

Environmental Crisis and Adivasi Challenge against Colonial Rule in 19th and 20th Century India

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ABSTRACT

The Adivasis in India had expressed their deep-set mourning and grievances through armed insurrections against the long term exploitation of the ruling Zamindars and the Colonial rulers in different pockets of India in the 19th and 20th century in an environmental background. The tale of anguish and agitation focused by the Adivasis shaped the course of the National Movement in India in a different dimension.

KEY WORDS: Adivasis, Agitation, Environment, Colonial, Zamindar, Tribal, Uprising Exploitation, Grievances, National Movement.

I

Introduction:

From time immemorial India has been a labyrinth of rigid caste and varna system. In Manusamhita, there is the description of the evolution of four varnas from Brahma's face, hand, knee and feet. Accordingly, *Brahmins*, *Khastriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Sudras* have been evolved in India. From this Varna system itself, the conception of caste has emerged and the tribes are again the sub-groups of the castes. Actually, castes and tribes are very much inter-linked with each other and these castes and tribes identify some typical social groups. According to M. N. Srinivas, "A socialist would define caste as a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes."¹ Senart, Max Weber and Jayaraman are of opinion that it is a kind of 'close corporation' or 'close status group.' In the opinion of Dipankar Gupta, stratification is the keynote of caste and tribe pattern in India. He says, "Stratification spontaneously signifies a multi-layered phenomenon."² Caste and tribe are inter-dependent on each other from both religious and economic view point. Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal in his

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book *Social Mobility in Bengal* has shown that the *Varna* system was evolved in India with the coming of the Aryans. According to him, there were originally three varnas — *Brahmins*, *Khastriyas* and *Vaishyas*. The Aryans defeated the aboriginals or the people of Dravidaland in India and established themselves mostly in northern part of India. In old Sanskrit texts these people have been described as *Dasayus* or *Dasas* or *Anasa*. They were quite different in their cultural values from that of the Aryans. From the very beginning, these non-Aryans or *Dasas* were looked down upon in society and later this group came to be known as Sudras and they completed the fourth category of the '*Çhaturvarna*' system.³

The Caste and Varna system in India form a very complex pattern in the societal structure. Sekhar Bandopadhyay holds the opinion in his book *Caste Politics and the Raj* that the entire society was structured according to division of labour, which again formed the backbone of the tribal system. Stratification of society ranked these non-Aryans or Sudras in the lowest layer of society. Louis Dumos in his book *Homo Hierchicus* has expressed the opinion that religion (Hinduism) was solely responsible for this rigid and complicated stratification in society.

The Adivasis divided into nine groups – 'Nava Sakha' are mostly belonged to low professions and low status. They form the rank and file of the population and obviously they are the most poverty – stricken people, dependent upon the whims and orders of the upper ranks of people. They are ruthlessly exploited and tortured in society.

The tribals or the Adivasis live in different quarters of India – right from South West Bengal to Bombay, Andhra and other places. The Adivasi discontent is simmering with the passage of time. The brutal treatment of the upper caste people upon them gives them adequate incentive to change their religious beliefs, for example from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam or Vaishnavism. They also try to come out of their tribal antiquity to better cultural identity through the process of 'Sankritization,' which became a popular vehicle of socio-cultural assertion as described by M.N. Srinivas.

This sort of merger of 'Identity Crisis' coupled with the hatred against local rulers and the White Colonialists creates a platform for the explosion of agitations mostly in the form of agricultural revolts. The Adivasis, sometimes find their age-long agony articulated by a single religious hero or sometimes by 'religious syncretism' which give them enough impetus to fight and sustain.

Environmental crisis takes an acute turn in some parts of India – Jungle Mahal region in South-West Bengal, Thane region in Bombay, Guntur region in Andhra Pradesh. The poor forest Adivasis, who are so long enjoying the forest resources for their living, are now deprived of all forest riches which are plundered and utilized for the greater benefits of the local Zamindars and the selfish interests of the Colonialists. The vandalism becomes so acute that the Adivasis are compelled to hit at the roots of British edifice in India. This article shows how environmental crisis instigates the Adivasis of these regions to raise their hands of protest against alien rule and how they have poised a challenge against the White Overlords. This article unleashes the fact how the Adivasis (the Dasas or the Sudras) shapes the foundation of peasants' revolts in India which gradually paves the path for the great National Movement in India.

