

**THEORISING STATE, COMMUNITY AND SUBJECT:
A STUDY OF THE ADIVASI RESISTANCE
IN LALGARH, WEST BENGAL**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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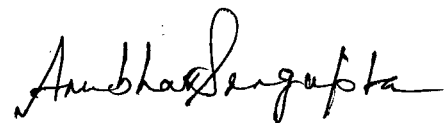
NEW DELHI 110067

2011

July 25, 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled 'Theorising State, Community and Subject: A Study of the Adivasi Resistance in Lalgah, West Bengal' submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is an original research work and has not been submitted so far, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University/Institution


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July 25, 2011

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled 'Theorising State, Community and Subject: A Study of the Adivasi Resistance in Lalgarh, West Bengal', submitted by Anubhav Sengupta to the Centre for Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University.

We recommend that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work has been product of a long association with vibrant political milieu of JNU. The questions, that I have raised here have emerged straight out of the big wall posters on the walls of JNU, intense debates through pamphlets in the mess and vibrant discussions in *Dhabas*. Often such debates, arguments have infiltrated in the class rooms. With encouraging faculty members and eager class mates, these classes have then overstepped boundaries drawn by syllabi, institutional, disciplinary regimes and have become academics proper. I am therefore forever indebted to JNU and all my class mates and professors.

Dr. V Sujatha deserves a special mention not because she was kind enough to supervise this dissertation; not because it is customary to acknowledge your supervisor's contribution. It is because, without her guidance all those already mentioned strayed thought, fragments of imagination could have never been a subject of proper academics. I went to her, in my initial days of writing this dissertation, with absolutely confused, vague jumbled up ideas. She listened and asked me to put it on paper. Though, even after that I did not make much sense, she kept faith in me and persisted with my loose chain of thought. She never intervened till the very end when I more or less said whatever I had to. Then sitting with her and sharpening my arguments have been a learning experience which can be appreciated only by us who are 'students trying to be scholars'. This work, which I so passionately wanted to pursue, would have been a disaster without her passion for and dedication to rigorous academics. If this work has been able to justify her dedication to her students and work, I will consider that to be reward enough for me.

I would also like to remember contributions made by Rona, Ritu, Priyaranjan, Divya, Manobhanjan, Hem, Priya, Gogol, Shreeya, Umar who have been through torturous times as I often interrupted their discussions in between posing abrupt questions pertaining to Marxism or some other theoretical problems that I could not resolve previous night. They always responded with equal enthusiasm without fail, as a collective or on an individual basis. I thank Alekhyada, whom I forced to listen over phone for hours to all my arguments and miseries of life while writing the dissertation. It is their work as much mine. I would also like to extend my gratitude to

two of my best friends, Anirban and Tanvi. When I almost decided to leave this campus for personal reasons, they stood firm reminding me again and again that life stands for something big. Buno and Ujithra have been the other two figures in my life who patiently have listened when I have made no sense; they have spoken when I have had nothing to say, hunting for words in oblivion. Indulgence that I have constantly received from these two persons has been the life-line for me through this period of writing. Without Zaheer and our late night rendezvous at 24/7 with cup of tea, this work would have never seen light.

My parents absolutely unaware of what I am really up to in life have kept and keep on having faith in me. This is the most sociologically intriguing aspect of life that perhaps I will forever be amazed with. Needless to say without this unflinching faith in me and their support, I would have been nowhere. This acknowledgement perhaps is one lifetime opportunity to register that formally. Their friendship remains a driving force of this work like all other ventures in my life in the past.

In the end, I am grateful to thousand of unknown faces fighting in Lalgarh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand or Orissa. I don't know them; they will perhaps never know me. However, without they being there, hundreds miles away from where I sit and write, this work is meaningless. They brave the sun, rain; they brave the gun. They struggle with nothing, against death, starvation, displacement. In the darkest hours, when I just wanted to leave everything and wanted to go away from JNU or from writing this dissertation, these people convinced me again and again that the struggling it out with nothingness in a void is what real politics is. If this work has been able to frame this 'real politics' --- that I have learnt from them --- even very sketchily in this work, I will consider myself lucky enough to find at last what my 'real politics' is.

With my supervisor's thorough engagement with this work for months and informed comments made by my friends at several drafts of the thesis, needless to say, whatever achievement this work embodies it is to their credit; while inconsistent, loose arguments, and casual mistakes that might still remain is entirely fault of mine.

Anubhav Sengupta

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1-23
CHAPTER 1:	24
The Genealogy of Power and Subject: <i>Political Society to the State Of Exception</i>	
Interpreting Political Society: <i>Governmentality and Power, Subjectivation and Subject</i>	25
Re-interpreting Political Society: <i>State, Power and Writing; Universality, Particularity and Subject</i>	47
Towards a conclusion: <i>the state of exception</i>	60
CHAPTER 2:	66
Theorising Emergence of Subject (I): <i>Exception, Community and Subjectivity</i>	
Exception as a condition of Politics: <i>Paradigm of Government; Politics of the Proletariat</i>	68
Subject as the Condition of Politics	88
Theorizing Emergence of Subject	99

CHAPTER 3:	112
Theorising Emergence of Subject (II): <i>Subjectivity of the Oppressed and Vanguard</i>	
Towards understanding aspects of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh: <i>Politics of the state, politics of the governed</i>	113
Maoism as a Problem <i>Under standing the relationship between community of the oppressed and Maoists</i>	150
CONCLUSION	159
REFERENCE	169

Introduction

A confused however completely awestruck student of sociology, in early years of his post graduation is sitting on the edge of his seat. The question, which he could not muster courage to ask the prolific Partha Chatterjee on the stage delivering a lecture on lineage of Political Society, is finally asked by someone from the audience. What does Chatterjee think about recent Maoist upsurge in India? From a political economy perspective how does he see the state/community mediation on this precise question of Maoism? This has been the question for the student, who by virtue of coming from West Bengal has lived with the memory and stories of Naxalbari uprising and now living with the unfolding history of Singur, Nandigram and Lalgarh adivasi/peasant uprising towards an immediately unknown future. As far as it could be understood, it seemed Chatterjee prefers to locate the problem in very failure of political society. It has been the impression. True or not true, that question and its answer remained an impetus whose direct result is this work. This work is an attempt to look into various manners in which state and community relationship has been understood in existing theories of the state, of the social movement and revolution and through that trying to understand the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh as a specific example of Maoists movement in India.

This unusual, unconventional initial remark however has specific importance. Indeed political sociologists and in general academicians engaging with questions pertaining to politics and polity often draws their initial blood from the impulsive urge to react to situations unfolding in their contemporary society. So it could very well be a sociologically right method to contextualize an essay on political sociology in the social environment to which it is trying to speak to (Gupta 1995).

This social rooting of the knowledge/theory in particular, as indicated above (which has been the chief question of sociology of knowledge) has crucial implication in case of political sociology and political theory in general. And such influence percolates into several layers of analysis --- the interaction between socio political upheaval and theory; theory and politics (the realm of praxis); and even among several paradigms of theories, as developing in the west and other parts of the world.

A historical excursion of such interrelationships, as we will see, will indicate the research problem that we are trying to respond to in this essay.

Development of political sociological theory in the western context

Before 1950s, the west started experiencing a series of new socio-political situations in the form of decolonization and nationality struggle. These struggles across the world were indicating a new regime of socio-political sensitivity which was markedly different from erstwhile politics of colonialism. The intellectual world was bound to respond to these movements and in retrospect it becomes quite clear that it was also time for tense churning even within the intellectual world. The intellectual world was not only responding to the process of decolonization, in the backdrop was looming large haunting past of Nazism, World War-II. This led to certain theoretical shifts where liberalism and Marxism came to interact in a tense relationship (see *Foreword* by Godzich 1997). In France it took the shape of French existentialism. It was a tense wedding of Marxism and liberal values based on universal principles of nation, individual man etc. While in America Frankfurt school started bringing in question of culture, individual experience into the fold of Marxism (see for example Marcuse 2002). A Marxist humanism came into existence as an emancipatory counterpoint of the liberal dream of unrestrained laissez fair market ruling the world. However, both Marxists as well as liberals were projecting an enlightened notion of man, society as the kernel of political understanding. However by 1950s inevitable flash point came into the fore. For example, blacks in America started vying for "Black Power"¹. Liberals who on the account of universal freedom and other principles supported their movement found themselves incapable of continue to extend their support. They thought black demanding for "Black Power" is a particular demand which contradicts the universal spirit that liberals till now wanted to uphold (*Introduction* by Trombadori 1991). Marxism was also facing an unexpected questioning in the form of 'Stalinism' and politics of the Soviet block. New Left as was unfolding in several European countries (like in Britain, particularly see Thomson 2010) started reemphasizing the humanist tradition of Marx, what they believed had been prostrated in the iron grip of Soviet brand of socialism.

¹ A term denoting black people's demand for greater political authority and representation in the power corridor on the basis of their particular identity as a black.

Subject and subjectivity became the key notion around which the class, class conflict such concepts in Marxism was being explored to radicalize the emancipatory project itself. A strong rebuff to this humanist tradition came from structuralist school in general, and in particular from Althusserian school of structural Marxism. The theme of the debate was set. In discussing Marxism as a radical alternative of politics one section of the intellectual world was upholding humanist Marx and the question of individual subject with agency as the key themes of Marxism. On the other hand, another section (particularly Althusser) was stressing on scientific method of Marx based on structural abstraction. However by then another crucial political scenario was unfolding which the intellectual world now had to confront. World was till then polarised in two centres, the capitalist block and socialist block. However the socialist block gradually got fractured in Soviet form of socialism and Chinese path. Socialism was facing serious crisis in this second half of twentieth century, as compared to their march to victories in first half. The world started looking more like developing into centre and periphery, former designating developed countries (including both pro-soviet socialist countries and capitalist countries) and latter underdeveloped countries. The conglomeration of the developed countries evolved into a centre and underdeveloped countries as periphery. In between the two a 'natural' flow of production and exchange relations came into existence premised on the 'naturally' given unequal positioning of these countries on the basis of their unequal material, spiritual (i.e. economic, political and cultural resources) status. A 'natural' centre was appearing where this logic of binary (centre/periphery) seemingly started taking over. The challenge to this natural centre came in the form of another wave of liberation struggle, however markedly different from earlier struggles against colonialism decade or two before. These movements were different in a sense that these were not waged on the familiar line of nation or even classical Marxist notion of class. Cuban revolution in terms of its strategy and tactics was enduring example of such movements.² Subsequently other movements in Latin America or Africa caught the attention of the intellectual world. These movements though inspired by socialist

² In fact Foucault talks about Tunisian movement in an interview to hint towards his intellectual developed vis-à-vis the political atmosphere of the time. While like Cuban movement, Tunisian movement also evolved under the banner of Marxism, Foucault constantly refers to its difference with orthodox Marxist movements in developed countries like France under the leadership of Communist parties (Trombadori 1991).

ideals, they were adopting strategies of urban guerrilla warfare, guerrilla foci in rural areas which were not in direct application of Marxist praxis hitherto the world has seen. These struggles were carried out with the political strategic premises that power must be weakened not by one final blow with the people; but it must be attacked in a diffused, dispersed manner suddenly in several points over a period of time with guerrilla armies. It was also re-conceptualizing notion of proletariat including peasantry, landless labourers, students in urban centres etc.; and thereby experimenting with core of Marxism premised on the revolutionary potential of working class as the very given agent of revolution (see *introduction* by Gott (1971) in Marighela 1971). Subsequently taking clue from such political praxis, challenging the idea of natural centre, post-structuralism came into existence as a philosophical response. It not only questioned liberal Enlightenment, Marxism, but also structuralism for its too much emphasis on efficient structural binaries (*Introduction* by Trombadori 1991). It was looking for a break with existing theories which was a direct response to socio-political reality as was unfolding that time. It questioned the immutability of the centre seeking to radicalise the politics against the concentration of the power in urban centre, western developed societies. Post-structuralism started arguing that there is nothing natural about the centre as an authority. It started arguing that it is a typical neo-colonial response of the west, based on enlightenment principles, towards 'the other'. They saw a rational, reasoning, subject that Enlightened West was eager to uphold is precisely the philosophical doctrine that is indoctrinating the politics destroying any possibility of radicalism in politics. Therefore for them enlightened notion of man itself has to be put in question. Subject (the self) must be decentred as the basic philosophical premise as all knowing conscious being in order to incorporate 'the other' in non-west. This will in turn delegitimize the very claim of the centre as western power was espousing, be it capitalist state or socialist state as an alternative. So while retaining structuralist anti-subjective stance, they moved away even from structuralism (arguing it is being another mirror image of enlightenment thought) and started incorporating 'margin' (for example think of deconstruction as a method of reading). The 'difference' was championed than the 'binaries'. If this was the interaction between socio-political upheaval and theory, the interaction between theory and practice (the realm of praxis i.e. praxis) also transformed completely. Radical politics no longer remained a project

of grand meta-narrative of emancipation through general struggle of the people guided by proletariat vanguard. The incorporation of margin in theory meant incorporation of diffused, local, particular struggle to power. In terms of interaction among theories, therefore it directly resulted into further intensification of post-structuralism's tense relationship (and subsequently its postmodern, postcolonial refashioning) with Marxism. In denouncing enlightened liberal notion of Man and power of reason and rationality, post-structuralism was also attacking Marxist project based on consciousness. Subject was decentred as an authority which could make sense of the everyday world and thereby attains consciousness. Subject (or self) became fragmented on the face of reality; did have nothing privileged in it which could lead to proletariat consciousness or even vanguardism.³ Vanguardism³, in the back drop of Stalinist Russia, was also theoretically questioned as another route to acquire power and turning it into centre just like capitalist state. If this is the theoretical response of post structuralism to Marxism; in politics as already argued, effect of the organized politics as radical alternative was delegitimized by the post structuralists. Radical politics was thought to be about local struggle on the basis of particular demands from the perspective of particular community waging from their particular subjective position (which may or may not be of working class). These struggles do have universal dimension but definitely they don't have any universal prescription as Marxism argues (see Foucault's response to Trombadori's question on this issue in Foucault 1991). Universal, as we will see in this essay as well, came to assume the status of empty signifier filled in with particular in a particular context. A good example of such a theoretical move having direct influence on political practice is Foucault's activism with respect to prison. He along with several other intellectuals, post 1968 student movement in France started raising the issues pertaining to prison condition. Foucault in hind sight recollected this to be exact application of his politics as reflected in his several books (Foucault 1991). According to him he was dealing with a particular demand of a particular marginalised group. However that does not

³ Vanguard is generally used to denote members of communist party and vanguardism is the theory of communist party's relationship with proletariat and other classes in a given country based on the ultimate goal of socialist revolution. Vanguardists are generally, to begin with, petty-bourgeois intellectuals who are responsible for organizing spontaneous proletariat movement against capitalist and giving it a direction (in the last section of first chapter and third chapter, we have tried elaborating on such relationship between vanguards and proletariat from existing literature).

mean these experiences of the margins of the real people have no general significance. He argues this specific movement had the potential of raising several issues pertaining to power's relation to body, subject and manner of functioning i.e. power as a force in the society in general, which as understood could be the direct concern of the any political parties including socialist, communist parties. However he points out in general politics of these socialist parties, communist parties such margin never appears as real problem. They are abandoned with the pretext that these are not real problem. Foucault denounced such generalities in this interview (Foucault1991) and talked about rather importance of resisting power in these sites of localization. For him such intricate relationship with local, particular problem raising it on to the level of universal (as he defines universal to be, not the enlightened notion of universal) is real politics; not only that on an intellectual plane this is the only way of understanding "what is power" in its actual functioning.

Perhaps direct effect of such philosophical articulation and socio-political changes could be found in the most dramatic form in the intellectual career of Zygmunt Bauman. In discussing Bauman as a key sociologist, Blacshaw (2005) shows his break from Marxism and gradual movement towards postmodernism under the influence of Foucault. Till 1970s a Marxist sociologist employing categories especially social class to understand society, Bauman started talking about increasing difficulty in relating Marxism with changing social reality by 80s. His break from Marxism came onto two separate levels, however related in much greater depth --- nature of society and categories available to understand man in society. Bauman pointed out in early 1980s and subsequent decades he capitalized on the theme that society is no longer a productionist society, as orthodox Marxism would like us to believe. It is increasingly becoming a consumer society. Modernity is getting structured on the question of consumerism and consumer choice rather than on the question of production. Therefore on the level of analysis of man in society, Bauman started arguing that no longer class can be seen as the vantage point of understanding society. Human beings no longer live in the tight grid of time and space constituting his *habitus* and referred to as class to denote the closure of familiar secured surroundings, customs and familial, community bonds. More and more, in consumer capitalism, society is becoming fluid, uncertain. He shows how working class with their contractual, temporal nature of works leading to a less and less density of living

is becoming incapable of achieving the status of proletariat as a class-for-itself in this fluid modernity (Bauman & Tester 2001). If this is what is the fate of class as an epistemological category, it was precisely based on the fact that on an ontological level subject was getting fragmented. Class no longer remained the only basis of identity based on production relation. In a consumer society, the subject (or individual) is given choices --- like consumer materials--- of several identities and the subject relates to these identities from his/her subjective position and be part of several communities. In other words “ *there results an internal division of the subject between the kind of self that one needs to be in certain situations, generally linked to one’s means of livelihood, and the kind of self one is in other settings. The individual no longer feels his or her self to be a whole, but rather a series of diverse zones, subject to differing constraints, frequently of irreconcilable sort.*” (Godzich 1997).

So quite understandably in the context of this, there came declarations by the authors likes of Foucault, Derrida, Barthes that “author is dead”; “Man is dead” etc. and with these declaration came a particular ways of reading a text, a work of art, architecture, society and politics. While we keep aside all other aspects and concentrate on society we see, authors especially Foucault and even Derrida come to occupy a crucial position. Their influence on social science configures the whole questions in political sociology, political theory and political philosophy. Question no more remained that what is power? Who exercises it? Who resists that power? Politics and society from a political sociology perspective became all about asking the right question --- how power is exercised? How it relates body with body (biopolitical model of power)? How it relates with subject and subjectivity?⁴ So subject comes to exist just as a complement to power; his/her agency is nothing but another act of power (a complete reversal from Marxist notion of subject and resistance).

Development of political sociological theory in the Indian context

Initial phase of Indian political sociological theory and political theory no doubt responded to changing social reality of India and the world over. In India decades of 1940s to 60s was definitely the phase of decolonization. As formulated

⁴ See how in responding in one seminar given by Foucault, Allan Miller from the audience ultimately asks “who resists whom?” in Foucault’s framework. And Foucault’s response almost reduces this question as non-question if not irrelevant (see Introduction by Trombadori 1991)

before as well, Indian state as a rational-legal modern institution came into existence to strengthen the very nation-state, called India. Premised on the both stream of modern universal thought i.e. liberalism and Marxism, India went ahead onto the path of modernization of Indian state and society and economic stability as a sovereign political unit in the world map. All sections of society, from left to right, common people to bourgeoisie kept enormous faith on the model of state-owned development of economy and democratization that Nehru-regime was envisaging (Kaviraj 2011). Therefore in Indian context intellectual tradition was looking at development of India with mixed perspective largely being confined within the scope of civil society and alliance of classes under the influence of classical Marxism and liberal tradition. While state remained in the focus, it was largely felt that Indian elite has managed to forge an alliance with common people; and traditional institutions instead of blocking the modernization and democratization of the society is actually blending into the system (Rudolph 1967; also see Gupta 1995). However this optimistic picture started fading away by 1970s. First and foremost, undivided CPI was divided into CPI(M), and then CPI(ML) broke away from CPI(M) on the question of nature of Indian society and question of transition. Arguing that India is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country where peasants can be the revolutionary force in a protracted people's war, CPI(ML), contrary to CPI, CPI(M) started talking about non-parliamentary, revolutionary armed struggle for revolutionizing the society. The direct fall out of this line of politics was that India experienced after 'independence' for the first time, violent revolutionary upsurge of landless, semi-landless peasantry in West Bengal, Andhrapradesh. Other parts of the country were also influenced more or less by this revolutionary movement, generally referred to as Naxalbari uprising (Basu 2000). India, just after Naxalbari uprising was crushed, experienced another political event of crucial importance i.e. emergency. By 1980s Indian scholarship therefore started looking into India as a democratic system with a new vigour. The nation-state was dissected from several aspect viz. continuing importance of traditional institution like caste in democratic polity like India; ethnic question; communalism and secularism; voting pattern and demographic aspect etc. In fact the very notion of Indian state was also questioned as a western concept by few authors (Gupta 1995). However except in few authors (most importantly Ranajit Guha) of subaltern school, the direct impact of Naxalbari and revolutionary Marxism as was developing through Mao Tse-Tung's

thought was not really visible in intellectual circle. In fact in 1980s, as Gupta (1995) shows, landless, semi-landless peasant movement, question of state repression and violation of democratic rights remained largely missing. By late 1980s and 1990s however Indian economy shifts its gear and moved into liberalization paradigm. As Kaviraj (2011) argues it was bound to have political ramification as well. State started rolling back, got more and more integrated with global market economy and political parties adapted to such economic endeavour and translated them in popular languages; and debate stirred up in political arena and intellectual circle as well.

The debate still continues and in gaining more and more attention from the intellectual circles. The role of the state and civil society is revisited. Newer concepts have been introduced to map newer and newer political developments happening in Indian context. One such concept is that of political society by Partha Chatterjee (2004) which is a direct result of a negotiation with existing socio-political scenario of India. It tries analysing --- employing Foucault's notion of governmentality--- layers of political relationship in which power relations are weaved between a liberalized state, which is looking for avenues to decentralize governance in terms of meeting needs of the community through NGOs and other private associations and the existing communities.⁵ However it is, at the same time a dialogue with exiting theories built on the model of modernity, its universal principles as enshrined in the concept of the state rational-legal authority, civil society.

Civil society and political society

Civil society has been a phenomenon of 'post Stalinist states' when a community of people stood against concentration of the state power in the hands of few or one party. Gradually it has come to occupy the very imagination of the democratic activist across the world (Chandhoke 2009). Civil society, as Chandhoke puts it has been seen as the escape route from 'greed of the market' and 'power of the state'. Indian state as well in sync with Washington Consensus trying to liberalize the

⁵ Community, as a concept is taken in this study (when not qualified vis-à-vis such notions like class) as an inherited network of social attachments fulfilling a certain moral condition enabling individuals to participate in a collective with a sense of effectiveness and satisfaction (Chatterjee. 1998). We almost retain Chatterjee's formulation in this regard, while trying to understand nature of civil society, political society and in fact society itself as a community.

economy has found the non-state actors in civil society, NGOs as the partner of the state in their rolling back policy. Recent plans and policies of Indian state have exhibited a shift towards governance through such non-state actors where people's need would be met by such mediating forces directly working in the grass root. However, Chandhoke (2005) also argues that it does not mean the state can really wither away. With the typical institutional-historical development in India, most of the people see the state as having the principal responsibility of looking after such development aspect of the people. The state is still held accountable. She further shows that there are theoretical justifications for such expectation of the people. There are two chief limitations of the civil society. First of all civil society is not in a position to formulate policies; and secondly they are also not in a position to implement the policies. Both these activities are prerogative of the power-corridor which is a realm of "political society" where varying political parties are rallying for power and capture state institutions vested with power. Therefore the role of civil society is that of a watchdog, demanding accountability and effective practising of democratic norms. In that way, in a democracy like India "political society"⁶ and civil society are not mutually exclusive or substitutive bodies; but complementary elements working together for a democratic functioning. Chandhoke, for example takes the Right to Information movement as the classic example of functioning of civil society calling forth greater participation of people and thereby ensuring greater accountability from the state putting it through repeated questioning. She sees this movement as the hallmark of widening scope of democracy through the state, as democratic ethos deepen through civil society. However at the same time she cautions that civil society is a conflicting zone where various voices debating and discussing and few of them might not be democratic as well. With reference to this observation she gives the example of Anna Hazare led movement against corruption. While it is indeed a civil society movement, but she finds it to be undemocratic in spirit due to RSS involvement, proposal of a bill like Jan Lokpal etc. (Chandhoke 2011).

⁶ This notion of political society is different from Chatterjee's notion of political society. Here political society refers to the realm where politics is played out as vying for political power; in contrast to civil society where politics happens in recognition of the state but not to capture power vested in the state.

Civil society as a mediating concept between the state and community goes by a classical, enlightened notion of democracy. It takes, as already evident, community as a non-stratified mass of people having equal access to the civil society. In keeping the economy somewhat removed from civil society, it fails to see that how economic relation has bearing on the post-colonial countries like India in terms of a community's access to civil society. Also on a theoretical plane it conflates community of people under the state and civil society rendering them identical; whereas, Marx (1978) definitively shows that a conceptual distinction must be made between the two on the basis of spiritual existence and material existence of a community under the state. Marx argues that the state in its non-religious, secular and political existence binds the community in an emancipated universal relationship. Vis-à-vis the political state, the realm of civil society is created where every body is part of the sovereign power in the eyes of the state being equal. However Marx argues that this 'being equal by participation in the civil society' is just the spiritual existence of the man, just like his existence in religion. In their real 'political community life' where relationships are still fraught with inequality made on the basis of birth, race, private property is their actual material existence. And political state emerges not in smashing these inequalities; rather by presupposing their existence in real material life to transcend them in civil society as a spiritual existence (Marx 1978). In other words, political state does not address material social existence of human beings marked by inequalities; but addresses just the political aspect of their social existence granting them equal political rights. While as citizens they are considered to be equal in the eyes of the state; as human beings living in a society and implicated in polyvalent social relationships (which ultimately the state governs) they continue to be unequal. Addressing all these questions, Chatterjee somewhat turns the concept of political society as espoused by Chandhoke on its head. In Chatterjee, political society⁷ assumes a separate existence from civil society and the realm of politics of the political parties in the corridor of power, which Chandhoke refers to as "political society". At the same time, in postcolonial context, Chatterjee advancing Marxist distinction of civil society and political community, seems to rectify Marx also. Marx correctly identified a distinction between civil society and political community on the

⁷ Now on whenever we use political society without any qualification, it denotes Chatterjee's notion of political society

basis of ingrained material (economic) relationship of inequalities. However Marx did not engage with the bearing of economic inequalities on the participation in civil society. And in so far as this is the case, such exclusion from civil society might force both the state and the community lying outside the civil society to establish a new political relationship different from existing political relationship of civil society. It is according to Chatterjee, a specific result of the movement of capital, different from the west, in a postcolonial country like India. The time of capital enshrined in nation-state is heterogeneous here and therefore also the trajectory of the state and nation-building. The civil society in India is severely restricted. A vast section of population does not enjoy the legally mandated citizen's rights that members of civil society do. Or in other words Chatterjee shows specifically what Chandhoke misses out that the nation as a community is a stratified body having several other communities not having any access to civil society. Also in doing so, he includes what Marx excludes that these communities are however not cut off from the state. Their relationship with the state is mediated on a tense, strategic political relationship which, contrary to civil society, often takes illegal avenues. This is indeed antithetical to democracy and civil society's dream of 'rule of law'. But, this is again, according to Chatterjee a specific result of governmentalization of the state (Chatterjee 2004).

Political society as a community:

Political society as a concept tries to conceptualize a community which lies outside the scope of civil society, the enlightened, rational community of citizen. This community, denoted as political society emerges as the process of governmentalization of the state in a very Foucauldian sense. The state in the concept of political society no longer a legal-rational order strictly bound by legalistic paradigm of governance. The state-power is diffused through its many apparatuses, schemes and in interaction with communities that it is governing. It targets a community of people --- who otherwise does not enjoy any civic rights--- as a population (a Foucauldian term denoting a group of people as a statistical, demographic unit which is to be administered as a part of general interest of the society, including productive, economic interest). The state targets this population group not necessarily through universal legally mandated policies and schemes. At times these policies and schemes are bent to suit particular needs, requirements and

demands of the population in question. The universal legal paradigm of the state fades in the background to provide a strategic normative order on the basis of which state functions with a biopolitical model of power. In this interaction with the state on the other hand this collectivity assumes an identity of a community. The collectivity increasingly rallies around their particular demands often representing them through loosely formed associations. These associations come to bargain with the state on behalf of the collectivity. On the other hand the state needs these associations to administer their policies, govern the population as we have discussed above. Therefore not on a rational-legal ground but on a loose strategic normative order, the state and the association representing the collectivity get engaged into a complementary relationship. This recognition by the power as a population having specific demands of their own help the association, on the other hand to mobilize the collectivity into a community having an identity of their own.

If we pay closer attention, this emergence of the community with a distinct identity out of a loosely formed collectivity is an indirect result of the relation of power. Political society, in other words, describes how power vested in the state relates to the people other than in the form of civil society in post colonial countries like India. In that way, Foucault's notion of power-knowledge model directly underlies Chatterjee's formulation of political society and its emergence as community. Just as Foucault sees subject as an effect or relationship of power, in Chatterjee also community denoted by the concept of political society assumes an identity of similar sort.

Political society, community and the subject:

As a processual actuality the notion of subject mediates between individual and community through the concept of identity. As a notion subject refers to a becoming and as well as a transition from individual mode of being to holistic community belonging with one identity. This identity of the individual by virtue of being a part of the community is what supplies meaning to his lived experience.⁸ The

⁸ The best example to take is that of social class. By sharing identity of a social class, the individual in question is supposed to make sense of his belonging in the world. This is exactly what Marx defines as class consciousness (true or false), which individual acquires being a part of community of people who are placed in the society like wise. This conceptual semblance of class and community is what Bauman will later invoke to discard the category of class i.e. community defined in terms fixed, unitary

subject also denotes a process of transition from passivity of existence to agency, active participation in a mode of being in this process of becoming a part of community (Aloysius 2007). In post- structuralism this unity of experience is specifically attacked; however the subject continues to mediate the process of individual becoming a part of community with an identity. The subject is defragmented that is there is no one identity that could mediate the whole lived experience of an individual. Like subject, identities and communities of the subject are also forever shifting, changing in a state of fluidity. This is exactly the meaning in which Chatterjee's insistence on strategic, tense character of politics of political society has to be understood. Political society as a community assumes a subjective position vis-à-vis the state in so far as they assume one identity on the basis of their particular collective demands. That one identity serves as the mode of being (or subjectivity) precisely on the strategic calculation that being able to occupy that subjective position will enable them to make the power listen to their demands. However this subjective position of community is bound to change according to the shifting correlates of the power. The radical possibility (which Chatterjee refers to as new ethics of politics and political justice) lies in this possibility of strategic shifts and fluidity of subjective position, which nothing but in Foucault's expression the very "death of subject". It appears, for Chatterjee, this political existence is, if not only but one chief form of 'subaltern' existence in today's society.

Political society and the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh: a theoretical problem

After 1990s liberalization of economy, we have already noted changes taking place in Indian society and its influence on political sociological theory and political theory in Indian context. However from the second half of 1990s intellectual circle of India faced a bewildering challenge in terms of negotiating another socio political reality in the form of Maoism. Maoist movement in India, at its present form led by CPI(Maoist), is a unique phenomenon in the sense that it brings back the question of 60s and 70s. Drawing their lineage directly from Naxalbari uprising, they have brought back questions (thought to be a dated question in the global and Indian context) of mode of production (capitalist or semi feudal, semi colonial), mode of

economic relation and move towards a more cultural definition of community diffused and fragmented.

transition to socialism (peaceful transition through parliamentary path or armed resistance) etc (See Ganapathi 2007; Giri 2009; Shah 2010; Gupta 2010; Azad 2010). In recent years, particularly after 2004, CPI(Maoist) has persistently led people's movements across heartland of the country stretching steadily south to east and west. In West Bengal, the eastern part of India, Lalgarh resistance, led by CPI(Maoist) has started capturing lot of media attention since November, 2008. While CPI(Maoist) has remained the heart of the question, a number of intellectuals across disciplines started taking Lalgarh resistance as the point of entry to discuss on Maoism in India (among them for example see Sarkar and Sarkar 2009; Bhattacharya 2009; Giri 2009; Nigam 2010 etc.). The adivasi resistance in Lalgarh in its specificities, opens up the possibility of focused understanding of Maoist movement in post-independent India.

To put it very briefly⁹ Lalgarh is a part of West Midnapur district in West Bengal and erstwhile the part of colonial administrative unit called Jangal Mahal. Economically backward, chiefly adivasi dominated area, Lalgarh used to be considered to be stronghold of CPI(M), ruling party of West Bengal. By 1990s there was reporting of the presence of People's War group (which will later form CPI(Maoist) with MCC). However in the wake of the struggles launched by peasants and landless peasants against the state opposing forced land grab for industrialization in Singur and Nandigram, Lalgarh suddenly surfaced on the political map of India when adivasis villager of this region went for a blockade. They opposed the police atrocities against villagers after a land mine blast on the convoy of Buddhadev Bhattacharya, the then CM of West Bengal and Ramvilas Paswan, Union Minister. The villagers of Lalgarh dug up roads, blocked the streets and manned the boundaries with arms refusing to allow administration and local CPI(M) leaders or cadres to enter. Their chief complaint, among other demands was that CPI(M) cadres locally known as harmads and police together had unleashed a regime of coercive domination which could not be tolerated anymore. Subsequently, these villagers came together to form their association called '*poolicy santrasbirodhi jansadharaner committe*' (The committee against police atrocities, the PCPA) with reference to their specific and only identity as oppressed. This non-political association then forced the state to come

⁹ The detailed discussion has been done in the first section of third chapter. It is a brief introduction based on the materials as referred in the chapter

for a bargaining on the issue of blockade. By then CPI(Maoist) also took responsibility of the blast and their presence in the area was well known. The state first accepted the PCPA's demand only to violate the agreement very soon. Following this another blockade started. This was happening way back in 2008. By 2009, the PCPA almost started functioning as a people's government to take care of development work, law and order etc. besides negotiating with the state. They even formed people's militia, along with armed wing of CPI(Maoist) in order to protect the area from forceful entry of the state police or CPI(M) cadres called harmads.

At this moment, the area called Jangal Mahal where Lalgah resistance subsequently spread rapidly is declared to be under Sec. 144 of IPC¹⁰ and state forces along with police is in joint operation identifying it to be 'extremist affected area'. The PCPA in existence with active assistance of CPI(Maoist) is resisting the forces. It is an exceptional situation in so far as sovereign governmental authority is constantly being challenged by the villagers and Maoists in this area; and owing to this the state has resorted to a war like approach considering situation being different from normal 'law and order' problem.

Can political society explain such a community like the villagers of Jangal Mahal, who crosscutting their differences in terms of gender, caste, ethnicity has come together with the dominating identity of being 'oppressed' under the banner of the PCPA? In the first glance though it seems that the concept of political society explains the reality in a fitting manner; in a greater depth, a theoretical problem resurfaces. The most important theoretical problem --- besides other theoretical problem which we have deliberated upon in the third chapter --- as quite evident from the above short description of the resistance lies in conceptualizing the state/community relationship. The political society as a concept is based on the notion of governmentality, where different executive and administrative apparatuses of the state and their extension through NGOs, private associations come to interact with the population on a normative basis which cannot be called constitutional all the time.¹¹ Unlike state's interaction with civil society on the basis of universal, constitutionally

¹⁰ It is an legal provision where owing to extraordinary law and order situation the state disrupts normal administrative functioning.

¹¹ In fact as Chatterjee argues it is at times illegal as well.

mandated legal order; the interaction between the state and community as political society is aimed towards meeting particular, contingent normative order, not guarded by constitutionalism. Compared to both of these communities (especially political society) state's relationship with the community of people in Jangal Mahal is exception of all forms of constitutional and even normative order. Constitution is here invoked (i.e. by imposing sec: 144 of IPC) to suspend any form of 'order', legal or normative. And this has been done so to tackle 'biggest internal security threat' Maoism. In other words, to tackle Maoists the state has resorted to force exerting its 'power over life and death' through sheer violence owing to an exceptional situations (Foucault 1990 & 2006).

'State of Exception as a paradigm of Governance', by Giorgio Agamben, is a very recent concept, furthering our understanding of Foucauldian notion of power (Agamben 2005; also see Agamben 1998). In the light of several developments in Western politics like immigration, racial and ethnic diversities, terrorism and counter-terrorism, he shows us that how 'state of exception' has been evoked time and again as a power of sovereign to suspend constitutional/normative order and govern like wise. Sovereign as Agamben argues is the one who decides on the state of exception; and he is of the opinion that often in contemporary world, the state employs this method to govern. The theoretical implication of this act of the sovereign according to Agamben is to show the very originary link between juridico-model of power and biopolitical model of power. He argues that modern western politics has originated from the relationship of the sovereign with the figure of homo sacer. Homo sacer is a figure who can be killed by anybody without being punished, but cannot be sacrificed. The figure of Homo sacer is a naked life in exception, who is included through exclusion; who belongs to the world of human by the sheer fact that human world has excluded him. Premise on this originary formulation he shows how modern state as sovereign-power, practices the same violent power over life and death (biopolitical model of power) of its people by the very suspension of juridico political order (while sovereign's power to suspend the juridico political order is granted by the same order). So, bio-political and juridico-political power are complementary mirror image vis-à-vis the state of exception and figure of naked life.

Beyond any shed of doubt, to understand the state/community relationship between people of Lalgarh and the state we must have to step over the realm of political society (as Chatterjee stepped over the realm of civil society to understand certain political developments) and probe into the state of exception. This is the first theoretical problem that we must recognize here.

There is a second theoretical problem. As Nigam (2009) has argued the state of exception is a useful model to understand today's reality but it ignores corresponding element of the resistance to power in its conceptualizing of naked life. It is indeed true that Lalgarh denotes a state of exception where the state is exerting its sovereign right over death (also life) by exposing a whole community of people as 'suspected Maoist'. But how do we understand people's resistance to power, armed or unarmed as a community under the Banner of PCPA and with active assistance of CPI(Maoist)? In fact if we carefully look at the chronology, before even the state, it is people who declared a 'state of exception' by blocking the road for the state forces to enter. Not only that with CPI(Maoist) giving an open call for vote-boycott, subsequently people resisted any attempt of the polling officers to enter the area. The state was forced to adopt exceptional measure by setting up booth outside the area. The villagers still never turned up for voting. Therefore it is also theoretically important that how do we understand a community's challenge to the sovereignty, in the backdrop of CPI(Maoist)'s politics which in itself questions the constitutional sovereignty of the present Indian state? How do we understand people, representing themselves as a community of the oppressed forces a state of exception on the state, which otherwise a prerogative only sanctioned to the state as a sovereign?

