

EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF TRIBAL IDENTITY /
**In the Context of Socio-Economic Changes Among the
Tribals of Ranchi District, in Bihar**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment for the the award of
the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled, "EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF TRIBAL IDENTITY", (In the Context of Socio-Economic Changes Among the Tribals of Ranchi District, in Bihar), by CHRISTOPHER LAKRA for the Master of Philosophy Degree has not been submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy.


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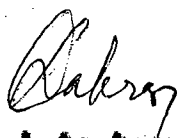

Christopher Lakra

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Chotanagpur has been the original home of the adivasis even before the dawn of history in this land. Since the time of their settlement which remains unknown in the dark of history, the tribals - the Oraon, Munda and Kharia - (Adivasis), developed their own unified culture with their socio-economic and political organizations. Though it is difficult to trace the exact date of the entry of these adivasis at different periods of time, it is unanimously agreed that the Munda tribe was the first to come to the hilly tracts of this land. The Oraon tribe followed the Munda and with their improved agricultural knowledge, the former surpassed the latter. But in the area of social and political organisations the Oraons took

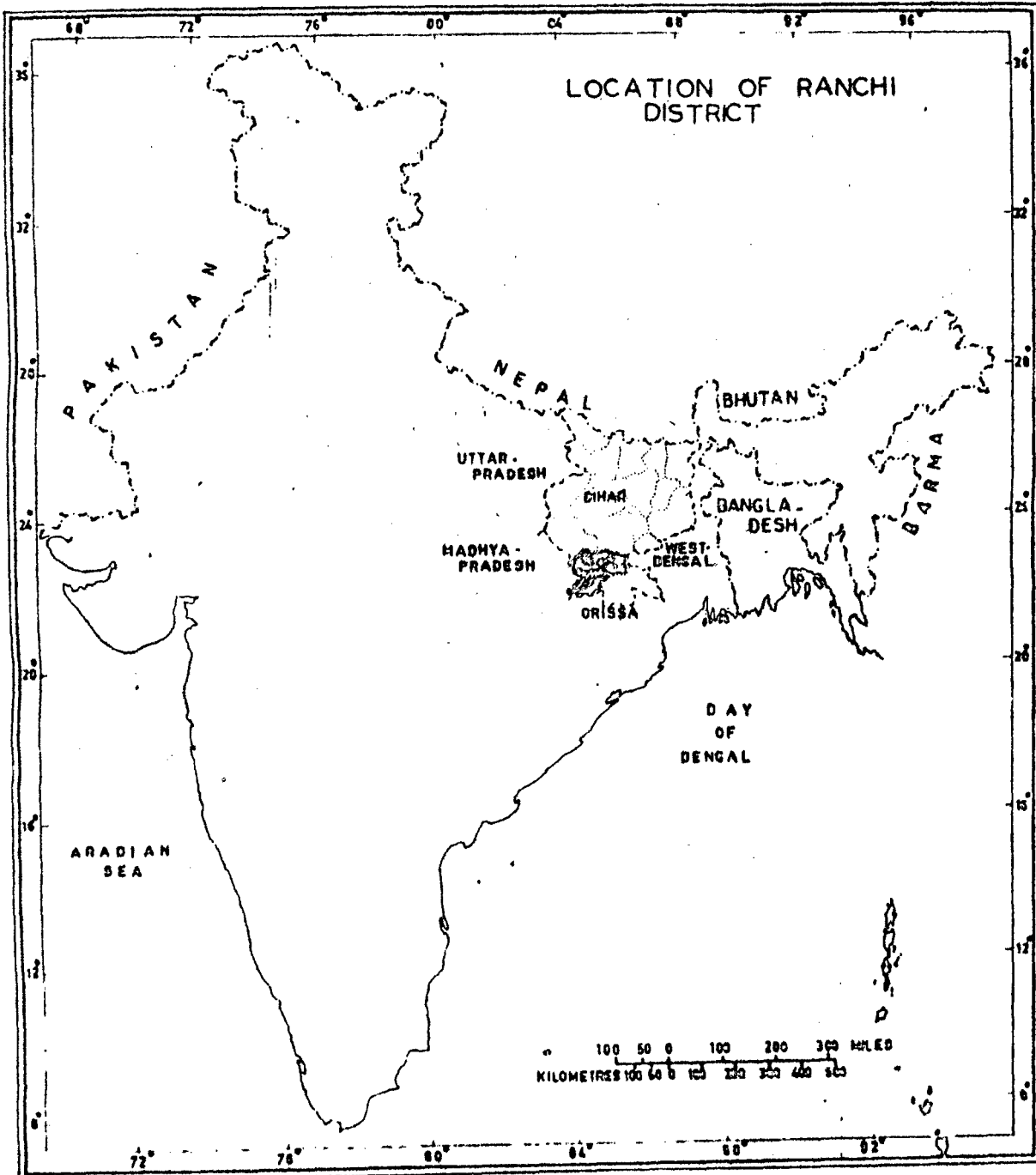


Fig. 1

much from the Mundas. The Kharia tribe which was known much later in the area, also copied some of the institutional organizations of the Mundas. The most common element of the tribal organization found in all the three tribes was the Parha federal organizations in the earliest tribal society. Most of the social and political institutions were common among the three tribes. For our purpose, then, we shall call 'adivasis', those three tribes collectively.

Until the invasion of the Mughals (1585-1765) in the hilly regions of Chotanagpur, the adivasis lived a happy, peaceful and undisturbed life. They took the trouble of clearing the jungles and tracts (Jharkhand), to make fields for cultivations and build houses. They had their own Parha panchayat to rule and control the villages. The tribal chieftain was the Parha raja helped by the council of five panches. This was their court which took decisions on every important matter and sanctioned penalties to the defaulters. The adivasis were self-sufficient, hardworking and pleasure loving people. They lived in their kingdom of joy and peace.

The historical account of the adivasis can be traced only with the subjugation of the tribal chieftain by the Mughal emperor, Akbar in 1585 A.D. The tribal chieftain

was mistaken for a real 'raja' and emperor Akbar sent the his army which conquered the former and made him a tributary to the Mughal emperor. This was to mark the end of the free, peaceful and harmonious life of the tribals. There were repeated attacks by the generals on the tribals. The major transformation however, came with Raja Durjansal who was captured by Jehangir and taken prisoner to Gwalior in 1616 where he was completely enamoured by the royal style of life and luxuries. Upon returning to his palace in 1628, he set out to furnish his court after the manner of the Mughals. Consequently, he invited Hindu Pandits, courtesans and other hosts of officials to settle down in the palace. These people were later on given jagirs and become the thikadars. The process of land alienation began with this new influx of the aliens on the land. In the subsequent years, the woes of the tribals were unbearable due to the loss of their 'bhumi-hari' and 'Khunt kati' land. The adivasis who were the original settlers and the owners of land were deprived of their land, subjugated to begari (unpaid labour for the rajas and jagirdars), and lot of harassments, with the result that many left the place and migrated to the tea estates of Assam and Bengal to find their livelihood.

With the arrival of the British on the land, peace and harmony was restored for some time. But the imposition

of the tax system among the tribals continued the old evil of land dispossession; the adivasis continued to lose their land now in a more subtle manner in the courts established by the Britishers. The simple tribals who never knew about documents, (for they never needed them) and the court procedure, became the unredeemable victims of the capricious intrigues of the Zamindars and thikadars, who by force or fraud, managed to obtain documents in their support in the courts.

At this juncture, the Christian missionaries appeared on the scene as the only saviour of the helpless adivasis whom they met in the streets of Calcutta as coolies and workers. With their sympathy and help the tribals learnt to go to the court to redeem their land the rapacious hands of the Zamindars. There was a section which impressed by the hope and help given by the missionaries became Christian while the others did not. We shall develop this point in the course of our discussion. But this had an important bearing on their life. It was at this point that some of the converted tribals broke away from the mission to organize themselves against the British, the landlords and the missionaries. This was called the 'Sardari Movement' which was the beginning of many subsequent risings of the tribals to redress their grievances. The most famous of such risings were the Sardari Movements.

the Kherwar movement, the Birsa Movement, apart from stray and short lived protests and uprisings. But such resurgents were termed rebellious and violent by officials under the British administration and were ruthlessly crushed at gun point. These risings, however, did have effects in the enactments of some of the regulations -- the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act being the most important of them all.

The post independence era was preceded by the era of organizations and constitutional demands. As early as in 1908, the Christians took the initiative of organizing the tribals into societies like the Unatti Samaj, Kisan sabha and Advaiti Mahasabha to raise up the socio-economic life of the tribals. This continued till the eve of independence when the organizations matured and terminated into forming a fullfledged political party, called the 'Jharkhand Party' with the Cock as its election symbol. The party fought the first election in 1952 and won the majority of reserved seats forming the main opposition to the Congress in the Bihar Assembly. But the tactical device of the Congress got it merged with itself rendering the party paralyzed for ever. The numerous factions of the party are not the obvious signs of their unanimity and focus on the tribal problem which alone could serve a common ground for struggle. But with the given situation the tribal problems seem to be diffused and other national parties like the Jana-Sangh and

the CPI are trying to fish in the troubled waters. Even at the political level the Jharkhand becomes victimised.

✓ The transforming factors in the past and the pre-independence periods are Christianity, education, industrialization, urbanization and modernization. These are the factors which have got to be examined in detail which have brought about great changes in the original identity of the tribals of Chotanagpur and that of Ranchi district in particular. Ranchi is the biggest and the most populous of all the five districts of Chotanagpur and hence the study of the adivasis of this district should be the exemplar of the tribals living in other parts of Chotanagpur.

✓ This paper is an attempt to look into the tribal history in order to examine the process of transformation of tribal identity down the ages. Though the main concentration would be on the post independence period of the earlier history is so important to put the process into proper context. Secondly, one has to get the original image of the identity of the tribals in order to understand the present changed one. Thirdly, we shall take only those events and factors which have played a role in the transformation. In modern times, factors like education, industries and urban life are of great importance because they are major factors of change in today's world.

Vidyarthi has referred to the scholarly oriented British administrators like Risely, Dalton, O'Malley in East India, Russell in middle India, Thurston in South India and Crooks in North India. But these anthropologists had strong colonial biases due to which their works were meant to help the task of colonial expansion in the tribal areas. In the same period missionaries like Bodding (1925), Hoffmann (1924) and Dehon published ethnographic materials on tribals.

Then came the self-made anthropologist, S.C. Roy under the influence of the above authors. He was the first Indian national who published his epoch making work on the Munda tribe. Nothing was put into writing systematically about the tribals of Chotanagpur before this century. The very first ethnography on the Munda tribe published by S.C. Roy was "The Munda and their Country" in 1912. Then followed the other workers. The Orsons of Chotanagpur, 1915; Orson Religion and Customs, 1928; The Kharias, 1937; Though the historical parts of these workers of Roy are purely conjectural, they have served as excellent basis for data and informations in regard to the tribals' culture, customs, beliefs, practices and socio-economic institutions. The later authors on the three tribals of Chotanagpur have heavily based themselves for material on the works of S.C. Roy.

The second phase of writings was more extensive and comprehensive. These post-independence writings on the

tribals of Chotanagpur were given lead by Sachchidananda, N.K. Bose and still at a later stage, L.P. Vidyarthi. As a true anthropologist Sachchidananda's approach to the tribal studies was analytical, critical, and comparative. L.P. Vidyarthi on the other hand restricted his approach to description as regards tribal customs, culture and organizations. With respect to interpretations, Sachchidananda was ethnic-bias-free and more authentic to the tribal symbolic and ritualistic meaning. N.K. Bose advocated tribal integration on the Brahminical, hence Hindu, pattern.

In his Multi-faceted Studies on Changing factors like Christianity, Education, Industrialisation, Modernization, Urbanization, Vidyarthi was greatly praising the capacity of adjustment among the tribals to these changing conditions. But, despite his prolific literature on the multiple aspects of tribal problems he gave an impression of being rather superficial in analysis and with a purpose of helping the planning policies of the government in interpreting the modern changes occurring in the tribal areas. However, the changing process of leadership pattern was well traced in his book, Dynamics of Tribal Leadership in Bihar, (1978).

Dr. K.N. Sahay wrote his doctoral thesis on the influence of Christianity on the five Oraon villages of Chainpur Block in Ranchi district. Since then he specialized in this line. 'Under the Shadow of the Cross' 1976, laid an

out-line for understaining the process of socio-cultural changes among the tribals. While the work was praiseworthy, the ill-information about Christianity and the lack of genuine understanding of the tribal culture led to ^{the} author to mis-interpretations. He has practically suggested that Hinduism was the best and the only alternative for the tribals in the face of conversion.

There came a set of historical writers on the questions of the tribals in Chotanagpur. Dr. S.P. Sinha wrote the first authentic biography of Birsa, The Life and Times of Birsa Bhaerman, 1964. K.S. Singh's, The Dust Storm and the Hanging Mist, came out practically at the same time. These two authors provided rare and multiple data. Through the agrarian movements the tribals, esp. the Mundas immortalized themselves in the annals of tribals history of Chotanagpur in the second half of the 19th century. S.P. Sinha has presented a detailed account of the career and activities of the great personality of Birsa Munda, who exercised personal influence on the history of Chotanagpur during a very critical period. K.S. Singh provided detailed descriptions of the Movements between 1875-1900 under the charismatic leadership of Birsa Munda.

A Missionary, Fidelis De Sa, by name wrote the book Crisis in Chotanagpur, 1975, with a special reference to the legal procedures between the Missionaries and the

British Government. Besides, the book was rich in historical data and documental sources. Historians, on the whole have been true to its tradition; however, they refrained from interpretations.

In the third stage, the writers have turned their attention to the most prominent political organization, the forum of tribal expression since 1949-50. The Jharkhand Party served as a vanguard to expose all the tribal problems. Many authors have written on different topics like... tribal culture, land alienation, Dikus, tribal exploitations, influence of Hinduism, Christianity, Modernization, Urbanization and Industrialization. The Community Development Programmes were studied by Sachchidananda and Vidyardhi, who regretted it that most of the allocations of resources meant for the tribals were manipulated and ended in seepage.

A strong political orientation was presented in "The Tribal Voter in Bihar" by Sachchidananda. But at later stages in the Sixties and seventies the authors in articles and essays have lamented the end of the original Jharkhand which has fragmented into small parties.

At this crucial period, the major national political parties like, Congress, C.P.I. (M), Jan Sangh, Socialist and Swatantra, made their intrusion into the heart of tribal

region of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district. The Marxists have made their alliance with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and control the industrial cities of Dhanbad Jharis and Bokaro in the region. The ulterior motive of this party in wooing the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is not hidden from the people either. The Congress has played the champion of the poor throughout in order to win the role of the same, but its success is too obvious in illusions. The Jan Sangh Party, time and again, has tried ^{to} win over a certain hinduized section of the tribals, turning them against the other sections and thus followed the policy of "divide and rule". Ironically enough very few tribal politicians have been able to realize how their problems get diffused in aligning themselves, with one party or another.

In writing about the tribals of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district and their problems, wide coverage of aspects has been doubtlessly achieved. Since the tribals of this area came in the notice of the anthropologists, social anthropologists, social workers and politicians, the changes among the tribals have been worked by all.

✓ This research is largely based on the secondary sources, available literature, documents and a few interviews. Direct field work has been minimum. The first chapter consists of introduction of the subject, survey of literature, outlining the plans and methodology followed.

A short description of the land and people is embodied in the second chapter. A brief history of the origin and settlement of the three tribes - Oraon, Munda, and Kharia- has been traced in the third Chapter.

The extensive detailed account of their origin is not possible, for the lack of data, and what has been done is with lots of conjectures. But even this was necessary to give a proper context to the development of the tribals. The effects of modern factors are described in Chapter four. But behind this description attempt has been made to show how and why the tribals adapted themselves, their social, economic and cultural styles to these new situations. This in fact indicates, indirectly the proper and more suited approach to study tribal societies. History and the process of adaptation combined together give us a more luminous insight into the tribal societies.

Chapter five deals with the problem of search for a new identity in a new political forum. The seat of power for influence in any democracy lies in politics which, in the given situations cannot be just ignored by the tribals of Ranchi district. In Chapter six, we have taken the issue of 'Detribalization' which was a thorny problem when connected with the question of integration of tribals in the main stream of national life. The final chapter consists of the conclusion in an attempt to suggest a more suitable approach in studying the tribal societies undergoing changes. The historico-adaptive method ~~to~~ a great extent seems suitable for the purpose because.

this is more helpful to understand the meaning of changes in tribal societies. This provides insights into grasping the problem of detribalization. That we call detribalization may not apply to the tribes themselves, who still adhere to the tribal pattern of life.

In this connection, we may refer to the article of J.C. Mitchell, "Theoretical Orientations in African Urban Studies", published in The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, (ed. Michael Banton). In studying urbanization in the African countries the authors have followed two broad categories. "In one, exemplified by the social survey, various social characteristics of the urban populations have been recorded, frequently with little attempt to relate these characteristics one to another in an explanatory way. The other type of study aims to interpreting the behaviour of people in terms of the social situations that exist in the town".¹ Hence patterns of behaviour have arisen in towns which are different from those in tribal areas from which most of the townsmen have come. But most authors are mistaken in taking it as social change. Even in the Indian context N.K. Bose, S. Fuchs and others used Diffusionist (Cultural Contact) approach to study tribal societies, K.N. Sahay, Surajit Sinha, Edward Jay used

1. J.C. Mitchell, "Theoretical Orientations in African Urban Studies". The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, ed. M. Banton, p. 39.

functionalist frame of reference. Vidyarthi and Sachchidananda studied tribal social changes in terms of contacts with and impact of modern factors.

But all these approaches failed to grasp the two levels of changes pointed out by J.C. Mitchell. One such change is due to the different behaviour a tribal person must adopt as he participates in urban institutions and is involved in urban structures. Another is the change which is proceeding as new institutions and patterns develop out of old. Mitchell, therefore, has suggested the 'historical' or 'processive' method to study the two levels of simultaneous change in a tribal society.

CHAPTER - II

THE LAND AND PEOPLE

Ranchi district is situated between $20^{\circ} 21''$ and $23^{\circ} 43''$ N. altitude and between $85^{\circ} 0''$ and $85^{\circ} 54''$ E. longitude. The tropic of Cancer runs through Ranchi. The original home of the 'adivasis' (Munda, Oraon and Kharis), is clad with forests, cut across by rivers, streams and ravines, is bounded in North by Palamau and Hazaribagh districts, on South by Singhbhum (Bihar) and Sundergarh (Orissa) districts, on East by Singhbhum and Purulia (West Bengal) districts and on West by Raigarh and Surguja (both in M.P.) districts.

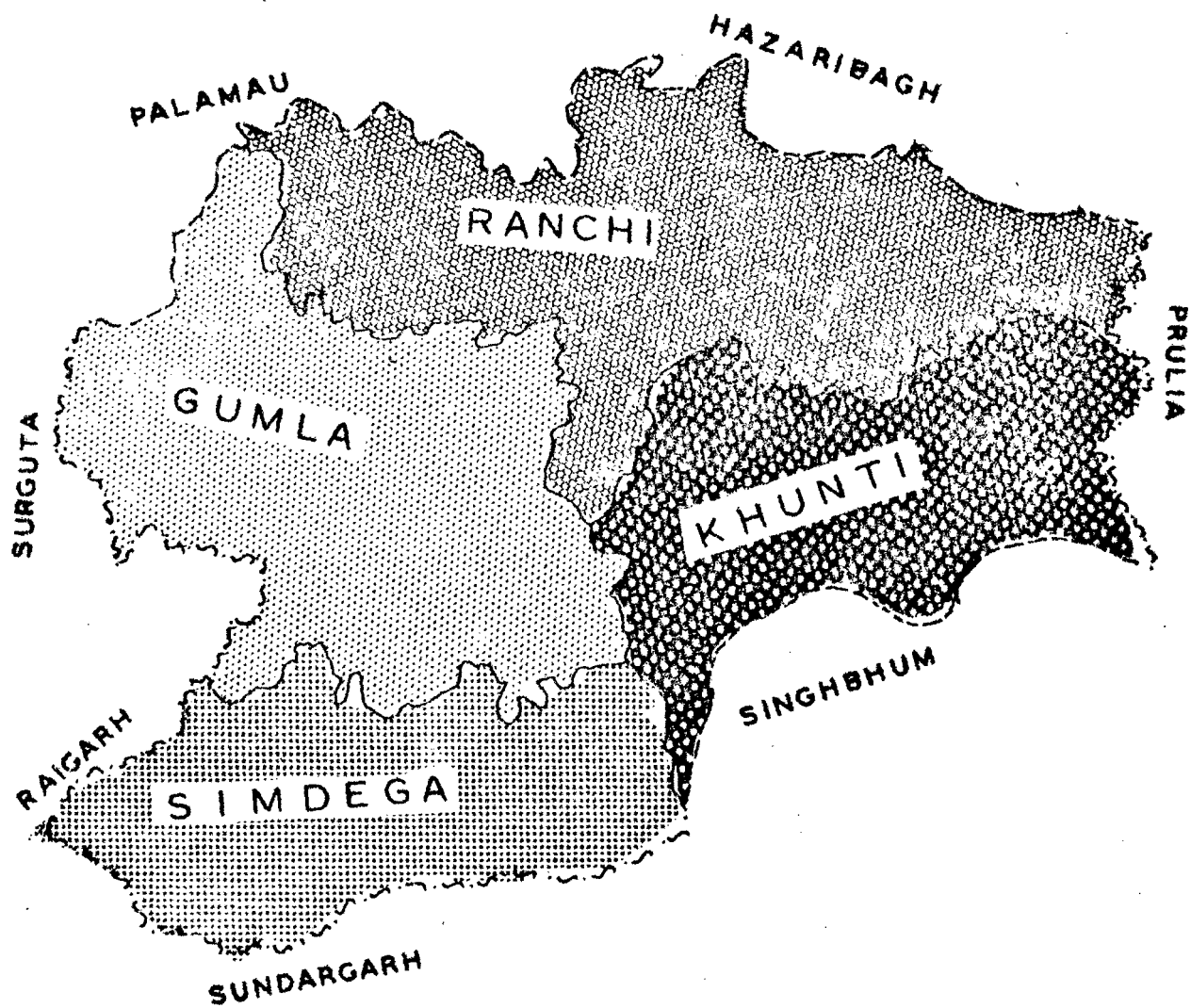
The district of Ranchi extends over 7,035.2 square miles (18,331.0 square K.M.) with a population of 2,138,565 of which 1,076,251 were males and 1,062,314 were females. The density was 304 per square mile. Thus the largest district of the stage in area it ranks only 12th in respect of population.¹

In 1833 Ranchi was created an autonomous district with its headquarters of the Principal Assistant of the Agent to the Governor General, who administered the area initially at Lohardaga, but in 1843 it was shifted to Kishunpur a village, which later merged into Ranchi town.² Ranchi which is one of

1. Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part IIA, P 57.

2. Originally Ranchi was a big village, but with the shift of the district administrative Headquarters it developed into a town, and into a city with the extension of HEC, Hatia.

THE FOUR SUB-DIVISIONS OF RANCHI DISTRICT

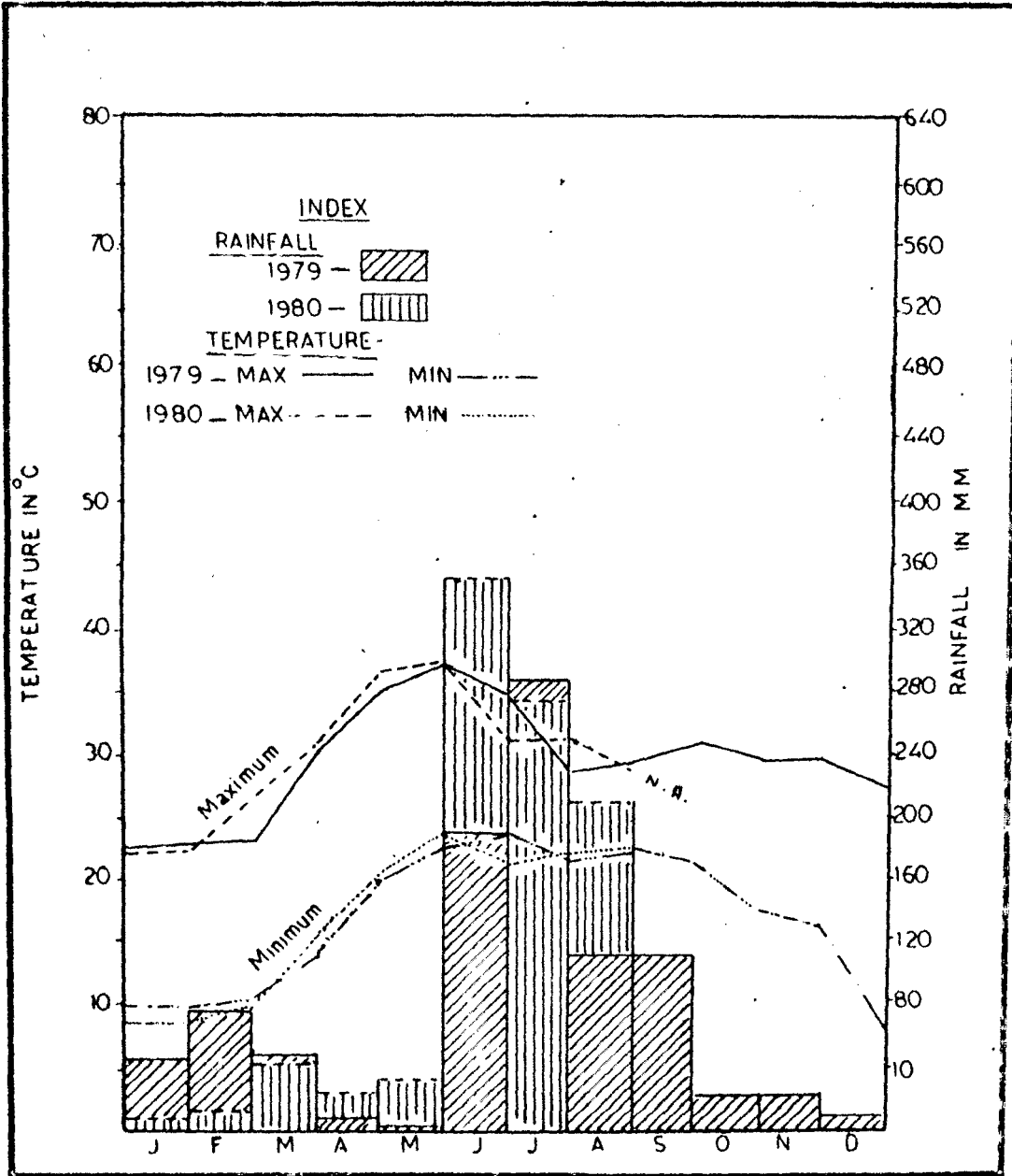


the five districts of Chotanagpur division in South Bihar, is further divided into four sub-divisions, (a) Sadar Sub-Division, (b) Khunti Sub-Division, (c) Gumla Sub-Division and (d) Simdega Sub-Division. According to 1961 Census, there were nine towns in Ranchi district. These towns were: Ranchi, Deranda, Lohardaga, Khunti, Khelari, Muri, Bundu, Simdega and Gumla.

