CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

The history of the Jharkhand region is an accommodative history in the sense that it has provided shelter to numerous ethnic groups over the last two thousand years or so. Perhaps the earliest settlers in this central tribal belt were the "Asuras" and the "Saraks" or Jain Shravakas. Asuras, a small non-Aryan tribe, were iron smelters by profession. They dominated the region in the fifth century B.C. but gradually faded out after the advent of the Mundas. The Mundas came from Central Asia along with their language family the Kharias, the Hos and the Santals. They were followed by the Nagbanshis (Nag Community) during the first century A.D. while the Dravida speaking Oraons came even later. One of the branches of the Oraons, speaking "Kalto", advanced towards Rajmahal hills while another branch, speaking "Kudukh" came through the Sone valley to settle in the Ranchi plateau. Upto a certain period all these communities were able to maintain their socio-cultural and linguistic identities without much difficulty. But the steady flow of immigrants into the region, right from the days of the fourth Nagbanshi king Pratap Rai during the fourth century A.D., brought significant changes in the economy and cultural patterns of the region. The diku immigrants, mostly non-tribals, not only infiltrated into tribal territory but also into their socio-economic life and culture.
The Mundas and Oraons together selected a *manki* — the common leader or *Raja*, around the sixth century A.D. This *manki* was not the sovereign of the land but used to play a prominent role during the war. People gave voluntary contribution in kind and a few days of free labour to him every year. With the emergence of Chotanagpur raj, Ramgarh raj and other such kingdoms and zamindaris the tribals' contact with the *diku* immigrants also increased. Brave, chivalrous and scholarly people as well as priests were invited to settle in the region to protect and develop the area. Refugees as well as military invaders also came and settled down in the region from time to time. The influx of immigrants which continued even during the Mughal period, upsetting the demographic pattern of the region, did not give rise to any major protest from the original inhabitants of the land as the tribals' rights over land and forest as well as their socio-cultural institutions were not directly affected up to this period.

The Jharkhand region experienced frequent invasions from the neighbouring rulers who came mainly in search of precious stones and other valuables like diamond, ivory and silk for which the region was quite well known. In the early years of Muslim rule the Mohammedan rulers of Bihar used to attack the region in their quest for diamonds. They were generally satisfied with a tribute of two or three diamonds from the rulers of Jharkhand.
In 1585 the Raja of Chotanagpur was made a tributary of the Mughals. In 1591, Madhu and Lakhmi Rai of Kokra helped the Mughal army led by Mansingh to conquer Orissa. Chotanagpur was granted as a jagir to the Subadar of Patna in 1632 which brought Mughal money economy into play in the region. The Mughal emperor Jahangir during his time decided to invade the region, famous for its precious stones. In 1557, Jahangir seized huge stocks of diamonds by defeating the tribal chief and demanded an annual tribute from him. In another war Durjansal, the tribal Raja, was taken prisoner by the Mughals in 1670, for arrears of tribute. All diamonds and elephants in his possession were confiscated.

Following this victory certain changes were introduced in the tribal way of life in accordance with the Mughal administrative system. The Mughal land revenue system brought with it officials from North Bihar for the collection and management of revenues. These officials were mostly Muslims and upper-caste Hindus, who gradually established their hold over each and every sphere of tribal life. On his return from the Mughal prison at Gwalior in 1680, Durjansal surrounded himself with Hindu courtiers and mercenaries. The Brahmins came as priests, while the Rajputs were invited to fight for the Raja during wars with his neighbours. In return they were granted jagirs of Munda and Oraon villages. Under the new system the tribal peasants cultivated the land and paid rent to the non-tribal jagirdars, who paid a share to the Raja of Chotanagpur, who in turn paid a share to the Mughal emperor. Many Munda and Oraon cultivators were forcibly ousted.
from their lands when they showed reluctance to pay rent or to render begar or forced labour. Thus the loss of ancestral tribal lands began in the seventeenth century itself, much before the advent of the British in the Chotanagpur Plateau.

The Rajas of Panchkot and Mayurbhanj, like their counterpart in Chotanagpur, also granted brahmottar and devottar or rent free jagir to various castes of Hindu migrants in return for their services to the society. The Ramanand Vaishnavas of South India were accepted by the Panchkot Raja as the high priest of their kul or lineage. They were entrusted with the responsibility of worshipping the Kesabrai deity and got in return a large number of villages as lakheraj or rent free jagirs. The Rarhi Brahmins, mainly the Shaiva, Tantrik and Vaishnava sects were also given lakheraj land. Various professional castes belonging to the lower strata of the Hindu caste hierarchy like Nāpit (barber), Dhopa (waherman) Dom (drummers), Baidya (doctors), Sunri (wine makers) were also rewarded with lakheraj property for their services. The headman of the village, the Mahato or Manjhi, the priest of the village lava or nayki were also granted land. The result was large scale alienation of tribals from their ancestral lands.

The tribals were not only ousted from their own land but by the middle of the eighteenth century the communitarian adivasi society was already encompassed in a larger social system. It was no longer isolated from the stratified Hindu society. The caste system, based on social division of labour, gradually made its entry into the egalitarian adivasi society. The influx of alien
Jagirdars, zamindars, thikadars and mahajans changed the overall pattern of the adivasi economy. The tribals lost not only their lands, but also their own cultural heritage.

The East India Company got hold of the erstwhile Jungle Mahals and Dhalbhum from the 'Nawab' of Bengal, Mir Qasim in 1760. Within five years the Company became the revenue collecting agent of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II and by 1765 they got the dewani rights of Bengal. However, the Company had to face stiff challenges from the local zamindars while trying to establish its control over the region. They started to penetrate the hill areas in 1767 when the Resident of Midnapur, Mr Graham, sent Lieutenant Fergusson with a military contingent to subjugate the zamindars of Ramgarh, Lalgarh, Jamboni and Jhantiboni to the west of Midnapur. In 1769, Captain Camac brought Ramgarh, Palamau and Chotanagpur under his control. Thus by 1771, almost the entire Jharkhand region came under the jurisdiction of the East India Company.

The Company was actually interested in establishing a permanent legal and administrative structure which would ensure regular and smooth collection of revenue. The tribals' traditional rights over land and forests, their age old panchayat system were discarded and were replaced by individual ownership of land, money economy and a modern police administration.

The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1793 legalised the individual proprietorship in land and led to further alienation of tribal lands. The existing zamindars were granted full ownership with absolute proprietary rights in land. The idea was to make
arrangements for more efficient collection of revenues. This certainly brought injustice to the actual cultivators of the land. The occupancy rights of the poor peasants were completely ignored and they were reduced to mere tenants in their own lands. The zamindars — the revenue collecting intermediaries, constituted the key link between the central authority and the cultivators of land. By granting legal ownership through the settlement, the East India Company tried to create a class of 'loyal collaborators' who would enhance the collection of revenue so very necessary for building the empire.