The research questions: the decline of subaltern and subaltern as subject

In order to look for a different method of enquiry to grasp state/community relationship in the backdrop of Lalgarh resistance, we must first recognize the centrality of the notion of 'subject' and subjectivity in relation to state power, something that is glossed over in Chatterjee's characterization of political society. We need a framework in which conceptualization of state/community relation is not from the vantage point of sovereign power, but from the subject of such power. We find this in the works of Ranajit Guha, the founder of *Subaltern School* where the politics of the subaltern is formulated in terms of their autonomy. It is argued that compared

to what dominant historiography proposed that their politics forever remained subsumed under the politics of the elite and how power-relationship was arranged in colonial time in this elite domain, the subaltern had certain autonomy in terms of being able to influence this relation of power as unfolding among elites of Indian politics. This autonomy is conceptualized by Guha and others in early subaltern studies from a class perspective (Arnold 1984; Guha 1983 & 2010). Or in other words, dealing with subaltern communities, these authors propose identities in terms of class consciousness. And as Aloysius (2007) shows class consciousness in Marxism is a question of subject i.e. mode of becoming and being able to act, articulate, express. But this does not imply that subaltern school has adopted the orthodox, deterministic form of Marxism. They always accept that in largely pre-capitalist, colonial India, class cannot be a coherent identity. However this does not signify that these subaltern groups cannot act politically with imbibed consciousness which enable them to come together. Guha (1983) writes, "*Solidarity is a categorical imprint of peasant consciousness and there is hardly a rebellion that does not bear it. However its quality varies from one event to another and from phase to phase within the same event depending on whether its content is a sense of belonging to the same class or any other affinity... Such coexistence of class solidarity and other affinities... was... explicit in the politically less sophisticated agrarian uprisings of the period before 1900... Many of these earlier instances, therefore, of what essentially was the peasants' resistance to their class enemies, lend themselves to misrepresentation as nothing but communal or racial protest based respectively on sectarian or ethnic attitudes. What is wrong with this type of explanation... is not that it emphasizes some of the communal or ethnic elements in such combinations of rural masses, but that it underestimates or even ignores their class character.*" (pp. 169-170). So they never argue in favour of a fully articulated class consciousness enabling solidarity; but they also don't find any reason to discard their subjectivity effectively determining the power-relation from a position of autonomy. Guha takes this proposition, as we have already quoted, to a logical conclusion in his work *Elementary Aspects of Peasants Insurgencies in Colonial India* (1983) using subjectivity as the key theme in understanding formation of a community-identity and its role in determining power relation from a position of below. He manages to show that proletariat subjectivity, defined as class consciousness can also be grounded in peasant community.

In recent works like that of Chatterjee and such conceptualizations of politics of the governed (or subaltern), Sumit Sarkar (2010) presumes the 'decline of the subaltern'. While early subaltern studies, like that of Guha discussed above, want to map the regime or domination and subordination from the position of subject; recent works by subaltern group tries to map the regime of domination/subordination from the perspective of power wielding sovereign.

The new development in Indian scenario where peasants, tribal movements are re-emerging either in the ambit of the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism¹² or in other forms, it may be fruitful to bring back the early subaltern studies' framework to recover the notion of subject. Perhaps in stead of mapping the state/community relationship from the perspective of power; it will be more helpful to approach the question from the perspective of the subject and subjectivity (denoting a community's consciousness, other than working class, of its strength of solidarity).

So our research questions are:

What are the available concepts to characterize the simultaneous emergence of power and resistance? In other words, how does subject emerge in the process of interaction with the state and other modes of articulation of power?

How would we conceptualize the emergence of subject, above primordial identities in relation to the state and its apparatuses? In other words, how could the notion of subject and that of community be formulated simultaneously, otherwise differentiated on the axes of gender, class, caste or ethnicity?

How do we understand the relation between subject resisting state-power and other organized political forces contesting state-power at the same site? To put in the context, how do the adivasis of Lalgarh resist state-power and what relationship do they establish with CPI(Maoist), an organized political force contesting the Indian state in course of their resistance?

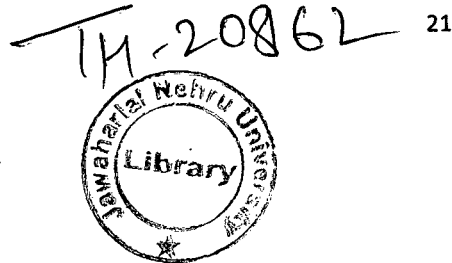
¹² Definitely early subaltern studies, especially Guha was highly influenced by Maoism. He persistently quotes from Mao's writing in *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgencies in Colonial India* (1983). In fact Sarkar (2010) also notes such influences on Guha.

Methodology

The essay is primarily based on secondary literature, intending to give a broad theoretical overview in reviewing existing literatures. The essay as a part of dissertation in partial fulfilment of M.Phil in JNU is required to be a literature review. However in the third chapter, we have used few additional materials which could be grouped as primary materials including fact finding reports, fact finding reports published in the form of articles, pamphlets, news paper reporting as well.

The topic that this essay addresses is a vast topic with several disciplines, ranging from political science, political theory and philosophy, sociology, history etc. contributing to our understanding. There are several debates between and among distinguished scholars, leading to a wealth of literature available. However due to narrow scope of the essay and paucity of time, we have restricted ourselves to certain conceptualizations, theoretical frameworks. The choice of the theorists and concepts are largely driven by the research questions posed and the thematic order in which one conceptual order is followed up by another conceptual-thematic order.

The first two chapters are literature review based on the research questions posed above and subsequently touching upon certain key concepts indicated below. The chronology in which the theorists have been discussed, once again, is guided by the questions that we are trying to respond to and the logical order in which the concepts and themes appear. In the third chapter we have tried contextualizing tentative conclusions of these two chapters in an account of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh as a case study of Maoists movement in India. As widely accepted, the case study method provides us with a synoptic view acting like a microscope for social scientists (see Young 2003). For us this is particularly useful. In studying Maoist movement, there is evidently lack of information and accuracy of data available. However regarding Lalgarh resistance in media, intellectual circle lot of debate is going on which ultimately tries to generalize on Maoist movement from their respective perspectives. There is also information available in the form of fact finding reports as referred in the third chapter. Therefore it easier to isolate key themes around which the individual case of Lalgarh can be accounted for which are on the other hand throw light on Maoist movement in India. Therefore in arranging and organizing available information we have narrowed down on few themes: structure of



domination in the area prior to the resistance; changes in structure of domination as a part of democratization process; economic backwardness and development work; evolving of institutions after the resistance started and their nature of relationship with various political forces. Beyond any doubt, choice of themes here reflects our particular interest in reading the community around the resistance from political sociological perspective, rather than general sociological perspective.

The information has been read in constructing the account in a particular manner. Given that exceptional situation in which the resistance developed often usual source of data is not available to us. Also there is possibility that the sources are sided either with the state or with the people, from their respective ideological commitment. So in order to avoid the trap of being one sided, partial in arranging our data, we have tried cross referencing available data in almost every cases. Effort has been made to tally one source of information about any particular incident from at least two or more than two sources. Further we avoided taking any interpretation of the fact finding report, news paper report or article informing about Lalgarh resistance as constitutive of our argument. We have tried culling out just simple information or data out of these sources. We also heavily depended on, as an usual practice in case study method, what people have to say while interacting with fact finding teams, news paper reporters or others. As we have quoted these people we have tried interpreting these comments in their given context to get access to community's world view in and around the resistance.

The genealogy of power and subject: political society to the state of exception

The first chapter deals with the research question--- **What are the available concepts to characterize the simultaneous emergence of power and resistance to it? In other words, how does subject emerge in the process of interaction with the state and other modes of the articulation of power?** Here we probe into the relationship of power with the subject, as we have already discussed in relation to Partha Chatterjee, Foucault in greater detail. The key concepts that emerge in this chapter are --- governmentality, power/subject; legality/illegality or illegibility of law; universality/particularity.

Theorising emergence of subject (I): exception, community and subjectivity

In the second chapter we come to address the second research question: **How would we conceptualize the emergence of subject, above primordial identities in relation to the state and its apparatuses? In other words, how could the notion of subject and that of community be formulated simultaneously, otherwise differentiated on the axes of gender, class, caste or ethnicity?** Here we examine the idea of the state of exception. We try to understand the analytical structure of the concept as a power relation. This analysis facilitates a grounding in the perspective of subject and relationships it establishes with other forces from a Marxist position. The key concepts chalked out in the preceding chapter are interrogated, however from the vantage point of the subject as proposed. The key themes of this chapter are: proletariat as subject and state of exception, proletariat consciousness and subjectivity, proletariat and community.

Theorising emergence of subject (II): subjectivity of the oppressed and vanguard

The third chapter begins with an account of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh as a case study of Maoist movement in India on the line as we have already chalked out in discussing methodology. Then it aims at answering last question raised above: **How do we understand the relation between subject resisting state-power and other organized political forces contesting state-power at the same site? To put in the context, how do the adivasis of Lalgarh resist state-power and what relationship do they establish with CPI(Maoist), an organized political force contesting the Indian state in course of their resistance?**

Chapter 1

The Genealogy of Power and Subject: Political Society to the State Of Exception

This chapter wants to address the first question that we have posed that is **what are the available concepts to characterize the simultaneous emergence of power and resistance?** Or o put it differently: **how does subject emerge in the process of interaction with the state and other modes of articulation of power?** There are different sites in which power and subject have been conceptualized in recent theories and their relationship has been proposed from various vantage points. Given the restricted scope of the present essay, it is imperative we draw the line clearly to take up a narrow but focused understanding on the issue. We take Partha Chatterjee's (2004) formulation of the 'political society' as the point of departure as it has been a theoretical outcome of an alert observation of recent political processes in postcolonial countries like India. Moreover the concept also functions as intersecting points of various theories on this issue, thereby providing a scope of meaningful discussion on power and resistance. The key themes that emerge in this discussion are legality/illegality, universal/particular, as corollary to the principal theme of power/subject. We will see how Chatterjee's notion of political society, can be interpreted, reinterpreted from theoretical positions of Foucault (power/subject), Derrida and Veena Das (legality/illegality) or post-Marxist thinkers like Ernest Laclau and Chantal Moffat (universal/particular). In the conclusion of this chapter we hope to show political society in the back drop of certain political developments falls short of explaining entire gamut of politics of the governed in contemporary India. Following Agamben, we would argue that the 'state of exceptional' in which the relationship between power and subject can be thought of, is an important realm of politics in understanding state/community relation in today's India.

Section-I

Interpreting Political Society:

Governmentality and Power, Subjectivation and Subject

What is Political Society?

The notion of political society (Chatterjee 2004) is a useful one in understanding post-colonial Indian nation-state and its institutions and processes. This concept foregrounds difficult and complex relationships between universal and particular, modernity and democracy, citizenship, community and state etc. Western modernity, according to Partha Chatterjee has been invested in empty homogeneous time of the capital. It is empty in so far as to use almost cult expression of Anderson it is imagined. It is homogeneous in so far as it identifies unilinear trajectory of capital with linear connects of past, present and future. Capitalism as developed in the west it did so being concomitant with the notion of nation state. The notion of the nation state was again firmly conceptualised with reference to civic nationalism. Civic nationalism inscribed in individual freedom and equal rights was and is still thought to be the 'progressive' in spirit. Therefore the time of capital translates any politics based on the community as inherently regressive, decisive and restrictive with reference to nation state based on civic nationalism. For the west, politics based on community identity is antithetical to freedom, individual property rights etc --- the very fulcrum of capitalist development and emergence of nation-state. Inevitable fall out of this view is to see the politics of community identity (say ethnicity) as coming from pre-modern time. But this homogeneous empty time has no correspondence with real space. When one grounds oneself in real space of the people, the time correspondingly becomes heterogeneous time. Chatterjee draws from Homi Bhabha to argue that even modernist nation-state's location in temporality is densely heterogeneous. Henceforth it is a theoretical chauvinism of the west to plot several times co-presenting in heterotopic real spaces as pre-modern, modern etc. This is overt simplification which misses out the nuanced process that goes on in reality

where each time is a complex encounter with modernity and new product through active transformation.

Civil society and political society – citizens and population groups

Situating the debate in terms of modernist project of nation-state as only accepted community of people having universal liberating principles of citizenship rights enshrined in it versus particular rights of a community, Chatterjee now takes up the issue of civil society versus political society. Chatterjee takes the classical definition of civil society as conceptualised by Hegel or Marx. For him civil society denotes all those institutions of modern associational life which retain characteristics based on equality, autonomy, freedom of entry and exit, contract or deliberative procedure of decision making, recognized rights and duties of the members etc (Chatterjee 1998). He argues that in the west the trajectory that followed is largely to do with development of the civil society. The modernist dream of the west has envisaged the role of the state as the agent in helping the sphere of the civil society to grow and incorporate in the government functioning making the political system of democracy truly participatory, deliberative. However in non-western countries like India the same trajectory, from the very beginning, had shown its inherent contradiction. Taking example of B. R. Ambedkar, he tries to elaborate, “*the contradictions posed for a modern politics by the rival demands of universal citizenship on the one hand and the protection of particularist rights on the other.*” (Chatterjee 2004; 8).

With twentieth century, the modern democratic polity entered a new phase of mass democracies in the west. The activities of the state have produced a new distinction between citizens and populations. With this, there is a shift that has taken place in the philosophical discussions in the west. Instead of liberty versus community¹, the concern has come to be citizens versus population. Reflecting on the distinction, Chatterjee seems to hold the view that it signifies another trajectory whereas in the west democracy has first passed through the modernist phase of gradual expansion of civil society consisting of citizens to the phase of mass

¹ On this debate Partha Chatterjee elaborates on the article “*Community in the East*” (1998). This article is important in so far as it reflects early formulations of political society along with few other articles.

democracy where governmentality of the state creates another section besides civil society that is of populations. In postcolonial set up this trajectory has a different history. Generally in countries like India after colonial interventions, the phase of modernist project of participatory democracy with active deliberation of the citizens has been short lived. The governmentality phase has seized the large share of state's practices. This trajectory is what inspires Chatterjee to look into the politics of the population groups or governed from a different perspective in the present juncture. He predicates this politics as 'popular' (popular in so far as it is reflection of the popular governmental interventions now widely recognised all over the world) and specifically argues that this popular politics is developing in "*those part of the world that were not direct participants in the history of evolution of modern capitalist democracy*" (Chatterjee 2004:3) .

Political society emerged out of this phase of governmentality as a site of 'popular' 'politics of the governed'. If civil society is situated within a system of interaction between citizens and the nation-state, founded on the popular sovereignty, granting equal rights to citizens; political society is the domain where interface happens between governmental agencies and populations who are targeted by these agencies on the terms of security and welfare. Political society consists of people, who are theoretically right bearing citizens; however in practice who are far from being members of civil society taking part in actual functioning of the government. The institutions of the state too never regard them as such as the members of civil society. However still they are part of the state mechanism in so far as in calculating cost/benefit, wellbeing of the population the state must count them in. This process of counting in, in which state does a thorough assessment of its policy interventions with an instrumental approach towards a population cluster, ties the latter with the former in an active political relationship. A separate sphere of politics outside civil society is opened up. To argue out how it is a political relationship Chatterjee refers back to the early subaltern studies project. In this project a split was thought off between organized elite domain and unorganized subaltern domain. The split tried signifying a fault line in standard nationalist and Marxist historiography where subaltern groups were drawn into organized political domain but subsequently kept distanced from the process of postcolonial state. Subaltern studies therefore attacked the nationalist and Marxist notion that before their incorporation onto organized political domain they

were restricted in a pre-political stage. They rather tried showing they were also political and organized however differently from the elite nationalist politics. Chatterjee in the context of the political society argues the same. The split that he envisages between civil society and political society has its ultimate significance in showing that the relationship between state and political society is also political, however differently than what western modernist project have thought in the context of civil society.

Political society as a product of governmentality

Political society, as a product of governmentality and development policies of the state, lives in a heterogeneous time. It is heterogeneous to the extent that government's engagement with different population groups is particular, context specific and instrumentally situated, compared to civil society where guiding norms are universal, equal and general. From the perspective of the governed also every encounter with the state is of strategy, negotiation and bargaining. There is no overarching framework of equal citizenship, deliberative, participatory democratic process where state is open to its citizen for guidance for good governance. Association spawning out of political society henceforth is starkly different from civic associations. Chatterjee elaborates in a lucid manner, "*...a politics emerging out of the developmental politics of government aimed at specific population groups..., organized into associations, transgress the strict lines of legality in struggling to live and work. They may live in illegal squatter settlements, make illegal use of water or electricity, travel without tickets in public transport. In dealing with them, the authorities cannot treat them on the same footing as other civic associations following more legitimate social pursuits. Yet state agencies and nongovernmental organizations cannot ignore them either, since they are among thousands of similar associations representing groups of population whose very livelihood or habitation involve violation of law. These agencies therefore deal with these associations not as bodies of citizens but as convenient instruments for the administration of welfare to marginal and underprivileged population groups.*" (Chatterjee 2004; 40).

Politics of the governed in political society is therefore hinges on an understanding that both state and the population in question know that not always latter's claims are legal, justified in fact at times it is contrary to good civic behaviour.

However both the parties are also aware that the state has a public obligation to look after these underprivileged populations owing to their inalienable rights as human beings to habitation, livelihood. What happens then is a politics of negotiation between the community, targeted by the state as population cluster and the state according to calculations of political expediency. What needs to be highlighted here is the process whereby effect of governmentality first initiates a possibility of creation of a population cluster and then through a farther internal transformation the population assumes a community identity. Political society is the new site where political relation between state and community actualised.

Political society, as a concept does capture quite usefully some forms of political processes unfolding in twenty-first century India. However this concept is severely limited on the face of recent developments taking place in India vis-à-vis state/community relationship. Moreover Chatterjee also hopes to find, as already mentioned, a real ethical space leading to new terms of political justice in these contestations within the realm of political society. This seems to be a project which must be contextualized and interpreted in the backdrop of recent development of political philosophy and theory. Following sections and subsections are an effort towards that. As Chatterjee himself draws his lineage from Foucault's notion of Governmentality in following subsections we will delve deeper into Foucauldian corpus of thought to begin with. In doing so, we also hope to gain an overall insight into the different forms of mediation between power and resistance.

Politics of the government and its apparatuses: governmentalization of the society

To start off for simple analytical convenience a distinction must be made between politics of the government and its apparatuses and politics of the community or governed with reference to political society.² We would begin with the former aspect of the political society --- the politics of the government and its apparatuses.

² Chatterjee hints towards possibility of such a separation by naming his book '*The Politics Of The Governed*'. However towards the end we will see that such analytical distinctions might be useful for sake of simplicity; but cannot be accepted within the nuanced theoretical framework of political society. Both the realms of politics mentioned above is actually in a complementary relationship.

What is the politics of the state in relation to political society? Chatterjee gives the answer in most succinct manner: “...the concept of population makes available to government functionaries a set of rationally manipulable instruments for reaching large sections of the inhabitants of a country as the targets of their “policies”....Indeed, as Michel Foucault has pointed out, a major characteristics of the contemporary regime of power is a certain “governmentalization of the state”.(Chatterjee 2004: 34). However for obvious reasons Chatterjee does not elaborate on the aspect that how these population come about as an effect of power; or in other words what does ‘governmentalization’ in Foucault really mean? This however is a crucial point which requires patient elaboration in present context in order to understand the backdrop in which population (community), the state as sovereign or as government apparatuses, and power regime functions in modern regime.

What is governmentality?

The modern regime of power as ‘governmentalization’ for Foucault marks a transition. The transition that took place, he writes, “...in the eighteenth century from an art of government to a political science, from a regime dominated by structures of sovereignty to one ruled by techniques of government, turns on the theme of population, hence also the birth of political economy.” (Foucault 2006: 218).

What is this art of government in the first place that Foucault is talking about? Foucault develops his argument in a unique manner where he juxtaposes Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and other certain texts which are anti-Machiavelli in their stance. Through this discursive reading and counter-reading, the different features of the art of government come forth which would eventually be institutionalized as we have seen by eighteenth century. First, is the relationship between ‘governor’ and ‘governed’. In *The Prince* the relationship is of absolute ‘transcendent singularity’ and ‘externality’. The Prince, as a figure is uncontested figure of power in so far as his power over his principality is absolute; and he is external to the extent that he stands above and over his principality and rules it from outside not being a part of it in any sense. In texts which are opposed to Machiavelli, on the other hand an art of government is propounded based on ‘plurality of forms’ and ‘immanence’. The figure of prince in Machiavelli acquires or inherits his principality. He never forms a part of

it. The figure of prince binds himself with the subjects and territories (principality), which have been acquired by him, through violence, treaty or family inheritance. He not only stands outside his principality but his relationship with his principality is that of singularity. His sole interest is to protect the weak, fragile link between his principality and himself. The art of government for Machiavelli is that of protecting this *unique* link from outside. Texts, written in objection to Machiavelli first and foremost note that it is not only the singular figure of the prince who governs. But one can also think of governing in terms of 'governing' one's household, or 'governing' a religious order. Such 'government' in reality by 'the governed' (governed by the prince) happens inside the very territory and jurisdiction of the governing authority of the state (or the prince). Therefore Foucault argues these texts mark a unique character of the art of government i.e. of 'plural' and thereby 'immanent' character of governance. The 'governing' as an act can no longer be conceived as a singular prerogative of the governing authority like Prince from the outside. It is inscribed even inside Prince's principality and in differing manners. The second character follows from the first. There is a relation of continuity that is stressed in the art of government. The point is not to show definite discontinuity between different forms of governing and the unique, singular authority of the prince as a governor in relation to his principality. It has been done in Machiavelli's prince in order to render legitimacy to the prince to govern from outside. The point is to show continuity whereby someone who is good in governing himself, his goods and patrimony can precisely be successful as the governor of the state. Similarly the continuity also flows upside-down. When a state is well run, it can be expected that family will be run properly; individuals will behave as they should. However the chief character of the art of government, according to Foucault, is the insistence on "*right disposition of things*" (Foucault2006: 135). Foucault uses his famous metaphor of the ship to elucidate the point. Governing a ship, from the perspective of a prince is to protect the ownership of the ship and also the sailors. However from the point of view of the art of government, it is "*that activity of establishing a relation between the sailors, who are to be taken care of, and the ship, which is to be taken care of, and the cargo, which is to be brought safely to port..*" (Foucault2006:136). Therefore governing things means not necessarily an opposition between men and things; but governing the precise complex composed relationship between men and things. It is a shift,

Foucault points out, from sovereignty and territory to governing men in their relationship, their links with wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory etc. While it does not signify a decline of the sovereign; however it definitely, for Foucault, indicates a transition to regime of politics governed by principle of economy i.e. political economy, displacing privileged position of the sovereign. This regime of art of government also initiates a change in perspective in terms of legality. If for the sovereign the absolute instrument was law to demand and secure obedience; in art of government the question becomes that of disposing things. Therefore no longer law can be imposed on men; but it also has to be employed as a part of tactics and strategy with a goal to dispose things.

This art of government which was gaining momentum in sixteenth century onwards slipped into a dormant stage. It resurrected again in 18th century with certain historical developments. Now from the art of government it transformed onto a knowledge proper in the shape of political science. One of the important developments was the demographic change. Population, our area of interest in this context, emerged as the unit of art of government with the development of statistics. No longer it is family only that is the heart of government, but governing a population became the goal. Population with its aggregate effect also brought back the question of economy. Population must be accounted for and must be brought under scrutiny and control. This gave away to a typical tri-partition specific to Foucault, where society was now placed in a triangle of sovereignty, discipline and government vis-à-vis population. This process where population is incorporated and transformed through discipline, legal sovereign order and other such strategic intervention into a society, Foucault refers to as 'governmentalization' of the society. Foucault adds one another point also in passing. He dismisses the preoccupation with the state in modern government and argues that statization of society is becoming a less important phase of government in our society.

Governmentality and power: indissoluble link

We must note that Chatterjee considers this governmentalization as the regime of power. Foucault's notion of governmentalization and subsequently Chatterjee's analysis also lies on a detail understanding of functioning of power in Foucauldian schema. Gilles Deleuze, renowned philosopher and a colleague of Foucault in his

commentary writes: “*What is power? Foucault’s definition seems a very simple one: power is a relation between forces, or rather every relation between forces is a ‘power relation’.*” (Deleuze 1999: 70). This formulation of Foucault’s notion of power in such terms comes directly from Foucault, when latter insists that it is futile to ask what power is but what is to be asked is how it is practiced. Foucault argues that power in general does not exist. It is there only when it is practiced. Hence for Foucault it becomes important to trace the practice of power as a capacity. Power for Foucault is no longer a grand question of institutions of power, or group, or elite or class. It is a form which is experienced in our everyday life. It is a form which in its particular immediacy categorizes individuals and marks him by his own individuality, attributes identity and also places him in a truth regime vis-à-vis the Other. This privileging of everyday, micro notion of power has precise justification in Foucault. He contends that when we talk about power relation in an exact sense it signifies a relation between individuals. In fact the very structure of power is just an ensemble where certain persons exercise power over others (Foucault 1982).

What constitutes power? Foucault argues that power must be seen as action i.e. one action working upon another action. The very capacity that certain persons’ action or actions can modify the actions of others is the pure content of the power. Therefore to reiterate the point made earlier power is not there as a concentrated or diffused form stacked in some institution or structure; it is there in so far as it is put into action. Such a notion of power as ‘action on action’ brings the second aspect of power on to light. Power is not a function of consent; or not a renunciation of freedom. Power as an action is not exerted over anybody to force them or to modify them. Power is exercised over in terms of acting on somebody else’s action. So power acts to control others action in present and at the same time actions that might arise in the future as well. This means Foucault moves away from the Weberian notion of the state, as a seat of authority having monopoly over legitimate use of violence. Violence though is there however does not constitute the essence of power. Violence is a form to induce consent. But power does not even work on the axis of consent. Both, violence and consent could be instrument or results of power but never these constitute basic principle of power. Foucault explains the modality of power: “...*a power relationship can only articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that “the other” ... be*

thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up." (Foucault 1982: 220). To add to the list of violence, consent Foucault farther displaces another notion that the freedom is opposed to power. In his schema freedom is inside the power regime. Power can only be exercised in so far as it is exercised over free individuals. Freedom therefore starts corresponding to a field of possibilities in which individuals are free to make several sets of choices, behave manner in which permitted in that field. So for Foucault slavery is not a power relation. Power relation is a much more complex composition of the interplay of power/domination and freedom/consent. This complexity of power relation is best captured through the notion of strategy with reference to power. Foucault employs the term in three precise senses: 1) rationally obtaining certain means to achieve certain goals; 2) in a situation of game efforts of one to act according to others' expected actions and also what s/he thinks to be others anticipation of his own action; 3) designated procedures in a combative situation to deprive opponents from his/her means of combat and neutralizing the opponent in that process (Foucault 1982). Power relation either contains all these three aspects of strategy at the same time or depending on situations on varying degrees. This is precisely so because at the heart of this regime of power there always resides the element of subordination, signified as freedom as we have already seen. The contending forces i.e. governor and governed do not lose their specific elements in this contestation however what happens is a ensemble of such strategic intervention time to time in order to have varying forms of power constellation.

Before elaborating farther on the aspect of power, the emerging correspondence that is palpable in our discussion between governmentality as a form of power regime must be stressed. The art of government, which would later to be instituted as governmentalization and inscribed in knowledge as political science based on a notion of 'political economy' has following characters as we have already seen --- immanence/ plurality vis-à-vis externality/singularity; continuity/discontinuity; ruling the subjects inside the territory vis-à-vis disposition of things. As we have observed that for Foucault power is less about transcendental codification of power in one institution of figure of authority and more about everyday relation in terms of action upon action. It is a relationship which is inscribed

within the very relationship of governor and governed. One complements other in a power relationship. Therefore power relation is that of immanence and not of externality. It is also of plurality precisely because governor and governed are not the only relationship characterising 'action upon action'. In our everyday life every interaction has this property where strategic interventions ensue possibility of modifying others action in relation to one's own goal. So power relation is also plural. The property of continuity also flows from the very nature of power. Power is not a question of simple domination and yielding consent. But it is play of freedom and consent. It is a game where contending parties are locked in a situation where power "passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the mastered (since it passes through every related force)." (Deleuze 1999: 71). The action of the other upon which one is intending to act upon has no meaning in so far as the former action does not exist. For this precise reason also governmentality is not about ruling your subjects; but disposition of things. Where a strategy must be instituted in order to account for, calculate and manipulate every relations --- men with men; men with resources etc.--- in order to achieve one's own goal (goals of the governor), while reducing discontent, resistance to its possible minimum effect.

Governmentality as a regime of power focuses on bio-politics and shifts away from the juridico-political model of power. The body is invested into the heart of politics. The techniques of power and technology of the self is instituted to discipline and regulate the bodies. Power of the state as a sovereign is no longer just a power of constitution and law; it is more specifically a power over life and death. The goal of governmentalization is to take care of the population, make an exhaustive note of its condition of existence and implement, execute policies aimed at making the population productive, secured within a painstaking cost-benefit analysis (Agamben 1998; Foucault 1991; Foucault 1990;). The best examples of how a population is categorised, administered and then disciplined or regulated comes from Foucault in several texts. Out of these, for our purpose, *Discipline and Punish* (1991) and *The History of Sexuality, Vol-I* (1990) are two most important examples to take up. Though further references to these two texts are unavoidable, it would be more apt, for now, to take example of political society, as provided by Chatterjee. This will enhance the understanding of modalities through which governmentality really functions in practice vis-à-vis a population group in practice.

Political society as an example of Foucault's notion of biopower

As we have already noted for Chatterjee a sharp conceptual distinction must be made between civil society and political society. It was enlightened dream of capitalist bourgeois democracy working in a homogeneous empty time of the capital to have a political order where democracy will reside in the interaction between civil society and the nation-state. However on the contrary Chatterjee notes a different popular politics is emerging in most of the world where the state interacts with various communities as population groups and institute democratic governance in the form of governmentalization. The time here is heterogeneous compared to empty universal time of the capital rooted in nation state. With respect to these population groups the state and its apparatuses' interaction is not bound by constitution legal border. It often transgresses the boundary of constitutional provisions which otherwise binds a state with its civil society. The relationship between political society and the state is mostly strategic, context specific and heterogeneous.

Interaction between the CPI(M) led West Bengal Government and a religious sect, *Sanatan Dal* on the issue of cremation of their Sect-leader Balak Brahmachari is an instance of the governmentalization of the state (Chatterjee 2004). On May 5, 1993 Balak Brahmachari died in a government hospital. The doctor issued a death certificate. However his followers refused to accept that their spiritual leader is dead.³ They referred to an incident way back in 1967 when the spiritual leader apparently had gone into *Samadhi* for 21 days. They insisted that it is also a spiritual phenomenon rather than being natural death. Therefore consequently they kept the Baba's body in an air conditioned room. Soon the press picked this story up. A local newspaper called *Ajkal* stirred a debate involving prominent intellectuals, public figures and organizations of popular science movement against this so called superstitious regressive phenomenon. They also heavily criticised the state government for their inaction and alleged that the government is not doing anything in lieu of the fact that the *Sanatan Dal* constitutes their vote bank, and just before Panchayat election any action against them could have had adverse effect on their

³ We would insist that the very act of refusal must be taken with due seriousness here. Chatterjee does not do so. But later we will try to show that it is an important political moment, having possibilities which goes beyond the purview of the governmentality.

own supporters in the party. What is interesting is government's response against such scathing criticism. They only intervened after fifty-one days but that too in terms sending a team of doctors who would go and inspect the leader's body in order to testify about the facticity of *Dal's* claim. While a group of doctors protested that there was no scientific ground of disputing the fact that the leader is dead; the team went ahead. However they were not allowed to inspect the body. By now a well known leader of CPI(M) and an influential one in that area, minister Subhas Chakravarty was asked by the party to intervene. He met the activists of the *Dal* and tried persuading. His approach resembles the principle of governmentality in terms of strategy and particular interventions that he adopts. Chatterjee writes: "*He agreed that there was no scientific reason for doctors to re-examine the body that had been certified as dead, but insisted that this was a necessary part of the process of persuasion*" (Chatterjee 2004: 44). Or in other words sending a team of doctors had nothing to do with facticity but it was a simple strategic intervention. In the end the state however forcefully entered the *Dal's* office and cremated Baba's body. Chatterjee notes that conclusion of the matter however did not lead to end of the debate. Rather he draws attention to the fact that how civil society --- aspiring to have a rational, legal and scientific state in the name of democracy --- and a political society --- a community of believers having the right to have faith in their belief system --- split up. The state government was caught in this duality of governance always accounting, measuring and balancing the cost-benefit. The government had had to recognize the space of the *Sanatan Dal* activists even if they were not acting from inside the civil society (in fact quite opposed to it).

Another example that Chatterjee takes up is that of an illegal settlement on the railway's land. The settlement emerged way back in 1940 with a group of landless peasants leaving their village after Great Famine and coming to Calcutta. Gradually migrants from East Bengal also settled down in that area. There were several efforts in 60s and 70s to evict them from the land. However with political mobilization and channelling, they successfully resisted those initiatives from the part of the government. However Chatterjee notes these efforts on the part of the settlers under the leadership of any influential individual is not politics of the political society proper. He is more interested in a new trend of mobilization which has been built around an association of the residents of colony. *Jan Kalyan Samiti* or People's

Welfare Association, as it is called was first set up in view of setting up a medical center and a library. The association regularly approaches local political party leaders, middle class residents of the neighbouring blocks, police officers in police station for raising fund. Chatterjee gives us several examples where this association is used as a platform to negotiate with the government apparatuses on several issues. Like under Integrated Child development Scheme (ICDS) even government used the association to reach out to the population. With active initiative of the population, the medical camp was set up in association's office only. In another example, Chatterjee notes that how successfully the association managed to install community electric meters, make arrangements for basic civic amenities from local municipalities. What he especially notes that all these development took place, mediated by an association which has no locus standi like other civic bodies. Chatterjee argues that often the rhetoric through which the settlers describe themselves as a community is a state's discourse. Quoting a petition he shows how all the categories that they use --- refugees, landless people, day labourers, homestead, below the poverty line--- are demographic categories emerged in the course of governmentality. The point that Chatterjee wants to make here is that the government uses these associations as a tool to reach out the populations concerned. For that purposes they categorise and account for particularities of a given population set. However in return these population groups use these particularities to acquire an identity of community.

Politics of the community or governed: subject and subjectivation

The process in which a population group comes to consider themselves as a distinct population group and in turn pose themselves as a community, having distinct identity to the government and its apparatuses is another aspect of the politics of political society as mentioned earlier. This has its theoretical foundation in Foucault's notion of subjectivation that Foucault started elaborating in *The Use of Pleasure* (1990). Chatterjee does not dwell on the question of subject and subjectivity at all; yet because of this theoretical embeddedness in Foucauldian schema the question of subject becomes unavoidable. Without naming it, what Chatterjee aspires to recover once again is the subaltern subjectivity through the notion of political society. Before beginning the chapter, "*Politics of the Governed*" from which the example of illegal settlement and *Jan Kalyan Samiti* we have taken, Chatterjee writes in concluding

remarks of the preceding chapter: *It is clear that in pushing the project of turning subaltern subjects into national citizens, the modernizers have encountered resistances that are facilitated by the activities of political society. But I have tried to emphasize that even in resisting the modernizing project that is imposed on them, the subaltern classes also embark on a path of internal transformation.*" (Chatterjee 2004: 51)

'Internal transformation' and community identity in political society

Crucial move for the settlers of the above mentioned example is to seek and find recognition of the population group. At this juncture state and settlers come to a common ground because for the government also population is empirical category useful to reach out with its policies. However on the part of the settlers in emerging as a distinct population group what matters most is to generate a moral attributes of a community (Chatterjee 2004). As Chatterjee shows that this settlers do not have a pre-given category to fall back on to form the identity of a community. They come from diverse backgrounds and heterogeneous spaces. In terms of their caste position also, they are not a homogenous group. So the building of a community identity must have been started from scratch. In this the most important metaphor is that of home. They persistently argue that be it from East Bengal or villages of West Bengal, one thing that ties them together is the fact that before coming here they were all homeless. Being homeless they did not have a life called family life. It is only after coming here and settling down on an occupied land they started realising collectively a family life with settled home. Therefore their collective occupation of the land, collective struggle to set up a home and run a family is the tie which actually binds them together with a bigger single family i.e. the community. Chatterjee rightly identifies that it is not their shared interest that they highlight for coming together in the form of association; rather they emphasize on the shared kinship-like linkages. Association also complements such sentimental shared identity by certain activities. It organizes sports events, collective viewing of television shows or videos, and most importantly through religious festivals. Or in other words what association tries to signify through all these events that it stands for something which is in excess of simple utilitarian shared interest. This residue is the kernel of the identity of the community and recognition as a distinct population in the eyes of the government and its apparatuses.

This is what Chatterjee argues is the 'internal transformation' that the population of settlers has gone through after post 1980 and consequently has undergone a change from a loose population group to political society having distinct population/community⁴ identity.

'Internal transformation' and the question of subject and subjectivity

Is not it the fact that the 'internal transformation' that Chatterjee refers to is an exact corollary to Foucault's notion of 'subjectivation'? The fact that to get recognized by the state as a distinct population group, the population as a collective must project themselves as a community (and this realization is the source which gradually initiates certain transformation within the collective) reminds us of the above mentioned Deleuze's metaphor --- power as a force flows through master and mastered. That the Mastered (governed) constitutes just the other side of the master.

We have now reached the threshold of subject and subjectivity. The figure of subject in understanding existing relationship, between power and subject's resistance on the terrain of political society is ignored by Chatterjee; however for Foucault's notion of governmentality, the figure of subject is essential. For further justification for such a claim, we must recall almost confessional declaration of Foucault, the great narrator of power, governmentality and politics of truth: *I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years...My objectives...has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects* (Foucault 1982: 208). With this disclaimer what Foucault does is to show that how his entire corpus of work is nothing but finding out different modes of objectivising of the subject. First he investigated the scientific discourses and tries to discover the linkages where the discipline objectivises the speaking subject (philology); or productive subject (economics), or subject as animated being (biology). In second part of the study he argues his aim was to articulate process in which objectivising of the subject happens through divided practices. The good example of such a work is *Discipline and Punish* (1991). And

⁴ Community and population cannot really be used interchangeably. But as the above analysis shows that they are intricately linked. For the collective to be recognized as distinct population group, worthy subject governmental activity, it is very important that they present themselves as community.

towards the end he turned his attention towards the modalities through which a human being turns himself or herself as subject. All these signify theoretical shifts (Foucault 1982; Foucault 1990). The third theoretical shifts we are particularly interested here. It is a project that takes shape in most lucid manner in *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault 1990).

What is subject in biopolitical model of power?

But what does the concept 'subject' stand for in the first place. It seems Foucault's conceptualization is fairly simple: *there are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge* (Foucault 1982: 212). In exploring the notion of subject and subjectivation further, the point of departure in *The Use of Pleasure* becomes morality. Morality stands for twofold meaning. One speaks of morality when one talks about set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals (codes of conduct); and morality also stands for real behaviour of individuals in relation to such norms and values (forms of subjectivation). Foucault argues that power acts on a subject through subtle interplay of the both. However in certain moralities emphasis is given on its strict adherence, its employability and power of regulation. In these sorts of moralities focus is on the figure of authority who enforces the code. The authority ensures that the process of learning such codes and observing them without deviation. Even if it requires transgression might be penalized as well. The subjection that takes place in these situations Foucault refers to as of quasi-judicial form. Over here the ethical subject refers his or her conduct to a set of laws while committing at the same time to the risk of making offenses for which he/she is liable to be punished. Docile Body in *Discipline and society*, of 18th century is exact subjection of that nature. Body was treated individually obtaining hold upon the different parts and thereby controlling movements, gestures, attitudes. Then came the controlling the body in terms of its economy. Movements, exercise and internal organizations must be controlled to orient towards an economically efficient body. And ultimately there was constant coercion, supervision of the processes of activity rather than the end result. Such supervision is done with respect to a certain codification which partitions the time, space and movement economically. This gave rise to body of docility-utility. And not so surprisingly perhaps the sites of such

disciplinary regime were workshops, monasteries and army barracks etc. (Foucault 1991).