II

From the inception of the Colonial period, i.e. in the 18th Century, it is observed that the grievances of the masses, particularly of the lower rank people no longer remained mute. In the opinion of Gail Omvedt, there was a fundamental structural change in society from the late 18th century.⁴

One of the most terrible movements that gave a thunderous blow to the British edifice was the Santal Rebellion of 1855-56. This rebellion did not occur all of a sudden. The virulent discontent of the Santals was surging in the South-West quarter of Bengal for ages. It eventually takes the shape of the Rebellion.

There are many theories that have been raised for the Santal Revolt of 1855-56. Captain Sherwell has observed that the torture and exploitation inflicted upon the Santals by the Mahajans were the glaring reasons behind this revolt. One indigo merchant namely Charles Berner, Pareshnath Bhattacharya, the Atornee of Queen Khemasundari of Pakur, Gopal Singh, the ruler of Maheshpur have shared the same opinion. Rev. Draese, one missionary from Church Mission Society expressed the opinion that excessive amount of land rent imposed by the Mahajans and the East India Company coupled with the torture of the English railway officers gave enough stimuli to these poor Adivasis to raise their arms against the exploiters. Pareshnath Bhattacharya, Gopal Singh and others also are of opinion that the disrespectful behavior of the English railway officers towards some Santal women flamed

the fire of rebellion in this region. Many other historians are of opinion that religious fanaticism instigated the Santals to come out of their age-long slumber; the deep anguish which lay dormant in the thousand souls found expression in the divine message that was declared by the Santal leaders — Sidhu and Kanu. Both of them were treated as messengers of a new dawn — who would help them to get freedom from shackles of bondage. E. G Mann has summarized all the above-mentioned reasons and come to the conclusion that these reasons had created the platform of the Santal Rebellion of 1855-56.

Apart from the exploiter–exploited relationship that existed between the Adivasi Santals and the Zamindar–Mahajan–Company, environmental crisis was a burning cinder which actually shaped the course of the rebellion. The original dwellers of the Jungle Mahal region were the Paharias. They did not know the art of cultivation with spade. Very often they used to come to the plateau region from the hills and they plundered and looted and again left for their hilly abode. The situation underwent a big change with the beginning of Company’s rule, especially with the initiation of the Permanent Settlement in 1793. The Adivasi Santals were now engaged for the task of cultivation of these rugged lands. The Santals put their hard labour to turn these lands into fertile tracts. They settled in this region, increased the level of production and made land–settlements with the help of their village heads or Majhis. They came to believe that these lands were God gifted and they had the capacity to exercise their supreme control over these lands. These lands close to the Raj Mahal hills were called the Damin– i-Koh. The following table shows the level of Santal concentration in South West Bengal. Swapan Dasgupta in his article ‘Adivasi politics in Midnapore – 1760 – 1924’ has given an account of tribal population concentration in the Jungle Mahals.⁵

Adivasis	Jhargram	Binpur	Salboni	Garbeta	Gopiballavpur
Bhumijas	5.25	5.65	5.65	6.74	0.57
Kumi	25.52	8.94	21.68	2.86	6.13
Santal	23.88	31.17	15.58	16.92	21.32

Source: Compiled from *Bengal District Gazetter*, Vol-B Midnapore District Statistics, 1900-01; 1910 – 11.⁶

When Mr. Pontet was appointed as the Superintendent of the region, the rate of land

rent turned to Rs. 2,611 which was quite an exorbitant amount for the Santals. During 1854 – 55 this amount increased to Rs. 58,033. The local Zamindars always sought the opportunity of exploiting these Adivasis. Whenever a piece of land became fully fertile, they used to utilize the crop production for their own use and increased the amount of land tax upon the Adivasis. The Santal leader Sidhu declared that their revolt was targeted against the ruling Zamindars, not against the Company. The Adivasis received greater range of exploitation from the Mahajans and the Businessmen and the poor Adivasis knew no way out to get rid of these lusty Mahajans. The desperate, poverty–stricken Santals used to borrow food crops from these Mahajans. As a result, the Mahajans regulated two methods for meeting these loans:

- 1) **Kamiyati Method** – According to this regulation the Santals had to put their labour in land till they could meet the loan.
- 2) **Harwahi Method** – According to this method, the loaner Santals had to plough the Mahajans' lands and had to do all kinds of works as dictated by them. In return, they used to get one seer of paddy on daily basis from the Mahajans. As a result of this, the Santals became their – serfs, because they could never pay back their loans. This was a permanent source of exploitation on the Adivasi Santals.