By the end of the eighteenth century almost all the Rajas of the Jharkhand region, both big and small, accepted British control. They were followed soon by the local zamindars, thikadars and the markis — all of whom virtually became effective means of imposing alien rule on the people of Jharkhand. Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century a four tier system of administration came into being in the Chotanagpur region. The East India Company was at the top of the ladder, followed by the Maharaja of Chotanagpur, then a number of local Rajas, mainly non-tribals, who were subservient to the Maharaja and, finally, the intermediary rent collectors or thikadars appointed by the Rajas to collect rents directly from the peasants.

The Chotanagpur region, which was attached initially to the Calcutta Presidency, was later brought under the South West Frontier Agency with Benaras as its centre. The Agency was created as a Non-Regulation Province in accordance with the
Wilkinson’s Rule introduced under the Regulation XIII of 1833, after abolishing the Military Collectorship of the Ramgarh Hill Tract. The Agency area included Ramgarh district, the districts of Jungle Mahal and Midnapur. Agency administration was abolished vide Act XX of 1854 and its powers were vested in an officer appointed by the local government known as Commissioner. This Commissioner was placed directly under the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. It continued to be a Non-Regulation Province, but with a new name, Chutia Nagpur Division consisting of the districts of Birbhum, Lohardaga, Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Singhbhum and the tributary states of Chang - Bhakar, Korea, Sarguja, Jashpur, Udaipur, Gangpur and Bonai.

In the meantime, Christianity was introduced in the region by the middle of the nineteenth century. The tribals had already come in contact with the Jain, Buddhist, Hindu, Kabirpanthi and Vaishnava missionaries much before the English, German and Belgian missionaries came to Chotanagpur with the message of Christ. The tribals were not really bothered about the earlier contacts and there was hardly any adverse reaction from their side against the missionary zeal which did not pose any challenge to the tribal religious practices. But Christianity touched the very core of tribal life. It provided an alternative way of life quite distinct from the socio-religious practices followed by the tribals. Tribal deities, religious rituals as well as social practices were denounced. This resulted into a much sharper and sometimes even violent reaction from the tribal folk, anxious to retain their identity.
The main thrust of the administrative policies pursued by the East India Company was to increase the collection of revenue. They were hardly interested in the development of the region or for that matter improving the conditions of the people at large. The revenue demands were pitched so high that the 'revenue collecting intermediary' — the zamindars, had to offer nine tenths of the revenue collected to the government and remain content with the rest. Defaulting zamindars were replaced by new ones as their lands were confiscated and auctioned to recover dues. Lands sold to the highest bidder were grabbed most of the time by upper caste Hindus, mahajans or urban money lenders. The zamindars were, however, free to evolve new techniques of oppression — to impose various kinds of illegal levies and taxes on the poor peasants to meet the growing demands of the colonial masters. The result was large scale discontent among the deprived peasants who very often rose in protests and sometimes they were even joined by the so called 'loyal collaborators' — the zamindars, who were dispossessed of their land on grounds of arrears in revenue payment.

II

A series of tribal uprisings were reported during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. Sometimes the peasants revolted against their immediate oppressors — the zamindars who were the rent collecting agents of the East India Company, and sometimes the dispossessed zamindars themselves became the rallying point for the rebel peasants to fight
against the alien rulers. These insurrections were not mere expressions of particular local grievances, though such grievances were there to provide the initial spark, but they signified a general rejection of the alien rule. It is true that the alien rulers could bring along with them better amenities and other comforts of life, but the tribal yearning for independence, their concern for their own culture and identity as well as their spiritual bond with their ancestral land and forest led them to reject British rule. Christoph Haimendorf, a British anthropologist specialising on Indian tribes, observed that 'anyone with first hand experience of conditions in areas where aboriginals are subject to exploitation by more advanced populations must be surprised not by the occurrence of uprisings, but rather by the infrequency of violent action on the part of aboriginals deprived of the ancestral lands and the freedom they enjoyed before their contact with populations superior in economic and political power.'

a) **First Chuar Rebellion (1767)**

After getting the 'dawani' of Bengal in 1765, the East India Company decided to subjugate the rebel zamindars of the Jungle Mahal region by sending troops to the North and Western part of the Midnapur district. The Company thought of destroying the forts of the local zamindars, the symbol of resistance, to shatter their confidence and then to compel them to pay revenues. As the intentions of the Company became clear, the whole of Jungle Mahal, spread over an area of some two hundred miles, rose in
revolt by the beginning of 1767. This is known in history as the First Chuar Rebellion.

The zamindars of Jungle Mahal enjoyed freedom during the latter part of the Mughal rule. Naturally, they refused to accept the authority of the East India Company and resisted the Company's bid to subjugate them with the help of the pyke soldiers in their possession. Mr Graham, the Resident of Midnapur, sent Lieutenant Ferguson to Jungle Mahal to control the rebellion. The zamindars of Ramgarh, Lalgarh, Jamboni and Jhantiboni—all were defeated after putting up stiff resistance. The British troops advanced further and brought the zamindars of Singhbhum, Manbhum and Bankura under their control. The rebellion was quelled, the pyke rebels were defeated but not before inflicting heavy damages on their much fancied rival simply with the help of poisoned arrows and other traditional weapons.

b) Dhalbhum Rebellion (1769—1774)

In January 1770, the Bhumijes of Jungle Mahal revolted against the zamindar of Dhalbhum who, incidentally, was the most powerful zamindar of the region with a well-protected fort and a large number of armed pykes under his command. The rebels from the hilly territories of Ghatshila attacked and killed a number of 'sepoys'. Though peace was restored temporarily, the rebels once again resorted to indiscriminate lootings in the month of November. Jagannath Dhal, an ex-zamindar of the region, took advantage of the charged atmosphere and became the leader of the rebels who not only refused to pay land revenue to the zamindar, working as an agent of the East India Company, but also thought in terms of liberating the Dhalbhum.
region from the clutches of the colonial power.

Jagannath Dhal was ultimately successful to get back the zamindary of Dhalbhum by organising two massive attacks in 1773 and 1774. He was assisted in his fight against the colonisers not only by the hilly tribals of the region but also by the zamindar of Barabhum. Though basically this was a rebellion of tribal feudal lords against the foreign rulers, the participation of the common subjects adequately revealed their overall rejection of the alien rule.

c) Tilka Manjhi's War (1730 - 1735)

Meanwhile troubles developed also in the Bhagalpur region where the freedom loving Santals refused to allow the East India Company to interfere with their traditional way of life. These Santals enjoyed freedom even during the Mughal period and were not prepared to sacrifice their long cherished freedom to be dictated by the foreigners now. They refused to pay revenue or any kind of taxes. The Company responded with oppressive measures to bring them under control and force them to pay revenues. Refusal to abide by the dictates of the Company led to inhuman repression of the Santals.

