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## TODAY'S NEED OF BIRSA MAUNDA'S ULGULAN (AGITATION) IN TRIBAL PEOPLE.

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### Abstract:

**Water, Forest, Land** and Underneath **Wealth**, these four are the bases of tribals' life. Tribal society has been depending on these four things. In other words these are two aspects of tribals' nature. In other words tribal Nature are two sides of the same coin. But one thing is to be noted here that the Tribals have always considered nature as their mother. They never exploited the natural resources in a ruthless and oppressive manner. The tribal's nature is **simplicity** and **serenity**. Therefore, their nature is simple and pure. They know very well that life is made of creatures and forests. They have always considered life valuable. Due to greed and cruelty they neither killed life nor ruined the forests. It is necessary only because of being same with nature they start singing folk songs in the midst of happening in homes and fields. Folks keep their steps rhythmically in the dance. This is possible only when mind is pure and heart is simple. The subjects of their folk songs are also the works of ancestors and victors of the forest and wild life.

In reality all the agitations, revolutionary movements and conflicts with the outsiders of the Tribes till date have been with regard to their rights on water, forest, land and natural wealth along with their cultures and languages.

The real colours of agents and brokers are seen when crops get destroyed due to excessive rains and droughts as well as famines. These people used to pay taxes to the Tribes for fertilizers and seeds with a high level of interest and mortgaged the land. The process of taking serial advantage of the illiterate, uneducated simple and pure hearts begins with the sincerity of the **Tribes**.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January the struggle and agitation with Gaya Munda and his family had come to know the depth of the roots of the movement of **Birsa Munda** by the Government. On the other hand, the rebels were also alert. Now they left the houses and they took the shelter in the hills of **Sail Rakab** with their families. There were many caves in the hill where they can hide themselves. It was very safe hill. It could be climbed from only lone direction on this hill. The rebels had locked their houses and families along with needs kept the location ban for the entry of any bad elements. There was an arrangement of a large number of bows, arrows, swords, axes, etc. On 9th January the commissioner army contingent and police squads arrived at **Sail Rakab Hill**.

They threatened to surrender to the rebels to surrender to them moving towards the hill. Police and army were challenged for furious fight and war shining their axes and swords. The commissioner ordered the contingent for shooting with bullets to them. Birsa's soldiers started throwing stones from their catapults. When the police army started climbing up then came down proclaiming Birsa god be praised earthly Father be his kingdom. The axes and swords were in their hands. An encounter took place at the middle of the hill from both sides. The army contingents in group's queues started firing bullets and the rebels hiding themselves on the trees trunks blowing the arrows to the police men. But how long the bows and arrows could be continued in front of the guns, bullets and rifles. There were about 2000 rebels on the rock hill. Among them there 400 were martyred there and the rest escaped to the dense forests. Birsa had to take shelter in the **Bartodih village** with his young **wife Soli**.

**Key Words: Land, Water, Forest, Wealth, Dikus (Outsiders), Agitation.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Birsa Munda** was rich in personality. Like a flash of lightning, bulking of sorrows, lighting of hope and faith in anxieties, lives in a storm of pains, tribulation of centuries of exploitation and atrocities. Inerasable **ULGULAN'S PAIN** is written with his young blood. He did not urge, **"You give me blood, I will give you freedom."**

A soldier does not ask for blood in a fight, blood is shed for others so that he can be happy. The more you think about the sacrifice of **Birsa Munda**, the bigger it is, the more its form starts expanding.

He did not assure, he did not console, whether he said or not, **"I will go to heaven and pray to my father for you."** He saw the light and consciousness of his never-ending rebellion, let us recognize **our rights**. He had said in clear words that he would have given a body made of clay until he adopted it. You guys won't be able to escape. Don't be discouraged, don't think that I have left you in the middle unsafe. I have given you all the arms and hands, means, tools and inspirations. You could protect yourselves from them and the weapons are **unity** and **organization**. In order to express my devotion towards great revolutionary leader **Birsa Munda** I have offered an homage to the vibrant fire of, **ULGULAN (Movement, Agitation for human Rights, Liberation)** in year 2023. It is published by Shanti Printing Publication, Ranchi.

It is a matter of immense joy that the inspiration, motivation and consciousness of **Birsa Munda** has become the live consciousness of **Dr. Bhim Rao, Goutam Buddha, Jyotiba Phule, E.V. Ramasamy Perriyar, Nelson Mandela** and the burning glory of human liberation of the Tribes and oppressed people.

I came in contact with respected **Waman Meshram**, the BAMCEF president in **Sangam Garden Hall** in Ranchi who is steadfast liberator for the oppressed and segregated people of India in his great work of spreading the message of these great men, not only in India but also outside India and he has given me feelings of affinity in the form of an adoration. As a result of which **Birsa Munda's** words are breaking and appearing before you properly. I express my sincere gratitude to them. Shanti Printing Press has become a mission. Through them the cooperation of my own brother **Sudhir Toppo**, nephew **Manish Toppo** is the hand of age and for the completeness of this book. They are good writers, rich in Tribal concepts, upliftment and welfare. I would like to express my gratitude to them for their active co-operation. My heartfelt gratitude to departed **Jema Sekunda Kiro** who always inspired and helped me actively to favour the oppressed Tribal people.

At the end, I request all those Birsa Munda's devotees and followers not to let the young sacrifice of Birsa Munda go in vain and use the sacred name of the pioneer of **Ulgulan** in a narrow political and personal selfishness.

**Ulgulan Amar Rahe, Aaba Birsa Munda Amar Rahe" Ulgulan Movement be forever, liberation for the Tribes here in India, let Soil Legendary be ever fresh with Tribal people of India.** The great campaign of Shanti Printing Publication be a channel of successful spread and dissemination for motivating and inspiring to the people.

## BASES OF TRIBAL LIFE

**Water, Forest, Land** and Underneath **Wealth**, these four are the bases of tribals' life. Tribal society has been depending on these four things. In other words these are two aspects of tribals' nature. In other words tribal Nature are two sides of the same coin. But one thing is to be noted here that the Tribals have always considered nature as their mother. They never exploited the natural resources in a ruthless and oppressive manner. The tribal's nature is **simplicity** and **serenity**. Therefore, their nature is simple and pure. They know very well that life is made of creatures and forests. They have always considered life valuable. Due to greed and cruelty they neither killed life nor ruined the forests. It is necessary only because of being same with nature they start singing folk songs in the midst of happening in homes and fields. Folks keep their steps rhythmically in the dance. This is possible only when mind is pure and heart is simple. The subjects of their folk songs are also the works of ancestors and victors of the forest and wildlife.

They do not forget to respect them even in the joyful festivals. Full of deadly poisonous snakes, sharp roaring and powerful legs of lions, tigers and leopards, they are valuable. But the same simplicity and openness is also the reason for the exploitation of these tribes. The development of business in cities has created a wave of dangerous poison and that name of poisonous element is exploitation. Business and exchange gave birth to this young generation and class who started coming to the markets price form without any physical labour.

The people who produce grains also become one with the soil but their hard work is the origin of their sweat. But their hard work does not cover even half of their sweaty core market. The one who buys grains or oil seeds at a low price and sells their produced grains at a high price and agents of businessmen make huge profits out of their hard sweats and labour. There has always existed a class of agents and middlemen between the producer and the consumer making profit from both sides.

Thus, today the basis of Tribal Society is snatched away from the modern society.

In reality all the agitations, revolutionary movements and conflicts with the outsiders of the Tribes till date have been with regard to their rights on water, forest, land and natural wealth along with their cultures and languages.

## LAND-SONS GRINDING IN THE MILL OF EXPLOITATION

The real colours of agents and brokers are seen when crops get destroyed due to excessive rains and droughts as well as famines. These people used to pay taxes to the Tribes for fertilizers and seeds with a high level of interest and mortgaged the land. The process of taking serial advantage of the illiterate, uneducated simple and pure hearts begins with the sincerity of the **Tribes**.

Later, their land is grabbed by putting their thumb impressions on a blank paper. The process of exploitation does not stop here, the farmer tribal who is given to a member of his family was mortgaged to the landlord or money lender as a pledge for wages. In return, they were not given wages. Slavery and other work of injustices, evil practices continued for years, even after the country become independent. Today too, this evil practices are continuing in **Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand**, whose news is always read in newspapers and seen in their lives in our country.

After money lenders, landlords, brokers there is a class openly exploits them, to whom the Mundas call them a big **Dikkus** (Strangers, Foreigners or a Caste system upper graded people, the outsiders). Where has this series been able to stop the exploitation even today? Rapes on Tribal girls is like rights for money lenders, brokers, contractors, elites, upper castes and the politicians.

The terror of the forest official and the police was maximum. The atrocities of the employees can be gauged from the fact that at one time the village where the police was investigating, the police used to stay in that village for so many days, the village was obliged to arrange for their foods; drinks and luxuries. The meaning of saying this is that the attack of exploitation on the Tribal society has been continuing all the ways. The sons of the land have

been suffering from it for centuries. After the Independence of the country, the power came in the hands of those people who had exploited the sons of the land for centuries in every way. In this way the brunt of exploitation is falling on the sons of the land the natives.

Sometimes in the name of huge dams, sometimes in the name of multinational companies, sometimes in the name of national parks, sometimes in the name of big projects, and in the name of industries, they are being driven out of their ancestral homes since ages. Discontentment has always been brewing in the tribal society. This is also its real reasons.

## THE GENESIS OF EXPLOITATION IN EARLY HISTORY

While singing-dancing in the lap of nature, the life of happiness and peace of the sons of the land of the natives was eclipsed when then residence was snatched by the Aryans (Dikkus = Strangers, Foreigners, Outsiders, Non-tribes). These foreign robbers may be Aryans by the general public but the ancestors of the Tribes said to them Dikkus. There are expressions of hatred and disdain in it. In the guise of a sage, these Dikkus entered in thick forests. Where they stayed and those places they named them **Ashrams**. The word Ashram means refraining from **hard work**; a place **without toil**.

Well as soon as they came here, they indicated that this is not a society that eats after earning, but a society that grabs the goods of others without any efforts and work.

While the natives of this country were called hard workers; hard toilers. The time a man sitting idle is hardly visible, this is the reason why animal sacrifices started spending their time and spent the time in drinking liquors and alcohols. In the name of oblations (Yajnas) they started pretending to perform religious rituals by burning valuable food items.

When the forest and wild life started being destroyed by their destructiveness, the natives started opposing them. When a Tribal woman named Tadka opposed the misdeeds done through Ashrams, she was attacked by so calling her demoniac, demonic and monster (Danwi), she was killed by Ram and Lakshman while Rakshasa means protector, Asur means not drinking alcohols and daanar means donor. The kings donated villages to villages to make them ashrams. The Brahmins made the Tribes of the land forced labourers and bonded labourers on their own place. What an agonizing, pathetic, painful factors and it is to sweat by becoming a bonded labourers on the land of your own forefathers. They made them to live a humiliated life in one's own native regions. There is an early history of exploitation of the sons of the land. From the beginning till today, by the Tribes of the native all the rebellions that have taken place, have been against this exploitation. This rebellion is not going to stop till the tribes of their lands are returned and given back to them all as the human rights demand all over the world, the lands which have been taken away from them (the native tribes).

## INTRUSION, INTERFERENCE, ENCROACHMENT OF THE OUTSIDERS

It was the claimants of the forests due to the interference of the outsiders in the tribal areas on the basis of their armed force the Arya Kings started subduing the tribal areas to increase the limits of their State. They appointed their governors there to control these different regions. In course of time, these governors started working as kings in their respective areas, started living a luxurious life and started collecting the taxes wildly. This tax was collected in the form of grains and rupees. Apart from regular taxes, not only this, the taxes on **weddings, festivals** and especial **occasions** were collected. The outsiders not only collected the taxes from these tribes of the land, but their exploitation was another cruel act of forced labour. The money lenders, landlords, brokers forcibly forced these tribes to work in their homes and fields.

