

# **TRIBAL STUDIES IN INDIA: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES AND APPROACHES**

## **Lecture52**

### **Lecture 52: Social Movements: Tribal Activism and Tribal Rights: Part 1**

Good morning everyone. Welcome back to the NPTEL online certification course, Tribal Studies in India, Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Approaches. Today we will be doing our lecture number 52, titled Social Movements, Tribal Activism and Tribal Rights. Now, any student of social science will know that social movements is a very, very important part of the understanding of any kind of community or any kind of society. And social movement is something which is very common in many parts of the world.

And it helps us to understand the history of the society or the specific communities. But at the same time, it is also important to understand that social movements have also contributed significantly towards bringing about change or even at times resisting change. Now, social movements, as you know, is a very, very broad concept. It's a very, very broad category where many times, you know, it's very difficult to clearly give a singular definition of what social movements are. So there can be movements pertaining to cultural movements.

There can be movements, you know, which are very, very political. At the same time, there can be movements which are very religious in nature. Movements which are very secular in nature, movements related to specific groups like women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, farmers, and peasants. And likewise, there can be a lot of movements like anti-war movements, peace movements, environmental movements, so on and so forth. Therefore, the first thing that I wanted all of us to understand is that the definition of a social movement is something which is very difficult in a sense that there is no single definition of social movements, and within social movements there can be a lot of

movements or movements that can be categorized or clubbed within the broader definition of social movements.

Now, but one important thing about social movements is that, like I said, it helps us to understand, you know, the history of a community, the history of a nation. Now, the world today, you know, emerged out of, you know, many, many movements. Many of the rights, for instance, that we have, you know, as a citizen of this country are primarily because of some kind of movements, mobilizations that have happened in the past. For example, the right to information, you know, the right to information is a very important, very powerful right today, but it did not come out of a vacuum. It was, you know, framed as a law after a concerted, you know, mobilization, particularly in the state of Rajasthan.

Now, likewise, you know, many of the rights that we enjoy as citizens today are not given to us. People have actually fought for it. People have actually, you know, demanded that kind of rights. Likewise, you know, today, for example, for many of us who are employed in a government sector, the idea of these eight-hour working days. People used to work from morning till late evening. So there was no clear idea of how long people should work.

Now today the basic idea is that a human being who is employed in the formal sector should mostly work for eight hours a day. Now, that idea of eight hours working, eight hours a day, was not given to the workers. It was demanded by the workers, after which, after the prolonged struggle, then people get, you know, this recognition of these kind of rights. Therefore, in the context of tribal communities also, today, tribals are, you know, in the last few lectures also, we have talked about it, that they have received or they are granted several special constitutional rights and provisions. But these rights and provisions are not given to them.

There were, you know, a lot of struggles. There is a lot of histories, you know, behind those kind of rights. Therefore, it is important to really understand, you know, the contribution, the role of social movements, not only in the context of tribes but in the context of the larger nation or even in the context of the larger global society. So there is this you know very common definition that is given on social movement which is that you know it refers to a collective organized initiative involving a significant group of individuals aiming to promote or resist

change in society, politics, economy or culture. Now, there are certain things which are important in this definition that mostly characterize what a social movement is.

One is that a social movement is a collective. Now, in the last three, four years, we have seen, you know, farmers movement in India, for example, farmers, you know, who sit in the borders in Delhi. So, therefore, farmers movement cannot be led by a single individual. Farmers movement cannot be a movement if it is only one individual who is sitting at the border in delhi, right? So there has to be a group of people coming together with, you know, some kind of shared agenda or shared objective.

Therefore, in that sense, it is an organized initiative in a sense that, you know, certain groups of people decided to come together and organize themselves. So sometimes the organization can take a very formal setup in a sense that, you know, there is a clear hierarchy: who is the leader, who is the spokesperson, who is who, what kind of roles its individuals or its collectives are going to play. But at times it can also be very informal in a sense that it is very unclear who is the leader. Sometimes it is very unclear which direction the movement will take, in a sense that will they continue protesting, will they continue to sit in demonstration, what kind of strategies the movement will employ; it also varies whether it is a formally organized social movement or it is an informally organized social movement. But the important thing is that a social movement is a collective, and second, it is an organized initiative.