Baba Tilka Manjhi (Murmu) protested against this barbaric attack on the Santals and organised a salvation army to liberate the area from the clutches of alien rulers. He even started imparting training to the local Santals in the use of their traditional
weapons like bow and arrow. The Santals under the leadership of Tilka Manjhi declared open rebellion against the British and took recourse to guerrilla warfare. The fighting continued for years resulting in the death of hundreds of Santal rebels. On January 13, 1784 Augustus Cleveland, the Collector of Bhagalpur, lost his life in an encounter with Tilka Manjhi. The death of Mr Cleveland made the foreign rulers furious and the level of oppression increased further. The British army was strengthened and police forces were deployed all over the region who started combing operations to apprehend Tilka and his followers. Adi vasis villages were set on fire, thousands of Santals were brutally killed. Tilka along with his followers was hiding in a forest in Tilakpur village near Bhagalpur. He was surrounded from all sides by the British army and was forced to come out of the forest for want of food. He was arrested after he put up a heroic fight against the superior colonial power in the battle fields of Sultanganj. Tilka was brought to Bhagalpur and was hanged after facing inhuman torture in May, 1785.

d) Pahadia Revolt (1738 — 1791)

The East India Company, after establishing their control over the Rajmahal region, took special measures to subjugate the adivasis, especially the hilly tribes of the region. Living in the hilly jungles, these 'Pahadias' were known for their barbaric nature and used to come down to the plains in search of food and very often resorted to forcible harvesting.
In 1772, Captain Brooke tried to control these hilly people with the help of a group of sepoys, but in vain. Augustus Cleveland became the Superintendent of the Rajmahal region in 1773. He was appointed Collector of Bhagalpur in 1779. He decided to win over the Pahadies through regular meetings and by offering monetary help to them. He was wise enough to realise the futility of using force to come to terms with these hilly tribemen. He arranged meetings with the Pahadia Sardars and Manjhis twice a year and introduced a monthly salary for them at the rate of Rupees ten and two respectively. He even provided them with a uniform of blue shirts and red turban recognising their superior status among the common people. Cleveland not only won the hearts of these savage people but also was successful to persuade hundreds of them to join the British force as 'sepoys'. However, his efforts to establish a colony for the Pahadies namely, Damin-i-koh, failed as the tribals refused to settle there.

By the middle of 1788 the Malpahadia rebels started attacking the Kutcheries and Kuthias of foreign as well as native businessmen and zamindars in an area situated about hundred miles north of Birbhum district. In the first week of January 1789, some five hundred rebels attacked and looted a big market and granaries of local zamindars. The rebellion gradually spread to Bishnupur in Bankura district. Ilambazar town, the main business centre of Bankura, was captured from the British in June 1789. By the beginning of 1790, Rajnagar, the old capital town of Bishnupur, also fell to the adivasi rebels who by then got hold of almost the entire district of Birbhum.
Bishnupur was also captured by the rebels as the British soldiers fled the region under instructions from Mr Christopher Keating, the Collector of Birbhum. The area remained under the control of the rebels for a few months as the fighting was suspended along with the onset of the monsoon.

The East India Company took some administrative measures to counter the rebellion. Apprehending mass upsurge it decided to divide the region into two separate districts, namely, Birbhum and Bankura, and brought them under a separate Collector. These Collectors apart from looking after collection of revenue worked as Chief of the army stationed in the region. However, it was soon realised that it was impossible to counter the rebellion effectively until and unless the Collectors fought the rebels unitedly. Special responsibility was given to Mr Christopher Keating to evolve strategies to suppress the movement.

In their fight against the British army Pahadia rebels used country made guns and swords and did not rely solely on their traditional arms like bows and arrows. They fought bravely, sometimes with a definite plan, like a disciplined and well trained military force. Though generally depicted by the British historians as a threat to the people of plains, when it came to the question of fighting the colonisers of the region, the Pahadia rebels found the peasants of Birbhum and Bankura by their side. However, organisational weakness, internal squabbles among the rebels and lack of effective leadership ultimately led the Pahadias to surrender to the British force in 1791.
e) **Second Chuar Rebellion (1798 – 1799)**

The Bhumijes of Manbhum along with other tribal communities of the region fought against colonial exploitation in 1798 – 1799. Their fight against the diku migrants and the British was basically a result of excessive revenue demands of the new masters leading to alienation of tribal lands.

In 1795 the Raja of Pachet had to sell his estate for arrears of revenue. The estate was bought by his dewan Ram Sundar Mitra. In the same year, the zamindar of Raipur, Durjan Singh, was similarly dispossessed of his estate which was bought by one Hira Lal. The local adivasi communities did not welcome the new owners and in Pachet adivasi peasants led by their sardars started a non-cooperation movement against the new Raja. They refused to cultivate his lands and pay revenue. They even attacked the revenue kutcheries of Mitra and threatened his tehsildars with dire consequences. In Raipur the reaction of the adivasi people was somewhat more violent. In May 1798, a gathering of some one thousand five hundred Bhumij peasants set fire to the bazar and kutchery of the new zamindar, refusing to accept his authority.

The rebellion gradually spread to the Midnapur town and engulfed over a hundred villages in the region. Backed by the Queen of Karnagad and zamindars of Harajole, the rebels paralysed the administrative machinery, foiling the British Company's bid to collect revenue at an excessive rate. They were led by Madhu Singh of Manbhum, while Madhab Singh was in the forefront in Barabhum. Ex-zamindar Durjan Singh provided leadership in the Raipur P.S. of the Bankura district. At least thirty villages came under the control
of the rebels and the East India Company had to take the help of the army to counter the movement.

One interesting feature of this particular movement was that the poor adivasi peasants were backed by Government employees, tehsildars and even the zamindars of the region in their fight against the colonial power. A unique display of solidarity among the neighbouring zamindars added a new dimension to the movement. Different zamindars of the region informed the magistrate that they would join hands in a general rebellion if the original zamindars were not restored to power. Surprised by this rare solidarity among the local people against colonisation, the British took several measures to sow seeds of division among the Bhunij peasants, the tehsildars and the zamindars. It was decided to return the lands of the tehsildars. The zamindars were also assured that their estates would not be sold in future, for arrears of revenue. The zamindars were further entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining peace in the region. Thus the colonial power was largely successful in alienating the tribals, whom they gave a derogatory name 'chuar' and in order to discredit their heroic struggle against colonial expansion described it as Chuar Rebellion.

f) Mayek Hangama (1806 - 1816)

The East India Company after gaining control over Bengal concentrated mainly on increasing their revenue collection. Chhatra Singha, the ruler of Bagri, in the northern part of Midnapur, refused to meet the enhanced revenue demands of the Company. Consequently he was dispossessed of his zamindari. The jagirs of the
nayeks of the region were also confiscated in 1806. This led to a situation whereby the nayeks ousted from their own land, were virtually on the brink of destruction and had no other option but to revolt for their own survival.

