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Munda rebellion

LESSON 20 OF 37

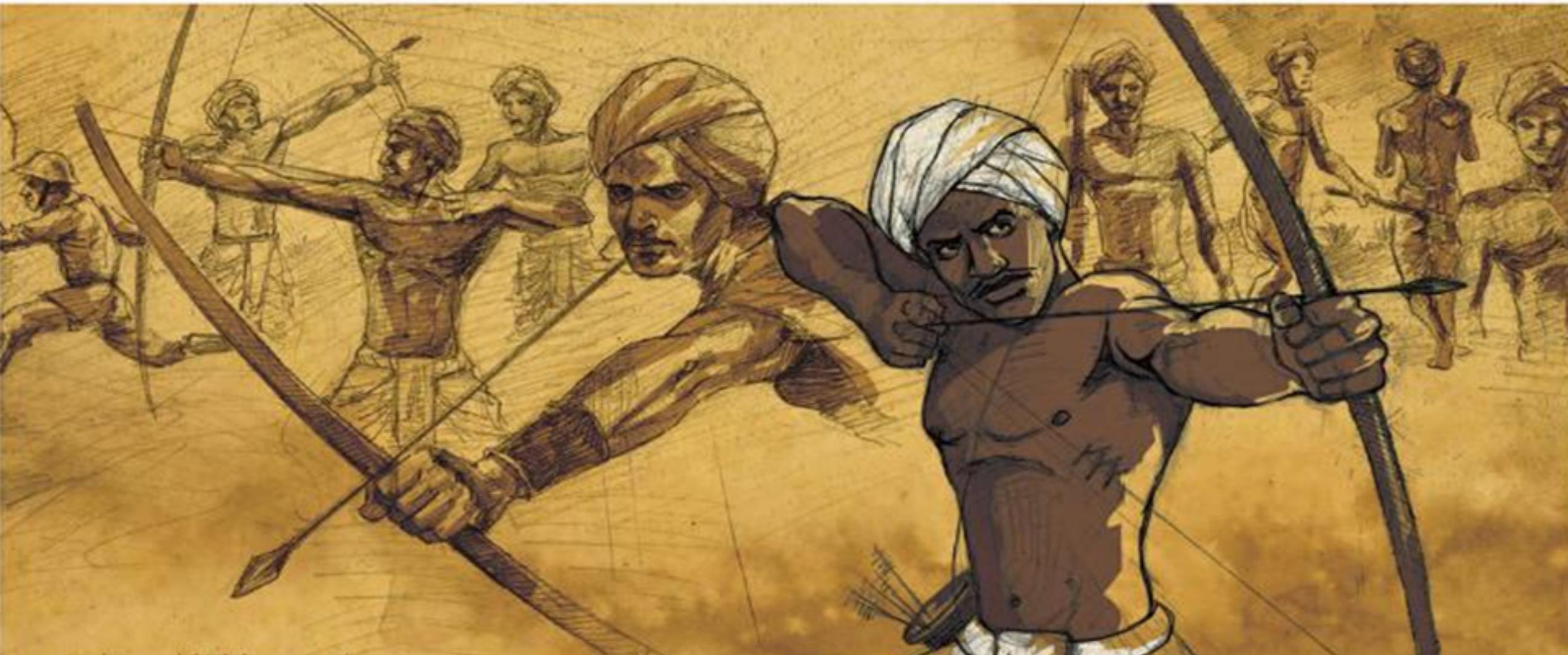


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Birsa Munda (1875–1900)

A warrior from woods



MUNDA REBELLION

BY- RAM KUMAR

Birsa Movement



Birsa Movement was led by Birsa Munda in areas of modern Bihar and Jharkhand.

The Mundas were the frustrated tribal people who resorted to rebel several times in 1789, 1807, 1812, 1819 and 1832 in Bihar & modern Jharkhand. These revolts were because of the undue interference by the administration and the attitude of the landlords.

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Who was Birsa Munda?