The land is full of forests, hills, valleys and rivers. The most important rivers like, Suvarnarekha, North, Koel, South Koel and Shankh flow across the heart of Ranchi district. Numerous waterfalls, the highest being the Hundru fall, falling from the height of 320 feet, about 39 K.M. from Ranchi town, mark the beauty-spots attracting great number of tourists to Ranchi. Among the many hill summits the highest in the district stands over 3,621 feet.

The climate of Ranchi plateau is cool and pleasant, because the district land is situated at an elevation of 2,180' from the sea level. In April the temperature occasionally rises to 105°F. But the nights are cool and the atmosphere is so dry that heat is not oppressive. The temperature in December rises to 22.9°C (37.3°F) and falls to 10.3°C (50.5°F) on an average. In May and June the temperature rises to 37.2°C (90.0°F) and 40°C (104°F) or above in some places, respectively on an average. But with

TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL GRAPHS OF
RANCHI DISTRICT
(1979 -80)



SOURCE OF DATA : METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATORY
RANCHI AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, KANKE, RANCHI

Fig. 5c

the advance of the South-West monsoon into the district by about the second week of June the weather cools down appreciably. The rainfall on an average covers for 80 days with 58.34" rain in a year.

The land of Chotanagpur division has got the world's largest deposit of mica, India's largest deposit of coal, iron, copper and adequate quantities of bauxite, limestone, phyllite, chromite, asbestos, graphite, kyanite and steatite. The district of Ranchi is also pregnant with rich deposits of minerals like, mica, phyllites, schists, quartzite, lime silicate rocks, asbestos, barytes, bauxite, beryl, cassiterite, coal, copper lead, silver, mineral pigments, steatite, limestone and building materials.³

The district of Ranchi ought to be situated in the context of the wider geographical map of Chotanagpur division, in order to understand and estimate the riches it carries in her bosom. Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas account for 1/40th of the country's area. But more than 1/4th of the total mining activities are centred here. More than 1/5th of the India's public sector investment in industrial activities are located here. In private sectors, apart from the giant plants like TELCO and TISCO aluminium, copper, uranium, mica industries are planted in the land

3. Cf. L.P. Vidyarthi, 1970 : p. 5.

of Jharkhand.⁴ This region is covered with 29.2% area of forests. The following table represents the type of land in this region.

Table: 2.1

Types of Land in Jharkhand Area

Type of Land	Jharkhand %	Rest of Bihar ^{°°} %	All India [°]
Uncultivable	10.7	5.2	13.2
Cultivable fallow	7.1	1.2	6.6
Current fallow	15.3	8.2	4.9
Other fallow	12.0	2.3	3.9
Land put to Agriculture use	42.8	68.8	57.8
Land put to Non- agriculture use	12.1	14.2	13.6

[°] = 1970 - 71

^{°°} = 1969-70

Source = Directorate of Statistics and Evaluation, Bihar, given in Nirmal Sen Gupta, Class and Tribe in Jharkhand, in EPW, Vol. XV, No.14, AP. 5, 1980, p. 667.

With such rich deposit of minerals, mines and factories established in recent times, and with comparatively rich amount

4. Sengupta Nirmal, 'Class and Tribe in Jharkhand', in EPW, Vol. XV, No. 14, Ap. 5, 1980, p. 667.

of agricultural land in the region of Chotanagpur, the adivasis of this land are poor, uneducated, unemployed and exploited. This is the paradox we shall try to show in the respective chapters. The original tribals who cleared the forests and cultivated the land were not only ousted from their homeland, but were denied employment, education and equality by the outsiders. In the giant plants of Thermal Power Generation at Patratu and Bokaro, Steel Plants of Jamshedpur and Steel City of Bokaro, Heavy Engineering Corporation at Hatia in Ranchi, the greater majority of employed are non-tribals, who have come from North Bihar and other neighbouring states.

The Oraon, Munda and Kharia are the three tribes earliest to immigrate into this land which became their home in the subsequent generations. These three major tribes (for convenience we shall call them as 'Adivasis'), the undisputable earliest settlers in the region of Chotanagpur populated the area as settled agriculturists.

According to the 1971 Census the total area of Ranchi district was:

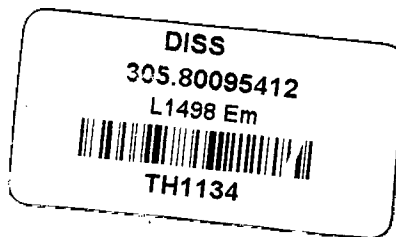
<u>Area in Km.</u>	<u>General Population</u>
Total - 18,331	Total - 2,611,445
Rural - 18,120.4	Male - 1,329,303
Urban - 210.6	Female- 1,288,142

This is the total of the four sub-divisions of Ranchi district. The district of Ranchi is dominantly tribal in population composition. According to the 1961 census the tribal population in the district was 61.61% of the total population, but it got decreased to 58.0% according to the 1971 census. The decrease is obviously the result of immigration in the land from other states. Secondly, the district has got the largest percentage of tribal Christians. The census of 1971 gave nearly 88% of the total Christian population of Chotanagpur tribals residing in Ranchi district. The percentage of the tribals in the whole of Chotanagpur according to the 1961 census was 33.9% which came down to 32.2% in 1971. The three major tribes according to the 1961 census were:

Oraon Tribe	-	c 735,000
Munda Tribe	-	c 628,000
Kharis Tribe	-	c 100,000

This makes 33.9% of the total population of the Chotanagpur division. The population of different tribes in Ranchi district is as follows: 1971 census:

Oraon	-	645,598
Munda	-	521,095
Kharis	-	115,116
		<hr/>
		12,81,809 Total Tribal Population.



This could be compared with the general population of the district which is 2,611,445, as given above. The Oraons are the highest in number followed by the Mundas and the Kharias come only in the third place. The Kharias show growth in population, and the figures also show that the district of Ranchi is the concentration of tribal populations - Oraon, Munda and Kharia.

The following table gives the idea of the tribal and non-tribal population in Chotanagpur and Ranchi district.

Table 3.2

Tribal and Non-Tribal Population (1971)

Population	Tribal Population	Non-Tribal Population	% (of Tribals)
(in '000)			
<u>Chotanagpur</u>			
Total - 11,035	3,413	7,625	31.0
Rural - 8,224	3,224	5,722	36.0
Urban - 2,091	189	1,903	9.6
<u>Ranchi</u>			
Total - 2,610	1,516	1,094	58.0
Rural - 2,254	1,451	803	64.4
Urban - 356	65	291	18.2

Source: Census of India, 1971.

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Source : Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil*, p. 186, Table 4:1 Both in Chotanagpur as a whole and Ranchi district in particular, the majority of the tribal population lives in the rural areas. This shows their economic base in agriculture primarily.

Though the district of Ranchi is the most populous tribal area. The following table represents the tribal population and percentage in other districts too.

Table: 1.3

Tribal Population in Thousands According To the 1971 Census

Districts	Scheduled Tribe Population	Tribal Percentage
Palamou	287	19.09
Hazaribagh (Giridih)	332	10.99
Ranchi	1,517	58.08
Dhanbad	156	10.61
Singhbhum	1,124	46.12

Source: B.K. Roy Burman, *Demographic and Historical Setting for Ethnic Relations in Chotanagpur with Particular Reference to the Tribal's in The Passing Scene in Chotanagpur*, P. Dash Sharma Ed, 1980, p. 158.

When compared to the 1961 census, a gradual and general erosion of tribal concentration is found in all the districts of Chotanagpur.

Table 3.4Tribal Population as Percentage of Total Population

District	Year (1961)	Year (1971)
Palamau	19.25	19.09
Hazaribagh	11.29	10.99
Ranchi	61.61	58.08
Dhanbad	11.08	10.61
Singhbhum	47.31	46.12

Source : Ibid.

The above two tables clearly show the gradual erosion of the tribals. Though the rate of migration is reduced compared to the 19th century, there is a higher rate of immigration in this land of Chotanagpur, reducing the percentage of the tribals. Now the tribals no more migrate to the tea estates of Assam and West Bengal, but go out to cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi and a substantial number migrates to the green belt of Punjab and Haryana in search of jobs. The outsiders unscrupulously flood the industrial towns of Chotanagpur. If this goes on unrestricted, the separate state of Jharkhand would not be realised on the score of the majority of tribal population. This seems to be the subtle policy of the state and central governments to minimize the majority - margin of the tribals.

Ranchi and Singhbhum are still the areas of heavy tribal population. Ranchi has got 58.08% and the district of Singhbhum retains 46.12% of the total populations. In the case of Ranchi, the percentage is more likely to come down because, the educated tribals are looking for jobs outside and instead the non-tribals are flocking into the district. According to the census years the rates of immigration and migrations are as follows:

Table: 3.4

The Rate of Immigrations and Migrations

Census Year	Immigration	Migration
1891	95,400	4,21,900
1901	1,21,300	2,82,000
1911	1,89,740	3,86,000
1921	1,36,500	75,000
1931	2,07,000	NA
1951	4,32,000	NA
1961	7,87,500	NA

Source: B.K. Roy Burman, Op Cit. p. 159.

These data do not give the tribal and non-tribal break up. From the various ethnographic studies carried out in the area, it can be assumed that the bulk of the outmigrants from Chotanagpur are tribals and the bulk of the in migrants to Chotanagpur are non-tribals. The highest

number of outmigrants was in 1891, for that was the time when the land lords deprived the tribals of their land at a very high rate. This was the period again when the missionaries appeared on the scene and saved their land. The number of outmigrants was far less in 1901. But it went up once more in 1931, after falling greatly in 1921. On the other side, the inmigrants have been on the increase constantly. The outgoing migrants were the labourers in the tea estates of Assam and Bengal. "Thus the erosion of the tribal preponderance in Chotanagpur in the recent decades can be considered to be primarily the result of the influx of non-tribals in large numbers from outside. It has been accentuated by the outmigration of the tribals to a certain extent. But the contribution of the latter factor in causing demographic imbalance seems to be progressively less".⁵

As we have seen in the previous pages, the greater majority of the tribals are concentrated in Ranchi district. (Cef. Table 1.3). According to the 1961 Census we give the break up of different tribes in different parts of Ranchi district. The Mundas make 74.0% of the total Munda tribes in Chotanagpur and 15.67% of the total population (general) of Ranchi. Their main concentration is in the south-eastern region of Ranchi district. Mundas form as high as 86.30% in

5. B.K. Roy Burman, op. cit. p. 160.

Murhu Anchal, 85.10% in Tamar II, Anchal, 66.19% in Torpa Anchal and 60.37% in Khunti Anchal.

The Oraons form 17.5% of the total tribal population of Bihar and 14.5% of the total tribal population of Chotanagpur. 76.5% of the total Oraon population is concentrated in the district of Ranchi. Their main concentrations are in the central and the western parts of Ranchi district. The highest percentage of the Oraon population comes in Ghaghra Anchal with 65.38% followed by Gamharla Anchal with 59.52%, Lohardaga Anchal, with 55.78% and Bishunpur Anchal with 55.55%. The Kharias are the least numerous according to 1961 and 1971 census among the three tribes. Almost 50% of the total K^haria population is concentrated in Chotanagpur. But they make only 4.26% of the total population of Ranchi District and 6.83% of the total tribal population of the same district.⁶ The south western region of Ranchi district is the concentration belt of the Kharias. The Kharias are 43.75% in Bolba Anchal and 24.84% in Simdega Anchal. There are three categories of Kharias, namely, the Hill Kharias, 80% of the Delki (Delki= Those come later) and Dudh (Pure) Kharias. 80% of the Hill Kharias depend on forest economy for their subsistence, 30% of the Delki and 5% of the Dudh Kharias depend on forest economy for their subsistence, 30% of the Delki and 5% of the Dudh Kharias depend on forest economy.

6. Ivorn Francois, Chotanagpur Survey, 1969, p. 42.

As we have already mentioned, some tribals were converted to Christianity while others remained in their original Sarna religion. To understand this let us give the general picture of the district population according to religion.

Table 3.6

Religion Wise Population of Ranchi District, 1971.

Budhist	Christians	Hindus	Jains	Muslims	Sikhs	Other Religions
11-207	228,124	862,747	1,106	98,187	2,958	129,971
F-170	233,946	825,120	1,044	91,754	2,891	133,214

Source : Census of India, 1971.

The Hindus are the highest totaling to 16,87,067 followed by the Christians totaling to 4,62,070 and the other religious groups come third with a total of 2,63,185. There are some tribals who have recorded themselves as Hindus. Hence the tribal percentage is distorted. All the Christians of different denominations are put in one category in the census of 1971. We can infer that the majority of them are Roman Catholics. In other religions, the greater majority is of the tribals who practice the Sarna Dharan^o. The dominant numbers of Christians in Ranchi district are from among

^oSarna Dharan is the religion of the aboriginals of Chotanagpur, so called because their worship revolved round the Sarna or the 'Sacred Grove'.

these three tribes. According to the 1971 census there were 72,805 Christians among the Kharias 1,54,627 among the Mundas and 1,80,377 among the Oraons. The percentage, however, is highest among the Kharias. The numbers of non-Christian Kharias, Mundas and Oraons are, 42,311, 366,468 and 465,221, respectively. The total number of Christian tribals comes to 4,07,009 according to the 1971 Census, in the district of Ranchi. In 1961 there were about 3,64,000 Christians forming 27.6% of the total tribal population and 17% of the general population of the district. If we compare the data of 1961, and 1971, there has been an increase in the number of Christians. The following table represents the rate of increase in general and Christian population in Ranchi District.

Table 3.7

The Population of Mundas, Kharias and Oraons and Christians of Ranchi District in 1931 and 1961 and their percentage of increase between 1931 & 1961.

Tribe	Population		Difference No.	% of Increase 1931-1961
	1931	1961		
<u>Mundas</u>				
General	3,86,400	4,65,000	78,600	+ 20.4
Christian	97,241 (25.2%)	1,41,400 (30.4%)	44,159	+ 45.4
<u>Kharias</u>				
General	75,083	96,000	20,917	+ 28.0
Christian	46,891 (62.5%)	66,800 (69.6%)	19,999	+ 42.5
<u>Oraons</u>				
General	4,40,000	5,62,774	1,22,774	+ 27.8
Christian	1,13,322 (25.7%)	1,55,000 (27.5%)	41,678	+ 37.1

Source: F. Ivern, Chotanagpur Survey, 1969, op cit. p. 35.

There has been an increase in the number of Christians by 54.4% among the Mundas, by 42.5% among the Kharias and by 37.1% among the Oraons from 1931 to 1961. Though the Kharias are the least numerous of the three tribes, they have got the highest percentage of Christian population (69.6%), followed by the Mundas (30.4%), and Oraons (27.5%). This leads to the conclusion that the largest number of tribal non-Christians are among the Oraons followed by the Mundas. According to the 1971 Census, the numbers of non-Christians Kharias, Mundas and Oraons were, 42,311, 3,66,468 and 4,65,221 respectively. When we compare the percentage of Christians of the district with the rest of the social groups we come to the following figures:

Table 3.8

Religious Composition According to the
1961 Census

In Ranchi District

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Hindus Formed	63.7
Christians Formed	17.7
Muslims Formed	5.8
Sikhs Formed	0.1
Jains Formed	0.1
Other Formed	12.6

Source : P. Ivern, Chotanagpur Survey, 1969, pp. 44-45.

Though the largest majority in the district are Hindus the Christians come second followed by the other religious groups. Ranchi district is the heavily populated area by the adivasis and the highest number of Christians (88.0%) are found in the district of Ranchi.

In the censuses the different denominational Christians are all put together. It is difficult to get all the breakups of these different Churches. But we try to give the picture of the Catholic population of Ranchi Archdiocese^o, obtained from the sacred returns.

Table 2.9

	1978	1979	1980
Total no. of Catholics	3,31,514	3,44,904	3,50,857
Non-tribal Catholics included in the total	103	97	N.A.
Increased by	-	13,390	5,953

The catholics form the largest number in the districts followed by the GEL (Gossner Evangelical Lutheran) Mission. There are seven Vikarates in the Ranchi Catholic Archdiocese. The following is the number of Christians Vikariate-wise.^{oo}

^o = Archdiocese is the ecclesiastical jurisdiction geographically demarcated. The sacred Returns are the Annual Census of the Catholics submitted to the Archdiocese at the end of the year.

^{oo} = Vikariate is the sub-division of the Archdiocese consisting of a number of Parishes (also called the Deanery), headed by the Dean of the Chairman.

Barway	-	60,868	Khunti	-	40,503
Biru	-	1,02,808	Mandar	-	24,629
Gumla	-	23,206	Neatoli	-	57,942
Ranchi	-	41,501			

There has been an increase in the number of Catholics from 1978 to 1980. But while the increase from 1978 to 1979 was by 13,390 it has decreased to 5,953 from 1979 to 1980. Secondly, the increase is not by adult baptism so much as infant baptism. That means the rate of birth is the more significant factor for the increase in the number of Christians. In the decade 1951-1961 the Catholic population of Ranchi district showed an annual increase of 2.14% as against the annual increase in the general population of 1.6%. This rate of growth is not the same in all the sub-divisions. The following table makes it clear.

Table 3.10

Rate of growth of General Population and Catholic Population in Ranchi District from 1951 to 1961
(In Percentage)

General Population growth % 1951-61		Catholic Population growth % 1951-1961	
Simdega Sub-division	12.5	Biru Vicariate	16.5
Khunti Sub-division	6.5	Khunti Vicariate	25.0
Sadar Sub-division	20.75	Ranchi Vicariate	31.5
Gumla Sub-division	14.8	Gumla	17.7
Chainpur Dumri			
Anchal	14.4	Barway	13.0

Source: Population : Census, 1961 Catholics : Sacred return 1951-61. F. Ivorn, op.cit. p. 36.

The Catholic population of Ranchi district has registered its highest rate of growth during recent years, in the urban parishes of Ranchi town itself. In 1963, the four urban parishes had 14,000 Catholics (5.78% of the Catholic Population of Ranchi district). In 1967, it came upto 20,500 (7% of the Catholic of the district). This is an indication of the rate of urbanisation because of which the rural population is moving into cities. The following table gives the figures of religious composition of the district from 1901 to 1961.

Table 3.11

Percentage of Population by Religious Groups,
Hindus, Muslims, Christians Tribals and others
for 1901-1961 in Ranchi District

Religion	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961
Hindus	39.95	39.69	41.88	55.48	54.40	63.7
Muslims	3.35	3.69	3.92	4.21	5.20	5.8
Tribals						
Sarna	46.00	43.81	39.80	23.50	22.13	12.6
Christians	10.52	12.81	14.80	16.80	18.05	17.7

Source : F. Ivorn, op. cit. p. 44.

All the religious groups show increase in number per decennial. The Hindus show a spurt rise between 1951 and 1961 i.e. from 54.40% to 63.7%. This is because in 1950s the establishment of H.E.C. and other industries developed

in Ranchi district which attracted many non-tribals from outside Chotanagpur. The Sarna tribals have lost rapidly down the decennials. Where as they were 46% in 1901 they were reduced to 12.6% only in 1961. This is obvious that many tribals were converted to Christianity and some others to Hinduism. The Christians show a steady and continual growth on the average a little more than 2% per decennial. But in the last decennial there is a decrease from 18.5% to 17.7%. The fact is that though the Christian population is on the increase (Ref. p. 10, No. of Catholics) the rate of immigration of the out-siders is higher than the former. This is seen particularly in the period between 1951 and 1961 when Ranchi district began to develop in industrial complexes. In future this tendency of growth of outsiders, reducing the preponderance of the local tribals both Christians and non-Christians, is most likely to continue, in the district of Ranchi, in particular and in Chotanagpur in general.

There are certain conclusions to be drawn from the data given in the preceding pages. Though the land of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district is rich in mineral and arable land, the local tribal population is not absorbed into industries nor in improved farming. Consequently outsiders are flooding in the district and the tribals are flocking to the urban centres leaving the stagnant rural

agriculture. The more educated tribals are looking out for jobs in distant towns and cities while the unskilled labourers from the tribal belt are moving out to Haryana and Punjab and the brick kilns of Calcutta, with the result that the present tribal percentage of Ranchi district which is 58.08% of the total tribal population is going to decrease further.

Regarding the religious minority, the present (1971) position of 17.7% Christians in the district may increase but at a very slow rate, because the trend indicates that the increase in the number of Christians is mostly through infant baptism. There is no mass conversion any more, though the majority of tribals are still non-Christians. Ranchi district, the land of the earliest settled adivasis, has become the home for all races and people.

CHAPTER - III

ORIGIN, SETTLEMENT AND STRUGGLE

The Mundas, Oraons, and Kharias, collectively known as the 'Adivasis' or the earliest settlers in Chotanagpur and Ranchi, came to this land at different points of time. Although the origin of these three tribes remain covered with the uncertain and distant past, we shall try to trace their original homes in keeping with the accepted ethnographies which have appeared in the past. The earliest writings about these tribes are found in the ethnographic volumes of Sarat Chandra Roy of Bengal. Though the earliest part of the origin of these tribes is to a large extent conjecture, therefore, unhistorical and uncertain, the descriptions about their unknown history is not without a base. Cultural and linguistic evidences lead to accept the given theories of origin which S.C. Roy has proposed in his writings. Of course, such theories are disputable, but we do not engage ourselves in this theoretical question.

These three tribes belong to two main categories of races. The Munda and the Kharia tribes belong to the ^{P₂ A₂} Australoid race and the Oraon tribe is attributed to the Dravidian race. In the following pages the description of each in brief will make the problem much clearer.

THE MUNDAS:

The Mundas are spread over Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura. But the major concentration is in Ranchi district. The following table gives the distribution of Munda population and general population.

Table 2.1Area wise Distribution of Munda Population Compared to the General Population

	1971		1901	
	Munda	General	Munda	General
All India	1,18,151 (0.21%)	547,950,000 (100.00%)	4,66,668 (0.19%)	238,333,313 (100.00%)
Bihar	7,23,166 (1.3%)	56,353,369 (100.00%)	-	27,311,707 -
Chotanagpur	7,14,927 (6.5%)	11,040,225 (100.00%)	3,44,373 (8.1%)	4,263,707 (100.00%)
Ranchi Dt.	5,21,095 (20.00%)	2,611,445 (100.00%)	2,87,105 (24.5%)	1,177,611 (100.00%)

Source : Sachchidananda, The Changing Munda, p. 33.

There is a slight increase in the Munda population at the all India level; from 0.19% in 1901 it became 0.21% in 1971. Such an increase is also seen in Chotanagpur but there is a decrease at the district level. While it was 24.5% in 1901 it came down to 20.0% in 1971. At the beginning of the 20th Century many Mundas migrated to Assam and Bengal and recently the Mundas from the district of Ranchi are moving out to other districts of Chotanagpur.