In the face of such a crisis Achal Singha, a retired soldier of the Bagri government, took upon himself the responsibility of uniting the dispossessed nayek community and led them to fight for their rights against the mighty colonial power. His long experience as a soldier helped Achal Singha to organise successfully a rebel force, well trained in the use of traditional weapons. The rebels adopted the technique of guerrilla warfare taking advantage of the dense forest near the Garbeta region and was able to inflict heavy losses on the British army, equipped with sophisticated weapons. The rebels used to come out of their hiding all on a sudden and used to disappear behind the thick forests after catching their opponents off-guard. The rebellion spread all over the Bagri region and its impact was felt even in the adjoining Bishnupur of the Bankura district and Hooghly.

The guerrilla war continued for a long time and the British finally decided to destroy the entire forest, providing shelter to the guerrillas, with the help of the canons in their possession. A large number of nayeks were killed in the attack. But the British army failed to arrest the leader of the rebels - Achal Singha. Achal Singha started reorganising the nayeks with renewed vigour. This time the nayeks were joined by the Maharashtrians and Rajput fighters who were looking for an opportunity to take revenge on the East India Company who had earlier captured Orissa from the Maharashtrians.
This combined force of the rebels started raiding the British occupied territories to regain their lost wealth. The British, on the other hand, were trying desperately to trace Achal Singha but could not succeed. By this time Chhatra Singha, who was removed from the throne of Bagri earlier, helped the British to capture Achal Singha in order to get back his zamindari. Nayek Achal Singha was killed by the British but Chhatra Singha could neither earn British trust nor could he regain his own zamindari. The nayeks continued their fight against the colonial power even after the passing away of Achal Singha, under different leaders. In 1836, the nayeks ultimately gave in to their much superior adversaries when more than two hundred rebels were killed by the British force.

g) Kol Ulgulan (1831-1832)

By the 1830s tribal protests against the colonial oppression engulfed larger areas and became much more intense. The localised outbursts of tribal agony took the form of general insurgency against alien rulers. The Kol Ulgulan of 1831-32 was one such example when the poor adivasis reacted against the introduction of a 'complex, legalistic administrative system'—the Cornwallis system, into an under-developed area without discrimination and proper supervision. British penetration into the central tribal belt had already alienated the tribal Rajas and zamindars; now the introduction of an alien system ruined the tribal economy further.

In 1831 Maharaja Kunwar Haranath Singh, a local zamindar of Govindpur, arbitrarily dispossessed the adivasis, mainly Kols and
Mundas, from twelve villages and gave the land to some Sikhs and Muslims. The resultant protest saw united efforts on the part of the Mundas, Hos, Bhunyas and Oraons to come out of the double oppression let loose by the diku—British alliance. The rebels from Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Palamau and Manbhum under the leadership of Singhray and Binray Manki fought not only against land alienation and bonded labour but also against the cultural subjugation of the local adivasis. They fought against an oppressive system perpetuated by the non-tribal zamindars, traders, money-lenders and the contractors. The tribals openly declared that all taxes were obnoxious to them. They decided to march to Calcutta to set up their own government and to introduce the eight anna tax on ploughs which they considered to be sufficient.

The trouble started in Sonepur on December 11, 1831 when a group of Kols from Boochang and Jamoor looted two hundred heads of cattle from the village of Kumang. Such raids and looting were not uncommon, but the scale was unusually high. The attackers, however, did not inflict any physical injury on any one and refrained from plundering or burning property. It was soon followed by a raid on four other villages in the Sonepur pargana by some seven hundred men. This raid on December 20, 1831 was violent in nature. The villages under attack were plundered and burnt causing injury to two Sikhs.

One significant aspect of both these attacks was that these were attacks on outsiders, a Muslim—Mahomedally in Kumang and a Sikh—Hari Singh in Sonepur, both of whom had taken over adivasi villages. Several other villages were also attacked, plundered and burnt within a fortnight. The adivasi peasants were very often
backed by mankis (circle headmen) and mundas (village headmen) in their fight against outsiders. In a major attack on January 12, 1832, some four thousand Kols captured Govindpur and almost the entire pargana of Belkuda was plundered and burnt. The main target of the rebels was the houses of the non-tribal people. By now they were attacking the Hindus, Muslims and other foreigners indiscriminately—who had settled in their villages to pursue their own agricultural or other commercial interests. The rebellion engulfed a large area within a short time and by January 26 tribal rebels had complete control over the whole of Chotanagpur along with its five dependencies, barring some of the forest tracts to the south of Palkote.

The first attempt to check the rebels came from Captain Wilkinson, who along with magistrate Cuthbert tried to counter the insurgents locally. Reinforcements came soon with Captain Malthy and some of the Rajas and Maharajas also came forward with some assistance for the British. But while Captain Wilkinson was busy in containing the rebels in Chotanagpur, trouble had already started developing in Patkum pargana of the Jungle Mahal district. In fact, the rebels from Chotanagpur and its dependencies had sought refuge in Patkum and continued their struggle against alien rulers from there. The rebellion was ultimately suppressed by the British but not before incurring heavy loss of lives and property on both sides.
h) **Ganga Narayan Hangama (1832 - 1833)**

The Bhumij Revolt of 1832 - 33, also known as the 'Ganga Narayan Hangama', took place in the Jungle Mahals and the Dhalbhum region of the Midnapur district of the Bengal presidency. Like the 'Kol Ulgulan', this Hangama was also a direct fall out of the introduction of the Cornwallis system into a backward tribal region. The general discontent of the adivasis coupled with the personal grievances of Ganga Narayan Singh, a member of the Barabhum zamindar family, produced a unique anti-colonial uprising.

It all centred around the disputed succession in the Barabhum zamindar family. The Bhumijes protested against the British Court's order that the eldest born of the second wife of Raja Vivika Narayan should be the heir to the throne as opposed to the adivasi custom which favoured the son of the first wife. Tribal discontent over their loss of land and excessive taxes led them to rally behind Ganga Narayan, the grandson of Vivika Narayan who however, fought for his own personal interest.

At the beginning of the uprising the rebels killed the dewan of Barabhum - Madhab Singh for his diku like behaviour. They looted the palace of the Raja and the munsif's kutchery, set fire to the police stations and attacked government offices—all symbols of oppression. Ganga Narayan's claim to be an avatar of 'Kal' (goddess Kali) helped him rally the already aggrieved tribal peasants around him. According to an official report of 1832,
nearly every Bhoomij, whether Ghatwal or Ryot, had by this time joined Ganga Narayan who announced his determination to clear the country of police thanas as far as the Great Benaras Road. Ganga Narayan was successful in capturing Barabhum from the British with the help of some three thousand Bhoomij rebels and conferred the title of Raja on himself. The hangama soon spread to Akro, Ambika Nagar, Raipur, Shyamsundarpur and Phulkusuma regions of present day Bankura district and Shilda, Kuilapal regions of Midnapur district. The British force succeeded in controlling the rebels by November - December 1832, when Ganga Narayan, faced with British troops from all sides, fled to Singbhum along with some of his followers. He was, however, captured later and killed in February 1833.