How the subjectivation process unfolds i.e. one ties himself or herself up with one's own identity through conscience and self knowledge? There are layers in this process which has to be passed through before one constitutes oneself as an ethical subject and at the same time a subject to power.

Determination of the ethical substance: There is a rule of conduct that one has to follow. However there is more to it from the point of view of an ethical subject. One must determine the manner in which one ought to conduct oneself with reference to these rules. There could be various ways of determining this 'ought to' aspect; there are several possibilities to define the proper manner of conduct. Therefore "one can relate the crucial aspects of the practice of fidelity to the strict observance of interdictions and obligations in the very act one accomplishes. But one can also make the essence of fidelity consist in the mastery of desires." (Foucault 1991: 26). So while the relationship between the ethical subject and rules in the first case is mediated by 'carrying out the acts themselves'; in the second case it is the soul and contradictory struggle is the material of moral practices.

Mode of subjection: There can be varying ways of relating oneself with the rules in the first place. Recognition that one is obliged to follow the rules can come in different manner. One might adhere because one recognizes oneself to be a member of a group that accepts it, preserves it as a custom; one may also subscribe as Foucault gives an example, just because one acknowledges oneself as a heir of a spiritual tradition or willing to offer oneself as an 'example' in response to a certain appeal etc.

Elaboration of ethical work: There can also be different possibilities in which one performs the ethical work. The transformation that is subjection might follow various trajectories. So Foucault argues that sexual austerity can be practiced through systematic prolonged learning, memorizing and assimilation of ensemble of percept on sexuality; it can also be sudden, definitive and all embracing renunciation. It can be practiced through relentless combat with occasional set backs; or it can also be done through painstaking, minute observation of the movement of desires.

Telos of ethical subject: The last point that Foucault adds is that in the process of subjectivation, a moral action cannot be seen in its singularity. This implies a moral action is not only moral in itself; but it is also, as it is a part of the moral conduct that ethical subject subjects himself/herself to. So this telos of circumstantial integration of the moral action with moral conduct is what exactly leads an individual to a mode of being, which is moral and ethical.

Emergence of the subject as the process of subjectivation: resistance as mirror image of the power

These activities could be carried on only on one condition which is the essence of subjectivation. Subjectivation as a process is therefore not only establishing one's relationship with external reality and externally given rules; but establishing connect with oneself vis-à-vis externality. So in subjectivation one individual almost distances that part of himself/herself that is subject to moral practice. Then s/he defines his/her position accordingly and decides the mode of being serving his moral goal. And then begins a strenuous, rigorous process of monitoring, testing, improving of that part of one's self, ultimately leading to transformation of the self.

We get a vague sense that governmentalization and subjectivation are two ends of a same knot. How governmentality and subjectivation are tied up in the politics of the political society? This is the question we must pursue in brief before we end. It is clear from the above example that *Jan Kalyan Samiti* cannot be considered to be a legally mandated civil society association. The members of the association are illegal residents on public property. The state cannot grant them the legitimacy that a civic body warrants because their activities like in itself opposed to good civic behaviour i.e. illegal occupation of land. But at the same time we have seen for policy implementation the state apparatuses use the association to good effect. How then such ambivalence is retained within the heart of governmental practices? If we care to see little carefully it is not only civil society or the state, even the settlers themselves don't claim that their activities are legal and in tuned with common good. Or in other words they adhere to the very code of conduct that community of legal citizens must respect. They show their willingness to do so. However in that process they emphasize on their incapacity to do so. They project themselves as a community of people, who are landless people, day labourers, below the poverty lines etc and having

no place to go.⁵ They make their claim only on the line of right to habitation or livelihood. So what is interesting here is to note that the emergence of the community happens only through a dual, simultaneous process. The 'internal transformation' ---- that we discussed in preceding paragraphs --- is a successful process of constituting collective subjectivity of a community, in so far as, they are also ready to constitute themselves as ethical moral subject vis-à-vis given code of conduct of good civic behaviour; in so far as, they themselves internalize the identities like wage labourers, migrant etc. i.e. all the governmental categories as valid one; in so far as they accept they are not behaving like a true moral citizen. Thus the government apparatuses can intervene so long as through their association, community identity the settlers fix their subject-position vis-à-vis the state. So 'internal transformation' as a politics of the governed is not only essential for the settlers to pursue their claim as a collective; but it is a process which feeds into the regime of governmentality also. The formation of the community identity as ethical subjects, through the process of internal transformation i.e. subjectivation, is crucial element to establish the relation of power between the master and the mastered.⁶

The concept of subjectivation has crucial implication for political theory and philosophy. It has its own practico-political implication which has to be grasped in its nuances. The subjectivity or self as a notion is common sensically given to us as an 'inside'. When we talk about one's own self, we talk about what is going on inside. Therefore 'subjectivation' as a process must be seen as formation of inside vis-à-vis outside i.e. external world, the Other. Deleuze notes that for whole life Foucault is haunted by this inside/outside theme. For Foucault, towards the end to his life to his utter frustration, inside always appears to be just mere fold of outside. It is a question of double. However the doubling never happens inside-out that is as projection of the interior to the outside. The doubling is in precise sense interiorization of the outside.

⁵ Chatterjee extensively quotes a petition that the association made to railway authority and these points are quite explicit there (Chatterjee 2004: 99)

⁶ We can contrast this example with another example that Chatterjee gives of book-binders in college street in Calcutta. Though various interventions by the political parties, a strike by binders, the condition of the book-binders has not improved over the years. And Chatterjee notes among other reasons, one chief reason for such a failure is book-binders' inability to constitute themselves as a community. This, according to him, never facilitated the political society that could have bargained with the state. So this primacy that he attaches to the formation of community makes our point quite clear here.

“it is not the emanation of “I”, but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self” (Deleuze 1999: 98). This is the philosophical implication when Foucault is talking about the formation of the ethical subject. As we have seen it requires one to cut a part of the self, distance himself/herself from that part and then making it subject to observation, administration to a moral goal. And this moral goal comes from outside, this moral goal stands for the Other--- which one incorporates as a part of oneself and gradually orient oneself completely towards as entire mode of being. This is a chilling and frustrating realisation indeed. If we care to see little closely, subjectivation as a process just resonates what Foucault has to say about power. The relationship between “I” and the Other is that of immanence, continuity and of calculation, administration and strategic interventions in various phases of the relationship between “I” and the Other.⁷ There is nothing that can escape power. Resistance is already and always a name for power relation.

The limit of the politics of political society: is civil society really ‘fictive’ for the ‘governed’ in political society?

What is the implication of these observations? We argue that the process of subjectivation and the formation of the ethical subject constitute a decisive theoretical moment. It shows the limit of the politics of political society which Chatterjee fails to appreciate. Let us start from the temporary and contextual nature of the politics of political society. As he shows quite persuasively that politics of the political society often depends on the balance of the political forces and ability of the members of the political society to manoeuvre using their vote-bank as a political instrument. As the example of the railway colony suggests, they often move back and forth in terms of their allegiance to a political party. While the CPI(M) led state government attempted an eviction, they had to seek support from opposition *Trinamool Congress* which had their leader as a railway minister at that time. In this negotiation what was their means of bargaining is definitely their vote-bank. However, as it is expected, this is a never ending cycle making politics of the political society always temporary and contextual. This contextual and temporary politics, Chatterjee rightly observes, is “*an equally*

⁷ Over here I am alluding to three properties that we have culled out of the art of government --- immanence, continuity, disposition of things

legitimate part of the real time-space of the modern political life of the nation” (Chatterjee 2004: 25). Political society indeed achieves freedom for the underprivileged, marginal section which otherwise would not have been possible from inside civil society. However his claim that it also could be seen as resistances seeking to find “real ethical space” succeeding in “inventing new terms of political justice” (Chatterjee 2004: 25) seems to fall short on theoretical and practical plane. As we have already seen, for Chatterjee an analysis of civil society with the notion of popular sovereignty and equal citizenship and political society, as the realm of governmentality hinges on the understanding of property and community. So civil society is the domain where the relation between its members is mediated by the notion of property. However given the failure of the modern nation-state to include the whole population in civil society, a fictive element has entered the politics. The state maintains the fictive all encompassing domain of civil society and thereby resorts to a dual strategy. On the one hand it adopts para-legal measures to modify, rearrange and supplement on the contingent terrain of political society the absence of the civil society; and on the other hand legal property relations continue to be protected in the domain of civil society where proper citizens have equal rights granted. So Chatterjee argues in political society a real struggle takes place rather than the formal distribution of citizens’ rights. He concludes that while the fictive ideal of civil society wields influence over political sphere; so does the real struggle in political society over rights and entitlements leading to significant changes in property rights or law, actually existing in modern state.

While clearly such interactions instituted in the political society brings forth considerable changes, question that needs to be asked, is whether that has the capacity to institute ‘new’ ethical space? For new ethical space we need a new ethical subject, capable to explore the outside of the power. But theoretically the regime of governmentality is exactly against such a change. It is an effort to fold back the outside in a continual movement to the inside. We must register that Chatterjee goes wrong in assuming that fictive ideal of civil society has no real content. Fictive ideal of the civil society is what constitutes the code of conduct which even political societies in their real, practical struggle must account for. Therefore in petition they have to argue that if for the purpose of extension of the city’s railway services and for improvement of the city it becomes absolutely necessary for them to shift out, they

request for an alternative settlement. Though they are not part of it, still they have to uphold the morality of civil society and respect what constitutes 'good civic behaviour'. Chatterjee notes this aspect of the politics of political society. But he fails to realise the implication of it in its entirety. The fictive ideal of civil society is real in a sense and it has direct bearing on the discourse of the politics of the political society as well. These two aspects of modern politics therefore are not two separate domains of politics coming in contact, overlapping in situations; but they are inseparable outside/inside of the power. In so far as this is true we must conclude that from the perspective of ethical subject, the politics of the political society never provides us with any 'new' order of being. It is mere modifications, interventions and changes in power relation having empty ethical substance within the politics of modern nation state. This perhaps also explains never ending, always and already temporary, contextual movement of the members of political societies from one political party to another; their inability to break the cycle and go beyond the liberal multi-party democratic frame work when 'things'⁸ are at stake.

Section-II

Re-interpreting Political Society:

State, Power and Writing; Universality, Particularity and Subject

One rationale of grounding the notion of political society in Foucault's governmentality, we believe, can be logically traced in considerations on legality and law. In the regime of governmentality, Foucault argues, law fades more and more into background and in the end incorporated in the ensemble of apparatuses like medicine, administration and so on. Law becomes just the norm for the normalizing societal existence of a population or 'we, the people'. Therefore it makes sense to us when Chatterjee comments exactly extra-legal parameters or terms on which associations emerging from political society and state and its apparatuses interact. The shift in terms of legality and legal bindings happens in a particular context of the development of nation-state. Foucault elaborates for us with several examples this

⁸ Using it in very Foucauldian sense

context which he attributes as bio-political regime of power. In *History of Sexuality* (1990) Foucault gives precise logic of 'fading away of law' when he writes, "...the existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population." This preoccupation with biological existence in a modern nation-state happens as the question of the security of nation and its people assumes a different dimension. Foucault forcibly shows in the bourgeois capitalistic system 'productivity' becomes the key factor in understanding state functioning. The development that follows thereafter that we have already investigated in above section. In this section, however our focus is on law. Law, as constitutional codified form or normative structure is clearly an important mediation between state and community. Law in its constitutional force appear to us as universally applicable in the civil society; while on the other hand governmentality on the paralegal terrain is exact practice of legal institutions on the basis of particular. The subsections that follow we first examine the first theme of law as mediation between state and community or as an axis of **the politics of the government and its apparatuses**.⁹ In the next section we take up the theme of universal and particular, which Chatterjee also pays attention to in his introductory theoretical remarks (Chatterjee 2004). The section will show that how the subject is inserted into the gap between universal and particular in recent political theories.

The politics of government and its apparatuses: Writing, Signature and Magical State

In a collection of articles by anthropologists coming and working in different parts of the world, titled *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (2004) a different perspective emerges that is of looking at the state from the margin. In various works of this volume, which are simultaneously result of a seminar workshop of these anthropologists, quite strikingly certain overlapping of themes happen which are present there in the work of Chatterjee as well. Let's take for example Veena Das's work. The boundary between legal and illegal seems as blurry as Chatterjee indicates. Moreover certain figures like Anadi Bera (in Chatterjee's example of railway colony the school teacher and who simultaneously assumes a leadership position in forming

⁹ It must be mentioned here that we stay with our initial analytical separation --- **Politics of the government and its apparatuses** and **Politics of the community or governed** --- in this section as well.

the association or leading different negotiation with the state) resembles that of Das's Nathu, who in a Delhi slum almost performs the same role. Otherwise also, Das writes, "...under the conditions in which residents of jhuggi jhopdi colonies live...negotiations become necessary to ensure economic survival. These sites, then, are particularly important for understanding how states manage populations at the margins, and also how those living in these margins navigate the gaps between laws and their implementation." (Das 2004: 241). Is not it the same site from which Chatterjee starts his analysis of political society? Therefore while there are considerable differences, it seems there are certainly common points in Chatterjee and Das (other anthropologists writing in this volume).

Magical state as the politics of government

Das in her own style takes up the issue of para-legality. While Chatterjee is interested in looking into the community; Das's stated aim is to read the state from this vantage point. She defines this legal/illegal as the margin from where it is possible to grasp everyday life of the state. She argues that such an understanding would take us away from overemphasising bureaucratic rational sovereign aspect of state; and focus on magical aspect of state's functioning. So for her state has two modes of being: rational and magical. Through local practices, state assumes a presence in the life of communities which is not that of legal-rational through its administration, policy initiatives etc., but of magic. Magic essentially does not signify here any form of trickery. She uses it in a certain specific senses. First, magic having a specific real effect on the community; second, non-transparent nature of the forces present in magic; third, close alignment of the magic with forces of danger because of the combination of obscurity and power; finally engaging in magic is to place oneself in a position of vulnerability.

Das gives us two example of such a magical functioning of the state. The first example comes in the form of a FIR that was lodged in a police station after 1984 riot came under control in West Delhi. And second one is a divorce agreement that was formalized on a court paper in a riot affected localities like Sultanpuri and Mongolpuri. In the FIR Das notes the very particular manner in which the riot has been described in an official document under the instruction of the police officers themselves. The FIR represents an official narrative about the riot. It was written that

victims were attacked as Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi “was cruelly murdered by her two security guards” and it enraged “the people in Delhi, the capital of India”. Das argues that the manner in which subjectivity was bestowed on the perpetrators of violence is interesting here. Though the complainants knew all through that it was not at all the case and it happened in quite orchestrated manner under the command of local politicians and officers in local police stations, it was too important for them to procure an official document for compensation. They therefore readily complied to attest this official version in their own reporting. And as it happened, Das elaborates, gurudwara committee asked for this very document from the claimants. Veena Das stresses on this point that while a community is in great animosity with the state, yet the very state’s document is what it acknowledges as valid. Similarly, she gives us another example. In the *Shikhi* community custom levirate marriage is prevalent. So in case of a deceased husband it is expected that widow will remarry his brother. However after the riot government announced compensation and gurudwara also declared a pension for widow. This opened up a source of independent income for the widows. In addition, from the perspective of the community it is believed that the rightful heir of a man’s property is his father, brother or even mother. Given this situation, Das cites from a divorced settlement on legal court paper where a divorce was granted to a widow on the condition that she divides the compensation equally with the natal family of the husband. These two contrasting examples Das argues show that how magical state functions. From the bureaucratic-rational practice the state has rules and regulations and community customs are made valid under the shadow of that structure as we see in the examples. It could be bent or rigidly followed. It is magical in its presence for the community life as it derives even its own existence from a particular reading of the state.

Writing and signature

The magical state, Das explains from the perspective of Derrida’s notion of writing and signature. What is Derrida’s notion of writing? First and foremost his notion of writing is a double break from traditional notion of ‘sign’ representing ideas for absent audience. So he argues that writing cannot be seen as a simple act of linguistic/grammatical phenomenon; what is true for writing is true for oral languages or even for that matter, experience (Derrida 1982). This is exactly why Veena Das can

employ this theoretical intervention directly, without much prelude. The second point is much more radical. He hypothesizes and proves logically that writing is not a special case of communication of ideas through 'signs'. What constitutes writing is an operative of absence.¹⁰ He elaborates that traditionally it is assumed that when one writes one extends communication for someone who is absent in that present. So it is 'powerful' 'intentional' 'extension' of the 'communication' in order to convey ideas to someone who is not present. Derrida argues with this presumption what one does is to assume a homogenous space extended far beyond the scope of present. As if the absence is just a presence delayed in time (with present context and intention). He is of the opinion that this delay --- or he prefers to call it difference--- is a break. It is an absence which has to be understood constituting the very structure of writing. For him structure of writing is its legibility and thereby iterability. He writes: "*A writing that was not structurally legible—iterable—beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing.*" (Derrida 1982: 315). It is almost a circular logic that an author's death (his intention and subjectivity) has no meaning for writing just because it is iterable even after his death. It is also similar for the readers. So it is quite meaningless to think that writing is addressed to an absent reader. Even if it was written with a reader in mind, it is a writing in so far as it exists legibly even after death of both the subjects. Writing as a mark however does not mean that it can function outside the context, which has no centre of anchoring in writing, as it thought to be. This is because any writing can be quoted, any unity of a writing can be put into quotation mark; or in other words any writing, for the very reason of legibility or iterability, can be cited absolutely in new and newer context. This as Derrida argues in the same logic which is true for signature also. Derrida elaborates, "*The effects of signature are the most ordinary thing in the world. The condition of possibility for these effects is simultaneously, once again, the condition of their impossibility, of the impossibility of their rigorous purity. In order to function, that is, in order to be legible, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to detach itself from the present and singular intention of its production. It is its sameness which, in altering its identity and singularity, divides the seal.*"(Derrida 1982: 328-9).

¹⁰ This point about 'absence' is very important from our perspective. In the last section we will see that many contemporary thinkers ground their notion of subject on this absence, as a pure negativity including Derrida, Foucault.

Law as writing, state as signature

Das, in citing Derrida, replaces writing/signature with the law/state. Therefore in this context law becomes something which can be cited, quoted or moulded from out of one context and applied in another. State's signature becomes a 'divided seal' to be appropriated by suitable 'source' as authority in one given context. How law becomes writing, Das elaborates, with two examples mentioned above. The community which is in a combative relationship with the state because it has failed to keep law and order in place (in fact legally elected or appointed representatives, with vested authority on them by law orchestrated the massacre) still recognizes the law by making a FIR (even professing state's narrative) as a valid proof to claim compensation or pension. This is nothing but locating law in different context. However more powerful example of such 'quotability' and 'iterability' of law is the second example. In Sultanpuri, street number A/4 the *pradhan* of the locality, who is a *Shikhi*, used to stay. A crowd gathered in front of his house and demanded the *pradhan* to come out. He came out with a gun. The SHO accompanying the crowd ordered him to keep the gun back as it was *illegal*. He also threatened other caste members who came out hearing the noise to return to their respective houses unless they wanted to be hauled off to police station. People went back and the *pradhan* came out this time with his two sons. The crowd started abusing him; and after sometime started beating him up. When the sons came to their father's rescue met the same fate. They were almost beaten to death and later burnt alive. And all through this incident, the SHO present there shouted out alerting other inhabitants that if they dared to resist that would be *against law*. Over here signature of the state on law is appropriated by the SHO, and that is why he could successfully quote law in the most unlawful circumstances with great effect. Quite understandingly this mesmerizing capacity of law --- which rendered even the inhabitants of the locality inactive while witnessing a simple act of terror and state-sponsored riot---- Das refers to, as Magical state.¹¹

¹¹ There are other innumerable examples of similar nature, she provides us with. She also argues that for such infelicitous application of law what the state resorts to is 'excuse'. This time she borrows this concept from Austin.

So to establish the connection with the politics of governmentalization and political society, what we must add that when a state employs certain policies targeting a certain population group who otherwise has no claim whatsoever, it does so through the gap of context and law as 'writing'. The railway colony settlement was an illegal cluster of population and civic bodies surrounding the colony did demand a removal of the colony for polluting a nearby lake. Still the state is able to govern these illegal settlers and administer legally planned policies targeting them as a community is because this citability of law in different contexts. Or in other words, the precise strategic interventions on the part of power and authority is this act of quoting, putting in quotation the unity that fits the context and thereafter sign it as an act of singularity or particularity.

The Politics of the community or governed: Universality, Particularity and Subject

In the above section, we have an interpretation of the state and law in the regime of governmentality. In the Foucauldian scheme, there is a connect between governmentalizing agencies and governmentalized subject --- both are sides of the same coin called governmentalization. Power/subject is one thematic order in above discussion that has come through Foucault's formulation of power as biopower. Das and Derrida explain another aspect of the regime of power i.e. law. However as we can see in their discussion yet another theme emerges. The 'citability' of universal legal order in precise particular context is what Derrida explains through his notion of signature (universal)/ writing (particular) and Das applies it in the concrete reality of everyday life of the state and community of subject. In fact in Chatterjee's notion of political society, such tense relationship between particular demand of the community and universal principle of modern nation-state is a recurring theme. In following paragraphs we take up the theme of universal/particular to discuss how politics of the governed can be reconceptualised to under this complementary relationship of power and community. We discuss Post-Marxist thinkers like Ernest Laclau and Moffat to throw light on to this aspect of politics in modern day society.

Universal and particular in the politics of governed

To begin with it is fruitful to go back to an originary moment of Chatterjee's argument which is premised on the theme of universal/particular. Chatterjee cites

Anderson to invite readers to dwell upon the concepts of 'bound' and 'unbound' serialities. For Anderson bound serialities are those where a sense of community is created through the governmental interventions and thereby rendering an individual as an integer. Either he/she is the part of the community as one member or *not at all*. He argues the politics of ethnic community directly feeds into such illusory community politics. In contrast a nationalism induced community does not turn a free individual into integers. It does not impose rigid arbitrary criteria on individual for membership. In the end from the universal ethical position, Anderson made his preference clear for unbound serialities, however Chatterjee simply asks that whether such 'unbound seriality' at all exist as a universal principle except in utopian space? It is quite clear that Chatterjee's position is quite opposite to Anderson, as he sees new ethical space in the politics of political society. Or in other words in postcolonial context he refuses to see the particular politics of community based on 'bound serialities' as narrow. His whole project is to show that how particular politics of political society shows heterogeneous and real character of modern nation-state in postcolonial context instead of the utopia of universal classical nationalism. The point, to be noted here is the context of particular/universal in which Chatterjee poses his debate. We will try to show in following passages that this contextualization has great theoretical implication (intended or unintended) in terms of explaining the politics of the governed. It again brings back the question of subject in a renewed fashion.

The 'internal transformation' that Chatterjee has talked about within the community and which we have tried interpreting as the process of subjectivation, can be re-interpreted in terms of relationship between universal and particular. The rail colony settlers through this 'internal transformation' try to attribute themselves with a universal community identity based on their particular identity. Now for post-Marxist theorist Ernest Laclau, "*the universal results from a constitutive split in which the negation of a particular identity transforms the identity into the symbol of identity and fullness as such*" (quoted in Zizek 2000: 176). It signifies that Universal only emerges within the Particular when a particular element starts operating only as the Universal. Or in other words a particular, splitting itself from the context, fills the void of absent Universal. This relationship as we can logically conclude is a contingent relationship between particular and universal. Therefore Laclau argues that Universal is always an empty signifier. Let's recall the petition that our railway colony settlers submit to the

railway authority in the wake of a real threat of an eviction. As we have seen, that how certain categories like landless wage labourers, refugees etc. which are results of the particular act of governmentality on the part of the state have been inscribed on the register of the community. In that petition only, it is also mentioned that how they have no place to go if they were evicted from their home. So this identity of having a home in the colony is just another particular identity for the inhabitants. But if we remember for the settlers this particular identity is what constitutes their universal identity as well i.e. the colony is, *as if* a big home. They are all part of a bigger family. Laclau would insist on this constitutive split i.e. colony being *as if* the bigger home. With this articulation, '*as if*' what happens a contingent relationship is established between the particular identity of 'they all being otherwise homeless people having a home there in the colony' and universal identity of the community as a big family. Chatterjee shows and we have quoted elsewhere that how they have repeatedly downplayed other particular identities and articulates this kinship tie, metaphor of family again and again.

This contingent relationship of the particular/universal however, Laclau points out, has other theoretical implication. If the split at the level of the particular is constitutive of the universal, Laclau argues we must see all the identity as differential identity. A community successfully projects itself as having identity as it manages to show its difference from others. But at this instance, he insists that we must pause and realize a paradox at the heart of the matter. If the difference is what constitutes that distinctiveness of the community of railway settlers as a population group; they subvert that constitutive difference at the level of 'internal transformation'. They slip into a logic of equivalence (see Žižek 2000; Laclau 1995) when they treat other differences at the community level (i.e. migrants from East Bengal, landless peasants; wage labourers) as being equal vis-à-vis the identity of 'living *as if* in a big family". The theoretical conclusion that follows is that the Universal is not only an empty signifier; it is precisely so because Universal always and already a 'constitutive impossibility' also. It can never be constituted in its 'fullness'. The effect of Universal being full is always ideological.

We must also recall in what context Chatterjee argues that politics of the political society is contingent and strategic. He shows that the community of the rail

way settlers uses their capacity as a vote-bank to increase their bargaining power. Erstwhile they were supporters of the CPI(M) leading the left front government in the state. They have used their allegiance to lobby in the corridor of power and protect themselves from getting evicted. When Chatterjee is writing they have shifted their allegiance to Trinamool Congress, the opposition party in the state and against a notification of eviction, their hope was Mamata Banerjee's return to the cabinet ministry of the Railways. In this juncture Chatterjee points out the contingent and strategic character of the politics. Here also Laclau's observation is important. The community is settled on a public property. Their occupation of the land is illegal. However they still demand for right to life, livelihood and shelters on their specific identity of 'having no where to go except the colony where they are living *as if* in a home'. However the moment they start strategising on the line of electoral politics and bargain with the resource of vote-bank, they again fall back onto the 'logic of equivalence'. With respect to being legal citizen having universal right to vote and choose their representative they subvert their specific claims and politics of 'political society' being different from civil society. Contingency and strategic nature of the politics of the governed must be understood from this perspective also.¹² The point over here is again the 'constitutive impossibility' of articulating the identity of the community in its fullness. The community can only represent itself through the production of empty signifier like the 'home'. But this representation is never complete. It is tenaciously poised in a hegemonic ideological game between particular and universal.

Through certain theoretical moves, Laclau will show us that the mode of politics has always been that of articulation. He will farther show that how politics has nothing to do with material reality as Marxists have us to believe. For him politics is just discursive articulation.¹³ It is also a discursive articulation as a struggle for hegemony where every competing group tries to put their particular choice into the

¹² Over here we also see that how 'fictive civil society' is not entirely fictive. Even for the political society that 'fiction' has real concrete consequences. We have made this point earlier in the context of subjectivation. This is another instance where we can emphasize on this point farther.

¹³ This fascinating theoretical articulation we cannot delve into in full detail except alluding to one or two concrete examples. Because it will take us farther from our present context. Laclau writing in the context of West certainly does not fit Chatterjee's analysis always. There are lot of divergences besides convergences, in which we are interested here.

position of the Universal. Politics is a discursive effort to fill the emptiness of the empty signifier, the Universal. He argues: "*Politics is possible because the constitutive impossibility of society can only represent itself through the production of empty signifiers*" (quoted in Žižek 2000: 176).

Universal/particular and the subject

In this politics of hegemony, the subject plays an important role. The subject is the very agent which sutures the Universal to a particular content. Subject is an agent for Laclau, in so far as, Žižek argues, subject emerges in a course of an act or decision. And most importantly, subject's decision or choice is not grounded on any pre-given factual order. Subject is neither an essentially foundational, ordinary figure or it is constitutive of social relations. To put it simply, it is the standard post-structural argument. To think that subject is a unity from which agency flows or authentic experience constituted is falling for the typical rationalism or empiricism. Quoting Foucault, Laclau argues that such a notion of subject reduces whole analytic field to certain oppositions: the empirical/the transcendental; the cogito/the unthought; withdrawal/return of the origin (Laclau & Mouffe: 1994). In Derrida, all the subjects, the author or readers, die sooner or later. What remains is only writing --- an empty universal which can be quoted, put into quotation. As an effect to this context emerges and so does, in relation to that movement, the subject. Laclau's conclusion therefore seems logical when he argues that there is no 'subject' in that authentic sense. It is like universal and as a universal it is an empty signifier --- a constitutive impossibility never reaching the 'fullness' of a unity. Subject for him is the subject position in discursive relations. That is the position from which the articulation for hegemony happens. However in that same breath he cautions that there is neither pre-given position on the basis of which articulation happens nor the position is closed. Like the discourse, the subject position is also overdetermined (Laclau & Mouffe 1994). Borrowing the term from Althusser (who borrowed it from Freud) what Laclau intends to signify is that the subject position is also a symbolic representation which can never be closed, but contingent on different and other subjective positions. This is because the subjective position partakes the discursive articulation which has the character of overdetermination. There is no one concrete closed subject positions; it is always open with the possibility of contingency (in other positions). Laclau and

Mouffe illustrate their argument with reference to Marxist notion of political subject (Laclau & Mouffe 1994: 118-121). It is a common agreement that in Marxism the subject is social classes, whose unity is constituted around interests determined by their relations to production. But how Marxism theoretically and politically counters dispersion and diversification of social classes? Laclau and Mouffe argue that there are two sets of response. One is elementary and inscribed in the logic: *“the workers’ political struggle and economic struggle are unified by the concrete social agent — the working class — which conducts them both.”* (Laclau & Mouffe 1994: 118). But there is a logical fallacy in this and a theoretical confusion. They argue that ‘working class’ as a category has been used here in two different senses. One is in terms of relations of production; second, to name an agent who occupies the position. Under the naming therefore you group a cluster of social classes who otherwise don’t qualify as ‘working class’. If this is the empirical response to the dispersion and diversification of the social classes, theoretically the answer comes through a split through the notion of false consciousness. That is such diversification exists because of the fact that social classes especially workers have not been able to correctly identify their position vis-à-vis relations of production. So the unity is conceived to be a future unity. This unity manifests through representation. Vanguard represents the real workers while working in the split between the workers and their real objective condition. Now Laclau and Mouffe argue that representation is a fiction. They write, *“every relation of representation is founded on a fiction: that of the presence at a certain level of something which, strictly speaking, is absent from it.”* (Laclau & Mouffe 1994: 119). This enigmatic assertion however is simple. The vanguard is supposed to represent the working class and their interest; but vanguard precisely needs to do so because a working class, aware of their interests, does not exist. So a representative, as a subject always represents an absence. They however quickly point out that fictional character of representation does not stop it organizing social relations. Therefore according to them we reach a situation where political struggle is a game whose outcome can never be predetermined. One possibility could be, as a small section of Marxists do, to claim that vanguard does not represent anybody. It represents working class’ historical interests. Therefore they constitute a single discourse on a same plane. However what in reality happens in any political struggle, be it Marxism or others, an effort is made to win the allegiance of a concrete social

agent to their supposed historical interests. This puts representative and represented on two different planes and in two different discourses. However Laclau and Mouffe insist that it should not be seen that as if Marxists' argument of economy determining politics is wrong and there is a complete separation. However given that overdetermined character of reality where on a symbolical plane politics as a sphere might spill over to economy and vice versa, a third way --- away from complete determination and necessity (Marxism) and the complete separation --- must be formulated. And they argue, "*There is a different way which ...is in any case a third way. The 'winning over of agents to their historical interests' is, quite simply, an articulatory practice which constructs a discourse wherein the concrete demands of a group — the industrial workers — are conceived as steps towards a total liberation involving the overcoming of capitalism.*" (Laclau & Mouffe 1994: 120). So return to our previous argument with reference to this specific discourse the subject position of the vanguard and working class can be conceived. They are the one who make their choices through articulation however again in a non-determined manner within the game of struggle for hegemony.

To conclude this discussion let us go back to the incipient moment of political society which till now we have kept in considerable vagueness. According to Chatterjee, before the association (*Jan Kalyan Samiti*) came into existence, such bargaining and lobbying with the seat of power used to be successfully conducted under the leadership of one or two influential persons. They being close to ruling parties like CPI(M) and wielding considerable influence in the area did such mediation. However Chatterjee refuses to see that process as a formation of the political society. For him political society's originary moments are coincidental with association coming into being (Chatterjee 2004). Is not it the fact that besides 'internal transformation' of the inhabitants as a community, Chatterjee's preoccupation also lies with representation? Is not it the fact that his chief argument is that classical civic bodies are not only mode of representation in terms of mediation between state and community; and that political society must be seen as a sphere where alternative representation taking place? In that case we must see the association as a form of subject position representing the community. We must understand their articulation, say for example in the petition, as political struggle *like that of*, for hegemony. And we must understand in so far as 'constitutive impossibility' resides at the heart of

representation, subject position and articulated discourse of the distinct community identity (the politics of the governed) will be forever contingent and strategic. In search of new, it is forever condemned into a vicious cycle of struggles for hegemony between competing parliamentary parties.

Section-III

Towards a conclusion: *the state of exception*

Derrida writes, "*Deconstruction does not consist in passing from one concept to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order, as well as the non-conceptual order with which the conceptual order is articulated.*" (Derrida 1982: 329). Over here what we have tried to do is exactly what Derrida suggests as deconstruction. Political society as a concept is a powerful tool to describe and analyse today's Indian reality. However what we have is to lay open certain absences which are there inside the conceptual framework of the political society. We have stayed close to Chatterjee initially following him faithfully on his formulation of the political society as a sphere of politics gradually unfolding in the postcolonial situation of India and elsewhere as an effect of the regime of governmentality. However a detailed analysis of the concept 'governmentality' has exhibited some sort of obscurity around crucial concepts like subject and subjectivation. Further keeping Chatterjee's notion of political society and governmentality in focus we have moved more and more towards the margin and tried exploring other conceptual and nonconceptual order in which political society should be read. Two observations, though already mentioned in the above sections, must be stressed once more. First, the concept of subject has come to occupy a position of more and more important axis of analysis. However all these thinkers Foucault, Derrida, Laclau --- who could be very broadly thought to be representatives of discursive analysis --- have cautioned us against a notion of subject which is rooted in unity, intention, agency, authentic experiences etc. Subject in their writing has come to represent a more and more decentred position. Like state as a sovereign, the subject has been displaced off their privileged position. Secondly, quite an extension of this argument, in a classic move of post-structural argument they have also displaced concepts like transcendence, truth; in that place they have brought in contingency, strategy and politics or game of truth. Our effort thereby has been of an insistence that though Chatterjee tries to

capture a new ethical possibility of politics, the theoretical trajectory he follows and burden he carries has ultimately let him down. We have tried to highlight with several practical instances that how his notion of political society ceases to explore any new 'order of being',¹⁴.

If this has been our discursive, deconstructive practice, let us now move towards material reality. In a brief fashion let's investigate certain events in Indian politics, as an expression of power and resistance to it in order to show that how they lie outside the purview of state/civil society and most importantly state/political society framework. Or in other words our contention is that the notion of political society does capture real politics unfolding in spaces like India; however it is truly 'popular' politics as Chatterjee argues. It does not exhaust the possibility of politics.

The condition that prevails in this sphere of politics, that we are hitherto going to talk about, is that of exception. It is a politics in a situation where 'politics' itself is "out of joint". Up till now all the theories that we have analysed work within a framework of liberal bourgeois democracy. They flow from a space where law is present in its constitutional framework. And precisely the story unfolds more to show that 'legality' 'constitutionality' is not the end of the story. There is more to it. Political society critiques bourgeois democratic model of governance to show that in a nation state, politics can be thought to be beyond recognised fold of civil society. However, again to stress the point, the constitutional framework remains; it does not go away as if a fiction. But what happens when this system in itself is contested? What sort of mediation it acquires when constitutionality in itself is questioned in a resistance?¹⁵ While we will devote a whole chapter on a practical example of such politics (i.e. the resistance of adivasis in Lalgarh and Maoist movement in India in that context), for now let's probe this condition of exception and some practical experience other than Maoist movement in general.

¹⁴ A notion which I am borrowing from Alain Badiou to denote transcendence, order of truth etc. all put together.

¹⁵ Undeniably in the form of Naxalbari, Srikakulam and now Lalgarh, Narayanpatna, whole central India, Maoist movement has history of such politics.

Foucault, in his theoretical endeavour hints something but never pays attention to it adequately is the condition of 'exception'. He is aware that in the exceptional situation i.e. a situation where the state, as the sovereign has exhausted all limits of the calculation of cost/benefit would more likely employ its right over death 'as the last resort' to preserve the people (Foucault 1990). This situation of exception, where the state asserts its power over life and death is a curious case. It borders the limit of governmentality. Agamben shows that following the logic of 'exception' biopolitics is part of western politics right from its inception and so is law, a part of modern regime of power. For Agamben the state of exception is an anomic space (Agamben 1998). It is precisely so, because it is a zone of indistinction. The zone of indistinction comes about in a highly constitutional liberal democracy, because of the hidden logic of the sovereignty at play. Agamben shows through an exquisite analysis that the logic of sovereignty is premised on the figure of *Homo Sacer* (*sacred body who can be killed but cannot be executed; vis-à-vis whom each and everybody is sovereign*) --- a figure which is in a zone of indistinction as it is included in the society through an act of exclusion. Following the same logic of homology Agamben argues that the state of exception in a sense that through law it is announced to be a lawless state --- a space where force of law is in place but without a law, for anybody to capture. And sovereign is the one who decides on this state of exception. In our liberal democracy, modern nation-state is sovereign as it has the legal right to suspend law. This opening up of a conceptual space populated by actors like the sovereign state (following Agamben with respect to the state having right over death, each one of us is *Homo Sacer*), a population who can be killed but cannot be executed (a population who is threat to security therefore exposed to forces of the state like police, military, endowed with force of law) signals a relationship between the state sovereign and community, which goes beyond the framework of political society. Let's take an example of the state and community relationship which Chatterjee himself uses i.e. of Dalit Community. In setting up why he thinks it is illegitimate to uphold universal ideals of nationalism without recognizing importance of politics spawning out of governmentalization of the state and society, he uses an example from his personal life. In a seminar contrary to liberal and left intellectuals' pessimistic view on history of Indian nation-state, Chatterjee writes about a Dalit activist's response, "As far as he could see, the latter half of the twentieth century had been the brightest period in the

entire history of the Dalits, since they had got rid of the worst forms of untouchability, mobilized themselves politically as a community, and were now making strategic alliances with other oppressed groups in order to get a share of governmental power. All this could happen because the condition of mass democracy had thrown open the bastions of caste privilege to attack from the representatives of oppressed groups organized into electoral majorities.” (Chatterjee2004). While we are not contradicting this claim, at the same time we claim it is an incomplete story. Thousands of Dalits will not talk in the same manner as Chatterjee’s Dalit activist does. A case in hand is Khairlanji. Without getting into details, which is more or less known because of media and post-Khairlanji agitation, we can firmly claim that Chatterjee’s ‘condition of mass democracy’ and governmentalization completely loses meaning given the gruesome manner in which *Bhootmange* of Khairlanji was killed. If anything describes the prevailing condition it is ‘state of nature’, where everybody is a *Homo Sacer* to everyone and everybody is sovereign in relation to other. What *Bhootmange* family was reduced to is to the figure of *Homo Sacer* vis-à-vis whom all (read upper caste) were sovereign as they could kill them without facing any *real* threat of punishment. Teltumbde describes their situation through a powerful rhetorical intervention, “All four lay helpless as anyone and everyone did whatever they wanted to them.” (Teltumbde 2010; 101). What is interesting is what happened after that. The Dalit community of Maharashtra did consolidate themselves and took streets to protest against the complicit role of the state in this whole incident and demanding punishment of the culprit. An association, ‘*Nished Samitis*’ emerged quite spontaneously with women and youth in the lead. About the community of protesters, Teltumbde writes, “These were genuine protesters who did not have the usual support system that established political parties have.” (Teltumbde 2010;117). State’s response to this community of protesters was of heavy police repression. Another interesting feature of *Nished Samitis* was its deliberate decision to keep established Dalit leaders or political parties away from the platform. In brief, the community of protesters, agitated section of Dalit community and state’s relation over here is not that of political society. *Nished Samitis* as Teltumbde informs us used the platform to interact with authority and make necessary arrangements for rallies and protests but never was this platform used for negotiation. Moreover police as an apparatus of state in this case came down heavily. The police, as a representative of sovereign authority

and protesters' interaction over here is anything but that of bargaining, governmentality or even disciplining; it is quite explicitly a relationship premised on the exact nature of sovereign who has the right over life and death, and legal apparatus armed with legitimate use of violence.