According to the record of S.C. Roy in the "Mundas^a and Their Country", 1912, the Mundas and their kin Kolarian tribes originally lived in the hilly regions along the Aravalli and Vindhya ranges and from there they gradually spread. They spread further to the north and occupied the valleys of the mighty rivers of Northern India.¹ Later on the Mundas were pushed southward when the Aryan tribes began to pour into India through the North-Western passes, the former unable to resist them, were pushed southward.²

Like the Oraons, the Mundas also refer to Ruidas in their tradition as their former home. "The famous Rhtasgarh is without doubt the Ruidas of Munda tradition. How long the Mundas dwelt here it is impossible now to determine; but even this strong fortress failed to afford a lasting refuge to the tribe".³ They were forced to move out from Ruidas and they took the course leading south-eastward, until they came to a village Omedanda which Munda tradition names as the first settlement of the Mundas in 'Nagpur' - as they name the Ranchi district.⁴

While their kinsmen, the Santhals, parted company and crossed the Damodar into what is now called the Santhal

1. Roy, S.C., Mundas and Their Country, 1912, p. 26.
2. *ibid.* p. 27.
3. *ibid.* p. 109
4. *ibid.* p. 111.

Parganas', the Mundas preferred to stay on in the forest covered regions of what is now the Ranchi district. In this new home (Jharkhand), their kinsmen, the Asuras, appear to have already preceded them and worked which hints at the question whether the Mundas were the first settlers or the lesser tribe, the Asuras. Most probably, the Asuras were primarily artisans and the Mundas subjugated them because of their agriculture and forest economy. This event of subjugation of one minor tribe by another major tribe is, probably related in the traditional Munda legend of the Asur boy, ^{the} fall of sores, who was given shelter by a compassionate Munda couple, named Luthkum Harma and Luthkum Buriyah. The legend goes that the Asuras were destroyed in the furnace, by the help of the boy who was in fact, the 'Sing Bonga' (the supreme God), in disguise.

These valleys of Chotanagpur and Ranchi afforded them lands suitable for cultivation and forests offered extensive pastures for their cattle. No enemies could any longer dog their steps in these forest-clad highlands. No intruder would penetrate into these hilly fastness and forest to wrest their new found home from them. Here at length their age long wanderings were followed by a long era of peace. Here, in the primeval forests of "Jharkhand" or the "Forest Country" as it appears to have been once called, the first Munda immigrants made clearances

in the jungles and established their primitive Kol villages, just as we see their latter day descendants doing even in our own times in the South-Eastern parts of the Ranchi district.⁵ While they cleared the forests to make their 'Hatu' (Village), later known as the 'Khuntatti Hatu' (original village), they reserved one bit of jungles for the village spirits. This is the origin and meaning of 'Sarna is the traditional abode of the spirits around which the whole ritual life of the Mundas and the Oraons is centred.'⁶

The first Munda settlement in Chotanagpur started with Risa Munda by name, who came down to Kurma, famous for great dancing place - followed by 21,000 Mundas with 21 hills (clans). Later Korumba Munda founded a Munda village called Korambe named after him. Sutiā was the follower of Risa and he also founded a village called Sutiāambe⁷ after him. From here the Mundas further went to Pithoria and finally to Chutia (Sutia). From this comes the word 'Chutia Nagpur' which later became the present Chotanagpur.⁸

5. Roy, S.C. 1912 : pp. 111-112; 114.

6. Roy, 1912: p. 116.

7. Sutiāambe is supposed to be the father of Raja Pharimukant Rai, the first Nagbansi Raja.

8. Roy 1912 : pp. 131-132.

THE ORAONS.

Of the three tribes of the Oraons are the most numerous both in Chotanagpur as well as in Ranchi district. They are distributed in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Tripura. According to 1961 Census the number of the Oraons in Bihar was 7,35,025; West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh had the population of over 2 lakhs each and Orissa had over one lakh. They were 2,875 in Tripura.

Unlike the Mundas the Oraons were akin to the Dravidian race whose linguistic influence is found even to this day. A few centuries after the Mundas had settled down in Chotanagpur, there followed a Dravidian tribe pursued by enemies from the North and found its way into the jungle tracts which hitherto the Mundas had called all their own. These unwelcome intruders were the 'Kurukho', better known to us as the Oraons. Who were these Oraons? There is a much thicker veil cast on the origin of the Oraons, than on the Mundas.⁹ After many wanderings, in Northern India, in the course of which their traditions represent them as having passed through Nandangarh and Hardinagar, places which can only be doubtfully identified, they at length went to what is now the Shahabad district in Bihar. Here they settled down as agriculturists and landowners.¹⁰ They

9. Roy, 1912 : p. 123.

10. S.C. Roy, The Oraons of Chotanagpur, 1951, pp. 28-29.

appear to have lived in the country round about Aramnagar (Arrah) and Bynghra (Buxar), where they were out-numbered by other kinamen and Munda folk, the Cheros; so they consequently went to take shelter in Ruidan hills. There they built the famous fortress of Rehtasgarh, where they lived much longer than the Mundas did. But the fortress of Rehtasgarh was not safe for them either. The tradition goes to tell us that thro^ugh the Mlechas or the Kavravas (according to Fr. Grignard) took advantage of the drunken revelry of the Oraons at 'Khadi' (Sarnul) festival and drove the latter out to south. At first the enemies were repelled, where even women dressed in male's attire fought the battle, but finally the enemies succeeded in capturing the Oraon citadel.¹¹ Thus while one division of the Oraons named 'Male' sett led down in Raj Mahal Hills (The Malers), the other bigger division came to the land of Chotanagpur which was already occupied by the Mundas.

With their higher intelligence and better knowledge of agriculture they became gradually predominant in the north-western and the central parts of the plateau. This should be added here already that while the Oraons introduced the plough and other agricultural tools among

11. Roy : 1912, p. 126.

the Mundas, the former adopted the latter's village social organization with its Munda Khunt and Pahan Khunt, the system of tribal government and even some of the festivals and rituals. While the Mundas called their Parha Raja as 'Manhi' the Oraons retained the word 'Raja'.

THE KHARIAS:

According to the 1971 Census, the Kharias were found in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal.

Table 3.2

The Kharia Population in India, 1971

States	Total Population	Male	Female
Bihar	1,27,002	61,403	65,599
Madhya Pradesh	23,228	11,495	11,733
Maharashtra	3,827	1,863	1,964
Orissa	1,20,483	59,810	60,673
West Bengal	45,906	23,602	22,304
Tripura	744	382	362
Total	3,21,190	1,58,555	1,62,635

Source : L.P. Vidyarthi and Upadhyay V.S., The Kharias: Then and Now, Appendix, p. 214.

From the above table, it is clear that Bihar and Orissa are the main concentrations of the Kharrias. The Southern part of Ranchi District and the Northern part of Orissa are heavily populated by the Kharrias (Ref. p.9). The highest percentage (43.75%) is found in Bolba Anchal.

The principal habitat of the Kharrias extends from the Central hill of the Mayurbhanj district in Orissa in the South-east and the hills of Singhbhum and Manbhum districts to the North of Mayurbhanj through the hills and plateau of Ranchi district, now in Bihar, and Sambalpur district in Orissa.¹² There are three categories of Kharrias, namely:- the Hill Kharrias, the Dudh and the Dholki (Delki) Kharrias.

The Kharrias have been classed on racial and cultural, particularly linguistic, grounds among the Munda group of the aboriginals of India. This group is also sometimes called the 'Kolarain' group. The Mundas, Santhals, Hos, Savaras are generally better known than the Kharrias and other tribes such as Godavas, Asurs, Birhors, Korwas...etc.¹³

The Dudh and Dholki Kharrias, recount their memories of their former stay in Vindhya and Kaimur ranges in Rohtasgarh before migrating to Chotanagpur. This shows that all the

12. S.C. Roy, The Kharrias, Vol.I. p. 20.

13. Ibid, p. 21.

three tribes have passed through Rohtasgarh region at different times. The Dholki further recount the tradition of their former home in Chotanagpur on the banks of rivers Koel and Shank, in what are now Gunla and Simdega Sub-divisions of Ranchi district. Later on the migration took place to different regions of Jashpur, Gangapur and Central provinces. The Dudh are so called because they are considered to be puritanist and do not eat meat, beef nor would they receive ^{ok}colled food from other tribes. The Dolki which in Kharis literally means, those come later, arrived in Chotanagpur much later than the Dudh. In fact because of the arrival of this group, the Dudh were forced further into the interior of Biru (In Simdega subdivision) leaving the banks of Koel and Shank. Now they are settled at various places like Palkot, Basia, Kolebira and Biru Police Stations. On the authority of Sir George Grierson the philological evidence would appear to lend support to this supposition of the Kharis having migrated through the Central Provinces to their present habitat in Chotanagpur and Orissa. But whatever the route the different sections of Kharis may have followed, in their past immigration, they have all come into contact with various communities and cultures, and by changing their manners, habits, customs they were not the same as they are today.

Upto this point everything about these tribals is historically uncertain and a conjecture. They entered into history during the Mughal period (1585 AD - 1765 AD), when their collective life and policy created a doubt in the mind of the Mughal emperors, who, mistook the tribal chieftain for a real 'Raja', subjugated the latter and reduced him to a 'Malguzar' or tributary to the Mughal Empire. Till the 13th year of Emperor Akbar's reign the land of Chotanagpur called 'Kokrah' remained independent. In 1585 AD Shabaji Khan Kambu sent a detachment thither and the Kokrah raja was defeated. Many detachments were sent later on until during Jehangir's period the Kokrah raja Durjan Sal was taken prisoner to Gwalior in 1616, who upon returning in 1628 showed himself a changed man in every way. During this stay for twelve years in the Mughal Court he had seen and tasted the royal luxurious life. Upon returning from his imprisonment he fashioned the kingly court after the manner of the Mughals for which he brought in many Hindus and Muslims as courtiers, attendants and officials. They had got to be maintained and paid for their services which the king did by giving land taken from the tribals. Thus, with these Jagirdars and thikadars, the Khuntkati and the Bhumihari land of the Mundas and the Oraons began to be alienated from them. This new era came with a lot of sufferings and struggles

for the tribals. But before we come to describe in details the exact process of land alienation let us examine the social and economic organizations of the tribals.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION:

Though the three tribes came to the land of Chotanagpur at different times, they came in contact with each other and later on they developed a collectively similar social organizations and administrative structures. The adivasis had the 'Parha Panchayat' (Village Confederacy) headed by the Parha Raja who was called the Ranki among the Mundas. This confederacy was organized consisting of 10 to 15 villages. The heads of the villages formed the Parha Council. Every head of the family was the member of the Parha Panchayat. The Parha Raja or the Ranki was like the chieftain of the tribe who was mistaken for the real raja by the Kughals. At one period the Mundas and the Oraons lived together and chose a Raja collectively to be the chief over their land and people. This Raja recognized the rights of the Mundas and the Oraons to their ancestral land and did not interfere in the internal administration of their villages. The villages and the confederacies remained autonomous.

The Parha Panchayat was the supreme court whether matters regarding tribal laws, customs, marriage, inheritance, quarrels, theft, murder, sex crimes and any loss of

property were brought in. Most of the time the penalties were sanctioned with paying of fines in cash or in kind which went to the feasting and drinking by the Parha members. In case of pre-marital sex resulting in pregnancy they were settled in marriage after the nominal fine, unless the culprits were of the same clan or gotra. The same type of court was operative even at the village level. This village level Panchayat also dealt with similar cases, and if necessary, a case could be referred to the higher level at Parha court. Most of the time the cases were settled at the village level itself. This was the original policy of tribal village administration.

ECONOMIC SYSTEM:

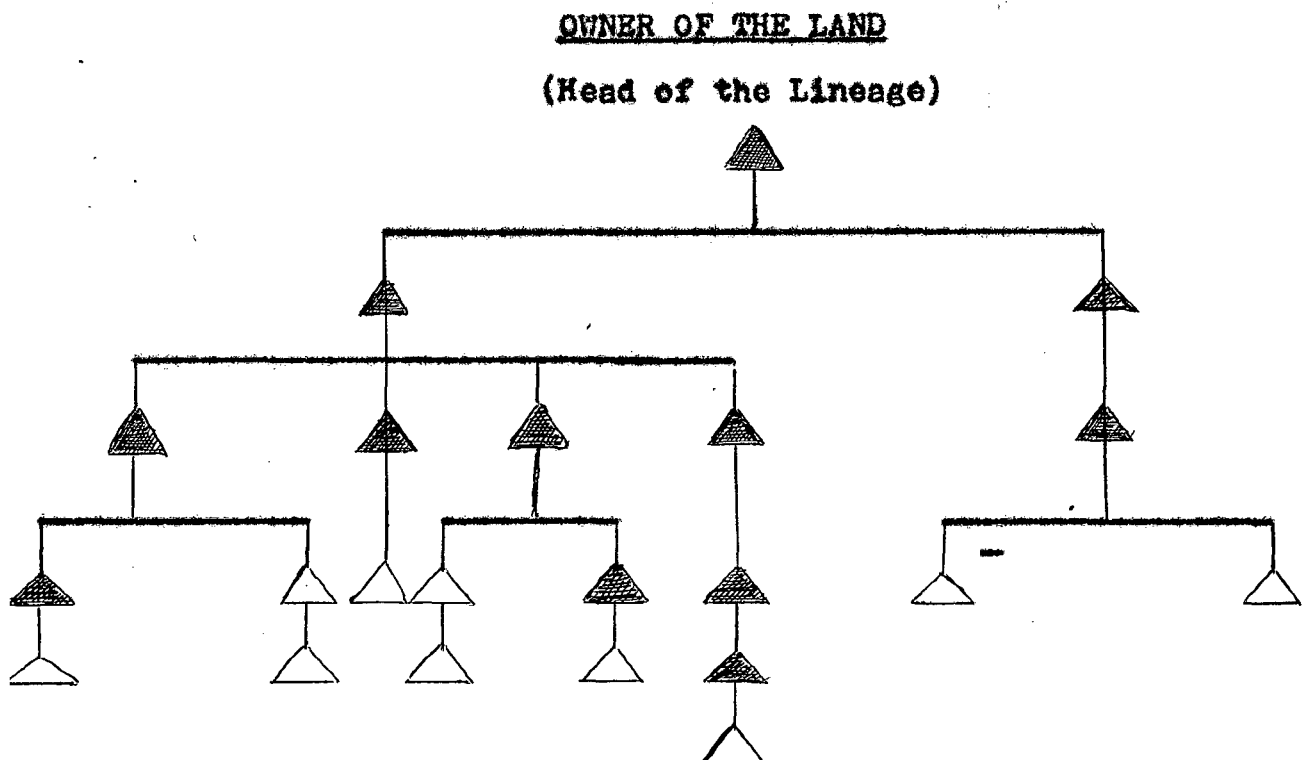
Land was the biggest economic asset for the tribals. They were settled agriculturists, who began clearing the forest to convert them into fine fertile paddy yielding stretches of fields. Among the Kharias, the Hill Kharias never knew cultivation, for they depended entirely on the jungle products, for their subsistence. Occasionally they engaged in 'Jhum Cultivation'. But the Dudh and Dhelki Kharias were as good agriculturists as any Oraon or Munda. They produced enough to live throughout the year and in lean seasons they would support themselves with supplementing jungle products. Exchanges of goods

and services were mostly on barter system. They were self-sufficient and did not care to produce any surplus. Money was almost unknown to them until the Jagirdari and particularly the taxation, began with the Britishers. During the intensified period for agricultural operations, like the plantation, harvesting house-building etc., the tribals cooperated with one another and the services were paid in kind or in repay of service by labour. The cooperation was known as the Pancha system. This pancha system refers to the collective cooperation of the whole village to any particular family for the type of work he needs. Anyone who needed such cooperation could ask for it and pay them by offering drinks and meals. Most people know this system also as 'Madat'.

Land was owned collectively. The Kunda called their land Khuntkatti, because they had acquired it by clearing the forests. Among the Oraons the same was known as Bhumihari which meant that they were the original owners of the land. The Khunt head or in the case of Oraons the Bhumiharis head was the real owner of the land and the descendants were only collective owners with the head. Though such land could have been divided among brothers for convenience sake but it could not be sold or alienated in any way, for that belonged not to the individual but to

the Khunt or the Clan. The collective land ownership among the tribals could be illustrated through the following diagram :

Diagram-1



- * Represents the dead persons
- Represents the living heads of the families.

This system of common ownership of Khuntkatti and BhumiHari land was not understood either by the Jagirdars or by the British. This type of land was dear to the adivasis who would not have liked to part with it at any cost. But later on the process turned out to be such that

the major portion of the tribal land was grabbed by the alien landlords.

There were three main village-officials known as the Pahan, Pujar and the Mahto. Pahan was the religious head of the village while the Mahto was the secular administrative head. Pahan was the official priest to offer sacrifice to the 'Bongal' and Bhoots' and thus look after the spiritual and cultic affairs of the village. The Mahto was, on the other hand, the custodian of law and order. Pujar whose place was not so significant was the helper of the Pahan at the time of offering sacrifices. These officials were granted service lands (Dheetheta) in order to maintain themselves and their families. They were most respected and every member of the Panchayat in the village obeyed them. They were the controllers of the village in every matter. They were assisted by the council of village panches.

RELIGION AND CULTURAL:

Though the tribals believed in Bhoots and lesser spirits, they had the idea of one Supreme Spirit which the Munda called 'Singh Bonga' and the Oraons called (Dharmes'. Hence the term animist for the tribals seems a misnomer. Animists are those who worship natural powers but that was not the case with these tribals. Many authors have made this mistake with the tribals of Chotanagpur.

Their belief in one Supreme being is corroborated by the following passage from S.C. Roy. "As for religion, the Mundas do not appear to have ever been Fetish-worshippers. For them the earth is full of invisible spirits whose blessings they invoke and whose wrath they seek to avert by various sacrifices. Their principal deity - Sing Bonga (literally, the Sun - God, and secondly but in reality of Supreme Deity) is altogether a beneficent Deity, ever intent on doing good to mankind".¹⁴

There are two kinds of Bongas and the Bhoots, the first are benevolent who are protectors of village, territory, land, cattle, crops and people. They are invoked for help. The ancestors are the spirits most benevolent who have been honored in the land of the blessed. They are offered sacrifices. The maleficient spirits bring evil, misfortune and sickness to cattle, crops and children and hence they need be appeased through sacrifices. This proves that the tribals used to live in utter fear of such spirits. In fact, as we shall see later, it was in order to be liberated from such spirits that the tribals were converted either to Christianity or to other religions like Hinduism. Thus, one can say, with substantial reason, that the conversion had spiritual motive, too apart from temporal and material.

14. S.C. Roy, Kunda and Their Country, p. 122.

Marriage was contracted among the adults which was strictly monogamous, though divorce was allowed on sufficient ground. Such cases were decided in the Parha court. Marriage was clan-exogamous and tribe endogamous. Breach of such tribal customs were heavily punished. The family was patrilineal, patrilocal and had a wide range of kinship relations.

There were rituals 'de passage'. There were elaborate rituals and customs for birth, marriage and death. Ancestor worship was very much in vogue which is kept still very alive even among the converted tribals.

Dhunkuria or Gitti Ora (among Mundas) was the respected social institution for the socialization of the adult men and women. These were youth dormitories which were used to introduce the youth in the life of marriage and family. This was also the centre for learning crafts and skills and also served as the labour power on occasions.

The tribals are known for their life full of happiness, joy and gaiety. They love dancing in the 'Akbara' evening after the day's hard work as the most innocent and common recreation. The girls dance in rows while the boys beat the drums. Since the dancing is almost all the time in the evening till late at night the outsiders look down upon this custom with disdain.

The festivals are organized according to the agricultural cycle. The most important of these are Sarhul (Khadi), Phagu, Karma, Kadleto, Harihary, Nowakhan, Sohrai, Khalihani and Maghe. It was during the 'Khadi' festival that the Oraons were taken advantage of their drunken revelry and were driven out of Rohtaagarh. These festivals are occasions for lot of eating and drinking.

The tribals led their life in perfect peace and harmony. They were self-sufficient economically, had self-government, and remained independent of any outside aggression until their own raja sold them into the hands of the aliens in a gradual process. After the historic imprisonment of Raja Durjansal at Gwalior, all the descendants were more and more Hinduised in their life-style, customs and manners. Yet these Rajas so far did not exact tributes, but the Oraons and the Bundas voluntarily offered gifts and rendered services on occasions. But because of the royal court's increased expenses on the new Jagirdars and attendants, even military, the Raja began slowly to levy fixed tributes from the Khuntkatti and Bhumihari tribals. Add to this, the Raja even gave the Jagir,¹⁵ consisting of a few villoges to his officials and courtiers. These Jagirdars, played havoc in exacting excessive tributes from the tribals who not only resisted

15. Jagir = Estate given out to an individual for the service rendered to the Raja.

but also were unable to pay the exorbitant amount. The furious Jagirdars, when they were not paid the fixed tribute, occupied their lands forcibly. This was the beginning of the process of land alienation in tribal regions which continues even now in much more subtle ways, despite the land protective Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908. This was the first upsetting of the long peaceful, harmonious and self-sufficient life led by the tribals with their own socio-economic and political systems. The era of transformation of their traditional socio-economic, political and cultural systems started with the first encounter with outsiders.

The adivasis were conscious of their historical and collective identity through language, folk songs, territory and culture. L.P. Vidyarthi has pointed out some of the characteristic features of the tribals which gave them their identity. "The tribal tradition was conducive to religious orientation and society functioned on the principles of reciprocity and mutual obligations. Tribal life was characterized by landscape, folk songs and agricultural economy, social-solidarity, group cooperation and copartnership".¹⁶

16. L.P. Vidyarthi, Industrialization and Social Change in Chotanagpur in Passing Scene in Chotanagpur, Dash Sharma ed., op.cit. p.143.

Myron Weiner writes in his book, Sons of the Soil, about the distinctive features of the Chotanagpur tribals, "The distinctive feature of the tribals' life is the very attitude towards life itself. Tribals are carefree people, hedonistic in their desire for simple pleasures. They enjoy their drink, dance regularly, enjoy freedom in social intercourse between tribal boys and girls, go for an arranged marriage mostly, have simple food habits".¹⁷

These two authors have brought out practically all the most distinctive features of the adivasis of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district which gave them their identity in their multiple cultural nation of India. To maintain this, they developed their own political organizations in their own land. Chotanagpur was their ancestral home; land was their biggest asset in economy through which they led a self-sufficient, unperturbed life and expressed their happiness in regular singing and dancing in the Akhara as the simple means of recreation. They developed their language and culture.

But these very tribals were slowly reduced to such conditions, by the later Rajas and Jagirdars, that the former were relegated as mere tenants of the latter. They

17. Myron Weiner, The Sons of Soil, op.cit., p. 158.

helplessly saw their land (Bhumihari and Khunskatti) being dispossessed from them; their women and children harassed persecuted and exploited. The situation went so far as to force the tribals to leave their homeland, cherished for so long, and migrate to the tea estates of Assam and Bengal. When the British came to the land in 1765 as the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was ceded to the EIC, the condition was worsened. The imposition of tax dragged the tribals into money-economy hitherto unknown to them. The company did not want payment in kind but in cash which had to be looked for elsewhere. The tribals could not believe that they had to pay tax. To pay tax for their own land, which they had acquired by clearing the forests, was utterly nonsensical. They were mainly agriculturists who never cared for a surplus produce or cash crop. But in the present conditions, they were forced to produce 'money' from their land which was impossible. Consequently they migrated in exodus to Assam and Bengal to earn money as labourers to pay taxes. The tribals proud of possessing land were deprived of it. They were deprived of agricultural economy and turned into a mass of labourers in tea plantations. Those who resisted and stayed in Chotanagpur entered a period of conflict, struggle and pauperisation.

ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH:

In 1765, The Mughal Emperor was defeated by the British and the Dowani of Bengal and Orissa was ceded to the East India company. Consequently, Chotanagpur, a part of the Dowani of Bihar, fell under the British Rule. In 1772 the administration of Chotanagpur was brought under the British directly.

The British took over the Jagirdari system of levying tributes introduced by the Mughals. But instead of a Jagirdar now there was the new tax collector called the 'Jamindar' and the payment was done strictly in cash instead of in kind. The Jagirdars and landlords or the Jamindars entered into alliance with the company to cooperate in distribution of villages for taxation and in some cases both the Jagirdars and Jamindars were the same persons.

The tribals, under this new system continued losing their lands. "Thus, the period of British rule in Chotanagpur was a time of internal disturbance and unrest".¹⁸ Dewani was the tribute paying districts and the revenue collectors were the Jamindars. The EIC was a trading company interested in cash revenue. To protect the trade and the trading interest the Company maintained a military force.

