

Lecture 4:

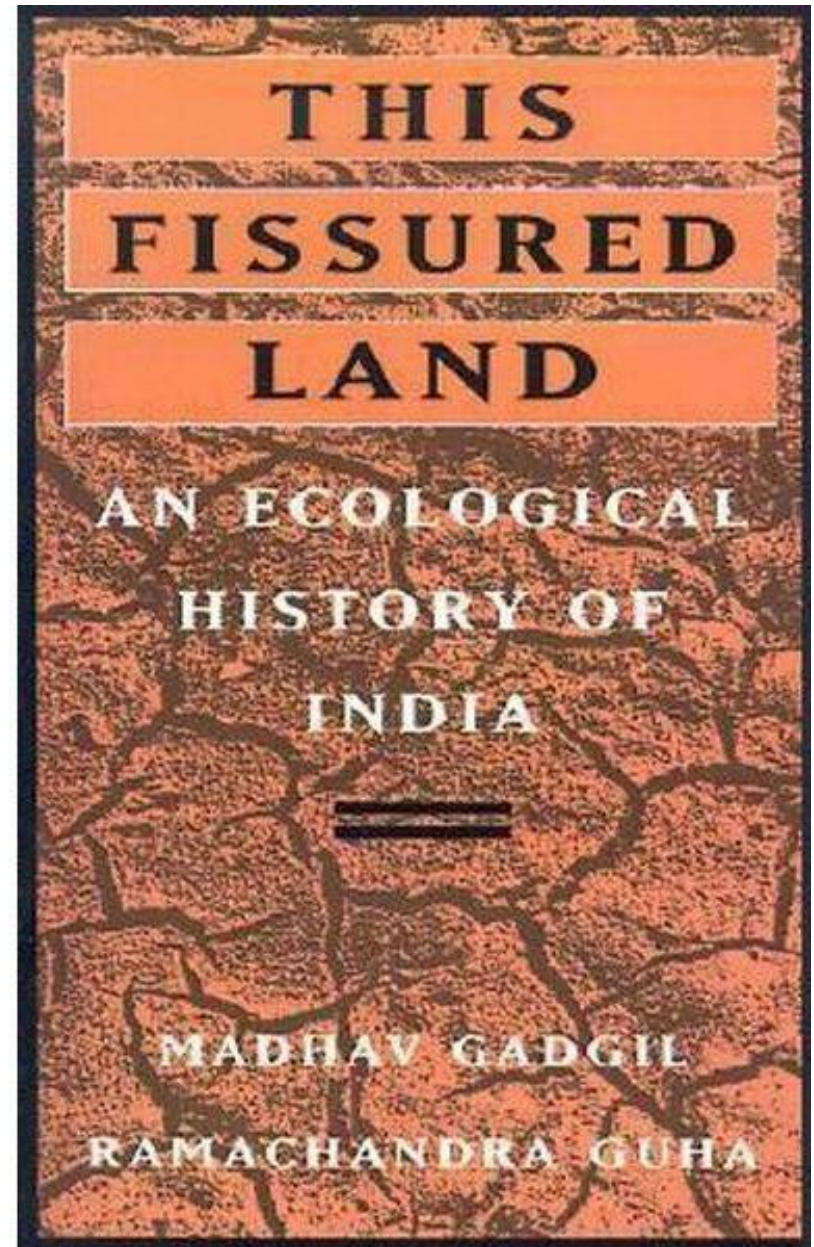
Themes in Indian Environmentalism - I