These sorts of associations are not isolated phenomena in recent political scenario under the purview of Indian state. We can take the example of *Majlis-E-Mashawarat*, a platform of the protesters formed after rape and killing of two women in Shopian in Kashmir, led the masses for almost 47 days of complete shut down of the town and the parts of valley. It was a non-political formation which even functioned as state's substitute during this period, distributing rations for shop-owners and daily wage earners, for example (Kak 2010). Again the striking similarity that we must mark is its professed non-political character. One might point out that these are all temporary associations not having permanence of associations that political society has. But case of Lalgarh, in West Bengal in that case definitely shows that this does not hold true. More and more political confrontation is getting formalized along this line. People's Committee against Police Atrocities (PCPA) as a platform in its very ideology beyond any ideology of established parliamentary political parties. It is leading a struggle now almost for two years whereby it has successfully driven out state from its territory. In association with CPI (Maoist), a non-parliamentary radical left organization which believes in the armed overthrowing of the state, PCPA has substituted state in this region, locally referred to as Jungle Mahal (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2008, Giri 2009). We will turn to the last example, as we have said, in greater detail later. However for now what suffices is to argue that condition of exceptionality that resides at the heart of governmentality is opening up a new horizon of state/community relationship on the axis of power and resisting subject. The figure most interesting here is that of 'homo sacer'. But could this be thought of as an alternative mode of subjectivity which transcends the existing order? Could this be seen as the fulcrum of politics of the subject which indicates a newer form of state/community relationship? All these imply a need to go back to classical Marxism. Such a theoretical tour becomes necessary for two reasons: first, under the headings of exception or transcendence what we are discussing here is the possibility of politics -- - revolutionary in potential; second, on the practical ground the van guard of Lalgarh movement is CPI(Maoist) whose ideological commitment lies with revolutionary

Marxism. In the next chapter we turn to Marxism and question of subjectivity, a necessary discussion whose issues and complexity Laclau has already provided us with in his analysis of vanguard as representation, social class as subject, historical class interest as class consciousness and false consciousness.

Chapter 2

Theorising Emergence of Subject (I): Exception, Community and Subjectivity

This chapter is an attempt to answer the second research question: **How would we conceptualize the emergence of subject, above primordial identities in relation to the state and its apparatuses? In other words, how could the notion of subject and that of community be formulated simultaneously, otherwise differentiated on the axes of gender, class, caste or ethnicity?**

In the preceding chapter, we have seen political society in understanding power and resistance limits itself to popular politics beyond civil society. It captures certain political moments brilliantly, however in its search for a subject position characterised by 'new ethics' and 'new political justice', it falls short. The corresponding subject position that emerges is that of a result of subjectivation (in Foucauldian sense of the term), a mirror image, an interiorization of power itself. Moreover with respect to power and resistance to it, it leaves aside the question of state of exception. However we have already seen in Indian politics, power and resistance are increasingly getting manifested in the form of originary bond of sovereign power and bare life. Therefore in discussing the emergence of subject, we take our point of departure Agamben's notion of the state of exception as paradigm of government. But as in the introduction we proposed, we subsequently interrogate this concept from the perspective of the subject, not sovereign as Agamben does. Walter Benjamin's theses on Philosophy over here functions as a crucial link where he establishes a connection between Marxism and state of exception. Following this the chapter goes on to show how Marxist emancipatory politics articulates a theory of exception, however from the perspective of the proletariat.¹ Lenin's work, *State and*

¹ When we use the term proletariat we must be aware of the complexities of its meaning. Though in classical Marxism proletariat signifies working class in industrialized countries; with spreading of Marxism-Leninism in the form of Maoism in China, revolutionary movements in Latin America like

Revolution (1977) is used as the principal point of departure to flesh out Marxist notions of various concepts like state, proletariat, class, class consciousness and the nature of their relationship for state/community mediation. Louis Althusser and George Lukacs are the other two Marxist thinkers who are used in order to show how Marxism also has a notion of 'state of exception' from the perspective of the proletariat in articulating a theory of subject and its relationship with state-power, law, universal/particular condition of existence (themes that have been discussed in the previous chapter). At that juncture we see proletariat emerges in our discussion with its imputed class consciousness as a political subject in classical Marxists writings. Hence in the second section class consciousness as proletariat political subjectivity and its development within working class inside capitalist society will be discussed. Basing our arguments on Lukacs' celebrated account of history and class consciousness, we try to show how revolutionary subjectivity becomes the very condition of political relationship between state and community (i.e. in the sense of proletariat as a class) in Marxism. In doing so, we again try to allude to the fact that how the characteristic features of 'state of exception' are present in the articulation of proletariat revolutionary subjectivity as well. In the third and last section, with the previous analyses of 'state of exception' and specific Marxist theory of proletariat class consciousness as revolutionary (political) subjectivity we try to develop a general theory of subject and subjectivity, as a condition of politics by grounding it in Indian context. Developing our theses on the basis of Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983), a celebrated work from early subaltern school, we try to show how the subject emerges in the context of a community solidarity above existing differences of caste, gender, ethnicity. We try to approach this work with three inter-related viewpoints. First, we try to re-read the text and its material on the basis of the proposed general thesis on subject and subjectivity. Second, such an attempt is possible precisely because of Guha's conclusion in the text. He argues that the subjectivity of peasantry is a crucial sociological concept to rewrite the history of colonial insurgencies elaborating the relationship between state and community. His argument, which we will try to show in the next chapter still being pertinent, paves the way for us to see how community transforms itself into a

Cuban revolution, there are theoretical articulations which have gone onto include various classes as revolutionary proletariat beyond working class as well.

political class (in rudimentary sense) on the basis of subjectivity, which in turn defines their relationship with the state. Third, to conclude we try to read this work in a counter-posing manner vis-à-vis Chatterjee's notion of political society in the broader framework of Subaltern Studies and its criticisms as a school of historiography.

Section-I

Exception as a condition of Politics

Paradigm of Government; Politics of the Proletariat

Politics of the Sovereign: State of exception as paradigm of government

The State of exception is an originary structure through which law encompasses living beings by means of its own suspension. It also signifies the biopolitical aspect of the modern power regime alluding to an intricate relationship between law and the living beings in the originary structure of sovereignty. Agamben uses the "military order" issued by the president of United States on November 13, 2001 as an example to show how the state of exception works through in a biopolitical regime. The order authorized the 'indefinite detention' and trial by 'military commissions' of non-citizens suspected to have terrorist links (Agamben 2005: 3). Bush's order radically omits any legal status of the individual, reducing a person to a legally unnameable and unclassifiable being. These people suspected to be terrorists and detained for an indefinite period are subjected to *de facto* rule and hence are neither persons nor prisoners. Their status can only be compared with that of Jews in Nazi camp, who along with their citizenship had lost every legal marker of identity. Deliberating on the question of the camp, Agamben argues that the camp is a space where state of exception is turned into a rule (Agamben 2000). He insists that as long as any juridico-political order resembles the structure of the camp, the relationship between the state and that specific population in question is equivalent to the camp.

Agamben further argues that the modern nation-state has moved into the paradigm of government where the state of exception is the permanent rule. Political system of the modern nation state is founded on the functional axes of territoriality, determinate order (the state) which, is mediated by the third factor of inscription of

life (nation or birth). However with biopolitics, as we have already seen, the state assumes the full responsibility of the management of the biological life of the nation. So in modernity a rupture happens with respect to the mediator that is, the birth or inscription of life. Agamben shows how the camp was invented in Nazi Germany along with new laws on citizenship and denationalization of citizens, a process which occurred in other European states also. Therefore to counter a situation in modern politics, where a rupture is there between inscription of birth in order, camp or state of exception became new territoriality to arrange naked lives that cannot be inscribed in the order. Or to put it simply, Jews by their origin of birth could not be accommodated in the territory of Germany which was inscribed in the order of Nazi state. Therefore a new territoriality is invented in the form of the camp. The Jews were captured however outside (Jews were inscribed in the order by an act of exclusion).² The relationship between Jews as a community and the Nazi state perfectly resembles the originary moment of sovereignty, premised on the authentic political aspect of naked life. The hidden logic of this contiguity between state of exception and sovereignty premised on the political relationship of naked life further gets explored as Agamben writes in the context of President Bush,

“President Bush’s decision to refer to himself constantly as the “Commander in Chief of the Army” after September 11, 2001, must be considered in the context of this presidential claim to sovereign powers in emergency situations. If, as we have seen, the assumption of this title entails a direct reference to the state of exception, then Bush is attempting to produce a situation in which the emergency becomes the rule and the very distinction between peace and war (and between foreign and civil war) becomes impossible.” (Agamben 2005: 22).

In the state of exception, as we have already seen, the state reduces anybody or everybody, qualified as suspected terrorists to the level of naked life. Therefore there remains no distinction between citizens and non-citizens, anybody who is potentially suspected to be a terrorist (which means in possibility everybody) can be detained, in a situation which obliterates any distinction between civil war and foreign war. This indistinction is the chief characteristic of the state of exception. The

² Over here Agamben alludes us to the etymological origin of the word exception. It means captured outside (ex-capere). So what is being excluded is captured outside (Agamben 2000: 39).

blurring of inside/outside is the essence of the state of exception as a paradigm of government. "...*(T)he state of exception is neither external nor internal to the juridical order, and problem of defining it concerns precisely a threshold, or a zone of indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other.*" (Agamben 2005: 23). So how do we define the state of exception?

A recurrent opinion tries to ground the theory of the state of exception to the theory of necessity. The argument echoes Latin adage --- *Necessity has no law*. Agamben puts this argument, flowing from the adage, to rigorous scrutiny. He shows that the adage has been interpreted in two opposing ways: 'necessity does not recognize any law' and 'necessity creates its own law'. And in doing so the proponents have reduced structure and meaning of the state of exception to a theory of the necessity. Agamben argues that the adage was formulated in Gratian's *Decretum* and it appears in the text twice. In the first context, it is argued that "*many things are done against the rule out of necessity or for whatever other cause*" (Quoted in Agamben 2005: 24). A preliminary glance makes it seem that necessity is attributed with the power to make illicit licit. This is because it is argued that something which is done out of necessity is licit, since whatever is illicit in the eyes of the law, necessity makes it appear to be licit. However Agamben disputes this simple logical conclusion and draws our attention to the second context in which the adage has been repeated in the aforementioned text. This is in the context of listening and singing of the mass, Gratian notes that it's preferable to avoid singing and listening to the mass in a place where celebration of such is not permissible, unless and until it is celebrated out of supreme necessity. Agamben believes in the light of this example, necessity appears less to be a factor rendering illicit into licit, rather more to be a justification for a specific case of transgression. He quotes from *Summa theologiae*, by Thomas to drive home the point. Latter writes,

"If observing letter of the law does not entail an immediate danger that must be dealt with at once, it is not in the power of any man to interpret what is of use or of harm to the city; this can be done only by the sovereign who, in case of this sort, has the authority to grant dispensations from the law. If there is, however, a sudden danger, regarding which there is no time for recourse to a higher authority, the very necessity

carries a dispensation with it, for necessity is not subject to the law" (quoted in Agamben 2005: 25).

This conclusively proves that instead of considering necessity as a power to determine licit/illicit; theory of necessity is none other than theory of exception whereby a particular case is exempted from the law. So necessity is not a source of law nor does it have the power to suspend the law. All it does is to provide a ground for releasing a particular case from literal application of the universal norm. If necessity provides such a ground for exemption that is because law is binding only in the condition that it is ordained for common well being of men. In particular case where law finds no application with respect to this ultimate goal i.e. common well being, exception can be made. This is the proper structure of necessity and its applicability as exception in the medieval time. Agamben argues that for medieval world, necessity is just a derivative of the common well-being of men; necessity is not included in the medieval juridical order. *"The idea that a suspension of law may be necessary for the common good is foreign to the medieval world"* (Agamben 2005: 26). Only in the modern times, the state of necessity has come to be included within juridical order. It is no longer a commonly held belief that necessity just defines the situation where law loses its applicability. The principle is rather reversed and in practice, it is considered that necessity itself constitutes the ultimate ground and source of law. Santi Romano writes, *"...It can be said that necessity is the first and originary source of all law, such that by comparison the others are to be considered somehow derivative...And it is to necessity that the origin and legitimation of the legal institution par excellence, namely, the state, and its constitutional order in general must be traced back..."* (quoted in Agamben 2005: 27, *emphasis added*). So this is the figure of necessity in modern times. The state of exception as an "illegal" (that is by legal order not permissible) but perfectly "juridical and constitutional" measure (that is it being the very source or origin of law). It signifies that in case of revolution where a constitutional order is threatened to be suspended or the state of exception where sovereign itself is the source of suspension, the state of necessity appears to be an uncertain zone blurred between legality and illegality. A threshold is inserted where law and fact also indistinctly merge, when one gets transformed as the other. In other words a short-circuit happens between the particular and the universal. While on

the one hand universal (law) is suspended due to a particular instance (fact) and on the other hand such particular suspension is upheld as having an universal validity.

Agamben however tries to show that the reduction of the state of exception to the state of necessity runs up against serious aporias. First, the theory of necessity overlooks the fact that necessity is not an objective condition. It is a matter of pure decision that when and how one considers one particular case to be worthy of exception on the ground of necessity. The situation of exception appears to be objective only when one subjective decision has been taken on the ground of necessity by the authority. Second, the subjective decision that has been taken in theory is a decision on zone of uncertainty and undecidability between fact and law. Noting these serious short comings, Agamben turns towards a rigorous effort on the part of Carl Schmitt to theorise the state of exception in books like *Dictatorship* and *Political Theology*.

For Schmitt, Agamben argues, the site of the state of exception is presented through the figure of dictatorship.³ In doing so what he does is to displace the question of the state of exception from the realm of necessity to sovereignty. For Schmitt there are two forms of dictatorship: commissarial dictatorship and sovereign dictatorship. Commissarial dictator is the one who wants to preserve and protect the existing constitution through the declaration of the state of exception; and sovereign dictator's aim is to put an existing constitution itself in question. However in the end both of them are the figure of sovereign. Both retain some relationship with the order (in juridical sense); it is not total chaos in the state of exception. Agamben notes this essential relationship, between dictatorship and order, is a paradoxical formulation. This is because dictatorship as a formulation is a figure which exists outside the juridical order; however when Schmitt insists on an existing relationship between dictatorship and juridical order, he is arguing in favour of inscribing the figure of dictator, which is by definition outside.

³ This identification of the figure of the state of exception with the figure of sovereign dictatorship is crucial. We must remember Marx's prophetic prescription against capitalist evil is 'dictatorship' of the proletariat. We will try to show in following section that it is not mere coincidence; but it is quite instructive.

This theoretical paradox can be retained because of the practice of the state of exception in both forms of dictatorship. Commissarial dictatorship suspends the concrete constitution in order to protect the constitutional order. So the state of exception is the creation of a state of affair where law is suspended precisely to enable the condition of realization of it. Or in other words while the commissarial dictator suspends application of the constitution, he/she retains his/her relation with juridical order in the shape of retaining the force of constitution. Theoretically commissarial dictatorship as a state of exception emerges out of the gap between constitution as a norm and constitution as techno-practical rules governing its realization. On the contrary, sovereign dictatorship is not limited to suspending an existing constitution on the basis of right conferred on the sovereign. Its specific aim is to create a situation through the state of exception whereby a new constitution can be in order. The operator which allows in the case of sovereign dictatorship to anchor state of exception in juridical order is the distinction between constituent power and constituted power. Constituent power over here acts as force of the constitution and moreover it is connected to every existing constitution in such a manner that it appears to be the founding power.

Agamben emphasizing once more on the fact that theory of exception has to be seen as the theory of sovereignty (he who decides on the state of exception) writes, *"the state of exception separates the norm from its application in order to make its application possible. It introduces a zone of anomie into the law in order to make the effective regulation of the real possible."* (Agamben 2005: 36).

Agamben towards the conclusion refers to a distinction that Derrida makes in discussing law. It is a separation between 'law' and 'force of law'. Agamben argues that this distinction is decisive in so far as the technical sense that 'force of law' is suggestive of, pertains to decrees that executive power is authorized with. Therefore force of law in technical terms denotes a separation between norm and its applicability. The decrees, provisions, measures which are not formally law nevertheless assume the status of law by virtue of the 'force' of law. This separation (not necessity), according to Agamben, is the chief character of 'state of exception' as a paradigm of governance. It is an anomie where 'state of law' is in force but unapplied, and on the other hand, acts which do not have the value of law acquiring

its force. The state of exception is an indeterminable zone because “*force of law floats as an indeterminate element that can be claimed both by the state authority (which acts as a commissarial dictatorship) and by a revolutionary organization (which acts as a sovereign dictatorship).*” (Agamben 2005: 39).

The structure of exception, corresponding to the figure of sovereign is the political threshold of western politics around which all forms of communal life (state and community relationship) is premised on at this present juncture. This is also the originary moment of politics. From this flows Agamben’s critique of the Marxist theory of state. He argues that keeping aside the question of sovereignty and stressing on the question of ‘who within political order is invested with power’, Marxism has ended up identifying itself with the enemy. Agamben argues that the Marxists miss out on the transitional phase of dictatorship of proletariat as the state of exception (Agamben 1998).

Politics of the Oppressed: the State of exception and proletariat

In this section, going contrary to Agamben’s observation that Marxism does not pay sufficient attention to the theory of state, we will try to show that the politics of the oppressed and proletariat emerging as the conscious agent of history is precisely hinged on the structure of the state of exception. Or in other words, the question of agency, consciousness, based on the question of proletariat as political subject, is an ontological condition characterised by separation and indistinction (two chief structural features of the state of exception).⁴

The state of exception and Marxism

In conceptualizing the concept of history from a Marxist perspective, Walter Benjamin (1982), echoing Agamben, proposes a philosophical premise, “*the tradition*

⁴ This point of separation and indistinction cannot be made without one qualification. Separation and indistinction (blurring) happens in a state of exception as a simultaneous process. There is no chronological or temporal order. Force of law and law, which otherwise appear in an unity finds a separation only in state of exception however to again get blurred in the figures of sovereign. Another good example perhaps is the Marxist notion of praxis. Praxis as a concept definitely presumes, on a theoretical level, a separation between theory and practice as it exists in reality; while simultaneously blurring it in its own application. So in the concept of praxis, separation of theory and practice is simultaneously blurred. So in the process whenever we would be talking about separation and indistinction in Marxist theory (a radically different context from Agamben) this point must not lose our attention.

of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule" (pp. 392). He elaborates his thesis from the vantage point of the history and historian. He argues at the same time that the subject of history is struggling, oppressed class itself who wages the war against the exploiting classes for liberation of all downtrodden. His theses on the concept of history is indeed philosophical and come through a literary flourish, but at the same time he characterizes the role of proletariat and oppressed classes as a subject of history which we will try to develop in following paragraphs. He gives us indications that how the state of exception lies at the heart of the politics of oppressed as a revolutionary subject. According to him, politics of the oppressed is revolutionary as it stands at the cross roads of history. It tries to explode the continuum of history and thereby creating rupture which turns all the past time into now-time. He is of the opinion that the politics of the oppressed is always meant to be exceptional precisely because of its position in the history. Oppressed as a class is meant to create a new calendar of a new time, however such an endeavour cannot be dissociated from the past, which of course does not belong to the oppressed. The past as it exists is the past of victorious exploiting classes. In that sense, the past belongs to the victorious exploiting classes not to their brutalised ancestors. On the other hand the future going to belong to their 'future grand children' so long as they emerge as victorious today. Therefore today's oppressed class, according to him find itself as historical subject. Who belongs to neither to the 'past of defeats' nor to the 'future of victory', however as a connecting point today's oppressed class must turn towards the past and achieve the victory for future. The figure of the oppressed therefore quite understandably is exceptional; the task of the oppressed is exceptional too. They are always and already historical subject precisely because they are in 'state of emergency' as a rule.

Following Agamben's analysis of the state of exception and Benjamin's innovative philosophical thesis, what we try doing in the following paragraph is to read the state of exception as a mark of the politics of the oppressed, instead of only sovereign. The theorisation of the state (or being conscious of why and how the state exists from the point view of the proletariat, the oppressed class), which is the basic stepping stone of the politics of oppressed should be read from the vantage of the proletariat as Marxism already does; but it should also be read from the point of view of the proletariat, who is in 'a state of emergency' as a class of oppressed.

What is the Marxist theory of the state?

To begin with let's pose the question what is the theory of state in Marxism? A good point of departure is Lenin's classic work, *The State and Revolution* (1977).⁵ Lenin argues that in Marxism the state cannot be seen to be as an institution imposed on society. It emerges from the society through the dynamics of the society itself. So the state as an institution is an outcome of historical processes. "*The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled.*" (Lenin 1977: 266). Or in other words the state as an institution arises at a crucial juncture where class struggle between existing exploitative class and exploited class reaches a situation from where reconciliation is not possible. So irreconcilability of the antagonism and the state are complementary conditions. The state exists insofar as class antagonism is irreconcilable and the existence of the state itself proves that class antagonism exists. The last argument is crucial in the context of revolutionary Marxism. Lenin insists, contrary to 'opportunists' that abovementioned statement can never be seen in isolation. True Marxism can never see the state as a reconciliatory mechanism. This is because Marx painstakingly has proved that the state is always an instrument in the hands of ruling class. What it facilitates is sitting over the dispute and see to it that verdict is always in favour of the ruling class. Through legal means what it ensures is the oppression of exploited classes by the exploiting classes. So the state is a moderator who is theoretically and practically always and already biased. The state is not a site of mediation of the class conflict. The state, as a dictatorship of ruling bourgeois class in a capitalist society for example, is a moderating organ which will call for its dissolution if it is to accommodate (or reconcile) its antipode.

There is another aspect to the state as well. It is seemingly above the society moderating the society in some sort of alienation. This is precisely why the state at the first glance appears always to common sense knowledge as something from without. Engels writes,

⁵ Marx and Engels have never wholly devoted their attention to the question of the state or even for that matter class struggle (Lukacs 1971). In texts like *Communist Manifesto*, *Eighteenth Brumaire* and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* we have substantial however dispersed comments. Lenin's (1977) work in that respect is a comprehensive point of entry with extensive quotes from these texts and his own Marxist-dialectical interpretation.

“...in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interest might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above the society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of “order”; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.” (quoted in Lenin 1977: 266).

In the context of the state being an alienating force, for the first time Lenin articulates the relationship between the oppressed masses and the state as it does exist in bourgeois society. Indicating towards the alienation that the state impinges into society, he argues that the relationship between the state and the oppressed class is nothing but that of antagonism. The very existence of the state calls forth a violent revolution and also destruction of the state apparatuses.

This conclusion is drawn from the fact that the state is endowed with the public power. Under the rubric of public power, contrary to “self-acting armed organization” highly specialized, complex institutions like army and other material adjuncts, coercive institutions like prison are grouped. Lenin argues following Marx and Engels because of the condition of necessity that irreconcilable class antagonism leads to. The irreconcilably antagonistic classes, left with arms that would inevitably lead to a violent armed struggle leading to a disorder for the capitalist system. This perhaps explains why Weber in defining state stresses on the “monopoly of violence” which is legally legitimate. This also explains why the state and authorities endowed with power assume a position above society, due to the ‘relative autonomy’ that the state might enjoy in exceptional situations. As the state is nothing but the site for class struggle where the dominant exploiting class also extends its dominance in the political realm through the state, Lenin argues that there can be situations where not one single class manages to achieve that sort of a political dominance. This apart from other factors is due to their weakness as an economic force to begin with. At this juncture the state might enjoy some form of relative autonomy as well.

The Consciousness of the politics of the state is itself the politics of the oppressed

Given this structural condition of the state, the politics of the governed is formulated along with it. It is an overlapping theme in Marxist theory that for the

practical reason of determining the politics of the governed or oppressed, it is necessary to theorise the state or politics of the government and its apparatuses from vantage-point of the governed. There are two phases through which it must be analysed: First, proletariat must abolish the state, so that in the second phase it withers away. When Marxism talks about abolishing the state in the first phase by the proletariat, it is talking with respect to the bourgeois state. The bourgeois state in Engels' formulation is a "special coercive force" in the hands of the bourgeoisie to suppress millions of proletariats and keeping them in a condition of subjugation whereby rule of the few attuned to their interests can be attained. Henceforth it is important that through a revolution the proletariat takes control of the special coercive force and suppress the bourgeoisie and their effort to utilize the means of production for the interest of the few. The state remains in its form while undergoing drastic transformation in the hands of the proletariat. Bourgeois state is abolished to create a dictatorship of proletariat whereby it is possible to turn the means of production into state property. However with this seizure of state power the second phase is well underway. The state ownership of the means of production under the exploited class alters the condition of politics in the society. The state ceases to intervene in the matter of social relation and becomes chiefly an administrative unit. With administration of the economy on the line of socialistic principle, the anarchy, characteristic of the capitalistic production is removed. It also removes the collisions and excesses arising out of the oppressive economic principle. There is nothing to hold in subjection. The historical necessity of the existence of the state is also immaterial in the context of the dictatorship of the proletariat. So through revolution a process is initiated, which Engels puts succinctly. "*the first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society--- the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society--- is also its last independent act as a state*" (quoted in Lenin 1977: 273). The gradual structural insignificance of the state in a post-revolutionary stage under the dictatorship of proletariat is what Marxism terms as 'withering away' of the state.

In this context, Lenin's polemics against opportunists, mostly like Kautsky, social democrats is important. Attacking them for distorting Marxism and compromising the revolutionary essence, Lenin argues that it is both historically and scientifically erroneous for them to assume that the seizure of power through peaceful

means will ultimately necessitate the 'withering away' of the state. This is because the second stage can never be achieved unless and until condition of the abolition of the bourgeois state and its apparatuses is achieved. By seizing power through peaceful means, social democrats would inheriting the oppressive state instrument with its army, bureaucracy (public power). In this case withering away of the state is a wishful thinking as it will be impossible for the proletariat to socialize the economy. Bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie will find enough breathing ground to launch a fight back and suppress the dictatorship of the proletariat, either by violent means or using rampant corruption so systematic to the capitalist bourgeois state. Lenin is of the opinion that such deliberate theoretical oblivion comes from their inability to see the basic tenet of the theory of state that the state could never be a site where class antagonism can be reconciliated.

The Great Proletarian Revolution, the politics of the oppressed is there fore aimed at the state. And as Marxism is a politics of praxis, the practical act of revolution and theoretical act of understanding the state goes hand in hand. However from this cursory visit of the theory of the state in Marxism-Leninism, it appears that Agamben's criticism stands valid. Marxism as a theoretical paradigm is seemingly blind to the question of the State as a sovereign power. It appears that it has failed to see what Agamben shows us quite persuasively that the originary structure of the sovereign is that of the state of exception, a zone of separation and undecidability or indeterminacy. However in the following paragraphs we will try to show that the Marxist theory of the state has a novel understanding of the state of exception. This state of exception is the ontological condition which enables the marriage of the theory of the state with revolution i.e. the politics of the proletarian.

Althusser's theoretical elaboration on Marxist understanding of the state: Separation at the heart of Politics of the state and proletariat

To further the argument it is useful to begin with Louis Althusser's (2006) elaboration on Marxist theory of the state.⁶ If Agamben locates a certain lacunae in Marxist theory of the state, it flows from the fact, as Althusser argues that the theory

⁶ We must hasten to add that we have considerable disagreement with his 'theoretical elitism' and most importantly his formulation of the concept of the subject and subjectivity.

of the state in Marxism is a descriptive theory. In the classical texts at least it is restricted largely within the sphere of political practice. The theory is developed with a topological metaphor of the base and superstructure. The state apparatus belonging in the realm of superstructure is ultimately determined in the last instance by the base that is the economy or the mode of production. However being descriptive, as Althusser correctly points out it facilitates gathering of vast historical data on the line in which it defines the state and its repressive apparatus. Therefore taking the cue from the theory of the state, a rough overview of which we have tried providing above, Althusser makes advancement towards forming a theory of the state.

Althusser to begin with locates the whole question of the state in the realm of reproduction. He argues that reproduction of a system is as important as the question of production. No production system can survive for more than a day without having a corresponding system of production. Every social formation must reproduce its condition of production at the same time it reproduces. Reproducing conditions of production necessarily involves reproduction of 'the productive forces' and 'the existing relations of production'.

On one hand, on the question of reproduction of the productive forces, the means of production as Marx compellingly showed is achieved at the level of whole economy. This is crucial in so far as he shifts the site of reproduction from the farm level (as bourgeois economists tend to do) to the economy as a whole. Thereby what is required by factory X as raw material is provided by Y and for Y to produce what X needs, the raw material is supplied by the production of Z. So this is the chain of economy that sustains the condition of the means of production. On the other hand, the other aspect of the productive forces i.e. the labour power is produced first through the wage that is paid to the worker for his/her minimum subsistence including his family. Althusser here argues that this is not the only aspect of reproduction of labour power. The labour power in supply simultaneously must be skilled and disciplined. With respect to this question, he brings in the aspect of subjection to ruling ideology. He argues that to reproduce the labour power as skilled and fit for factory production a certain ideological commitment must be extracted from the workers in terms of disciplining as a productive work force. The educational institution as a part of the state apparatuses is one such chief institution in bringing

discipline as a productive factor in labour. Besides these he notes that the church, the army may serve the same purpose for the ruling class. These institutions ensure subjection through ideological indoctrination and in return ensuring conformity to a certain code of practice. Hence for Althusser, subjection takes two fold meaning. It is no longer only a question of getting skilled in capitalist practices (we can think of Taylorism, Fordism) it is a question of reproducing or having in place a condition of ideological subjection that initiates reproduction of the skills. A new reality emerges within the very corpus of the state that is *ideology*.

With these observations in mind, Althusser argues that to complete Marxists theory of the state we must add another factor besides **repressive apparatus** i.e. **ideological state apparatus**.⁷ However before we elaborate on this first separation, we must mention another crucial separation that holds this first separation together. From a direct interpretation of the classical Marxist texts, he argues that we must make a separation between **the state** and its existence in different apparatuses and **state power**. The state and state apparatuses have no force without the force of the state power. This is a particular reading of the relation existing between the ruling class interest and the state. The fact, that the state is always and already a dictator of any ruling class (including proletariat), is articulated on the theoretical level with this separation.

To go back to the distinction between ideological state apparatus (ISA) and state apparatus (SA) which is repressive in character, Althusser attempts to draw an empirical list. While SA includes the government, the army, the police, the courts, the prisons and all are put together under the name the state; ISA includes plurality of institutions which for an immediate observer appears to be distinct and specialized institutions. These institutions are the religious institutions, the school, the family, the political and the legal ISA, the trade union etc.

What distinguishes ISA from SA is their mode of functioning. Whereas ISA functions with ideology; SA functions with violence. However Althusser is quick to add that these are no watertight compartments. While SA predominantly works

⁷ Althusser argues that the Marxist theory has contained this distinction right from the beginning, perhaps little implicitly. Largely being preoccupied with political practices classical texts never fully develop the presupposition of the ideological apparatus in a fully articulated theoretical form.

through repression it still resorts to ideology in places. Similarly ISA also employs tactics of repression like punishment, expulsion, elimination and selection in institutions like schools, church etc.

This co-functioning of ISA and SA, secures the reproduction of the relation of production thereby ensuring total reproduction of the social formation. SA through repression creates the condition for the reproduction of itself and ISA. But above all through repression what it secures is a political condition in which ISA can function to create the condition for reproduction of the relation of production. Behind the shield of SA, ISA functions smoothly to ensure subjection to the ruling ideas and ideology and thereby secures complete subjection to the social formation in its condition of production and reproduction.

Althusser's analysis shows a twin separation at the heart of the Marxist theory of the state. First, there is a separation between state apparatuses and state power. Second, another separation follows that is of SA and ISA. If we remember the state of exception is premised on an act of separation. The state of exception separates the norm from its application. It does so by inserting a zone of anomie in the state of law. We must now pay closer attention to this aspect of separation in Marxist theory.

Importance of the separations (ISA/SA and State/ State power) for Marxism

In the context of 'abolition' and withering away of the state, as Engels quote (previous section) vividly explains it for us, there are two stages involved post bourgeois-capitalist state order. The revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing but a transitional period which will be succeeded by communism with withering away of the state. We must understand social revolution and this transitional phase is nothing but the state of exception from the point view of the proletariat. This is precisely so because with social revolution, the proletariat separates the state apparatus and state power. What they achieve for the first time from the point view of the proletariat is to unmask the class character (i.e. bourgeois) of the state apparatus, irrespective of the state power in its functioning. Therefore it becomes important from the point view of the proletariat to abolish the state apparatus as it exists. This can only explain Lenin's insistence on taking the abolition of the state as crucial and a significant aspect from the point view of revolution. His

insistence on the distinction between meanings of abolition and withering away stems from the fact that structurally it is impossible, contrary to the belief of the opportunist and social democrats, to achieve revolution unless and until the separation between state apparatus and state power is given its due importance. So with revolution what is achieved is the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This dictatorship is nothing but destruction of the old form of the state and transforming it into new form. However while all this is achieved, the state power remains. It floats at the time of revolution just like force of law. The proof of this fact comes from two assertions. As we have seen in classical texts and in Lenin, proletariat needs the state to suppress the minority but still existing bourgeois class. They need state so that they can use the state power to secure what bourgeoisie has secured through the power of the state that is suppressing the antagonistic class. Moreover as we quoted earlier the state is also to achieve another principal task of taking control of the means of production. So though altered in a new form of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', the state is still called in to exert its power to take control of the means of production. And with this Marxism argues the state performs its last duty from whereon withering away of the state is initiated. Therefore to argue in the terms of Agamben in revolution force of the state remains while the state apparatus is abolished as it exists. Or in other words the proletariat inserts the state of exception in the heart of the system with their politics of separation.

Agamben does touch upon this point and he also recognises revolution as the state of exception which he terms 'sovereign dictatorship', however, what he did not engage with the nuances of the Marxist argument. For Agamben the state exists with its figure of sovereignty as an autonomous sphere of politics. However Marxism attacks this very presumption as being bourgeois ruling class ideology i.e. rendering the state a status above society. So while Marxists engage with the very question of the state of exception and the structure of the state as sovereign, they do so in terms of its real material relation with community that is, over here oppressed classes. And from their articulation, which Althusser has already pointed out heavily in favour of an emancipatory politics and most importantly praxis, what they achieve is a notion of the state of exception from the perspective of the revolutionary oppressed subjectivity. In fact what they dwell upon is that by when the sovereign decides on the state of

exception and does so as a paradigm of governance, he/she decides always and already on behalf of a particular class interest.⁸

Lukacs elaboration on legality and illegality from the perspective of proletarian consciousness: An example of indistinction (blurring)

To drive home the above point further let's now pay attention to the other pair of separation i.e. SA and ISA⁹. We will see that how the condition of 'indeterminacy' or 'undecidability' is inscribed in the heart of politics of emancipatory subject i.e. proletariat. We must, however, hasten to add that this 'undecidability' or 'indeterminacy' is not a question of decision undertaken by the sovereign. From the position of the proletariat it is a positive condition of improvising tactics.

Althusser lists legality or law as one of the ISAs. However in a footnote he also explains that law is at the same time an integral part of the SA. So this overlapping itself gives a good fertile ground to inspect the condition of 'indeterminacy' with the example of law. However, it is also useful given the fact that in both the preceding chapter and in this chapter the question of law (legality and illegality) has occupied a very important position in discussing the state/community relationship.

In Lukacs' polemical dialogue with opportunists and revisionists, the question pertaining to legality and illegality almost finds equal expression as in Althusser too. In trying to ascertain the meaning of the concepts of legality and illegality, he writes, "*(the) question leads us inevitably to the general problem of organised power, to the problem of law and the state and ultimately to the problem of ideology.*" (Lukacs 1971: 257). He also starts off by identifying the correct identification of the state and law with force however not in abstraction but in terms of real economic and social

⁸ We will have ample examples from the past to qualify the argument. However one example should suffice here. The Bush's declaration that Agamben talks about and his subsequent 'war on terror' is beyond doubt creating a state of exception. However, as several studies have already shown that the Bush doctrine must be seen in the broader context of US imperialism and aggression, serving the ruling class, trans-national corporations' interest. A good point of departure to understand US state's functioning vis-à-vis its own population and outside and its rooted economic interest is Chomsky's *Failed States* (2007).

⁹ If we analyze it we will see that this separation is also in the last instance a derivative of the originary first separation. For reason of digression which can be kept aside for now.

function in Marxism. Echoing Althusser, he argues in strict accordance to Marxism, that one must understand the functioning of the ideological structure to understand society in its totality. This is because amid the interlinks of economy, society and politics, the corresponding ideological structure is found projected into the thoughts and feelings of men drawing them inside the ambit of authority. Or to put it differently, the state apparatuses harmonises with the economic order governing the society so well that men start experiencing the state as the very natural entity having superior and meaningful bearings in their lives. As a result they fully accept the subjection. Over here Lukacs traces the ideological roots of the Marxist observation that the state in bourgeois society starts appearing as the above society having an autonomous natural existence.