18. De Sa, Fidelis, Crisis in Chotanagpur, p. 41.

The tax collectors, Jamindars, were supposed to pay a fixed amount to the Company as rent, but they taxed the tribals more than what was required. They were free to exact any amount (which was always excessive), from the tribals, failing which the latter's lands, cattle, and other valuables were confiscated, their women and children were beaten up. When they were unable to pay taxes because of the failure of crops, the Jamindars took the land of the tribals and later became the masters of such lands (landlords). By force and fraud the foreigners managed to deprive the tribals of their land. The Maharaja¹⁹ had given the written documents to the Jagirdars from whom later on the Jamindars obtained the villages and their land. The Maharaja himself did not realize the implications of the grants of jagirs, for he knew that he had no proprietary rights over the land. He meant no more than relinquish his claims to the supplies in favour of the Jagirdars.²⁰ But the foreigners made it appear that the Maharaja possessed absolute right over the whole the Chotanagpur and that in making his service grants he had transferred his absolute proprietary rights to the Jagirdars. Landlordism thus entered Chotanagpur. The tribals were reduced to tenants from the owners of land. In the law

19. Maharaja = The tribal chiefs became Hindused and assumed this title.

20. S.C. Roy, The Munda and Their Country, 1912, p. 165.

courts the cases of tribals were lost, because there was no written document to prove their ownership of land. They did not need such sophisticated documents to prove their ownership, instead, if only the foreigners accepted, the documents of the tribals were engraved and planted in the "Sasandri" (kili stones) and grave yards (Harh gari). Their sacred groves (Sarnas) were the traditional marks of Khuntkatti and Bhumihari ownership. While for the time being they helplessly saw their land passing into the hands of the Dikus (those foreigners), they took up arms. Hence, there were instances of many risings to redress their grievances and save their land in particular. This was the root cause of the agrarian unrest in Chotanagpur, in the second half of the 19th century. The Sardari Movement and the Santhal and Birsa movements were only the most outstanding agitations with regard to the land problems. Taking up arms was perhaps the first means of adaptation to the drastically changed conditions in the life of the tribals. Their original identity with their own systems of government, their own social and cultural as well as economic organizations, was disrupted. They were threatened to disintegrate as a tribal group and society. The movements and agitations were nothing but efforts to recapture their original structural set up by nostalgically glorifying their earlier history. The

religious or revitalization movements were the best examples of such phenomena in which they wished to relieve the golden age by revitalizing the earlier cultural symbols.

As a result of land alienation many tribals, especially the Mundas and the Oraons left their homes and migrated elsewhere. The number of outmigration has been given in Table ^{2.5} 3.2, on page ²⁴ 6. In 1891 the highest number (4,21,900) of Chotanagpur tribals migrated outside. The second was in 1911 when 3,86,000 tribals from Chotanagpur migrated mostly to Assam and Bengal.

THE ARRIVAL OF MISSIONARIES:

At this juncture the missionaries came on the scene. The tribals in despair, deprived of their land, went in big numbers to Assam, Bengal and the city of Calcutta. Here in the streets of Calcutta, the Christian missionaries first met the ousted tribals, working on construction jobs as coolies, whose cheerfulness and gaiety, amidst hardships, attracted the attention of the former. Through them they came to know about the tribes in Chotanagpur where they found new area of missionary operation. When the tribals found these missionaries sympathetic and willing to help them to save their land, they came to the mission house, sought the help of the missionaries, received

their advice and waited to hear the missionaries preach a new religion. Since this religion offered them help not only to save their land but also to preserve their communal lives and tribal organisations, the Mundas and the Oraons thought that they had found the means to adapt to the changing conditions in their country. Conversion to Christianity, therefore, has been seen by Fidelis De sa, in his book, "Crisis in Chotanagpur", as a means to adapt themselves to the new situations.

ARRIVAL OF THE LUTHERAN MISSION:

The Gossner Evangelical Lutherans came in Ranchi in Nov. 1845. When these missionaries came to Chotanagpur they found the English who were in the seats of political power. The Lutherans and the Jesuit Missionaries belonging to the Roman Catholic Church were the main advocates of the cause of these adivasis. The work of the Lutherans could be divided into three phases: from 1845 to 1850, from 1850 to 1857 and from 1857 to 1868. But we shall be brief in describing their work.

The first persons to be baptized by the Lutherans were the 4 Oraon Bhumihars in Ranchi, where they used to come in connection with their court case. Though they were all Kabirpanthi Bhagats they were much influenced by the preaching of the Lutheran catechists. The conversion

to Christianity once begun went on rapidly sweeping the tribal villages in Ranchi district. By 1855 the number of baptized was over 400 and there were over 800 enquirers.²¹ A year later there were about 900 baptized and over 2,000 enquirers, Mission stations were started at Domba in 1846, nine miles west of Ranchi, at Lehardaga in 1848, 48 miles west of Ranchi and at Govindpur in 1850, about 30 miles south-west of Ranchi.

The landlords were greatly disturbed to see the missionary work which claimed so many of their clients into the other fold. Secondly, the enlightened Christians were resisting the unjust labour demanded by the landlords. In other words, a group was being formed which challenged the authority of the landlords in the region. They levelled false allegations against the missionaries and accused them before the Government. They were accused of unduly exciting the tribals, turning them into rebels who refused to pay taxes. An occasion offered them to take revenge on the Mission and the converted tribals in 1857 in the Sepoy Uprising, when the landlords attacked the mission churches the missionaries and the converts. The missionaries had to leave Ranchi and flee to Calcutta on 31st July. Once the newly converted were starving for

21. De Sa Fidelis, Crisis in Chotanagpur, p. 77, Enquirer were those seeking conversions.

books. Speaking about the attitude of the landlords to the Christians during the months, July to October 1857, Captain Davies, the Senior Assistant Commissioner of Lehardaga wrote, "The Landlords took advantage of the absence of the authorities and oppressed and plundered the whole of the native converts, many of whom preserved their lives only by seeking, with their families, the protection of the jungles".²² The Lutheran Missionaries returned to Ranchi by the end of October 1857 when order was restored. They rebuilt fast and the Government made Relief Fund available to the adivasis who took it as a sign of sympathy and friendship of the authorities towards them. But the landlords thought that the Government was siding with the mission and the Christians. For some time they withdrew from the scene and left harassing the Christians. But that was only an eye-wash in the sight of the British authorities. The rate of conversion was so fast that by 1868 there were about 10,000 converted Christians. So far, it was the lone effort of the GEL church; the Anglicans were always with the Government, and occasionally they even played against the GEL church and later on against the Roman Catholic, too. But there were some internal conflicts due to which the GEL Church

22. Senior Assistant Commissioner of Lehardaga, to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur, dated March 15, 1859, in the Calcutta Review, Vol. XLIX, 1859, p. 126.

was split in 1868.²³ A group of them, the splinters, declared themselves as joining the Anglicans while the other remained Lutherans. Since then the spirit of it competition came in the mission work and this led to many false and unprepared conversions for the sake of number and influence. The mission became less effective henceforth, and the converted Christians were confused between the two factions. Many tribals relapsed in their old tribal religion in the years to come.

Upto 1869 the Lutherans were the only group in the field. Even if the Christians were not convinced they had to prove their loyalty by going to Sunday Services, give up drinking and dances and keeping away from the worship of non-Christians.

THE JESUIT MISSION (ROMAN CATHOLIC) IN RANCHI DISTRICT.

The first Jesuit missionary arrived in Chotanagpur on 24th November, 1868 in the midst of trouble that threatened the Lutheran mission. His name was Father Stockman who had been sent from Calcutta to investigate the possibilities of starting a mission-station in the area. At first he found the place not suited for the purpose and returned. But Steins, the Vicar Apostolic of

23. The split took place when four older German Missionaries were ordained Anglican Pastors who started converting. As a result 3,000

West Bengal asked him to go back and start one. He was arrived at Chaibasa on July 10, 1869, to pitch the camp for ever and set the ball rolling for the Jesuits and the Roman Catholic Church to flourish.

Father Stockman was the pioneer who was assisted by a group of young missionaries. This first batch was very cautious and confined its work among the Mundas in the hilly regions of Sarwada, Chaibasa and Bandgoun. The two stalwarts who followed were Father Constant Lievens and Father J.B. Hoffmann Lievens was posted to the region as a missionary in 1885, and in the beginning lived under Father De Cock, the missionary who was already working in the regions staying at Jangai. This place was in the border area of both the Mundas and the Oraons. This was a strategic location from there this new enthusiastic missionary learnt the languages and people of both the tribes.

Lievens worked in this mission from 1886 to 1888. By the time Lievens was in the field, the Sardari agitation had grown stronger. The enlightened group of Christians, who were denied help and advice to send petitions to the Government and Her Majesty the Queen in England, formed themselves into an organisation against the wishes of the missionaries, the Government and the land lords, to carry on the movement. This is in short

the root cause behind Sardari agitation. Those Sardars forced the converted to withdraw their children from the mission schools. At this time many Lutherans left the GEL Church and joined the new mission of the Roman Catholics. The tribals were so desperately in need of help in order to save their land that anyone who promised them some hope could win them. It is important here to note that these missions were means for the tribals to adapt themselves to the changing situations. Tribals in large numbers were drawn to it.

The earliest missionary method of conversion introduced by the Lutherans and the earlier Jesuits was direct preaching and converting; Lievens adopted a different method. When he saw that the Mundas were being deprived of their ancestral land and were being harassed by the tax collector landlords, he changed his method. "Lievens found that in such a situation direct preaching to the people could not draw their attentions. Even the ordinary works of mercy."²⁴ By visiting the villagers and listening to them and their troubles and helping them he came to be regarded as a friend. He took their cases to defend against rent and compulsory unpaid service (Begari). He learned about the traditional rights of the Mundas and the dues sanctioned

24. Fidelis De Sa, Crisis in Chotanagpur, op.cit., p. 123.

by a law and custom. He advised them to pay the required taxes, but if taxed more than sanctioned, to take it to court. If they were ill-treated they would take the matter to court and no bribes were allowed.²⁵ He himself visited the court at Ranchi many times, and when chance offered he supplied magistrates and details of harassments by the landlords. In many cases the oppressors lost and were punished. The success, achieved by the tribals over their enemies filled them with a sense of victory and even pride to see their oppressors punished. More and more Mundas flocked to Lievens who, together with such help, carried on the work of teaching catechism and giving baptism. This was deemed a ripe season for abundant harvest and Lievens put conditions for offering his help. Fidelis De Sa writes, "He told those seeking help that he would not help them unless every single member of their village joined the mission".²⁵ Then they brought the rest and the whole villagers became Christians. This method of such a great missionary like Lievens did not go without criticism. He was too hasty in baptising them without much preparation. In later years, therefore, there were many both in the Munda and the Oraon areas, who reverted to their older religion or joined the Lutherans. Father Hoffmann, another great missionary of the region was also of the opinion that the tribals came to them

25. De Sa Fidelis crisis in Chotanagpur, op.cit. p. 127.

only for material gain and accepting Christianity was just part of the bargain. "We all know that they primarily and chiefly expected from us was assistance against oppression and aggression of the alien invaders, and to obtain this they just barely accepted Christianity as part of the bargain."²⁶ However, this statement of Hoffmann is taken to be too superficially and pessimistically by the present missionary who is the Director of Catholic Cooperative Bank in Ranchi. His contention is that reasons for conversion were deeper. According to this missionary, Father Van Exem, the reasons were spiritual as well as material. The latter did not need explanation, but for the spiritual part the author contended that the tribals were in spiritual bondage as they feared the spirits. Christianity proclaimed freedom from such servile fears and preached the loving relationship of God in the Bible. They accepted Christianity in this context, thus to get rid of their spiritual obsession regarding the spirits (Maleficient Bongas and Bhoots). Secondly, the converted tribals were conscious of their self-respect and human dignity. They were more independent and learnt to fight their case successfully. Colonel Dalton write, "The Kols who embraced Christianity imbibed more independent notions and in several instances successfully asserted their rights."²⁷ Van Exem elaborated it in details explaining

26. Hoffmann, J.B., "Social Work in Chotanagpur" for Private Circulation, 1909, p.4.

27. Quoted in C.S. Roy, Munda and Their Country, p.175.

the tribal belief in spirits and Sing Bonga, and as a conclusion he had shown how tribal religion - Sarna Dharma - was contiguous with Christianity and Christianity was the interiorization of the former.²⁸

A.N. Sandhwar, who made a field study of the converts among the korwas of Palamau district in Chotanagpur, also comes to the conclusion similar to the method adopted by the earliest missionaries. His conclusions, however, are more biased and generalized. "The methods of conversion by material inducement as implied in the conversion of the Korwas of Nawadih may be considered to be one of the various methods of conversion adopted by Christian missionaries in Chotanagpur".²⁹ Secondly, he concluded that the poor tribals are more guided by non-religious considerations in accepting Christianity than by the religious and theological ideas of a religion.

Whatever the criticisms of the method of conversion the undeniable result was that thousands joined the mission, though not all were baptised. The landlords on their part took it as a social movement (revolution) which encouraged their subjected to disobey them. The following figures give us an idea about the rate of conversion :

28. Van Exem A. "Tribal Religion at the Cross-Road' in Christianity in India. Its true face ed. & Published by the C.D.C.I. commission for evangelization, New Delhi, 1981.

29. Sandwar, A.N. "The Method of Christian Conversion

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Converted Tribals</u>
September, 1886	2,000 followers
July, 1887	10,000 at Torpa Mission
January, 1888	25,000
March, 1888	40,000
October, 1888	56,000

Source : Fidelis De Sa, Crisis in Chotanagpur, op. cit. p.133.

As regards the last figure, 56,000 it is not certain that all were baptised. Lievens did not inquire into the motivations for conversion. "Neither Lievens nor the catechists inquired closely into the motives of the converts. Lievens and his companions were concerned with statistics, which were usually approximation and often exaggerated."³⁰ The reactions of the landlords were obviously inimical. They opposed their becoming Christians. They persecuted the converts, threatened to kill a missionary, Father De Smet, robbed the people and intimidated the catechists. Even Father Lievens was pursued often by the landlord's gangmen who sought to kill him. That is why when Lievens moved to Barway in the Oraon region, he was more cautious about baptizing adults. He moved to Barway in 1889 and when he left the place for his homeland to recover from the infection of lung consumption there were about 13,000 converts among the Oraons.

Among the Tribals: The Korwa converts of Palamau; A case study, journal of social research, Vol. XVI, 1973, p. 92.

30. De Sa Fidelis, op. cit. p. 137.

REASONS FOR CONVERSION AS OBSERVED:

The first reason lies in the very condition of the people. When the tribals were deprived of their land and left helpless the missionaries gave them hope to restore their land.³¹ They were sympathetic and listened to their grievances with patience. They came with all possible help, while still caring to stay in good favour of the British Government. "People seem to have felt that their religion could not help them. Christianity was a means of saving their land and being free from forced labour"³²

Secondly the continuous oppression by the landlords drove the tribals more and more to accept Christianity. The landlords did not question why the tribals fled from them and sought the protection of the missionaries. Had they given this consideration and offered a viable alternative for the tribals they would have kept the tribals with them. This has not been the realization even to this day.

Thirdly, the attitude of the missionaries drew many tribals to embrace Christianity. These were found accessible people for any kind of help at any time. The missionaries

31. Hope to restore their land maintain their social organizations, customs and culture.

32. De Sa Fidelis, Crisis in Chotanagpur, op.cit.p.82.

restored in them self-confidence which gave them self-respect as against the beastly treatment given by the Jaminders and landlords.

Inspite of the benevolent and friendly behaviour there was a section of tribals which was not attracted to Christianity. The reasons are various, Christianity, though an universal religion, was to the tribals a foreign religion. The Christians were from England and European countries who preached the religion which was entirely new to them. The early Lutheran missionaries were very strict regarding the habits of drinking and dancing which were essential features of the tribals. There were some who did not like to give up those tribal customs at the cost of accepting Christianity. Kushal Kerketta has written an article in the Journal of Social Research explaining the role and significance of 'rice beer' in Oraon culture.⁶ His main points are that drinking rice beer has cultural values. Rice beer is essential for certain rituals and social customs. For instance in Sohrai, the feast of the cattle, the house-wife has to sprinkle rice beer on the feet of the cattle. There are a number of other customary examples when rice beer is essential for ceremonies. Economic reasons are that on

⁶ - Kerketta Kushal, "Rice Beer and the Oraon Culture: A Preliminary Observation, Journal of Social Research, Vol.III, No.1, March, 1960, pp. 62-68.

an occasion when someone invites for pancha (Cooperative work) he has to offer rice beer and meal as wages of the day. It has social significance, because whenever any guest comes in the house he is cheered with this customary and traditional rice beer, without which the feasting is incomplete and the guest remains unhonoured. K.N. Sahay, reports about his field work in three Oraon villages in Barway. In one of the Christian Catholic Sabha, there came a proposal of banning rice beer completely. The majority of the present opted rather to leave the church and revert to Sarna religion than give up drinking completely. On this matter the Lutherans were much stricter right from the beginning. This step biased many other tribals against accepting Christianity and drove many Lutherans to the Roman Catholics who adopted liberal stand in this regard.

Dancing was the only cultural recreation among the adivasis. The Missionaries who came from their European background of morality, looked down upon this most essential part of tribal life. The tribals loved to dance. The missionaries restricted dancing particularly the night dances and in many places stopped it completely.

The third big reason was that new religion gave an impression that it was at the cost of losing one's 'jat'.

In many places the Lutheran missionaries, made everybody sit together and dine. Though there was no strict caste system among the tribals, yet, there were certain food and the types of food one tribe would not accept from the hand of the other. The Hinduised Mundas of Tamor and Bundu areas in Ranchi district did not accept cooked food from any other people.

Fourthly, the traditional village heads - the Pahan, Mato and Pujar, and the Panches were replaced by a new category of leaders, namely the catechists. There occurred a clash because they felt that their traditional cultural institutions and customs were threatened. There was an imposition of a new model which was primarily Western and not suited to the life-style of the tribal people.

In 1886 there was a split in the GEL Mission where four elderly missionaries were ordained Anglican Pastors. The Lutherans felt betrayed and were confused with the result they lost interest in being converted. The two factions not only tried to get conversions in competition but also caused scandals to the new converts and the yet-to-be-converted due to their infights. Before the Jesuit missionaries came, the Lutherans had been slack in offering relief funds and in taking care of the converted. These were some of the most important reasons why a

section of the tribals was not attracted towards Christianity. There is still another reason why the Lutherans joined the Anglicans and which barred the non-Christians from conversion. The Lutheran missionaries bought huge amount of lands to build churches and residences and they owned lands. They asked for church donations from people who took it as paying tax to the new landlords. Since the tribals were fighting against such evils they found it transferred on the missionaries who gave the impression of a new class no less capricious than their native Hindu landlords. Thus, they found that the mission betrayed them and could not offer them the means of adaptation any more. They had joined the mission and changed their religion because, unconsciously, they saw in the new religion a means towards readjustment to the changing conditions in their country. As long as they thought that the new religion was offering this means they came to the mission.³³

The sardari movement also had its implications. The mission despite their activities for restoration of land to the Mundas and the Oraons, did not like to take any such steps which would win dis-favour of the British

33. De Sa Fidilis, Crisis in Chotanagpur, op.cit. pp. 101 - 104.

Government. Accordingly the Sardari agitation was viewed as extremists' activities by the missionaries who not only did not offer any help but also dissuaded them from sending petitions. The Sardars (Leaders) in return, instigated the converts against the missionaries and prevented the non-converted from approaching them. They tried to create an impression in the minds of the people that the missionaries, after all, were not the genuine caretakers of the tribals. To a great extent, particularly the non-converted, believed them.

The tribals had seen the Golden Age before the introduction of non-tribals into the land by their own Hinduised Rajas. Raja Durjanpal and Phani Kulant Rai (Munda Nagbansi Raja), to name but two imbibed Hindu ideals, adopted their culture, customs and even inter-married with them. This gave them the power and status like any other Hindu or Mughal Rajas who lived in splendour and ruled like monarchs (Maharajas). It was greed for power and status which sold the tribals into slavery and oppression.

The first onslaught by the alien Jagirdars and Thikadars completely disrupted the infrastructures of the tribal society, by depriving them of their land which they had acquired with their own sweat and blood. Their economic system was thrown overboard. It should be borne

in mind that the tribal socio-cultural system was very much linked with their economic system. We have already mentioned in the foregoing pages that the religious festivals of the tribals were organized according to the agricultural cycle. When once the economic organization (infra-structure) was affected, the related social, political, cultural and religious organizations (super-structures) were also affected. This functional approach to the analysis of problems is crucial at this point. This will be dealt with emphatically in the third chapter when we would consider the effects of industrialization which rendered many tribal festivals and rituals defunct.

With the arrival of Christian Missionaries the tribals seemed to have found a 'Saviour' in them for they inspired new hopes in their despondent minds. But seeking the missionaries' succour was not without a cost. Once the tribals were converted their allegiance and loyalty went to the mission first ignoring the tribal society. The new leadership emerged in the person of the Christian catechist in place of the traditional village Pahan or Raja of a Parha. The life around the traditional Sarna (sacred grove) was shifted to the church building.

This had a further implication. A clear distinction was made between the converted tribals and the non-converted

tribals.³⁴ The converted tribals were better off and acquired higher status in society. In earlier pages mention has been made how the Christian tribals fared better in court because they were more confident and had access to sound legal aid.

Christianity changed the village organization of the tribals. Though the traditional village panchayat still functioned, the centre of life and activities for the Christians was the church and the Christian Sabha (Catholic Sabha), these institutions replaced the panchayat to a great extent. While it is true that the missionaries tried to maintain, as much as possible, the tribal customs, institutions and culture, the emphasis was now shifted elsewhere.

Land was the biggest economic asset to any tribal. But, it was the land which was alienated from the tribals and this land alienation problem ensued down the ages in which many agitations and agrarian revolutions have taken place even costing lives of many a tribal. Their cultural and socio-political life revolved round the land. Their family and kinship relations were determined on this line for inheritance and ownership of land.

³⁴. Sachchidananda = The Changing Kunda.

Due to a number of agrarian uprisings attention was given to land reforms by the British rulers. The Maharajas had granted Jagir land to the alien, Hindus and Muslims, but not the ownership. But these Jagirdars and later on the Zamindars, deceitfully usurped the tribal land gradually. This was followed by disputes between the alien and the aboriginal and caused unrest in the region. To remedy this unrest, the government passed the Chotanagpur Tenure Act, 1869, with subsequent survey settlement operations. The hope was that it would prove a panacea for these troubles, instead, this legislation fell short of its objective. The reasons for the failure were, that the Act had come too late. Had it come before 1839, it would have been successful. Secondly, the tribals got suspicious that investigation of their land by the special Commissioners were meant to impose more tax. The landlords played the rumour-mongers. The tribals refused in many cases to have their land investigated.

This fact was undeniable that the British were well-intentioned to enact laws for land tenure. This was the cause of unrest in the region and they wanted peace at all costs so that their trade would flourish. They had discovered that the Mundas and the Oraons were severely wronged.³⁵ Some of the British administrators like, Davidson

35. De Sa Fidilis, Crisis in Chotanagpur, op.cit.p.67.

and Richets clearly recognized some of the essential features of land tenure system of the Mundas and the Oraons. Some British judges, too, were inspired by a general desire to do justice to those aboriginals. And all attempt to bring peace failed to their great wonderment. It was here that the great missionary and linguist, Father J.B. Hoffmann, undertook the charge of studying the land tenure system of the Mundas, and acquainted the administrators who finally enacted the most famous agrarian law known as the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908.

This Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, ¹⁹⁰⁸ 1908, was also a farce, because when it was passed the time had elapsed. By the time the Act came out ninetenth of the Khuntkatti and Bhumihari land had already passed into the hands of the landlords.³⁶

The well-intentioned British administrators, whose sole aim was to carry on trade and collect tax, failed in this respect because they did not understand the land tenure system of the Mundas and the Oraons, and the fact that even the tribals could be land owners. According to Hoffmann, the defect lay in the general inability of two entirely different civilizations to understand each

36. Ekka Philip, "Revita list Movement among the tribes of Chotanagpur? Tribal Situation in India, op.cit. 1972, p. 426.

other. The Britishers came from a background with private property whose ownership was in paper documents. But in the name of records of ownership the tribals had their proprietorship inscribed in their burial places (Sasandiries), Sarnas, and Kili-stones, but to what use in the British legal court! The Judicial system proved favourable to the foreign landlords who could produce written documents, true or false, could speak the language which the tribals could not in the court. The landlords had money and patience to frequent the courts while the poor tribals felt exasperated and harassed.³⁷ Thus, the British un-intentionally and unwillingly helped in transferring the communal ownership of land into individual ownership in favour of the landlords. There was opulent place for mischief. S.C. Roy writes, "Though inadequate knowledge of the British officials and their Indian subordinates of the history of land holding in the district and the inappropriate application of the principle of English law and ideas of landlordism to a country where the history of land-holding has been quite different, incalculable mischief was done to the rights of the aboriginal peasant proprietors".³⁸

37. De So Fidiic, Crisis in C Chetarapur, op.cit. 1978, p. 68. Lower officials in the courts and police were all allies of the land lords. Govt. seemed to protect them.

38. S.C. Roy, The Bunda and Their World, o.cit. p. 370, Desa, P. p.68 (Quoted).

There was a puzzling question raised in the minds of the tribals. They know that they were paying nominal undemanded gifts and services to their rajas. But now they were baffled why they had to be taxed on their own land and even be coerced to do so. They did not understand the paper-ownership of land while signs of ownership for them lay buried in their land itself.

Migration was a connected problem with the tribals. The growth of land alienation threw many Mundas and Oraons out of place even to the point of starvation, with the result that they had to look elsewhere for subsistence. Secondly, the need for cash drove them to look for jobs. The growth of tribal population created a surplus of labour ready to be employed in the tea estates of Bengal and Assam. The britishers liked them to hire as labourers because the tribals were hard-working and accustomed to work in hilly regions and climate. These were the factors, given by Myron Weiner, but above all it was land alienation which caused migration 'on masse'.