In this way, the Adivasis were suffering from these environmental hazards for a long time. Added to this, was the exploitation done by the railway officers. This resulted in the outbreak of the Santal Rebellion of 1855-56 in a wide scale. Dr. Ranajit Guha has commented in his book *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* that the above-mentioned two reasons proved to be crucial for the outbreak of the rebellion.⁷

The insurgents firstly tried to cope with the situation by pleading and requests. Secondly, when they found that the Company itself was totally immune to their grievances, they chose the path of armed rebellion. Under the leadership of Sidhu and Kanu, 19,000 Adivasi Santals assembled at the Bhagnadihi Maidan and a big procession proceeded towards Calcutta, where they intended to place their plea for urgent solution of this kind of environmental hazards. This was a rare instance in the 19th century annals of history. Their designs being frustrated, they once again assembled at Bhagnadihi in thousands and declared the Santal Rebellion. Sidhu himself killed the cruel Mahajan Mahesh Dutta; the next victim was Dindayal

Roy. The Santals declared their bloody determination as '**Hul! Hul!**' which meant revolt. There followed a bloody debacle between the Company and the Santals. The Santals were brutally tortured. Sidhu and Kanu were arrested due to their rebellious impetus and both were put to death.

The dream of the Adivasi Santals and the dream of Sidhu and Kanu to establish an independent Santal dominion came to a tragic end. But the triumphant trumpets of the Santal revolt could not be smothered so quickly. The contemporary journals and magazines like '*Sambad Pravakar*', '*Sambad Bhaskar*', '*Somprakash*', '*Calcutta Review*' etc gave a vivid description of the events of the Santal Revolt. The Karmakars, Carpenters, Kumbhakars, Teli and all other people of the lower brackets of society joined hands with the Santals. They said they wanted justice from the White Rulers, which proved to be futile. Instead, they were killed ferociously like jungle wolves.

The Santal Revolt was put to an end for the time being. The fire of protest and the aspirations of the lower rank of people found echo in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, Indigo Revolt of 1859 and many other Peasants' Revolts in the coming years which gradually made the path of Independence to be carved on a granite foundation.

III

With the establishment of Colonial rule in India, Colonial imperialistic lust became exposed in every corner of the Sub-Continent of India. From the very beginning, the Colonialists with the help of the ruling Zamindars and Mahajans exploited the peasants and artisans in order to grab enormous amount of wealth from the Indian agricultural sites.

Thane district of Bombay Presidency was one of the victims of this imperialistic lust. A deep sense of agony was slowly being fomented by the forest-dwellers of this region. The Adivasis of this region, namely the Warlis, Thakurs, Katkaris were totally dependent on forest resources for their daily living. The '*Dalhi*' custom was prevalent among them for a long time. According to this system, the Adivasis used to divide the hilly tracts among themselves and each of them used to receive one acre of land at the rate of 8 annas. There was of course no hard and fast rule in this system. They used to burn the trees and collect the crops. After utilizing the particular land for once, they used to leave that tract and that tract could not be used for seven years. The collected crops were sold through the medium

of barter system. The forest fruits, roots and other parts were the main food items of the poor Adivasis. Hunting was another medium through which they could survive.

The Colonial administration promulgated the regulation in 1860 that the Adivasis would have to abandon the shifting or hoe cultivation. This was also called *Jhum* or *Podo* Cultivation. Instead, the Adivasis were required to accept the proper cultivation methods. In 1878, more strict regulations were imposed upon the poor Adivasis. They were expected to cultivate lands for the interests of the Company; there was of course no concern on part of the Company whether the Adivasis were deprived or not.

The Adivasis of Thane region tried to place their plea before the White Colonialists for redressing their acute grievances. Along with this policy of plea and requests, there followed what James C. Scott says, "Everyday forms of peasant resistance." The Adivasis used to express their protest by 'Jungle Gherao', bribed the forest-keeper and continued to collect the forest resources by putting fire in the forest resources. Every time they were resisted and every time they continued with their slaughter, because environmental resources were the only sources of their living. The agonized Adivasis were desperate with their remorse which knew no redress.