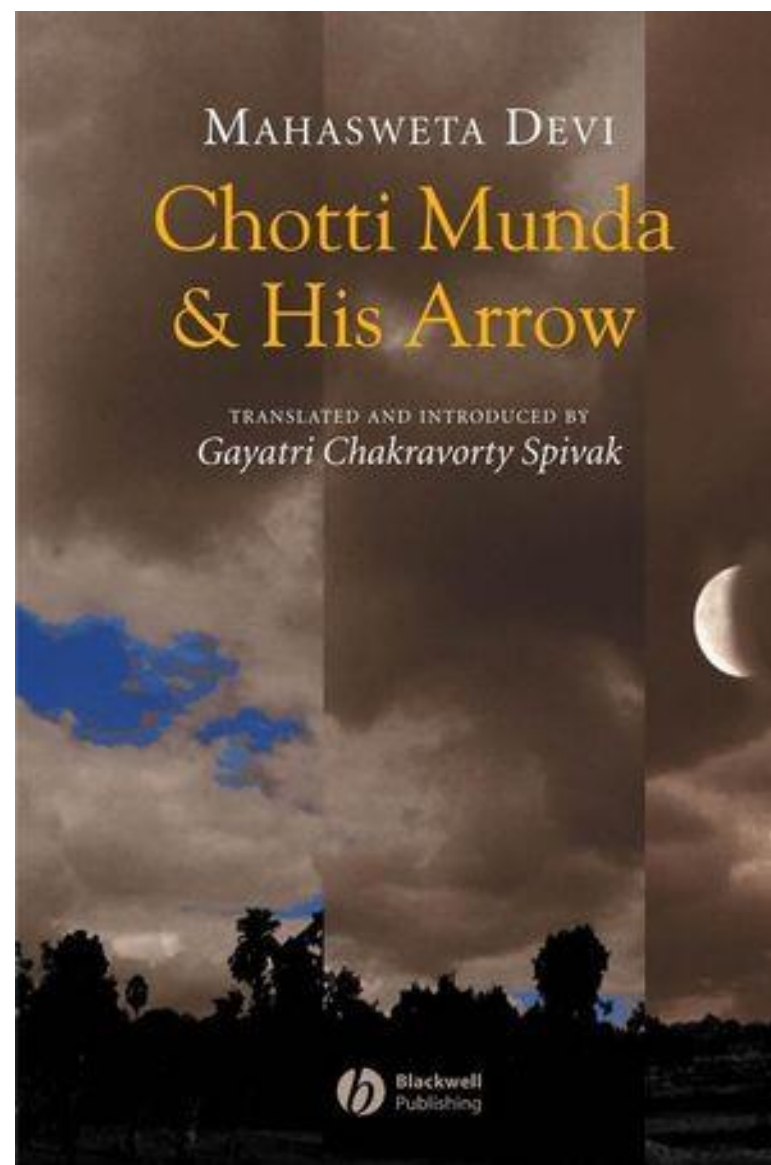
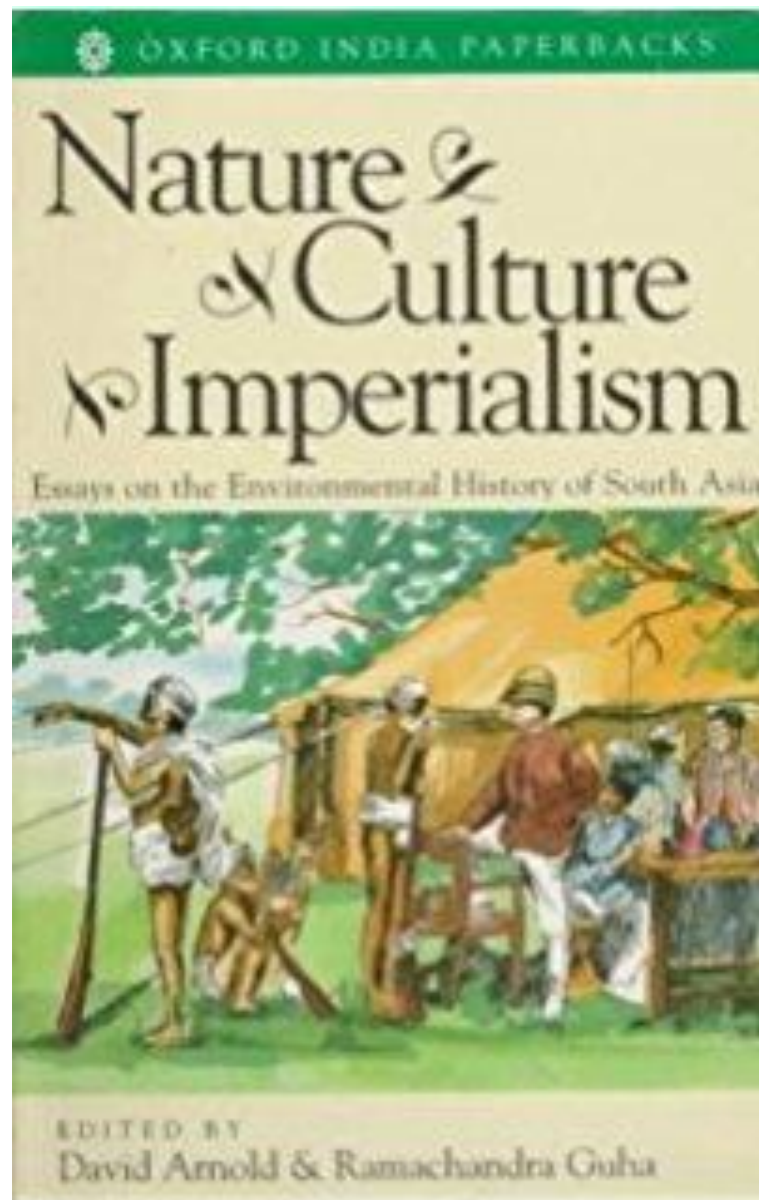
Course: Environment and Politics in India

