



POL SC HELP  
FYUGP Series

# **Peasant & Tribal Movements- Part 2 (Colonial India)**

**DSC3- NEW FYUGP SYLLABUS**

**BA HONS. POLITICAL SCIENCE 1<sup>ST</sup> SEMESTER-2022-23**



# DSC 3: Colonialism and Nationalism in India

## Unit 1. Colonialism and Nationalism:

- Main perspectives on colonialism: Liberalism, Marxism, Postcolonialism
- Approaches to the study of nationalism in India: Nationalist, Imperialist, Marxist, and Subaltern

## Unit 2. Colonial Rule in India and its impact:

- Constitutional developments and the colonial state
- Colonial ideology of civilizing mission: Utilitarians and Missionaries
- Impact on agriculture, land relations, industry and ecology

## Unit 3. Reform and Resistance:

- The 1857 war of Independence
- Major social and religious movements
- Education and the rise of the new middle class

## Unit 5. Social Movements

Peasants, Tribals, Workers, Women and anti-caste movements

## Unit 4. Nationalist Politics and Expansion of its Social Base

- Phases of the Nationalist Movement: Liberal constitutionalist, Swadeshi and the Radicals, Formation of the Muslim League



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# Social movement: Meaning & Features

## • Definitions:

- The International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1972) defines a social movement as a variety of collective attempts to bring about change
- 'A Social Movement is a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'utopian' community.' (Paul Wilkinson in his book, Social Movements)
- a social movement is an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem they feel they share in common (Toch (1965))

## • Features:

- Collective action by group of people
  - sustained collective mobilization through either informal or formal organization
- is deliberate, intentional, and planned in accordance with the goals and targets it aims to achieve
- is directed towards change relating to a specific issue at hand
- Most of the social movements have some ideological base
- the social movement has an organization
- Employing variety of tactics from peaceful to violent means
- Has a political nature



# Main grievances of Peasants & Tribals

- New land tax rules- Permanent Settlement, Ryotwari- a heavy burden of taxes, eviction of peasants from their lands, oppression by new intermediary- Zamindars, encroachment on tribal lands.
- Promotion of British manufactured goods in Indian markets leading to destruction of Indian handloom and handicraft industries
  - Artisans becoming landless agricultural labourer- increase load on land
- Increased exploitation in rural society- Zamindars, British officials, Traders/merchants & Money Lenders
  - Exploitation now by both means- political and economic
- Expansion of British rule into tribal areas- loss of tribal people's hold over agricultural and forest land.
  - Loss of traditional tribal way of life- collectivism, egalitarianism customary rights and obligation, are distinct way of life integrated to nature
- British forest laws snatched customary rights of tribals to secondary forest produce. Big contractors and forest officials became another source of exploitation
- Troika of Zamindars, Traders, Money Lenders, and missionaries ( in subtle ways) destroyed peace in rural and tribal areas

*Dikun*



# Common Features

- Mostly directed against Revenue or forest officials, Landed class, traders/merchants, money-landers
- Movements sometimes broadened its ambit to include issues beyond the immediate grievances
- Protest of the oppressed also often involved redefinition of the relationship of the oppressed to the language, culture and religion of the dominant classes. This took the form of denial of the convention of respect and submission in speech or the destruction of places of worship or of symbols of domination or oppression
- protests took varied forms in many spheres, from everyday life to organized insurgency, looting, firing, killing, guerilla warfare, etc.
- Being public and open these rebellions were political actions, different from crime
- Public or popular legitimacy- religious sanctity, God's command
- Most of them were highly localized and isolated
- Exposed the underlying tensions between class, caste or ethnic and religious groups
- As the first expression of the protest of the oppressed in the colonial period, these movements were highly significant for the national movement



# Birsa Munda Revolt ( ULGULAN )

- **Timeline:** 1895-1901
- **Location-Areas** affected:
  - Singbhum and Ranchi districts of the Chotanagpur region; current day Jharkhand
- **Main Grievances:**
  - Exploitation and ruination of simple tribal life by the outsiders dikus - landlords, traders, merchants and government officers
  - Replacement of traditional land revenue system- 'Khuntkari system'- by the Zamindari System ; loss of customary rights over their land
  - Loss of tenancy rights; eviction from land
  - Two famines in 1896-97 and 1890-1900
- **Events/Features**
  - movement was led by Birsa Munda, considered to have possessed Godly powers
  - Aim was to attain religious and political independence for Mundas by driving out the Dikus
  - Refusal to pay land tax, looting, rioting, killing
- **Outcomes/Impacts**
  - Tenancy Act of 1903 was passed which recognized the Mundari Khuntkatti system
  - Chotanagpur Tenancy Act in 1908 was also passed reaffirming tenancy rights of Tribals on their land
  - movement inspired the future social, religious and political movements of tribals





# Santhal Revolt

- **Timeline:** 1855-56
- **Location-Areas** affected:
  - Santhal Pargana region of Chotanagpur ; current day Dumka and Bhagalpur Districts of Jharkhand
- **Main Grievances:**
  - Exploitation and ruination of simple tribal life by the outsiders dikus - landlords, traders, merchants and government officers
  - Displacement of Santhals from their traditional homeland- Daman-ikoh
  - Excessive interest rate by the money landers
  - ~~Two famines in 1896-97 and 1899-1900~~
- **Events/Features**
  - movement was led by two brothers- **Sidhu and Kanhu**
  - Aim was to take back their land from their oppressors; total annihilation of the Dikus, establishment of old pristine Santhal raj
  - It was an armed uprising against the Dikus; many many moneylenders and Company agents were killed
  - The company rule suppressed the revolt by violent means killing more than 20000 Santhals
- **Outcomes/Impacts**
  - Around 5000 sq. miles areas was carved out as "Non-Regulation" district, which came to be known as "Santhal Parganas".
  - An administrative head was appointed to recover the taken away land.



# Tana Bhagat Movement

- **Timeline:** 1914-20
- **Location-Areas** affected:  
Among Oraon Tribal areas of Chotanagpur ; current day Gumla Districts of Jharkhand
- **Main Grievances:**
  - Exploitation and ruination of simple tribal life by the outsiders dikus - landlords, traders, merchants and government officers
  - Tribal lives inflicted by bad food and social habits
- **Events/Features**
  - movement was started by a 25 years young man named Jatra Uraon
  - Jatra declared that Dharmes (Supreme Being) had told him in a dream to give up bad habits- ghost findings and exorcism and belief in spirits, animal sacrifices, animal food and liquor, ploughing their fields, working as coolies or labourers,
  - Aim was to establish a pristine Oraon Raj and pure tribal life
  - The Uraon bhagats (prophets) promised their followers safety and relief from the oppressive and unjust revenue system and exploitation by landlords, usurers and Government officials.
  - The Bhagat refused paying land tax and doing begar (forced labour)
- **Outcomes/Impacts**
  - Tana bhagats were followers of Gandhiji and adopted Gandhian means
  - The movement inspired introspection and purification of tribal life; it was more like socio-cultural movement but also directed towards Dikus and their oppressions



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