What an irony and agony that the people who were the owners of the forests and land started working like slaves in their own land. Not only this but in the name of religion, the land lords used to give donations from village to village to Brahmins. All the expenses for rituals, festivals in these temples are recovered from these tribal farmers. In this way outsiders gradually started looting the tribes of the land in every field, social, religious, economic, political and moral ways. Simple tribal people were in favour of their own tribal rules and regulations. They



have to go to tehsil and offices several kilometers away from their villages to seek refuge in the law.. The officers who administered justice did not understand the language of the Tribes. They used to spend the remaining money on lawyers. They could not understand the language of lawyers and judges. In this way, the interference of outsiders came like a disturbance in their happiness and peace.

The anger suppressed with the help of the tribes of the soil that has been erupting like volcano among them from time to time. This is also the root cause of their anger. The government also knows the reasons for their anger, even then it becomes unknown. The reason for this is that the outsiders who interfered, intruded in the native areas of the Tribes and culture, are same outsiders who have been majority in the government. They are deaf to the agony of the local tribes for years.

## ANCESTORS OF BIRSA MUNDA

It is said that years ago two brothers named **Chutu** and **Nagu** of **Purty community** were born. While searching for a habitable place they reached near Domdagara river. This river was recruited in Doranda or Durangara zone. The meaning of Durangada in Mundari language is river that sings. (Singing river). Another story is also prevalent in the water stream of river, they saw the trunk of tree flowing. Both the brothers, started travelling sitting on this trunk. They saw a hole in the stem too and there was a live mouse in it. Considering it to be signs of life, they considered it auspicious. Therefore, the place where stem stopped on the edge, they settled to dwelling. That unknown place was name **Chutiya** (Mouse). Rat is called **Chutu**, in Mundari Language, hence they chose the name Chutiya. The name of both (Chutu and Nagu), the brothers today the name of this place is Chotanagpur. Due to outsiders Dikkus, their descendants settled in places like Mandih, Singbhum, Sodam, Kotna and Bagri. Two of these people Laka and Raka settled in Ulihatu village. Their in-laws' house was in Chalakad village. Lakar and Lakari had three sons. Middle son's name was Sugna Munda. He was married to Karmi, daughter of Diwar Munda of that village **Ayub Hatu**. **Sugna and Karmi** had five children; three daughters and two sons. Among them was the name of the fourth child Birsa, later he became immortal in history by the name of Birsa Munda. Actually right now the ancestors of Birsa Munda were from the reputed ruling family. Their forefathers were once the rulers of the country. After defeating them in the war of Aryans with conspiracy, they were chased towards the forests but did not let them live peacefully there too. Struggling for their rights on the land of their own surroundings, we can see the ancestors of Birsa himself, to Birsa and his descendants, we can see him today. After spreading the red flag, it is waving as a red, revolution and it will continue to come red till then, until the exploitation of the sons of the land stops, their rights are not restored.

## BIRSA'S BIRTH

Birsa Munda was born on **15<sup>th</sup> November 1875**. After the Birth of Birsa, some such situations arose in Bamba Village. Because of which Birsa's father Sugna was forced to leave Bamba village. There was a fight between Munda and in Bamba that was the impression, Sugna had to become witness in this quarrel. That is why it was not safe for him to stay in Bamba village. Birsa's elder uncle Kanu had accepted Christianity in Ulihatu. Of course, Birsa was not even born at that time. Later Birsa's father Sugna and his younger brother also accepted Christianity and became Christians. Sugna showed great interest in Christianity. The masses of Munda started accepting Christianity because their ancestral land was being protected and justice was sought in court of the Ranchi District. The main reason for accepting this new religion was that their land documents were made by the courts, which was appealed by the Christian missionaries of Chhotanagpur. The money lenders, the capitalists, the **dikkus** = outsiders, non-tribes, the landlords, moneylenders, contractors who were taking away their toiled land, fertile land and properties from the simple and illiterate tribal people as well as were forcefully snatched away from them their precious land by the rich corrupted outsiders.

So also their dignity was much respected and they were considered as the human beings by the missionaries. These missionaries who could understand their language and fought for their rights to protect land and injustice done to them by the Aryans (Brahmins, Caste system people, Outsiders, Money lenders and Dikkus). Seeing his faith German Christian Missionaries appointed him to the post of Dharma Pracharak (Spreader of Religion). He

was named Masih Das and Birsa was named David (Dawood) Munda later. After this Birsa came to be known as Dawood Birsa. After a fight between Raiyaton, real owner of land and Mundas his family left Bumba and headed towards Chalakad. Birsa's mother's place was in Chalakad. There a Munda named Veer Singh provided him shelter. Till **Birsa's Ulgulan (Rebel, Revolution)** the family stayed in this village. On coming to this village, Sugna celebrated the birth anniversary of his son Birsa. It is said that son Birsa was born on Thursday. On the basis of this he was named Birsa. The birth anniversary of Birsa was completed with the custom of Christianity. Although the Christian missionaries were definitely starting converting them in the tribal society but the tribals could not completely forget their Tribal practices, rituals and culture. The only difference was that some new names were also added to Jesus and Mary in their own natural worship and traditions. But the birth anniversary was celebrated in Christian method and way. Because then Birsa Munda was named Dawood Munda, who knew that this Dawood, Birsa Munda will beat brick by brick against the oppressors of the Tribal society and Jharkhand (Bihar) will be immortalized in the history by the name of Jwalamukhi which means volcano.

### LANGUAGE OF MUNDAS: MUNDARI:

Remnants of Mundari Language are found in many parts of the country but the Munda Tribe speaking Mundari language is confined to a particular area. This plateau region area has dense forests. In this area are **Ranchi, Lohardaga, Gumla, Simdega, Ramgarh, Hazaribagh, Giridih, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Bundu, and Chakradharpur** districts. The four districts adjacent to these are called Santhal Parganas. Its inhabitants are spread over the Tribal belt of West Bengal which are situated in **Medinipur, Purulia and Bankura East. Raigarh and Sarguja** in the West of **Chhatisgarh (Madhya Pradesh and Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Keondjhar and Mayurbhanj** districts of Orissa are included. **Santhal Pargana** is situated on the plateau of **Chhota-Nagpur**. This region has been made a State by the name Jharkhand.

Today the country's most rugged, thick forests, no transportation, barren plateau area. Their ancestors did not live in most of these inconvenient plateau and places where lions, leopards, poisonous reptiles, snakes were rampant. These people are aborigine settlers to India. Aryans (Dikkus), now as per DNA Ureshians, Iranis, and foreigners had driven them away. Historians believe that the ancestors of the Munda Tribe came from Western India. They passed through the areas of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh Bundel Khand etc. and settled in Jharkhand Zone Chhotanagpur in southern Bihar. A professor of Mithila University Darbhanga was Dr. G. B. Choudhary and his wife Ruby in their research on their thesis said that - "**According to Munda History when powerful people chased them out of Indian territory (Indo-Gangetic Valley) Munda Tribe started living in the jungles of Chhotanagpur (Chhota Nagpur).**" Tribes were once spread over the entire territory of the country. They were chased by the powerful people towards the thick forests, and rugged areas. The Munda language found in every nook and corner of the country testifies to this fact. These remnants can be found from same Himachal to Kanyakumari even today.

The surprising fact regarding Mundari Language is that the **Brahuyi Script** remains of the inhabitants of the Indus Valley Civilization are still in Sindh in Brahuyi Script. Brahuyi words are not only in the dialect of **Kerala's Priyah** untouchables but also in Mundari language. On this basis it can be said that Adivasi Aborigines and Dalit lower strata people are brothers and natives.

### MUNDAS OF PRE-BUDDHIST

The word Munda comes from the Punjabi language for boy. The interesting thing is that in Mundari Language the word Munda means – "Human". In fact the word Munda seems to have originated from Mund. In Pali Language it means a person with a hairless head. In broad meaning of Munda in **Mundari Language** is not only human but human with hairless head. These hairless people who believe in the religion, life style and wisdom of Buddha with shaved head and propagated it. The

Brahmins started using the word Munda as a derogatory way to Mundaka. It is described in Tripitaka that once he was giving alms in Shravasti. He went to the Agni Bhardwaj Brahmin's house. He has seen them coming from far away – same Mundaka, same Shraman same low man – stop! This means in the era the word Mundak

was made as derogatory as today's bald, hairless head. The meaning of the word Munda, in Mundari, Pali, Punjabi is human or hairless head human. Because he is a Buddhist monk; but in Sanskrit Mundak means sinful human. Here with Munda there is a suffix AK and AK means in Sanskrit sinful man or sin. This means change is result of enmity of the Brahmins with the Buddhists. Not only this a clear impression of Buddhism can also be seen on the customs and rituals of his religious principles. There are only five remedies mentioned in the code of conduct of Mundas. His Sarna worship is the corruption of Saran. It is done from the initial Trisharan of Buddha Vandana. In the past we saw that the Tribal Mundas are the sons, the heir of the Indus Valley Civilization. He became a Buddhist from the early age.

Before starting his revolutionary movement, Birsa Munda used to visit religious places. Even though all those places are in the possession of Brahmins today but their History tells that those places are of Buddhists. The Brahmins have captured them and installed their deities. Birsa Munda had also said that the places belong to our forefathers of Tribes. Thus it becomes clear that Mundas were Buddhists in early time and early ages.

### **NATURAL INTEREST IN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FROM EARLY AGE**

That Time English and German Christians arrived in the Tribal area and Plateau. The German Christians Missionaries had come to India in large numbers. Their entry into the tribal areas was done to the remote paces. Along with Christianity some lights of Education entered the thick wilderness and the dense forests. Seeing the poverty and helplessness of the father Birsa's elder brother left the house to Rataunti village. There he started working in a Tribals house and got married there. Birsa Munda also had to go to his maternal uncle's village named Ayubahatu. From there the boy Birsa used to go to school of the village. That time his younger aunt got married. She loved Birsa very much. That's why she took Birsa to her father in-laws house to Katnga village

There was more movement of Christian missionaries in **Katnga village**. The child Birsa had heard from them that original religion of Mundas is very bad. The religion of Christians is very good. Hearing this a very deep impression made in the heart of the boy child Birsa. He cannot do any thing at such a young age. As a result he becomes very serious. Other Munda children remained busy in playing, running and he remained loss in deep thinking and reasoning. He was pained too hearing the Christians missionaries talk about the evils of his Aadi Munda religion. Along with other classes he also used to go to the forest to graze goats, cows and buffaloes. That is why he used to play flute for peace of mind. He gets so immersed in his tone that he does not have any news of the world as if his grief and pain comes out of the flute's soothing tone. Apart from the flute, Birsa's another instrument for him was which is called "**Tuila**" in Mundari. This was string instrument whose tune also touched the heart since childhood Birsa was deeply saddened by the humiliation of his forefathers and the plight of the tribal society. In the gamut of musical instruments, his sadness was somewhat calm. Musical instruments are definitely the basis of Tribal life and valuable recognition of Tribal culture.

### **BIRSA'S SERIOUSNESS IN SOLITARY:**

Birsa was not living with normal children. He had become serious and remained in deep thinking. His seriousness and deep thinking can be gauged from that fact that after facing the insults of community people and religion. Birsa runs away to his father and expresses his desire to study. Seeing the seriousness of his sons, his father is fully confused and gets scared. He expresses his feelings to his wife - "**He knows that his son Birsa does such things which no other Munda children of his age can do.**"

**Birsa says – "Baba (Father) you know, this time at the house of a Munda Mother, such a child will be born who will protect the rights of Tribal People by fighting their battle."**

I asked after listening to the words of Birsa – "Who taught you all these wrong and confusing things. In reply to this Birsa said immediately, which type of father you are? You do not even know what everyone knows. All the Munda community people talk like this. They sing similar songs in their songs as well. Why you have not heard those songs of Mundas? I said yes, I have heard them singing. It seems from Birsa's words. That this boy will not stay with us for long. His mother Karmi also supported her husband's words."

