

1914: Tana Bhagat Movement

Tana Bhagat Movement (1914-20) :

This movement was initiated in 1914 by a young man named Jatra Uraon. He was about 25 years old, a resident of the Chingri village in the Gumla district.

The movement was known as the Tana Bhagat movement. Jatra declared that Dharmes (Supreme Being) had told him in a dream to give up

(a) ghost findings and exorcism and belief in spirits,

(b) all animal sacrifices, animal food and liquor,

(c) ploughing their fields which entailed cruelty to cows and oxen but failed to save the tribe from famine and poverty, and

(d) working as coolies or labourers under men of other castes and tribes. He proclaimed that the Uraon raj was about to begin and that he would be its first king. The Uraon bhagats (prophets) promised their followers safety and relief from the oppressive and unjust revenue system and exploitation by landlords, usurers and Government officials. In the leadership of young Jatra, his followers were determined to put an end to the system of beth begari or forced labour extracted from them by the diku oppressors without any payment. Jatra told his followers to

(a) stop paying tax for lands which were theirs,

(b) pray to one true God, and

(c) throw out all spirits from their rituals and beliefs. Because of their refusal to work for the zamindars and Government, Jatra and his disciples were arrested and put in jail. However, other bhagats like Sibbu Bhagat of Mandar in the Ranchi district; Balram Bhagat and the woman bhagat Deomania of the Batkuri village in the Gumla district took over from Jatra and continued the movement

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