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## NCERT Class 8 History Chapter 4: Tribals, Dikus and Vision of Golden Age YouTube Lecture Handouts

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[NCERT Class 8 History Chapter 4: Tribals, Dikus and Vision of Golden Age](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjUJVAoCznM)  
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1895: Birsa From Mundas in Chottanagpur – miraculous powers – could cure disease and multiply grains – to save people from trouble and free them from slavery of *dikus* (outsiders) – slowly became *Bhagwan*



Later Santhals and Oraons became his follower

## Tribal Features

- Unique Customs and Rituals
- Those of same tribal groups thought of sharing common kinship ties
- Jhum Cultivation was practiced – cut treetops and burnt land, spread ash which contained potash (fertilizer) , axe to cut and hoe to scratch soil, broadcast seeds (scattered in field) , field to be left fallow – common in NE and Central India
- Exchanged goods for valuable forest produce
- Carry load and build roads
- Moneylenders gave loans by which tribals could meet the local needs – stuck with debt and poverty

Baigas: Central India could not live below the dignity of forest and not converted to laborers

Khonds: community living in Orissa forests – collective hunting and divide meat, ate fruits and roots, cooked food in oil from mahua and sal; used forest shrubs for medicine; local weavers asked them for supplies of kusum and palash flowers to color clothes and leather

Hajang: Tripura and migrated from Assam – women took children to workplace and factories

Pastoralists

- Van Gujjars of the Punjab hills were cattle herders
- Labadis of Andhra Pradesh were cattle herders
- Gaddis of Kullu were shepherds
- Bakarwals of Kashmir reared goats

Around 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Tribals started settling down – Mundas of Chottanagpur – land belonged to clan as whole – members were descendants of original settlers

British officials considered settled tribal groups like Gonds and Santhals as more civilized than hunter – gatherers or shifting cultivators (wild and savage)

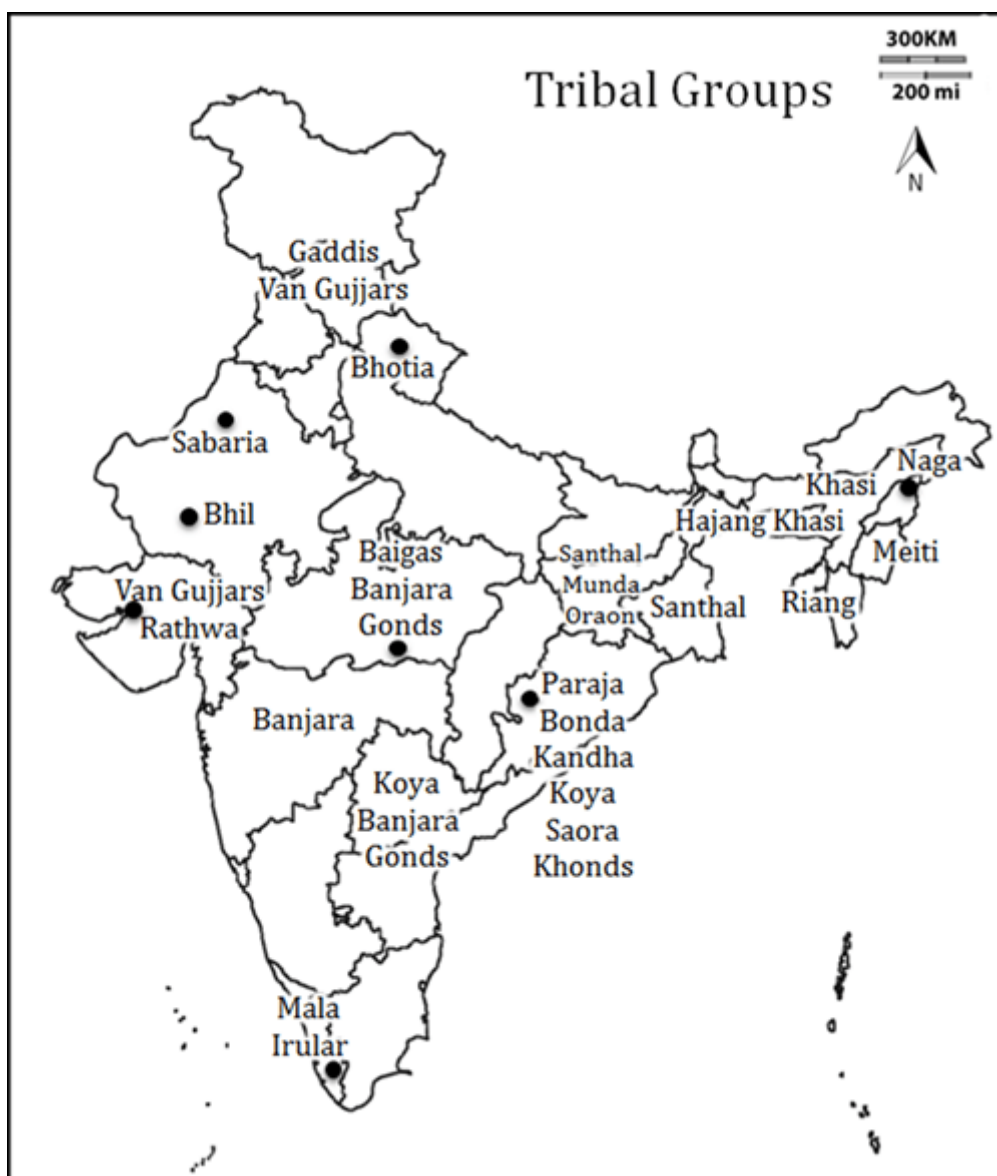
## How Calendar Year Works for Tribals?