She has also said that whenever she looks at him, of course, there is a strange kind of affection in my heart. He was also very surprised about this that Birsa alone from Khatnga village to Kundi Bartauli and from Kundi Bartauli to Barju village he walked on foot and came here. Birsa's seriousness was about the plight of his society. Atrocities done by the strangers or foreigners on him every moment shook him to the core of his heart. But even if a child would have resisted it, how would he have done it. He becomes pale and extremely serious inside. Tribal society and concerns for them kept pondering in his mind. By the stage he becomes a teenager, these questions also getting serious. This seriousness gave birth to a big movement (**Ulgulan**) for human rights of their community people.

## DEPARTURE TO CHAINBASA

In the year 1886 Birsa reached the German Christian Mission of Chainbasa with the desire to study in higher secondary school. The little poor boy Birsa – how to know that there is a fixed time to enter the school and take admission, but nothing is impossible because of his determination. A long journey from Buruj to Chainbasa was covered on foot by him. It was wonderful precedent in itself. A tribal child's attachment to education and its achievement, such a fervent passion for its attainment that inspires to walk miles of distance, could not attract the attention of any writers or litterateur of literatures and that too by a Tribal child could study? **Manu has given the right of education only to the Brahmin class.** Blessings be upon the preachers of **Christian religion** of those who started giving education to untouchables and Tribes of Chhotanagpur in Jharkhand. This was not the time to enter the school. There the people of Mission refused him to enter. But seeing this child coming on foot from such a long distance and seeing blisters on his feet, Birsa got admission in the school. This was the victory of the will power of Birsa. Reasons to study in Mission school, Christian Prayer was compulsory for all students. Not only this, many Christian rites and practices were also imposed on the students.

Being contemplative since childhood, he also learned about this propaganda as medium of Christianity, Birsa used to think very seriously. This was the time when the ferocity of the reform movement of Sardar, Started spreading in all the Tribal areas.

Many people of the Christian Missionary were involved in the **Sardar Movement**. A belief had settled in the hearts of these people that only a Munda young man would lead the Tribes. Secretly the youths had told Birsa Munda about this belief of the people.

## RECOGNITION OF EXTRAORDINARY CHILD

One day an old woman stopped Birsa on his way to Chainbasa. For a few moments she kept looking at Birsa's face with her wise and experienced eyes and then voicing out she said, **"Hey I see you are that Munda young man who has to do many big things. I believe that you have come as the messiah, the savior of the Munda community. Seeing you, I am beginning to feel that now the stalled fight for the rights of Mundas is about to start again. Soon people will know your true form and accept you as their messiah and protector as well as saviour. You are the one who will give us freedom from the landlords and outsiders (Non-Tribes)."** The news of this prediction of the old woman spread like a wild fire in the entire tribal areas. From whole **Chainbasa area**, Tribals started coming in groups to see Birsa and see their faith in concrete form. Regarding this prediction of Birsa's life is very popular among the Tribal people. This incident is very popular among the Tribes. This news instilled a new faith and hope in the hearts of the tribal people and the rise of ethnic self-respect at the same time Christian Missionaries and officials were provoked and stirred with the news. On top of that, they rejected it as superstition but inside they felt an unknown fear and they were completely shaken. Not only the landlords, money lenders, contractors, capitalists and looters did injustice to them and lands of **Mundas, Oraons** and other Tribes were usurped but the British officers and officials also did no less injustice to them. In fact, Christian preachers knew very well that injustice has been done to the Tribals and those people also did not help them. The symbolic meaning of prophecy, **"Munda will write his own destiny. It is futile to expect help to come from the outsider alien people."** This belief gave birth to feeling of unity among all the Tribes and they started uniting for their fight for own liberation.



## FIRE THUNDER AND ROAR

An incident took place in the Mission School of Chainbasa where Birsa was studying. During the school assembly, a pastor said, “**Munda Sardars are all cheats and thieves.**” Hearing these derogatory words and insulting statement about their communities, all the Munda students of the school remained silent without any protest. But a voice thundered tearing the silence of all the Munda students. Such a **lion’s roar** was not of anyone else but of the self-respecting **child Birsa Munda** immediately responded the thundering roar to the pastor. Birsa roared, calling, **the Munda people are traitors and thieves!** He questioned the pastor, “**Munda people are not cheats. Munda people are not even thieves. You called Mundas are thieves and a big cheats? The people of Munda, Oraon and Kol people do not know anything regarding theft, robbery and cheating. You called Munda people a cheat. Can you tell that, whom did they cheat? The people of Munda clan, ethnic and community believed in officials, even believed the lawyers and gave them money on their demands.**”

**“In fact, the officials, the Mission people and lawyers altogether betrayed the Munda Sardars. The real betrayers are these people, then on what basis are you making the false allegation on the entire Munda People.”**

The officials of the mission took this roar of Birsa very seriously.

The smallest form of spark made them see the seed of possible revolution of tomorrow. There, it is right to suppress this spark. Fearing this possibility the missionary officials had expelled Birsa from the school; while leaving Birsa went on saying that the officials of the mission and officials of the administration both belong to the same caste. There is no difference between the two. After this incident, many Munda people abandoned **the Protestant Church** and took refuge in the **Roman Catholic Church**. But within short time Roman Church also became disillusioned with him. The people of Munda ethnic group learnt from their own experiences why their ethnic liberation is neither in Christianity nor in Brahminism or any other so called religions of outsiders. There is no one who will take the side of tribal people, no one is the protector for the tribal cause mainly for the tribal liberation to protect their land and rights for their survival. At present when we see the situation of the tribal people there is no improvement of their lives. Specifically their poverty is vehement in tribal communities as of the age of Birsa’s time.

## BIRSA IN BUNDGAON VILLAGE

There was a landlord named **Jag Mohan Singh** in the village of Bundgaon whose scribe was **Anand Pandey** by name. Anand Pandey had a brother whose name was Sukhnath Pandey. Both these brothers were followers of the Vaishnava Sect, in Brahminism. Staying near them Birsa heard many things about the Vaisnava Sect. But the demand of time was something else. At this time Birsa got the news that Birsa’s friend at Porhat had started a new movement. The reason for this movement was that the Government had passed a law that the land in Singbhung, Manbhung and Palano areas and the number of Government lands in every village; all these lands will be the rights of the **Forest Department**. To control the forests, maps started being prepared in the villages. Under the forest Department all these forests will be counted as **reserved forests**.

After this arrangement, Tribal people will not be able to use and enter the forests. With this law of the Government, the basis of lives of the tribes will be snatched away mercilessly.

For the safety of our existence, will have to raise our voice against this law of the Government. This was the opinion of the tribals. Birsa Munda also raised his voice in protest. Many Mundas presented applications against this law. The Munda people of **Sigrida village** appeared before Birsa Munda with a similar protest letter and application. Some Mundas also challenged Birsa that the existence of Tribes is in danger here and he he is engaged in the devotion of Brahmin’s religion. In this allegation, the very existence of Birsa was shaken. In this hour of crisis, the Munda people from far off places appeared before Birsa. Birsa agreed to support them and went their village with the tribal people of Sigri village. Anand Pandey tried a lot to stop him but who can stop the flow that flows for the sake of others. This is about in 1894, Birsa started walking and revolting. A great

resolution on his expedition had drawn him to a great responsibility to build a history walking on that great path, the possibilities of creating a history were awaiting for Birsa Munda.

## A NEW DIRECTION

On the one hand, the thorny corruption of human respiration, existence and survival of tribal had become an enemy of the lives of the tribal and on the other hand, the orgy of nature's famine worked to push them to death. In such a difficult situation, all the tribals expressed their full faith in Birsa Munda. Birsa's own family had a very pathetic condition financially. People started dying in large numbers due to the famine. A girl died in Birsa's village itself. With such a helpless situation he went towards the burial ground. According to the practice of Mundas, the girls were given Samadhi (Burial Ceremony) on their death. Along with that her jewelry and precious ornaments were also buried with her dead body. In Birsa's mind, and thought arose that on the one hand, a living person does not get the food to eat and people of her family and community used to bury the dead person with full ornaments and riches of her belongings. Due to the poor condition of his helpless family, he digs girl's graveyard and takes out all the ornaments and money. On the second day, Birsa buys rice from the Birbanki village market, but the people of the village get the news of his act of Birsa. This act of Birsa hurts his mother Karmi a lot. His mother does not even touch the rice brought by Birsa. After this incident Birsa goes into the forest. He feels strange in the solitude of the forest. He feels as if the whole forest and his earth are calling out by saying - "I am the mother of all tribals. The people of the British raj and outsiders, aliens (Dikkus) want to separate me from you people. You people will no longer have any right over the forests. The eager voice of the forest land gets absorbed in his every pore. He gets restless. He starts calling like crazy, Mother bless me then I will fight that battle. Should hundreds – thousands of Birsas be sacrificed for your protection is no sorrow. Thus Birsa got new direction.

## BIRSA'S ORIGINAL MUNDA FAITH (NATURALISM)

Yesterday's Birsa today he becomes the **FATHER OF THE EARTH. (Dharti Aabba)**. That Birsa has become god the savior. One belief, one faith and one leader were needed to vocalize the agony of the tribals, that is their own man. The tribals suddenly saw all these qualities in Birsa Munda. His house in Chalakad became a pilgrimage for all the tribals. Tribal people started coming from far and wide to visit Birsa. Due to being educated in their fraternity and in contact with the preachers and propagators of Christianity, many reformists' steps were taken by Birsa.

When smallpox broke out in a tribal's houses, Birsa would reach there with his retinue (service groups) and gets engaged in service of the patient. And makes arrangements to keep the patient separate. Applying ointment and sandal wood paste on his body, then he would have taught people the rules of health. Due to his sense of service, his fame spread far and wide. People started coming in groups (drives) to see him. Only one name in the mouth of all the tribals! Earth Father (**Dharti Aabba**) **Birsa Munda**. "Birsa would give the teachings of his religion, faith to the coming people in this way and called it **Nine Commandments**, as follows: -

1. **To steal, to lie and to kill is injustice.**
2. **No one should beg.**
3. **All of you are poor and stop worshipping by giving sacrifices in the interest / words of priests and exorcists.**
4. **Do not worship any gods and goddesses.**
5. **Do not believe in ghosts, witches, vampires etc.**
6. **Hariya (Rice Beer), Daru (liquor, Alcohol), Tari (Intoxicate drink from a tar tree), Mahua (Alcohol from flowers of a Mahuva tree), all these are the houses of the devil.**

With these intoxicants, man's intelligence is going to be destroyed from the root. Therefore, do not consume any kind of intoxicants.

**7. Be incessantly hard working like ants.**

**8. Learn to live together like animals and birds.**

**9. Love everyone.**

The wave of this new religion / faith spread throughout the Tribal areas. **The first shock** of this religion fell on the **exploiters** of the Tribes, the **Dikkus** (alliance, outsiders), the Missionaries and Brahmins. Many Tribal people left their new faith who had accepted that and started following Birsa's given ordinances.

**The second shock** was affected to **liquor contractors** and the **excise department** of the Government.

**The third shock** fell on the **landlords, contractors** and **moneylenders**.

**The fourth shock** fell on the **witchcrafts-thugs** of the village and the **exorcists** of the areas.

## **SARDAR MOVEMENT AND BIRSA**

The Sardar movement has its own special importance in the tribal liberation struggle. Sardar continued to strive for the liberation of Tribes even after being initiated into Christianity. Their lives and living style changed as a result of their exposure to the Missionary when they became Christians. There was also a change in their thinking and way of life in refining themselves for civilization. In the beginning they thought that even pastors of the mission while they talk big about the humanity. So they believed that the people of Christian missionaries would help them to free and liberate from the slavery of landlords, money lenders, contractors and exploiters of poor Tribes.