Lukacs would essentially be in agreement with Althusser's separation of the state apparatuses in ISA and SA and more importantly listing legality and law both under SA and ISA. The former argues that the bourgeois indeed uses its repressive apparatuses including law as a repressive organ to suppress the resistance of individuals or groups by force. It is an essential condition for its survival. However it is also true that a state cannot use force every time it is necessary. And if it becomes indeed the situation then according to him the situation is revolutionary (we could easily discern the manner in which the term is employed here. When he uses the term revolutionary, it is quite clear in this context it can also be read as 'exceptional'). So what we see in normal circumstances is a sort of ideological force in play extracting conformity from the subject for the ruling class.

What happens in a bourgeois social formation, Lukacs argues is a naturalization of the existence of the state. The proletariat are left with the belief that the state, the laws and the socio-economic opportunities granted by the bourgeoisie society is the only possible, natural environment for existence. Though for the proletariat many improvements will be desirable, nevertheless it remains at the level of improvement, but not at the level of deprivation. Taking the state as natural basis of societal existence, they never see it to be the very source of those deprivations. This is the function of legality in bourgeois state. It does not always entail a conscious betrayal or conscious compromise. What legality does achieve in the bourgeois system is a fixed point of departure to understand the otherwise chaotic social

existence. From the perspective of the legality/illegality an instinctive, natural attitude develops among the men, women in society towards the state. However these are individual transgressions which Lukacs argues are indicative of the ruling principle itself. First, the state is more or less equipped to handle these sorts of violation, They do not pose any real threat to the state apparatuses and the existing social formation. Second, referring to Dostoyevsky, he shows that every criminal perfectly understands that why he/she is guilty and accepts it to be true. But this does not necessarily means they feel any remorse; but the point is their ready acceptance that they have broken laws, for reasons valid or invalid. Personal motives and circumstances which have led to their commitment to crime never ever question in the end the validity of the law in terming their act as illegal and criminal. Law almost assumes an immutable character for these individual violators. Lukacs is of the opinion that this is the precise ideological effect of the law in our society.

Lukacs sees the social revolution as the only possibility of overhauling this system of oppression. With revolution the proletariat assumes the full consciousness of the system in which they live in. They break free from the spiritual domination of the bourgeois society through the full knowledge of its functioning. However the social revolution is the very condition which can lead this process to its completion. This is because knowledge or consciousness in Marxism as we have argued elsewhere is not a mere question of theory but of praxis. Therefore knowledge and consciousness also in the last instance a 'practical critical activity'. It is 'practical critical' in so far as with the very act of revolutionary movement, the proletariat abolishes the state with the critical understanding of the separation of the state apparatus and state power, as we have already seen. And this leads to the consciousness of the proletariat as they manage to grasp also another crucial separation between the SA and ISA. They understand not only the natural existence of law and the state as it exists as naturally given norm; they also understand the ideological force behind this natural immutability of law and the purpose it serves. Therefore, revolution as the state of exception separates these categories to free the proletariat from the inner bindings of the capitalist society. Or in other words in the state of exception another event unfolds that is of simultaneous blurring of the legality and illegality. The law no longer remains a fixed point to reflect back on the world. The form in which law is presented is itself put into question with the separation of the

categories like *Law, as the legitimatizing source of violence and repression* and *Law, as the ideological apparatus*. Therefore in the course of revolution, law is merely in force, not in form. The revolution captures law outside law, to use the topographical description that Agamben gives in relation to the state of exception. It is included through the very act of exclusion. Revolution, which is, in the end, in the eyes of bourgeois law an illegal process tries to capture a legal institution like state (dictatorship of the proletariat) to achieve its ultimate end. We must read Engel's comment i.e. "*the first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society--- the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society--- is also its last independent act as a state*" in its full conceptual complexities. The statement in the last instance speaks of, theoretically a condition of the state of exception, as argued above.

But as we argued in the beginning, from the perspective of the politics of the proletariat this indeterminacy or undecidability is not a question of decision in the last instance as is the case with the sovereign. It is rather a positive condition of a tactical politics where decision hinges on the question of tactical choices with ultimate goal of proletarian revolution in mind. Lukacs writes, "*The question of legality or illegality reduces itself then for the Communist Party to a mere question of tactics, even to a question to be resolved on the spur of the moment...as decision have to be taken on the basis of immediate expediencies*" (Lukacs 1971: 264). This question of mere tactics is a positive condition of politics in so far as this attitude of the Communist party, as vanguard party also opens up the horizon of consciousness (the simultaneous process of revolutionary moment and reform of consciousness that we have already talked about). The tactical attitude towards legality and illegality reduces the bourgeois society's spirituality, based on legal normative order to a mere empirical entity; an attitude of indifference strips off all its aura of order and immutability prescribing the form of life to be lived by. The form of law is exposed preserving no regard for it from the perspective of proletariat while the force of law is used according to expediency. This attitude of indifference, the tactical use of force of law while continuously attacking the form in which it is presented is according to Lukacs the precise 'practical critical activity' which helps the proletariat as a

revolutionary subject to transform and free themselves from the capitalist life-form holding them in subjection.¹⁰

Section-II

Subject as the Condition of Politics

We have seen that Marxism, in its insistence on dialectical materialist method, sees theory and practice in a unity of praxis. From that point onwards, revolution becomes an emancipatory point of departure rooted in 'practical critical activity'. Theorising of the politics of the state is enmeshed with the practice of the politics of the proletariat that historical condition demands from them as revolutionary force. We have almost returned from where we started that is the Foucauldian theoretical model sustaining the notion of political society. As in Foucault's governmentality, politics of government and its apparatuses and politics of the governed cannot be separated. They are intrinsically linked in a power/knowledge regime. Similarly in Marxism the politics of the proletariat (or governed) is rooted in being conscious of the politics of the state. However the crucial difference that separates both is their different points of reference. While for Foucault the point of focus is power, (even though his stated aim was to theorize subjectivity) in Marxism, the point shifts to the historical role of the proletariat subjectivity and consciousness enabling the destruction of seats of power, hence Foucault's argument is inversed in Marxism. The striking theoretical corollary of such an inversion is the return of the notion of subject, not in its decentred form as Foucault, Derrida, Laclau have insisted on but as an Archimedean point to reflect back to the reality. Does subjectivity exist in its fixity in reality to escape and transform the reality itself? For all these thinkers the answer is in negative. Foucault shows that nothing escapes power; in fact resistance itself is a point through which power flows; it is exercised. Subjectivity in the end is subjectivation --- an inward folding of outward reality shaped by power. For Derrida and Laclau the reality, the politics of the real becomes a discursive articulation where the subject as an authorial

¹⁰ This is an important point that is, the role of vanguard party in creating a positive condition of politics. However this issue of the relationship between proletariat as subject and vanguard party will be taken up in the next chapter while examining the relationship between the adivasi community and CPI(Maoist). It suffices for now to say that Vanguard party is also a subject in this politics; but its emergence and transformation is different from the proletariat as a subject. This is an issue which we will have greater scope to explain with practical instances from Lalgarh movement.

figure is dead. What remains is to articulate, to read the reality in a deconstructive mode including, in one's critical reading, what is silent and left in the margins by power.¹¹ In contrast to this Marxism boldly proclaims that even remaining within the system, proletariat can have 'consciousness' of the capitalist system and then can transform the system with the 'true class consciousness'. Or in other words, in a theoretical move, Marxism's basic tenet is that the outside can be inscribed i.e. can be carved out even remaining within inside to transform it from within. In a rhetorical flourish, we can also say, Proletariat the nemesis of Bourgeois factories is born inside the factory only. The question that that needs to be asked first is what is this 'class consciousness' and how the proletariat (in strictest classical Marxist sense) emerges as the revolutionary subject in capitalist society itself? What is the relationship between the proletariat subjectivity and revolution as a state of exception? We try to show in the following sub-subsection that the state of exception is the very ontological condition of the emergence of the working class¹² as a proletariat subject inside a factory.

What is Class consciousness? History, exceptionality and working class as proletariat subject

With the question of class and class consciousness we are now venturing into a question of immense sociological importance. Besides evaluating the theoretical and practical significance of the concept of class and class consciousness in the strictest Marxist terms, we must also evaluate what is the status of class consciousness as a

¹¹ Recent theoretical works have pointed out that this almost pessimistic politics is obsessed with death. It is masochistic in its approach. Even when a fixed point is talked about that is, also in terms of a 'void'. In response to that recent theorization has tried to move away from this tendency. Alain Badiou, Slavoz Žizek have made several attempts drawing from Maoism to talk about a rupture, a new order of being (Badiou 2005, Žizek 2000). In India Ranabir Samaddar has also made similar attempts to theorize political subject (Samaddar 2010)). We have certain differences with these works. Just to mention an example, Žizek himself shows that Badiou's understanding at times has the covert understanding which can be termed simply metaphysical notion of truth, event etc. Still these works remain highly influential in breaking the post structuralist, post modernist framework, with what we can have differences but cannot afford to have an attitude of indifference. Given the limited scope of this essay this will not be engaged in detail.

¹² Working class and proletariat are terms used often interchangeably to denote the same class. However over here we try to maintain a distinction whereby we are trying to name the subjectivity of working class as proletariat. Later we will see proletariat as a name of a particular subjectivity includes classes beyond the working class in the third world context like China, India.

sociological problem. Is it a general problem or a problem pertaining to the proletariat specifically?

Consciousness is intrinsically linked with history. Nothing happens without the conscious purpose of men/women and an intended aim. However for Marxism, history is something beyond and further than these readily available motives and intentions. The proof of this lies in the fact that many individuals' wills have been active in the past however history bears the truth that not often did reality turn out in accordance to their will. So, in appearance, consciousness is the last operator of the reality but some thing else drives the parameters of consciousness. Marxism argues that the driving forces of man/woman's consciousness and his/her psychological being is ultimately the outcomes of historical processes. Consciousness is therefore incapable of determining real motor forces of history. As a sociological concept it is to be isolated from psychological facts and brought back to the level of man to man relation in order to establish its proper relationship with history (Lukacs 1971: 46-7).

In primitive stages the relationship between man's consciousness and the historical forces takes the form of the attribution to nature all the forces as these were. Nature embodies man's incapability to understand forces of history and thereby attains a power above and over men/women. It takes the form of eternal laws of nature. In bourgeois consciousness such forms go through subtle transformation however it still retains its primary character. Man/woman's reflection on the social form and its scientific analysis starts post-facto when these social forms and institutions have attained nature like durability and immutability. Therefore though their effort is targeted towards being conscious of their historicity, what they manage to achieve is to interpret their meaning. Marx gives an example of classical bourgeois economic theory where the object comes to occupy the character of natural objects. Relations between men/women are reduced in economic theory to relations between objects. To take a more pertinent example we must refer back to the bourgeois notion of the state in capitalist society. The state, with its other apparatuses assumes a natural character above and over the society as an institution for every class including proletariat. The effort therefore is directed towards not to understand how it came to its existence as it exists now; but why it exists at all. And as we have seen the

bourgeois legality as an ideological body, it plays its role too in sustaining such moral, ethical and political attitude towards the state as an institution and its history.

Bourgeois thought and consciousness of its history, as Marx explains, becomes an apologia for the institutions (Lukacs 1971). All consciousness of its own history flows from its initial awareness of the social reality with its institutions *as if*, immutable in character. History for bourgeois consciousness is constrained within the institutions; whereas Marx argues history is histories of these institutions. The immediate result of this 'apologetic' consciousness of history also becomes a stunted understanding. History takes the form of a finished product. Therefore from the vantage point of the bourgeois thought history existed in the past but it no longer exists. The state as an institution, for example, had its forms of development but with an immutable character that bourgeois thought attributes to the state it almost, consciously or unconsciously assumes that bourgeois state is the highest form of development of the state. Another form in which history is also conceived of in bourgeois consciousness is that of 'individual' epochs. Therefore any meaningfulness is banished from history and it is reduced to 'individual' epoch achieving its own maturity. History, if in the first case is reduced to natural laws, then it is embodied in the 'spirit of the people' or great men. History becomes describable in so far as looked from a pragmatic point view; it cannot be rationally explained.

Marx dissolves this two-fold aporias by proposing an alternative understanding of history. First, he argues that history is nothing but relations between persons mediated through things. With such a conceptualization, what he first encounters is the reductionist view of history to natural laws. Second, he does not do away with the objectivity of social institutions like in individualist view point. He simply asserts that the relations between men should be the concrete object of history. Marx farther elucidates that such a concrete understanding cannot be premised on any form of abstraction. He argues that by attributing society as the most concrete form, bourgeois society is farthest removed from the objective reality. Their consciousness is 'false consciousness' precisely because by attributing something abstract, that is society as a concrete totality, bourgeois consciousness lives in a perpetual state of illusion. Marx therefore stresses on the fact that when one is talking about relations between men, it is futile to think of it as relations between one individual to another

individual. It must be understood as between classes. This is because when one abolishes relations between these classes, one actually does away with the very notion of a society. Concrete analysis in Marxism means to see the relation to society as a whole. (Lukacs 1971).

Consciousness in Marxism is rendered into a sociological problem. By relating consciousness to the whole of society it is possible to deduce the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation. The assessment of the situation and its corresponding interests in their immediate and long terms context is what constitutes for Marxism the proper content of the consciousness. From this stand point, barring proletariat, all classes in the history and in bourgeois capitalist order are incapable of seeing the society in its objective entirety. Their very situation in the society masks their consciousness as the latter stands in opposition to class position or their situations in the society, so there is a conditioned unconsciousness for these classes. However bourgeoisie as a class stands somewhere in between proletariat and other classes in so far as their class position is dialectically opposed to class consciousness. Therefore from the stand point of immediate goals, while they are able to see for example feudalism as an immediate enemy; they fail to see the historical emergence of proletariat as their nemesis. So while they are imputed in the development of the structures of history and thereby can assess their immediate goals subjectively, they fail to reassess the objective aspect of history which they subscribe to fatalistically. Henceforth their consciousness indeed is consciousness but it is 'false consciousness'. Falseness of their consciousness lies in the lack whereby they fail to integrate immediate goals with larger long term goals. However this is not only a question of simple failure on the part of bourgeoisie. Even if bourgeoisie sees the immediate context in larger contexts, that is the 'objective possibility' of their class situation, they are incapacitated to act just because it means dissolution of themselves and their own class interest. From this point, proletariat is the true revolutionary class. Though acting on the objective possibility of their class situation and towards their class interests definitely means dissolution of the class--- proletariat--- itself. This they are historically capable of carrying it out precisely because their class interests are not contradictory to their own dissolution. The historically given situation of the proletariat which places them in the position of transforming the society has no fatalistic aspect to it. Like in the case of other classes, while they are not able to see

their objective ultimate goal, they might be able to initiate revolutionary changes by being a revolutionary agent because of their situation assigned to them by historical development. As Marx noted in *Communist Manifesto* (1972), all hitherto revolutions were political revolution whereby usurping power, one class brought about revolution but partial revolution; but proletarian revolution is a social revolution as it is going to transform the society itself. *So historical responsibility entrusted with proletariat is exceptional in nature, where the 'political' and 'social', these realms are blurred.*

Political power (i.e. state) is seized by the proletariat to transform the society itself. We cannot avoid the striking similarity that we find between social revolution as an historical exception, which is however historically given and structural features of the state of exception. To move beyond we must also note that proletariat as an agent of revolution is also exceptional in its conscious subjective position. For the first time in history, Marxism argues, a revolution must happen with full consciousness of its agent. This just cannot happen as the internal dynamics of historical development inevitably leads to a revolutionary change (like feudalism to capitalism) while agent remains 'falsely' conscious (in the sense of partially conscious) of such a development. For proletariat social revolution to happen, revolution must need its subjects, who are consciously bringing the transformation. In Lukacs' words, "...proletariat has been entrusted by history with the task of transforming society consciously". They cannot simply look for catering to their immediate needs and goals. They must recognize the dialectics in play between immediate and ultimate or long term goals. Immediate needs are articulated within the capitalist mode of production and the worldview or historical sensibility that capitalism imposes on members of the capitalist society. While its immediate articulation opens the possibility for transformation, it can only be achieved in reality when the proletariat is able to see to which direction they must lead these immediate articulations so that they can go beyond capitalist worldview. Or in other words, they must become the conscious agent. Perhaps in this context we can think of the example of proletariat's attitude towards legality and illegality. It is analysed by Lukacs, as we have elaborated, in consonance with this principle of dialectics of immediate goal and ultimate goal. As a subject position, proletariat is a historical exception. *As proletariat i.e. subject they no longer belong to the history hitherto known (i.e. history as capitalism envisages). They are outside of historical sensibility of capitalism from the*

*perspective of their consciousness of long term goals. On the other hand they are included by the very virtue of such a self-imposed exclusion because their immediate goal in the capitalist society remains the context for such an exclusion.*¹³

Quite contrary to Foucault or other post-structuralist thinkers, Marx argues, a subjective position can be thought of which is emancipatory in nature. It is emancipatory precisely because it is capable of articulating its subjective situation while remaining within the capitalist system and can go beyond it by relating to the society as a whole. A revolutionary subject is therefore a historical exception, who is conditioned by historical development entrusting it with bringing transformation consciously. Or to put it with the topological metaphor, a revolutionary subject is revolutionary precisely because while remaining inside (i.e. within capitalism) it can think of an outside (i.e. socialism) which is beyond the purview of inside. So for a revolutionary subject, inside (here in the sense of subjectivity) is not mere folding of outside (i.e. capitalist worldview); but something excess which flows past the outside. And as our analysis has tried elaborating such excess is nothing but the product of a Marxist theory of the state of exception.

Working class and Factory: Reification, proletariat subjectivity and its ontological condition as state of exception

If our analysis so far is consistent --- that Marxist theory is a theory of exception as well --- we must be able to articulate that working class as a potential subject of history owes its condition of subjectivity to the state of exception. To put it differently, being consistent with revolution as a state of exception working class is the proletariat subject precisely because its ontological condition of emergence as a class is also that of the state of exception. Both revolution and proletariat share the same order of being i.e. the state of exception for classical Marxism.

Agamben, following Schmitt, gives us a precise definition of the sovereign. Sovereign is the one who decides on the state of exception. We have tried showing, Marxism turning this theoretical formula up side down, proposes that working class is the one who fully emerges as a proletariat class through their praxis in a state of

¹³ To put it in terms of Agamben, proletariat include themselves through their conscious exclusion.

exception i.e. revolutionary politics. In a capitalist set up, working class is a product of the factory. In other words, for the working class, factory is the very ontological space which shapes their being. Now factory as a space in capitalism shares an unique relationship with the society too. Ideological indoctrination of the society in bourgeois overview is crucial for the proper functioning of the factory. And the factory in its internal structure holds the structure of capitalist society, as if in a microcosm. "*the internal organization of a factory could not possibly have such an effect --- even within the factory itself --- were it not for the fact that it contained in concentrated form the whole structure of capitalist society.*" (Lukacs 1971: 90). As the space, factory epitomizes the principle of reification which on the other hand determines the worldview of bourgeois society as a whole.

Reification is the process where by commodity structure replaces the relation between people. Latter thereby assumes the character of the thing achieving autonomy, alienated from human being itself. Such commodity fetishism is the specific feature of capitalist society. This is because in capitalist system of production, reproduction and distribution all are dependent on the principle of exchange value. This is in direct contrast to earlier epoch where things are bartered; use value used to prevail over the exchange value. The production of the commodity by the producers had less to do with creating exchange value and more to do with the use value which when in excess could be exchanged. Moreover most importantly in capitalist society not only exchange value has come to dominate production, reproduction; but it has encapsulated the very internal structure of the society. In capitalist society things to be exchanged assumes the form of commodity and thereby establishes itself to be the universal principle of societal existence. It reifies the society (Lukacs 1971).

Reification signifies a subjugation of consciousness ensuring that a society learns to satisfy its needs through commodity exchange. Processes like separation of the producer from his/her means of production, destruction of all 'natural' production units and other social and economic relations which tend to establish with capitalism leads to a situation where all 'natural' relations exhibiting human essence are replaced with rationally reified relations. Consumer product no longer appears as the product of an organic process within a community. Their identity is fixed as a commodity belonging to some species or other and as objects which is to be possessed or not

depends on rational calculation of the individual. Whole life of society is atomised, isolated in the form of abstract commodity exchange. Commodity exchange as discrete, rational and an individual act comes to dominate the consciousness of all members of the society. The law of capitalist economics penetrates the consciousness of the society creating an illusion of rational individuals making their calculated choices just like the structure of commodity circulation.

The illusion is however a necessary one for capitalist economy to function. Because such atomisation, isolation and individuation can only work through when individuals themselves believe that they are acting as rational and calculable commodity owners in an isolated exchange with another isolated individual as commodity owner. This is significant in so far as it sustains the belief among the workers that they too are commodity owners, owning their labour. This in turn impregnates in consciousness of the society the myth of 'free labour'.

In the factory when a worker enters as an owner of his/her labour power, it is important to bear in mind that in the factory commodity is produced with the active participation of the worker; and it is also the microcosm of the society. It is the very seat of commodification and reification. Most importantly workers are the very part of that process. It is their labour, which they believe to own, is commodified and reified through a precise mode of rationalization, mechanization and control. They are reduced to mere machine among many machines while stripping them off from their essence of being. Labour no longer remains the creative process which connects them with their being; but a commodity in exchange which is stamped on the product they themselves created. Increasing specialization and mechanization reduces them to become an isolated, individual part to the whole production process. In the end, they lose any attachment with their own labour power, the commodity they create, and the work process through which they create. Everything stands alienated inside the factory and outside the factory also every human relation they share with the society is as well reduced to atomized, individual commodity exchange which they themselves have created inside the factory. The inside and the outside of the factory almost gets blurred in this process (Lukacs 1971; Marx 1993).

Within the factory, when workers are working, a separation happens which is otherwise not so distinctly present for other individuals members of society.

Objectively, for everybody living in a society assumes as we have pointed out, a consciousness of rational law and individual members acting calculatively (which is nothing but the reflection of the commodity structure in human beings' intellect). This is indeed alienating as human beings come to imagine that these laws are immutable laws above them, which they can do nothing about but follow and manoeuvre as efficiently as possible in their *acts of exchange as owners of commodities*. However such subjective realisation dawns upon the workers --- while eluding others --- inside the factory when subjectively they realise that their labour power i.e. their human essence is nothing but a commodity to be exchanged; and in the process of working in the factory they further realize in the alienated environment of the factory that gradually ownership of that sole property is also being snatched away, alienated from them.

This dialectics of subjective and objective enables the workers to read the 'symptom' of the capitalist system better than anybody else. The symptom as a concept is introduced by Zizek (2008) in his discussion of ideology and Marxism. According to Zizek, symptom is the logic of exception. Marx's ingenuity lies not in discovering the fact that labour is the creative force behind commodity (even before him, bourgeois economists discovered it) but in discovering how such commodity structure takes this form to engulf the society. He detected a certain fissure, an asymmetry at the heart of commodity fetishism or reification. This is a sort of asymmetry which completely subverts the universal bourgeois system. This does not mean that with the development of a higher form such an imbalance can be perfected rather this imperfect moment is essential required for the system, because it acts as the very constitutive element. In this sense, it appears, for Zizek, a practical critical activity is detecting that exceptional element in the system which is heterogeneous but still necessary for the system. He gives us an example of the bourgeois notion of freedom and equality. It is an ideological universal which speaks of every form of freedom starting from the freedom of speech to that of consciousness and political dissent. Central to the bourgeois notion of freedom is the lack of it for the workers. It is realised that without the latter, the first cannot be sustained. Therefore reification as a process is the specific element (the symptom) which subverts the bourgeois system despite being a necessity. The space of the factory is the only place where the dialectical duality plays out. The exceptional moment of the capitalist system starts

manifesting itself in terms of certain dialectics: individual versus generalized social character of the production; and quantitative versus qualitative aspects of life. Bourgeoisie and workers inside the factory are two opposed groups finding themselves with same sort of aporias. While the nature of exchange with respect to labour is individual, the workers increasingly find mediation in the society which is collective in character. Or in other words while entering the factory, the worker enters as a free owner of his labour power, he finds when he exists that the whole society has been structured around the same principle as his labour has been. Like the labour, the whole society has been given away to the mystical power of the commodity form and its exchange. For bourgeoisie, however, the same realisation is true; but it does not come across as a contradiction as this is what serves their interest. The aporias of individual/collective, for workers gets further mediated through another dialectics in place. In a dialectical development, more and more quantitative addition leads to qualitative change. The same happens here for the workers, more and more his individual labour power is taken away and his individuality is deformed inside the factory, he realizes the collective dimension of the phenomenon. He emerges, as Lukacs argues, with the class meaning of the process of reification. In other words, to relate it with Zizek's notion of symptom, a knot around which the whole factory system is hinged starts unravelling precisely because after a certain quantitative change, both necessity and subversion starts appearing at the same time for the workers. They start becoming conscious of the fact that the so called freedom which the

Bourgeoisie espouse in the factory in terms of their ownership does not exist, although it is important for them to have the workers believe so. In other words in a society, the factory itself becomes the exceptional element. It is the space where labour-time, individuality is mechanised, rationalised and quantified as the whole society is by the bourgeoisie capital. At the same time, this is the space where qualitative meaning of class emerges for the workers who are deprived of their individuality and hence start discovering the collective aspect of their existence as proletariat. Adding to Lukacs we would like to argue that the factory is not only a microcosm of the society. It is indeed the necessity of the bourgeois society, which stands firm on the principle of commodity exchange. The factory is the very site where 'necessary' exchange value is produced. But it is also the site where workers

emerge as proletariat by identifying the qualitative aspect of infinite mechanization, quantification with respect to the commodity. It is a site of subversion as well, in and through which subjectivity emerges.

The above section in an elaborated manner has tried to show how Marxism articulates the condition of emergence of political subject and its politics as the mediation between state and community. In that we have seen the situation of exception is the very ontological condition of emergence of subject, in this case the proletariat. The proletariat develops into a subject with autonomy of thought and practice, even within the fold of capitalism. Simultaneous, overlapping processes of separation/distinction and blurring/indistinction is the precondition of the subjectivity of the proletariat. The dialectics of immediacy and long term goal fashions such processes. Subjectivity is the qualitative leap in the consciousness of proletariat which comes through a practical engagement and the conscious proletariat subject is the condition of politics in a capitalist society. This is because, if politics is about power over institutions and society, emergence of the proletariat as a subject only can break away from stagnated reified bourgeois society with its infinite quantification. A qualitative change in a new epoch can come into being, a new society with new ethics only when the proletariat emerges as a class. However they must as well emerge as a class with subjectivity, this is because the new can replace the old society only when proletariat as a class is conscious about their practice.

Section-III

Theorizing Emergence of Subject

The factory as a space and the proletariat as a subject will indeed lead the politics of the oppressed till the last century in western world. Socialist politics, as Marx envisaged would surpass the factories and in the name of proletariat, a new political subjectivity would determine politics not only in western world, but almost all over the world by middle of the last century. A new mediation between state and community of the oppressed will even drive leading intellectuals like Sartre to say that *whoever is not a communist is a dog* (Badiou 2005). By the 80s, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the end of cold war, China's firm policy of neo-

liberalism and ultimately with the collapse of Berlin Wall, Socialist politics appeared to have met its doom. It instigated even few to announce the end of history. Simultaneously, in theory Marxism was shoved under the carpet. Post-structuralism and postmodernism whose different variants we have tried articulating in the previous chapter tried showing the dangerous side of Marxist representation or symbolic order in the form of vanguard party, the state etc. Alain Badiou, one of the leading thinkers of our time, captures the mood specifically "*Today the latent universal statement is that every communist is a dog.*" (Badiou 2005: 96). He sees a direct correspondence between whatever was happening in the real politics and practice all over the world and what was happening in theory. He argues that while the outside world in its real politics was announcing the death of representation of Marxist politics and its symbolic order that is socialist states, vanguard communist party etc. The intellectual world was actually capitalising on another death of communism which happened in silence but before the institutional, representational death of communism that is the death of the subject, 'we, the communist'. Communism died twice. First it was its subjective death; and Second its representation which could happen precisely because 'proletariat' as a subjective force was dead by then. Post-structuralism, postmodernism with their insistence on decentred, fractured subjectivity came through this lack of unitary subjectivity that history presented us with. His analysis comes across as right when we see in sociology, Bauman an erstwhile Marxist denounces Marxism and intimates his readers to postmodernism by arguing that there is no proletariat anymore (Blackshaw 2007).

Is the proletariat really dead? Does Marxism, a science merely signify that revolutionary subjectivity is only that of subjectivity of the workers? Or through Marxist analysis of subjectivity of workers, as revolutionary force we can abstract a theory of subjectivity functioning in the politics, mediating the state and community relationship? It seems in the light of developments particularly taking shape in the third world such an effort is not theoretically meaningless. With Maoism, equating proletariat only with workers has become obsolete.¹⁴ On the other hand, gradual consolidation of the Maoist parties indicates that 'we, the proletariat' is not dead

¹⁴ See Mao's (2002) famous text, *Report on an Investigation of the peasant Movement in Hunan*. Over here he explicitly shows the revolutionary potential of the peasants.

everywhere. So to understand proletariat in its broader scope of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism we must make an effort to find a rigorous theory of the subject in general. In writings of Ranajit Guha, especially in *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* some clues are given.¹⁵ The book would be a good historical ground to test our propositions on the question of subjectivity.

We have already seen that proletariat subjectivity emerges in the logic of exception. It is a process through an ontological condition where separation happens inside the factory between individual (quantitative bourgeois aspect of existence) and collective (qualitative aspect of workers' existence). This is supplemented by a blurring of inside world of the factory and outside world that is, society. The workers in their exceptional existence inside the factory gradually realises that there is no real difference between time spent in the factory and outside world. They come to realise that how society is being captured by bourgeoisie in the outside is the same in the factory (the obvious parallelism between the camp of Agamben and the factory must be registered here). This consciousness of simultaneous separation and blurring is reflected on from an Archimedean point, which is the real actual space of subjectivity. As Lukacs argues that qualitative shift can only be seen from a different point of view and in Marxism proletariat is the point of view obverse to the bourgeois world view. What appears from bourgeois point of view as mere quantity, rationalised and calculated; from proletariat's point of view comes across as a qualitative difference in their individual and as well as collective life. Subject is who registers the qualitative shift; subjectivity is the register of the qualitative shift. Subject is an operator through which world view is altered, individual and collectivity, quantity and quality is mediated. In following paragraphs and the next chapter we will give empirical examples of such processes like of separation/blurring, quantitative to qualitative shift as the site of the emergence of subject.

¹⁵ Consequently, as widely known Guha heavily from Gramsci; but at the same time, he also draws from Mao's Hunan Report in this book.

Understanding 'subject' and 'subjectivity' as a concept: Reinterpreting Ranajit Guha's 'subaltern subject'

We have proposed two theses on the concept subject/subjectivity. First, its ontological condition of emergence is a situation of exception. Second, it is an operator that registers the qualitative change. The theses on subject, put forth here, draw its sociological significance from the fact that its full articulation can illuminate to us on aspects of state and community relationship in societies beyond fully developed capitalism and working class from a sociological point of view. In the Indian context, the concept of subjectivity has been used by Ranajit Guha in understanding state and community relationship in the context of colonial India. He uses the term subjectivity as an important sociological marker signifying consciousness and autonomy to restructure the Indian historiography looking into an encounter between peasant communities and colonial state-power. His work is a good point of departure to develop our theses on subject as a sociological concept.

The notion of subjectivity is inserted in Guha's work, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgencies* from a direct theoretical borrowing of Gramsci. Gramsci in the Italian context tries to argue that there should be an alliance between peasantry and working class, as revolutionary forces. Going contrary to mainstream Marxism, Gramsci refuses to see peasantry as individual producers isolated from each other in terms of relations of production and thereby lacking an objective condition of emergence as class and working on its own. His argument is that the peasantry often rises up from their position of subordination against ruling class domination. He stresses on the fact that revolutionary history of such mass upsurge must be written to restore the subjectivity of peasantry as living in political time (Gramsci 2009, Arnold 1984, Guha 2010). Ranajit Guha directly borrows from this and tries to re-write the history of peasant insurgency in India from the perspective of the peasantry. His principal thesis is that the concept of subjectivity must be supplemented to see the encounter between colonial state and these peasant communities in a new light.

He observes that official account, narrative accounts and even colonial historiography have looked into these peasant rebellions from the perspective of rational and secular time. It has strictly adhered to the principle of reasons of state and has created a discourse of power. Inevitable result of such a point view has been to

make the security of the state the central problem. Peasant communities were reduced to mere element in the career of colonial state. This has amounted to discrediting the peasants from any notion of subjectivity. They were deprived of any position as a subject of history in their own revolt against the colonial state. Similarly the encounter between these communities and the colonial state was interpreted to be spontaneous in post-colonial historiography. By doing so, Indian historiography also discredits these communities of any consciousness, autonomy i.e. subjectivity. Such rebellions are looked at as fall outs of the intervention by charismatic personalities, mobilization by organized parties etc. Post-colonial historiography including nationalist and Marxist has always remained elitist in this respect. On the contrary, Guha tries to write a history of these revolts by assuming that the peasant is maker of his own rebellion. By default this signifies attributing consciousness and autonomy to the peasants. Therefore in his work, through various evidences he tries to show that in insurgencies (he prefers the term over rebellion and revolt to distance himself from official account) there was a specific subjectivity at play which is conscious and autonomously functioning vis-à-vis the domination of the colonial power and semi-feudal forces. In other words, on the axis of subjectivity, he tries to re-write the state/community meditation in colonial India.

In colonial India rent constituted the most substantial part of the income from landed property. The extraction of surplus was determined by extra-economic coercion. It was a relationship of domination and subordination, characterised by feudal types of society. The economy in short was still in pre-capitalist conditions of production and the legitimacy was drawn from a traditional culture imbibed in feudal practices like caste hierarchy, patriarchy etc. Domination was not just economic but also traditional in nature. Guha gives us plenty of examples of such practices from rural India from colonial times which sustained such domination of the feudal forces on peasantry. This includes for example of simple verbal communication. Thereby peasantry, mostly from lower caste groups were barred from talking in front of an upper caste landlord at least addressing directly. Moreover there was direct authoritarian control over non verbal expressions and even body. Spatial distance of the body for example was used to reinforce caste hierarchy and status differences. The clothing was another aspect of the feudal culture of rural Bengal which used to reinforce this sort of authoritarian structure. Colonial state instead of breaking this

structure of domination assisted directly in strengthening it. Britishers effort was specifically to do away with old, corrosive elements of the landlordism and infusing with new blood. Through permanent settlement act and other such land reform acts, they revitalized the quasi-feudal structure. They removed old, weak landlords to replace them with new effective members from same class/caste background. The colonial regime became more politically and economically dependent on the feudal structure, arranged in a newer fashion. Few legal measures were taken on paper to rectify old brute forms of repressions. On the local level, however Britishers' representative always worked in close association with landlords, giving them extra-legal powers. In fact, the colonial state quite willingly shared the right to punish --- the ultimate power of the state --- with local landlords. Therefore in the structure of domination, *Sarkar* and *Jamindar* came to occupy the same position for the poor and subaltern. Another axis to this structure of domination was *sahukar*. With land markets flourishing with agrarian legislation, demographic increase and money supply, *mahajans* and *baniyas* came to replace dormant feudal lords in many places. They became sources of double oppression --- as rentiers they also brought to bear all their skills in usury. Peasant indebtedness increased manifold. In this socio-economic context, Guha notes that peasants' insurgencies cannot but be political. This is because revolting against this structure of domination means revolting against the very structure of rural society in colonial India.

Political act of insurgency, from the perspective of both, peasants and landlords was an *exceptional situation*. From the perspective of domination, these insurgencies were not merely against immediate economic oppression. Often these insurgencies had been looked at as the effort to break away from the continuing political and moral order. These insurgencies were a violent rupture in the norm of unquestioning obedience to authority. Guha notes that often in describing peasant insurgencies official language had attributed suddenness to these events. According to Guha, what was intended by such comments was to capture the relative entropic¹⁶ situation in the socio-political scenario (Guha 1983: 36). If for landlord and colonial state, such insurgencies were an exceptional situation, Guha argues for the peasants

¹⁶ The use of the word is highly suggestive. Dictionary meaning of the word generally expresses it to be a numerical measure of the uncertainty of an outcome with reference to communication theory.

also it was a similar case. Contradicting the theory of spontaneity, Guha shows peasants have resorted to arms in exceptional situations only when every petition, request had been turned down by local or colonial authorities. Left with no options, in the last instance they had taken this conscious decision to question hitherto the unquestioned power structure itself.

While insurgencies comes across as a state of exception, it is intriguing to see that from the perspective of the insurgents a sharp separation always used to take place in terms of the enemy and ally. Guha calls this process of separation, "discrimination". Out of the several examples that Guha gives, we can take the example of *Kole* and *Santal* rebellion of 1832 and 1855, respectively. In both instances, the rebels did not harm any tribal population; only targeted non-tribal, outsiders. They termed these outsiders as *dikus* or *suds*. Not only that, in their attack they also spared lower caste non-tribals with whom they had their daily interactions on the basis of economic or social practices of the village community. Often members of these lower castes had been considered to be allies. On the other hand, *mahajans*, landlords were specifically attacked by the rebels. Guha even argues that the fact --- in these two rebellions often *jamindars* were attacked while their tenants have been spared--- goes on to show that ethnicity is not always the parameter of separation; it even amounted to incipient class consciousness.

Correspondingly we see the simultaneous blurring of categories in these insurgencies as well. To take one example out of many, it is interesting to see how awareness of feudal, oppressive practices had been tactically fused with subaltern's own cultural codes through an act of inversion on the course of insurgencies. At the time of insurgencies, for the purpose of tactics and strategy, rebels had consistently borrowed cultural codes from their own subaltern culture and as well as dominant oppressive culture. The latter was done often to subvert and negate the dominant codes. They would make fun of the bodies of the police telling them they looked like '*bhoot*' (Ghost); they would consciously refer to *jamindars* in derogatory fashion by referring to him as 'tu' instead of customary 'aap' etc. On the other hand, they would similarly draw on their cultural repertoire to communicate, transmit messages at the same time to mislead or subvert the dominant order. In one instance, Guha tells us, how a branch of tree with three leaves was sent to a police station. Police not being

able decipher the meaning asked prisoners from the same tribe to interpret the message for them. They told them that it means a meeting would take place on the third day from the date of receiving. No body turned up on the day of meeting. While Guha accepts that it could be possible that leaders of the insurgents could not turn up for some reasons; he argues that this could as well be a possibility that it was just a mockery of the police. Moreover we should take the example of Sido and his explanation in his interrogation. He argued that he was given an order by the *thakur* (god) to fight the *Mahajans*, in writing. A piece of paper fell on his head instructing him to fight for justice and assuring him of *thakur's* blessings. This is an interesting example given the fact that all insurgencies including *Santal* rebellion always seized written documents and burnt or destroyed them in process. Guha explains that for the peasants these written documents were instruments in the hands of enemies. The rent roll perpetually deceived them; bond had put them in servitude. Therefore it was quite natural that they would have hatred towards written documents as object of oppression. Still when Sido, duly supported by Kanhu spoke of written documents they tried to legitimize their decision to challenge the power and authority (Guha 1983:52-55). This however does not imply that these insurgents assumed the attitude of complete indifference towards the normative order like proletarian consciousness. However even in their "negative consciousness" we see a tactical, strategic stance towards normative order. The blurring of cultural codes took place side by side bringing a sharp distinction of the two worlds--- *diku* and their own.