Only when people think that they are being affected by something or if people think that they should be part of the movement, then there has to be some kind of organization because people are coming together. Now, so like I said, it cannot be by one individual, right? Only one person cannot start a social movement. Maybe one person can start a social movement, but for the social movement to survive without any kind of collective support, the social movement, you know, before it actually emerges as a strong political force, it will die down. Many times we think that, you know, movements aim to promote or resist change, right?

But many times you will see that, you know, some social movements resist change. Some social movement emerged because they don't want external change or they wanted to remain things as it is. But there are many movements

which demand or promote some kind of change. Maybe change in terms of their culture, change in terms of their political status, change in terms of laws, legislations, or anything associated with some kind of change that will result in the society. So in India, we have seen a lot of social movements in the sense that, much like I said, many of the rights that we have today as citizens are associated with social movements.

So in some sense, one can say that, you know, these social movements essentially aim to promote some kind of change. But like I said, there are also movements that actually resist change that demand status quo or that demand any kind of change coming from the outside. So in the context of tribal communities, there has been a lot of movements and characterizing these movements is also at times very, very difficult. And scholars, you know, have tried to use different parameters and criteria to actually classify social movements in the context of tribal communities. Now, if you talk about, say, the state of Jharkhand, if you talk about Chhattisgarh, if you talk about Bengal, Gujarat or even Rajasthan, or even if you talk about the states in the northeast like Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Arunachal, Nagaland, you will see that, you know, there are a whole lot of movements that have happened in the past that are happening today.

So many a times it is very difficult to categorize the different kinds of movements. So, in that context, scholars have tried to classify tribal movements using different approaches and different criteria. So, we will quickly try to look at what are the ways in which social scientists have attempted or tried to classify tribal movements. One is that scholars like Kathleen Gough, A.R. Desai, and Ramachandra Guha saw tribal movements as a part of the larger peasant struggles because they considered that many tribal communities have practiced subsistence farming. So, the kind of demands that peasants have is deeply integral or deeply interlinked with the kind of issues that tribal communities have faced, for which scholars like Kathleen Gough, Desai, and Guha see tribal movements as a part of the larger peasant struggles.

Now, this is in some sense quite convincing in the sense that, you know, if you look at many of the tribal movements, they are closely associated with land. They are closely associated with resources. Now, peasant struggles, the term peasant itself, you know, signifies that it has to do with, you know, farming. It has to do

with land. So, therefore, it's quite, you know, convincing that these three scholars have classified or put tribal studies within the broader rubric of peasant struggles.

However, a very noted anthropologist in India, K.S. Singh, critiqued this view, arguing that tribal societies are distinct due to their relative isolation from mainstream society, which can also affect how their movements are led, organized, and mobilized. Until the late 1960s, tribal movements did not receive the kind of scholarly attention they deserved. So, from the 1960s onwards only, social scientists have begun to seriously pay attention to tribal movements. Now, we will look at a more concrete attempt made by different scholars to classify tribal movements. The first is by Mahapatra, who was one of the first to attempt or to classify tribal movements.

And he observed different type of movements, particularly in the context of eastern India. One is political parties based on inter-ethnic cooperation. Second is ethnic-based pressure groups seeking upward mobility. Third is cultural revival and regeneration efforts. Fourth is religious movements and student-led activism.

Now, you can see that Mahapatra tried to make a distinction within tribal movements on the basis of the nature of the movement or the kind of demands or objectives that the movements have. But you can see that there is an attempt to make a distinction within tribal movements. Now what is the basis of this distinction? Why did he categorize this? What are the parameters that Mahapatra used to distinguish different types of tribal movements?

**Typologies of Tribal Movements**

- Mahapatra (1972) was one of the first scholars to offer classification of tribal movements.
- He observed different types of movements among eastern Indian tribes, such as :
  - Political parties based on inter-ethnic cooperation
  - Ethnic-based pressure groups seeking upward mobility
  - Cultural revival and regeneration efforts
  - Religious movements and student-led activism

internal, that is, if the movement is emerging from within the community itself or if the movement is being influenced by external agents, right? For example,

activists went to the tribal society and mobilized the people, from which there emerged some kind of movement. But there are also many movements which have emerged from within. The leaders of the tribal themselves, the kind of people who participated, the masses or the collectives are essentially tribals. Therefore, Mahapatra used to make this distinction that sometimes movement can be led from within, sometimes movement can be led from the outside.