But their faith and hope was shattered. It was understood very clearly by them that the Mission people and British people are two different sides of the same coin. They decided to do their struggle on their own strength. The success of the Sardar movement depended on this and that was the unity of Tribal People. It was not possible to obtain authority by begging for mercy from their exploiters. Suddenly their attention was drawn to the Munda student who had vented his anger at the pastors for making objectionable remarks against the Tribal people. He was expelled from the school by calling this a bold, fearless protest and opposition of in discipline. This student was nobody else but the same Birsa Munda. Birsa can be an ideal medium among the Tribals, that way the Sardars thought so. In the hope of these possibilities, they propagated the goddess form of divinity of Birsa in a big way. Because of this propaganda of Birsa, the Mundas accepted him as Father of the Earth in their hearts. Due to the popularity of Birsa and the needs of the tribals; Sardar became impatient. In the excitement of rashness he decided to take direct action in the event of conflict. Before starting the struggle and agitation, Birsa had asked his followers which path they wanted to take of peace or of struggle /Agitation. Every one said in one voice – about the struggle and agitation.

## **THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN**

Birsa's popularity spread in the entire tribal area in the form of Earth Founder (Father of the Earth). Herds of tribes started coming towards Chalkad to have a darshan (Sight, glance) of their earthly father. All the tribals were very excited to find earthly Father in their midst. They decided that there would be a revolt against the British Rule and monopoly of the landlords, money lenders, capitalists, contractors, looters of the land. All foreigners, Dikkus the above said will have to be killed and driven away. First of all Munda State (Abuwa Disum= Our own Country, Rule) will be established. Birsa went from village to village to propagate this that no tribal would give money to the government treasury through the appointed personnel of them. Group of tribals from all around started moving towards Chalakad village. As a result, paddy sowing in that year remained lying barons. Their work in the fields and barns also came to a standstill. Landlords and contractors stopped getting tribal laborers for wages. Due to all these changes, the British rule started getting worried. The Deputy Commissioner of Singh-bhung ordered Birsa to be imprisoned in the Tamar police Station.

To follow this order a head constable along with two police men left for Chalakad. The scene they saw after walking to **Chalakad**, the police men were surprised to see him. Devotees of Virsa had built 50-60 houses in Chalakad village. There had a huge gathering of tribal people. It seemed so, as if there is a fair in the village. When the tribals heard that police men had come to imprison the savior (Leader or god). So they started beating him. Birsa told these policemen. "You are their servants of the officials (Deputy Commissioner, you have come to follow their orders. Eat and drink in this dark night and leave tomorrow morning and the policemen had to return empty handed the next day. On the second day without wasting the time, the head constable, a Christian Preacher and the police along with 200 men left for the same village. Birsa should not be imprisoned so all the tribals came and stood near Birsa.

## **PANCHAYAT OF BIRSA**

After getting the introduction of this unity and courage of Mundas, all the gathered Munda tribals called a Panchayat (Meeting). There has been a very ancient tradition of Munda Panchayats among the tribals which ended due to their no development and progress of Mundas by the arrival of outsiders in the medieval period. For the first time under the leadership of Birsa, Mundas saw themselves freely, what was considered in the ethnic group panchayat; who are the people in their lives who subjected them to tyranny and oppression. In this panchayat, the tribals also discussed the issue that the British government also tortured the innocent tribals. The police men and their sub-inspectors kept coming to the villages and collecting money from the tribals. All these outsiders (dikkus) together made the lives of the tribals very difficult as if they are their personal slaves. There was no notable movement till 1895 regarding agitation. But there was a significant impact to keep in mind that even in such places in the entire Tribal areas there were no access roads. There also a new hope and a new faith was born in the heart of the every tribal. They got an identity of their own. This unimaginable work could be possible only by Birsa. Birsa warned the tribals all the time that both the Missions Sahib, outsiders (Dikkus) and the Government Sahib were their enemies. The agents of and brokers of the Government the landlords, money lenders and contractors are all enemies of the tribals. When the independent Munda reign comes all these enemies will be finished (vanished). The great dream of 20 year old youth was of Birsa Munda. This young man had not only seen the economic and social exploitation of his entire tribals with his own eyes, but he himself had experience the pain of exploitation and oppression. Seeing their dream also seems like a danger bell for the enemies. This caravan of dreams begins with the faith and bold, courageous support of Birsa.

## **ARREST OF BIRSA MUNDA**

Seeing this new enthusiasm of the tribals and the awakened consciousness for their liberation, the eyes of the British Government were opened. The selfish people who started instigating the British Government against the innocent tribals, among them Christian preachers, landlords, contractors, usurers and money lenders had big conspiratorial hands of these looters. All of them together started instigating the British rule against the local people and in local language (Mundari), the British Government could not make a direct contact with the tribals.

These landlords, contractors and lawyers took full illegal advantages of it for interpreting the unknown language (Mundari) in their own favour stealthily. As a result of this provocation, and instigation, the Deputy Commissioner of Sinhbhung ordered arrest of Birsa. The main reason for this order of arrest was that tribals from all regions gathered in Chalakad village. Sur to this, these landlords and contractors told the preparation of rebellion against the British and their rule through the 00000outsiders. In their conspiracy, a pastor among the people even informed the British that on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August 1895, all the Christians would be killed as per the instructions of Birsa. For this it was decided an opinion that the Deputy Superintendent of Police named Mr. Miryas would go himself to arrest Birsa. This arrest of Birsa will be made in the night without any clue to him. The charge will be of obstructing the head constable in official work by use of force and inciting the tribals by his speeches. Birsa was arrested by armed police parties who surrounded Birsa's house during the night. At the time of arrest, Birsa protested a lot on his behalf and also made a lot of noise. At that time the number of men in



the village would be only ten to twelve. After arresting Birsa Munda at night, these people reached **Bandgaon** village at around 8.30 a.m.

The news of Birsa's arrest spread in the entire tribal areas like fire. The tribals got shock by hearing the news and started agitation and protest for the illegal arrest.

## **TRIAL ON BIRSA MUNDA**

The decision was taken first by arresting Birsa, instead of getting the case done in Ranchi, it should be done in Khunti village. In this decision, the British offers wanted to prove that Birsa is a normal person, he is not a god. As soon as the news of the law-suit in Khunti was received, all the tribal started towards Khunti. Everyone wonders why the god Birsa was arrested; why was the public kept ignorant of this? Instead of Ranchi, the British had another motive for prosecuting him in Khunti village. They wanted to punish Birsa in front of the tribals so that their morale would break and they would be afraid of the British administration. Seeing the agitated state of the tribal communities, the British thought that litigation in Khunti can also be dangerous. Tribal people can turn violent at any time. So frightened, they changed their decision at the last moment and decided to conduct the trial in Ranchi itself. The Deputy Magistrate named **Krishna Kali Mukherji** freed the arrested tribals saying that no offense was proved against them. The English Administration was very angry with this work of the Deputy Magistrate and he was immediately transferred from there. The British Government was surprised to find that there was a sudden increase in their enthusiasm due to the apprehension that the arrest was ever dangerous.

In Ranchi fifteen tribals were put on trial along with Birsa. This lawsuit was totally against the principles of justice. No lawyer was also made available to Birsa to present his case. One sided judgement was given against Birsa Munda. Birsa only said in his favour that he is not guilty. He has not committed any crime. But in the judgement that is pronounced in the trial – is that his sentence is for two years rigorous imprisonment.

## **THE UNJUST ATTITUDE OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION**

The British Administration had estimated that the Government had broken the moral of the Tribals by keeping Birsa captive and torturing the tribals. One side taking innocent Birsa as a prisoner, all the tribals had a sense of hatred towards the British Government. On the other hand instead of fear and terror in their hearts, the sense of hatred towards the British deepened even more due to unnecessary atrocities on the tribals. The wave of establishment of **Munda Reign (Raj)** started intensifying. In these two years 1895-97 when Birsa Munda was serving the sentence, the crops in the Munda and tribal areas were destroyed twice due to no rain (Drought). There was a famine in an area of about 700 miles. As a result, the prices of commodities increased. People started dying due to lack of food grains. Without Government cooperation the life of the tribals became difficult. Even the landlords did not help them in this critical time. Being forced the tribals had to save their lives by eating the tender shoots of bamboo. Landlords filed lawsuits against tribals for eating tender bamboo shoots which were cut by them.

This inhuman cruelty of the landlords will be pain staking written on the pages of history. It is a big shame to them for such cruelty. It was the talk of the British rule. Has there been any change in the situation even after the so-called independence of the country, change has definitely come. The White British left but the black foreign rules took the reins of the country in their hands land gained power in the name of the people's representatives. The facilities which could not be made available to the public or could not be done. People's representatives have been given thousand times more facilities for themselves and for their family members started collecting. Those days' landlords and petty kings who licked the soles of the British in flattery and exploited the common man. The same people started beautifying the posts of ministers in the Assemblies and legislative constituencies.

## RELEASE OF BIRSA MUNDA

At that time when Birsa was serving his sentence in jail, at that time the lives of the tribals had become due to famine. The British Government did not help him. In such a crisis, the British Administration increased in the amount of revenue. The famine continued. Along with this, the tribals also stopped paying taxes. Famine afflicted tribals had started looting paddy. Due to Birsa Munda being in jail, the old Sardars continued the movement in the name of Birsa. They themselves were not able to provide leadership to the tribals but kept trying to prepare the ground for Birsa Munda through agitation and started waiting for Birsa to be released from jail. The British officers did not have the courage to keep Birsa in Ranchi Jail, because the anger of the tribals increased day by day. Seeing the anger of the tribals, Birsa was shifted from **Ranchi Jail to Hazaribagh Jail**. Most of Birsa's imprisonment was spent in **Hazaribagh Jail**. Birsa was released from Jail on 30th November 1897. The Munda and Oraon Tribals of the districts started celebrating in the joy of getting release of Birsa. In this period all the Mundas started abandoning the Christian Missionary. Tribal dances and songs started in every village to the sound of drums and trumpets. Meanwhile, a huge tribal fair was also organized in Chalakad village. Seeing tribals' celebration and unity of the tribals the British administration again started getting worried. The British Administrations sent the Deputy Commissioner from Ranchi to Chalakad village. The Deputy Commissioner came to Chalakad and met Birsa saying "I have seen you closely at your two years imprisonment and am also pleased with your behaviour. This time also you promise us that there will be no disturbance ahead." Birsa shook head in acceptance.

## THE ROAR OF ULGULAN (AGITATION) MOVEMENT

The followers of Birsa were in favour of taking a direct fight with the British and exploiters of tribals. They believed that it was because of the British rule that these money lenders and landlords exploit the tribal. It was decided that December 25<sup>th</sup> is the day to celebrate the greatest day (Christmas) of the British. From that day Birsa's liberation Movement would start. In Mundari Language this liberation, Movement is called "ULGULAN". Under this Ulgulan the decision was taken that all the landlords, contractors, pastors and money lenders should be murdered. These people are their exploiters and enemies; these murders should be the beginning of rebellion from us. Under this Ulgulan on December 25, 1899, the police stations of **Singhbhum, Chakradharpur, Ranchi, Khunti, Torpa, Karra, and Tamar** etc. of village police stations were burnt. The Missionaries in these places were also attacked. The Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi issued orders that police should be deployed in Tribal areas. From 25<sup>th</sup> December 1899 Birsa started sending tribals to **Sail Rakab Hill**. There are many caves on this hill. The Mundas who fought here started settling down with their families.