Mounting quantitative determinants like oppression by *dikus* or dispossession from the land by local authorities did create large scale alienation for the peasantry through out history of colonial India. Guha shows how such alienation widely pervaded the mentality of the adivasis in Chota Nagpur areas even after "transfer of power". The wide spread history of oppression leading to alienation led to a situation, whereby *diku* came to include all --- non-autochthones, class enemies like *jamindars*, moneylenders and even sections of adivasis population who were in the pay-role of *jamindars* or moneylenders. Such antagonism towards *dikus* on the other hands had its historical roots in wide scale land appropriation by the outsiders in the colonial era. In fact Guha cites that how even official records accepted appropriation of land as chief cause of insurgencies in these areas. "*We have reasons to believe that lands were taken by the Rajah and the Jaggerdars from Coles or Raoteeas and given to*

Farmers for an increase of Revenue, and it is easy to understand that the ousted parties would try by all means to recover their lands." (Quoted in Guha 1983: 287). The following statement made by Singrai, the *Kol*, testifies for the widespread alienation that adivasis faced due to dispossession from land, looting of their resources by local authorities: "*They have taken away from us our trees, fishes, lands and jagirs*" (pp. 287). However Guha's proposition is that insurgents' relationship with the colonial power and structure of domination cannot be understood with simple reference to these quantitative negative determinants like oppressive alienation inflicted by *dikus* or alienation of land. While these factors played its part decisively, the relationship was mediated by positive determinants of ethnic space and physical space as well. Guha argues that official records and even later day historiography insist again and again to see these insurrections as conflict of ethnic groups i.e. *dikus* versus *adivasis*. However the fact is negative determinants like oppressive relationship with the other and alienation of land, transformed in something qualitatively different which defines these movements as anti-colonial in nature. The anti-colonial character of these movements imbibed a certain consciousness of class and *diku* as class enemies and colonial power as alien foreign power. Parallelism extends beyond the simple quantitative determinants, as adivasis started asserting its own identity on the line of ethnic space (among other factors). The domain of insurgency in each case is considered to be coinciding with the tribe itself. It tended to permeate the entire diaspora. Guha quotes from Major Sutherland's comment on *Kol* disturbances, 1832, "*The insurrection had no limit but that which it found in the class of people by which it was instigated. Had the country between Chota Nagpore and Calcutta on the one hand and Benares on the other been inhabited by Dangerous Coles, the insurrection would have spread to those places. The Coles are one large family which can unite for any purpose good or bad...*" (Quoted in Guha 1983: 286). Therefore Guha argues that besides the ethnic self, at the moment of insurgencies there was a consciousness of itself as a body of insurgents for the adivasis. This consciousness is what Guha refers to as the marker of anti-colonial character of these insurgencies. Its articulation might vary, but there was a definitive worldview from which all these insurgencies looked at *sahib* (the foreigner). To take one example, Sido and Kanhu repeatedly stressed on the fact that their struggle is against sins

committed by *jamindars*, *moneylenders* and as well as *sahibs* who have occupied lands rightfully belonging to them.

The physical space was another parameter of consciousness for these insurgents. If alienation of land pushed them to the degree of alienation that they were forced to contest the power; in and through the insurgencies the question of land had a qualitative transformation too. The fight for land was often transgressed to become the fight for homeland. The physical space with their distinct boundaries in terms of rivers, mountains then functioned as a positive determinant to mark the spatial boundary of the insurgents' aim to free from oppression and alien presences. The insurrection stood, Guha opines, as the consciously defined space for them.

Along with ethnic space and physical space, another factor comes into define the consciousness of the insurgents is time. Often, Guha notes, these insurgents had a notion of glorious, prosperous mythical time which used to exist in the past for them. With intrusions of the alien other such prosperity and glory had declined leading to complete impoverishment of their present. Therefore often this consciousness of a mythical time, Guha tries to show elaborates their future. The direct correlation of qualitative aspect and the dimension of temporality is hard to miss here. Guha gives us the example of Birsa who borrowed certain notion of mythical time from Hindu notion of time and described the past/present duality as *satjug/kaljug*. He persistently referred to *satjug* as the time of prosperity, peace and moral purity when *Mundas* used to be ruled by the creator, *Nirajan*. In comparison, *Kaljug* was the rule by the queen *Mandodori* (the wife of Ravana). It was characterised by impoverishment, moral degradation and oppression. Over here, the parallel between Queen Victoria and colonial state and queen *Mandodori* is instructive. It proves beyond any doubt that for Birsa, it was another way of making sense of their present and rejecting it and in place bringing a future structured around that mythical past.

Guha, as we have mentioned earlier sees these insurrections as anti-colonial struggle. To support his argument, he shows all the above instances of fragmented consciousness. On the axis of consciousness, he, being a Marxist tries to bring in the concept of subjectivity as the mediating point between colonial state and the communities, chiefly adivasis and peasantry. This enables him to write a different historiography on the basis of a Marxist sociological analysis of this colonial period,

stretching from 19th century to 20th century. However, not only that, he sees in this history a key to understand later period as well. For him later peasant movements like Tebhaga Movement, 1946 can only be described only when we acknowledge this emerging consciousness. He accepts that their struggle failed to conceptualize the domain of nation. They were constricted with their co-residential solidarity and primordial loyalties. Localism had raised its head time and again to restrict the scope of these movements in critical junctures. He in fact acknowledges the fact that colonial state's successful use of the sections of peasantry or adivasis to subvert the movements proves the fact that ethnicity as a basis of solidarity would always fail to replace importance of class solidarity in true emancipatory movements of Marxist variation. Still his insistence on paying close attention to these elementary aspects of peasant insurgencies stems from the fact that he identifies something ethically and politically new in the emergence of their subjectivity and consciousness. He urges us to register the qualitative difference that these insurgencies were aiming at beyond the structure of semi-feudal domination. However Guha's notion of subjectivity has a circular character. It thwarts the realisation of its full radical potential in articulating a theory of subject, as a point of mediation between state and community. He defines subjectivity with reference to autonomy and consciousness. On the other hand he argues that presence of consciousness stands as a proof of insurgents' subjectivity. He falls short of articulating from where such autonomy comes or consciousness emerges. In that context as we have tried showing our theses on subject and subjectivity perfectly explains Guha's circular conclusions. Guha's history of insurgent movements perfectly shows how the insurgencies were a situation of exception. It indicates the quantitative determinants preceding such exceptional situation. In the end, the history also speaks volumes about qualitative shift in terms of consciousness. As we can see insurgents are the ones, who from the perspective of collective ethnic identity register such qualitative shift. However this collective identity was in and through the insurgencies were much more complex phenomenon than simple ethnic identity. As we have seen ethnic space intervened to create self-awareness of what Guha refers to as "body of insurgents". To remember Sutherland, as an ethnic group (he refers to it as class) they were indeed as family; but something incapacitated them in reality to come together with reference to qualitatively different dimension of physical space (home land), qualitatively different time (*Kaljug*) than

what their present had to offer. This 'something' is what we have referred to as subject. It is an operator which has registered such qualitative shift; which has enabled such bonding together on the basis of those qualitative shifts. *Most importantly --- to propose a corollary to our theses --- as 'body of insurgents', "subject", they also resemble the exceptional figure of homo sacer (in the sense of Naked Life).* If we see, to take the one example of time, as insurgents they have rejected the present therefore they don't belong to the present. On the other hand, they are aspiring to belong in a future, fashioned around a past in which they never belonged. Is not it the same exceptional situation of Homo Sacer who can be killed but cannot be sacrificed; who neither belongs to human order nor to divine order. Or to think differently, for Agamben paradigm of government is now that of a juridico-political reality of a camp. Camp as a juridico-political order is a space where inside is captured outside. Guha's insurgents on the other hand are forced out of their lands. They are now outsiders in the eyes of colonial state. But in their conscious articulation of a 'home land' which occurs in simultaneity of their struggle against colonial state, are not they also trying to capture inside (their consciousness of physical space as their own 'home land') in outside (because in the eyes of the colonial state vis-à-vis that actual physical space they are outsiders having no right). This however signifies a radical departure from Agamben's notion of homo sacer who is the inseparable, structural counterpart of sovereign power. Over here, we see that the insurgents themselves assume the status of homo sacer acting like a sovereign. In trying to reclaim their sovereignty they are homo sacer. *So subject is a figure of homo sacer who simultaneously preserves the capacity of being sovereign.*

Before concluding we must note that Partha Chatterjee after almost twenty years in his analysis also aspired to achieve an ethically new space for politics with his notion of 'autonomy' enjoyed by political society. However as we have tried to show in the preceding chapter that theoretically he fails to do so precisely because he cannot break away from the practical "fictive relationship" that his political society shares with citizenship. His political society never constitutes a new subjectivity whose point of reference is something qualitatively different from citizen subject. Unlike Guha's peasant insurgents who try to come out of the very structure of domination from their subjective articulation, political society's subjective articulation is always in the last instance structurally limited by the sovereign state's

discourse of right bearing citizens. In Chatterjee, the concept of subjectivity has slanted towards Foucauldian notion in the end subverting such assumptions like consciousness, autonomy. This trend as Sumit Sarkar argues has led to decline of the subaltern in subaltern studies (in fact he criticizes Chatterjee quite heavily for using Foucault quite out of context. A point that we have tried emphasizing on differently) (Sarkar 2010). Sumit Sarkar's main argument is that later subaltern studies writers including Chatterjee has moved away from a Marxist definition (Gramscian in precise) of the subaltern as Guha enumerates and have increasingly adopted a cultural definition. This lacuna restricts application of Chatterjee's concept of political society to understand different processes that is unfolding in India, especially socio-political situations trying to break away from sovereign state's discourse on legality, rights from a different aspiring subjective position. This is indeed ironical given that Guha's early subaltern study and its conclusions, on other hand specifically try mapping similar socio-political situations from colonial time. Therefore Guha's argument --- when stretched to its full potentiality, as we attempted above --- seems to have more direct relevance in explaining today's reality with reference to questions of Maoism and the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh.

Chapter 3

Theorising Emergence of Subject (II): Subjectivity of the Oppressed and Vanguard

In the preceding chapter from a theoretical point of view we have tried conceptualizing the emergence of subject in various contexts. Using Marxist theory of the state we have tried showing that how politics of the proletariat is nothing but understanding or being conscious of the nature of state and how to struggle against it from the subjective position of revolutionary subject. We have also seen that in this politics of the proletariat, the state of exception is a prevailing ontological condition. The subjectivity of the revolutionary proletariat is also marked by an ability to see the world of power, as enshrined in the state from a qualitatively different perspective than what is simply given. In the end, grounding these two conclusions in the work of Ranajit Guha (1983), we have tried arguing how in the Indian scenario, such a subjectivity attributed to the proletariat may also be noted in the context of communities of adivasis, peasants. With these conclusions, this chapter wants to present an account of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh as an empirical elaboration of the theoretical conclusions that we have till now reached and at the same time we also try to provide a theoretical answer to our last theoretical question: **How do we understand the relation between subject resisting state-power and other organized political forces contesting state-power at the same site?** To put in the context, **how do the adivasis of Lalgarh resist state-power and what relationship do they establish with CPI(Maoist), an organized political force contesting the Indian state in course of their resistance?**

The first section is a detailed account of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh. In the next section, we try to analyse the relationship of the adivasi community with CPI(Maoist) as a vanguard. Any analysis of this adivasi resistance cannot be completed without a discussion the relationship between these two forces. However as

empirical information on the existing relationship between the adivasis and CPI(Maoist), is scarce, we rely on commentaries and interpretation by the intellectuals to initiate a theoretical engagement.

Section-I

Towards understanding aspects of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh

Politics of the state, politics of the governed

Politics of the state: thirty years of CPI(M) led-LFG till the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh, 2008

Any discussion on the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh must be contextualized in the political economic development in West Bengal in last fifty years, a period stretched between India's independence and India's effort to liberalize its economy and thereby polity to link up with the global order. West Bengal's political economic history of this period is very unique. From 1940s to the end of 1960s, West Bengal politics has been a whirlwind with two much discussed peasant rebellions, *Tebhaga* movement and *Naxalbari* uprising, trying to revolutionize the existing economic and political relationship in favour of the oppressed (section of population including landless, semi landless, sharecroppers, lower caste). In the late 70s, *Naxalbari* militancy being repressed by state-power, CPI(M) led Left Front Government (henceforth LFG) came to capture power with moderate, reformist left slogan of land reform and decentralization of power. Since then, West Bengal's polity, till the beginning of the new millennium exhibited remarkable stability. LFG have managed to be in state-power for more than thirty years uninterruptedly. However in its recent phase, almost repeating the history, West Bengal saw a series of resistances in Singur, Nandigram, Haripur. The adivasi resistance in Lalgarh is the latest addition to the list and the most formidable, organized resistance too, led by CPI(Maoist). So no doubt, to understand such a resistance, we must probe into the past of West Bengal politics, led by CPI(M) to grasp the break and continuity of political economic development in West Bengal.

Tebhaga and Naxalbari uprisings: 1940 -1970, the turbulent time of West Bengal

1940 to 1970, the period was a tumultuous time for West Bengal politics. The state politics first saw *Tebhaga* movement, just before the independence and then *Naxalbari* uprising. Both the movements were peasants' movements of landless, semi-landless peasants of rural West Bengal. *Tebhaga* movement was principally a movement of the sharecroppers demanding share of two-third of cultivation (the name of the movement is drawn from this specific demand where instead of customary division of cultivation in two halves; they demanded dividing it in three parts, of which one third goes to the land lord and two third remains with the cultivator) instead of customary division of crops in halves between zamindars and cultivators. In *Naxalbari* uprising, lowest strata of peasants and rural society in unison rose up against feudal oppression, increasing marginalization with the ultimate slogan of 'land to the tiller'.

The *Tebhaga* movement which stretched from 1946 to 1947 is the most intense and widespread sharecropper's struggle in the pre-independence era in West Bengal (Cooper 1988). The movement was launched for the first time in the month of September, 1946 under the leadership Bengal Province Kishan Sabha (now on BPKS). It was a loose consolidation of militant dissident members of Congress and Communist Party of India (CPI),¹ which around this period developed a tense relationship with Congress. In the early days of the movement, the demand for *Tebhaga* was sporadically raised in parts of Bengal --- in North Bengal, in parts of Maymansingh (part of Bengal province now in Bangladesh) and also in districts like Medinipur. In Tamaluk, Medinipur, sharecroppers demanded reduction of interest in paddy loans, no eviction except in emergencies besides their demand for *Tebhaga*. At this phase of the movement, it was more of sporadic initiatives of activists of BPKS rather than a policy of the Sabha that decided the course of the movement. Gradually, the movement grew some momentum by November, 1946, as in several areas BPKS made concrete suggestions to peasants that peasants should harvest the crop collectively with the assistance of group of volunteers. Then harvest should be taken to *khamar*, where keeping aside landlord's share of one third, rest would be

¹ Later this organization would turn into a mass organization of CPI

distributed among the peasants, in presence of *Kishan* leaders and activists. By December, 1946, the paddy was ripe for harvesting in north Bengal, the field was guarded by *kishan* volunteers, armed with *lathis* and then was taken to *khamars*. A compromise with rich peasants i.e. peasant holding ten *bighas* or less was reached. In places peasants started demanding that *jamindars* should give them receipts acknowledging the payment of his share and also acknowledging voluntary change in customary law. By January, 1947 the movement spread across Bengal and its organization, mobilization took definite shape. In fact, *Tebhaga elaka* (area) came into existence as liberated zone. Sharecroppers, landless, semi-landless peasants not only started controlling aspect of payment of rent, decisions of harvesting, pattern of cropping, they started taking up other village related issues also. *Kishan* samity in the name of *Tebhaga* committee started setting up people's court in receiving complaint against landlords. Peasants in places went and arrested *jamindars* for being alleged to harm peasants. Following this, in these areas across Bengal, known as *Tebhaga elaka*, repression grew intense and policy of direct resistance was taken up. In places like Rangpur, Midnapur, Maymansingh, Jalpaiguri efforts were made to extend *Tebhaga* even beyond the *Tebhaga elaka*. However harvest season was over soon and new contract had to be made with *jamindars* over tenant's right. In between repression became stronger with *jamindars* also regrouping with their own armed groups acting with police. Following this the movement started dissipating and the leaders mostly now underground being threatened to be arrested, as a member of illegal organization i.e. BPKS, adopted the policy of retreat. This policy of retreat more or less ensured that the movement in coming months of 1947 became weaker and weaker (cooper 1988).

With the beginning of 1950s CPI adopted the party line of peaceful parliamentary path of uniting people in a capitalist country like India rejecting the Chinese line of identifying Indian scenario as semi-feudal. The program of protracted peasant armed struggle was also abandoned as CPI's program. A thin stream of criticism however stayed alive inside CPI. On the international level, CPI stood in solidarity with Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalin regime in Russia; Charu Majumder, then a member of CPI, strongly criticised this line and upheld Stalin's line. On the national level also, Majumder argued that Sino-India border dispute was

India's aggression on socialist China contrary to what party's stand of extending its support to Nehru-government (Basu 2000).

Most striking development in this time is in the period 1958-62, when Kishan Sabha of North Bengal decided to revive the demand of *Tebhaga* in north Bengal and struggle against *jotedars*, *jamindars*. Under the leadership of Majumder, *Kanu Sanyal* and other leftist forces in CPI, the movement became more and more militant. The leadership of the North Bengal remained underground and started launching an armed struggle. Towards the end of 1962, CPI leadership instructed Majumder and other leaders of the movement to stop the militant struggle. Majumder abided by the party line; however also became completely inactive. These developments and growing dissidents voice inside CPI ultimately led to formation of CPI(M) in 1964 in Calcutta. However in CPI(M), one dominant section described Indian situation as a capitalist-bourgeois following CPI's line of argument. In opposition, a pro-Chinese Maoist line argued in terms of including bourgeois classes complicit role in neo-colonialism and also argued in favour of extra-parliamentary struggle along with parliamentary line. Charu Majumder, Saroj Dutta, Ajjul Haque, *Kanu Sanyal* etc. --- later day *Naxalbari* and CPI(ML) leadership --- joined CPI(M) but they remained the left faction even within CPI(M) (Basu 2000).

By 1967, the crisis in CPI(M) caused by the tussle between right and left tendency was deep. Charu Majumder and other leaders from the left faction started mobilizing peasants in North Bengal as small guerrilla groups to fight against feudal forces in the rural India. They were following Mao's idea of New Democratic revolution in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country where peasant must be armed and a protracted struggle must be waged against the state to forcefully overthrow it. The movement started with *Naxalbari* peasants coming together and forcefully resisting jamindar's forces and police in North Bengal in 1967. CPI(M) leadership highly critical of such an adventurist line stayed away from the movement and asked its cadres to stay away as well. CPI(M) by 1967 also came into state-power as an allied force with Congress in West Bengal. This development sharpened the debate more, subsequently leading to formation of CPI(ML). Under the CPI(ML) leadership the movement stretched till 1970s, with students also participating in urban areas especially in Calcutta. This has been another feature of *Naxalbari* movement where

an effort was made to encircle the cities with villages through a united struggle of people, including landless, semi-landless peasants, oppressed castes and also students (see Majumder 2008).

By the time, around 1972-3, *Naxalbari* uprising was crushed with severe repression by Congress-led state government. Most of the leaders of *Naxalbari* uprising, were either killed or arrested, leaving a vacuum for the lowest militant strata of the society without any leadership. In the mean time, CPI (M) won the election by 1977 forming Left Front government independent of Congress.

The CPI(M) was lauded by academicians studying trends in Indian democracy of that time for its social democratic practices what they believed to be leading India to a possibility of redistributive system. Kohli, Dreze or Sen, (Kohli 1987; Dreze & Sen 1997) along with World Bank appreciated its pro-people reformism ultimately resulting into effective governance especially in rural society. They noted that the party's ideological commitment to certain classes who are not propertied as the main reason for the regime's success (Harris 1993; also See Gupta 1995). However John Harris in his longitudinal study in three villages in Birbhum district of West Bengal concludes that indeed CPI(M)-led LFG succeeded in bringing in certain improvement in the condition of rural poverty through their agrarian reforms. However he suggests there was no direct evidence to conclude even hypothetically that such reforms brought any change in rural structure by untying the personal interlocking (Harris 1993).

Basu (2001) argues that CPI (M)'s victory came through its large support among middle class peasants and hegemonising the lowest militant strata which was in complete disarray due to lack of leadership. The process of hegemonisation as even other authors have frequently pointed out came through with sustaining myth of land reforms by Operation *Barga* and decentralization of power through Panchayat samitis.

Operation Barga and Pachayati Raj --- Hegemony of middle class: 1980-2000, the stable phase of West Bengal politics

Operation *Barga* as it is known in the context of West Bengal politics is an extension of the policies of land reforms. Green revolution in terms of technological development in agriculture was associated with land reforms in changing the rural

relation. However in West Bengal context, it was thought that Green revolution, in the absence of an effective land reforms had been leading to increasing contradiction in rural economy. Green revolution by strengthening big landlords and rich peasants was running the risk of turning red. UF government therefore decided to withdraw bureaucratic, administrative and police support off the landlord and rich peasant classes with respect to land dispute, unless and until there was bloodshed. It rather concentrated on giving protection to *bargadars*, landless peasants and labourers from getting evicted from land. With this stated aim, land reforms in West Bengal came to occupy the status of operation *Barga*. Being a part of UF government, CPI(M)'s role in this new orientation towards land reform was decisive. (see Konar, 1969)².

West Bengal rural society was undergoing some crucial structural changes before and after independence. In pre-independence with absentee 'Bhadralok' landlords, West Bengal rural society was marked by following classes: the actual peasants cultivating their own land; and those who purchased 'raiyaats' (i.e. rights) but did not cultivate, leasing it out to share croppers. This hierarchy assumed to evolve into types of tenancies found in post-independence phase as sections of small cultivating landlord with proprietary rights; peasants with semi-proprietary rights cultivating themselves; and under raiyat, share croppers etc. being different varieties of tenants with little or no rights. Undoubtedly the last stratum was acutely impoverished and subject to all forms of insecurities (konar 1969).

Decentralization of power through Panchayati Raj was another crucial political issue that factored in CPI(M) led LFG's victory in 1977 state election and subsequent elections to follow till the beginning of new millennium. According to the West Bengal Panchayat Act., 1973, with LFG coming to power after 14 years on 4th June, 1978, Panchayat election happened in West Bengal electing 56000 thousand representatives for 15 zilla parishads, 324 panchayat samitis and 3242 gram panchayats. Gram Panchayat is the lowest level electoral unit covering around population of 10000 in 10-12 villages. It has 15-20 seats of representatives elected in every five years. An electorate composed of 700 voters elect one representative. Gram Panchayat is headed by 'pradhan' and 'upa-pradhan' elected among themselves by

² A minister of UF and a member of CPI(M), Binoy Konar delivered this lecture on land reforms, in IAS training Academy, Shimla, 1969.

gram Panchayat members. Over gram panchayat there are panchayat samitis covering around 100-130 villages and headed by 'sabhapati'. Above this, comes the zilla parishad which is led by 'sabadipati'. The local administration, through Block development officer works in tandem with Panchayat samitis; this ensures some control of the people over the bureaucratic administration as well. To the credit of LFG in West Bengal, it is the only state, where since 1978 Panchayat election has happened in every five years in a regular manner (see Poromesh 1993; Maitreesh and Ghtak 2002).

While distribution did take place under Operation Barga, but it was not in terms of redistributive system ending inequality. It rather strengthened the dominance of middle peasantry firmly in rural West Bengal (Basu 2001). In West Bengal emerged a new-kulak in the form of middle peasantry as dominant force allied with rich, landed class of peasants. Banerjee (2008) takes stock of both these 'achievements' in a recent context, *"In West Bengal, for instance, land reforms remained partial and imperfect, and the "immediate relief" in the shape of land redistribution and other benefits went awry when certain sections (patronised by the party to extend its organisation) cornered most of the benefits and have today developed into a powerful new rural CPI(M) sub-elite of panchayat pradhans, rich farmers, traders and contractors in some districts. For their own "immediate relief", they siphon off funds meant for development works and divert food stocks from the public distribution system to the black market (which led to anti-CPI(M) public outbursts in West Bengal some months ago)"*.

Basu (2001) argues that though Operation *Barga* was launched by CPI(M), the fact remains in West Bengal system of *Bargadari* has never been very popular. In most cases, peasants farming took place either with family labour or hired labour or combination of both. Land covered under *Bargadari* therefore remained quite less compared to land cultivated with above measures. Since this is the case it is no surprise that landless labourers in West Bengal peasantry was the another effect that Operation *Barga* completely failed to address besides the question of land. NSS data on land ownership from the 37th round in 1982 shows that between the period of 1962 to 1982, landlessness increased to 17.31%. West Bengal, under LFG remained one of very few states where such steep rate of landlessness was recorded. Also, in 1982,

NSS data shows that only 6.9% household (having more than 5 acres of land) had almost 41% of total cultivated land, indicating a high degree of concentration of land (See Harris 1993). Another crucial question that Operation *Barga* never addressed is the question of cost sharing. All the cost had to be borne by the tenants whereas rich or middle peasants who were hiring the land out did have to bear the brunt. Moreover official figures show while up till 2000, 10,38000 acres land was redistributed; 6,28264 acres of land was already distributed prior 1977 (the year when LFG came to power). This means while UF government managed to distribute 60% land in less than decade time; LFG, has managed to distribute 40% in more than two decades. It does not simply mean Congress rule was much more effective and LFG has been failure. It is rather a much deep political question. Basu argues the phase of five years when maximum land distribution was possible was also the phase of militant mass mobilization. In the period between 1967-72 when *Naxalbari* uprising was at its peak, 6 lakh acres of land was vested in terms of ceiling surplus land --- a figure which is unparallel in terms proportion of land vested in coming decades. However in the absence of any such movements in LFG regime, the reform basically has come to aid the middle and rich peasantry. LFG also shying away from any such political program actually proves their complicity with this dominant section. While rate of minimum wage increased scarcely little in tandem of price rice, LFG in West Bengal never implemented taxation on agricultural income. LFG's favourable position towards rich, land owing class exempting from taxation on the one hand and on the other aiding them by steep food pricing. Noting all these developments, Basu then argues that gradually with realisation that LFG was here to stay rich landed, propertied section started coming in support of LFG, being in alliance with dominant middle stratum of the society.

If this was the economic transformation, it had to have political ramification as well. Though CPI(M)-led LFG has always championed 1974 Panchayat election as a stepping stone for decentralization of power in rural West Bengal, Basu poses the question that with an economic reformism heavily tilted towards middle strata and middle-rich strata, is any form of political equality is at all feasible? The three-tier Panchayat system indeed replaced the bureaucracy from the position of importance. Sabhadipatis in gram or district level started wielding power that erstwhile preserved for the bureaucracy by the state. However this does not imply that caste, gender and

class bias of power-sharing was anyway altered in that whole process. *“It is interesting to note that almost all the sabhadipatis belong to the upper strata of rural society with a bhadrak background. A few sabhapatis of panchayat samitis may be from lower castes but never from lower classes. The most important question, however, is the class background of the district party leadership (of the CPI(M)). In a system of so-called democratic centralism, it is the party secretary who holds the ultimate authority, though there may be a few exceptions. And a party secretary with a labouring background is unusual. The overall domination of the privileged classes over the decentralised power structure, as a result, remains without being seriously challenged”* (quoted in Basu 2001: 1339). Now the BJP-TMC representing the feudal, landed class is now trying to co-opt the lower strata against this politics of middle-classness. This, according to Basu, explains the spiralling violence in rural west Bengal in early years of new millennium.³

The adivasi resistance in Lalgarh: politics of the state in new millennium

Profile of Lalgarh as a part of rural west Bengal bears some direct evidences in support of Basu or others’ argument against the myth of land reforms and decentralization of power. The place called Lalgarh is located near Jhargram in the north-western side of West Medinipur district of West Bengal. It is an area heavily forested and hilly, inhabited by adivasis, mostly Snathals. However other adivasi communities like *Mundas*, *Shabars*, *lodhas* are also part of the population of 1.94 lakh. The adivasi population is not highly hierarchized. Both men and women equally participate in all forms of occupation that is available. There are few schools in the area, thereby literacy rate is reported to be very low. Handful has been able to procure college level education in the past (Sarkar & Sarkar 2009)

Lalgarh as an area covers 93,896 hectare of land. Out of this cultivated land is 41,916 hectare. But only 12.5% of land comes under irrigation facilities. Most irrigable land is also owned by upper section non-adivasi population (in most cases CPI(M) cadres) leaving a huge section of the population completely dependent on

³ The validity of Basu’s analysis of socio-political situation ten years back, seems in retrospect can be registered more certainly with recent development and TMC’s overwhelming victory in state election with the slogan of *Ma-mati-manus* (Mother-land-human beings)--- a very leftist slogan from a party who is utterly status-quoist in its alliance politics.

rain-water harvesting in small plots of land or migrant labour in others land. The direct result of such a socio-economic situation is more than 50% living under below poverty line. Only 6.5% have access to pure drinking water. In almost 623 villages there is no electricity (see report published by West Bengal Development Corporation, collected and collated by IIT, Kharagpur; also See Bhattacharya 2009a). 59% of Lalgarh is forest land. Lalgarh's subsistence economy in absence of other opportunities heavily depends on natural resources available from jungle. However this source of income has also been absent in recent years as government has claimed this forest to be reserved barring any entry to it (see Sarkar & Sarkar 2009; Fact Finding Report, DSU, 2009).

Structure of dominance in Lalgarh: Harmads as an axis of power and domination

Sumanta Banerjee explains in the wake of Lalgarh in November, 2008, post Nadigram and Singur that *"In West Bengal...land reforms remained partial and imperfect, and the "immediate relief" in the shape of land redistribution and other benefits went awry when certain sections (patronised by the party to extend its organisation) cornered most of the benefits and have today developed into a powerful new rural CPI(M) subelite of Panchayat pradhans, rich farmers, traders and contractors in some districts. For their own "immediate relief", they siphon off funds meant for development works and divert food stocks from the public distribution system to the blackmarket (which led to anti-CPI(M) public outbursts in West Bengal some months ago)." He carries onto gives us the picture of urban centre "In the state's urban areas too, the "immediate relief" has accrued to a class of lumpen-bourgeois (real estate agents and their musclemen described in the current Anglo-Bengali parlance as "promoters"), who again with the help of local CPI(M) politicians and the administration, have taken over prime lands from farmers to set up luxurious housing complexes and shopping malls (as in Rajarhat on the outskirts of Kolkata)." (Banerjee 2008: 13).*

In this complex political economic situation of West Bengal, post 2000 an industrial policy was set up which made the situation almost exceptional. With the help of neo-liberal policies that UPA was following in the centre, LFG opened up several industrial projects all over West Bengal on exceptional terms. While in Lalgarh, Jindal Steel was given land in terms of SEZ (an exceptional provision of

acquiring land for Industrial development. On places where the project is set up is exempted from several norms and regulations otherwise applicable for other industrial projects.), in Singur for example land was given to TATA on terms and conditions which make 'exceptional' relaxations for the corporate. In this situation, the peasants, adivasis objected to such land grab for industrialization opposing the very inequitable terms and conditions (see Banerjee 2008, Bandopadhyay 2008). In case of Lalgarh, such protests took a particular form, through interventions of PCPA against Police-*Harmads*-forest mafias laying bare the very structure of domination in rural Bengal.

Harmad is a salwa-judum styled private militia group that CPI(M) has been employing in rural West Bengal for quite sometime as a form of extra-legal authority. Several reports (DSU 2009; Sarkar & Sarkar 2009; Bora & Das 2009) indicate that in Lalgarh specially, *Harmad* has been a part and parcel of the structure of domination with coercion. With recent debate between Chidambaram, the Home Minister of India and Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, Chief Minister of West Bengal on existence of *Harmad* camps in *Jangal Mahal* and the incident of Netai killings of innocent villagers by *Harmads*, as reported in media, it is now beyond doubt that *Harmad* as a structure of oppression and coercion does exist in rural West Bengal, as counter-part of Salwa Judum. Netai incident has clearly brought out the similarities with reference to recruitment policies and other structural features that *Harmads* and Sawa Judum share. In absence of proper study on *Harmads*, it would be useful to look into works dealing with Salwa Judum to understand the manner of functioning of such private-militia group as a part of state's coercive apparatus.

In June 2005, Salwa Judum (initially known as Jan Jagran Abhiyan) was launched as a movement to counter the Naxalites in Dantewada district in the state of Chattisgarh. Though declared to be a peaceful movement, it turned out to be a coercive step on behalf of the state with 4048 Special police Officers (SPOs) armed with guns, lathis, axes, bows and arrows. Recruited from unemployed tribal youths this paramilitary structure was given training by security forces. Now dressed in uniform, Salwa Judm activists are permitted to carry searches of houses, cars and levying illegal taxes. The effect of Salwa Judum movement has been wide-scale displacement whereby 644 villages have been affected in this region. According to official figure, as of January 2007 number of displaced people living in 20 Salwa

Judum camps reached 47, 238 (Sundar 2010). The structural patterns that emerge out of Salwa Judum movement are i) complicity of ruling political parties in the movement; ii) complicity of state forces with the movement and a direct association as coercive forces. Besides these, Sundar (2010; also see Sundar 2006) also mentions that the movement is directly funded by the state. Sundar gives several examples to show ruling party's direct involvement in the movement. Out of several incidents, she reports one incident that took place on 24th May, 2005 "*Kedar Kashyap, Prabhari Mantri (Minister in charge of the area) attended the Jan Jagaran rally at Bhairamgarh. This was also attended by Lachu Ram Kashyap, Chitrakoot MLA, Rajaram Todem, member of the CG Scheduled Tribe Commission and the Army Welfare Board Member, Vijay Tewari.*" (Sundar 2010: 40). In this context, Sundar further observes that rule of law and civil administration has been a complete breakdown in these areas with Salwa Judum activists becoming the vigilante group having right to control, intimidate and punish anyone, suspected for being Naxalites. In this Sundar also notes the tacit and active support of the security forces for Salwa Judum, as the movement has now reached its second phase, referred to as "Operation Green Hunt". Hereby Salwa Judum activists are called Koya commandoes, in uniform moving with paramilitary, security forces clearing up areas by burning, looting villages, forcing people to flee (Sundar 2010).

Accounts similar to Salwa Judum can be found in case of *Harmads* as well. To start with a recent example as already mentioned, in Netai incident, Lalgah it was widely reported in media that a *Harmad* camp was set up in nearby areas by the riverside. *Harmads* were coming to the villages, forcing people to cook for them and later they started demanding persons from each family to join the camps. Villagers coming to know that few of *Harmad* activists are staying in the house of one local CPI(M) leader, who is a school teacher by profession gheraoed the house and started protesting. In retaliation, *Harmad* activists opened fire on villagers killing people on the spot. It was also reported in the media that villagers alleged that though police was reported on time, they only reached after almost six hours to the scene (See "Blood in CPM Camp- Seven Killed in Lalgah", *The Telegraph* 8th January &

“Netai: A tale of torture, rebellion and suppression” *The Statesman*, 9th January⁴). Another report from early phase of the adivasi resistance in Lalgah in local newspaper *Ananda Bazaar Patrika* gives a vivid account of activities of *Harmads* without naming them directly. “An active member of People’s Committee against Police Terror from Belpahari was killed on Sunday. Another member had been kidnapped. There was massive rally of the Committee at Chakadoba, Belpahari on Sunday afternoon. The murder took place in the same morning. Chhatradhar Mahato, leader of the Committee alleges, “Police, CPI(M) and a band of agents of theirs are launching such attacks on us so as to sabotage the rally.”... Mr. Nirmal Sardar had gone to have his morning tea at the Charakpahari Mor as was his daily routine. He was gunned down there. Srimatidebi, Nirmalbabu’s mother, says, “Two strangers came looking for him as soon as he had gone out. I told them he had gone to take tea.” Nirmalbabu was killed at around eight thirty. According to eye witnesses, about eight armed people, their faces covered in black cloth, had surrounded him. Five shots were fired, Nirmalbabu died on the spot.” (Ananda Bazar Patrika, 26th Jan, 2009)

Quite similar to Chattisgarh where BJP leader Mahendra Karma has been one of the few in chalking out and giving active participation to Salwa Judum Movement (Sundar 2010, 2006) in West Bengal few names of CPI(M) leaders have been associated with ‘*Harmad vahini*’ for leading the private militia. Partha Sarathi Roy reports in *Sanhati* “The CPI(M) has tried to hit back at the adivasis in Garbeta, one of their strongholds where the movement had spread in recent days. After the public statement of the notorious CPI(M) minister from Garbeta, Sushanta Ghosh, about the “correct medicine (*dawai*)” for the adivasi revolt, CPI(M) cadres attacked the protesters in Garbeta and looted 30 cycles, 2 motor cycles and 12 thousand rupees. As a result, the movement has added two more demands to the original 11 demands, return of these looted items and compensation for the people injured in this attack.” (Archive: Lalgah Movement: Mass Uprisings of adivasis in West Bengal, *Sanhati.org*). In fact from state government’s side there was a tacit approval to the fact that there was some validity in such claims when state government on December 7,

⁴ Most of the news paper reports quoted here in this chapter are taken from *Lalgah Archive*, *sanhati.org*

2008 agreed to a probe in police and as well as CPI(M) activists' involvement in atrocities (The Statesman, Dec 7, 2009). In Sanbad Pratidin, another Bengali daily a report published on 12.04.2010 gives a detail account of *Harmads* camps according to Intelligence Reports of the state. Not so surprisingly as Sundar observes in case of Salwa Judum these camps are stacked with heavy artilleries and automatic weapons including rifle, 12 bore gun pistol, SLR, hand grenade and even AK47 etc. Members in a camp may vary from 35-40 to 80-100. However interesting point is to note that these camps are set up in Panchayat office (Kangshabati Gram Panchayat) to schools, CPI(M)'s party office like in Goaltore, Shakia etc. It conclusively proves the overlapping between CPI(M) cadres and private militia called *Harmads*. Moreover in Fact Finding Report, DSU (2009) we see that villagers of Lalgargh has taken names of several CPI(M) leader as notorious leader of *Harmads*. Anuj Pandey, one of them is reported to amass wealth from embezzlement of funds, siphoning off several development schemes for his own benefit. He used to have a palatial house which was later destroyed by the villagers after he had fled. Not only that he was also reported to have numbers of motorcycles in his house which villagers told the members of the fact finding team that those used to be put to use by *Harmads* for their routine raids aiming to terrorize the villagers. In fact a report from *Sanhati* about a press conference by District Magistrate of Bankura corroborates the fact there was rampant corruption and mismanagement on behalf of the authority, *"The district administration said today that the failure to utilise funds meant for rural development, especially in certain tribal dominated areas in Bankura, is responsible for the continued tribal agitation in villages adjacent to the jungle. The district authorities have also initiated intensive mapping of areas where movements have taken place, following the Election Commission's recommendations. While mapping the troubled areas, the district administration has found that 56 villages are reeling under severe crises. "A section of South Bankura villages have become troublesome, and we have learnt that the failure to fulfil demands for basic amenities is the root of these troubles. I have sought explanations from five BDOs as to why development work are still pending," said Mr Sundar Majumdar, DM, Bankura, at a Press conference in the district headquarters. SP, Mr Vishal Garg, was also present at the Press conference."* (Sanhati.org 8th April, 2009). The power nexus of CPI(M) leaders, government authorities heavily relied on CPI(M) leaders and their cadres known as *Harmads*

opened up a whole new structure of domination--- leading to corruption, siphoning off funds as already noted--- through direct coercion. *"...(T)he CPI(M) has targeted anyone who has dared to show dissent against their corrupt practices, misappropriation of funds and non-implementation of government schemes. Whether it is work under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) or funds allocated under the Indira Awas Yojana, it seems that local leaders of the party always grab a major share of the pie for their own cadres and supporters."* (Bora & Das 2009: 15). While these bits and pieces of official declaration, mainstream media, fact finding reports help us to get an fragmented picture, the succinct elaboration on actual existential condition come as a whole from one open letter written by PCPA. *"Before November 2008 uprising in Jangal Mahal, armed goons of CPI(M) and its party activists unleashed ruthless terror on the people. All activities in the village, social, economic, political and cultural, proceeded as per their dictate. All of us had to endure silently whatever was dictated by CPI(M). The Panchayats under CPI(M) control were paradises for corruption. All activities of the Panchayats were linked to the interests of the local leaders of CPI(M) and their close associates. Beating up, murder, confinement, fines, attachment of land and property, pulling down homes, looting was common occurrence. The money earmarked for all government projects was pocketed by CPI(M) leaders. It was through these funds that leaders like Anuj Pandey constructed big, palatial buildings. None in the village was allowed to work and express opinions according to his/her own political beliefs. If CPI(M) diktat was not followed, that person had to remain imprisoned year after year in false cases."*(Open Letter 2, PCPA)

Above examples, sporadic indeed signify a rural society (in fact marginalized adivasi society in the context of Lalgarh) where a sharp contradiction is created between political-elites and marginalized section of the society due to CPI(M)'s functioning. Corrupt practices and rampant siphoning off funds by the local party leadership has given them financial opportunities otherwise acutely underdeveloped parts of West Bengal. Moreover they have also come to replace the very feudal structure with same form of authority which *Ranajit Guha* (1983) in colonial context describes as 'domination without hegemony'. Extra-legal direct coercive power in the form of *Harmads* and illegal searches, raids by police has increasingly come to secure the dominance of earlier phase when hegemonic, ideological cooption of lowest,

marginalized strata was still possible through rank and file of the cadre based CPI(M). So we must contest one fact that 'Lalgarh as a society only became violent with 'Maoist intrusion'. It was already a structurally violent society with extra legal coercion replacing other forms of exploitation through domination. Perhaps following statement, made by villagers of *Daigera* about joining meetings called by CPI(M) brings out this transitory nature of interaction between villagers and CPI(M) cadres most eloquently, "Initially they used to pay us and feed us whenever we were taken to Kolkata for any meeting. At least that was the incentive for us. But later they stopped paying us and we had to go wasting a day's work. In recent years, however, they had rather started to ask money from us whenever there was a meeting. So we get no money, waste a day's work, and over that are forced to pay them to attend their meeting". (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 21).