1) Santal Hool (1855)

The Santal Hool of 1855, now elevated to the status of India's first war of independence, was a violent expression of the simmering discontent and tension among the Santals against the exploitation by the non-tribal mahajans, zamindars and British merchants. Led by Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav brothers, the hool (rebellion) centred around the Santal Parganas - including more than four parganas of present-day Birbhum, Bhagalpur, Munghyr as well as adjoining Murshidabad.

Generally peace loving, the Santals did not think in terms of any violent protest against the diku exploiters till the middle of 1854. Their leaders initially thought of securing autonomy for the Santal province through negotiations with the East India
Company. They even left their villages in some places without any protest, to avoid confrontation. But in May - June 1854, the Santal peasants in Damin-i-koh attacked the mahajans' residence six consecutive times within two weeks, but interestingly enough did not touch the mahajan's property. These attacks were basically intended to take revenge on the exploiting mahajans and moneylenders. The Santals led by Bir Singh Pargana of Sasan, Bir Singh Manjhi of Boreo, Kaole Paramanik of Sindree and Domon Manjhi of Hatbandha were successful to frighten the diku exploiters who sent reports to Mohesh Datta Daroga of Badlagunj thana and also to the Queen of Pakur estate.

For about a year peace prevailed in the region as no fresh incidence of violence or looting was reported. However, behind this apparent calmness lay the seeds of the imminent storm. In 1855, mahajans complained to Mohesh Daroga that the Santals had again become turbulent — burning and plundering their houses. The Daroga along with some chowkidars and constables proceeded towards the village Thatkathia to arrest the erring Santals. Indiscriminate arrests and cruelty with the prisoners infuriated the Santals who by now lost faith in the British administration, promoting unholy nexus between the local police and the diku mahajans.

In early 1855 thousands of Santals assembled in Damin-i-koh to discuss ways and means to come out of the clutches of the oppressors. Some six to seven thousand Santals came from Birbhum, Bankura, Chotanagpur and Hazaribagh. They demanded punishment for the exploiting mahajans who had turned the Santals into paupers. In the mean time around mid-April, Sido and Kanhu, who hailed from the Bhagnadihi
village, told their followers that they had received direct instructions from Chando Bonga, the Santal God, to fight their enemies without fear. They assured the Santals of victory over the diku exploiters as they would be assisted by the divine authority. This assurance of divine assistance brought a significant change in Santal psyche.

The rejuvenated Santals assembled at night on June 30, 1855 at Bhagnadihi village to chalk out their programmes. Some ten thousand Santal peasants from four hundred villages resolved that henceforth they would not pay land taxes, would not pay back their loans and would be free to cultivate as much land as they could as they were the true owners and rulers of the land. The Santal leaders wrote letters to the Government officials, police officers and local zamindars—informing them of their decisions and seeking redressal of their grievances. They even thought of marching towards Calcutta, the then capital of British India, to seek justice from the Company Bahadur.

The hool started with the killing of Mahesh Daroga when on July 7 he arrived at 'Panchkhetia Bazar' along with some chowkidars and constables to arrest the rebel leaders. He accused the Santals of theft and asked his men to tie up Sido and Kanhu. The rebels responded quickly by killing the notorious Daroga along with some of his accomplices. They even killed five mahajans known for their misdeeds. The hool spread like a wild fire and engulfed the adjoining regions within a short time.
During the first ten days of the hool, the Santals drove out the British from Dumka, Bhagalpur, Ranchi, Singbhum, Hazaribagh, Lohardaga and Dhanbad. But while advancing towards Bengal, the rebels suffered a serious setback at Pakur and conceded major defeats at Maheshpur Berhait near Dumka and Raghunathpur. These reverses, however, could not dampen the spirit of the Santals and the hool spread to Godda, Pakur, Maheshpur, Murshidabad and Birbhum on the one hand and the entire Chotanagpur region on the other.

The Santals attacked Godda in Bhagalpur district of Bihar under the leadership of Gocho Manjhi. They started killing the exploiting mahajans of the region to do away with feudal oppression. While advancing towards Pakur, Gocho was joined by Tribhuban Santal along with his followers. They sent an invitation to Sido and Kanhu and with the help of thousands of Santals and some lower caste Hindus kept Pakur in a state of seige for three days and three nights. On the fourth day i.e. July 12, 1855, Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav entered the Pakur palace and looted it. Later, they killed another mahajan Deendayal Rai who had declared himself as the new zamindar of Pakur. The rebels then advanced towards Murshidabad district and in spite of resistance from the British forces on their way, they succeeded in plundering Maheshpur palace and seized a lot of wealth. But on the 16th of July, the rebel force of some four thousand Santals suffered a major defeat in the hands of the colonial power. Sido, Kanhu and Bhairav suffered injuries while more than two hundred rebels were killed. But even after this setback the Santals were able to liberate almost half of the Birbhum district from the British. For a long time Malhati, Rampurhat, Nagore, Seuri, Langulia, Gurjori
and some other areas of the district were under their control.  

Though the Santal rebels met with some initial success by defeating the Company forces here and there, it was difficult for them ultimately to succeed in the face of a much superior attack. Some thirty to fifty thousand rebels armed with swords, axes, bows and arrows bravely faced twelve to fourteen thousand soldiers well versed with modern techniques of warfare. In some places the rebels took resort to guerrilla tactics, killed a number of British and native soldiers and set ablaze government offices and kutcheries. The British Company took serious note of the progress of the hool and apart from sending fresh troops, appointed a 'Special Commissioner for the suppression of the insurrection'. The local zamindars, mahajans as well as the European Indigo planters came forward to assist the British with men, money and even elephants. The British troops unleashed a reign of terror in order to suppress the movement. The army brutality reached a new height when on July 29, they razed thirty six Santal villages to the ground on a single day.  

By the middle of August 1855, peace returned to the region and the British administration thought that the rebels had fled to the adjoining areas following army action. On August 17, in a declaration of amnesty the Special Commissioner appealed to the rebels to surrender within ten days, but warned those who had misled the Santals and were responsible for the loss of human lives of severe punishment. The Commissioner also announced rewards ranging from Rupees ten thousand to one thousand for apprehending leaders of different categories.  

In the month of September some three thousand Santals, led by Muchia, Komna Jele, Rama and Soondra Manjhi plundered and burnt a
few police stations and looted some villages. More than thirty villages in the Operbundah and Nangoola police station areas were plundered within a fortnight. The rebels liberated a wide area on the eastern side of the river Ganges ranging from Bhagalpur in the north to Grand Trunk Road in the south and upto Tundi pargana in the west.