This arrangement of Birsa created panic and disturbance in the city of Ranchi. The English administration also made complete preparation of its behalf. Police was called from Khunti, Birju and Bandgaon villages. Deputy Commissioner of Street Field announced in the tribal language that all the Mundas should surrender to the Administration. In protest against this, Mundas challenged them for fight. They declared that it is our native birth place (our own reign, rule = Raj), not yours. On refusing to surrender, bullets were fired from the police and army. Stones were thrown from the side of the Tribals. One side strong British rule which defeated the powerful kings by their treachery and took over the whole country. On the other hand the resourceless Tribals were fighting for their lost freedom since centuries. It was one of the unpleasant events in the world history which till now no historians have put the vision and eyes to it.

## BIRSA AND TRIBES ARE NOT HINDUS:

Today the fanatics are propagating deviously, seeing the fearless agitations of the tribals' movement that Birsa Munda and tribals are the followers of the Vaishnava Sect of Hinduism (Brahmanism). Presently keep in mind, these are the same vicious people who are afraid of the Tribals even calling them Tribals (Adivasis) and give them dirty abuses by calling them Vanvasis (Forest dwellers). For Dalits they call them Harijans (Untouchables) and for tribals they call them Vanvasis, these are the abusive words; which they use. **Indira Gandhi** made this abusive words even more clear. She said to them "**Girijan**" in the scripture and casteless people. Be a Tribal or

a Dalit there is never a slogan of equality with them. But they say the slogan (Samrassta , Harmony). The illiterate public has got entangled in this cycle of words since ages. It is true that while staying there in Bandgaon village, Birsa heard more things about Brahmanism and Baishnava Cult from Anand Pandey, the Munshi (Accountant) of the land landlord Jag Mohan Singh there.

If someone propagates this incident as the basis that Birsa Munda was follower Brahmin religion and he opposed Christians for the protection of Brahmins. So there cannot be a bigger white lie than this. The truth is that those who led the tribals to this miserable life are the Brahmins, landlords, money lenders contractors and (dikkus) outsiders. The Mundas call these exploiters Dikkus (Aliens / foreigners) with hatred. These people evicted the Mundas from their ancestral lands. These tribal people were denied and deprived from education and kept them segregated in the jungles. These outsiders looted the lands and raped their sister and daughter in ruthless way. They kept their forefathers as bonded labourers. The tribals have paid such a huge price for their identity and crime on them for not being Hindus or Brahmins. Today's tribals are not simpleton like the Eklavya (Whose finger was chopped). They do not accept the propagation at all that Birsa was a follower of Vaishnavites (Brahmanism). If this were the case then his followers would have been gone to Vaishnavism as their own religion. But he did not do this. He put the base for aborigineous Munda religion (Nature Worshippers). The Mundas who were struck in the quagmire of Brahmanism. They also came out of that dirty mire of Brahmanism, the Caste system and joined the religion of Birsa. The original religion of Mundas was Buddhism. Being Buddhists in the plains of the country, these tribals were chased from plain regions to thick forests and segregated them by the outsiders Brahmins). In the customs and traditions of Mundas, the aspects of Buddhism can be searched.

### **EARTHLY FATHER (DHARTI AABA):**

Soon Birsa's fame spread from village to village as a leader, religion founder, a miraculous personality, a healer, and a social worker. All kinds of people started coming to him in large numbers to listen to his sermons. At the initial stage he used to preach sitting on the bed outside of his own house. When the number of listeners started increasing, they used to sit under a tree on the open field. Using Hisimuni Turban (20 hand long turban) Birsa looked very attractive wearing a dhoti, coloured in turmeric Birsa announced from the stage for one day while preaching among his following - **“I am Dharti Aaba (Father of Earth) . You call me as earthly Father (Dharti Aaba). The whole crowd said to him together - You are our Earth's Father. From today we will call you Dharti Aaba (Earth's Father).”** From that day Birsa became famous as **Dharti Aaba**. He launched a campaign for a better life for his followers. He emphasized on moral and ethical rules. He attacked habits of Tribals and attacked on using alcohols. He opposed the customs and evils spread in the society. Of-course Birsa's stories of miracle quickly spread throughout the tribal areas. The tribals started believing that Birsa had come as heir Messiah. There was so much effort in his speech that what he says that to what happens. Birsa got it what he wanted very quickly. Tribals started standing in front of him with folded hands. They believed so much in Birsa that what he said used to happen. Far away in the country side; his discussions started blossoming and spreading. In the folk songs of villages were sung in the form of **Dharti Aaba**. In this way, at a very young age, Birsa became publicized in the tribal areas as Dharti Aaba. People left their works and started coming to see him and listen to his preaching. In this form, Birsa has done a favour to Tribal Society. Their self-confidence has increased.

### **REFUSAL TO SOW THE CROP: WHY?**

In the famine-stricken tribal areas Birsa announced that stop the crop sowing; it seems very awkward but he had a vision and farsightedness behind it. Merchants, money-lenders and Jagirdars used to loot them. Traders would make their crops bought at throw away prices. The money lenders used to give loans for these crops on high interest rates for fertilizers, seeds, bulls etc. The **Jagirdars** used to usurp their produce and crop as tax. On the other hand the outsiders were monopolizing the forests. These outsiders, the looters used to take away all the woods, fruits, leaves, birds, animals, honey eatable roots and medicines from the forests. In this way Birsa had instructed his fallowers to not sowing the seeds given under a very well-thought-out strategy. His idea was to hit

two targets with one stone. When the crop was not sown, he wanted to gently give a blow to their enemies, outsiders. To whom will the money-lenders give loans when the crop is not sown; to whom traders will cheat them?

From where will the Jagirdar take the tax? On the other hand, to satisfy their hunger, the tribals then turn to the forests and make them completely dependent on the forests and leading them towards the jungles. Birsa knew very well that even after toiling hard in the field for a whole year, which tribal could get enough crop and grain to survive? Birsa wanted that the tribals would earn their living from the forests from the wood, roots, natural medicines, honey, making ropes from the grass, mines, salt of the hills, fruits etc. Could be sold or exchanged for earning the livelihood. Do not depend on the outsiders. So that they should avoid exploitation. That's why he announced that tribals should stop sowing crops. Discerning followers of Birsa followed it, seeing the far-reaching consequences of this step. Christian pastors and outsiders called it, as their madness and nuisance. These outsiders (Dikkus) spread the message that earlier tribes used to die from famine but now they will die with hunger. Whatever could be the consequences, it was the far sighted decision of Birsa Munda.

## SECRET MEETINGS

Birsa was only a preacher in Chalakad. His purpose was only religious there. But the center of struggle was shifted from Chalakad to Dombari for further real preparation. Coming here Birsa's movement became a revolutionary movement. In fact Birsa had deliberately brought his headquarters here. He knew about this place since childhood. The location was perfect for the security privacy, seclusion etc. from all the bad intruders. Dombari was under the Murhu police station to the last of Khunti and that location was surrounded by hills from all sides. This was only open or the approachable from the valley of **Saiko**. Near to it drinking water was also available. This is the reason why the **Kol** Agitators also chose this place for their protest and agitation. The following important decisions were taken here: -

1. **The decision to stop paying rent to the landlords.**
2. **Plowing, sowing and getting the crop without paying the rent (Lagaan) and**
3. **To re-establish the rights on forests.**

A secret meetings of the representatives took place at this headquarters. In these meetings, it was decided to take the ideological struggle to every village. This is where the ideological debate took hold as to how the **Adivasis (Tribals) were the real owners of this land**. They had monopoly over the forests. Their daughter in-laws and daughters used to walk fearlessly even in the jungles. No one was going to take arbitrary tax land unemployment from them. Outsiders have left us nowhere by interfering in our personal lives. This ideological decision was taken to even house and in every village.

It was here the methods of attacking the enemies, the place, time etc. of attack were fixed. Then secret meetings paved the way for further conflict and agitation. Now Birsa's movement had become political from religious. In these meetings Birsa linked his movement to a question for the emancipation of the tribals. In fact now the movement had started taking any sides together. It had freedom, identity, cultural identity, existence indigenous religion etc. everything was included. Now it had taken the form of a fierce and overall movement.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF MUNDA (RAJ) KINGDOM AND REIGN

An army of 4000 volunteers was quickly organized on the strength of the revolutionary activities of Birsa at the Dombari headquarters. So this 22 years old (Dharti Aaba) the Earth Father established Munda Raj (Reign) in the forest by consulting his close followers. **Bandgaon, Torpa, Murhu, Jashpur, Rampr, Sarguja, Rajgangpur, Janjgir** had an area of thousands of square kilometers in the area of this Munda Raj (Reign). Due to the thick jungles and forests being there the British officers were unable to take action against Birsa. From the Birsa's order itself all followers declared their home sacred and announced that unauthorized intruders would be



punished. By doing that it became easy to keep weapons in homes and prepare plans for secret diplomacy. After this Birsa then divided his own volunteers soldiers into the following three divisions :-

**1. Preacher and Teacher:** In this troop (Group) Birsa kept learned and confidential members. Birsa and his minister commander used to hold meetings twice, a week on Thursday and Sunday in their homes.

**2. Puranic:** In this troop there were selected soldiers from all over the area who were ready for the struggle and agitation.

**3. Nanak:** In this group only youths kept who were not called in the secret meetings but giving the information about the decisions of the meeting. The work was handed over to them. In this troop, number of members multiplied soon.

Through the above arrangement, the message was conveyed to tribals from village to village that now Mundas have their own Kingdom. The forests and lands belong to them. Now no one will be able to exploit them. Neither the outsiders (Dikkus) nor the White British, or Money lenders, or contractors, or landlords, even the agents of elites. Establishment of Munda State in Tribal areas was an epoch-making step. At that time the work was no less daring. On one side the British rulers were prevalent and another side Outsiders, Contractors, Money lenders, Usurers, Capitalists and their agents. Creating a third force between these two forces was a huge historical event. Only the great people like **Birsa Munda**, as Earth's Father (**Dharti Aaba**) could have given the introduction of such **extraordinary courage**.

### TRAVEL TO PLACES OF ANCESTORS:

Before blowing the trumpet of armed revolution, Birsa travelled with his followers to the temple of Chutiya near Ranchi. According to the oral tradition of the Tribals **Chutiya temple, Jagarnath temple and Navratna temple** were built by the forefathers of the Munda Tribals. We have been writing from the past that the tribals were the Buddhists of the former hermitages. Recent discoveries have proved that the above temples were of the Buddhists and were built by the ancestors of the tribals. It was occupied by Brahmins after expelling Buddhism. The purpose of Birsa's Munda's visits was to find written evidence in this regard. And Mundas had to establish their connection with the temples. Birsa had heard from his forefathers that it is written on copper plates that the builders of these temples were Munda Tribals. This means that till the time of Birsa, Copper Plates were available on this subject. These are the places where Mundas once built Penkara Viharas (Buddhist Sacred Places). Aryans, outsiders have captured their highest heights and converted them into Brahmin temples and kept idols of their deities and threw them away. He rejected these so called gods, goddesses of Brahmanism. He blamed the Aryan Brahmins and their gods and goddesses for the decline and miseries of tribal society, then described the tribes' glorious past.

He also told that our ancestors and forefathers were the kings of this country, the natives are the aborigine people. Arya outsiders had defeated them by treachery and chased them into the forests. Later on their descendants, outsiders came to exploit us even in these forest. Now human rights of worthy living are not available even here. Our struggle and agitation will now be for these human rights. Today it is being told in research books by various historians that the above religious places belonged to Buddhism. Outsiders (Dikkus) captured them. This means that till the time of Birsa, all natives knew this truth through oral tradition.