Attitudes towards existing society range from conservative to revolutionary or reformative, focused on whether they are targeting norms, general society, or values. So attitude towards existing society many a times you will see that demand for equal rights between men and women, for example, even in tribal society, is being resisted, and this resistance was also something that came to light in the context of Nagas also when there was an attempt to implement the 33 percent reservation for women. In urban local bodies, the Nagas civil society groups were in strong protest, saying that it is going against the tradition of the Naga communities. So in some sense, one can say that the kind of movement that emerged in that context is conservative in a sense that they demand the status quo, that the public domain, essentially the political domain, is for men and not for women. So, in this, in the example that I just mentioned about the Naga case, they are specifically targeting norms, right, the norms within the society, and that they resist the change that is coming from the outside.

Connection to religion, religious or secular, like I said, you know, there are many movements, not only in the context of tribal society, which are religion-inspired, but at the same time, there can also be movements, you know, which are secular in a sense that, you know, political movements that do not necessarily have religious overtones. Involvement in politics, whether they are political, apolitical, or revivalists, can also be about movements that are demanding some kind of autonomy or movements that are supported by political parties, mainstream political parties, so it can take different forms, right, response to being a minority, emulating others, or strengthening tribal identity, so in many cases. There are also movements that seek to restore what is seen as the golden past or return to earlier tradition and ways of life. In contrast, a conservative movement aims to preserve the current state of society and resist any major change. Now, the case of Nagal and that I mentioned in the past.

Today it may no longer be an issue. But then there was a point some few years back that, you know, there was a strong resentment against the implementation of 33% reservation for women in local bodies. Now, what it says is that basically it is going against the Naga way of life, the Naga traditions and culture. So, therefore, there was a movement that actually resists that kind of change. On the other hand, we have movements like revisionary or revolutionary movements that focus on changing or reforming society.

It also comes in different forms. It can basically be about reforming the customary laws or it can also be, you know, demanding a different kind of political status. It can be also about, you know, trying to improve the socioeconomic condition of the people. So, movements that essentially try to bring about some kind of positive change in the society. Most of the time, these movements attempt to improve or purify cultural social practices by removing what are considered harmful, outdated, or negative customs, beliefs, or institutions.

Now, another very prominent scholar by the name Surajit Sinha divided tribal movements into five broad types. One of the first ethnic uprisings in the colonial period, reform movements like the Bhagat movement among others, movements for autonomy within India, that is, for example, the Jharkhand movement, agrarian movements, and the other kind of movements that Surajit Sinha essentially talks about are movements inspired by religion. So, we will look at the details of this, but most of the movements that I have mentioned here are very, very popular movements, right? They are very popular in the sense that they were at the heart of tribal movements, particularly during the colonial period. For example, if you talk about, you know, the Santhal, you know, rebellion.

In the 1850s, it came up, you know, much prior to even, you know, the first sort of India's independence that tribal communities such as the Santal, you know, rose up, you know, in revolt against the colonial state. And there are movements for autonomy within India, basically that demand, you know, that demand separate statehood. A good example is the Jharkhand movement. But at the same time, there are also a lot of movements in the northeastern part of India, which, you know, essentially demand some kind of internal autonomy within the framework of the constitution of India. So, the character of tribal movements varies depending on several factors.

According to Sinha, the level and nature of tribal movements in unity-based movements are influenced by several key factors. One is their geographical location in relation to dominant farming communities, that is, essentially peasant communities, their population size, and how much they have contact with the non-tribal groups. Now, Surajit Sinha makes this claim that the kind of movements of whether the kind of unity-based movements that we see in tribal society are not entirely dependent on the community itself, but it is also dependent on certain key factors or external factors, for example, how the population size, but at the same time, how much contact they have with other non-tribal groups. And this contact becomes important in terms of whether the non-tribal, what is the response of the non-tribal groups towards, you know, the kind of movements that the tribals are leading, whether they're supporting it, whether they're opposing it, you know, makes a lot of difference. In eastern and central India, tribal communities often live in close contact with caste Hindu population.

