coincided with the intensive phase of colonialism, during which merchant capital penetrated into tribal economy affecting their relationship with the land and forest.
   - Birsa Munda movement in Chhota Nagpur during 1874-1901
   - Kuki uprising in Manipur during 1917-19

The Kuki of Manipur revolted against the British government when the government tried to recruit them into the army as coolies during World War I. They were unwilling to go to far-off places. Moreover, the recruitment of able-bodied youths adversely affected their own agriculture.

3. The **third phase** covers the period from 1920 till the achievement of independence in 1947.
   i. Some tribals of western India launched movements against moneylenders and landlords and liquor sellers in the 1920s
   ii. The Kharwar of Palamau, Bihar, participated in the forest satyagraha in the 1930s demanding restoration of their customary rights to extract timber and collect forest produce for consumption.
The problem continued to persist in the post-independence period. The Kharwar again launched a satyagraha movement in the 1950s.

Post Independence
- The Gond tribe of Chhattisgarh demanded the formation of a separate state for the tribals in the 1950s.
- The tribals of Chhota Nagpur have been demanding separate statehood to protect them against the exploitative tactics of the diku since 1938. Their demand for a separate state has continued in one form or another to this day.
- During the late 1990s tribals were mobilised in some parts, particularly in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, by Hindutva forces, against Muslims and Christians which divided the tribals along religious grounds and converted them to militant Hindus.
- The tribals of Garhwal region launched a movement against forest contractors in the 1930s and 1970s.
- Adivasis of the Dangs, Gujarat struggled without success over a decade in the late 1980s till the mid-1990s against the Forest Act and Forest Department which deprived them of land and the right to collect forest products.
- The tribals launched a no-revenue and land grab movements in Gujarat in the 1950s, declaring that they were the natives and original owners of the land.
- The tribes in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra joined the land grab movement of 1969-70.
- In the late 1960s, the main constituents of the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh were the tribals who fought against exploitation.
- The main participants in the Shahada and Bhoomi Sena movements in the 1970s, in Maharashtra, were the tribals.

The main issues of tribal movements on the eve of independence and thereafter are:
- a. Land alienation,
- b. forced labour,
- c. minimum wages,
- d. land grabbing, etc.

**Name: Jaintia and Garo Rebellion Rebellion**
**Place:** Meghalaya  
**Year:** 1860-1870s  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** U Kiang Nongbah, Pa Togan Sangma  
**Causes:** After the First Anglo-Burmese War, the British planned the construction of a road connecting Brahmaputra Valley (present day Assam) with Sylhet (present day Bangladesh). The Jaintias and the Garos in the North-Eastern part of India opposed the construction of this road.  
**Mode of protest:** Rebellion  
**Result:** The Jaintias leader U Kiang Nongbah was captured and publicly hanged and the Garo leader Pa Togan Sangma was defeated by the British.

**Name: Tana Bhagat Movement**  
**Place:** Chotanagpur Plateau  
**Year:** 1915  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Balaram Bhagat, Jora Bhagat, Devamenia Bhagat, etc
Causes: The tribes in the plateau want to expel the foreigners from their land who are responsible for their miserable state
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: Movement was suppressed by British through repressive measures

Name: Bhai Rising
Place: Western Ghats
Year: 1817-1819
Against whom: Britishers
Leaders: Sewaram and others
Causes: Agrarian hardships under the new British regime
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: The British crushed the revolt

Name: Chuar Uprising
Place: Midnapore district
Year: 1766 – 1772, 1795 - 1816
Against whom: British
Leaders: Durjan Singh
Causes: Enhanced land revenue demands and economic distress
Mode of protest: Rebellion
Result: The rebellion was suppressed with utmost cruelty.

Name: Munda Rebellion
Place: Bihar and Jharkhand
Year: 1899-1900
Against whom: Money lenders and British Officials
Leaders: Birsa Munda
Causes: Non-tribals occupying tribal lands, the moneyenders and the zamindars ill-treated the Mundas.
Mode of protest: Rebellion
Result: Finally The Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 was passed which provided some land ownership rights to the people and banned bonded labour of the tribals.

Name: Pagal Panthi
Place: Bengal (Now located in Bangladesh)
Year: 1825-1850
Against whom: Britishers and Zamindars
Leaders: Karam Shah and his son Tipu
Causes: Zamindari Oppression
Mode of protest: Armed Struggle
Result: The movement was crushed by the Zamindars with the help of the British army in 1833.