### DECLARATION OF WAR AND MASSIVE AGITATION

Birsa Munda called secret meeting in March 1899. In this 300 trusted bow and arrow soldiers of Puranic contingents were called. Second meeting was held in October 1899. All soldiers were called in this meeting. Birsa prepared two flags, one **red** colour and the other **white** colour. The red colour was a symbol of Mundas and white was the symbol of outsiders (Dikkus, Brahmins, landlords, Mahajans, traders, contractors ...). An arena (Akhara) was made. White flag towards East and red flag towards West directions were put (fixed). After that Birsa announced thundering roar like a lion ; a massive agitation and war with outsiders (Dikkus) is going to

take plac. The earth will turn red like a red flag with their blood. We have quoted the historians behind as saying that the Munda's ancestors were chased from the Western India towards these dense forest. This is the reason Birsa said that the red coloured flag was the symbol of the Mundas put towards the West direction. The Munda community is considered to be the Buddhists and the ancient places of Buddhists are also present on the West side. In which **Sarnath, Kushinagar, Shravasti, Mathura and Takshshila** are prominent. After this Birsa held about 16 small and bigger meetings. Birsa said to them – “**To rescue our lands and forests from the occupation of outsiders.**”

We took refuge in the judges of the court to rescue our lands and forests out of the possession of outsiders (Dikkus); but we did not receive the justice because judges give decisions in favour of outsiders (Dikkus). So we have no option and choice but to play Holi with these outsiders blood. In the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1899 meeting, it was decided that missionaries should be attacked as this secret information used to give then to the outsiders and the officials (Hakims). In this way, **Birsa the Great** announced for the war by warning his followers and his soldiers. Munda Raj (Kingdom) had already been announced. Now there were plans to remove outsiders in the next phase. In 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1899 meeting, it was decided to take action in two phases for armed struggle and the fire was burnt.

### ARMED CONFLICT IN TWO PHASES

Birsa targeted the Sakhadara Mission on 25 December 1899 in the beginning of his agitation and war in the form of **Ul-gulan**. The pastors were over joyed in the Churches celebration of the solemn day of Christmas. **Gaya Munda** attacked with his 100 soldiers. Pastor Carberi was attacked with arrow on the chest of him. He had worn warm coat therefore he escaped from injury and got survived. The soldiers set the mission's compound and houses on fire after the shower of arrows.

To teach a lesson to the missionaries, Birsa had sent three troops to different places. The second contingents attacked on Murhu Missionaries. There the pastor **Vasti** was listening the song of the Students. Arrows were fired at him but he got injured and ran away. Mission houses were set on fire. The third squad attacked the Burhju Mission. The police of Khunti was stationed there. The pastor was injured by barrage of arrows of the soldiers and five police constables were killed. After this all the three divisions returned to Birsa. It was a trial for further struggle and agitation. There was massive bloodshed in the second phase.

This time only police stations were targeted. The attack on Khunti and Ranchi was planned. Taking a contingent of 300 soldiers, Birsa attacked the Khunti Police Station. The police officer and a constable there were killed and the rest were injured. In this fight and struggle, a soldier of Birsa also got martyred. On the other side Gaya Munda attacked Ranchi police station with another contingents. There was a police vigilance at place like **Hatia, Doronda** but the soldiers reached Ranchi sweeping out the arrangement of police system. Blood spilled everywhere. A wave of panic spread all over Ranchi. Many policemen were killed and many were injured. Brick by brick of all the police stations were made in fear. In this way Birsa

Completed with success in two phases of bloody struggle in the first innings. Now in the third phase of the agitation / struggle it was the turn of the real criminals. They were the hypocrite Brahmins, usurers, money lenders, bastard land-ocrats, **Birsa Munda** now started focusing his attention on them.

### CHILDREN BECOME REBELS

**When the** Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi received information about the attack on police stations and killings of policemen, he got shocked and upset. He reached Gaya Munda's house with the police force. It was the day of January 6<sup>th</sup> 1900. There was no one outside the house. The doors were locked from inside. There was a smell of rice cooking on the stove. Police called lout but no answer came from inside. Police men entered the house through the window but immediately ran out screaming. Deputy Commissioner shouted and said come out. Otherwise the house will be set on fire. Despite this neither someone came down from inside nor one came out of the house. Finally the policemen set fire to thatch house. The thatch house was made with grass so started

burning with smoke. Suddenly the door was open, **Hurrah Birsa god**, Praise the Earthly father, declaring with the words nine women, men and children came out. There was flames of fire on the roof, the same was seen in their eyes.

On their chests were flames in such a fire of rebellion. Gaya Munda had a sword in his hand. His **wife Maki's** hand was a long sticks, Axes in their hands of sons, poles in daughters-in-laws' hands. The little children being ready with a sharp arrows on the bows. Gaya Munda rotated sword; the police fired the bullets. The bullets hit the shoulder of Gaya Munda. The wife Maki it the commissioner's head with the stick. Sons and daughters-in-laws attacked on the police men (Personnel). The children started showering the arrows. There was a terrible struggle and fight. The women and children also kept fighting and struggling with policemen until they got injured and arrested. By taking up the weapons by women and children it can be guessed that how the movement and agitation of Birsa had gone deep to the roots of the Tribal society. How newly married women of Munda society had also become revolutionaries.

The movement and agitation (Ulgulan) was of Birsa the Great was like this. Its propagation system and system was such that he had filled the children's mins with enthusiasm and zeal. It seemed that the volcano under the plateaus was spilt.

### **AGITATION WITH SEA OF BLOOD AT SAIL RAKAB HILL:**

On 6<sup>th</sup> January, 1900 the struggle and agitation with Gaya Munda and his family had come to know the depth of the roots of the movement of Birsa Munda by the Government. On the other hand, the rebels were also alert. Now they left the houses and they took the shelter in the hills of Sail Rakab with their families. There were many caves in the hill where they can hide themselves. It was very safe hill. It could be climbed from only lone direction on this hill. The rebels had locked their houses and families along with needs kept the location ban for the entry of any bad elements. There was an arrangement of a large number of bows, arrows, swords, axes, etc. On 9th January, 1900 the commissioner army contingent and police squads arrived at **Sail Rakab Hill**.

They threatened to surrender to the rebels to surrender to them moving towards the hill. Police and army were challenged for furious fight and war shining their axes and swords. The commissioner ordered the contingent for shooting with bullets to them. Birsa's soldiers started throwing stones from their catapults. When the police army started climbing up then came down proclaiming Birsa god be praised earthly Father be his kingdom. The axes and swords were in their hands. An encounter took place at eh middle of the hill from both sides. The army contingents in group's ques started firing bullets and the rebels hiding themselves on the trees trunks blowing the arrows to the police men. But how long the bows and arrows could be continued in front of the guns, bullets and riffles. There were about 2000 rebels on the rock hill. Among them there 400 were martyred there and the rest escaped to the dense forests. Birsa had to take shelter in the **Bartodih village** with his young **wife Soli**.

After this fight, encounter and agitation, the Government declared the situation very-very serious in whole of Ranchi with the tribes.

The lands of the rebels were seize by the Government and the rebel soldiers were being arrested in the villages. The Government announced a reward to the location of Birsa Munda to arrest him.

**Kuwar Narpat** Singh the landlord of Porhar started assisting the Government. At the bloody struggle of **Sail Rakab Hill** Birsa suffered lot of loss. The injured were doubled by the martyrs. A large number of them were seriously injured as well as wounded.

## AGAIN BIRSA'S ARREST

Government announced a reward of Rs. 500/- for Birsa's arrest. The rupees 500/- was not simple amount for the difficult circumstances that the tribal people were going through at that time for the scarcity of money. Therefore, forced with these compulsions of **Manmaru and Jawaikela's** seven tribals sold their conscience for 500 rupees and left for their prey. While walking he saw smoke rising from a remote deserted place in the army forest. The prize party of seven people progressed in the direction of smoke. Suddenly they saw a Munda girl burning wood in the forest and cooking rice, it was the indication which is enough. For information about this prize party that their treasure of rupees 500 is somewhere here. They proceeded with a poignant heart. They saw a heart breaking scene. Birsa was sleeping deeply and in a short distance from him on Dondaga his wife **Soli** was in asleep. These people caught sleeping Birsa and walked towards the Bandgaon village. Till yesterday, the brave Birsa, awaken the self-respect of the exploited tribals' suffering for centuries he proclaimed Revolution Ulgulan (Agitation)." The same Birsa in his own sight for these seven Munda people for the greed of **rupees 500** remained a bundle only. The same Birsa resolved to remove the slavery of thousands of thousands, he will only be sold by seven traitors at the hands of enemies. The cost of freedom of all tribal society is just for Rs. 500. In the auction of identity of the entire tribal society, in just Rs. 500=00. Yesterday's **Great Birsa**, yesterday's **Earthly Father** and today's a slave, a prisoner of only seven people, he was arrested.

These seven people were Jagirdar Narpal Singh's people. The Tribal group for their liberation which a twenty year old **person Birsa Munda** took a historical step through which of peace, justice, equality of the tribal brothers and freedom of life for them is attained. **They took their own hero in the cage of deep sleep, what can be a bigger historical stigma than this? The news of Birsa's arrest spread like lightings.**

### GREAT BIRSA IN CHAINS-FETTERS:

When Birsa and their colleagues were arrested, a famous correspondent of that time revolted about the huge handcuffs, chains, fetters gives the shocking information. Correspondent writes – "Heavy handcuffs and fetters in the feet and chains in the waist are worn. On them not even trials are being heard. They are taken back to jail under the same embarrassing situation. Is there not a stigma for the entire human civilization? How big and unbearable is the heavy weight of handcuffs of chains and fetters. It will be clear from this that many places the poor prisoners had to walk a little more than 300 yards from the jail to the Magistrates office, they had to stop at many places. While being taken back from the court, they collapse on the way due to heavy fatigue Birsa, the Great was kept in the separate cell of isolation in Ranchi Jail. Heavy iron chains were tied around his waist and fetters on legs. Other rebels were locked in nearby cells. Even wearing heavy chains and handcuffs like this Birsa used to walk in the cell till late night. Birsa's body was stronger than the metal of which the chains were made. The body of Birsa could have been tied in the tightness of chains but the British Government did not have any such chain that could restrain him, which was burning in his chest. How stronger Birsa's body was this can be gauged and guessed from this. Wearing the chains and heavy fetters which the prisoners had to stay at many pace Birsa stayed in his cell till late night with those heavy chains and fetters. His walking noise was heard by the other rebels sleeping in the cells close to him. In fact, the fetters and steel of chains were made of Birsa Munda's body was also made of the same steel.

### MYSTERIOUS MARTYRDOM:

The Government knew very well that Birsa was not an ordinary revolutionary leader. The Father of Earth, earthly Father is the image of him in the hearts of tribals. One is of the Messiah. By hanging him, the Government did not even want to become wrath (Kopbhajan) stock for the anger of the tribals. Therefore, diplomacy was followed in the Government. By secretly torturing and poisoning him, the Government, hatched a conspiracy to publicize him as dying after suffering from some disease. This is the reason that Birsa Munda, who was agile like a leopard and had a body like iron became a skeleton after staying in jail for three months. He was tortured a lot in the jail. On 20 May 1900, when food was taken to his cell he did not eat. The jail doctor prescribed some medicine but



he did not complain of any discomfort. The speed of his pulse had become very slow. The eyes were bent inward. He was left with only a skeleton. When he vomited blood in the morning of June 9, 1900, he got fainted and he died shortly after that. According to the plan, the Government announced that he has died due to loose motion. The jailer was afraid that his death might not inflame the tribal community. In such a situation, the personnel of jail hurriedly took the dead body to the banks of the Swarna Rekha River at Kokar riverlet of a suburb of Ranchi and got the body cremated. There was a lot of anger among the tribals about this. His family was informed of his death several days later. In this way, even before completing the age of 25 years, the father of the earth, Birsa Munda had left them forever. It was on everyone's lips that the death of a **stormy revolutionary**, the soldier like **Birsa Munda** could be dead from the disease of loose motion, it cannot be such occurrence. They could smell some hidden conspiracy behind this. But then there was no favour to the tribals who could stand for them neither in the administration nor in the press nor in the Government. Therefore, the officials did not reveal the secret of death of Birsa Munda. In this way the martyrdom of this great person / leader Father of land resounds in folk songs as a puzzle even today and will continue to resound for ages.