It has been suggested that outmigration is a political safety valve, that is, that discontented people protest with their feet as well as with guns, bullets.³⁹

39. Weiner, Myron, Sons of the Soil, p. 162.

It is true in the case of the Mundas and the Oraons who, instead of rising up in arms massively, were defused through migrations. A big group migrated outside while the others who stayed faced the situations. There were Kol insurrections in 1832-33, 1855 (Santhal Insurrection) and 1857. The biggest of all these uprisings was led by the religious, charismatic agrarian leader, Birsa Munda, in 1899-1900. These movements were hushed down ruthlessly at gun point by the Britishers, but if the whole population of the discontented tribals instead of fleeing ^{to} the Assam, had stayed and organized themselves the movement would have gained strength and momentum to mark the history of social movements. But a movement requires certain economic standard which was too low among the adivasis. A man who is too poor and miserable, cannot protect. The tribals were reduced to misery and poverty, not a conducive disposition for any social movement.

There is a second category of movements which grew at this time namely, the religious (revivalist or revitalization) movements. The Tana Bhagat Movement in Ranchi district in 1912 was one of the most outstanding example of this. We have already hinted at this that these movements were no less assertive of the tribal identity than the agitations in arms. The difference was that while the former adopted cultural method, the latter adopted violent means.

At this stage, it is important to look into the attitude of the British administration towards the Missionaries. In general the Government did not concern itself over much with the work of the mission, as long as the latter did not come in conflict with laws. While speaking of the Lutheran Mission and its converts reports made no mention of the spiritual side of the apostolate. The officials spoke highly about the external activities namely the social uplift of the converts.

The Jesuit missionaries were referred to in the report (1888-1889), as involving in the intricate problem of land tenure system and were accused of exciting people of land tenure taxes. Most of these charges against the missionaries were brought by the landlords who tried to malign them. The missionaries were not allied to the 'Memorialists' who belonged to the Sardari group. At most what the Jesuit missionaries had done was that they used to send complaints against the landlords and the police to which the government did not seem to heed. The missionaries had some interference in matters connected with land tenures and rent yet they were not wholly responsible for the dis-affection between the Janindars and the ryots.⁴⁰ The administration accused these missionaries of mixing up spiritual with temporal matters.

40. Yet it was J.B. Hoffmann the missionary who helped the Government in formulating the Chotanagpur Tenney Act, 1908. 1908.

The police said that the missionaries exaggerated the cases. The missionaries were swayed by feeling, according to some officials, of compassion and sympathy with suffering humanity to be dispassionate and impartial critics of many matters coming under their observation. According to Mr. Dillingston, who was commissioned to investigate into the matter personally the missionaries were told to keep their hands off matters which were connected with the complex problem of land tenure in Chotanagpur, even though this involved obtaining justice for the aboriginals. This was the clear indication that the Britishers and the landlords were one in plundering the tribals. This history repeats even today in many parts of Chotanagpur. The Britishers are gone but the indiginous oppressors are still there. The Government did not do much to remedy the situation except passing ineffective laws. They prevented missionaries from obtaining justice for the aboriginals, and the Janindars did their best to oppose them.

CHAPTER - IV

EFFECTS OF MODERN FACTORS ON TRIBAL IDENTITY

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity had been a means of adaptation for the tribals in the fast changing situation. But this does not seem to hold good in the 20th century, particularly after the 1950s. This is so because now there are many other factors which are attributed to as means of adaptation. Modern education, industrialization, urbanization and modernization are some of the most significant factors today. Christianity which has got its vital role even now, is but one of such factors. In the following pages, we shall examine the transformation of tribal identity brought about by the above mentioned factors. Though Christianity does not operate in Ranchi district in a manner that it did under the earliest missionaries to win converts but it is of importance since its effects are deep - rooted in the social, political and cultural life of the adivasis even today.

The following chapters are specially focussed on the post independence period. If the latter half of the 19th century was known as the era of struggle in arms, the first half of the 20th century could be termed as the 'era of memoranda'. The third era which comes in the post-independence period could be named as the 'era of politics', given

situation. This was the 'motif' of unifying the different periods and struggles.

In the first half of the 20th century the educated and enlightened Christian tribals took the lead in organizing the converted tribals and made them aware of their prevailing socio-economic conditions. They created an opinion in the people that their tribal society was poor and oppressed. Unatti Samaj, Kisan Sabha, Catholic Sabha and Adivasi Mahasabha were the most outstanding socio-economic organizations for the upliftment of the tribals. It should be noted here that these organizations were led most of the time by the Christian tribals and for the Christian tribals. Adivasi Mahasabha reached its zenith in 1939 when the tribals in lakhs marched through the main roads of Ranchi crying out their demands. The same year Mr. Jaipal Singh, an Oxford educated Munda tribal, was elected president of the Adivasi Mahasabha which by this time had included even the non-converted into its membership.

Social Organizations

Under the influence of Christianity, the traditional Parha organization was replaced by a new model. The converted tribals left the Parha confederacy and entered into the ecclesiastical hierarchical structure. The catechist or the

Paracharak, popularly so-called, became the leader of the converted tribals. The catechists were the heads of village churches and many village churches were organized into a Parish or Mission Station with a Parish Priest at the head. The following diagram gives the idea of social organization of the Christians in terms of extension :

DIAGRAM : I

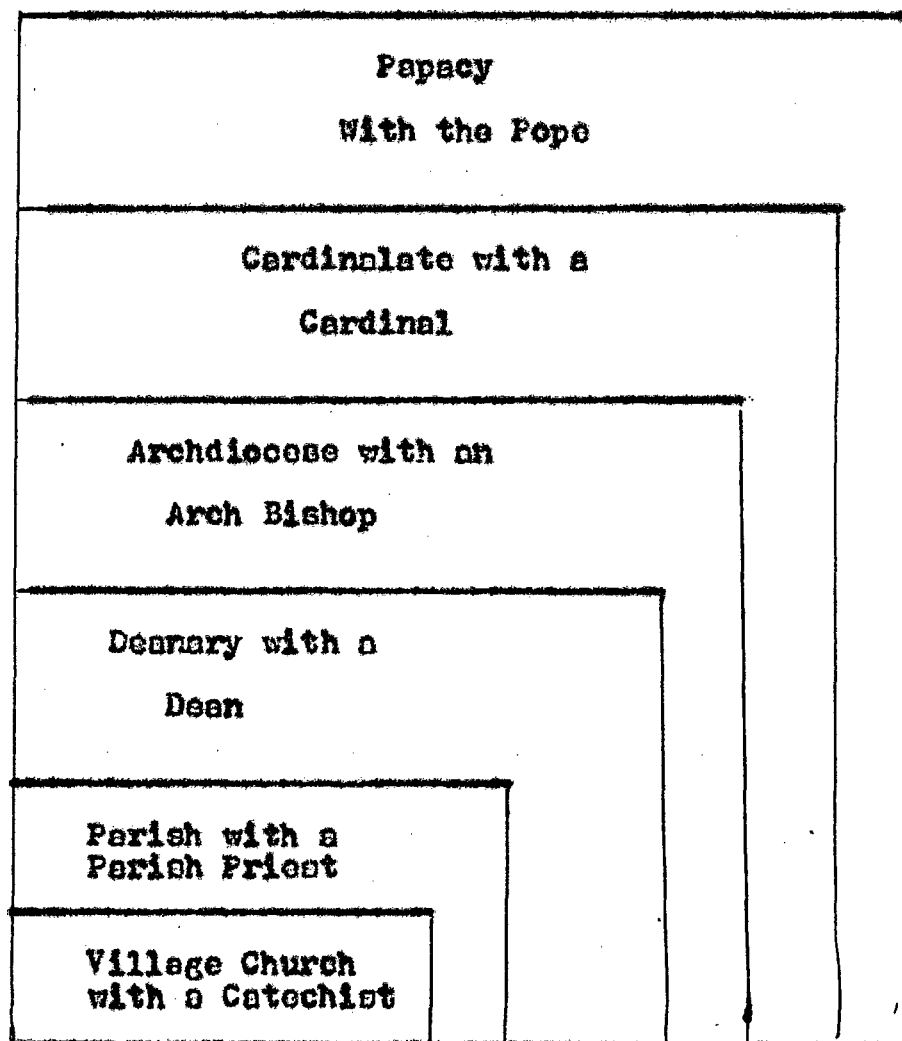


Diagram II: Church Organization in terms of Hierarchy:

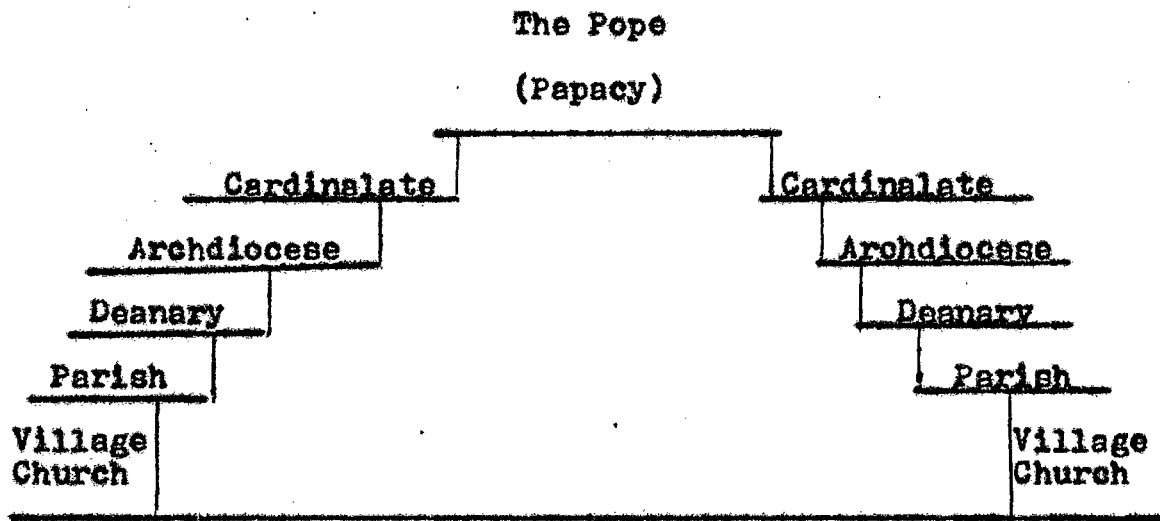
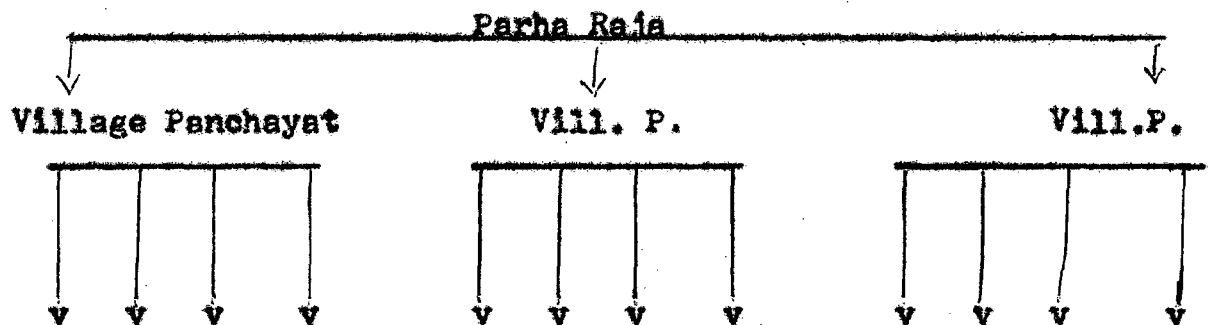


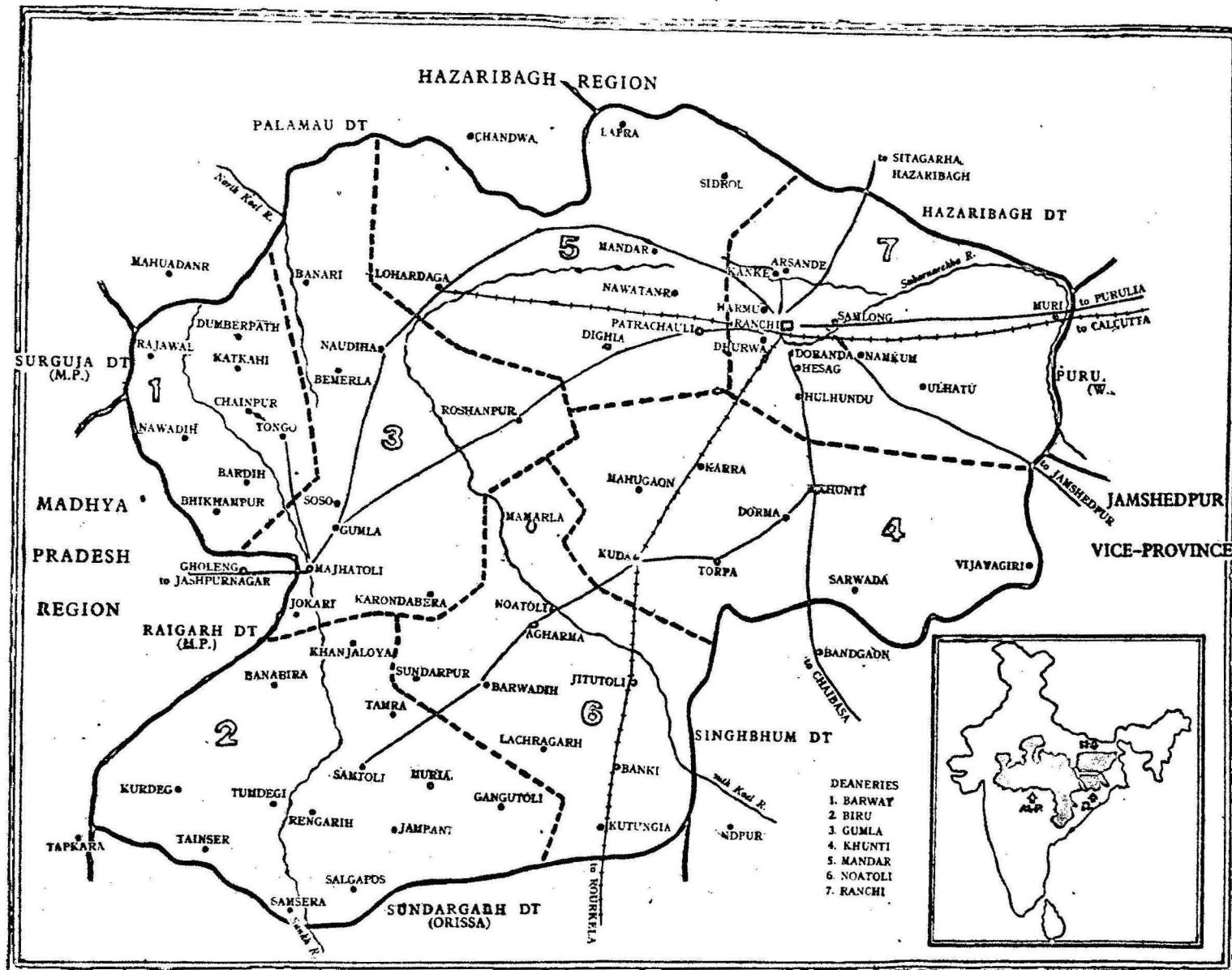
Diagram III: Parha Organization



V = Village,

VP = Village Panchayat

The structural contrast is obvious from the above diagrams. Though both the Parha and the Church organizations have hierarchies but the latter has got double the complexity of the former. It extends over much wider world than just a segment as is the case with the Parha organization.



Ranchi Archdiocese
Mission Station

Due to the effects of Christianity the very physical map of Chotanagpur was changed. Dr. Nirmal Minj, the present Bishop of the GEL Church in Ranchi wrote, "Because of Christianity the whole District of Chotanagpur was dotted with mission stations, churches, schools, agricultural farms, dispensaries and hospitals."¹ The centre of life and activities shifted from the Sarna to the Parish. Such a change, though drastic, but gradual, was acceptable to the tribals because this set up helped them to adapt to the new conditions. The same author continued further, "These physical changes in the tribal region of Chotanagpur served as an aid to form new visions and attitudes to life and it provided a fresh strength to face the challenge of life around them".²

The converted tribals felt proud of belonging to the church because in this new religion their relations cut across blood, racial and regional boundaries and extended to the fellowship of Christians all over the world. Their leaders were educated and enlightened. The converted tribals met every Sunday when they came for weekly service and had the occasion of meeting their relatives and other people irrespective of caste. In the Parha Panchayat they used to meet only when the need arose.

1. Minj Nirmal, "Transforming Effects of Christianity on Tribals of Chotanagpur", in Posing Scene in Chotanagpur, Ed. Dash Sharma, p. 18.

2. Ibid.

There were a number of new organizations in the church. Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh, Maria Marg, Maria Sangat, Yuva Sangh etc. were found among the Catholics, while Youth Club and Sunday School Group were common among the Lutherans in Ranchi district. Every head of the family and every house-wife of the family was 'de facto' the member of Catholic Sabha and Mahila Sangh respectively. The Catholic Sabha was the Parish assembly like the traditional Parha Panchayat. In the monthly meetings (general body meeting) they formed policies, regarding Mission Schemes, Bank Loans, Dhangola (Paddy Bank) and deliberated laws connected with almost all matters concerned to them. The Mahila Sangh, the Maria Marg and the Yuva Sangh also held their monthly meetings regularly where they discussed matters pertaining to them. The village catechists of the village churches were the official representatives who formed the Parish council with the Parish priest at the head.

K.N. Sahay, a professor in the department of Anthropology in Ranchi University, had made an extensive study of the effects of Christianity on tribal society. While he published his doctoral thesis with the title, "Under The Shadow of The Cross" in 1976, there had been many more changes among the Oraons of Chainpur Block in Ranchi district. But the analysis of the church organization made by him is

significant and the same structure prevails even now with fewer modifications. Just like the Catholic Sabha, Sahay pointed out, was the Pracharakpan among the Lutherans.

The missionaries basically organized the converted tribals after the manner of their traditional Parha Panchayat system, because the manner of functioning was the same to a large extent. Besides, the missionaries did not intend to destroy the traditional village panchayat. But in practice the converted tribals, ignoring the traditional panchayat, depended more and more on the Catholic Sabha. In K.N. Sahay's terminology this process of change is called 'Oscillation'. This implied that the individual was shuttling between two values, oscillating his loyalty between two choices.³

The non-converted were holding on to their traditional Parha Panchayat and Hatu (Village) Panchayat, until the introduction of the Statutory panchayat in the Block Development Schemes launched by the Government in 1956. Whenever, the question of change came the non-converted were the worst affected for they did not have anything to hold on to, while their converted counterparts had Christianity and the Church.

3. The word Oscillation may be described as the simultaneous observance by the converts of belief and practices having Christian and Sarna elements, which normally tend to be contradictory. (K.N. Sahay, Under the Shadow of The Cross, p. 22).

Socialization :

Dhunkuria, on which Sachchidananda has made extensive studies,⁴ still remains the primary institution for the non-converted tribal youth. In Dhunkuria which is termed 'Gitti Ora' among the Mundas, the young boys and girls of the village are introduced. This village dormitory for youth is supervised by an elderly man. This occasion is given to youth to congregate at the peer-group-level and many also take this chance for mate-selection. They are introduced into the art of household management and other customs of society. This group of youth also provides labour force for the village whenever required.

The centre of socialization for the Christian children are primarily Christian schools. Though life of a child begins in the family ^{the} child is instructed in Christian religion, morals and customs at schools. From early childhood he has to learn prayers which are said in the family both morning and evening, and detailed religious instructions are given at schools. On every Sunday-service they hear talks and sermons and attend catechism classes. In other words, schools and churches are the centres for social, religious and moral formation of Christian youth.

4. Dhunkuria = Youth dormitory in a tribal village.

Sahay's description of socialization ignores the fact that there are many other castes and social groups in tribal villages. The villages are composed of tribal as well as non-tribal families. They interact and associate in many different ways frequently. In fact in many tribal villages the caste Hindus are elected to the post of Sarpanch (Head). The tribals have learnt to live and adjust with any group particularly in the rural areas.

All the four sample villages taken for study by Sahay were homogenous in population and even religion. It is quite possible than in Barway area the villages mostly have such social composition. But in Biru and Nagpur areas the villages are more heterogeneous in social composition. Village Shephali, which Sahay studied, had predominantly Roman Catholic Oraons, while the second village Jaipur was populated predominantly by the GEL oraons in Raidih police station. The third village, Sanwaria, was predominantly inhabited by Sarna Oraons (non-converted) while the fourth village, Buntel, had a mixed population of Oraons belonging to all three religions. All these villages were located in Barway area about 112 miles on the road on the western fringe of Ranchi district, from Ranchi city.

According to Sahay, the converted distinguished themselves in their manners, behaviour and conduct. They abstained from nothing dirty or obscene in ceremonies and strictly banned dirty talks and cutting dirty jokes. This was the observation made by the author during his field work - about fifteen years ago from now. Of late, however, there is a reverse trend observable among the youth. Some of them do not hesitate to make obscene remarks, jokes and indulge in heavy drinking and even in highway robberies. This is true among the youth who are little educated hence unemployed and living in the suburbs of Ranchi city or in the city itself. In my interview with Father M. Van den Bogaert, who is the present Director of Xavier Institute of Social Service, in Ranchi, these points are corroborated in a slightly different context. According to him this trend, seemingly of a revolt, it is particularly marked among the group of students who have come to towns and found it difficult to adjust to the urban culture and fallen victims of identity crisis. M. Van den Bogaert classifies the Ranchi tribal society into four categories - line group, the employed and well-settled, and the middle class. This phenomenon is seen among the poor or near poverty-line group. The people of this second category, particularly the young, are fascinated by the trinkets of modern civilization, cloths, watches, shoes, film songs,

window-shopp ing etc. There is a craze among the semi-educated youth to go to cities which requires money. If money is not obtained through earning it has got to be acquired through deviant means. Drinking habit is appallingly on the increase among tribal Christian youth.

These observations of latest trends among the youth who go contrary to social and religious injunctions, made by M. Van den Bogaert are manifestations of side-effects of drop-outs from schools and unemployment. Their economic condition does not carry them very far in going for further studies, and on the other hand, there are no respectable jobs, except manual labour or other entrepreneurship. They have time and patience for indulging in social deviances. But, at a deeper analysis, this way of activity may be an escape from facing realities. They refuse to engage themselves in agriculture or in some other self-employed serious jobs. According to Nirmal Minj, there is a fear of the tribal youth being up-rooted from village farming because every educated youth is desirous of a job in the urban centres. This problem is arising as a result of modern education indiscriminately applied among the tribals.⁵

5. Minj Nirmal, "Social Implication of Changing Oraon Economy", in Bulletin of Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Vol. IV, No.2, Sept. 1962, pp. 1-15.

The above trends have adverse effects on the tribal society in general. This is but one example of 'cultural shock' prevailing among adivasis of Ranchi district. This particular category of population or social group, has never struck deep roots, hence, it comes under the category of floating population. They are easily swayed off their feet by the new culture they encounter. Secondly, they develop a spirit of mediocre mentality, with the result that many drop out of studies and look for easy money in deviant ways. This is a social problem among the youth of Ranchi tribals, but ironically enough, much of the problem is self-earned. This is, in the long run, a self-offacing process, because the coming generation stands a bleak future of rising, let alone competing, in socio-economic standards. This may lead towards self-extinguishing of tribals in the social and intellectual world of people.

✓ But the same author has also pointed out to some of the negative aspects of Christian tribals' social lives. Christianity brought tension in personal, social and interdenominational spheres.⁶

The seed of tension was planted in the very first stage of conversion, when the first Christian missionaries

6. Sahay, K.N., "Christianity as a Factor of Tension and Conflict Among the Tribals of Chotanagpur", in Conflict, Tension and Cultural Trend in India, ed. L.P. Vidyarthi, 1969.

protected the tribals from the clutches of Zamindars and have proved themselves the champions of the downtrodden and oppressed. But this led to tensions and conflicts as it was inevitable. The work of the mission necessarily antagonized the Hindu folk, for most of the Zamindars were Hindus. They feared that the free exercise of their despotism would be hampered because of the missionaries. The Christians were more resolute and had more moral courage to assert their right than the non-Christians. As a result there was a constant tension between the two groups. In Bihar, where politics and society and caste-ridden, the spirit of antagonism is only escalating. Today, there are no Zamindars but in the bureaucracy, police and courts, the majority are Hindus, who continue to oppress the tribals in more subtle, legal and systematic manners.

The tension was created even between the converted and the non-converted. The converted considered their non-converted counterparts as inferior in social and religious life. In return the non-converted hated the Christians. Sahay has pointed out instances of Christians going and harassing the non-converted. But this has got to be understood in a social and relational background, which means that the people might have taken advantage of

the occasion to take revenge on their enemies. The conflicting issue of converted and non-converted was heightened in the late 1960s by the late Kartik Oraon, who was then the member of Parliament.

The non-tribals developed an attitude of dislike for the Christians who looked down upon the former. S.C. Roy writes, "Large sections of aboriginal Christians appear to have consciously or unconsciously developed a superiority complex and have practically cut themselves off from the life and society of their non-Christian tribal fellows"⁷. The non-converted also thought that the Christians through their conversion had abandoned ancestral beliefs and religion and thus degraded or defamed the 'good name' of their tribe.

