

# Lecture 5:

## Themes in Indian Environmentalism - II

Course: Environment and Politics in India

# Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

Criminalizing lack of  
“means of production”:

The Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) was used against  
*“wandering groups, nomadic petty traders and pastoralists, gypsy types, hilland forest-dwelling tribals, in short, against a wide variety of marginals who did not conform to the colonial pattern of settled agricultural and wage labour”* – **David Arnold**

Amendments in the CTA from 1871 to 1911:

*“The needs of practical governance led to a search for a ‘social scientific’ explanation of crime in India, connecting Indian criminality to the introduction of the railways, the new forest policy, repeated famines and so on”* - **Meena Radhakrishna**



# Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

## IMPACT of canal irrigation:

- Introduced by the British to extend settled agriculture.
- Vast grazing grounds termed as 'waste lands' with no 'rational' economic activity. Varying conceptions of man-nature relationships.
- Imperial State as agent of social/economic/ecological change.
- Growth in output, net cultivated area, volume of trade, net revenue returns.
- Displacement of older systems of pastoral production and dryland farming:
  - ☐ Over-cropping
  - ☐ Salination
  - ☐ Destruction of wells/tanks
  - ☐ Percolation of main channel, leading to creation of swamps

# Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

IMPACT of canal irrigation:

- Waterlogging -> falling agricultural returns, diseases and disability .
- No emphasis on ecological *specificities* (knowledge of rain catchment, inundation, drainage) -> waterlogging, salinity, silt, DESTRUCTION of natural drainage through construction of embankments. EXAMPLE: Kosi.
- NEW lands available for settlement. Allotment to dominant landowning castes/classes -> more rigidity of social structures.
- Changing of social structures/patterns:
  - ❑ Contraction of grazing grounds
  - ❑ Destruction/marginalization of nomadic/semi-nomadic/pastoral tribes and cattle/camel/horse rearing.



# Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

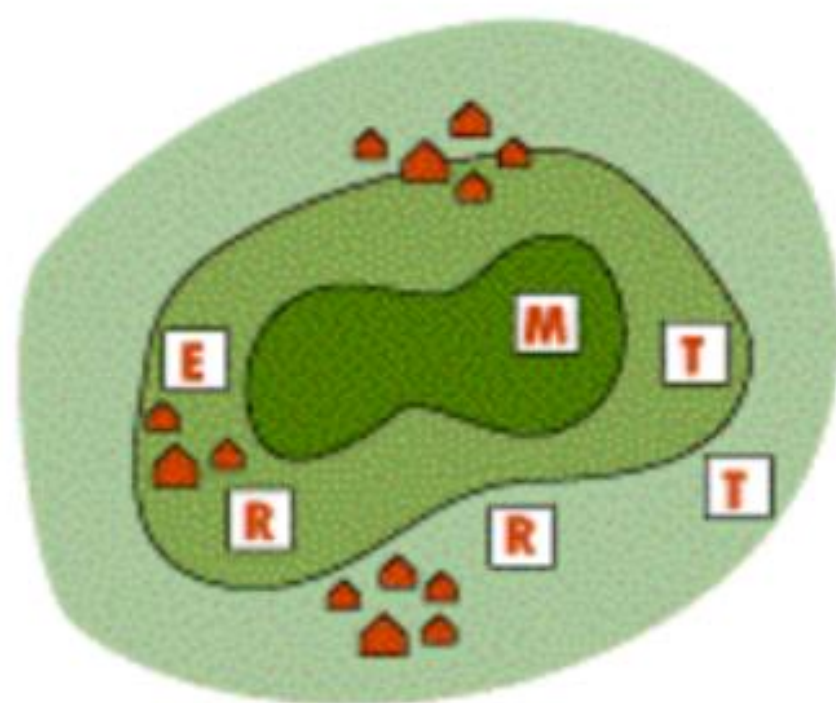
- Long Indian legacy of dealing with carnivorous animals.
  - No long history of state-sponsored projects to eliminate carnivores
  - Rulers hunted, helped to expand agriculture
  - Use of religious and magical methods to ward off tigers
  - Means of self-defence: Avoidance, killing of marauding animals
- Colonial Influence:

LITTLE EVIDENCE of an IRRECONCILIABLE conflict of existence of tigers and people. YET:

- ☐ Tigers to be sacrificed for land revenue
- ☐ Curbing of tiger population
- ☐ Hunting of predators by white men. Indians NOT allowed firearms
- ☐ Getting Indians to eliminate animals WITHOUT firearms
- ☐ Conflicts with ANIMAL REARING (goats, sheep) as well as cultivation



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE ZONATION



- Protected Area
- Managed Use Area
- Cooperation Zone
- Settlements
- R Research Area
- M Monitoring Area
- E Educational Use
- T Sustainable Use



# Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

## CONFLICTS:

- Reserved forests, CORE areas and human restrictions. Creation of 'illegal intruders', ecological refugees.
- Dwindling forest space, animal corridors.
- Increasing attacks on agricultural produce/cattle.
- Changing animal behavior. Read '*An Elephant Crackup*', NY Times