Name: Naxalbari Movement
Place: West Bengal
Year: 1972
Against whom: Government
Leaders: Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal
Causes: The tribals demanded abolition of zamindari, land to the tiller, prevention of tenant eviction, etc.

Mode of protest: Armed Struggle

Result: Movement failed in achieving its goal as it was supressed by the police action

Name: Ramosi movement
Place: Satara, Maharashtra, Deccan
Year: 1877-87
Against whom: British rule
Leaders: Chittur Singh, Vasudev Balwant Phadke

Causes: Protest against heavy assessment of land revenue and harsh methods of collecting the taxes.

Mode of protest: Rebellion

Result: The British Government offering the tribes land grants and recruited them in the Hill Police.

Name: Sanththal Rebellion
Place: Bihar
Year: 1855-1856
Against whom: Zamindars, Moneylenders and Britishers
Leaders: Sindhu and Kanhu

Causes: The zamindars, the moneylenders, and the government officers hiked the land tax and also oppressed and exploited the common peasants.

Mode of protest: Rebellion

Result: Creation of a separate district of Santhal Parganas by the government

Name: Satara revolt
Place: Satara
Year: 1840-44
Against whom: British
Leaders: Dhar Rao, Narsing Patekar

Causes: Deposing of the popular ruler Pratap Singh

Mode of protest: Revolt

Result: British crushed the revolt

Name: Bundela Revolt
Place: Bundelkhand
Year: 1842
Against whom: British
Leaders: Madhukar Shah and Jawahar Singh

Causes: Due to the revenue policy of British

Mode of protest: Revolt

Result: The revolt was crushed by the British. Mahukar Shah was captured and executed by the British.

Name: Khasis Movement
Place: Khasi hills of Assam & Meghalaya
Year: 1829-32
Against whom: British
Leaders: Tirut Singh and Bar Manik

Causes: Khasis wanted to drive away British from their territory due to their oppressive rule
**Mode of protest:** Revolt  
**Result:** British suppressed the movement

**Name:** Bhumij Rebellion  
**Place:** Midnapur district of the Bengal  
**Year:** 1833-1834  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Ganga Narayan  
**Causes:** The rebellion was a protest against the growing inequalities resulting from the replacement of the indigenous system of administration of the tribals by the rapidly growing authority of the British Company  
**Mode of protest:** Revolt  
**Result:** Ganga Narayan became a martyr while fighting. The British crushed the movement

**Name:** Singphos Revolt  
**Place:** Assam  
**Year:** 1830-39  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Nirang Phidu, Khasma  
**Causes:** While the British were engaged in a harnessing warfare with the Khasis, the Singphos broke into open rebellion  
**Mode of protest:** Revolt  
**Result:** They were ultimately defeated by the British

**Name:** Oraons Movement  
**Place:** Chotanagpur Plateau  
**Year:** 1914-15  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Jatra Bhagat  
**Causes:** To drive away the Britishers due to their oppressive rule  
**Mode of protest:** Revolt  
**Result:** Movement was suppressed by British through repressive measures

**Name:** Rampa Rebellion  
**Place:** Andhra Pradesh  
**Year:** 1879  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Alluri Sitarama raju  
**Causes:** Protest to the oppressive Madras Forest Act of 1882  
**Mode of protest:** Armed Uprising  
**Result:** British government suppressed the movement

**Name:** Waghera Rising  
**Place:** Baroda  
**Year:** 1818-1819  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Waghera chiefs of Okha Mandal  
**Causes:** A resentment against the alien rule coupled with the exactions of the Gaekwar of Baroda supported by the British Government.
**Mode of protest:** Armed rebellion  
**Result:** A peace treaty was concluded in November 1820

**Name:** Chenchu Rebellion  
**Place:** Nallamala Hills (AP)  
**Year:** 1921-22  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Hanumanthu  
**Causes:** Against increased British control over the forests  
**Mode of protest:** Forest Satyagraha  
**Result:** Movement was suppressed by the British

**Name:** Cutch/ Kutch Rebellion  
**Place:** Kutch  
**Year:** 1819  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Rao Bharmal  
**Causes:** Anti-British feeling due to the British expansionist policy and their interference in the internal affairs of Kutch  
**Mode of protest:** Rebellion  
**Result:** Defeat and deposal of Rao Bharmal, and imposition of Subsidiary Treaty on Kutch