There was tension among the Christians of the same denominations, on the ground of Christian customs and practice. There were cases when the newly converted still practised their old religion. Such people were called the 'Kaccha' Christians (lax Christians). They were taken to task by the good ones with the result that this led to formation of groups of the ostracized. In the church ostracism meant 'mandli behar', i.e. out of the church and Christian Community.

7. Quoted by K.N. Sahay - Ibid - p. 280.

Christianity also created tensions in families, where some of the family members were converted while others were still non-converted. There were divisions in families, quarrels and conflicts between brothers, parents and children. At the individual level there were conflicts in the mind of people who were not really convinced Christians and in matters of faith, they wavered between the old and the new. In times of sickness many were seen to consult witch doctors when their prayers failed them. Though one was a practising Christian he still believed in the older spirits and even stealthily offered sacrifices to them. This cultural process is known as 'Oscillation' in K.N. Sahay's analysis.

The deeper analysis of Christian life and culture made by K.N. Sahay in his book, shows that though outwardly conversion to this religion looked smooth and fast, the real percolation in the interior social and cultural lives was not without confusion, hazards and even resistance. Sahay has examined this phenomenon along the line of five cultural processes, which in fact is the paradigm of the book and his methodology. The abbreviation of this cultural process is 'OSCIR'. These letters stand for 'Oscillation', 'Scrutinization', 'Combination', 'Indigenization' and 'Retroversion'. We have already given few examples of the process of Oscillation. Scrutinization is

defined as a process that leads to elimination of certain Sarna elements on the one hand and to the retention of others on the other, on proper scrutiny. This is certainly associated with the first type and is common with the second generation of the converted. Practice of 'Indira Benja' (marriage of new wells), taboo food, and such like practices which do not contradict the Christian faith are retained as social customs. Certain beliefs like the Bhula spirit, Niksari, evil eye, which may involve superstitions are rationally explained away. These are some of the examples of 'Scrutinization' process.⁸

Cultural Scrutinization is followed by combination which may be described as the mixing up or combining of the retained Sarna elements with newly introduced Christian elements. For example, in times of sickness sacrifices were offered but now prayers and masses are offered in the church. Prayers are recited especially for the blessings of houses, wells, cattle and crops. The Christian priest has replaced the Ojha (witch doctor) in times of sickness. These are cultural combinations.⁹

Cultural Indigenization, within the indigenous framework of a particular Sarna belief or practice, refers to the

8. Sahay K.N., Under the Shadow of the Cross, op.cit. p. 164.

9. Sahay, K.N., Under the Shadow of the Cross, op.cit., pp. 164-65.

replacement of Sarna elements by Christian ones, the two generally being contradictory to each other. This process is similar to cultural combination, with the only difference being that here we note the partial replacement of a Sarna belief or practice by functionally similar Christian elements fulfilling indigenous needs. Fear of the devil is warded off by sacred objects like medals of saints, images or sacred relics. The sickness is not explained away any more by Ojhas as the work of evil spirits but they are explained through the Bible.¹⁰

Cultural Retroversion may be described as the reevaluation of previously eliminated Sarna elements and their readaptation after necessary modifications to suit the changed needs and outlook of converts. This process works generally after one has acquired a considerable understanding of Christianity and is in a position to make one's value judgements. Most of the tribal festivals are now adapted into Christian liturgical cycle. Vermillion is applied at the time of marriage on the bride and the groom.¹¹

These cultural processes served the theoretical and methodological outline for K.N. Sahay and data were collected to high light the same. This study of course, was done in

10. Ibid. p. 165.

11. Ibid. p. 167.

the early sixties. Since then lots of changes have come in Christian Church and worship. Since then the church has launched a campaign all over the world to renew itself. Sahay has observed this new trend and has written an article, 'Indigenisation of Christianity in India', in Man in India, Vol. 61, No. 1, March 1981. The latest picture of the Church, particularly of the Roman Catholic, is given in that article. The church in Ranchi Archdiocese is very much now made into the Church of the place and people. Philip Ekka has contributed a lot to indigenising the tribal church in Ranchi Archdiocese. But before giving the details of the indigenization process of the church in Ranchi, it is necessary to understand the reasons which made such changes imperative.

Sahay has stated in his article, "The Christians felt an urge to reevaluate, to re-adapt, or to 'go back' to many of the indigenous Indian Cultural Traditions which they had earlier eliminated or abandoned."¹² The reasons were that there was an need of better understanding of Christianity and its wider implication and they sought new interpretation of some or most of their non-Christian beliefs and practices, once abandoned. The second Vatican

12. Sahay, 'Indigenization of Christianity in India', in Man in India, Vol. 61, No.1, March 1981, p. 17.

Council at Rome strongly recommended to incorporate elements of local culture as much as possible into Church-life. Therefore, the word 'Indigenization' is preferred to 'Indianization'.

TABLE 4.1

Indigenization of the Church Personnel

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Indian</u>
Priests	6,500	5,000
Nuns	20,000	17,000
Arch Bishops	16	13
Diocese (area)	50=(with Indian Bishops)	30

Source : Sahay, K.N., Ibid, p. 20.

TABLE 4.2

R.C. Church Personnel In Ranchi Archdiocese

Priests	247
Brothers	78
Nuns	841

Source: V. Roemer, The Ranchi Archdiocese, 1979.

The ratio of the Indian priests is 4:1 (foreigner). Among the Protestants there are 5000 ordained pastors and clergy men who are Indian, but there are 3,500, who are

foreigners. The church in its aim and orientation is Indian and has achieved Indian status and autonomy.

"The missionary aim was no longer to be the spread of missions and missionaries, but the planting of the Church. No longer were the missionaries to be in absolute control of the Indian Church."¹³

Indigenization among the Tribals of Ranchi District.

The Ranchi Archdiocese has approved the readaptation of a number of indigenous tribal festivals like the Phagu, Sarhul, Dhanbuni, Harihari, Kadleta, Korra, Nawakhani, Sohrai, Khalihani and Maghe after the modifications to suit the Christian beliefs and needs. The Catholics have adopted, for instance, the magical diagram of Sarhul as a motif of the ritual dress donned by priests at the time of mass service. The chief pioneer on this line of adaptation of tribal feasts, cultural symbols and practices, Father Philip Ekka, spear-headed the movement. In the introduction of his talk given by him at the 1967 Missionary Meeting at Archbishop's House Ranchi, he said "She (the Church) has to be Catholic (i.e. universal) and also at home in particular cultures. Religion has to be made relevant in the personal, vocational and social life of our people. There ought to be no dichotomy between their everyday life and their religious practices.

13. Ibid, p. 22 (Quoted from Baago, 1965, 34).

"The basic outlook of our people is very simple. They are agriculturists, children of the pioneer settlers of the country. Land is their greatest asset. Children, crops and cattle are their most prized blessings, for with the help of these they are assured of the continuation and happiness of their family, clan and tribe. While they acknowledge God (Singhonga, Dharmos) as the Supreme Being and invoke Him at every critical phase of their life, they also propitiate minor spirits in an attempt to solve the problems of suffering. Their annual feasts are intimately connected with the annual agricultural cycle."¹⁴ Theologically these feasts are indigenized. They have set up a group of personnel who are the study Regional Theology. This is ^aan attempt at all-India level, by which they hope to produce theology of regional religions in India. The three most important moments in an individual's life are his birth, marriage and death-cum-burial. These ceremonies are extensively christianized.

In the end of the same talk Philip Ekka wants to dispel the possible fears from the minds of people. Wherefore, he concludes, "We need have no fear that these adaptations will lead to ethnocentrism and Adivasi exclusiveness, because

14. "Catholic Adaptation of Adivasi Customs", Talk given at the 1967, Missionary Meeting at Archbishop's House Ranchi, (for private circulation), p. 1.

many of these feasts are already borrowings and adaptations of the feasts of our semi-Hinduised neighbours. Our Christian adaptations of these feasts are sure to attract many more Hindus than our purely Westernized feasts. Nor need we fear to be outmoded. We have not missed the bus. The revival of the Adivasi festivals is a very live issue today." ¹⁵

The word 'Retroversion' used by Sahay to describe exactly this new process, in his earlier work, sounds very negative. Instead the new term 'Adaptation' or 'Indigenization' is more positive. The word 'Retroversion' denotes reversal in the archaic, which perhaps was meant by the author. But the terms 'Adaptation' and 'Indigenization' denote renewal and enrichment. No doubt, when Sahay jumps to a superficial conclusion as a result of this process. "As such, Christianity, in course of time, specially with change of generation, is most likely to be treated by the common Indian masses (non-Christians) at par with Hinduism. Some Christians might feel apprehensive but still things seem inclined to move in this direction."¹⁶ His second conclusion which seems more likely to be acceptable is, "The way in which they retroversion and indigenization

15. Ibid, p. 11.

16. Sahay, K.N. "Indigenization of Christianity in India, op. cit. p. 34.

is working, and expected to be intensified, indicates that there would be a gradual softening of the attitude of Indian masses towards Christianity".¹⁷

The first conclusion of Sahay, that Christianity is most likely to be treated by common Indian masses at par with Hinduism implies two things. The first is that Christianity is a religion of lower status compared to Hinduism. Therefore, Christianity was, as if, in need of rising higher to some standard religion. How many would agree with this view-point is open to question. The second implication is that the author unconsciously seems to drag tribal religion and tribals to accept Hinduism. No doubt, that in history, certain sections of Mundas, particularly in Tamar and Bundu areas in Ranchi district, have been Hinduized by the Vaishnava saints. It would be incorrect to assume, therefore, that the tribals are best suited for Hinduism.

An alternative position taken by Van Exem is that tribals are closest to Christians.¹⁸ He arrives at the conclusion that given the nature of tribal beliefs in Singbonga and Dharmao, the lesser spirits and the ancestors'

17. Ibid. p. 34.

18. Van Exem A., Tribal Religion at the Cross Road, op.cit. Ref. also by the same author "Early Evangelization in Chotanagpur", in Indian Missiological "Review", Vol.1, No. 4, 1979, pp. 350 ff.

spirits, the tribal religious belief (Sarna Religion) is contiguous with Christianity and the latter is the interiorisation of the former. In his studies he discovers lots of similarities between Christian faith and the tribal Sarna belief. Socially or sociologically speaking, he contends, the tribals would not accept Hinduism because it involves caste system unknown to the tribals. If ever they do so, they would be considered the low caste or untouchables, implying that they would be placed in the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy.

At this point, what is of importance is not the question of one religion being closer to the Sarna religion than the other, but to ask whether the Adivasi Sarna religion is prepared to remain intact from the external influences, or in the situations it is ready to adapt itself to the changing conditions in order to develop an autonomous identity, not unduly influenced by other religions. Is there such a possibility?

Education:

Another important factor which brought about tremendous changes in the social and economic lives of tribals in Ranchi district was the spread of education. Modern education changed the face of Ranchi district, by enabling

people to cope with the changing situations because of industrialization and modernization. It was characteristic of a mission station in Ranchi district that the schools had to open along with it where tribals flocked for education. Later on, there were many private as well as government and Adim Jati Sewa Mandal schools opened in the areas which made many admissions possible.

TABLE 4.3

Literacy among the Adivasis in 1961 Census

	Total Population	Literate
Munda	465,093	69,224
Oraon	564,774	77,392
Kharla	95,956	13,745

Source: Munda = Ranchi Gazetteer, The Mundas, 1970.

Oraon = Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part-A, P. XV, 70 & 88.

Kharla = Census of India, 1961, also in Ranchi Gazetteer 1970, p. 118.

TABLE 4.4

This can be compared with the literacy of 1971 Census

	Total Pop.	Illiterate		Literate	
		M	F	M	F
Munda	521,062	123,242	236,796	64,990	26,067
Oraon	645,598	232,953	287,517	87,714	37,414
Kharla	115,116	39,943	51,530	15,672	7,971

Source: Census of India, Bihar, 1971.

TABLE 4.5

Literacy Level of General Population in Ranchi District, 1971:

Ill	M	F	TOTAL POP.
Illiterate	753,615	763,083	1,516,698
Literate	189,909	76,147	266,056

Source: Census of India, Bihar, 1971.

If we deduct the total tribal literates, (239,878), from the total of general literate in Ranchi district (266,056), the non-tribal literate number comes to be 86,226. From this we are led to conclude that the majority of the literates in the district in 1971 were the tribals (adivasis). The percentage of literacy of general population of India according to 1951, 1961 and 1971 Censuses were, 16.6%, 29.45% and 36.17% respectively.

The tribal of Ranchi district has a considerably big percentage of literacy in the percentage of Chotanagpur division had got the higher percentage of literacy than North Bihar. From the above figures this is obvious that the literacy is on the increase among the edivasio of Ranchi district. The following figures give the number of such institutions with the number of students.

TABLE 4.6

Number of Catholic Educational Institutions in Ranchi District in 1980

Institutions	Total No. of Students	Catholic		Non-Catholic	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Primary Schools (385)	33,826	11,642	8819	8762	4603
Middle Schools (134)	40,718	11,888	9337	12,563	6930
H. Schools (77)	26,945	7267	5575	9076	5019

Source: Annual Returns, Arch Diocese of Ranchi, 1980. There are four (4) graduate Catholic run colleges and two (2) run by the GEL mission. There are 2475 (1491 Boys and 984 girls), Catholic students studying in Catholic and non-Catholic colleges.

Besides the Christians studying in the missionary institutions, there are others who also attend the non-missionary schools. In total there are 6002 such boys and girls of whom 3253 are in Primary schools, 863 Middle schools and 618 in the High Schools.

From the above figures we find that the majority of the Catholics go to missionary schools and all these are adivasis. Majority of the non-Catholic boys and girls are adivasis. This is so mostly in the rural based schools. In the urban based schools which are fewer in number, the non-adivasis have a bigger percentage in some of them. In others the percentage of non-tribals in the schools would be little more than 50%. In the Christian colleges on an average, 60 to 65% are the adivasis. In the following table, we have the figures of Christian tribals and non-Christian tribals at the High school level, since we do not have the data for the others.

TABLE A.2

No. of Christian and Non-Christian Tribals in 44 High Schools
(Catholic) in Ranchi District

Christian Tribals	Non-Christian Tribals	Total of 44 Hs.
Boys 4669	1138	
Girls 3981	494	
Total= 8650	1632	= 10,282

Source: Annual Report of Catholic Schools, The District Director of Education, Office, Gram Guru, 1980.

The general total students of the 44 schools were 14623. Therefore, if we deduct the number of tribals (Christian and

non-Christians) the other non-tribal students are 4341 only. This means that the average ratio of the tribal students with the non-tribals is 10:4. Similarly, the average ratio of the Christian tribals to the non-Christian tribals is 8:1. This leads us to conclude that the number of educated are more among the Christian tribals. Further the female literacy is higher among the Christian tribals than the non-Christians. At the lower stages, namely, primary and the Middle, the numbers are higher both for boys and girls, but the number of girls particularly of the non-Christian decreases very sharply. The non-Christians do not go for female education but are married off before they reach the high schools.

At the college level, the picture is different. According to the Annual Returns, 1980, the number of Catholic boys and girls studying at various colleges was 1491 and 984 respectively. This could be compared with the total number of High School boys and girls which was 4669 and 3982. Obviously the number goes down for both boys and girls at the college level. The girls, particularly, prefer to go for training in teaching, nursing, sewing etc. They do not go in larger numbers for higher studies. The boys also go for medicine, teacher's training, technical training and agricultural training.

The data also indicate that the converted tribals have shown much higher percentage in education which goes to prove why they have progressed much more rapidly in every sphere of life. Of the three tribal groups the Oraons seem to be the most progressive since they go for higher education in larger numbers. They show the greatest degree of flexibility and adaptability. This is corroborated from the statements of Mr. Narayanji, one of the protagonists of tribal welfare through the government agency, The Adám Jati Seva Mandal. "The Oraons are education-oriented. Whenever, a school is opened, it is filled with Oraon boys and girls. Many Oraons embraced Christianity, because they could not educate their children otherwise. They are making rapid progress both in elementary education and higher education. The British Government entrusted this work to the missionaries in Chotanagpur and gave them large grants".¹⁹ The same author recorded that among women the Christians were the first ones to be educated. In 1950 while not even one percent of the women in the whole of Bihar was educated there were as high as 9% of Christian women educated.²⁰ About the number of schools he has given these figures. "In 1950 again there were 10,000 Oraons

19. Narayanji, "Oraon, Munda and Ho", in Tribes of India, Published by Bhartya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, 1950, p. 37.

20. Ibid, p. 37.

in elementary schools; 500 in the High Schools; 38 boys in different colleges. There was an Urban Deputy Magistrate, one lawyer, one Engineer, 25 Christian Oraon graduates, 2 Oraon girls in colleges, 35 Oraon girls in High Schools.²¹ Besides, there were outstanding figures among Oraons like, Sahab Bandi Ram Oraon, Theble Oraon, Chetan Ram, Sukra Oraon, and Antu Bhagat.

Recently, Sita Toppe has published a book; Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India : A case study of Oraons in Ranchi District. She begins with the traditional Oraon Institution, Dhunkuria, for education. That was the only institution in tribal society for education and socialization of Oraon youth. But gradually this Dhunkuria was made obsolete with the arrival of modern Western system of formal education.

There are constitutional provisions for the tribal welfare and education. Article 46 of the Constitution lays down that, "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation, to implement these directive principles in Article 46, suitable provisions have been made in the fifth and sixth scheduled of the

21. Ibid. p. 38.

Constitution". Accordingly, Consolidate Fund of India gives grants in-aid as provided in Article 275 of the Constitution. In all five year plans the tribal areas were given sufficient aid out of this fund. The programmes drawn up included - assistance at all stages of education, freeships, stipends, hostel facilities, books, stationery grants, mid-day meals, uniforms, grants of scholarships for technical training land reclamation, irrigation, supply of seeds, manures, implement... etc. The government also has advanced Overseas Scholarship and between 1961-65 there were 41 Scheduled Tribes from various part of India who obtained fellowship. In the 3rd 5-year plan 1.022 million and 1.718 million children belonging to S. castes and S. Tribes were given Post Metric Scholarships. In 1968-69, 145,000 coaching centres were opened for the examination in UPSC and first class Subordinate Services. In the fourth plan, Rs. 11 crores were provided for post-matric scholarships.

The author made a study of 450 Oran Students in 23 different schools. Ten of which were christian missionary schools, 13, Adimjati Seva Mandal; 12 were located in urban areas and 11 in the rural. There were five boys' schools, seven girls' schools and 11 co-education. 250 students were from the Missionary schools and 200 from the Adimjati Seva Mandal. 60 students were urban and 190 were rural.

TABLE 4.8Table of Opinions About the Aim of Education from the respondents

84.4% = Christian students	= to get jobs
8% = Christian students	= Betterment of standard of living.
37.5% = N.C. Students	= Betterment of standard of living.
35% = N.C. Students	= to get jobs.

Source: Teppo Sita, Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India, p. 169-170.

The difference of 8% and 37% between Christian and non-Christian shows the Christians have already high standard of living while the non-Christians crave for it. There is a smaller marginal difference between the attitudes regarding job. The following table gives the idea about their choice of life between urban and rural areas.

TABLE 4.9

Total No. of Christian Students (250). Of the non-Christians 200

Prefer rural life 115(46%) - 81 (40.5%)

Prefer urban life 135(54%) - 119 (59%)

Total No. of Rural students (1190)	Total No. of Urban Students (260)
Prefer rural life - 117(61.37%)	79(30.38%)
Prefer urban life - 73(38.43%)	181(69.62%)

Source: Ibid, pp. 171-172.

Both the students with 54% and 59.5% who prefer urban life have an attraction for urban centres. But those studying in rural areas (61.5%) prefer rural life to urban; and those studying in urban areas (69.6%) prefer urban life to rural. All this show their contentment with their own habitat. The great majority of teachers (ranging from 63% - 100%) expressed that the Oraon students have medium intelligence.

In the year 1970 and 1971 the total tribal students who appeared for B.A./B.Sc. Final examinations in the Ranchi district college, Ranchi, was only 18%, which came down to 14% in 1972. Even if one adds the number of scheduled castes, which is only 1/10 of the tribals it would still be too low. According to the University Ordinance No. IV(26) it should be 30%. Nirmal Mijj objected to this non-tribal dominance in the Ranchi college. His opinion was that in tribal area there would be reservations for the non-tribal students than otherwise. But when it comes to results the tribals fair poorly. The following data were obtained from the Cross-List of Arts, Science and Commerce of the year 1971-1972 showing the results.

TABLE 4.10

	<u>Percentage of successful</u>	
Pre.U. Arts	73%	Non-tribals
	61%	Other tribals
	55%	The Oraons
Pro. U. So.	60%	Non-tribals
	36%	Other tribals
	33%	The Oraons

TABLE 4.10 (Contd.)

	Percentage of successful	
I.A.	82%	Non-tribals
	78%	All Tribals

Source : Ibid. p. 172.

The above table shows that the maximum failures were from among the Oraons and other tribals. Sita Toppe has given some legitimate reasons for such failure of which the illiteracy of parents and absence of tutors are important. "Most Oraon students come from "Ashram Schools" managed by Adimjati Seva Mandal and other village schools where teaching is not upto that standard which is attained by the schools of Ranchi town where mostly the non-tribal students study".²² This shows also that Adimjati Seva Mandal Schools, meant specifically for the tribals, do the most harm to the same.

Because of the education joint family structurally was less suited and entered into crisis. The young were more educated and this created a conflict in the authority role

22. Toppe Sita, Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribals India, p. 223.

23. The same things were also observed by L.P. Vidyarthi Socio-Cultural Implications of Industrialization in India, 1970. The study by R.B. Lall, "Social Change Among Urban Oraons" published in the Bulletin of Bihar

of the family-head. Educated wives exhibited more independence in house-hold matters. Traditional authority and role-expectations were affected.²³ With the change in joint family system and kinship relations, the traditional customs of co-operation in times of intensified agricultural operations - planting, weeding, harvesting... etc. customary visits to kinsman, and tribal solidarity were lost to a great extent. The spirit of tribal communalism and togetherness were converted into individualism. The young generation slighted the traditional authority. L.P. Vidyarthi wrote, "Urban-bred children are sophisticated, frequently more literate and have greater mastery of the new urban environment than their parents. The parents both among the converted and non-converted tribals frequently admit their inability to deal with their children".²⁴

With regard to dresses and ornaments the educated girls discard them as primitive and orthodox. The practice of tattooing their limbs is altogether outmoded among these girls. The characteristic features of adaptability and flexibility among the tribals are remarkable. While they cling to their original identity they also have the desire and capacity of adapting to changing situations.

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23. Tribal Research Institute, Vol. V., No.1, March 1963, pp. 33 ff. revealed the same fact).
24. Vidyarthi L.P., Socio-Cultural Implications of Industrialisation in India, 1970.

Industrialization, Urbanization and Modernization:

These three factors are closely related to each other. Industrialization leads to urbanization and these two factors consequently account for modernization. The tribals were cent percent agriculturists and are predominantly so even now. They dwelt in mud-walled, tile-roofed houses in the villages. Today they have come in contact with the modern world which has deeply influenced them.

Industries have greatly transformed the social and economic life of the tribals. The Heavy Engineering Corporation at Hatia in Ranchi, Thermal Plants at Patratu and Bokaro, Steel Plants at Janshodpur and Bokaro are the Giant Plants established in the tribal regions of Chotanagpur. In and around Ranchi city, there are several industries. The establishment of HEC at Hatia, N.C.D.C. at Ranchi, several medium scale industries such as Sriram Ball Bearing Ltd., High Tension Insulator Factory, Usha Martin Black Wire-ropes Ltd. are all in the vicinity of Ranchi. Usha Martin Black. But the largest scale changes have come about because of the HEC at Hatia. L.P. Vidyarthi has made a study of Hatia Industry with the help of a team commissioned for the purpose. The published report was in form of a book titled, "Socio-Cultural Implications of Industrialization on the Tribals : A case Study of Tribal Bihar", Sponsored by Research Programme Committee, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, 1970.

The green of Chotanagpur came under the polluting dusts and smokes with the discovery of coal-mines of Jharla, Bokaro, Karanpur in Dhanbad in 1856 and the establishment of TISCO Plant at Jamshedpur in 1907. These twin industries marked the beginning of large scale exploitation of minerals and other industrial resources of Chotanagpur. Ranchi has got the HEC in its heart. This industrial complex is extended over 9,200 acres including 12 villages, apart from cutting across certain portions of 16 other villages. The factory area alone is built on about 1,900 acres covering four villages (Dhurwa, Latna, Satranji and portion of Hatia). The township of Jagnath occupies 5,600 acres covering ten villages. In spite of all this tribals were still living their traditional and primitive lives. "Except the missionaries, no other agencies could help the tribals much to come out of the dark climate of poverty, illiteracy and poor living conditions."²⁵

The purpose of opening the HEC was that the Government of India and the Bihar Government supported the view that since the land was not fertile enough to yield subsistence level crop for the local tribals, they would live on working for wages in the factory. Besides, this would make them come into contact with the educated and advanced groups of people which would make them conscious of self-development in respect of economic, social, educational and also psychological status.