About Birsa Munda



HERO OF THE TRIBALS

The name of Birsa Munda (1875-1900) is cherished in

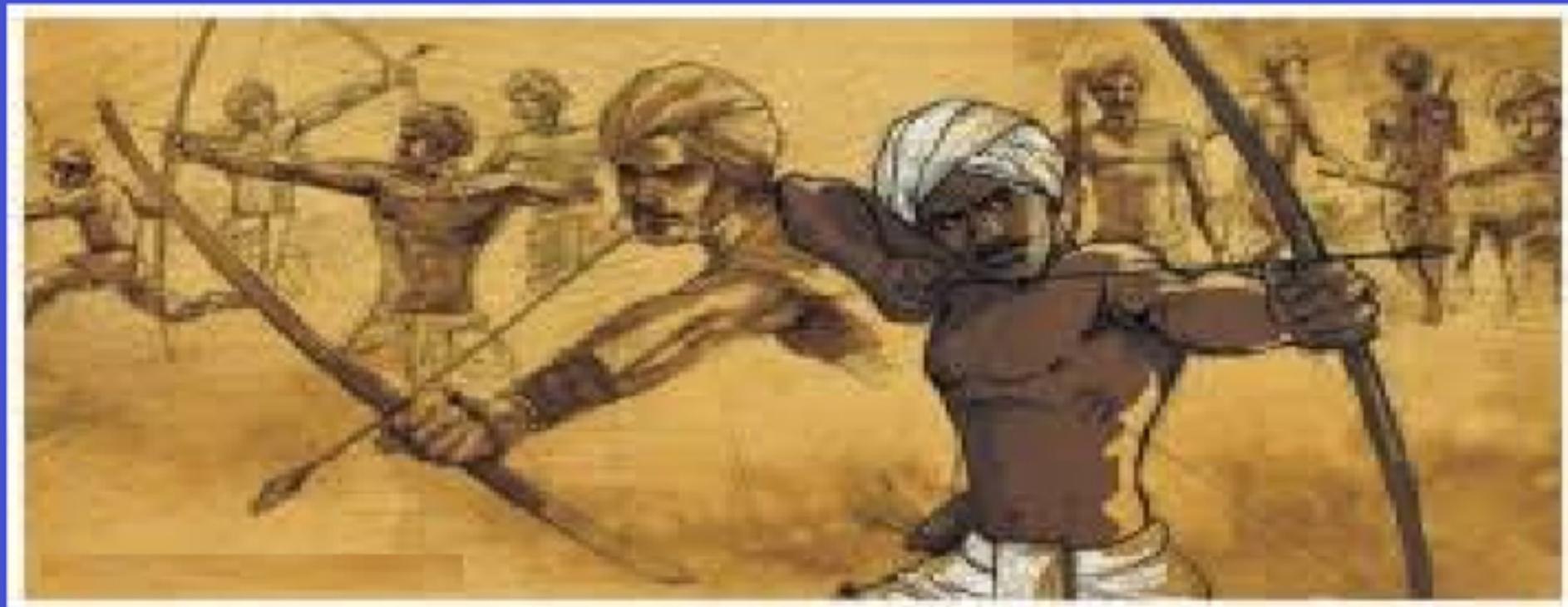
India as one of the great freedom fighters. He raised the voice against the transformation of the tribal agrarian system into the feudal state around the Chhotanagpur area. In 1900, at the age of 25, he was captured by British and put into prison. He died most probably because of the torture in prison.

Today, Birsa Munda is a venerated figure in Bihar and Jharkhand. His name decorates the airport of Ranchi and Birsa Institute of Technology, Ranchi. The followers of Birsa Munda are called **Birsait**.

“**Aranyer Adhikar**” which means “Right to the Forest” was a novel of Mahashweta Devi Published in 1977. This novel was based upon the Munda Rebellion and Mahashweta Devi got “Sahitya Akademi Award” for Bengali in 1979 for this work.