**Name:** The Uprising of the Bhils  
**Place:** Maharashtra & Gujarat  
**Year:** 1818-1831  
**Against whom:** English East India company  
**Leaders:** Sewaram, Peshwa Baji II, Trimbakji Danglia.  
**Causes:** Fearing agrarian hardships and the worst rule under the East India company regime  
**Mode of protest:** Revolt  
**Result:** British suppressed the movement

**Name:** Kuka Revolt/ Namdhari Movement  
**Place:** Punjab  
**Year:** 1840  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Bhagat Jawahar Mai (also called Sian Saheb)  
**Causes:** During the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, there was total ban on cow slaughter. After the British took the Punjab, they opened slaughter houses, because they themselves used to eat beef. This was challenge to the sikhi self respect.  
**Mode of protest:** Boycott  
**Result:** British government crushed the movement

**Name:** The Kol Uprising  
**Place:** Singhbhum, Hazaribagh, Palamau and the western parts of Manbhum  
**Year:** 1831-1832  
**Against whom:** British  
**Leaders:** Buddho Bhagat
Causes: The trouble started with large-scale transfers of tribal land from Kol headmen (Mundas) to outsiders like Sikh and Muslim farmers and the coming of moneylenders, merchants and British laws created a lot of tension.
Mode of protest: Rebellion
Result: Only after large-scale military operations order could be restored by the British.

Name: Kapaschor Akas
Place: Arunachal Pradesh
Year: 1835
Against whom: British
Leaders: Taji Raja
Causes: Introduction of new taxes by the British
Mode of protest: Rebellion
Result: Peace treaty was signed in 1844

Name: Koli Rebellion
Place: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh
Year: 1824, 1828, 1839, 1844-1848
Against whom: British
Leaders: Wale Bhausare, Chimanji Yadav and Nana Darbare
Causes: The imposition of British rule and dismantlement of their forts, the forests and a new order of administration in 1829 & 1839 set up by the Company caused widespread unemployment
Mode of protest: Revolts
Result: British suppressed the movement by capturing all the leaders

Name: Naikdas Revolt
Place: Gujarat
Year: 1858-59, 1868
Against whom: British
Leaders: Roop Singh and Joria Bhagat
Causes: Against the British rule
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: Supression of the movement after the capture and execution of Roop Singh and Joria Bhagat

Name: Khond Uprisings
Place: Orissa
Year: 1846-48, 1855-1914
Against whom: British, zamindars and moneylenders
Leaders: Chakra Bisoi
Causes: Introduction of new taxes by the British and the influx of zamindars and sahukars (moneylenders) into their areas, which was causing the tribals untold misery.
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: The revolts were put down with great difficulty by the Britishers.

Name: Col and Hos Uprising
Place: Singhbhum and Chota Nagpur
Year: 1820, 1822, 1832
Against whom: British
Leaders: Raja of Singhbhum
Causes: Occupation of Singhbhum by the British
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: The revolt was suppressed after much bloodshed by the Britishers

Name: Lushai uprising
Place: Lushai Hills
Year: 1842
Against whom: British
Leaders: Sukla
Causes: Against the British administration
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: Defeated the British forces at Arakan and Sylhet

Name: Kherwar Revolt
Place: Bihar
Year: 1874
Against whom: British
Leaders: Bhagirathi Manjhi, Dubai Gosai and Patel Singh
Causes: The rent of the lands was increased through the Rent Act of 1859
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: The revolt was suppressed by the British

Name: Gadkari Revolt
Place: Kolhapur
Year: 1844
Against whom: British
Leaders: Krishna Daji Pandit
Causes: Assumption of direct administration of Kolhapur by the British created resentment among Gadkaris
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: This revolt was suppressed finally by the British.

Name: Thadou Kuki rebellion
Place: Manipur
Year: 1917-19
Against whom: British
Leaders: Jadonang and his niece Rani Gaidinliu
Causes: For the independence of Manipur
Mode of protest: Rebellion and Guerilla warfare
Result: British finally crushed the revolt

Name: Kacha Nagas
Place: Cacher (Assam)
Year: 1882
Against whom: British
Leaders: Sambhudan, Jadonang
Causes: British intervention into their areas, customs and traditions
Mode of protest: Revolt
Result: The movement was crushed by the British