### **GREATEST INSULT TO BIRSA'S DEAD BODY:**

After Birsa's death, his dead body should have been handed over to his family members. Birsa got married shortly before. His young wife had become a widow at such a young age. According to tribal law and law of the Government required that Birsa's dead body should have been given to his young widow. Did not she also have the moral right to see her husband last and bid him farewell? How cruelty and arrogance was he decision of the Government not to give Birsa's dead body to his family members, to his relatives and to his communities. Some irrelevant argument was given to justify the cruel decision of this that Tribals are superstitious and rumour mongers. Hence Birsa's dead body will not be given to his family members. They can add the miracle of head-feet, with his dead body. Due to this the illusion of god or the incarnation among the Tribals can take hold citing their last wish, thousands of tribal can take arms against the Government by preparing to kill them. Tribal societies have some practices and beliefs. They bathe the dead body and wear new clothes and give Burial with respect. They do not cremate or burn the dead body. Birsa's body was burnt hiding the fact and reality, contrary to their beliefs and practices, which was a great insult and dishonor to his pure dead body. In a research 75 years after this incident, the revelation of the mystery of his death was not due to his loose motion but the Arsenic Poison is confirmed. This was the reason why the body was burnt instead of burial. The Government propagated his death taken place due to loose motion while his body had / were no any symptoms of such. Thus the Government hurriedly laid the body on cremation, burnt it on fire to hide its misdeeds. It was a violation of human rights. The British Government was also taking such arbitrary, inhumane decision because it wanted to give a message to the tribal society that Birsa Munda is not a **Father of Earth Dharti Aaba** but a very simple human being.

### **BIRSA'S LAST WORDS**

Before his arrest Birsa told his followers - **“Until I give my martyrdom till then you will not be able to escape.”** Do not be discouraged. Never think that I left you all at the middle. I have given you all the weapons and tools. Now you all can protect yourselves Hearing these words, his followers were shocked. They were encircled and surrounded by the police and army from all sides. Seeing their disappointment, Birsa, the Great encouraged them, I will come once again. I will inflame the fire of Holi in **Bundu, Tamar, Singhum, Kyonjhar, Gangpur and Basia**. I will blow dust storm in Sonpur. This is also such pleasant similarities that Jesus Christ had told his followers **“But now I will go to Him who has sent me and no one asks where you are going because I have told you this thing, your heart is filled with sorrow. Yet I Have told you the truth to you. I want to leave you in the interest of you because if I do not go then you will not be able to get a reliever. But If I leave then I will send him to you my people. (St.John: 18).**

Shouting at the guard Birsa said in the jail – **“Today you are guarding me. One day you realize and see, I make the earth a new form. The way what goes in to the machine, I will do the same in the earth. The ground will be laminated. I will strike 52 Parganas (domains, areas) and by harassing my enemies in the same doors, they will be ruined. The last words of Birsa the Great matches with Jesus as it is. What he said to his followers was**

completed for the last time too. This is the reason why he used to be honored, respected in the form of **Earthly Father (Dharti Aaba)** and still are done today, till the earth remains, that will continue. The era forgets the emperors forever **but never to the martyrs.**

## **HISTORICAL LAWSUIT (MUKADAMA)**

Birsa and his rebel soldiers from January to October 1900 in Ranchi, the 482 Mundas accused were prosecuted was a big historic. Birsa's followers were appointed **J.A. Pletail** a special Magistrate for hearing the trial. On the other hand, the deputy Commissioner, who played a special role in the raid of rebel in Sinhbhum District, heard the trial. From 4<sup>th</sup> December 1899 to 7<sup>th</sup> January 1900, a list of 15 types of allegations was prepared for incidents at various times. The main allegations were among them - to gather illegal crowd in Actejih, to kill the constables, to inflame on fire Jaipal Singh Nag's house in **Jamri**, to attack two Missionaries in Sarwada and overthrowing the current government and establishing a Birsa's rule. **Advocate Jacob** played the most vibrant role in the trial by special Magistrate in Ranchi. He was the lawyer on behalf of the accused. Not only was that he a very great spokesperson and supporter of the Sardar Movement but Jacob fought the case of Birsa's agitators with great fearlessness and skill.

In cross-examination from the witnesses of the evidence side, he showed such eloquence that he forced them to turn away from his statement. Jacob was such a sharp lawyer that between the crooks of the British Government and the accused he stood like a firm rock. Mundas should be proud of him that they got personal as a lawyer Jacob, who was heartbroken by the victim's human rights. In the final hearing, 98 out of 482 rebels were proved. Sixty eight were allowed to remain in imprisonment in fear of breach of peace. Three were punished on death penalty, 44 were given Cellular Jail punishment known as **Black Water** at **Andaman Nicobar Island** and 47 were given from 3 years to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment. Remaining rebels were simply released from the case and trial.

Overall it can be said that India had a historical lawsuit. This is the reason why the newspapers of that time covered it specially. The people of India showed special interest in it.

## **BIRSA'S BLOOD BROUGHT TREMENDOUS CHANGES**

The blood of Birsa Munda and his opposing soldiers did not go in vain. Every drop of his blood became a lesson of improvement of Tribals. Due to the martyrdom of their close colleagues and the remaining having long duration in Jail, Birsa's agitation movement got cold but the problems of Mundas were understood by the British Government. Munda Tribals wanted to protect their ancestral land rights. They wanted from the Government of their rights over the produce of the forest. They wanted to stop harsh labours without pay by the landlords. Hearing the call of Birsa and his blood of its associates the following steps were taken for the improvement of the problems of the tribals –

- 1). Forced Labour is abolished by law.
- 2). In 1902m Gumla is made Division so that the Mundas got easily Justice in their own area. The tribal land got measured.
- 3). Mundas land got ownership. Their social practices got protection.
- 4) Mundas were given back of their land which the outsiders (Dikkus) had snatched away their land.
- 5) Mundas land was banned from transferring it in the name of outsiders (Dikkus), strangers).
- 6) Mundas pending cases in the courts were settle soon. They were saved from the clutches of Money-lenders (Mahajans), Outsiders, and Capitalists by providing loans on easy installments.

7) In 1929 – 1939 the British Government ordered for measuring the land of Munda region again with the aim of ensuring them whether the real owner of the land has been received by Mundas or not which was snatched by outsiders (Dikkus). Thus Birsa and his soldiers gave their blood to receive the human rights to the Tribal Society.

Birsa had also told his followers before his arrest that until I give my martyrdom, you all will not be able to escape. Therefore, Birsa and blood of his associates and comrades nurtured the tribal regions, then only human rights brought greenness in crops.

### REPORTING OF TRIALS IN NEWSPAPERS:

The famous Newspaper of that time, “Bengali” wrote in its editorial that – ‘Unlucky Mundas did not commit so much sins as you think, more sins were being committed against them.’ When the public’s interest in the trials of the tribal people started increasing then the newspapers of Calcutta, sent a journalist by covering it in the news. His first report was people have stitched their lips in the proceedings of the Munda Nuisance. There is a complete reign of terror. No one has a courage that he is illegal by the session court for the cruel arrest of many rebels for weeks and weeks, challenging the cases run. I have about 30 years of experience working as a correspondent in different part of India. On the basis of it I want to insist and have no fear of denying my point that I have not seen any such cases till date. In which the principles of justice of British rule have been given in this way, the way Munda-rebels is being given in this case. Poor prisoners are getting rotten in jail without any reason, many have died in the jail.

How many bullets were roasted in alleged riots? The Newspaper “Bengali” wrote – Such allegations started coming in large numbers that police are putting another untrue versions in the cases rather to the witnesses say. And in this case, there is a complete exemption to make this case wrong. That is causing toxic effects on the witnesses. They must testify in favour of the Government; therefore Government is paying special attention to them. They are kept well. Good food is given instead of accused. They are kept completely separate from the city and courts with full care. There is no core stone unturned in it to be kept under proper supervision. So that they separate from the public and easily agree to live together.

### PRECIOUS WORDS OF BIRSA

Birsa never allowed the morale of his followers to get down. There was such a weight in his speech. Hearing his words, a revolutionary enthusiasm was filled with the growing youths. He said that 1. I will take the moon in your hand. I will bring **Ulgulan (revolution, Agitation)**. I will not take you on my lap to feed you; I will not even mislead by saying a lase thing. Landlords and government officials (Zamindars and Hakims) are all our enemies. Government personnel are our ruthless enemies. We will uproot it and will establish independent Munda Raj (Munda Reign and Kingdom). After the Government personnel are out and gone away, the end of exploitation of petty kings, landlords, contractors, Mahajans and Hakims is sure and certain to come to us.

Birsa had regretted the demolition of the movement and agitation that if they came under the pretext of the Munda chieftains (Sardars) they could have made their agitation to religious and social activities, they have their movement, superstition prevention, Cultural Consciousness and human rights on religious grounds, if they went ahead to achieve human rights then they would not have to pay such a terrible price. Birsa had said this emotional word to his remaining agitators and followers – that I told you if we kept fighting ourselves on path of religion then we would not have to face all these difficulties and our purpose would also be not fulfilled. Our families, women and children of homes have become destitute due to this policy and are suffering. Yet we should not reduce our hearts small. We should wait wit endurance and patience if I do not have life from this campaign; so do not worry. I will come back one day again and get my kingdom. Birsa had told the Deputy Commissioner, we have always spoken about our people living alive and eating bread with respect. If you consider it a crime then what is our blame in this. We have never done any such crime for the Commissioner for who we should be punished. So we see that such a precious and valuable person was Birsa Munda the Great and his words are incredible.

He was deliberately killed in the jail of Ranchi by the government officials at the age of twenty five. He was just glowing with bubbling youthfulness and rationality. His ideology and philosophy was getting germinated in his young mind for rational temperament like **Nelson Mandela, Jyotiba Phule, Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar, E.V. Ramasamy Perriyar**, etc. for the dignity of self-recognition and for a separate peaceful kingdom. (**Abuwa Disum, Abuwa Raj = Our Kingdom, Our Reign**). The agitation was for the liberation of his own people. It is a shame to the Government and the Jail personnel at that time who treated him inhumanly and kept his death and last rituals very secret. The history is unforgivable for such act who committed it.

### WHY THE IDEOLOGY OF BIRSA CEASED?

The police started torturing the tribal people badly after being fed up with the Birsa movement and agitation. They started torturing them in severe way. Innocent children and helpless elderly people were not even spared. Munda's sisters and daughters in broad daylight were raped and harassed. In fact, even when thousands of police men and soldiers army could not arrest Birsa despite their Joint effort, their companions could not come into their hand, then the officers of the campaign team for Birsa's arrest were thoroughly questioned. When the answers were summoned from the officials and they said their jobs going to be suspended then their patience got broken. They took out their anger at the children, elders and women present in the houses. Their families started dying from hunger due to property got mortgaged and seized. To hide their failure in arresting Birsa and comrade the Superintendent of police on 07-01-1900 with 200 army men attacked the Domvari village. Army gang rape and murder was open exemption to them. The whole village rose in hue and cry. The rumour was spread that similar barbaric proceedings will be held in every village. So the followers of Birsa from within got broken in this delicate hour. To save the lives of women and children they chose to go to jail after surrendering. 28<sup>th</sup> January 1900 was the day to shake the Birsa Movement because on this day **Donka Munda and Majhiya Munda** along with agitator followers surrendered their arms and themselves to the government. Both of them were the main chieftains to Birsa Movement. Thus this movement and agitation got divided and weakened. What these followers could do now? They were poor. Their number was less. They did not have the modern arms and ammunition. They were already evicted from land and forests. This is the reason that Birsa's trustworthy and loyal followers got shattered. The situation crushed them. They could not support Birsa Munda even after willing. They were surrounded with outsiders (dikkus) and looters. The outsiders reached the information of each step of Birsa to the police.