According to 1878 Forest Regulation, wide tracts of forest lands began to be measured and the forest lands were being demarcated as Reserve Forests. The Adivasis began to be severely punished for utilizing the forest resources. The Forest Department placed the Report that "there is too much taken up for forests and is scarcely enough left for cultivation." Actually, forest trees of these lands of the Thane region were being utilized for railway purposes. From 1843 onwards wide tracts of jungles were cut down for making of railway lines. In 1853 the first railway line was established by Lord Dalhousie between Bombay to Thane. But the Adivasis were quite unaware of all these developments; their despair and anguish became boundless. The Thane Forest Association and Poona Sarvajanik Sabha took attempts to reduce the pressure that was forcefully imposed upon the Adivasis. This news was flashed in the newspapers from 1879 onwards. It was found that the cattle-rearing lands also came under the control of the Colonialists. Not only that, entry of cattle in these protected lands was severely restricted. From the Statistical data of 1887, we come to know that the number of arrested cattle became 3346 from 212 and during 1892-93 the number raised to 4917.

Another reason for the grievances of the Adivasis was that the British Forest Officers declared 'Rab' Cultivation no more to be practiced. But E. C. Ozanne, Director of Agriculture himself declared that 'Rab' Cultivation was very much necessary for increasing forest wealth in the 'Barka' or 'Sindad' (unfertile) forest lands. The life of Adivasis in forest was drastically damaged for stopping this cultivation. In 1885, a Deputation Committee headed by Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Dadabhai Naoroji, P. M. Meheta and others went to meet Lord Ripon for redressing the grievances of the forest Adivasis of Thane region. But their pleading was fruitless. In 1894, the Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha criticized the British policy in vehement words, but that too was in vain.

In 1896, 4000 Adivasis comprising of Kathodi, Thakurs, Katkaris and others of the forest-mountain regions went to meet the Collector of Thane and requested him to dismiss the strict British regulations. When they failed, they violated the forest regulations and collected forest fuel forcibly and sold them at Basin Taluk. This time, they devastated the tent of the Divisional Forest Officer and had beaten up the Habildar. Palghar Taluk became one of the vigorous symbols of protest. The Adivasis demanded rent reduction not only from fuels, but from all forest goods. The Deputy Collector was compelled to write down this regulation on Stamp Paper. But, at the same time they were suspicious about the actual intentions of the British. Nearly 5000 Adivasis assembled in front of the Collector's Office and 2000 of them declared revolt at Mahim Taluk. Police firing followed; 40/45 persons were injured and 2/3 persons were killed. According to Indra Munshi Saldanha, "The poor, in particular tribal, through combined forms of appeal, evasion and confrontation, carried on the struggle against the mighty imperial state of its agents."⁸ The then Collector declared, "The agitation spread from class to class." The Mangelas, Vadwals, Kumbis and Bhandaris gathered in different places of Basin and Mahim Taluk and expressed their agitation. The village Patel or the Sardars also joined hands with the agitators. In spite of famine and plague epidemic being prevalent at this time, the revolt spread like volcanic eruption from village to village, forest to forest. The Adivasis gave a real violent challenge against this environmental crisis and their protest was targeted mainly against the poisonous peril that was stimulated by the Colonial Overlords.

Very soon, the Colonial Government brought the situation under control. Strict police control was imposed at Basin and Mahim Taluk and all Patels were kept under strict police

control. In order to appease the aggressors, the regulation on head load was minimized to a certain extent. The revolt was severely crushed, many of the local officers were dismissed, and many of them were transferred. From the Report of the Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay Revenue Department, Vol. 30, it is known that the Colonialists kept a permanent vigilance on the 'Sarvajanik Sabha' of Maharashtra, which was established by Balgangadhar Tilak. The Britishers believed that the activities of this Association had a close link with the revolutionary programmes of the forest Adivasis.