The British administration proclaimed Martial Law on November 10, 1855, putting the vast area of Bhagalpur, Murshidabad and Birbhum into the hands of military. The rebellion was crushed by some fifteen thousand soldiers who unleashed an unprecedented reign of terror. Thousands of Santals were killed, the leaders executed and innumerable innocent Santals were imprisoned without proper trial. On December 31, the government declared that the insurrection had completely been suppressed though the Martial Law continued till January 3, 1856.

The governmental enquiry that followed the rebellion, recognised the Santals as a 'national minority' and suggested measures to prevent the outbreak of any such disturbance in future. A separate non-regulation district of 'Sonthal Parganas' was created which was placed under a Deputy Commissioner and kept outside the jurisdiction of regular courts and general laws of the land.

It is true that the exploitation of zamindars, the extortion of mahajans, the corruption of bureaucrats, the oppression by the police, the cheating by traders as well as total absence of justice in the administrative system—all combined together to take Santal discontent to a boiling point in 1855. But over and above a deeper sense of freedom—"Santal yearning for independence, a dream of the ancient days when they had no overlords, perhaps a memory of prehis-
toric times when ..... they were themselves masters of the Gangetic valley and had not yet been driven back by the Aryan invaders" was instrumental behind the hool. However, the main inspiration behind the movement was the Santals' belief of being backed by 'Chando Bonga', the Santal God, in their fight against the exploiters. This very belief of divine involvement and inevitable victory made the Santals a little adventurous.

The hool though had an apparent ethnic bias, significantly, was not confined to the Santals alone. Though the Santals provided the leadership they were ably assisted by the indigenous artisan castes like the Kamars (blacksmiths), the Kumars (potters), the Telis (oilmen), the Gowals (milkmen) as well as the Komias (Muslim weavers)—who had developed a close relationship with their tribal brethren over the years. The blacksmiths played an active role in manufacturing and repairing of weapons while the milkmen worked as informers and guides to the rebels. Thus the unity of the lower stratum of the society under feudal oppression gave a new dimension to the hool, which no longer remained an uprising of a particular tribal community against local feudal lords and mahajans; it attained the status of an anti-colonial, anti-feudal struggle for freedom.

j) Kherwar Movement (1874 - 1882)

The experience of the hool of 1855 made the Santals realise that only such occasional violent outbursts were not enough to improve their socio-economic conditions as well as to put an end to all sorts of harassment meted out to them by the dikus. By the early seventies the Santals started adopting a different strategy
to protest against the discriminatory and exploitative measures taken by the British administration. They decided to shun violence as far as possible and resorted to non-violent strategies like non-payment of land rents and refusal to pay back the government grants distributed during the crisis.  

The famine of 1873–74 made things miserable for the poor Santals. They were further aggrieved by the discriminatory attitude of the administration in distributing food grains and other materials to the affected people. While the mahajans and people from other communities could get them quite easily, the poor Santals had to wait for long to get an access to those relief materials. This was coupled by an abnormal increase in land rents by local zamindars.

A distinct change in the Santal mentality was evident by this time. While contemplating a revolt in line of the great hool of 1855, the Santals this time, fresh from their experience during the hool, adopted a different strategy to drive away the British and the Christians from their land. They were initially led by Bhagirath Manjhi of Taldiha village in Godda sub-division, who was closely associated with several agitations of the Santals since 1868. Bhagirath was declared Raja of the land. After taking up the responsibility, Bhagirath announced his plan to secure a new era of Santal prosperity. He successfully blended politics with a religious flavour and led the Santals to dream of returning to the days of their past glory.

The immediate cause of the Santal revolt of 1871 was the sudden increase in land rents by the zamindars of the region. The zamindars of Hendoa, Balanatora, Shankara, Godda and some other adjoining areas increased land rents abnormally. The aggrieved
Santals appealed to the Assistant Commissioner of Dumka but in vain. The Commissioner instead of taking any remedial action, imposed a fine of Rupees ten on each of the nine Santal leaders as they had shown the audacity to complain collectively. The Santals' appeal to the court also fell into deaf ears. Such an apathy and injustice from the administration infuriated the Santals. Bhagirath, who added the title of 'babaji' to his name, gave a call to liberate the land of the Santals from the oppressors. The Santals under his leadership had developed a distinct consciousness as a separate tribe with a clear vision of an emerging independent 'Santal Raj'. While avoiding the path of violence, Bhagirath did not revert back to the pre-1855 policy of appeals and requests to the administration for finding solutions to their problems. The Santals resorted to non-violent non-cooperation paralysing the economy of the region for a while.

Bhagirath was arrested soon with one of his close associates on charges of treason. But that could not deter the spirit of the rejuvenated Santals who under the leadership of one of Bhagirath's disciple, Jnan Manjhi, continued their struggle against the oppressive system. The new leader instructed the Santals through an order not to pay land rents unless a new rate was introduced. Jnan Manjhi was also arrested in no time and his mantle was taken up by another disciple of Bhagirath, Dhona Manjhi. Dhona declared openly in the Burtola area of Rajmahal that a 'Santal Raj' had already been established in the region. The subsequent arrest of Dhona Manjhi weakened the movement which continued thereafter only sporadically.
The movement got a new lease of life during 1830-82. It started spreading to nearby regions since October 1880. The immediate cause behind the resurgence of the Santal rebels was the decision of the British administration to conduct census operations in the region. The Santals' bitter experience with the foreign administration— their distrust and apprehensions led them to oppose collection of data of various kinds. Not fully aware of the implications of various types of enquiries, the Santals were guided by rumours which even led them to believe that it was another ploy to impose new taxes. Some even considered census operations as a device to convert them into Christians.

Led by Dubia Gosain, a Hindu ascetic, the Santals in the eighties were much more matured politically and forthright in their campaign for a 'Santal Raj'. They openly declared their goal and were quite vocal about their rights over land and their unwillingness to pay land rents. They were even sure of their success in driving out the minority foreigners who were few in numbers. The British government was prompt to react. They put Gosain behind the bars and placed the entire area under the control of the police and the army.

The movement was revived once again in 1891. The leaders stuck to their old demands of restoring lands to the adivasis and non-payment of land rents. They even declared the end of the colonial rule and the introduction of a self-government. This revival was, however, shortlived as the colonial power successfully suppressed the possibility of a resurgence of 'Santal Raj'.

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'Kherwar' (or Kherwal) was, in fact, the ancient name of the Santals which represented the memory of their golden past when the Santals, free from outside exploitation, were their own masters. The main thrust of the Kherwar movement was revivalistic. The Santals dreamt of going back to a golden era of tribal history, marked by independence and glory. The leaders identified themselves with supernatural beings assuring the Santals to usher in a terrestrial state of righteousness and justice most similar to the days when they lived in Champa in absolute independence and had no rent or tribute to pay to anyone. Though the movement initially preached monotheism and tried to introduce internal social reforms, it gradually transformed itself into a campaign against revenue settlement operations. However, the economic factors leading to the movement were concealed behind a religious veil.