Three villages were displaced for the factory proper. Ten villages were displaced to build up township affecting 1620 families. Twelve villages were displaced to make railway and dam constructions. In all the HEC, Netia cost:

Total no. of villages affected	-	25
Total no. of families affected	-	2198
Total population affected	-	12,990
Total area acquired	-	9,200 acres
Total no. of area acquired for rehabilitation	-	3,552 acres

How many were absorbed in the factory? The bulk of tribals went for unskilled labour. In 1963, the total number of industrial workers was 28232 of which 12,003 were skilled workers and 16,229 were unskilled. One can imagine the tribals who must have filled the lists of unskilled labourers. In 1964 the number of employees in Regular Temporary and Regular Muster Role was 5566 of which 706 were tribals; the rest 4860 were non-tribals. This was one of the instances of defeating the purpose of opening HEC in the tribal belt. Out of 706 workers the unskilled were 409. Out of the total tribal working force, 57.9% were unskilled and on Muster Roll. Whereas in the case of non-tribals only 30.2% were unskilled and on Muster Roll. On the first of May 1965 there were 408 Scheduled

Castes and 695 Scheduled Tribes recruitments of which only 659 were from among the displaced. The lion's share of jobs went to the immigrants who crowded Hatia.

TABLE 4.11

The Immigrants in Hatia Complex According to the Survey:

State	No. of Males	No. of Female	No. of persons	No. of Families	Average Size of families
N. Bihar	318	222	540	167(52%)	3.2
W. Bengal	65	50	115	39(12%)	2.9
U.P.	45	40	85	20(6.1%)	4.2
Kerala	36	14	50	70(6.1%)	2.5

Source : Vidyarthi, 1970, op. cit., p. 213.
There were still other states but only the most outstanding ones were enlisted.

In the midst of displacement and feverish efforts to rehabilitate the tribals, the Mundas and Oraons, proved their capacity of adjustment. Some of the families were rehabilitated while others stuck on to the place and opened shops, cycle repairs, tailoring shops, hotels, cloth shops, flower mills...etc. and started living all over again. Their life-standard was improved, because of the increase in their per capita income.

TABLE 2.12

Per capita income (yearly)
(in Rupees)

	Past		Present	
	Hordeg	Kalamati	Hordeg	Kalamati
Orsons	150	142	257	223
Kunda	124	140	216	227

Consequences of Industrialisation:

The fertile land of tribals was converted into an industry. The tribals were off set completely because all these giant Industrial Plants were for them unheard of. There were radical changes as a consequence.

The characteristic homogeneous population of tribals was changed into heterogeneous one.²⁶ The flux of floating population, mostly labourers, crowded the factory areas. Truck owners, contractors, traders, merchants found accommodations in the suburb villages. Ideas and ideals, language and population, food habits and dress, social and religious outlook, and for that matter the entire way of life were characterized with heterogeneity.

There was a radical change in leadership. Traditional panchayat system was replaced by political and labour union leaders, since the nature of problems was industrial and individual

26. Ibid, pp. 142-143.

as against agrarian and communal. With the increase in education and political consciousness and contacts with the outside world, the very foundation of the traditional leadership was shaken. The traditional cultural systems and social significance lost their functions and meaning. The Oraons and the Mundas entered into a competitive world so far unknown to them. The traditional spirit of mutual co-operation was converted into elbowing and competition, because there was no question of any hereditary occupation in the industrial world. Instead, technical, and managerial skills and division of labour created more opportunities for the individuals to choose the type of work one was suited to.

The position of women was raised because there were working wives to add to the family income. There were 14.2% working wives as given in the survey as against 9.3% earlier. Consequently, smaller families were preferred as against big ones where every hand was a help. Now every hand which was not skilled was a liability in the family. As referred to earlier, there was a conflict regarding traditional authority. Since money-economy was given importance, this was the criteria of authority. Agricultural economy was now supplemented by jobs in the factory and through self-employment in shops, groceries, saloons, tailoring shops, etc. Migration of mostly men in the industrial

areas caused personal strains, stress, sex-disparity, which led to many evils like, murder, alcoholism, prostitution etc.

Many people were not given work with the result that the number of unemployed increased. This was one of the reasons why there was still a strong protest against the installation of Hhatia, HEC. People from the affected villages expected jobs but their hopes were boomed. Most of the villagers expressed the opinion that the installation of factory had been more beneficial to the outsiders and more hazardous to the local people. In Hatia village there were 712 Hindus employed in the HEC while only 348 tribals, of whom mostly joined manual labour. It is important to note that neither the Government nor the Corporation any time, did anything to open technical centres for training the local people. Gail Omvedt studied the Steel worker -adivasis, in Bokaro. According to her analysis, the factories have created rich and poor classes of managers and workers. "Poverty juxta posed with wealth, backward non-electrified villages juxta posed with huge Steel Corporation Complexes.....an illiterate and resentful tribal population unable often to even understand the language of Bengali, South India, Bihari, and Businessmen who are the ruling elite of the region?"²⁷

27. Gail Omvedt, "Steel Workers Contract Labourers and Adivasis", in E.P.W. Vol. XVI, No. 30, 25 July 1981, p. 1227.

Industrialization led to Urbanization. In his article on the Passing Scene in Chotanagpur L.P. Vidyarthi wrote, "The isolated forested and hilly belt with sparse and scattered folk population became integrated with the world market and these newly developed urban centres (as there was great flux of population in the respective districts), led to the growth and development of satellite urban areas with specialized foundations of transport, commerce and administration. This led to the industrial urbanization in Chotanagpur.²⁸ The urban population in 1881 in India was 9.4%, 4.1% in Bihar and in Chotanagpur it was even less. According to 1971 census the percentage of urban population was 18.9 in Chotanagpur as against 10.04 in Bihar.

In Ranchi district, the increase in percentage of urban population in the three decennials were 62.52%, 61.92% and 76.28% in 1951, 1961 and 1971 respectively. Obviously there was an increase in the urban migration. The rural population was the same as before. The tribal population was 61.61%, but this has come down to 58.08% in 1971.

Because of industrialization and urbanization the tribal population was displaced. The tribals have become

28. "L.P. Vidyarthi, "Industrialization and Social Change" in The Passing Scene in Chotanagpur, op.cit., p. 137.

beggars now, a phenomenon which was unheard of by the proud tribals. The causes were many of which urbanisation was one. T.S. Rao and Michael Van den Bogaert, have made a study of the beggars' problem in Ranchi city. The establishment of important institutions at Ranchi like Rajendra Medical College, Bariaatu, Agricultural and Veterinary College at Kanke, Birla Institute of Technology at Koshra, number of troops of Eastern Command stationed in the neighbourhood of Ranchi, changed the face of Ranchi city greatly. To cater to this population hundreds of shops, restaurants, laundries, garages, repair shops and transport services have started which required space in the city. Huge stretches of tribal lands have been taken over by such increasing population in Ranchi and the neighbourhood. Many tribals who were ousted have been reduced to misery even to the point of begging. According to their study the tribal percentage was 39.0% among the taken samples which was very high. It was either poverty or displacement which had pushed them to a livelihood they were not naturally inclined to. The second biggest percentage was Hindu caste with 20.5% followed by S. Castes with 15.5% in the samples (200)²⁹. It has been mentioned about the study done by Nirmal Minj on the social

29. Rao, T.S. & Bogaert M.V., "The Beggars Problem in Ranchi", in *Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. XXXI, Oct. 1970, pp. 285-302.

implications of changing Urban Economy. The author has expressed fears that the young generation was more inclined towards getting jobs in urban centres neglecting village agriculture.³⁰ These are some of the implications and consequences of urbanization. The study of RB Lall could also be mentioned here in which he had analysed how the urban dwelling Oraons in Ranchi city have been alienated and changed from their characteristic features.³¹

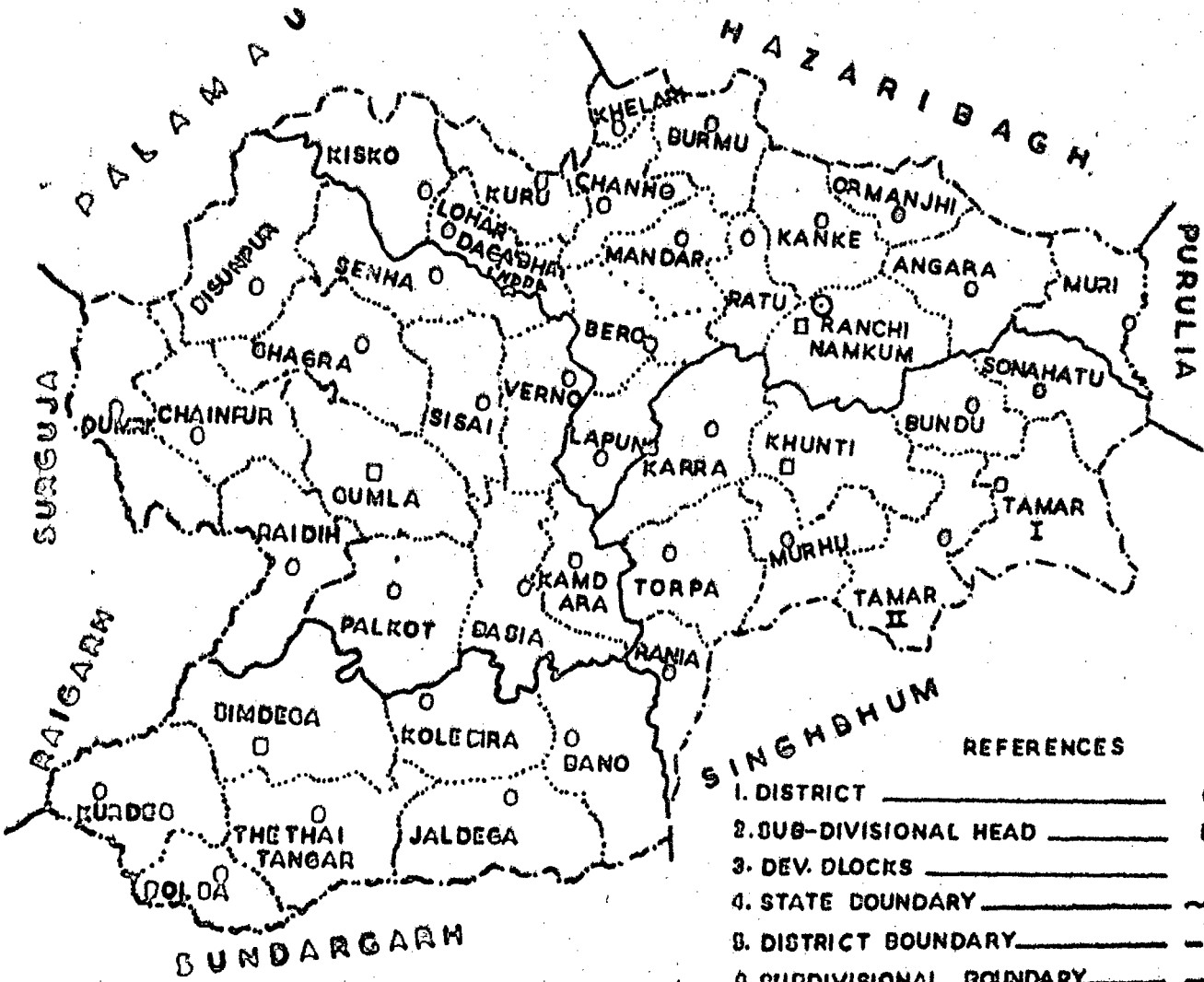
Modernisation:

The converted and in particular the non-converted, entered the process of modernisation with the introduction of Community Development Programmes launched in 1957 by the Government. After independence the Government of India, both at the centre and state level are spending considerable amount on the tribals and Scheduled Castes. In the first three plans, the amount spent were 17 crores, 41 crores and 53 crores, respectively besides the annual plans for 1966-67, 1967,68 and 1968-69.

In Bihar there were 63 Blocks according to the study by L.P. Vidyarthi, 1974.³² But inspite of the

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30. Dhebar Commission Report recommends agriculture cum dairy farming for the economic development of the tribals, but the Oraons seem to move towards, agriculture-cum-service pattern economy.
31. Lall, R.B., "Social Change Among Urban Oraons" in Bulletin of Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Vol.V, No. 1, March 1963, pp. 24-37.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS BLOCKS OF RANCHI DISTRICT



REFERENCES

- 1. DISTRICT _____ ○
- 2. SUB-DIVISIONAL HEAD _____ □
- 3. DEV. BLOCKS _____ ○
- 4. STATE BOUNDARY _____
- 5. DISTRICT BOUNDARY _____
- 6. SUB-DIVISIONAL BOUNDARY _____
- 7. DEV. BLOCK BOUNDARY _____

10 0 10 20 30 km

amounts spent in the first three plans per capita of expenditure on development was very meagre. For example, in the third five year plan the amounts spent per capita in rupees were :

Economic uplift	-	Rs. 1.82	(crores)
Education	-	" 0.998	"
Health & Housing-	"	" 0.78	"
All schemes	"	" 3.51	"

This is too little an amount spent on per capita.

Under these plans many minor irrigations were set up. Such irrigation centres were started in Bundu and Tamar (Munda) areas in Ranchi District. Animal husbandary, fishery, forestry, cooperatives were some of the important schemes under the plans. But these schemes are by and large failures. Some of the reasons are: a/ There is a neglect and lack of attention in spite of Constitutional provisions; b) inadequate fund allotment to cover the sectors; c) inadequate machinery of administration; d) lack of effective personnel; e) excessive politicization of tribal issues and failure of tribals to produce dedicated, articulate and enlightened local leaders. These are some of the glaring deficiencies the government should correct if the schemes were to benefit those meant for. Very few tribals have benefitted from the Blocks.

32. L.P. Vidyrathi, "Tribal Development in India and Its Future in Man in India, Vol. 54, No. 1, Jan-March, 1974, pp. 51 ff.

The tribals as well as non-tribals of Ranchi district were greatly helped by some private agencies for developmental programmes. One such organization was the C.R.S. (Catholic Relief Societies) in Ranchi district. In an interview with Father Linus Kinde, the present Director of CRS, I came to know the secrets of their success. They have improved upon the defects of Block system. The secret of their success, as I was told, was that the CRS was operating on the traditional panchayat system, where real democracy existed. Though the process of functioning was highly bureaucratic in structure, the efficiency and ability with which the work went, ensured that the people were seldom displeased or harassed. It was based on equality and honesty, and anyone who applied for any scheme, irrespective of caste creed or sex, was duly given a chance. The CRS has helped people to dig many wells, cultivate wheat and cash crops, provided work and solved the unemployment problem through "Food for Work" schemes. This programme stopped migration to outside places. People have more to eat, as many as three times a day, and have enough surplus to pay the fees at school. Living standard of people has gone up. He dismissed the doubts in my mind about the allurements for conversion since it was run by the Catholics. There

was no hook attached to it. He gave some examples of certain areas where the schemes were taken by the non-Christians and not a single conversion was made. In Lohardaga and Khunti areas there were 50% non-Christians and in Neadih and Gumla areas more than 60% were non-Christians who benefitted from the schemes. The principal and the only aim of the CRS was to help people to become self-sufficient by helping themselves. The Government was only too happy with CRS, because it has not to pay the cargoes (with supplies) coming from foreign countries.

Sachchi Dananda pointed out in his studies the deficiencies of communication as the defect of the Block systems. Besides, most of the time the non-tribals were those who took the lion's share and the tribals remained as they were.³³ Dennis Bara, the director of Vikas Maitri, (another private agency), a corporate endeavour of different churches, expressed his dissatisfaction with the use of manure, implements, seeds, and fertilizer. His main contention on failures of these were that people need be taught and their attitudes changed.

As a summation of this chapter let us see the radical changes in tribal features characteristic of their identity. The population of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district was tribal.

33. Sachchidananda, "Community Development and the Tribals", Journal of Social Research, Vol. VII, Nos. 1-2, March-Sept. 1964, pp. 70-78.

but today this homogeneity has given into heterogeneity. The tribals were primarily depending on agriculture have now taken up different occupations like, jobs in offices, business and commerce. The book, The Changing Kunda, by SSachchidananda, and the other book, The Kharis: Then and Now" by L.P. Vidyarthi, show this now changed attitudes of the tribals in their economic system. They grow cash crops, as against self-sufficient economy, invest money in banks, and are engaged in work throughout the year. Their economic attitudes are very well described in the book, Basis economic Attitudes of Chotanagpur Tribals, by A. Van Exem, the present director of the Catholic Cooperative Bank in Ranchi. The author deploras the lack of thriftiness and the scens of saving for investment among the tribals.

Socially, the tribals who lived only in rural centres now have shifted to urban centres and integrated in the city culture, though not without hazards, and problems. The illiterate are becoming more and more educated, filling even the highest governmental posts in the state and the Union Service. The custom of having big families has changed into nuclear types, at least structurally. The sense of mutual cooperation and the strong, solidary spirit of tribal communitarianism have given into more individualistic and segregational attitudes.

In cultural spheres the tribals have been exposed to many external situations and people, which have changed their primitive and superstitious values. Many tribal festivals and customs have disappeared in the changed situations. Dances and recreational gathering have become less frequent. In dress and ornament, the new and modern fashions have invaded the tribal societies. More and more people are enamoured by the coming modern culture with the result that the villages are at stake of under-population. In all these the tribals have been very flexible to adapt themselves, and thus try to develop a new, modern identity, in order to make a contribution to the multi-cultural nation like India.

CHAPTER - V

POLITICAL IDENTITY

The traditional tribal leadership took a different direction in the wake of Christian influence on the tribals.¹ Vidyarthi has traced the gradual development of Jharkhand party. He has also made an analysis of the Jharkhand Party leadership in the late sixties and early seventies. The movement which has passed through several initial stages of development in Chotanagpur discussed elsewhere,² eventually emphasized political functions since 1939 and specially after India's independence. The demand for the formation of separate Jharkhand state under the auspices of A.I. Jharkhand party which received the first fillip during the visit of States Reorganization Commission continued to be followed very vigorously till recently under the leadership of Jaipal Singh who found it impracticable, and who preferred to join hands with the National Congress.³

The period from the beginning of 1915, when the first Christian Students Organization was formed under the leadership of Bartholome, till 1937, has been termed as the preparatory stages for political activities.

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1. Vidyarthi L.P., "An Appraisal of the Leadership Pattern Among the Tribals of Bihar", in Tribal Situation in India, K.S. Singh, ed. pp. 438-453. Ref. also by the same author, Aspects of Tribal Leadership in India, pp. 131-137.
 2. Elsewhere = L.P. Vidyarthi, "Aspects of Tribal Leadership in India", pp. 131-137.
 3. L.P. Vidyarthi, "An Appraisal of the Leadership Pattern among the Tribes of Bihar", in Tribal Situation in India, ed. S.C. Dubo, pp. 439-440.

Within this period many organizations like the Unati Samaj, 1928, formed by Joel Lakra, Kisan Sabha, by Bandi Ram Oraon, Catholic Sabha, by the Roman Catholic Missions, and Adivasi Mahasabha under Ignace Beck and later under Jaipal Singh, came into existence.⁴ These organizations were mainly for the socio-economic uplift of the tribals of the region. They mostly adopted constitutional methods to forward their demands in order to alleviate their legitimate grievances. The period that preceded this was marked by violence and armed uprisings.⁵

Immediately before the formation of the political wing for the Mahasabha, some tribal leaders like Justin Richard realized the need of including the non-tribals, living in Chotanagpur in this organization. This leader organized the limited Jharkhand Bhakt in 1948, which later on was accepted. "After resisting the idea for sometime Jaipal Singh accepted it and the Jharkhand Party was formed in 1950 in Jamshedpur as the political wing of the Adivasi Mahasabha".⁶

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4. Cf. also - Nirmal Minj, "Effects of Christianity on the Tribals", in *Passing Scene* - p. 79; Cf. K.S. Singh, *The Dust Storm and the Hanging Mist*, 1966.
 5. Ibid, i.e. Nirmal Minj.
 6. Sachchidananda, 'Tribal Situation in Bihar', in the *Tribal Situation in India*, ed. K.S. Singh, 1972, p. 175.

PERFORMANCES OF THE PARTY

The performance of the Jharkhand Party can be divided into three major periods, namely:

- 1950-1957 - Glorious Age
 1957-1962 = Decline
 1963-1970 = Disintegration
 1971 - onwards = Attempts to reunite and further divisions.

These periods have been classified on the basis of general elections both of the Assembly as well as of Parliament. The following table gives the account of reserved seats won by the Scheduled Tribes in various elections.

TABLE 5.1Percentage of Reservation for the Scheduled Tribes, won by Political Parties in the Elections

Party	Election Years					
	1952 %	1957 %	1962 %	1967 %	1969 %	1971 %
Jharkhand	70.59	65.63	59.38		13.74	10.34
Congress	20.59	25.00	9.37	48.28	34.49	58.62
Hill Jharkhand	-	-	-	-	13.79	3.45
Jana Sangh	-	-	-	17.24	17.24	-
Swatantra	-	-	18.76	6.89	3.45	-
Socialist	-	-	9.37	3.45	3.45	-
Independent	-	3.12	-	24.14	13.79	24.14
Other Parties	8.82	6.25	3.12	-	-	3.45
No. of Reserve Seats	34	32	32	29	29	29

Source : Sachchidananda, The Tribal Voter in Bihar, New Delhi, 1976, Table I, p. 16.

The position of Jharkhand was very high in the first three general elections, though in a deteriorating trend. In the first general election the percentage of the seats won was 70.59 which dwindled to 59.38 in 1962. The first two elections were the glorious periods of the Jharkhand Party. This shows that the Jharkhand was able to mobilize the tribals who mustered their votes to the party on the issue of separate statehood for the Jharkhandis. During this period the famous States Reorganization Commission visited Ranchi and Chotanagpur (1956). The tribals presented a memorandum before the Commission in which they demanded a separate state for Jharkhand consisting of Chotanagpur and Santhal Paragana.

Merging of the Jharkhand party with the National Congress in 1969 was a virtual death-blow to the party from which it has never been able to regain its prestigious position. There were circumstances which necessitated the merger of the Jharkhand with the ruling National Congress. In spite of the spectacular victory of the party in the Assembly elections for 1952 and 1957, the party-men, particularly Jaipal Singh, felt that without the Congress their efforts to obtain a separate state were of no avail. "Jharkhand party leaders were tired of sitting in the opposition and believed that once in government they could actively pursue policies for tribal welfare. They

also would fight for a separate state of Jharkhand from within the Congress".⁷

Secondly, there was a growing influence of Janata Party in the area, and there was a difficulty of raising resources for the Jharkhand party organization. Thirdly, there was a general apathy among the people who lost interest in Jharkhand due to the failure of its demand for a separate state. There was also a rumour that, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru had bought up the Jharkhand together with Jaipal Singh, perceiving it as the emerging opposition with a very strong mass support. It was evident that due to the demand for a separate state the non-tribals of the place were against the party. Some even spread the rumour that among the non-tribals it was the Tata Company at Jamshedpur which bought up Jaipal Singh who posed an imminent threat to the outsiders (the Dikus) by creating a separate Jharkhand state.

At any rate, the party was merged with the Congress which resulted in a blow for the first time, when with the resignation of Sri Binodanand Jha, ac, the Chief Minister of Bihar, Jaipal Singh was dropped from the ministry and instead his lieutenant Mr. S.K. Bago was made a minister

7. Sachchidananda, "Tribal Situation in Bihar", in Tribal Situation in India, op.cit. p. 175.

by the new Chief Minister, Sri K.B. Sahay. It was only then realized by the leaders that even the very identity of the Jharkhand party was lost to the great resentment of Mr. Jaipal Singh. But the ruling Congress saw it as rehabilitating the sagging prestige of itself in Chotanagpur. With the merger all hopes of the tribal people of the region were shattered. They felt that they had been betrayed even by such a great and charismatic leader as Jaipal Singh.

In the 4th general election in 1967, the Jharkhand leaders suffered the blast of the anti-Congress wind. Sri S.K. Bage lost his security deposit. Many tribal leaders lost their seats and even Sri Jaipal Singh crept through the anti-merger vent in the election.

The period that followed the eventful and unfortunate merger, was that of deterioration of the party and division in several splinter groups. People felt great resentment against these leaders. There was a vacuum in the tribal leadership. To fill this vacuum, a number of new parties and organizations came up. The Birsa Sova Dal, Krantikari Morcha, the Chotanagpur Plateau Praja Parishad and some splinter groups, calling themselves the Jharkhand Party, appeared on the scene.⁸

8. Sachchidananda, "The Tribal Situation in Bihar", in: Tribal Situation in India, op.cit. p. 176.

Upto 1967 it was a peaceful sailing in the party and its policies. But the arrival of Birsa Sova Dal brought along with it radical actions which were heard in their battle cries, "Jharkhand Hamara Hai", "Jharkhand Larke Lenge - Teer ke Bal Par" or "Jharkhand is ours" "We'll win Jharkhand on the point of arrows". It should be borne in mind that even at that time the percentage of the tribal population in the Jharkhand region was only 34.0% (1961).

On the eve of 1969, by-election, Hul Jharkhand (active in Santhal Pragans) was born. Jharkhand and Hul Jharkhand tried to check to rising influence of the Congress. The result was that while Jharkhand and Hul Jharkhand cocured 13.79% each, of the reserved seats the Congress bagged 34.39% of the same. The tribals were fed-up with the Jharkhand and its different factions. Hence their choice in election fell more on the Congress, which portrayed its image as champion of the poor and backward.