In the opinion of Indra Munshi Saldanha, the role of the middle class and the upper middle class in this Adivasi revolt is quite unknown. But the desperate, desolate, exploited mass from all quarters of the Thane region joined in this revolt to unfold their age long agony and tears. The Adivasi Revolt of Thane region of 1895 was probably a revolt of a small scale, but this was a bloody confrontation which made a passage for the national consciousness of the exploited grass- root people, who could share their grievances with the greater Nationalist Movement of the time.⁹

IV

Just like Forest Revolt of Thane District of Bombay, Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh became another seat of violent protest in the early half of the 20th century. From the literary texts of the 16th century it is known that all the kings of Andhra region had followed a very well-planned forest policy. From the literary text called '*Aamuktamalyada*' composed by Raja Krishnadeva Rai of Vijayanagar Kingdom, we come to know that how he was concerned about the well-being of the forest-dwellers and how the borders of the forest region were well-kept.

In 1783, Colin Mackenzie, Surveyor General of India, was entrusted with the responsibility to survey all the villages adjacent to the forests and to take both geographical and historical accounts of the region. From Enugula Veeraswamy's '*Kasiyatra Charitra*' (1830-31), Kola Seshachalkeavi's '*Nilgiri Yatra*' (1831) and Julia Thomas's account (1836-39) we get a beautiful geographical description of the combination plateau, pasture and forest lands of this region.

Unfortunately, Andhra Pradesh could not escape the trap of the imperialistic prey of the Colonialists. Here also, lustrous environmental beauty was totally shattered due to the

cruel encroachment of the Britishers. From 1760 to 1800 onwards there was terrible demand of teak wood by the Britishers. The detailed account of this colonial encroachment is found in E.P. Stebbing's *Forests of India, Vol-I*. In the beginning, Madras Government took active part in meeting the tremendous teak wood demands of the Colonialists. But from 1860 onwards, a massive environmental change took place in the Krishna-Godavari coastal region due to the introduction of anicut system, which was a very effective means of irrigation, through which river-side crop production became double. According to T. Vijay Kumar as a result of this anicut system, Coastal Andhra was rapidly transformed from subsistence to market-oriented or commercial agriculture. The forest lands and wide tracts of barren lands were turned into fertile agricultural lands. But as a result of this, deforestation started which finally led to some tragic circumstances. As soon as the Colonial Govt. saw that profitable source could be accrued from these agricultural riches, they ordered that the entire forest region could come under the control of the Colonial Govt. In 1882, Dr. Brandis placed the Report "It is now recognized that there are no communal forests as distinct from state forests in the Presidency of Madras."¹⁰

The forest-dwellers or the Adivasis of the region were drastically deprived of their forest rights at the cost of the profit of the company. 1) They were deprived of the opportunity of shifting cultivation or *Jhum* cultivation. 2) They were deprived of the right of using the Minor Forest Produces (MFP). They could no longer collect fuel, leaves or twigs for their daily living. Even cattle-rearing was totally stopped. Special rents were imposed for cattle-rearing purposes. They had to take permission in every step— either for collecting wood or even for making a plough or cattle-rearing.

The Guntur Adivasis of Andhra, just like the Thane Adivasis of Bombay, burst into agitation during 1920-22 through an '*Aranya Satyagraha*.' E.P. Thompson said that this revolt was a conflict between users and exploiters. Atluri Murali thinks: "these class perceptions and interests were articulated within a nationalist ideological discourse."¹¹ The Adivasis were not only aggrieved with the Colonialist Regulations, but they nurtured their deep hatred against Colonialist exploitation. G.N. Thomassen, on behalf of the American Baptist Telegu Mission reported "I presume that it is hatred, because people look upon the forest as their own. They cannot get fuel wood and cannot take a single stick without being handed over to the Magistrate."

The anguish and discontent of the forest Adivasis of Andhra found expression through a massive revolt during 1920-22. Guntur, Nellore and Anandapur districts were the main seats of explosion of unrest. It was during this time that the all Indian Non-Co-operation Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi had taken a concrete shape. It was Gandhi's movement which provided the major inspiration to the aggressors. In the opinion of Atluri Murali, "It was this colonial, judicial and socio-economic context which shaped popular perceptions of Colonial rule as unjust, alien and immoral. Such perceptions and their context were the ultimate basis for radical agrarian and tribal movements in Andhra during 1920-24."¹²