As a result, their movements generally remain within the framework of the Indian Union by demanding internal autonomy. So, the cultural contact between tribal and non-tribal communities plays a very important role in influencing the tribal way of life. Many a time, the outlook of the community may also change, not only in the context of tribal society, but when any kind of community comes into contact with any other kind of community, one indirectly or directly, consciously or unconsciously gets influenced. And in that kind of context, even in the context of, you know, tribal communities in eastern and central India, there has been, you know, a lot of connections and a lot of cultural exchanges that happen between the tribal and non-tribal communities. And this has shaped, you know, the outlook of the tribal communities living there.

Now, K.S. Singh identified three historical phases of tribal movement. Now, for K.S. Singh, the categorization of tribal movements is based on periods when these movements happen. Now, this is a very different way of, you know, categorizing or classifying tribal movements. The first categorization is from 1795 to 1860, that is during the early British rule, the kind of movements that emerged, you know, pretty early on when the British, you know, landed in India. The second phase is 1861 to 1920, which was a time when the colonial state began to deepen its control and rule in India.

And many parts of tribal areas or tribal regions began to be integrated into the larger colonial economic systems by which we begin to see a lot of exploitation, a lot of economic exploitation pertaining to land, pertaining to water, pertaining to forest resources. The third movement that K.S. Singh talks about is the movement from 1921 to 1947, that is tribal participation in the larger freedom struggle and also many other local movements that were happening outside of the freedom struggle. Now, coming to the post-colonial period, he identified or he classified tribal movements into agrarian, cultural, political, and sanskritization. Now, this categorization is also very close to the categorization that we have discussed, by, for example, Mahapatra, where we classify different kinds of movements. And in that classification also follows, you know, more or less what K.S. Singh was doing.

But a very important part of, you know, what the way in which K.S. Singh classified tribal movements is in terms of periods that he used you know certain periods to classify the movements. So another scholar Dube identified four types of tribal movements in the northeast, specifically we are coming to the northeastern part of India. Religious and social reform movements, movements demanding separate states, insurgencies and armed struggles, and movements for cultural rights. Now, this is also very similar, you know, to the kind of movements that we just discussed in the context of, you know, in the context of mainland India. Now, some differences can be there, but more or less, you know, the movements are either inspired by religion, the movement are either inspired by demand for political autonomy.

The movement sometimes, you know, can be very violent. Some movements are very, very non-violent, very, very peaceful. So it depends. So according to that, Dubey categorized the different kind of movements that have emerged in the context of northeastern part of India. So he pointed out that in the northeastern part of India, tribes are different or the movements are different due to their proximity to international borders, cultural ties with neighboring countries, and greater political autonomy, except in states like Assam and Tripura.

So, Dubey attributes, you know, that, you know, in some sense, social movements in the Northeast or among tribal communities in the Northeast are essentially different because of their proximity to international borders. And many of these communities have, you know, very strong cultural ties with, you know,

people living, say, for example, in Myanmar, people living in Thailand, people living in China. So, therefore, this kind of difference culturally and geographically plays a very important role in terms of the nature of social movements emerging from the region. Now, shifting the focus away from what we have discussed, Ghanshyam Shah made a very important attempt to classify tribal movements again. One is movements which are based on, you know, culture and religion, which he called ethnic identity or ethnic movements.

Movements that essentially focus on land and forest rights, environmental movements, displacement and rehabilitation, and political demands. So, we will try to come to the specifics of this movement and then we will try to see how these movements have played an important role in the organization or in organizing tribal life and also in terms of understanding the contemporary tribal realities of tribalism. To understand the contemporary context of tribal society, it is important to go back to the social movements. And so in the context of colonial India, it is impossible to discuss all of the tribal movements in India. But then there are, you know, common bases in which, you know, one can actually identify the nature of movements, why this movement emerged.

These movements in colonial India emerged primarily as a response to the intrusion of the colonial state in tribal areas, and the intrusion of the colonial state was followed by the dispossession of tribals from their resources, and the community began to lose autonomy—social, cultural, political—and autonomy over their resources. So you will see that from the 18th century onwards, there were a lot of tribal movements all over India, and many times these movements are relatively unknown. But you will see that over a period of time, in the last 200-300 years of colonialism in India, tribal communities have responded to the colonial state in different ways. One is that some of them entered into direct confrontation with them. They directly confronted the colonial state, while there were other communities who organized long-term movements led by local leaders demanding their rights and expressing national or regional aspirations.