Indian Environmentalism

Persistent frameworks:

- EITHER strife OR harmony, NOT both. Environmental UTOPIA in the past *versus* environmental DESTRUCTION now.
- Local *versus* centralised State control
 - Colonial influence:
Changing ecological landscapes, fundamentally changing resource use patterns.
 - Developmental State:
Continuing the colonial legacy





Indian Environmentalism

Chinks in these stubborn environmental frames?

STANDARD ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE (Paul Greenough) and its critics:

- Baigas and Gonds in Central India [Archana Prasad's study of jhum cultivation]
- Tiger conflicts in 17th century Bengal: Boundary between field/forest, use of hunting and magic
- Evidence for a 'harmonious' relationship in pre-modern India? Were people uniformly 'prudent'? Was there nothing but balanced resource use? WEAK evidence.

AGRARIAN CHANGE/ FOREST TRANSFORMATION

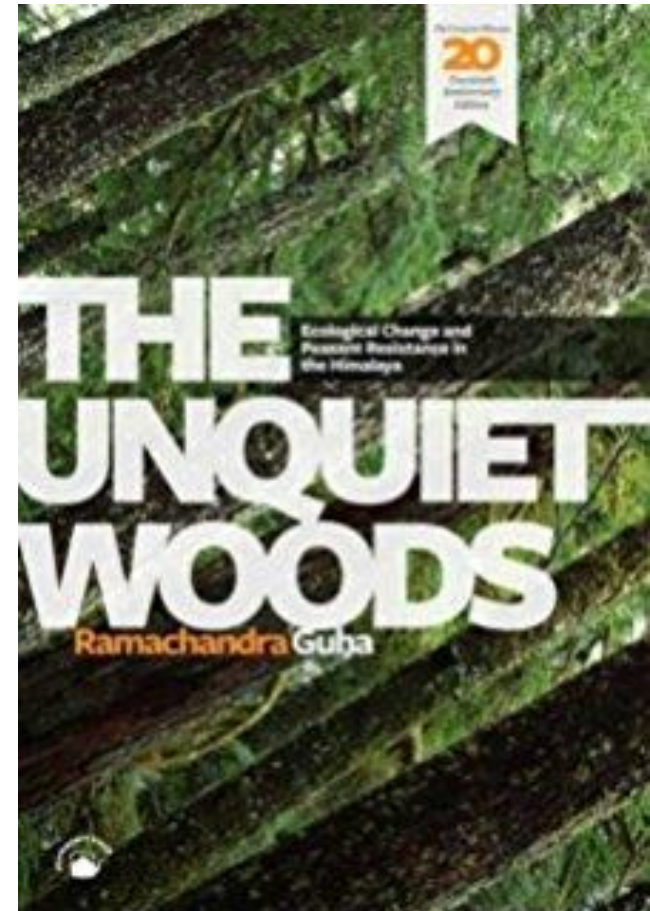
“Probably the most neglected group in India’s development programmes is pastoral nomads...the rapid conversion of pasture lands into farms has robbed them of their resource base, greatly impoverishing them in the process...many millions have already become landless labourers”