This revolt of the Andhra region was suppressed in a firm hand by the Colonialists. They did not hesitate to take cruel and severe steps against the '*Aranya Satyagrahis*' and very soon the flames of the revolt were dampened. This Adivasi revolt, which was aggravated in the Andhra region, had some common trends with the Thane revolt of Bombay. The environmental crisis poised almost a similar pattern; the stopping of shifting cultivation, cattle-rearing, collection of MFP etc show the forest Adivasis in both the regions suffered same kind of exploitation multiplied with age-long pathos and pain. In both fronts, people from lower brackets of society demanded justice, honesty and a minimum standard of living. From historical point of view, the Guntur Revolt of Andhra region was more closely linked up with Gandhi Movement of early 20s and in that way it had a tremendous impact in shaping the Nationalist Movement of India in the after years. But the novelty of the Thane Revolt was no less important – this revolt, which was fought in the late 19th century helped to develop amongst the poverty-stricken Adivasis a definite self-confidence which was a milestone for the future course of agitations engineered by the poor mass of India.

V

Conclusion:

The famous social thinker Douglas Deal once said "The proletariat's existence heralds the development of capitalism in the countryside as some or most of the peasants lose their land to larger and more commercially inclined owners responding to national and international market forces. This process of proletarianisation has itself been one of the major causes of agrarian revolution in the modern world."¹³ The above-mentioned agrarian revolts volunteered

by the proletariats or the down-trodden people portray the same picture of merciless exploitation upon them by the rising capitalistic force focused by the imperialists.

In the opinion of Suresh Singh, “From about the second half of the 18th century, tribal agrarian order in many parts of the Indian sub-continent disintegrated under the pressure of the land hungry British aliens. The movement of non-tribal regions was accelerated by the establishment and consolidation of British administration in those areas. The tribals reacted to these developments through a series of uprisings, in a bid to throw out the intruders from their homeland.”¹⁴

India had about one tenth of its population as of tribal origin and according to the latest Census, tribals constituted about 7.5% of the total population – the figures that give indication of the magnitude of the problem concerning the people. The gnawing discontent of these people had at times burst out into vigorous political movements and sometimes into open hostilities. It drew the attention of the politicians, administrators as well as scholars who began to think seriously since Independence as to the nature and root cause of the tribal in general, which however had different projections in different regions.¹⁵ The study of tribal or Adivasi unrest has been a patent phenomenon in modern India, which has injected a new complicating element in the socio-economic history of India.

“On numerous occasions”, as Madan C. Paul observes, “there were riots, revolts, uprisings etc against Colonial rule and its exploitative socio-economic networks. In almost all pockets of India, tribals were surging with resistance of this sort against the deprivation of their lands and forests.”¹⁶ Surface observation of this phenomenon may lead us to categorize them as ‘scattered events or episodes’ and not as movements. But these events of resistance by the tribal people were centered on the issues affecting their existence itself. In the opinion of Karl Marx, it is the awareness of the contradictions in the material condition of life which provide sufficient reason and impetus to fight it out. The tribals’ reaction was due to hindrances to religious beliefs, economic interests, political freedom and social hierarchy.

The above-mentioned historical tales unravel how the Adivasi humiliation, frustration and poverty of South-West Bengal, Thane Region of Bombay and Guntur region of Andhra Pradesh for long years had provoked them to burst forth into devastating debacles against Colonial rule. In every sphere, it is found that when either the land scenario or the forest

scenario, which had given them food, shelter and clothing for ages had posed obstacles and the daily living of the tribals of the areas were at stake, they showed their displeasure and despair in violent forms of agitation. The Colonial overlords wanted to replenish their own coffer with the environmental riches of India in different pockets, but they made no solution to the problems which the aboriginals of these regions were facing due to this stubborn environmental crisis. The violence which the tribals showed through their uprisings were turned from individual to general hatred and from general to national repulsion against Colonial rule.

The tribals or the Adivasis, who were always looked down upon in society from the ancient ages, now learnt the art of coming out from a critical situation and this environmental crisis slowly imbued them to raise a challenge against oppressive Colonial rule in India. These uprisings, undoubtedly paved the path for the nationalistic upsurge in India. Though they were not intellectually polished, but the mass support and awareness of the lower brackets of society created a granite support to shape the Independence Movement in India, which was a greater struggle to free India from the shackles of 200 years' of alien rule in the Sub-Continent of India.

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