The movement leaders sought to introduce social reforms in line with the Hindu traditions and adopted many Hindu symbols to mobilise the masses. Perhaps they thought that by adopting Hindu values and behaviour patterns they would be able to improve their socio-economic status. Thus while the 'Santal Hool' drove away the Santals from the Hindus through its contra-acculturative tendencies, the Kherwar movement encouraged greater acculturation. This, however, could not overcome the psychological barrier between these two communities. The Santals remained ambivalent in their attitude towards the dikus as before, admiring their intelligence but at the same time, hating their superiority complex as well as exploitative tendencies.
k) Sardar Larai (1875 - 1895)

While the Santals were fighting against the colonisers for their independence, to establish a 'Santal Raj' in the line of their good old days the Mundas and Oraons were also busy in raising their voice against the diku landlords, the British as well as the Christian missionaries during 1875 - '95. The agitation known as the 'Sardar Larai' (leaders' war) aimed at restoring lands to the tribal peasants and 'doing away with the imposition of 'beth begari' (forced labour) on them. The landlords in order to increase their collection of rents took recourse to various oppressive measures - often destroying the crops and houses of the tenants. They even refused to give receipts for the rents paid. The sardars or the chiefs of different tribal communities advised the tribals not to pay rent to the exploiting zamindars and even moved the law courts, through a Calcutta - based Anglo - Indian lawyer to protect tribals' rights over land and forests. They were also keen to preserve the cultural identity and religious purity of the tribals. Sardars' efforts to provide legal protection to the helpless tribals, however, could not succeed as they were eventually cheated by the lawyer.

In 1881, a group of tribal sardars protested against the exploiters in an organised manner. At Nava Ratan Garh both the Mundas and Oraons rallied around John the Baptist to wipe out corruption of all sorts and exploitation relating to tribal lands. Though initially both the Mundas and Oraons joined the movement and a 'corporate self - consciousness' was gradually developing during the course of the movement, around mid-eighties the Oraons distanced themselves from the movement.
The most unique feature of this 'Sardar Larai' was that the tribals, apart from taking up arms, for the first time, took recourse to law to protect their rights and privileges. They even collected money to fight for their cases in the Privy Council.

b) Birsa Munda Uprising (1895 - 1900)

The Birsa Munda uprising of 1895-1900, confined mainly to the districts of Ranchi and Singbhum in Bihar, was primarily directed against the British and non-tribal landowners. It aimed at establishing a 'Birsaita Raj' with Birsa as its 'new king' after driving away all the foreigners, not only the British but even the Hindus and Muslims, from the region. Land, forest, people and religion were the key issues behind this uprising. Economic exploitation in the form of land and forest alienation, social exploitation of tribal women and religious exploitation of converting tribals to Christianity were the main issues.

Birsa, son of a sharecropper, who had received some education from the missionaries and later came under Vaishnava influence, was a reformist and a revivalist too. He became a critic of the traditional tribal customs, religious beliefs and practices. He called upon the Mundas to fight against superstition, give up animal sacrifice, stop taking intoxicants, to wear the sacred thread and retain tribal traditions of worshipping in the 'sarna' (sacred grove) instead of temples. Gradually, Birsa gained the stature of 'Birsai Bhagwan' (Birsa God) in the eyes of the Mundas.
Birsa had the experience of participating in a movement in 1893 – '94 aimed at preventing the Forest Department from taking away the village waste lands. In 1895, young Birsa declared that he had received a message from the supreme God and claimed to be a prophet with supernatural healing powers. His strategies against the British were primarily non-cooperation but he was not against direct confrontation, if needed. He was jailed for two years in 1895 by the British who suspected a tribal conspiracy under his leadership. However, he returned 'much more of a firebrand'. A series of night meetings were held in the forest during 1898 – '99, where Birsa allegedly urged the 'killing of Thikadars and Jagirdars and Raja's and Hakims and Christians' and promised 'that the guns and bullets would turn to water.' Even the effigies of the British Raj were burnt by the tribals. On Christmas eve, 1899, the Birsaites shot arrows and tried to burn down Churches over an area covering six police stations in the districts of Ranchi and Singhbum. The police became their main targets creating panic among the force.

The British tried to crush the uprising at gun point because of its potential threat to their domination. On January 9, 1900, the rebels were defeated at Sail Rukab hill. Birsa was captured three weeks later and died in jail. Nearly three hundred fifty Mundas were put on trial, three were hanged and forty four transported for life.

With Birsa's death the movement dissipated, but Birsa himself became a folk hero. The agrarian revolt spearheaded by him was successful in the sense that the British henceforth tried to prevent or at least to minimise the loss of tribal land to the non-tribal dikus. The result was the enactment of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908.
Meanwhile the Santal peasants of Rampurhat subdivision in the district of Birbhum raised their voice against the corrupt mahajans and zamindars during 1906 —1907. They were led by Durga Manjhi and Brojo Manjhi of Thakurpara and Salunga village respectively. The Santals were specially annoyed with the money-lending mahajans who used to lend money with the ulterior motive of grabbing the land of the poor peasants. Dishonest mahajans used to record repayments of debts inaccurately and were not hesitant to commit even forgeries.

The aggrieved peasants not only fought for their lost lands but also against their forcible Christianisation by the Indian Home Mission. The religious activities of the Mission often led the local people to migrate to the neighbouring districts. In order to counter the challenge of Christianity, Brojo Murmu even introduced Durga Puja in his own residence.

Durga Manjhi, who was the Parganait of Rampurhat thana, was himself educated and became the undisputed leader of the Santals by virtue of his witty tongue. In December 1906, he submitted a petition to the Lieutenant Governor seeking his intervention to solve the problems faced by the Santals of the region. This petition was repeated in February 1907 and again towards the end of the same year — praying for the same rights and privileges for the Santals of the region as enjoyed by them in the Santal Paraganas. Discrimination persisted inspite of appeals to the highest seat of administrative authority resulting in large scale discontent among the local Santals.
Another revivalist movement took place under the leadership of Jatra Oraon of Chingri village in the Bishnupur police station of Ranchi. Known as Tana Bhagat movement, it promised to bring back a millennial era of Oraon rule. On April 21, 1914 Jatra Oraon proclaimed that he had received a divine message from 'Dharmesh', the Supreme God of the Oraons, to revive the 'Oraon Raj'. He along-with his followers would become Rajas and share the kingdom. He was also entrusted with the job of purifying the lives of the Oraons to make them equal to the Christians and Hindus in social status.