### BRAVE GAYA MUNDA AND HIS AGITATOR FAMILY

In the golden pages of the history of Birsa Munda's Ulgulan (Movement) at Domvari Killings (07-01-1900), the brave Gaya Munda's martyrdom is mentioned and inscribed. The brave Veer Gaya Munda was the Birsa Munda's most courageous, dedicated and fiery warrior. Not only had the youth of his family but also children and women jumped into the Birsa movement and agitation. First the Government resorted to diplomacy to arrest Birsa. The Government wanted to break the followers of Birsa Munda by allurements of money but for them he was not only a leader but he was a savior to them. He was for them a person of liberation from oppression, exploitation, atrocities, injustice and came to give self-respect and freedom of life from injustices done to them. In such a situation the vault of the Government money and all diplomatic policies remained in a dustbin. In such a situation the Superintendent of Police took a contingent of 200 soldiers, started raping and orgy of killings and murders in Domvari village. **Brave Veer Gaya Munda** who is also the Commander of the Birsa Munda Movement. He fought the armed police men till the last moment and breath. Although Gaya Munda and his colleagues did not have modern weapons compared to the army but they fought with great bravery and understanding. Veer Gaya Munda Strangled an inspector and ten soldiers to death. **Veer Gaya Munda** was martyred while fighting. In the Birsa Movement only a woman was jailed on a two year bail; she was the wife of Gaya Munda, **Maki**. Their daughters and daughter-in-law had been in jail for 3 months during the hearing and left them after punishing them for one day. His one son named **Jayamasi** was sentenced to **Portblair Cellular Jail**. His another second son named **Saner** was sentenced to death on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1901.



The third son who was eight to ten years old, who got release from jail, fell sick seriously, such a dedicated family was not a single one in the entire area it was found. The whole family gets punished. For the indigenous identity this family got shattered. Such an example is **rare anywhere in the history of revolutionaries of India**. We salute them for their courage and cherishing memories.

## **OUTSIDERS (Dikkus) REGRESSIVE ROLE AND GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL**

The movement and agitation of **Birsa Munda** was against the moneylenders and the landlords. These people were exploiting the simple tribals from all sides. Stringent actions are to be taken against these outsider rulers in the next phase of the agitated movement of the aboriginal local people of Chhotanagpur. Even if the Birsa's agitating movement was established, the outsiders (Dikkus) were certain to come out of the areas of the tribals. Therefore, they did not like the incessant movement and agitation of Birsa Munda. They wanted to see it ending in any case. When police were persecuting the Mundas in the villages to arrest Birsa Munda and hardcore cooperation groups, then the outsiders understood the strategy of Birsa. They increased their activism against Mundas by getting a chance. The tribes fiercely and vehemently opposed the police and government stand towards them. The police raped the Mundas' sisters, daughters, women and daughters-in-law in the day lights. Many incidents of harassing them took place in various ways. Those Mundas who protested them, they immediately informed the police that they are also associated with Birsa Movement. To protect and safeguard the rapes and humiliation of the women and to avoid the torture of the jail, the Munda people reached the Christian Missionaries to have a shelter. Going to the missionaries, they begged for the safety of their families. At the time of trouble and crisis, the Christian Missionaries provided the assistance but they had to pay it back in huge amount of losing their agitation. They were protected from the atrocities of the outsiders and police but the missionaries snatched their revolutionary faith and beliefs away of their **forefathers** and ancestors **King Asoka** and **Gautam Buddha** which is in their blood and race. That time to protect them from the crisis and atrocities of outsiders (Dikkus) and police more than 15000 Mundas accepted Christianity. Even to arrest Birsa Munda, the outsider landlords hand was there. These landlords, moneylenders and capitalists were real opponents to the local people the tribals which is visible even today in the guise of innocent lambs. There was a severe famine when Birsa Munda was put in the jail. Out of hunger the Munda people took the tender bamboo shoots from the jungle to eat by filling their stomachs to save lives, then the outsiders (Dikkus), landlords, moneylenders and exploiters reached the forest department to give information of each **step of tribes** and to the police stations to punish the innocent tribes. The dirty and heinous role of the outsiders will be always retained in the pages of the **shameful history**. To which the **future generation of the tribes** will never forgive them. The same incidents are reoccurring again and again in the recent days.

## **ON FOOTPRINTS OF BIRSA MUNDA**

After learning a lesson from the movement and agitation of Birsa Munda among tribal people, some more agitation irrupted in them. Following the footprints of Birsa Munda they discarded the gods and goddesses and the beliefs of devils and ghosts, which is known as Haribaba movement. Birsa Munda rejected the Brahmins gods-goddesses, satans and the practices of animal sacrifices. By entering in **Chutiya, Jagarnath** and **many other temples**, Birsa demolished the idols of gods-goddesses of Brahmins. The followers of Haribnaba, demolished the idols of gods-goddesses wherever they saw it. Thus the important role of the movement of Haribaba played a greater share t6o protect the tribal society to keep them away from superstitions. Secondly the **Chhotanagpur Improvement Society Act 1916** was passed and the tribals of the areas started the important movement. They agitated to get two demands from the government. Reservation must be given to the tribals in the first demand in the government services and in the legislations. The second demand was that the Chhotanagpur was to be created a separate sub-division. The leaders of this agitation demanded a separate tribal state by forming a tribes' Mahasabha in 1938. They considered Birsa Munda as their guide and ideal. They propagated in every tribal that they had received all the rights due to Birsa Munda. The Tribal Mahasabha started the honouring of Birsa Munda statue and paying the respect to him. They published the pictures of Birsa for the males on dhotis and females on their saris. They used to narrate the details of the sacrifices of Birsa on the stages and forums and raised the slogans of the name of Birsa. Following the footprints of Birsa, the above agitation

always elected its ideal to Birsa Munda. Due to these agitations the tribal community (Society) obtained the modern insights and inspiration and learned to fight for own rights. Birsa generated the **courage in the tribal people** to obtain their rights and dignity. He said to them – **“I have given to you all the weapons and arms to gain the rights.”** You can now protect yourselves from the outsiders (**Dikkus**).

## TRIBES AND BIRSA’S IDEOLOGY

The condition in which Birsa Munda emerged as a leader; due to non-evaluation, Birsa Munda’s personality was presented in their own way. In this presentation, each community and each group tried to highlight their own narrow selfishness. The staunch Brahmins who opposed Christianity propagated this that Birsa was a staunch opponent to Christians and the supporter of the Brahmin religion. The same people who preach such are the people who are utterly afraid of calling them tribals (Aboriginal people) they call them forest dwellers **Vanwasis**. Of course being late for it but getting educated, the tribes have shown strong opposition to this propaganda that tribal people are not Hindus (Hindu word is a derogatory word, abusive word coming from Mugals). Just as these radical Brahmins have given **OBC people** in the name of Hinduism misused them against Christians and untouchables by spreading terror and attacking them. But the tribals have understood their conspiracy and said that we tribal people are not Hindus. Although their efforts are on continued process. They want to win the hearts of tribals by establishing Welfare Ashrams in Tribal areas. People who believe in Varna religion, the word equality from their mouth does not suit. So they have taken the shelter of the word harmony (**Samrasta**). The truth is that the biggest hand in the economic and social exploitation of the tribals is that of non-tribal Brahmins, landlords, contractors and government personnel, who have captured their land, tricked their children and women to become bonded labourers instead of debt with a deceitful fraud and exploited them without wages. Although Birsa Munda knew about the Christianity during the study period at Chainbasa. He did not tolerate the humiliation of the community given by the Christian pastors. He immediately retaliated and had to leave the School at Chainbasa. He dissolved and disliked the missionaries. This incident turned his attention to his old Sarna practices. Waste of sacrifices, belief in ghosts he vehemently opposed the practices of exorcists ojhās, tantra-mantra, drinking alcohol, superstitions, wastage of animal sacrifices. In the darkness of his neglected and tortured people, Birsa came as a divine lighting and left the earth. Due to his lighting the tribal conscience transformed into a national conscience. May his ideology and philosophy of young Birsa of twenty five years, remain eternal in the history of aboriginal people as **a Dharti Aaba, Father of Earth**.

## RELEVANCE OF BIRSA MUNDA

What is the relevance of Birsa Munda in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of the blind race of **High-Tech** of today? This question stands in front of Tribes and non-Tribes of social thinking. Political freedom came in this country like a storm and the opportunists received the rein as a gift due to the human blood shed of the million innocent people in the name of partition. Who got freedom, who is free? **Jyotiba Phule, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Birsa Munda** who fought for freedom where is that country? Who are those people who had to drink poison of thousands of years of slavery in the name of religion, not only 100 to 200 years? Even today freedom is miles away from them. Dr. Ambedkar raised that question at the beginning of the freedom movement that the majority people of the society of the country are slaves since ages to those exploiters (Outsiders) who are longing for political freedom. Therefore, people who have so much quickness to gain power those people have instead to the freedom of 200 years for thousands of years who have been deprived of human rights in the name of religion, they talk about freedom? So opportunistic outsiders called them traitors, casteists and nationalists, who found what in 77 years of independence. From the land of Jharkhand by extracting the natural resources and minerals like iron ore, coal, bauxite, uranium etc. The **TATA Company** built the mega cities Calcutta, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai .... What is the state and condition of the sons of the land today? The coal of Chhatisgarh which is being transported to Gujrat for the supply of electricity. The pathetic condition of the **tribes of Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa**,

## CONCLUSION:

The independence movement for the self-dignity and self-respect was a great movement by various people from nooks and corners of the country. They had sacrificed their lives and soul for the independence and freedom of their dignity. There are numerous freedom fighters in India who have fought against outsiders' rule in which Tribal revolts were among them. Their contribution is unforgettable and remained in the pages of History against the oppressors. The tribes in India are under the impact of '**mobility and change**'. There are numerous examples of tribes transforming themselves into the larger entity of the caste system.

Birsa Munda was caught by his own men from the police conspiracy, but they did not feel sad at all. They knew that the tribe's exploitation was grinded in the mill. There is no disease greater than hunger and poverty. He was not worried about his subject when he was being put in jail. He was worried about his 400 arrested colleagues. He had told his closet follower Varmi Munda in the jail. They in court will be asked about me and punish me if you have a relationship with me. Therefore, Varmi I want you all to refuse to recognize me. This is the only way to avoid punishment. Do not think that I have left you in a half way. I have given all weapons and tools to you all. You can protect yourselves from them. On being imprisoned he said that I will come once again. No end of **Ulgulan (Agitation)**, No death of Birsa. The British understood that Birsa Munda is a normal Munda youth. These illiterate tribals considered him as superman in their ignorance.

But the belief in the hearts of thousands of tribals was visible towards their **Dharti Aaba (Father of Earth)**. They used to get frightened. The soil from which the body of Birsa was formed. The air in which he breathed the water and food he eat and grew, exploitation of ages in the entire atmosphere, the pain of year, the cruel treatment of age was reeling in his mind. That started crossing the boundaries. Then there was an explosion on Munda's earth and a messiah got emerged, whose name was Birsa. Is evaluation cannot be done with his community, his age and his education. Walking to Chaibasa from the village on foot, the pastor of the German Mission of Chaibasa and calling the tribals traitors and thieves and cheats. It was a sign to retaliate alone was an indication of volcano which will be erupted later. After that jungle and solicitude, Solitude and Birsa, Birsa and deep pondering, Pondering and long way to exploitation to tribals was a trail of thoughts in him; a journey for Birsa to become a extraordinary figure and legend for a Great Person. He had said he would again come back. Today, breaking the boundaries of Jharkhand, **Birsa Munda** has become a great martyr for India (Bharat). The entire country has recognized him the father of the exploited and oppressed tribal people. At last, **NO END OF ULGULAN (AGITATION), NO DEATH OF BIRSA MUNDA**, in the minds of tribes is the slogan.

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