1<sup>st</sup> Year Process

- Chait: clearing forest
- Baisakh: firing of forest
- Jeth: sowing of seeds
- Asadh to Bhadon: Men worked in the fields
- Kuar: 1<sup>st</sup> fruits were ripened
- Aghan: Crop was ready
- Pus: Winnowing, dance and marriages
- Magh: shift to new bewars & hunting and gathering

2<sup>nd</sup> Year: More time for hunting as only few crops were sown

3<sup>rd</sup> Year: Diet supplemented with forest products



### Effect of Colonial Rule

- Before British – tribal chiefs were important and had economic power and right to administer control, had own police and management

- Under British Rule – allowed to keep land and rent it but lost administrative control, were forced to follow laws and pay tribute to Britishers
- Britishers wanted people to settle down as it was easy to control and administer them – they wanted regular revenue sources and introduced land settlements
- It was hard to settle jhum cultivators in areas of scarce water and dry soil. Jhum cultivators in northeast continued with traditional practice

## Impact of Forest Laws

British extended control on all forests and declared it as state property

Reserved Forest: Produced timber for Britishers only – people were not allowed to move, practice jhum or collect fruits

Since tribals not allowed – where to get the labour to cut logs for railway sleepers

Forest Department established forest villages to ensure a regular supply of cheap labour

Tribal groups reacted against British laws – disobeyed and continued with practice that was declared illegal with open rebellion

- Songram Sangma in 1906 in Assam
- Forest satyagraha of the 1930's in Central Provinces

18<sup>th</sup> Century: Silk was demanded in European market, fine quality silk was valued and exports from India increased & so East India Company encouraged silk production

Cocoon rearing in Hazaribagh (Jharkhand) by Santhals – growers were paid ₹ 3 to 4 for 1,000 cocoons and were exported to Burdwan or Gaya (here they were sold at 5 times the price) – middlemen made huge profits

Tribals recruited in tea plantations in Assam and coal mines in Jharkhand – miserable life and low wages

## Tribal Rebellion

Against changes in law

New taxation system

Exploitation by traders and moneylenders

- Kols rebelled in 1831 - 32
- Santhals rose in revolt in 1855
- Bastar Rebellion in central India in 1910
- Warli Revolt in Maharashtra in 1940

## Birsa Munda

- Born in 1870
- Grew in forest of Bohonda
- Faced extreme poverty

- Heard tales of Munda uprising & sirdar (leaders of community)
- They talked of tales of freedom from oppression of *dikus* – time to restore ancestral rights – were descendants of original settlers
- Went to local missionary school and heard that it was possible for Munda to attain Kingdom of Heaven & regain lost rights – if good Christians gave up bad practices
- He spent time with Vaishnav preachers



- Urged people to give up liquor, clean village and stop believing in witchcraft
- He turned against Christians and Hinduism
- He talked about golden age in past – *satyug* – good life, constructed embankments, tapped natural springs, planted trees and orchards, practiced cultivation to earn their living
- Britishers were afraid that Birsa would drive out missionaries, moneylenders, Hindu landlords, and government and set up a Munda Raj with Birsa at its head
- Britishers arrested Birsa in 1895 for rioting and jailed him for 2 years
- In 1897, Birsa urged people to destroy *Ravana* (dikus or Europeans) - attacked police stations and churches, and raided the property of moneylenders and zamindars. They raised the white flag as a symbol of Birsa Raj
- 1900- Birsa died of Cholera
- He forced Britishers to introduce laws so that land of tribals could not be taken over easily
- He expressed that tribals can protest against injustice and revolt