Structure of domination: expanding grey zones and police-Harmad dyad

Emergence of grey zone or 'zone of indistinction' comes about in the backdrop of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh in West Bengal politics. In tackling what the state-government clearly sees as a situation of exception, we see extraordinary measures were and are being taken in terms of methods and processes of governance. A grey zone emerges now through even official declaration whereby increasingly police force and *Harmads* as state-sponsored private militia starts merging. We begin with two reports published in *Sanbad Pratidin* on 10/3/2010 and 12/4/2010 to see this blurring of boundaries as persistently claimed by villagers to several fact finding teams or in open letters issued by PCPA.⁵

On 10th March it was reported that CPI(M) through Director General (DG) of police has announced a new method of recruitment in police force in *Jangal Mahal* area. It was said that even after quick appointments, there were need for almost eight to nine thousand in the police force in that area in order to control the law and order situation. Therefore to face this extra-ordinary situation, the state-government decided to bypass the usual appointment procedure through Public Service Commission (PSC). Rather to hasten the process these new recruitments would happen through by setting up a 'police recruitment board' by Kolkata Police. In this new scheme, the

⁵ These two news items are also quoted in open letter sent by PCPA.

stated target was unemployed youths. The staff reporter while reporting this also interprets this situation to be making 'unofficial' *Harmad* vahini 'official'. The basis of argument, it seems the same prevalence of simple corrupt practices where CPI(M) cadres will be preferred over any other candidates and thereby recruiting *Harmads* in uniform. However, in another report on 12th April, it was reported that such recruitment is going to take place as 'SPOs'. It would be done so according to central government guidelines. DG also reported, when asked that in Chattisgarh these SPOs have been notorious for violence, that recruitment of SPOs was going to be only of ex-police or army. Ordinary villagers like Chattisgarh won't be taken in and also in districts number of SPOs would not cross hundred to start with.

These reports, whether or not we take news paper's own interpretation on face value indicate to a process whereby a grey zone is indeed created in West Bengal's state-administrative whereby a clear separation of legally mandated state-owned unit and private militia cannot be done any more. It is quite instructive to note that for deployment of new police force be it any form or SPOs, a new recruitment policies have been put into place bypassing usual recruitment through PSC exam. Setting up a 'Police Recruitment Board' and allocating the responsibility of recruiting to it shows another structural blurring in the state-machinery.

This new situation might manifest in terms of such extra-ordinary measures on the part of state. But for people of Lalgarh it is nothing new. Police atrocities have been a part and parcel of their everyday life whereby it constitutes another axis of domination. Their persistent claims have always been that police and *Harmads* actually have been complementary force to each other in this area, which has become more complicit with in recent years. Chapa Murmu of Darigera village perhaps sums up the villagers' attitude towards *Harmads* and police in the most precise manner. From Darigera village forty people were arrested for being suspected Maoists. When villagers went to the police station and reported that all of them are actually members of Jharkhand party, police refused to release them and said they are Jharkhand party members at the day time and Maoists at night. Reacting sharply to this attitude of police, Murmu recollects how she felt like saying to police, "you are police in the day and *Harmads* at night!" (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 20). Illegal detentions have been part and parcel of police activity in keeping law and order for years in *Jangal*

Mahal area. Way back in 2001, 14 villagers were arrested without any evidence. Villagers were completely clueless about charges. The cases are still sub-judice. At times cases were lodged against them after they were arrested with false case like of involvement in bank-robbery which might have had taken place in somewhere else far away from Medinipur. One accused person said that he had never been beyond Lalgarh town but was picked up on the charges of being involved in a bank-robbery which took place in Siliguri, north of West Bengal. In fact PCPA justifies such cases of false arrest by indicating to the fact that All India Legal Forum did carry a *Jan-Sunwai* and found out almost 15 to 16 cases which were trumpeted (Fact Finding Report, DsSU 2009). Such are findings of other fact finding reports and first hand account of persons visiting Lalgarh as well. Like Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar in their article (2009) interviews an activist who says, *"In the name of suppressing Maoists in the locality, there have been from the early 1990s large-scale and indiscriminate arrests and arbitrary and frequent floggings of local people. More than 1,500 people at present languish in police custody without trial."* (pp. 12). And perhaps the nature of nexus of police and *Harmads* comes out most vividly vis-à-vis such indiscriminate arrests when villagers report to another fact finding team, comprising eminent scholars like Amit Bhaduri, Gautam Navlakha *"the police arrested 55 of us when there was a fight between Jharkhand Party and CPI(M) supporters at the filing of nominations for panchayat elections in 2006. They later released all the 17 CPI(M) supporters but kept us in custody for two days."* (Bora & Das 2009: 15). In recent phase of Operation Green Hunt, PCPA has persistently claimed that security forces and police are giving active support to *Harmads*. *"They have built up camps at Bagherpukur, Nayagram and Kankabati to provide the base camp of the Harmads at Enaetpur with better protection. A brand new police station has in fact been put up at Gurgur pal. Camps have also been put up at Bangshol, Patorkumi and Vadutala to provide the CPIM Party Office at Vadutala and the base camp of the Harmads, with better security. At present we are aware of thirty such camps at Lalgarh, Shalbani, Gowaltore and Kotowali. There are fifty others such camps all over Jangalmahal of which we do not know much. The Harmads in these camps are armed with the most updated war equipments. Almost each has his own modern shooter. Up till now they would be deployed as "private forces", but now*

with the advent of the Joint Military Force, they have gathered wings.” (Open Letter 1, PCPA).

While tales of telling, severe repression targeting all forms of marginalized groupings are countless, perhaps the targeting of women in itself can give us a fair idea of what police as an authority meant in Lalgarh. It is reported that women are the constant targets of police forces in the name of raids in Lalgarh area. Even before November, 2008 when Lalgarh movement has started, the police atrocities along with *Harmads* were rampant in this area. Police would come late at night for raids and force their way through to houses. Then they would burn, loot and destroy even food grains by throwing them on to ponds. In these raids another recurrent event was molestation of women in the name of body-checks. Naxalites are active in these districts since 1990s. Therefore often police would force women to lift their saris to show their vagina in order for them to prove that they were not Naxalites dressed as women. Villagers have complained that how they stopped sending their daughters to schools because at odd hours police would wait at cross roads and harass these girls returning from schools. Even police would wait in places where in early morning women would go to relieve themselves (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009). A report in *The Telegraph*, titled '*Beneath Sari, brutal scars: Emerging stories of 20, 000 refugees*' (22nd June), by Sujana Dutta attests to such claims. Reporting first hand accounts of villagers, taken shelters at Pirakata refugee camp set up by Trinamool Congress, he writes "*The policewomen lifted my sari,*" sobs Bijola Mahato, "*and kicked me while lathis rained down and a man shouted 'since your husband is not at home, let me come tonight and be your husband'*". In 2006, Maiku Murmu from Teshabandh village was brutally beaten up by police. This ninety-year old woman later succumbed to her injuries. Her grandson narrated the incident, "*the police came looking for my father whom they suspected to have links with Maoistss. When they could not find him as he had gone to Medinipur that day, the police subjected the other family members to their wrath. When my grandmother tried to protest she was beaten up mercilessly.*" (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 18). On 5th November, 2008 after land mine attack on the CM's convoy by Maoistss, police went on a rampage in Chotopelia village in the name of hunting down Maoists and suspects responsible for the attack. In this also women were the primary targets of the police.

Chhitamoni Murmu lost her eyesight due to severe blows from rifle butts.⁶ Panmoni Hasda was seriously injured on chest with other fourteen women. In fact Lakshmi Pratihari who was pregnant that time was kicked several times in the stomach when she tried resisting police from arresting her husband, Dipak Pratihari (see pamphlet issued by TASAM & FAMA, 2009). With joint forces moving in these areas repression particularly targeting women has increased manifold. On the night of 30th June, 2010 joint forces and *Harmads*, reportedly attacked a village called Sonamukhi where they gang-raped seven housewives. After this local youth Congress leader Usha Naidu came as a part of fact finding as well. Following this up in protest almost two thousand women marched to Jhargram town to gherao the police station as well (Open Letter 5, PCPA).

A tale of structural violence: Chronic marginalization of people as an effect of structure of domination

To move on to elaborate on the chronic marginalization of the adivasis in *Jangal Mahal* besides violence perpetrated by state forces and private militia, let us pay attention to statements of *All India Committee Against Violence on Women*, as reported in *The Statesman* (21st May, 2009). As these members reveal it is not only a question of being targeted by police or *Harmads*, but women of Lalgarh have always been facing an extremely oppressive life and livelihood due to utter neglect of the authority. In the subsistence economy of Lalgarh, women have to go to jungles to collect *sal* and *kendu* leaves and other raw materials to make ropes which they sell in the markets for meagre Rs. 20-25 per day. Mostly this is a family labour where daughters of the houses also participate and result of which most have dropped out of school. Adding to that, most of the women regularly have to walk three or more than for drinking waters. At times there is no proper road to travel from one village to another. Their family income might rise to Rs. 40 per day in the time of harvesting and sowing. Most of the villagers including men and women in these two months period of harvest season work as a migrant labourers (also see Fact Finding Report, DSU, 2009). But rest of the years half of the family members which at times touches

⁶ There are plenty of reports in mainstream media attesting to the fact that government forces were responsible for these incidents. In fact state-government actually announced a compensation for Murmu (see *Sanhati Archive* for few of these reports)

the figure of 5 or 6 remain half-fed. In fact NREGA has come to very little help owing to that 50% , on an average, has no means to obtain food even once a day. Panchayat system due to its rampant corruption has alienated villagers completely. Previously villagers were asked to pay Rs. 150 for availing basic amenities. Though in villages like Laljal out of 36, 30 families are below poverty level they cannot even have enough means to access Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 rice and wheat policies. In fact Amlasol, in vicinity of Lalgah flashed onto headlines due to starvation death. Soma Mukherjee, a member of the committee sums up the situation in following manner, "*the landscape in the Jungle Mahal remained as it was 32years ago.*"

Lalgah movement as we will see in later sections is not merely a movement comprising few villages of three-four districts. It is a movement or at least part of a movement going on in this area called *Jangal Mahal*. It is not only a movement against police atrocities; it is a movement as well for social and political rights. Seeds of such an upsurge lie in the socio-economic condition of the area *Jangal Mahal*, mainly inhabited by adivasis, dalits and SC/ST. In Lalgah as already mentioned 5000 acres of land was proposed to be given to Jindal group for mining as a part of SEZ. As reported, the land given was first acquired to distribute among landless peasants of this area. Before even *Jindal*, foreign companies like *Lafarge*, Swiss company like *Halkim* have done extensive mining for lime in this area. However in stead of presence of such FDI, contrary to claims of CPI(M) led LFG, statistics of underdevelopment has alarming signs. As we have already noted almost fifty percent of the population lives under below poverty level. In a hilly area like Lalgah, only 6.5% land is under irrigation. This irrigated land is also mostly owned by non-advansi population and CPI(M) cadres. Therefore most of the adivasi population largely depends on rain water harvest in monsoon season and the rest of the year, they work as a migrant labourers. Previously natural forest resources like collecting *Sal*, *Tendu* leaves used to be a source of income. However after the state has declared forest as reserved area, this source of income has also been absent. Villagers allege that this forest area has been completely declared out of bounds for them. But on the other hand, with the help of local police and *Harmads*, forest mafias indulge into looting of forest resources, even cutting trees. But villagers if enter forest, they are harassed, fined. Or they are arrested as being accomplice to Naxalites (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009; also see Sarkar & Sarkar 2009). In this huge area "*Public hospitals barely*

exist in the entire area. People suffer from very poor health and they are prey to constant and many diseases. They are seriously malnourished, often at starvation levels." (Bora & Das 2009: 15). There was only one health centre in Katapahari which was also locked up after few years. Other proposed health centre never came about. The striking similarity of expression when Sarkar & Sarkar (2009) interviewed the activist who has visited Lalgarh perhaps stands as proof of severity of the situation. Risking repetition we must reproduce what he has to say, "*Public hospitals barely exist in the entire area. People suffer from very poor health and they are prey to constant and many diseases. They are seriously malnourished, often at starvation levels.*" (also see PCPA Letters, Fact Finding Reports).

Politics of the governed: the inception of Lalgarh Movement

Before Lalgarh Movement in its present organized form started, the very repressive socio-economic existence had propelled villagers to rise against state power in the past as well. In 1997-98 adivasi villagers of these areas started building up a resistance movement. Kept away from all forms of welfare measures, living well below the poverty lines villagers of Lalgarh came together to demand their *Bargarights* on the Forest Land. With the support of erstwhile CPI(ML) (People's War) an adivasi movement spread demanding 75% share of the forest produce. However the heavy state repression subsequently forced the adivasis to take a step back. This has been general trend in these areas. Such mass movements have taken place time and again but dissipated over time due to repression or lack of organization. Chattradhar Mahato, the spokesperson of PCPA in an interview argues, "*Every time in the past when we attempted to resist, we failed to sustain the movement, due to the lack of organization behind our spontaneity.*" (Fact Finding Report, DSU: 15).

Therefore while specific events acted like the 'nodal' point where adivasis decided to break away from prevailing status quo, in the end Lalgarh movement must be mapped out as a series of events and glaring example of all the components of domination and exploitation we have talked about. These events are neither episodic nor events calling forth spontaneous reaction. But these events are just in a chain of several moments which begins with long history of oppression and marginalization stretching way back to colonial period and reaches present moment of organized resistance.

It all started with 2nd November, 2008 when a landmine blast took place near a village called *Kalaihundi*.⁷ It was aimed at the convoy that passed through that area minutes before with Buddhadev Bhattacharya, CM of West Bengal and Ramvilas Paswan, Union Minister in cars. In that though CM and union minister escaped unharmed, four police personnel died. The very next day, on 3rd November police started a search across Lalgarh. They picked up three school children who were returning late on their way back from a Baul⁸ festival. Though they repeatedly tried clarifying to police, according to them police did not pay any heed. They were taken into custody suspected for being Maoists, like all other thousands of arrests and raids that had been carried out in Lalgarh region in the past.⁹ Against them police labelled charges of carrying dangerous weapon, conspiring against state, attempted murder etc. On that day and following day, police started raiding one after another village. As already discussed several women were seriously injured, a pregnant woman was mercilessly beaten up; her husband was arrested. Also police arrested a well known, widely respected retired school teacher, named Kshamananda Mahato. A contractor was also hauled up. Bhagbat Hasnda, Sunil Sasnda, Sunil Mandi, Surya Mahato and ten more people were arrested indiscriminately without any concrete charges. They were merely being suspected of having Maoist links and assisting them in carrying the blasts without any concrete proofs whatsoever. On 6th November 2008 people spontaneously came out in protest and gheraoed the Lalgarh Thana. After that they blocked the roads as an entry route to Lalgarh. They dug up roads, blocked by creating barriers with tree branches. Following day thousands of villagers marched down the roads linking Lalgarh with Medinipur, Jhargram etc. Lalgarh was completely cut off from outside world. In subsequent days the movement grew stronger and stronger with anger of villagers reportedly knew no bound. CPI(M) party offices were burnt down. In fact Anuj Pandey's house was burnt down completely.

⁷ The chronology of events are drawn from various sources like Fact Finding Report, DSU; Pamphlet issued by TASAM & FAMA, Sanhati Archives; First Hand account as reproduced in the article by Srakar & Sarkar 2009; article as a part of fact finding report by Bora & Das 2009 etc. There is a overwhelming consensus in all these sources regarding how all it started.

⁸ A religious sect which often organizes music festival in rural Bengal.

⁹ One of them is Gautam Patra, who was interviewed by the members of Fact Finding Team, DSU in which he corroborated the facticity. (Fact Finding report, DSU 2009:25)

Police and civil administration was asked to leave Lalgarh. Following this spontaneous struggle PCPA was formed to carry out this movement forward.

Organization of the PCPA: a new chapter of Lalgarh Resistance

The PCPA came about through an almost cathartic realization of the villagers of Lalgarh.¹⁰ First, historically they remembered the fate of their spontaneous rebellion against injustice in the hands of repressive state-forces, legal or illegal; secondly, they also came to realize the limitations of parliamentary parties in terms of resisting such atrocities committed by police and *Harmads*.

With this a meeting took place at Dalil Pur Chawk in which for the first time PCPA and its structure was talked about and its initial formation happened. The first principle that the PCPA adopted in consensus with the people gathered their in the meeting was to keep out any political party out of it. While political parties inability to struggle successfully against the state was one of the reasons. There was another positive factor to it as well. In words of Mahato, *“if we unite as the oppressed and repressed, would we be able to rise up against this repressive state machinery.”* (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 75). Presidents and Vice-Presidents were elected in this meeting itself and also other office bearers. Gradually, gram committees were set up initially in few villages comprising ten members from the concerned village--- five women and five men. The structure of the PCPA as enumerated in this meeting revolves around this same principle of equal participation of men and women in gram level, ancholic (local) level, block level, jilah (district) level and ultimately state level. Once the PCPA came into existence its called for a more than a month long blockade in the area stopping any armed personnel of the state or CPI(M) to enter the villages. They put forward certain demands to the state:

1. The Superintendent of police has to say sorry holding his ears. He must say “From today I shall stop arresting and victimizing common people, particularly, the women.”

¹⁰ This sub-section is entirely based on interview taken by members of Fact Finding Team (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 74-88). However facticity of this interview, as expressed by Chatradhar Mahato, can be verified from various sources, most of which have already been consulted all through the chapter.

2. *The guilty police officers who had physically assaulted women in the Chhotopeliya village on 5th November, 4:30 am will have to come rubbing their noses all the way from Dalilpur chawk to Chhotopeliya village.*
3. *The women who have been injured by the police brutality have to be compensated by 2 lakh rupees each.*
4. *All the people arrested in the name of hatching the Shalboni conspiracy have to be released.*
5. *All the false cases and charge sheets registered against people framed as Maoists in west Medinipur, from 1998 to 2008 have to be withdrawn.*
6. *Rampant arresting of ordinary people without warrant, at any place and time, must be stopped.*
7. *Para-military camps, like those situated in Kalaimuri, Dharampur, Ramgarh phanri must be removed.*
8. *The allegation that Shashadhar Mahato has planned the shalboni blasts while he was actually in Bansbed village, has to be withdrawn.*
9. *All attacks on the peoples' clubs and 'gaonta's spread all over West Bengal must be stopped.*
10. *Police vigilance inside villages from 5pm till 6am has to be stopped.*
11. *Police camps should not be set up arbitrarily in schools, hospitals or panchayat offices. All such existing camps have to be removed.*
12. *Attack on the protesters at Humgarh by the CPI(M) needs to be stopped. 30 cycles, 2 motorcycles, 12,000 rupees in cash and two bank pass books that were looted in the attack on 15th November on the NH60 between Moyrakata and Raskundu must be returned. Mohan Tudu, who was injured in the attack must be provided medical treatment and provided compensation of 2 lakhs.*

13.If the armed CPIM militia attacks the adivasis or the common people then the administration will be held responsible for this and administration will have to provide compensation. (Saha, Sanhati Archive)¹¹

This is a remarkable document to the extent that it quite conclusively proves the organized character of the resistance in terms of interacting with state government and also it also indicates towards (especially the demand 5) the very historical dimension of the oppression stretched over at least a decade.

On 7th December, 2008 state government accepted all these demands made by PCPA. The blockade was announced to be withdrawn by the PCPA. However state-government refused to meet these demands the very following days. In between, PCPA alleged targeted attack on their members and villagers as well. This, after twelve days led to another blockade. This more or less is the initial chain of events in the first seven months of movements. After this the movement has been still on under the banner of PCPA for last two years.

Process of democratization:

Lalgarh resistance has shown sign of greater process of democratization is a fact, which has been accepted by even authors, political commentators who are not exactly uncritical supporters of the resistance. While reserving their comments on whether or not these processes are revolutionary as Maoists claim, authors like Aditya Nigam, Nivedita Menon, Sumit Sarkar, Sumanta Banerjee et al. have still pointed certain developments taking shape in Lalgarh as new experimentation in democratic processes (Sarkar & Sarkar 2009; Nigam 2009 & 2010; Banerjee 2010; Menon 2009).

To start off we have already seen that as its very constitutive principle PCPA has equal representation men and women in *samitis* in various levels. But what is about the actual functioning? As one first hand observer reports that in big meetings taking place in front of outsiders coming in solidarity of the resistance, women are often shy and hesitant to come up on stage and speak. However in several occasions when they were requested they have had come up on stage and spoken. Sarkars'

¹¹ This is actually a translation of the pamphlet as circulated by PCPA and pasted as poster in Lalgarh.

(2009) respondent also informs *"In the internal meetings of the committees, outsiders are not allowed. I was allowed to attend a few as an observer, and I found that even though women hesitate in the open meetings, they are extremely vocal in the village-based committee meetings. Committee meetings where I have participated in as an observer consist mainly of the initiative of younger people, though older people are also present. Young people are mostly graduates but they live in their villages. Committee level women activists, in contrast, are uneducated (pp 14).*

One fact finding report clearly states that in initial phase women's participation in political gathering was strongly contested by other male section of the population. In fact women's equal representation in the *saamitis* was also opposed by few (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009). Women's participation and activism was accepted widely as in Boropelia in January, 2009 women led the resistance against police's forceful intrusion in the area by gheraoing them. After that in several such incidents women were the leading force against police-*Harmads* thereby earning their due share of responsibility and respect in the resistance. Jharna Murmu of Chitaram Dahi village explains the objective condition and question of women emancipation in movement-area like Lalgah, *"the police always attacked the woman to put pressure on the men. We have been systematically and repeatedly robbed off our dignity. Thus we must lead this movement from the front."* (pp. 37). While PCPA letters documents and others news paper reports corroborate large women's gathering gheraoing thanas, protesting police's intrusion, 5th letter from PCPA documents the movement against liquor and alcoholism, *"During November-December of 2009, in areas around Dahijuri, a programme to form a movement against consumption of alcohol was undertaken under the leadership of the peoples' committee. At that time, one could see cheap liquor shops and drunkards lying on the roads anywhere you would look. Women took part en masse in the movement to get their men folk out of such unhealthy environment. Demolition of liquor shops started to take place in 2010 July, in Ramchandrapur, Chandabila, Nekradoba, Piyalgeriya, Barodehi and other villages. Around 10-15 thousand women and men rallied in the first week of July to demolish the shops, requesting to abstain from alcohol consumption and gave a call to be a part of the movement."* (Open Letters 5, PCPA). Such movements against alcoholism are definitely a part of larger movement for democratization of the society as well. It is not a simple fight against patriarchy. It is also a fight against structure of

domination. This PCPA letter itself goes on to show that how alcoholism has been a chief method by which adivasi resources have been extracted from them and while CPI(M)-police as an accomplice of Liquor shop owners have pocketed the share of profit. This is also a question of 'productive labour'. Such practices are complete subversion of people's productive capacity and a barrier to their own self enhanced growth. So women's movement from this perspective is also a movement against feudal-mafia power structure as well. So it is not surprising when *All India Committee Against Violence on Women (The Statesman, 21st May, 2009)* visited the area they also saw participation of women in everyday labour in terms digging up wells, construction of roads, etc.

In the beginning of this section we observed that how democratization, empowerment as processes are closely linked with removal of structural inequality in the society. The Lalgarh resistance addresses the question at its root. The wider democratization of society within Lalgarh resistance has evolved through a "pro-people alternative development model". While there are different aspects to this development model that PCPA is trying to evolve through their struggle, the most publicized and documented is their success in improving health facilities. In this whole *Jangal Mahal* area before Operation Green Hunt started there were 35 health centres running in this area. Often doctors who are sympathetic to the resisting masses have come and treated people. These health centres are rudimentary arrangements however a great leap forward with reference to an area where pregnant women weigh 40kgs ("*Health Care Issues in Lalgarh: 40-kg Weight at full time pregnancy*", 10th July, 2009, sanhati.org). These health centres are giving free treatments to the patients of the area and also free medicine. In fact just when the operation green hunt started, in their first Open letter PCPA also announced their plans for two new schemes for women and children and also for people with incurable diseases. They professed that with these schemes they are looking forward to extending the free health facilities beyond health centres as well and as a part of social health security schemes.

Besides these there are other development works going on in the area includes irrigation, construction of roads and even land distribution (Sarkar & Sarkar 2009; Das & Bora 2009; Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009; Bhattacharya 2009 I & II). While all of these are done so on principle of collective labour, PCPA collects the

initial starting amount for raw materials. Generally with 'food for work' scheme (or at times wage-system) is the prevalent method of paying collective labour forces. In Bansheria, members of fact finding team, DSU observed land distribution taking place. It is reported that initial idea was to distribute up to 1 bigha to landless labourers and 15 kathas to semi-landless peasantry. People who have more than 5 bighas were not considered. In this land distribution whole village community was involved including landed (on a relative estimate) peasantry section. These plots of land to be distributed are often adjacent to Jungle and not always in perfect arable condition due to eucalyptus plantation as apart of state's 'social forestry' project. As villagers informed the members in initial two seasons these plots have to be prepared by cultivating vegetables, fruits before it can be used for paddy cultivation.

In the end we must note that in this whole initiative an important point is the use of labour as productive power. The labour as invested collectively in these projects, assumes a greater importance enabling the PCPA to exploit limited resources. Beyond any doubt people in these areas not only struggle against state-repression they are also affected party of underdevelopment in terms of technological backwardness, flow of capital. But PCPA as Chattradhar Mahato informs has been able to exploit another resources that the state has never paid enough attention to from their vantage point of industrialization induced by foreign capital i.e. labour. Mahato tells in one interview that how they have been able to construct 20 km of roads spending Rs. 47000, which in state's estimate would have required at least Rs. 300000. They have also been able to set up tube well in half the amount compared to state's estimate of Rs. 15000 (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 82). This successful tapping of labour resources perhaps is the kernel of alternative development aimed at people's development with people's participation.

Can political society explain the adivasi resistance in Lalgah?

Is it possible for the concept of political society to account for the adivasi resistance in Lalgah? A casual cursory glance seems to yield a positive answer. This is because as Chatterjee insists that political society really comes into being with an Association coming about as in the case of Railway Colony; in Lalgah also we see a real organized resistance takes shape only with formation of the PCPA. Moreover as the charter of demand suggests it is essentially aimed at a politics of negotiation led

by the PCPA. Also with these demands and under the banner of leadership of PCPA a community emerges which Mahato has remarked as the community of 'oppressed'.

This seems to be just a partial picture of the whole phenomenon when we take into account the entire gamut of events culminating into people's movement. *First and foremost* what distinguishes political relationship that marks the adivasi resistance of Lalgarh and thereby differentiates it from politics of the political society is the 'state of exception' that resides at the heart of Lalgarh resistance. *Secondly*, we have tried to show that political society never severs its ties from the legalistic, universal notions of citizenship, civic duties. Though 'fictive' still relationship between political society and civil society does configure the politics of political society. But contrary to this the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh willingly denounce 'good civic behaviour' severing any tie with civil society, even fictive. Their subjective position and articulation is anything but apologetic; but as resisting force they demand from apology from the state.

To take up the first point of 'state of exception' we see that Chatterjee's strong argument in favour of political society does not fit here entirely. To take the example of health services, as we have already seen, shows a pathetic absence of the state in any form. There was only one health centre for entire area, that too with meagre resources. The doctors were often absent. Another building meant to be opened as a health centre was never made functional. Later with the resistance spreading, Joint Forces moved in to occupy that as their camp (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009; Sarkar & Sarkar 2009; Report on 25th June, *The Telegraph*). They have never been targeted as a population group to control and thereby making policy level intervention as is the case in political society. Rather their history is of seemingly infinite abandonment by the state as a government, before they revolted. They are --- like for Bush, each and everybody is a suspected terrorists --- suspected Maoists/Naxalites to the structure of domination as present in *Jangal Mahal*. Civil society, political society or in fact society itself blurs in the region as anybody and everybody can be a suspect; and therefore can be exposed to all forms of violence by the authority. As Caesar Mandel reports (22nd June, 2009, *Times of India*) that police forces in this region often forces local youth to search for land mines before entering a new area. Generally, not equipped with personnel who are trained in detecting land mines; or not having

equipments to carry search, these police forces held local youths at gun point and forced them to scan areas for explosives. They were given a S-shaped rod, on the one end of which a rope is tied. They were instructed to grab any suspected object and then drag. Police forces meanwhile waited in a distance to see whether or not mine blasts. On the same day (22nd June, 2009), another newspaper *The Telegraph* carries a report by *Sujan Dutta*, who reports about women refugees taking shelter in *Pirakata* in Lalgarh. *Pirakata* is in the fringe of the Lalgarh where at that time the state had its reach. Women came from a nearby village in Kuldiha. Few days before the report, a police raid happened there and police carried a search. In which the newspaper correspondent reports that children were dragged; women were stripped naked. They were brutally hit. All male villagers of the village fled to see police approaching the village and to avoid being picked on account of being suspected Maoist. After the police raid, without any form of outside support, women were forced to wander about and take shelter in the refugee camp of *Pirakata*, where they were even ready to draw their saris up to reveal inhuman nature of torture. To add more, in one interview, Chattradhar Mahato informs the press (20th June, 2009, *The Telegraph*) how half of the population of this area live on the staple diet of ant's egg. His statement acquires credibility given the fact that *Amlasol*, a village adjacent to Lalgarh area hit the headlines of national newspaper few years back, as we have also mentioned earlier, due to starvation death. (see *Amlasol: Unkept Promises of Development and Lessons for Lalgarh*, 7th July, 2009, sanhati.org). These facts speak volume about the real condition of the adivasi community in Lalgarh. Let alone democratic rights guaranteed to civil society members; even strategic relationship that political society is able to establish that possibility also does not exist for them. As a community, they live in situation which is exceptional to the extent that their lives are lived in direct exposition to various forms of violence which can be directly related to the state and various forms of state power.

In this situation of exception what happens in case of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh is an inward movement. No longer the state is granted the right of being sovereign having capacity to take the decision of state of exception and thereby act accordingly (legally or illegally). By forcing the state out from their own area, they eventually declare a state of exception for the state. They claim what the state has been doing as illegal, while clearly maintaining an indifferent stance towards the

question of 'legality' in their own action. For example in several places in their open letters they persistently invite the reader to understand the situation in Lalgah. And thereby they argue though taking arms and politics of counter-violence might not be the very way politics is done in the sphere of civil society (we must remember all the open letters in which such clarifications came from PCPA are addressed to civil society and civil liberty organizations like APDR), but given the very exceptional situation, they are left with no choice. They have to resort to arms as a strategy of counter violence. The politics of the PCPA vis-à-vis the question of law is perhaps best articulated in this long quote, "*All the demands of the people's committee are valid. The entire nature of protest has followed the constitutional framework. But when the government officials violate the constitution in the name of constitution and create laws at will to torture the public, then questioning this unfair injustice and fighting for your own rights and building any form of protest for self-defence is lawful. We, the exploited, deprived, oppressed, are speaking up to uphold peace against all kinds of terror, to protect our honor and respect; and we feel as descendants of Sidu Kanu, it is also your duty to support. Stand by us. How will we live if we do not destroy Bengal's Salwa Judum? So in the lines of Santhal Rebellion of Sidu. Sorens, we have to survive by fighting in every step.*" (Open Letter 5, PCPA). The politics of PCPA and the resisting adivasis, as evident here, is indeed the incipient consciousness that Guha (1983) talks about in relation to solidarity of a community. Solidarity, Guha explains not necessarily a class solidarity. In cases like *Tebhaga* Movement or *Naxalbari* Movement where organized Communist parties, CPI and CPI(ML) led the landless, semi-landless peasant movement for proportional rights over cultivation or for land, there was definitely articulated class consciousness (Guha 1983). However in earlier movements of colonial time, Guha argues, solidarity emerged from various other affinities than class solidarity. In different juncture, one certain aspect of their identity like race, ethnicity etc might have superseded and dominated other aspects. However with this acknowledgement Guha is of the opinion that it is also important to see in that solidarity an incipient consciousness which defines their subjective position as political community.¹² It is a constitutive identity of a collective as a community that emerges from within itself which takes up

¹² See second chapter last section for a detail discussion on the question of consciousness in these peasant insurgencies.

rebelling as a conscious political act. Guha has also shown that how the community's incipient consciousness can also be accessed from the fact that how they relate with the very structure of domination in terms of enemy and allies. This conscious separation of the world of their existence in two categories at the exceptional moment of rebellion is often also substituted by rudimentary organization, which also Guha identifies as another symbolization of consciousness. We might find such awareness in case of the adivasis in Lalgarh as well. For example when a woman says that she felt like telling the police that they are police at the day time and *Harmads* are at the night, it shows that the adivasis have come to be aware of identity of two forces, one state and non-state vis-à-vis them. Further from interview of Chattrdhar Mahato we have also noted the cathartic realization from which to counter state repression the awareness of the need for an organized movement came about. The most clear articulation of such is Mahato's comment in much later phase when commenting on the structure of the PCPA he argues that the PCPA thought that the most successful way to come together is with their identity of oppressed and repressed. Therefore in the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh, incipient class consciousness has taken the organized form of resistance of the "oppressed and repressed" against the enemy, the "oppressor and repressor", chiefly embodied by Police-harmads.