Some tribes also began cultural or religious reform movements. Now, some tribes fought directly. For example, the Santhal Rebellion. You will see that there was an attempt, there was a direct confrontation of the colonial state. And there are also movements that were religion-inspired.

For example, in the northeastern part of India. There were a lot of movements, you know, which resist, you know, the entry of the colonial state, right? So, these movements, you know, were very, very strongly inspired by culture, strongly inspired by religious beliefs. Before the onset of colonial rule, the majority of tribal communities lived in relative isolation, managing their own affairs, land, and resources according to traditional customs and rules. Tribes had a certain level of autonomy in their territories, whether it is a big autonomy or a small territory, that does not matter.

But the point is that there was some level of autonomy that the communities enjoyed, despite the fact that they may be in contact with the larger outside world. So, scholars like Surajit Sinha, therefore, consider tribes as part of the little tradition, while Andre Beteille, a very noted sociologist, believed they were outside of the state systems and were not socially excluded. So, there were scholars who kept on saying that, you know, tribes lived in isolation, they were, you know, not in contact with the outside world. But scholars like Andre Beteille, you know, make a counter-argument saying that maybe, to some extent, they were outside of the state system in the sense that they were not entirely ruled by any kind of kings or any kind of influence of any kind of monarchs, but they were not socially excluded. There have always been socio-cultural contacts between tribals and non-tribals.

So, Andre Beteille, you know, counter-argues this kind of, you know, assumption that every tribal community in India lives in geographical isolation. Now, there is no doubt that, you know, many communities live in isolation. And this isolation also depends, you know, on the vantage point from which you are thinking. So, in a sense, this isolation can be in terms of the geography. This isolation can be in terms of culture, in terms of politics.

But then, irrespective of this, it was the British that incorporated the tribal areas into the colonial state system through coercion, primarily by war and conquest. After with the annexation of tribal territories, the colonial state introduced new laws and administrative systems that ignored tribal traditions. And the outcome of this is that the community gradually began to lose access to their own land and forest. So they themselves became outsiders, they themselves began to lose any kind of dignity, any kind of self-respect, any kind of autonomy, whether it is socio-cultural autonomy, political autonomy, or autonomy in relation to resources. So,

the entry of the colonial state marks a very, very important turning point in the history of tribes.

And from this period onwards, you will see that there has been incessant dispossession of tribal communities. And this incessant dispossession of tribal communities from resources also means that the community is gradually losing the sociocultural and political autonomy. Scholars like Sharma and Xaxa explained that land dispossession under British rule was driven by several factors. This included the introduction of private land ownership, landlordism, and expanding markets. Now, the colonial state, you know, the British, the Britishers were in India primarily because of their economic interests, right?

They came here as the East India Company, landed in India, and it started, you know, its business operations, right? And over a period of time, they colonized India. So for 200 years, they have fully exploited the country. So therefore, one cannot undermine the kind of exploitative mindset of the colonial state. And this was experienced in a very, very harsh manner, in a very, very brutal manner by the tribals, in the sense that they destroyed the entire economic systems of the tribal communities by introducing private land ownership, landlordism and also integrating them into a market system which was, you know, totally in favor of the colonial state.

Secondly, roads and railways were made and making tribal areas or regions more accessible leading to large scale land transfer from tribes to outsiders. And this was often done through fraud, coercion, and so you will see that one of the primary reasons why many social movements emerged during the colonial period was essentially because tribes were losing autonomy, tribes were losing control over their resources, and one of the resources was land. Because many tribal communities relied on oral traditions and were largely illiterate, they did not have proper land records, which made it easy for others to cheat them. Therefore, you will see that there are a lot of frauds. There were a lot of land dispositions due to force or coercion, and there were a lot of land dispositions due to debt bondage.