The official reports of the survey and settlement operations in the Chotanagpur region during the years 1902 - 1908 clearly show that the Oraons of Western Chotanagpur had to pay rent at a much higher rate than their Munda counterparts in the east. Naturally, they also suffered a greater loss of their ancestral lands than their neighbours. They had further to meet the excessive demands for unpaid labour from their diku landlords. They were also forced to act as forest beaters during hunting and had to carry bag and baggages of the local police for a mere pittance. All these gave rise to widespread discontent among the Oraons who decided to free their lands from foreign settlers.

The basic argument behind the movement was that land is the gift of God and no one has the right to interfere with the tribals' right over land. A 'no-rent agitation' was launched against the diku landowners as the poor and illiterate tribals were unable to
redress their grievances through legal procedures. Jatra Oraon asked his followers to stop ploughing the fields of landlord and to refuse to work as labourers under any non-Oraon zamindar. Some 26,000 Oraon followers were mobilised around Jatra during the hey days of the movement. It spread like wildfire among the Oraon population of Ranchi, Palamau and Hazaribagh. Some Munda and Kharias also joined the movement.

Jatra Oraon along with his leading disciples was arrested on April 23, 1914 for instigating the common tribals to refuse to work for the zamindars and the government and endangering peace. They were tried in the subdivisional court and were imprisoned. After coming out of the prison on June 2, 1915 Jatra, however, abandoned the leadership of the movement. Later he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi and joined the non-cooperation movement against the British along with his followers.

A succession of gurus followed. Next in line was Litho Oraon who declared herself a goddess and preached on the same line as Jatra did. She was also imprisoned and faded out after her release. In November, 1915, the leadership was taken by Mangor Oraon who eventually suffered the same fate. The movement showed unusual maturity under the leadership of Sibu Oraon and Maya Oraon in 1919. Sibu withdrew the restrictions on food, drink and conduct earlier imposed by Jatra and declared that Tanas were equal to the Hindus and Muslims.
The Tana Bhagat movement was basically an ethnic, revivalist movement among the Oraons, which called for 'purity of life'. Jatra Bhagat himself denounced the traditional religious practices of the Oraon community and asked his followers to practise 'purity of behaviour'. He asked his followers to do away with animal sacrifice, give up meat and alcoholic drinks and also to reject traditional songs, dances and showy ornaments.

Unlike other tribal movements in the region which mostly stayed away from the mainstream of the freedom movement, the Tana Bhagats joined the struggle for swaraj and thus significantly broadened their level of consciousness from the local to the national. The movement, however, was less pervasive and less violent in comparison with other tribal protests of the mid and late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it successfully brought into focus the discrimination and injustice meted out to the local adivasis by the diku overlords.

III

Though at the outset most of these movements appear to be mere expressions of local grievances, these were basically protests against colonisation of tribal lands. While ethnicity did play a major role in the initial stages of these movements, agrarian grievances were common and central to all these protests. Tribal peasants resisted all the intruders whether they were the new zamindars, money lenders, mahajans, rent - collecting thikadars
or the British troops, to protect their economic rights and long cherished freedom. An overall rejection of alien authority and refusal to be dominated by the diku exploiters marked these insurrections. This tradition of anti-feudal, anti-colonial struggles by the tribals ever since the last quarter of the eighteenth century, has found a new expression in the Jharkhand movement of the present century. In this sense, all these movements over the last couple of centuries can very well be described as the precursors of the ongoing movement in the central tribal belt of India.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

4. Ibid., p 140.
5. Ibid., p 140.
6. 'Diku' means outsider in Mandari language. According to some others, originating from Hindi 'dik' it means deceiver, exploiter.


25. Non-Regulation Provinces were under the direct control of military officers instead of civilians.

26. Wilkinson's Rule was adopted by the British granting wideranging administrative and economic powers to the tribal chieftains of the Chotanagpur region to end animosity between the government and the indigenous people of the land. This rule not only empowered the village chiefs to frame their own laws and collect revenue on behalf of the British Government, but also allowed them to have a separate judiciary in the region.


32. ‘Pykes’ used to play the role of the police during Mughal period. They enjoyed rent-free land in return for their services rendered to the Mughal government. During British regime these pykes not only lost their lands but also lost their jobs.


40. Letter from the Collector of Bearbhoom to Lt. Smith, January 10, 1789 as quoted in Roy Suprakash, op. cit., p 121.


42. Letter from the Collector of Bearbhoom to the Collector of Burdwan, February 16, 1789 as quoted in Roy Suprakash, op. cit., p 122.
43. *Letter from the Collector of Beerbhum to the Governor,*
   October 16, 1789 as quoted in Roy Suprakash, op. cit., p 119.

44. Hunter W.W., op. cit., p 79.

45. Dasgupta Swapan, op. cit., p 116, but according to Binay
   Mahato (1984) and S.B. Chowdhury (1977) the estate was bought
   by Neelambar Mitra.


50. *Chuar* means uncivilised, arrogant. See for reference
   Minz M, op. cit., p 7 and Jha J.C., The Bhumij Revolt
   (1832-33), p 33.


52. Basu Jogesh Chandra, *Mednipur Ithihas* (in Bengali),

53. Ibid., p 243.

54. *Ulgulan* means rebellion in Mundari and Ho languages.


56. Ibid., p 118.

59. Ibid., p 61.

60. Ibid., p 63.

61. Ibid., p 65.

62. Ibid., p 74.

63. Dasgupta Swapan, op. cit., p 112.

64. Jha J.C., op. cit., p 69.


66. Research conducted by the Bihar Tribal Institute, as reported in *The Statesman* (Calcutta), January 1, 1992.


68. Ibid.


72. Chowdhury Arun (ed.), op. cit. p 28. See also Chowdhury Binay, op. cit.


77. Ibid., p 32.

78. Datta Kalikinkar, op. cit., p 33.

79. Ibid., p 35.


81. Rasul Abdullah, op.cit., p 32.

82. Roy Suprakash, op. cit., p 331.


85. Ibid., p 29.


89. Roy Suprakash, op. cit., p 335.


90. Buckland C.S., Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governor, as quoted by Roy Tarapada, op. cit., pp 80-81.


93. Letter from the Commissioner of Ehagalpur to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, dated July 28, 1855. See also Chowdhury Binay, op. cit., p 772.


95. Ibid., p 353.

96. Ibid., p 352.

97. Ibid., p 352.


100. Ibid., p 854.

101. Ibid., p 854.
102. Ibid., p 854. See also Troisi Joseph, op. cit., p 135.

103. Ibid., p 855.


111. Sarkar Sumit, op. cit., pp 46 - 47.


117. Ibid., p 47.


119. Ibid., pp 47 - 48.

120. Ibid., pp 47 - 48.

121. Ibid., pp 47 - 48.

122. Ibid., p 48.


125. Ibid., p 69.


128. Ibid., p 426.
129. Ibid., pp 426 - 427.

130. Ibid., p 426.


132. Ibid., p 38.