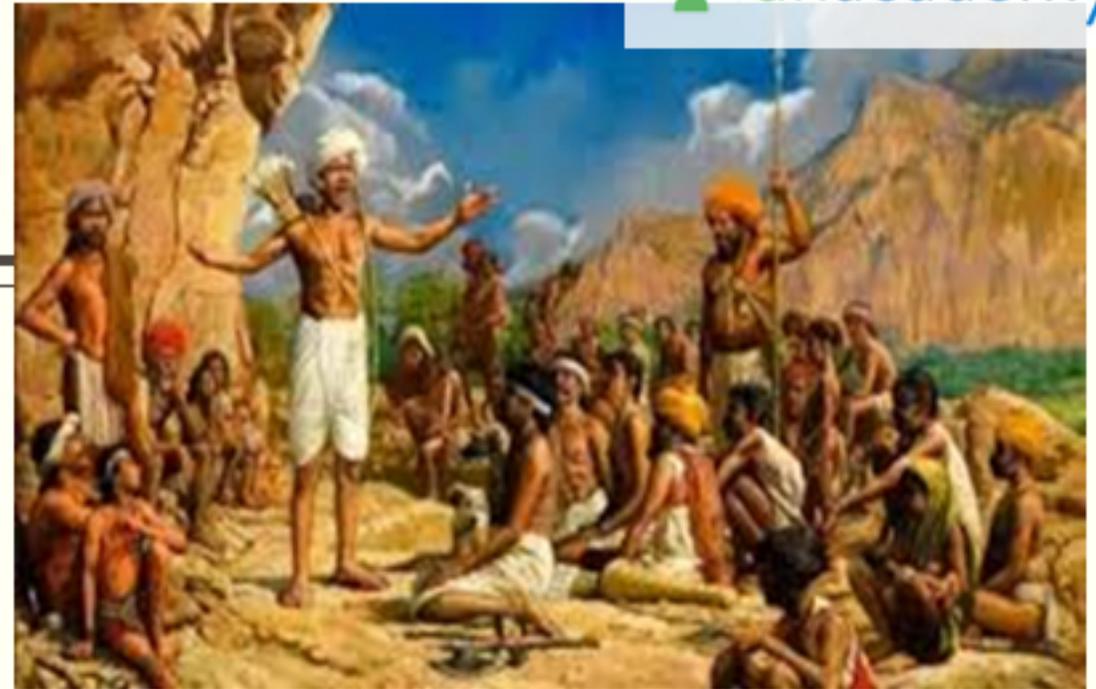
The Munda Rebellion

Munda Rebellion is one of the prominent 19th century tribal rebellions in the subcontinent. Birsa Munda led this movement in the region south of Ranchi in 1899-1900. The ulgulan, meaning 'Great Tumult', sought to establish Munda Raj and independence. The Mundas traditionally enjoyed a preferential rent rate as the khuntkattidar or the original clearer of the forest. But in course of the 19th century they had seen this khuntkatti land system being eroded by the jagirdars and thikadars coming as merchants and moneylenders.



CAUSES OF REVOLT

□ One of the aims of his movement was to reform tribal society, urging the mundas to give up drinking liquor, clean their village, and stop believing in witchcraft. In 1895, he asked his followers to recover their glorious past.



□ The political aim of the birsa movement was to drive away missionaries, moneylenders, traders, Hindu landlords and the government and to establish Munda Raj. They were the cause of the misery of the mundas. The British government was taking away their lands and missionaries were criticizing Munda culture.

CAUSES OF REVOLT



□ In 1894, the failure of the monsoon caused widespread starvation's and epidemics . As leader of the mundas , he demanded the remission of Forest taxes. He was arrested in 1895. the British convicted him on charges of rioting and jailed him for two years.

□ when he was released in 1897, he established a kingdom under his leadership . His followers started attacking police stations, churches, raided the property of money lenders . However, the mundas were defeated by the British and Birsa Munda was again arrested. He died in Ranchi jail under mysterious circumstances..

PERIOD OF REVOLT

□ The impact of Christianity was felt in the way he came to relate to religion later. Having gained awareness of the British colonial ruler and the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, Birsa started the faith of 'Birsait'.

□ Soon members of the Munda and Oraon community started joining the Birsait sect and it turned into a challenge to British conversion activities.

During the period, 1886 to 1890, Birsa Munda spent a large amount of time in Chaibasa which was close to the centre of the Sardars agitation.

□ The activities of the Sardars had a strong impact on the mind of the young Birsa, who soon became a part of the anti-missionary and anti-government program. By the time he left Chaibasa in 1890, Birsa was strongly entrenched in the movement against the British oppression of the tribal communities.

PERIOD OF REVOLT

❑ On March 3, 1900, Birsa Munda was arrested by the British police while he was sleeping with his tribal guerilla army at Jamkopai forest in Chakradharpur. He died in Ranchi jail on June 9, 1900 at a young age of 25. Though he lived a short span of life and the fact that the movement died out soon after his death.

❑ Birsa Munda is known to have mobilised the tribal community against the British and had also forced the colonial officials to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals. Birsa's achievements as a young tribal revolutionary has continued to be celebrated over decades now and he has successfully carved out a space for himself in popular and folk literature, academia, and mass media.

CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLT

- ❑ First, the British government had to pass laws so that the land of the tribals could not be easily taken away by the dikus.
- ❑ second, the tribal people had the courage to protest against injustice and the British government.
- ❑ The government attempted to redress the grievances of the Mundas through the survey and settlement operations of 1902-10.
- ❑ The Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 provided some recognition to their khuntkatti rights and banned beth begari.
- ❑ Chhotanagpur tribals won a degree of legal protection for their land rights.



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