Now, many times, since these lands are owned by two customs and/or customary laws are the ways in which tribal communities organize themselves economically. So there are hardly any records about their properties. So in that kind of situation, the colonial state takes advantage of these situations and uses

it to deprive tribal communities of their land, from their resources. The colonial government claimed control over forests, stopping tribes from gathering essences like firewood, tribal lands were declared reserve forests, cutting off their access. So, the colonial state employed multiple tactics and one was, for example, the introduction of private property.

Second is that, you know, by declaring certain areas as reserve forests, the community no longer has access, you know, to forest resources, but also they were torn out of these areas. So no one can live in the reserve forest, right? You know, they have to be expelled. Meanwhile, traders, money lenders, and merchants gained control over tribal land. As a result, many tribes revolted against these oppressive colonial policies.

During the 200 years of British rule, Raghavaiah, for instance, listed about 70 major tribal uprisings. These tribal uprisings may be very, very localized, but they will have far-reaching impact across states, across borders. But one can see that, you know, the exploitative nature of the colonial state was one of the primary reasons as to why we see a lot of social movements during the colonial period. Stephen Henningham observed that tribal communities in areas like present-day Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Bengal resisted British rule, often facing harsh consequences. And these uprisings took many forms.

Sometimes they were directed at landlords or money lenders and other times directly at the British. So, within Indian society also, the introduction of a zamindari system resulted in the emergence of landlords, and they were also moneylenders who were very, very exploitative. So many times, tribal movements and tribal uprisings were directed against these kinds of landlords and moneylenders, and many times, they were also directly confronting the British themselves. However, due to British policies that separated tribal areas from the rest of the country, different tribes had different experiences. Now, it's not that all of the tribal communities in India face similar kinds of exploitation.

It is not that, you know, all of tribal communities in India face different, similar kind of hardships. The Northeastern context can be very, very different. The Central Indian context can be very, very different. The South Indian context can be very, very different. So, therefore, the kind of responses, you know, the kind of movements that emerge also have, you know, local specificities in the sense that

it depends on the way, the nature of the colonial state, how it operates there, and the kind of exploitation that the communities face.

For instance, Central Indian tribes were brought under British control early, while Northeastern tribes experienced it later. Central Indian tribes like Oraon, Mal Pahariya, Santhal, Bhil, and Munda revolted as early as the late 1700s. Now you will see that the first impact of the colonial state was felt, you know, particularly in the Central Indian states and by the Central Indian tribes. And when it comes to tribal communities in northeastern India, many of them were integrated at different points of time in history. For example, Mizoram today, the Lushai or the Mizos were integrated into a colonial state only in 1898.

And it took more than 100 years to fully suppress the Mizos. Now, by this time, you will see that there were a lot of tribal communities who had already led different kinds of movements or agitations against the British. Now, in such a scenario, one cannot compare the experiences of tribal communities like the Oraon or the Santhal with those of the Nagas, the Mizos, or the Khasis, because they have experienced the colonial state very differently. And a very important, you know, example or a very important uprising that is still, you know, being talked about, that is being widely studied was the Santhal uprising. The Santhals were a Adivasi community mainly residing in the Rajmahal hills of present-day Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha.

And the East India Company encouraged the settlement of Santhals in the Rajmahal hills to reclaim forest land for cultivation and to generate revenue. Initially, the community cooperated and they cleared the lands for cultivation, but over a period of time, they began to be exploited. One is that the traditional land rights of the communities were systematically eroded by the introduction of zamindari and moneylending systems, which led to land dispossession. Local landlords, traders, and moneylenders, often referred to the community as the Santhal Dikus, exploited the tribal population by charging exorbitant interest and forcibly taking over land when debts could not be repaid. Now, the sense of exploitation that tribal communities face results in suspicion about, you know, the outsiders whom the tribal communities refer to as the dikus.

Now, it was this experience of exploitation at the hands, you know, of their own Britons that, you know, they were very suspicious about the intention of, the

intention of, you know, Indians themselves. In that sense, you know, the tribal communities such as Santhals did not experience economic exploitation only from the British. They also experienced economic exploitation from their, you know, from their Britons themselves, by which there was a lot of resentment, you know, against any outsiders. So, on June 1885, under the leadership of Sido and Kanhu Murmu, Santhals attacked British officers, police stations, railways, and postal lines. Now, the Santhal rebellion is, you know, one of the most known rebellion, you know, in the history of colonial India.