“With their forest-based lifestyles destroyed, the tribals are becoming human cannon fodder for the country’s modernization: poor, unskilled and viciously exploited”

**- *State of India’s Environment: The First Citizens’ Report*, Centre for
Science and Environment**

Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

- Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha:
 - Disruption and displacement of rural lives and livelihoods
 - FOUR modes of resource use/production: Hunting gathering/shifting cultivation, nomadic pastoralism, settled agriculture, industrial society
 - Major conflicts BETWEEN modes, leading to ecological crisis
 - Colonialism, destruction of village-level conservation systems
 - Industrial and State forestry



Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

CASE STUDY of Uttarakhand:

- Hill peasantry exercised direct control over the use and management of cultivated lands and uncultivated commons. Little interference from the State.
- Cultural traditions decided 'rules' for resource use. Practices allowed time for resource recovery.

EXAMPLE: Sacred Groves.

- Hill agriculture + animal husbandry: integration of cultivated and uncultivated lands, high dependence on forests.

1815: British Conquest

- 1823: First revenue settlement (*naap* and *benaap* lands)
- 1893: All unmeasured lands (wastelands) were declared 'district protected forests'. Artificial division into 'forest' (including grazing land) and 'non-forest' lands.
- 1910-1917: Creation of reserve forests.
- By early 20th century: 3 categories of uncultivated land.

Agrarian Change/Forest Transformation

CASE STUDY of Uttarakhand:

Impact on access to
resources:

- Class II Reserve forests
Commercially viable,
NO access.
- Class I Reserve Forests
Commercially less
viable, under civil
administration.
- Civil protected forests:
Under civil
administration. Heavily
restricted access.

Table 1. Area in Uttarakhand of Different Legal Categories of Forests

<i>Category</i>	<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Area (hectares)</i>	<i>Percentage of total forest area⁵</i>
Reserved forest (merged Class I and II)	Forest department	2,375,571	68.92
Civil and <i>soyam</i> forests (equivalent of undemarcated or unclassed protected forests)	Revenue department with <i>Gram Panchayats</i>	578,550	16.78
(<i>Van</i>) <i>panchayat</i> forests (equivalent of village forests)	<i>Van Panchayats</i> (with revenue department; in a few cases, with Forest Department)	469,326	13.63
Private, cantonment and others	Miscellaneous	23,262	0.67
Total		3,446,655	100.00

Source: Jena et al., 1997.

Table-2: Growth in Area of Forests under the Forest Department (in sq. miles)

Year	Reserved	Protected	Unclassed	Total Department
1878				14,000
1881-82	46,213	8,612		
1884-85	49,214	13,103		
1889-90	56,000	30,000		
1897-98	81,414	8,845	27,679	1,17,648
1913-14	96,297	8,390	1,40,925	2,45,612
1917-18	1,01,233	8,752	1,41,527	2,51,512
1922-23	1,00,922	7,238	1,15,544	2,23,704
1930-31	1,07,753	6,263	1,35,694	2,49,710
1934-35	1,06,240	6,938	1,68,333	2,81,511

Table-1: Average Quinquennial Growth in Forest Revenue and Expenditure

Period	Average Annual	
	Revenue (in million Rs.)	Expenditure (in million Rs.)
1864-1869	3.74	2.38
1869-1874	5.63	3.93
1874-1879	6.66	4.58
1879-1884	8.82	5.61
1884-1889	11.67	7.43
1889-1894	15.95	8.60
1894-1899	17.72	9.80
1899-1904	19.66	11.27
1904-1909	25.70	14.11
1909-1914	29.60	16.37
1914-1919	37.14	21.12
1919-1924	55.17	36.71
1924-1929	59.54	35.11
1929-1934	44.15	32.51
1934-1939	43.94	28.29