We are now in a position to relate to the question that we posed in the previous chapter and trying to find an answer theoretically with empirical evidences pertaining to the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh, West Bengal. Definitely the identity, on the basis of which they relate to each other is that of 'oppressed and repressed'. **But how such solidarity emerges out of existing differences?** It is interesting to see that how in the preceding quotation from 5th letter issued by the PCPA, reference to external sources has gradually gone a transformation and replaced with inward gaze. While talking about law, legality, constitution and upholding constitution, towards the end of it, the letter starts referring to themselves as 'descendants of *Sidhu, Kanu*. It starts evoking memories of glorious *Santhal* struggle led by them; and not only that a direct connection is drawn by comparing today's resistance with *Sidu Soren*, a martyr in this Lalgarh resistance. In stead of looking for external source to define their collective identity, the adivasi resistance of Lalgarh refers back to sources inscribed inside the collective in terms of their present history of oppression by the state and the

past history of oppression by the colonial forces; 'martyrs' in this struggle (*Sidu Soren*) and their historical legacy of *Santhal Rebellion* led by *Sidhu-Kanu*. The subjectivity emerges traversing a whole historical time of almost 150 years. Their *subjective articulation*¹³ blurs time, space distinctions as power in the form of the state or dominant discourse has bequeathed on the community. For us (even for the researcher writing) the time proper is the thirty years of CPI(M) rule in West Bengal to understand the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh. But if we carefully see the subjective-articulation assumes a different time for adivasi villagers of Lalgarh. They clearly try to prove existence of another historical time different from us. The first glimpse of it comes about when villagers argue that they have got freedom for the first time ('*Amra ei prothom swadhinota peyechi*' which literally means we have got independence for the first time) (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009). Colonial domination and oppression assumes a contemporaneity in being equated with today's structure of domination/subordination that they are subject to. So there is a blurring of pre and post independence era, creating a historical time different from us. The further proofs of this come from the *subjective expression* that they resort to. In several occasions we have seen that reports talk about the fact that carrying traditional weapon becomes a symbol of resistance. And it is not a mere symbol but a powerful one having certain political ramifications. The state is hell-bent on intervening in this place to break this symbolization. Several sources show that how the state in contravention to constitutional provisions has tried restricting their mobility with traditional weapons either by arresting them in the name of carrying dangerous weapons or refusing to give permission to them to enter Calcutta, the heart of West Bengal (see 7th April, 2009, *Express News Service*; Fact Finding Report, DSU, 2009). To add on to this let us take the fact that how every letter issued by PCPA starts off with customary '*Hul/Jahar*' an obvious reference to famous *Hul* rebellion of colonial time led by *Sidu -Kanu*. In fact one first hand account (Sarkar & Sarkar 2009) reports that how they even greet each other with same pronouncements in their everyday encounters with each other. The people's militia that is the armed wing of PCPA is called *Sidhu-Kanu People's Militia*. But drawing from a symbolic repertoire which belongs to these communities through their own historical awareness perhaps is best exemplified

¹³ As in the introduction we have seen in social sciences subject is often mapped in terms of these acts of articulation, expression and assertion (Aloysius 2007).

in the figure of Sidu Soren. Let us give a unusually lengthy quote from one Open Letter (5th PCPA) which we believe will establish the point we are trying to make here: *“On the 26th of July our dear leader and general secretary Sidu Soren was martyred along with five Sidu -Kanhu people’s militia members. During the British rule Jagai Munda was made a spy to catch our beloved leader (of ulgulan) Birsa Munda. The brave people of Jangalmahal will never forgive the Jagai Mundas who showed the infamous thugs of Buddha-Chidambaram, the Cobra force, the route to the hideout of our dear leader. When the Harmads started attacking the entire Jangalmahal including Goaltor, Salboni, Dharampur, Enayetpur we were forced to form “Sidu Kanhu People’s Militia”. Unanimously we elected Sidu Soren as the supremo... the journalists have reported that Sidu Soren was the terror of Goaltor. Our leader was not the terror but the protector of Goaltor. That’s why to protect the Harmads, to perpetrate terror, Buddha-Chidambaram duo finished Sidu Soren along with five militia members. The cowards are strutting about after killing them in sleep in Metala forest. The infamous DG Bhupindar Singh has announced a cash reward of 50,000 rupees for each of the Cobras. Rewards for butchering 6 adivasis. And we have Manmohan Singh delivering speeches everyday on his hand out of 13000 crore rupees for tribal development. This has to be seen in the reverse manner. They are killing tribals, capturing tribal land just like the British... Sidu was an ordinary adivasi youth. After 2nd November, 2008 the police brought down severe repression on the adivasi people. Sidu joined and gave leadership to the Lalgarh rebellion for he could not tolerate the attack on the tribal mothers and sisters and the tribal society. Sidu was given his name by a crowd of 30,000 people who had gathered at the Dalilpur Chowk. His parents had given the name Bhuta Baske... On the 13th November around 30,000 people from 90 villages gathered in Dalilpur Chawk. People’s Committee Against Police Atrocities was formed on people’s verdict. Bhuta Baske was elected the general secretary. The people named him Sidu Soren after the leader of Santhal rebellion. From that day he emerged as a popular leader among the people of Jangalmahal...Sidu was a terror to the Harmads and joint forces. He was a freedom fighter to the adivasi mulvasi people of Jangalmahal.”* If we see, the rise and demise of Sidu Soren is persistently juxtaposed with the figure of Sidhu of Hul Rebellion. The spy who helped police to capture Sidu Soren is over here unknown. But his anonymity is mediated by a historical operation when he is named as ‘Jagai

Munda of today', the accomplice of the Britishers who helped Britishers to capture *Sidhu*. Moreover there are also ample indication to draw a parallel between *Sidhu* and *Sidu Soren* as able leaders of the Lalgah resistance. But what is the most striking part of this whole story about *Sidu Soren* is his emergence as a leader from being a simple Bhuta Baske, a villager youth. Almost a collective of 30000 people named him *Sidu Soren* and incidentally he went on to lead the *Sidhu-Kanu* People's Militia. These are not simple instances of naming an individual. The act of naming here reveals a blurring of several generations placed on chronology of time, their differences over time and space. The blurring is not only of time it is spatial too. As we know that PCPA started with an organized resistance of adivasis of Lalgah. However it soon enough spread over 1100 villages across *Jangal Mahal*. This new spatiality of the resistance has superseded several official distinctions of villages, districts, states etc. and a new spatiality has emerged which is a part of long historical sense of space that people of these areas have. The solidarity that emerged is a spatial solidarity too which is based on historical imagination of space that these adivasis share. In colonial time this area was demarcated as *Jangal Mahal* (Samaddar 1998). Invocation of *Jangal Mahal* therefore creates a time and space grid which stands for blurring of differences and consolidation of a solidarity as a subject, the oppressed. Interestingly, the state-power also tacitly approves of this exceptionality which attributes the subjectivity of the rebels of Lalgah by recently declaring that a university will be set up in this area. And the proposed university is named after *Sidhu-Kanu*.

We also see that this subjectivity of the oppressed functions like a register of the shift from quantitative to qualitative. The gradual intensification of the oppression qualitatively alerting the adivasis' relationship with the state may be noted here. To recall one example, a villager's narrative that first CPI(M) cadres used to pay them money to attend meetings. Gradually they stopped giving money but at least they used to give them food and there was then added incentive of visiting Calcutta. But gradually they were given neither money nor food; rather were forced to join rallies losing one day's wage. The intensification of oppression as the state government became more and more aware of presence of People's War group and later CPI(Maoist) in this area is already mentioned. Villages adjacent to forest were subject

to repressive searches at odd hours of the day. It is reported that how in villages near to the forest areas, villagers stopped receiving guests. Any new face in the area increasingly started making police-harmads suspicious of he/she being Maoist taking shelter in the village. Most of the time, they would be picked up, interrogated or even arrested on false charges. And members of the family who have received a guest would be arrested either for being Maoists or for being a Maoists sympathizer supplying food and necessities (Fact Finding Report, DSU, 2009). Though no definite data on number of arrests was available, still a general sense prevails that such arrests increased manifold post 1997 till the land-mine blast event. Also increasing alienation of land, forest land and resources and absolute deplorable condition of basic amenities available were another factor in increasing oppression and domination. Purnima Murmu of Chotopaelia, in an instance of *subjective articulation* from this qualitatively different subjective position, village says, “ *we have crossed the limits of our tolerance. We have lived a life near to death so far. Now we shall fight and die. Let as many police and army come in. It will be the same police and same army whom we have seen enough in the past one decade. But this time things are different. We are prepared to fight.*” Or take the example of Gourango Hor of Basban village, “*The state used to brand us as “Maoists” and put us in jail even when we did nothing. So this time we shall fight back and go to jail. There are thousands and thousands of us. How many of us can they kill?*” (Fact Finding Report, DSU 2009: 11). Though they are alive but just like Agambenian naked life they are already *as if dead*. And being reduced to that status, they are stripped off all forms of qualitative expressions of life, but ‘number of dead bodies’ killed in encounters or ‘number of arrests’ made for being suspected to be Maoists. But when Gourango argues, “*There are thousands and thousands of us. How many of us can they kill?*” it is no longer discreet numbers helplessly in the hands of the state; but they are ‘numbers in a collective’ where their sheer numbers and coming together elevates their status above the isolated helpless individual being ruled by the state, oppressed by the politically dominant forces like CPI(M) cadres.

Section-II

Maoism as a Problem

Under standing the relationship between community of the oppressed and Maoists

There is, beyond any doubt considerable overlapping between the PCPA and CPI(Maoist) on the level of everyday functioning. Therefore no account of the resistance of adivasis in Lalgah reaches a conclusion without making note of the existing relationship between the adivasi community and Maoists. We must try to answer the question that **how do we understand the relation between subject resisting state-power and other organized political forces contesting state-power at the same site?** Or to put in the context, **how do the adivasis of Lalgah resist state-power and what relationship do they establish with CPI(Maoist), an organized political force contesting the Indian state in course of their resistance?** Available Information on this aspect however is very little. Here we could only attempt summary of certain view points: These viewpoints are either part of political-ideological debate or theoretical articulations on the basis of little information available. On the basis of an engagement with such theoretical articulations, we might just be able to propose a theoretical alternative, which needless to say begs for rigorous empirical details to corroborate.

Viewpoints expressed in the writings of academicians, academicians writing as a political commentators, social activists, political activists and even political parties like CPI(Maoist) can be grouped under three broad trends. One trend argues in favour of CPI(Maoist) and argue in the same line that we have argued so far that the people have agency (see writings by Ganapathi 2007; Giri 2009a; D'Souza 2009; Bhattyacharya 2010; Azad 2010; De'Mello 2010). The other two trends are not mutually exclusive. They differ in their concern, focus in looking at Maoism and point of emphasis. While one trend talks about people being 'sandwiched' between the state and Maoists, and the latter reaping the benefit of exploitation and repression unleashed by the state; the third trend actually tries look at the adivasi resistance from an alternative framework, other than CPI(Maoist) (for such both, trends of thought see Apporvananda 2010, Simeon 2010; Kumawat 2010; Nigam 2009 & 2010; Sarkar

& Sarkar 2009; Menon 2009; Banerjee 2009). We take up the third trend for a detailed discussion precisely because in these view points ideological-political debate has been kept aside; and a search has been made to theoretically articulate the existing relationship between Maoists and adivasi community from the vantage point of the adivasi resistance. By thinking an alternative to Maoist movement these works have shed considerable light on the relationship between Maoist and adivasi community as resisting mass.

The best articulation of the third trend has come from Aditya Nigam and Nivedita Menon (we are particularly focusing on three articles written by two Nigam 2009 & 2010; Menon 2009). Their articulation or what we term as 'Nigam-Menon' model of resistance almost brings back all the issues and themes we have discussed in the first chapter of this essay. How does 'Nigam-Menon' model conceptualize the relationship between people (who may or may not become Maoist) and Maoists? Their answer, as it appears, is that of theory of extraordinary (see Nigam 2009; also see Menon 2009, where she does not use such terms but argues in the same line). Nigam argues that there has to be a separation between liberal-constitutionalism in the name of democracy and democracy as mass democracy. While the logic of liberal-constitutionalism has the traits of sovereign power, the mass democracy is the sphere where multiple power centres function in accordance to Foucauldian model. Now liberal-constitutionalism according to Nigam is also about rule of property. Therefore often what is contested here is factors like land, rights like universal suffrages having implication on property relations etc. On the other hand beyond this liberal-constitutionalism constituted by debate and discussions there is an 'unthought', a mass of people who always subvert this order. Maoists also try to ignore these 'unthought' forces who truly uphold the democracy in their practice by resisting several neoliberal agendas of the state, other policies etc. Or in other words, as Nigam makes a faint indication, Nigam's 'unthought' is nothing but Chatterjee's 'political society' and possibility it generates in terms of democratic politics. Nigam is of the opinion that by ignoring such possibilities, Maoists rather try to create a rule of extraordinary just like state.

The rule of extraordinary according to the author is a historical specific phenomenon. So what is happening in Kashmir or North-East is a result of the failure

of the project of Nation-building as envisaged in India. Indian state uses that specific historical development to apply that logic of sovereignty. On the other hand Maoism also uses the specific historical development to assume their status as sovereign. From this point onwards, Menon (2009) and Nigam (2009, 2010) pursue the same argument. Their argument is that Maoists create the bogey of a repressive state organ assuming fascistic dimension and draw the line sharp and clear viewing the state as a repressive force crushing the people under its jackboot. Therefore to fight for the people one needs to take up arms, capture the state-power. They obliterate any middle ground in between and try to draw a linear connection between their ambition of capturing state-power with violence and with resisting people (violently or non-violently). Trying to project themselves as the representative of the people they try to subvert all forms violent or non-violent movement of the people. According to Nigam-Menon model these movements violent or non-violent do not have the aim of capturing power. These are democratic resistance to the power-that-be and thereby creating a ground in between Maoists and the state--- two extremes. Maoists with their agenda of capturing state power is just state-in-making, who are using the very rule of extraordinary to usurp all these movements lying in between the state and themselves. Or to put it little differently from what Nigam-Menon model has to offer, Maoists are specifically using the victimhood of the people to engulf the 'unthought'. And not Maoists, but this 'unthought' is what constitutes the real democratic resistance to neo-liberalism. In fact Menon (2009) take the example of Chiapas movement where tribal resistance is nothing to do with capturing the state power but resisting the system.

However there are few questions that we would like to raise here. Nigam does make reference to political society without naming Chatterjee. If not all the movements (which are unthought) constitute as political society in the sense Chatterjee formulates it; however it is clear from Nigam that these movements are guided by very politics of the political society. Chatterjee has shown for the state or even for the political parties these population groups are not really 'unthought' (while they might be unthought for Twentieth century Marxism and Maoism in India). They are very much part and parcel of our politics, political system including political parties (for example we must remember how railway colony association could use their *Bargaining* power by shifting their allegiance to several political parties on the

basis of voting rights. This, otherwise, means that these sections do come into political parties' calculation in voting time.). Therefore the 'unthought' of Nigam in reality does change the calculation of the system. However they remain forever destined to reside inside of the liberal-constitutional politics in a strategic, tense relationship. We have argued even before, that nobody can deny importance of such political mobilization as a part of democratizing process. But could the politics of the "unthought" explain adivasi resistance in Lalgarh?

All the reforms that Nigam talks about (for example, empowerment of Dalits through the system) eventually yield nothing to large sections of population in this country. Like Chatterjee's Dalit activist who argues that this system has been useful for the Dalits (Chatterjee 2004, pp. 24-25), Nigam also takes the same position. However what is important is to see to what extent such empowerment changed the rule of property. Does empowerment of the Dalit mean landlessness among Dalits have gone down? If Teltumbde is to be believed, the landlessness among Dalits is the most acute issue till now (Teltumbde 1996).¹⁴ Still most brutal violence is perpetrated against Dalits (Khairlanji being one such case) (Teltumbde 2010). To be precise, for these sections of Dalits such empowerment through the system has come to acquire little meaning. Similarly we have seen Panchayati raj, land reforms (what Nigam acknowledges as beneficial) have had very little effect on the lives of adivasis of Lalgarh. While we are not negating importance of these reforms, but perhaps we must also raise the question that can we look at historically oppressed section of population, like adivasis, Dalits in a homogeneous manner? There are differences and hierarchy even within Dalits, adivasis etc. and therefore can the effect of reforms be seen in such a uniform manner on these sections of population?

Indeed struggles waged by these sections of population have often forced the state to take these reform initiatives (as Basu (2001) also argues that the initial success of land reforms and decentralization of power in West Bengal was due to the militant

¹⁴ Quite interestingly Nigam argues that land reform was a result of militant struggle of the people of Telengana and Naxalite Movement. Naxalite movements had clear strategy of capturing state power. It did not succeed in doing so however for Nigam it necessitated a reform from the liberal-constitutional order. The question must be posed does Nigam make a distinction between Naxalite of 1970s and today's Maoist? Does he see that both Narmada Bachao Andolan and Naxalite movement of the same category of radical democratic movement? How he then defines radicalism?

mobilization of the oppressed section of the population, as experienced in *Tebhaga* Movement, *Naxalbari* Movement). But not necessarily such sporadic, spontaneous struggles or organized struggles have changed the situations radically. Even after, *Tebhaga*, *Naxalbari* uprising, the adivasi population of Lalgarh faces marginalization, oppression like decades before or even before that in colonial time. Approaching the issue of organization of the adivasis in Lalgarh against state, from this perspective, we would like to raise the question: can such organization be delegitimized as handiwork of Maoists pitting adivasis against the state? Or rather, can we think that their consciousness of increasing failure of spontaneous, isolated struggle is exactly what is leading them to greater organization under the PCPA? And this incipient class consciousness is not something completely new. Guha (1983), in his analysis of such rebellions in the past, persistently argues to recognize rebellious peasant groups as community fighting an anti-colonial struggle, not simple struggle against *structural domination which became little too much to bear in one point of time*.¹⁵

The model however makes a very important point. It is not only in Maoist-led movement that we must discover people's subjectivity. People's subjectivity in quest for political power for an alternative space to liberal-democracy subservient to capital does not have to be necessarily Maoist movement. There are various sorts of movements that are going on in this country where people too are exerting their agency. However again question is can they be clubbed under same heading of 'real radical democracy' as Nigam-Menon model of resistance suggests?

Continuing on the point raised just now, we believe, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the adivasi resistance is not only about challenging political sovereign. It is also about process of democratization by replacing oppressive rule of property (in the sense Nigam defines it). In the economic front, the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh is also about an effort to overstep capital by tapping productive capacity of labour, local natural resources on an equitable terms and conditions. Subsequent to the challenge of the state sovereignty, the adivasis of Lalgarh also challenged the political domination and as well as rule of property sustained through such domination. To argue that such changes are results of people's initiative alone might be a factual error

¹⁵ See previous chapter, for a detailed discussion on this point.

on our part. Such democratization has not taken place only in Lalgarh; but also in other places where Maoists have been present. Such democratization has been widely documented and even recognised by the state (See Planning Commission, GOI, 2008; also see Bhatia 2005, who has done a field work for her thesis (2000), in Naxalites dominated regions of Bihar and reports how Naxalism in these areas managed to change at least the rule of property and challenge feudal structure of domination successfully). Therefore we insist that our understanding must bear this aspect of the relationship between Maoists and the people.

Relationship between vanguard and people as emancipatory subject: question of subjectivity as fidelity

We argue that the relationship between a vanguard party and people, the revolutionary subject that the vanguard party identifies to work with is not a simple question of representation. In the first chapter we have seen that how Laclau analyses a system of representation --- which has to work with the logic of 'empty universality' --- as being the very part and parcel of liberal-democracy. However is it the case that between a vanguard party and the revolutionary class, the relationship is simple liberal democratic logic of representation? We argue that in a situation where armed struggle is waged against the state beyond the scope of parliamentary democracy, it is rather a question of constituting oneself as a subject through declared fidelity towards revolutionary subjectivity of the people. It is the condition of politics of the proletariat and vanguard.

Before we elaborate further, we must now explain what we exactly mean by fidelity. We have already said we borrow this term from Alain Badiou¹⁶ who uses this as a principal condition of the subject (Badiou 2005; also see Zizek 2000). According to Badiou, to put it very briefly, subject is the one who declares its fidelity towards an event. Or in other words who remains true to an event. Now event is actually a rupture in an order of being. It is something new which just happens by chance and given order of being does not represent all the multitude (in the sense of elements or aspects) present in that event. Precisely because of that, knowledge which is based on

¹⁶ We must note that Badiou, Zizek also philosophically problematizes the relationship of representation between proletariat subject and the party. They almost take similar positions though they see enormous importance of the concept of subject as a philosophical question of thought

present order of being cannot comprehend this event entirely. It cannot predict it, analyze it or even make subject to its existing framework of understanding in event's entirety. The event for Badiou constitutes the realm of truth. And the subject is the one who takes the risk to be faithful to such an event as something new to the order of being with an act of 'naming' it as a true event. Badiou's notion of truth, event, indeed has metaphysical implication as Žižek points out (Žižek 2000). Still his notion of subject has some validity with this dimension of fidelity, when compared with the role of vanguard as envisaged in Marxist classical writings of Lenin (1992).

Vanguard has to constitute themselves as a subject in order to position themselves as leading force of the revolutionary proletariat class. Though the understanding of the hidden logic of the system is theoretically available to them, it does not mean they are themselves a revolutionary subject. In fact, Lenin shows how vanguard can only work usefully when their ideas are tested through historical experience of working among proletariat towards revolutionary transformation of the society. While proletariat through their spontaneity indeed has incipient class consciousness, it is duty of the vanguard to make them see the larger context and help them to go beyond the spontaneity. However it is not a unilateral process. While the revolutionary subject is in motion with the leadership of the organized vanguard, the vanguards are also in a motion towards constituting themselves as a subject. Lenin writes in the context of trade-union mass movement, social democracy and proletariat consciousness in Russia, *"That the mass movement is a most important phenomenon is a fact about which there can be no dispute. But the crux of the question is, What is the meaning of the phrase: The labour movement will "determine the tasks"? It may be interpreted in one of two ways. Either it means subservience to the spontaneity of this movement...or it may mean that the mass movement sets before us new, theoretical, political and organizational tasks, far more complicated than those that might have satisfied us in the period before the rise of the mass movement."* (Lenin 1992: 128) Writing in a completely different context, Lenin stood by the second meaning of the phrase and thereby makes an important point. From the standpoint of the vanguard when they commit to a certain spontaneous movement of the masses as having revolutionary potentiality it does so with the faith that it is by the very logic of dialectics is the new emerging class with revolutionary potential. Newer and newer tasks will arise once a wager has been made by the vanguard towards a class

spontaneously protesting. At the moment of wager such newer tasks cannot be entirely foreseen or predicted. However a true revolution is possible (in this context social democracy as Lenin was engaging in that debate) only when such tasks will be met on the condition set by the vanguards' fidelity towards a certain class as revolutionary. Once just mere spontaneity is celebrated (as social democrat of certain section was doing in Lenin's time) what they do is to undermine that initial bond of fidelity that bound revolutionary subject and the vanguard as a subject. This in other words has been described in Marxism as opportunism. Opportunism is nothing but the betrayal of that fidelity which binds who are supposed to lead and who are initially to be led towards a revolutionary transformation.

We have seen that how a community emerges being true to their tragic history of oppression as a collective to proclaim that "we, the oppressed". On the other hand CPI(Maoist) works among these people with the very wager that this collective could transform this society being a part of the protracted struggle. The long association that Lalgarh people and such militant groups have is theoretically built on this political relationship of fidelity. We must see the interaction on this term rather than mere question of 'who represents whom'. There are several facts that could be presented to show (though agreeably quite tentatively) this non-antagonistic dialectical relationship. For example, we must pose the question if Maoists unequivocally claims to represent the people then why do they allow these parallel governments also to have their people's militia (in case of Lalgarh *Sidu -Kanu* people's militia)? If Maoists are simply state-in making then why they themselves don't rule these places as sovereign claiming to represent people's interest? One might argue that Maoists do so with the prevailing condition that they have considerable influence on such governments and control over its functioning. But what if, people antagonistic to Maoists (as several scholars have claimed from different newspaper reports and also certain reports inform us) use such force to counter Maoist itself? Why Maoists should run the risk of distributing arms to people which might just be aimed back to them? While there are specifically sociological questions pertaining to effect of such "militarisation" (see for Sundar 2006) from a political sociological perspective we cannot deny that we must study the interactions of such parallel structures in order to understand Maoist's relationship with the people.

This very tentative, loose theoretical proposition on the relationship between the adivasis in Lalgarh and Maoists begs, as we accepted earlier, empirical support. However these tentative theoretical proposition could be a guiding framework to understand the Maoist 'problem'. As long as we are ready to employ subjectivity as the important sociological tool to understand both state and community relationship and community and Maoists relationship, we strongly feel we will be in a better position to have a grasp over the entire spectrum of politics which is threatening to become a Maoist 'problem'. Perhaps the very political relationship that we have tried bringing out here, the state unconsciously has brought it out by declaring Maoism to be a political problem. While state obviously has an instrumental approach to it in terms of an alternative order threatening its monopoly of violence; still it might just as well has given us the clue to understand it --- that, the political power perhaps is the real question here, not merely human rights.

A cautionary remark must also be added here that we don't claim to endorse Maoism as the correct path. What we have tried here not an analysis of who is right and who is wrong. But we have tried arguing how to understand what is going on in Indian politics right now with limited information available to us.

Conclusion:

The investigation in this essay started with three interrelated and specific research questions.¹ Subsequently three chapters have tried addressing these questions respectively. However in no stretch of imagination these answers are conclusive. They are tentative theoretical formulations which beg empirical verification in future research in PhD level. There are also a set of interrelated questions which have remained unanswered and can be answered only with a detailed historical and empirical, field-based perspective. For reasons elaborated in the *introduction*, we started off with the concept of political society. There could have been various ways of entering the debate surrounding state, community and subject from the perspective of the resistance. But that has not been possible here for various reasons. A comparative analysis of such various point of entry into the debate could be very useful but it requires an elaborate framework and broader scope of study. Moreover the resistance in Lalgah has been simply put here as 'adivasi resistance'. A review of literature already indicates that it is important to make a comparative assessment of several terms used to depict the resistance like people's movement, democratic movement and even population. These are not simple question of nomenclature but indicative of various perspectives. There are other questions as well which we will try to elaborate in the end. Before that, a summary must be presented of arguments put forth here in an attempt to answer the research questions.

The genealogy of power and subject: political society to the state of exception

Political society: politics of the government and politics of the governed as subject

Basing our argument primarily on political society, we have tried showing that how politics of the government (i.e. state in its form governmentalization) situates in a modern day society differently from juridico-political, rational-legal model of state. Chatterjee talks about governing a society through political society, beyond modernist model of civil society. The bio-power comes out as a chief character in the politics of the government where the body, the subject is controlled, disciplined, administered by

¹ See introduction

several state apparatuses, executive or administrative via a normative order, which has the flexibility even of breaking away from certain constitutionally granted legal provisions. To take just one example, Chatterjee talks about a rail way colony residing illegally on land belonging to rail way. However, the state regulates, administers these settlers by implementing several policies and schemes through an association of these settlers which does not have any locus standi in the eyes of the law.

Chatterjee argues that such relations of power, between the state and the settlers, hinges on a politics of the governed. The state recognizes the settlers not as citizens having a citizenship right and thereby having right to demand something from the state. They are anyway doing something contrary to good civic behaviour by illegally occupying land belonging to rail way. The state's recognition is a direct result of the settlers being able to come together under the banner or the association, projecting one identity that they are homeless population and if they are evicted they will again become homeless. So they constitute themselves as a community and also use their voting right as a community to get into a bargain with the political party in state-power. The state seizes this opportunity in bargain and also exerts its power to administer, regulate these settlers in turn through the association as a community. The politics of the government and governed get registered into a complementary relationship.

Through Foucault and his notion of governmentality, we try to show the intricate link between the community's identity and its resistance to the state-power as a question of subject and subjectivity. As argued above, in social science the question of subject is not necessarily a question of individual but a question of actualizing process mediating between individual and collective. Emergence of subject can also be thought, in social science, is that of belonging or coming into being of an individual in a collective. We therefore try to show that this contingent, strategic² articulation of identity of the community directly depends on Foucauldian notion of emergence of subject as a process of subjectivation --- localised and particularised response to vis-à-vis localised, particular power. In becoming a subject (with an

² Chatterjee also shows that how they keep shifting their political identity: once they support left front government; and in some other situations they support oppositional party Trinamool Congress. which is a party at best centrist or even rightist in their approach. This quite conclusively proves contingent character of heir identity.

identity), the emergence of community in political society is a relation of power. Politics of the governed, as Chatterjee proposes in political society, appears to be, always and already a relation of power --- mirroring image of politics of the government.

Politics of the government and politics of the governed as subject: the question of law and universality/particularity

In second section of the chapter, we further investigate the politics of the government and politics of the governed from the vantage point of law. We have already seen how law fades away to resemble a normative structure adding flexibility to the politics of the government to strategically adapt to situations in regulating populations. Noting the centrality of the question of law, following Veena Das (2004) we probe into this fading of legality as illegibility. We see that how universal law in its contextualised application assumes particular form, which might even be illegal in a constitutional framework. Das shows how the politics of the government falls back on this illegibility in giving an example from 1983 Shikh riot in Delhi. It narrates about a constable in duty in a predominantly Shikh colony giving protection to the rioters and helping them in targeting the community by invoking law and his authority as a keeper of 'law and order'. He declares that the resisting the rioters would mean doing something illegal, as it would be obstruction to the authority. She argues such illegibility is a part and parcel of politics of the government; and not only that at times such illegibility comes to affect the politics of the governed as well. Or in other words, on this plane of illegibility --- particular, strategic and contentious application of universal law--- both politics of the government and governed is mediated. We then further show how such particular contextual application of universal is possible borrowing from Derrida's (1982) notion of 'event and signature'. Derrida shows that universal is communicable only in its repetition of each and every particular context.

If a universally-legally mandated state in modern times practices a politics of government only on the basis of particular, strategic application,³ it is possible only because politics of the governed also subscribes to the same logic of politics. Following Laclau and Moffat (1994) we try to show that how politics of community is

³ Even if at times it means being illegal thereby violating the order that mandates state's power itself.

nothing but articulating a particular demand from a subjective-position as universal. They show how particular demand from the subjective-position of the proletariat is articulated by the vanguard, as the representative of the proletariat's universal demand for emancipation of the society from the clutches of capitalism.

Politics of the government and governed as subject in the state of exception: Beyond political society

Political society based on governmentality, illegibility of law, does not exhaust the possibility of politics. Certain political events like Khairlanji (see Teltumde 2010), Sopian (see for a brief account of the event in Kashmir, Kak 2010) and most importantly the adivasi resistance of Lalgarh beckons to another relationship of power and its exercise. To understand these incidents, we find, Agamben's notion of the state of exception to be useful. In the state of exception as the politics of government, universal law gives power to the sovereign to suspend its universal application in a particular context, deemed to be 'state of exception'. On the lineage of power and subject, this is another relationship of power and its exercise in relation to law's universal and particular application. The corresponding subject of the power of sovereign in this power relationship termed as 'state of exception' is that of bare life or naked life. The bare life constitutes a becoming in relation to sovereign power. It can denote even a community, a collective existence like that of Jews in concentration camp. Jews are the community, characterised by subject position of bare life proper. They are captured outside the society in a camp. They are included in the society by sheer exclusion where they are exposed to sovereign's 'exceptional' power over life and death.

So we conclude the chapter noting the crucial importance of the concept of subject and subjectivity in mapping simultaneous emergence of power and resistance. Further we try to show that how in existing contemporary theory the subject becomes a mirror image of the power, thereby incapable of resisting power from outside. The subject is always inscribed in the regime of power; so is its resistance to it. However, with recent political developments in India, marked by 'the state of exception' it seems such a view of subject and its resistance falls short of explaining such developments.

Theorising emergence of subject (I): exception, community and subjectivity

In the second chapter, we deal with the second research question. Over here, first we have tried separating conceptual components of the state of exception as the politics of the governed. Second on the basis of that, we have ventured into the Marxism to see how in its various articulations, this philosophical-theoretical trend has tried articulating revolutionary subject's relation to various modes of power. The ultimate effort has been to deduce few general theoretical conclusions on subject and subjectivity, which could facilitate our understanding in Indian context.

Politics of the government: The state of exception as paradigm of governance

The state of exception as the paradigm of government, Agamben shows resides at the heart of modern day state functioning. Subsequently, he argues that such functioning of state power as sovereign is characterised by simultaneous processes of separation and blurring. To take an example of such processes, we might recollect, George Bush, the then president of USA issued a 'military order' on 13th November, 2001 declaring any non citizen, suspected to have terrorist link can be detained indefinitely and put on trial by military commissions. While a separation of noncitizen and citizen or suspected or non-suspected resides at the heart of this exceptional declaration, when it becomes a rule of governing, it simultaneously blurs any distinction between peace and war or civil war and foreign war. Most importantly, detainees being subject to infinite detention become non-classifiable beings --- neither prisoners of war nor accused.

Theorising subject: politics of the proletariat as the state of exception

On the basis of this observation the rest of the section shows that Marxism articulates a theoretical position of exception however from the point view of the subject instead of sovereign. The proletariat as an exceptional subject position (comparable to bare life) determines the politics of the governed or oppressed --- which is nothing but questioning the very legitimacy of the state to govern. Such an application of the concept of 'state of exception' in the politics of the proletariat as

oppressed stems from philosophical thesis of Walter Benjamin (1982). In this discussion key themes assume to be proletariat and their gradual maturation as a political community; proletariat consciousness and their class position vis-à-vis the state as an ontological condition of the state of exception. With the elaboration of Lenin (1977), Althusser (2006), Lukacs (1971) and Zizek (2010) we try to argue how separation resides at the heart of proletariat politics and so as simultaneous blurring in maturation of proletariat consciousness with respect to state power, law etc. We also try to explain the factory as a site in a perpetual state of exception in a capitalist-bourgeois society. From this point onward we venture to establish an alternative theory of the subject (i.e. conceptualizing bare life different from the standard post-structuralist notion of subject as seen in earlier chapter) in answering the actual question of the chapter. Two hypothetical conclusions follow from this specific understanding of the subjective position of the proletariat: i) ontological condition of the subject is that of state of exception; ii) the subject is the figure which registers the shift from quantitative to qualitative. However can these conclusions be generalised? If Zizek (2007) is to be believed the play of universal/particular lies in the precise fact that a theory or concept is universal as long as it survives in an alien particular context. So these conclusions must be tested in particular context of India to constitute a tentative theory of subject.

Grounding theoretical conclusion in Indian context: applying the proletariat subjectivity to community

Ranajit Guha (1983) in his analysis of peasant rebellion of colonial time already used the figure of subject from an innovative Marxist position to understand the state/community mediation in different context. In his analysis, following Gramsci, peasants also emerge as a potential subject somewhat imbued with an incipient class consciousness capable of resisting power. Therefore we try applying our theory of subject on his observations, while staying away from standard Marxist notion of subject as one who has consciousness and agency (even Guha also falls for this trap). In testing hypothetical conclusions on the basis of proletariat subjectivity could have been given a broader scope with respect to peasant/advasi subjectivity in Indian context and thereby coming closer to a reality which we have taken up in the third chapter.

Theorising emergence of subject (II): subjectivity of the oppressed and vanguard

In the third chapter, our effort has been to seek answer to the third question as posed above. Through an account of the Lalgarh resistance, we tried answering these questions from actual empirical reality. Moreover trying to apply our theoretical conclusions, we probe into Maoist and adivasis relationship in Lalgarh. This has facilitated a complete description of the adivasi resistance in Lalgarh and also a tentative theorization of the subject with reference to Indian context.

Theorizing subject as community of oppressed: The adivasi resistance in Lalgarh, making sense of oppression and solidarity

We have argued that the identity of the oppressed plays a key role in determining solidarity in the resistance, indicating towards a subjective consciousness as Guha talked about. We try to show that an account of the resistance in Lalgarh and its moment of inception is permeated with a narrative of oppression perpetrated by the dominant forces, or ingrained structural inequalities etc. It appears making sense of their oppression is what defines how they have emerged as a community of the oppressed.

Oppression seems to be made sense of by plotting in a time different from larger society lying outside. They link up their condition under CPI(M) led left front regime back to colonial past when *Hul* rebellion was led by Sidhu-Kanu against the colonial oppression. It seems their making sense of their oppression leads them directly to an awareness of existence of state of exception where they have been historically part of this society as a mere object to repress and oppress by dominating force and thereby forever remaining outside, excluded. If this fulfils the very ontological condition of the emergence of subject, it also becomes apparent that for the villagers, oppression in the hands of police, CPI(M) cadres, as locally referred to as Harmads assumes a qualitative shift after land mine blast stripping them off all forms of sense of security, their basic right to live (obvious reference to naked life). Therefore in making sense of their oppression and its articulation comes from a

definite subject position of the oppressed. Such subjective position in turn also asserts itself as an active agent in resisting such oppression; thereby fulfilling all the conditions that we charted out in the introduction following Aloysius (2007) in becoming subject.

Community of oppressed as subject and CPI(Maoist) as subject: representation or fidelity?

In the end, we see the relationship between the adivasis of Lalgah as subject and CPI(Maoist) also in terms of the bond of fidelity. Countering the exiting debate surrounding whether or not CPI(Maoist) represents the people, borrowing from Alain Badiou's notion of 'fidelity'. (2005) we make a tentative theoretical claim that real strength of the Maoist movement must be judged on the basis of their fidelity, as a subject towards this community of oppressed having consciousness to carry forward the true revolution. Or in other words, the question of representation must be displaced and their relationship must be evaluated on the basis of a relationship between these two subject positions trying to make sense of one single existential condition (i.e. people's living material condition under the present Indian state) and compatibility of these two world views.

To sum up, first, we have tried seeing subject and subjectivity as 'actualizing processes' or 'a becoming' (Aloysius 2007); rather than a simple teleological definition of subject--- subject is he/she. who has consciousness . Retaining Guha's proposition and method of enquiry, we have tried showing how 'state of exception' and 'quantitative and qualitative shift' could be chief factors in theorising the emergence of subjectivity.

Second, the subjectivity, as Guha has already shown can also be a question of solidarity of community and its consciousness. It does not have to be only working class consciousness in its full articulation as proletariat being the only position of subjectivity from the perspective of Marxist theory and praxis. Thus arguing in favour of the emergence of unitary subject and subjectivity and its usefulness in understanding the resisting adivasi community of Lalgah against power-that-be, we have therefore also tried highlighting continuing importance of sociological categories like class, class consciousness.

Third, based on the concept of fidelity, we have tried theorizing oppressed community's interaction with vanguard party in the context of Maoism from the perspective of subject and subjectivity.

Maoism as a problem has been described by many, in fact even by the state, as a political problem. We believe the implication of such an understanding is not simple question of understanding poverty, underdevelopment and destitution. If the adivasis are resisting and Maoists are active participant in their resistance, we must take the question of "Maoism as a political problem" with considerable seriousness. It cannot be seen as adivasis are fighting only against their socio-economic misery and Maoists are using them to attain their political goal of capturing state power. Whether or not Maoists are using them, we must accept that adivasis are not only fighting for *jal-jungal-jammen*, they are also fighting for empowerment, political and as well as economic. We must grant them their subjectivity not only as simple agent capable of taking decision and act accordingly. We must see them as conscious agents of history (whether or not it is fully articulated, in the manner in which an orthodox, deterministic Marxists would have liked) whose face is turned towards their oppressed past, however who are resolutely moving towards the future (as Benjamin (1982) would like to envisage in his marvellous artistic, philosophic imagination).

There are important questions, however, remain unanswered in this investigation. First and foremost, we must answer the question that if it is true that these adivasis are real conscious agent of history, why not everywhere in the country such movement is emerging in the same form? What is the reason of various forms in which adivasi resistances are emerging in Indian political map? What are the connections or differences between resistances like in Lalgarh and for example in POSCO? What is their relationship as a subject with other oppressed, dominated classes, communities viz. working class in the urban areas, or Dalits? What is the real implication in terms of socio-cultural, institutional changes that these adivasi communities are going through in this phase of resistance? What are the changes as a community they are undergoing in interacting with vanguard party like CPI(Maoist) in terms of their actual world-view inscribed in their customs and tradition?⁴ Needless

⁴ A point already raised by Nandini Sundar (2006)

to say, answering these questions require a detailed field work across time and space. The scope of the present study and paucity of time does not allow us to carry such in depth investigation here.

Historically, Maoism is not a completely new phenomenon. As in third chapter we have noted, Mao's Socialist China with its program and strategy have been influential on Indian Communist Movement all through. Therefore it is important to plot today's Maoist movement in the broader historical context of the *Tebhaga* movement or *Naxalbari* uprising. Today's adivasi resistances like in Lalgarh must be compared and contrasted with other adivasi movements under the leadership of several Communist groups in the past. Then only in understanding today's Maoist movement, we will be in a position to chart out convergences, as well as differences with respect to past movements. While talking about Maoist movement and their program of armed protracted people's war to overthrow the state through violent means, we must also investigate the evolving relationship that Indian state has shared with these adivasis groups settled in areas now known red-corridor and also with successive Naxalite-Maoist group functioning in several parts of the country in last four decades. Such a detailed historical understanding is crucial in grasping today's Maoist movement, which has also not been possible in this restricted scope of the essay.

Research in social sciences is not a way of reaching conclusive and foolproof tested conclusions. It is rather finding a way to raise questions, issues that could lead future research in the area. In this essay, our modest effort has been to indicate complexities attached to questions pertaining to state, community and subject and possibilities of unravelling such complexities in an organized manner. In doing so we have hinted towards certain tentative theoretical conclusions which might guide our investigation in the future in order to answer the questions and deal with issues, raised above.

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