And this rebellion has changed or impacted, you know, the course of Sandhal history, basically what was to come in the future. Though unsuccessful militarily, the rebellion was a powerful expression of tribal resistance against colonial rule and socio-economic exploitation. The British had to take cognizance of these grievances of the exploitation faced by the Santhals, and later on it resulted in the creation of the Santhal Pargana Administrative Division in 1856 to provide some protection to tribal land. Now, if you trace back the history of this resistance and what today is Jharkhand, you will see that it goes back to the 1850s when two tribals, Sido and Kanhu Murmu, led the mobilisation of the Santhal communities and led the Santhal rebellion. So, in the context of northeastern India, a scholar Verghese outlined four different phases of British involvement in the northeastern part of India.

The first phase he called the indirect control, that is 1839 to 1846. The internal control and military action, 1847 to 1850. A phase of non-interference, 1851 to 1861. And then direct governance and integration into British India. Now, this phase is important as it is also an attempt to look at the different ways in which the colonial state engaged with the tribes.

Now, the Britishers were not very keen, you know, to set their footprint in the tribal areas in the northeastern part of India because they did not see any kind of, you know, economic incentive to rule and govern. But then the invention of or the discovery of tea, rubber in Assam, and oil in Assam in particular, compelled the British to integrate and annex Assam. And that annexation brought them into closer contact with the tribal communities such as Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya. And over a period of time, the colonial state have deployed different strategies. And these different strategies, you know, become

the basis on which Verghese, you know, has outlined how the British have engaged with the tribal communities in the North East.

So, like I said, there was no real attempt by the colonialists for a long period of time to directly control and annex tribal territories. So, for instance, Varghese says that 1839 to 1856, it was essentially in direct control, that the British did not want to directly control and rule over these tribes. Secondly, since there was a lot of resistance, there was a lot of attacks on the colonial plantations, particularly in the foothill areas by the Nagas and the Mizos, for instance. So there was military action in the form of punitive military expeditions undertaken, you know, by the colonial state. And we also have the phase of non-interference.

There was also a period of relative calm where both sides, you know, were not interfering. But after 1870, after the 1860s, you will see that there were a lot of violent encounters between the tribes and the British, which eventually led to the annexation of many of the tribal regions in the northeastern part of India today. In the northeastern region, tribal resistance started with local uprisings against British taxation. Tribes like the Khasi, the Naga, Abor, Kuki, and Lushai fiercely resisted the British military campaigns between the 1830s and the early 1900s. In 1861, peasants in central Assam, especially from the Tiwa tribe, supported by the Kacharis and the Kaibartas, protested against British revenue policies in what became known as the Phulaguri Uprising.

Now, in many parts of northeastern India, while they may not experience the kind of economic exploitation faced by many tribal communities in central India, there is no doubt that there was a lot of resentment against the expansion of the colonial state. So, these movements resulted, you know, in some kind of political consciousness among the communities themselves, and we have seen that, you know, in the context of the Nagas, which began to establish, you know, the Naga Club in 1918, and this became more radical with the creation of the Naga National Council in 1946, which demanded political autonomy. So through this lecture, we have covered quite a vast terrain because, like I said, social movement constitutes a lot of things within it, a lot of typologies within it. There can be ethnic movements, there can be religious movements, there can be political movements, there can be reformation movements. There can be environmental movements, so on and so forth, labor movements, agrarian movements.

So in that kind of situation, it's very difficult to cover a lot. But in this particular lecture, what we essentially wanted to understand is the movements that emerged in the context of the colonial period. So what we see essentially is that many of these movements that emerged during the colonial period among the tribal communities were in response to the kind of dispossessions that the communities faced. And it continues to, you know, have a lot of significance even in contemporary tribal society in a sense that the communities continue to take inspiration from these movements, continue to organize themselves socially, economically, and politically. And the movements that emerged in the colonial state during the colonial period continue to have a huge impact in terms of the way in which the tribal communities organize themselves.

So it is in this context that it is important to discuss and have a proper understanding about the kind of movements that emerged in the past and how these movements have contributed or impacted the contemporary condition of tribal communities today. Thank you so much.