At this stage there were many other notional parties which had made their ontry into the forested and hilly regions of Chotanagpur and Santal Pargans. Jana Sangh fought the election for the first time in 1967 securing 17.24% of the reserved seats. Swatantra and Socialist parties secured 6.89% and 3.45% of the reserved seats respectively. In the 1969 by-election their position did not improve but they did not suffer loss either. The percentage of independent candidates decreased from 24.14 in

1967 to 13.79 in 1969. But comparatively it was higher than in the previous years, which was an indicator of the choice of people for candidates other than those belonging to any political party. The main reason for this distribution of seats was that the tribal electorate had no more faith in political leaders particularly in that of Jharkhand. The Congress took the lead securing 58.62% in the 1972 election, while the independents got 24.24% leaving Jharkhand and Hul Jharkhand to 10.34% and 3.24% respectively. The reasons for the landslide victory of the congress in 1972 were obviously the victory of 1971 Bangladesh war against Pakistan, and its oft-stereotypical slogan in favour of the poor and backward class. What is the importance for us here is the total down-fall of the Jharkhand and its splinter groups.

In 1971 there was a split in the All India Jharkhand Party between the groups led by NE. Hore and Bagun Sumbrai. The increase in Independent candidates (24.14%) indicates the resentment of the tribals against Jharkhand.

TABLE 5.2

The percentage of polling by the tribals in different Elections

<u>Years</u>	<u>% Turned up</u>
1952	58%
1957	56%
1962	53%
1967	35% Abrupt fall!!!
1969	39%
1972	24%

Source : Sachchidananda - Tribal voter in Bihar, op. cit. p. 20.

DISTORTION OF FOCUS IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The preparatory stages before the emergence of the Jharkhand Party, the activities of the tribal organisations (Unatti Samaj, Kisan Sabha, Catholic Sabha and Adivasi Mahasabha) all centred round socio-economic problems. Restoration of alienated tribal land and equality in the economic distributions and opportunities were in the focus. In order to achieve these demands, if not granted by the normal ruling government, the tribals were ready even to demand a separate Jharkhand State which they would rule. Jharkhand was, therefore, a territorial as well as an ethnic identity. Right from the beginning of the Jagirdari system, the tribals have been in conflict with the rulers of their land who always had the resources in their hands. It was the British whose administration directly touched Chotanagpur in 1834 and, later on, after independence, the Congress, who ruled the tribals. The latter claimed the right to govern and control their land as their own. "Thus they were in constant conflict between their aspiration to have their identity of their own and their experience that they had no such identity".⁹ The rise of Jharkhand has soothed the glow of conflict for sometime (1962). This was the golden period of Jharkhand.

9. Sachchidananda, The Tribal Voter in Bihar, op.cit. p. 21.

But the second era started for another set of struggles with demands. There were two significant differences in this period from the previous one. As we have remarked earlier with regard to the slogans of Birsa Seva Dal, there were planned activities, of demonstrations, protests, dharnas and even of non-cooperation and sabotage. Secondly, the consequent factions in the Jharkhand party, led by the personal conflicts and ambitions of the leaders, camouflaged the aims of the party as a wing of the movement. Discouraged and betrayed by the Jharkhand leaders, a new set of leaders emerged who tried to look into the present-day tribal problems in their own perspectives. They organized themselves accordingly into diverse groups. What was common in them, was, of course, to fight out the outsiders - Dikus. But in the later stages of Jharkhand's development the issues were mostly of urban nature as against the rural ones earlier.

In the earlier stage the sole aim of fighting against the alienation of land and its restoration united the tribals very strongly which was manifest in the election results. As we have noted in the second chapter, land for the tribals was the greatest asset and also had a spiritual bond. Sachchidananda writes, "For them (tribals) land is not just a means of subsistence but is a spiritual bond between them and their ancestors. Therefore, any loss land is

strongly resented",¹⁰ Though they strictly guarded their lands against alienation, the constant need of cash (since the time of Jagirdars and Britishers), for cultivation, paying tax (rent), frequent famines, drinking habits, ...etc. precipitated the way for their exploitation by the unscrupulous moneylenders who advanced loan at exorbitant rates of interests. That was why many tribal songs were melancholic and full of nostalgia for the lost-glory of their land and life.

This rural-centred land-issue was seemingly neglected and more urban issues like, unemployment non-admission in educational institutions, cut in scholarships of students, displacement problems due to industries, etc..... were thrown into high relief. With this unanimity of purpose, for rallying behind the Jharkhand was lost. Different tribal leaders had different view points on tribal problems. With the result that many of them left the party and other joined the Congress or formed a new one.

At his stage Jharkhand and, for that matter, the tribals were the most susceptible to any new party or ideology. It is not surprising therefore that the tribals have been teased about from one side to another in an effort

10. Saahchidananda, Tribal Voter in Bihar, op.cit.p.22.

to find their identity. It was the same phenomenon repeated which operated in the earlier stage of the tribals who were influenced by Hinduism, Christianity and other religio-cultural and social groups. Even on the political plan the tribals found themselves in trouble.

In the troubled waters the non-tribal political parties spread their nets for a big haul. With the merger of Jharkhand with the Congress, the latter for ever rehabilitated itself in the tribal land.

The Swatantra and Socialist Parties intruded in 1962 election while Jan Sangh made its maiden entry in 1967 election. The other parties, though with less success, were C.P.I. and C.P.I.(M), who extended their influence in the industrial towns of Jamshedpur, Bokaro, Hatia, Dhanbad and Jharin. These political parties have shown their sympathy to the tribals, time and again, and shed their crocodile tears for them in order to gain their support and votes. Jan Sangh capitalized on the Christian and non-Christian issue to win but a part of the tribals, that too, for a short-lived-influence. This party also indirectly but very clearly intended to divert the support for a separate Jharkhand which involved the "outsiders". It has always opposed the spread of the missions in the land and wanted to do further by bringing the issue of the converted and non-converted tribals into the limelight.

The National Congress, who envied Jaipal Singh for the massive tribal support and votes, was ever keen of winning over the tribal leaders on its side. The Congress was threatened by the rising support for the separate Jharkhand, and in order to divert their attention, formed policies for the welfare of tribals and backward class. Its image was that of a champion of tribal's cause.

The other parties like C.P.I. and C.P.I.(M) have gained the support of the industrial workers in the tribal belt and tried to organize the tribal working-class with some success. Dhanbad area, from where, A.K. Roy the Marxist leader was elected in the Assembly, was one of the examples of their alliance with the tribals. For A.K. Roy, the leader of Marxist Co-ordination Committee and Colliery Kanger Union, who was experimenting with the application of Marxism-Communism "in its true spirit" in Dhanbad area, the Jharkhand movement was important because "The emancipation of the working class is impossible unless it is linked with the aspirations of the subjected nationalities of Chotanagpur".¹¹

With these political invasions in the tribal region the main focus of the issue was diverted and the purpose was not only distorted but defeated. Besides, with so many

11. Sinha Arun, "Containing Jharkhand Movement" in E.P.W. p. 649.

factions in the Jharkhand the strength of the tribals dissipated. Ultimately, it was the Jharkhand who was the loser in the game, for it was paralyzed beyond recovery to fight and run its course. The other parties were only too happy to see the Jharkhand like a lion without teeth. Once the lion was too thross even if it did not support them with votes it hardly mattered its enemies. It^t sufficed them to know that the predator had become the prey.

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF JHARKHAND

The activities are determined by the view-points of the actors. Different sections of people have different valuation of problems and different measures to adopt in order to seek solutions to problems.

The primary need in the tribal policies at present is the question of unity of purpose and plan on one and the same platform. In the early seventies, six committees made a surprising appearance in an attempt^{to} forge unity. The battle-call was once more heeded to by all, even by Kartick Oraon, who had politically survived on anti-separation plank. They all vociferously advocated Jharkhand Nationalism. The United Front consisting of nine-party-committee was :-

- Jharkhand (Horo)
- Marxist Co-ordination Committee

- Jharkhand Mukhti Morcha
- Huh Jharkhand
- Revolutionary Socialist Party of India
- C.P.I. - M.L. (S.N.S.)
- Birsa Seva Dal
- Jharkhand Muslim Morcha
- and Congress.

This effort for unity had no better fate than the coalition governments in Bihar. The absence of Begun group in the Front and unwieldy number of groups rendered it impracticable to forge any such unity. Besides, there was little margin for accommodation and understanding of other' ideologies. This unity-effort remained a pie in the sky. The divergence in visions which came in the second era ought to be understood in this background. Where as they relied absolutely on one organization and leadership (Jaipal Singh) now there were dozens of parties and leaders each important in his place and wedded to tribal nationalism. According to N.E. Hero, leader of the All India Jharkhand Party (Hero), the old era was a war of memoranda, but now the battle was carried on two dimensions - political battle for separate Jharkhand and economic war against the exploiters. The new splinters like "Alag Jharkhand Rajya Samukh Morcha", "Jharkhand Mukti Morcha", "Birsa Seva Dal, have been organising economic and social struggles in their respective areas of influence.

Sibu Soren, the present General Secretary of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, stressed the need of tribal emancipation from the hands of Dikus, "Even if Jharkhand does not come into being in my life-time, why should I be bothered? Our first concern is to chase away the blood-suckers and help the people lead a respectable, quiet and fraternal life".¹²

We have already viewed the ideology of A.K. Roy, who is at present in close alliance with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. Liberation of the working class is possible once Jharkhand is attained, but yet it is being done even now. The agitations, hunger-strikes, bundhas, and rallies are organized in order to press the demands. This method, though, democratic and non-violent, therefore Gandhian, is stemming from the Marxist ideology primarily. There have been agitations against afforestation policy in Singhbhum (Santal tree Vs. Teak), forest produce purchase policy, for reclamation of grabbed land, and against Public Sector Projects under construction in Singhbhum and Ranchi.¹³ Forest policies are laid down by the timber contractors and forest officers. Lalit Oraon witnessed that they had destroyed trees worth five crores.

12. Quoted in Arun Sinha, "Containing the Tribal Movement", op.cit. E.P.W., April 7, 1979, p. 648.

13. (Cf. also -Arun Sinha, "Resurgent Adivasis" in EPW Vol. XIII, No. 36, Sept. 9, 1978, pp. 1544-1546).
SAL tree was an economy of 50% of the tribals, Teak was beneficial to all except the tribals. This agitation led to police firing at Gua on 8th Sept. 1980, in which several tribals were killed.

There were protests and movements launched at various places, to oppose the development programmes. At Kandara, about 500 miles from Ranchi, the tribals raised barricades to stop lorries to reach the Kool-Kare Construction site. But to liquidate such oppositions and movements the Govt. flooded the region with C.R.P.F., and Bihar Military Police, Bihar Armed Police at various sensitive places. The government termed these actions as 'Naxalbari' and Anti-Nationalist'. This also has to be borne in mind that the government has established three Autonomous Development Authorities for North Chotanagpur, South Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas. Chotanagpur has a mini-secretariat at Ranchi to avoid delay and waste of time in certain decisions. The government has also appointed Tribal Welfare Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the I.A .S. rank. Besides, there are spots of "Special plans" and "sub-plans" and great plans' for the tribal development. However, their executions may be questioned. Out of Rs. 75 crores allocated under the tribal sub-plan in 1978-79, only Rs. 21 crores were spent, and how it happened, one need not go to Chotanagpur to find it out. The Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana Development Authority formed by the Congress helped only certain political leaders, and the three new bodies are going on the same line. This is the two-pronged policy of annihilation and assimilation of tribals by the Government.

N.E. Koro viewed the oncoming calamities at the door-steps of tribals induced various developmental projects. The people were aware of their imminent displacement and opposed the functioning of the system and even blocked the roads. The Koel-Koro project near Kamdara (with two big dams and four power stations) and Subarnarekha project, would render 350 villages submerged. Since 1947 about six lakhs people have been rendered homeless. Samshepur was built on the debris of 158 tribal villages. This was the reason for opposition, sabotage and protest in different forms. Adivasis were forced to become violent against their nature. "Adivasis are as a rule simple hospitable and honest, but they can be quite aggressive and even dangerous, especially to those who cheat them."¹⁴ There were cases in which Marwaris had been killed at Ramgarh and Simdega. In Ranchi an Amin, who was notorious for cheating, was done to death.

Adivasis had been given a raw deal in the policy of buying jungle products, particularly of oil-seeds. Enraged by this policy, about 8,000 tribals rallied in a demonstration to the S.D.O. of Simdega, in Ranchi District. In order to offset the middle-men in the purchase the Govt. had appointed two traders and the Raja of Biru to purchase Mahua and Kusum oil-seeds. But they would not, which led to starvation of many families. The demonstration was planned

with the help of local traders, whose crafty designs led to police-firing in which officially, only one died and three got injured.¹⁵ But actually there were three more in the list of the dead. The local traders and merchants made such a conspiracy which got the Adivasis killed while they were safe. This race of oppressors of the Adivasis will never protect them. These adivasis have to supply their middle-men, administrators and police in order to provide an alternative instead of going for mere protests and oppositions.

To show the discontent, non-cooperation movement was launched by Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Marxist Co-ordination Committee, joined by Jharkhand (Horo), from 22 May, 1978 till Aug. 14, 1978. Accordingly people were asked to refuse paying the taxes block the developmental programme, stop the survey settlement operations, and boycott panchayat elections. In Jaldega, Kolebira, Thethaitanger, (all these in Kharis area in Sindoga Sub-division) the stacked Kendu leaves (meant to make bidis) were burnt down.¹⁶ But there was only a partial response to the call for non-cooperation, because some other parties did not agree to the course of action, partly out of sheer apathy. However, on the point

15. Firing occurred on 3rd Aug. 1978.

16. Ibid, p. 1546.

of separate Jharkhand there was no difference between the converted and non-converted tribals except for the group following Kartik Oraon. "Remarkably there are no differences at all cultural or political between the Christians and others among the Adivasis. All are one on the separation demand."¹⁷

This goes to negate the opinion of Sachchidananda who wrote in 1972, that although Christians formed only 10.6% of the tribal population, there was a fond hope among them that Jharkhand would be Christian state as they would have had much say therein. Such an opinion was never unanimously expressed anywhere. Besides, the author should take note of the aspects of leadership among the tribals emerging recently. Initially the movement began at the initiative of the converted and was even dominated by them upto 1939. But later on the pivot of tribal leadership shifted from the converted to the hands of the non-converted. Hence what Sachchidananda wrote years ago is not tenable now even by the non-converted.

In the late sixties there were many outrageous acts of violence committed both by certain sections of the Jharkhandis and the police. This has to be understood in the circumstances that prevailed in the district of Ranchi. With the emergence

17. Ibid. p. 1546.

of Birsa Sova Dal in 1967, dominated mostly by university students, there were sequence of events which led to antagonizing the non-tribals and thus inviting troubles and violence. Tensions mounted in many areas of which three culminated in police-firing leading to the killing of only the tribals. On 2nd June, 1968, at Chiri, about 40 miles from Ranchi, in an attempt to reclaim the usurped land by a Sahu (Bhois), the police opened fire in which officially three were killed but the actual number was seven. A few months later there was again another firing on the crowd of Adivasi girl-students of whom three died and some (3) injured. Firing in Simdega occurred on 2nd, June, 1978 and lately it was at Gun in Singhbhum District, where nine tribals died. In all these big shooting cases, it is surprising to see that only the tribals fell victim.¹⁸ In almost all the incidences there were evidences of pre-planning to kill the Adivasis, and circumstances were created such which necessitated the opening of fire by the police who are never friends of the Adivasis. These guardians of laws have been constantly harassing even plundering the Adivasis particularly, in the deep jungle regions of the Singhbhum district.¹⁹ This led to firing when protested, in Pakaria village in 1979, (Cef. E.P.W. 17th March, 1979).

18. Arun Sinha, "Gun Massacre of Tribals in E.P.W.", Vol. XI, No. 38, Sept. 20, 1980.

19. Ibid.

The activities of Birsa Seva Dal were not aligned with the political activities. They dealt with cases of delay in the payment of scholarships, difficulties in admissions to post-graduate classes and so on. They also took care of the candidates rejected from employment on flimsy grounds. When the communal riot broke out in Ranchi on 22nd August, 1967, the Seva Dal organized a 'Peace Dal' which went round convincing the Adivasis that they should not get mixed-up in this communal riot. The Birsa Seva Dal organized massive demonstrations to protest against the police firing at Ghiri in June 1968 and, in October, the same year, at Chairpur. This was one of the reasons why the Dal was termed "militant wing" of the Jharkhand Movement. It was also remarked by many that the Dal was gradually passing into the hands of the Communists who provided money and leadership.

The other powers have always tried to exploit the situations to their advantage. In this tense situation the communists, the Muslim extremists and Jana Sanghis have also always played with the Dal, which led to the disparagement of the same and diverting of purpose. The mission was accused of fomenting violence in the Dal to which charge the former made its stand clear, to the Deputy Commissioner at Ranchi. "The churches always acted as champions of the rights of the poor and the oppressed.

It was the missionaries who mostly educated the backward classes of this area and turned them into onlightened citizens of India. They were still ready to stand by the rights of the poor and the oppressed but they dissociated themselves completely from any group that advocated violence and used such means to redress of their grievances. Some of the church leaders expressed grave concern that the Communists, Muslims and the Jana Sanghis were trying to reap benefits from the prevailing tension".²⁰

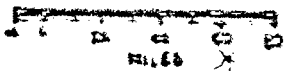
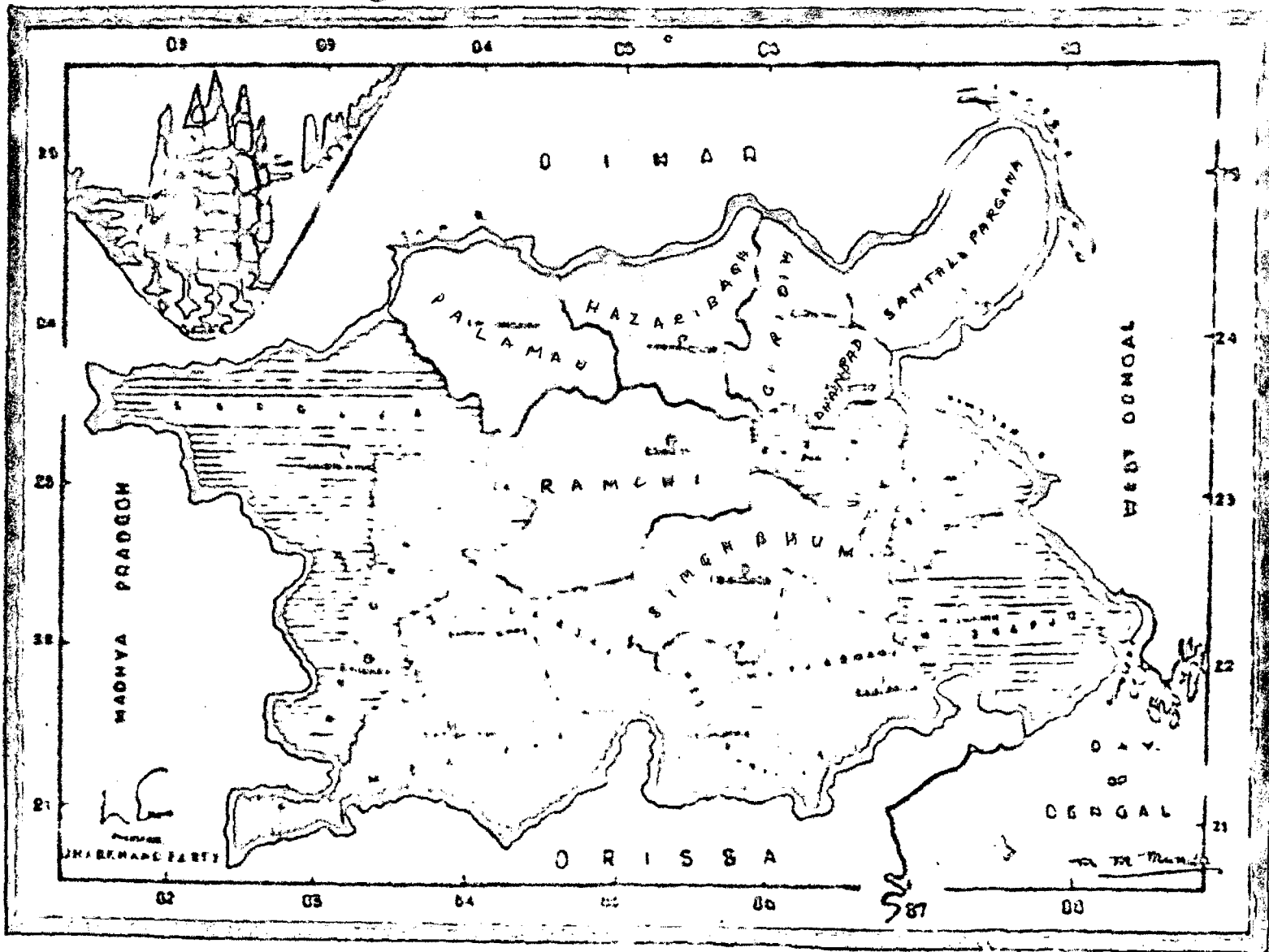
Earlier the party was more preoccupied with the problem of urban areas as against rural. These problems were cropping up in the form of displacements, inadequate compensation and non-rehabilitation. 70% of the displaced were not satisfied with the compensation. The educated youth were not employed, mostly due to lack of training and skill. More and more tribals wanted to take part in the administration and major decisions in policy making. The demands which concerned the rural population were reclamation of land, establishment of health centres, constructions of roads in the interior regions. The rural public felt neglected by the party and the result of 1972 election was that only 34% of the electorate turned up for voting.

20. Sen Jyoti, "The Jharkhand Movement", in Tribal Situation in India, op.cit. pp. 435-436.

PROPOSED

JHARKHAND

STATE



A separate state for Jharkhand remains still a dream. The very concept of Jharkhand state as a territory has not been clearly defined, nor is it unanimously accepted. The map of the Jharkhand area, published in Sunday, Sept. 17, 1978, on page 51, included 16 districts from four different states. The six districts of Chotanagpur division in Bihar, four districts of Orissa, three from West Bengal and two from Madhya Pradesh go to make the proposed greater Jharkhand. These 16 districts drawn from four states have about 40 million population. The other proposal for the separate Jharkhand includes the whole of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas solely from Bihar State. The allied problem with this territorial question is that of tribal population. In the whole of tribal region of Chotanagpur only 40%-42% are tribals and others non-tribals. According to Sachchidananda's survey of the elections out of 79 legislators who won the seats in the Bihar Assembly only 18 were avowedly for Jharkhand. So, how can the wish of 23% of the legislators be imposed on the rest of 77%?

The word 'Diku' originated when outsiders began to pour into the jungle tracts of Chotanagpur. Then the word Diku (Diku or Deke) referred to, "outsiders, non-tribals", 'money lenders', 'Jamindars', 'Brahmins', Hindi-

speaking Biharis' and 'Banias'. They were "those others" used derogatively. The word in Mundari is the plural form of "Di" = 'that', 'Diku' = 'they', used pejoratively. Thus this 'hato' word covered a long range of people.²¹

But this term was not used to denote the co-habitant artisan groups among the tribals. These non-tribal artisan groups were castes, like potters, blacksmiths, weavers, basket-makers who also had shared the same fate economically and socially. The Mundas accepted them as co-inhabitants. N.E. Hare is of the opinion that not only these artisan groups but many Hindus, too, who have settled down for long and consider themselves as the sons of this soil should be included in the term 'Chotanagpurians' rather than ethnic term 'tribals'. Hence, K.S. Singh came to the formulation of the term like 'From Ethnicity of Regionalism'. In Ranchi district, only 58.08% was the tribal population according to 1971 census. The artisan groups, of course, have lived side-by-side in the same village for generations and "with whom they have developed a symbiotic relationship to such an extent that they have become a part and parcel of the broader tribal society. Therefore, they are not categorized as 'Diku' generally.²² But if even the long settled oppressors are included as 'Chotanagpurians' at the basic purpose of the Jharkhand in defeated:

21. Sinha, S.C. *et al.*, "The concept of Diku among the Tribes of Chotanagpur in Man in India, Vol. 49, No. 2, 1969, p. 121.

The term 'Diku', taken for what it means, creates further difficulty. If this term means 'oppressors' then, there are in the same tribal community those who have economically become richer and keep oppressing the tribals. They are called 'inner dikus'. Sita Kanta Mahapatra wrote an article on "The Insider Diku" exposing this fact that such people were called so because of the growth of population and increasing wealth within the community.²³ This point should be taken for serious consideration. If one day Jharkhand is granted, is there any guarantee that the tribal society could be totally free from the dikus and oppressors? The present trend in the tribal society indicate otherwise.

The point is corroborated by the present condition in the party. There are many factions which indicate a clear lack of unity and common ideology. They are no more committed leaders to the tribal cause. In the last quarter of 1977, very suddenly a mushroom of organizations sprang up in Jharkhand all asking for a separate state. These prominent leaders were Lalit Oraon, the then forest Minister in Bihar Cabinet, Mrs. Jahanara, Kartick Oraon, Bagun Sumbarai and Sibb Soren. But later on due to allurements and coercion from the Karpuri Ministry, and their inherent weakness, the organizations broke up and disappeared.²⁴

22. Ibid - pp. 124-125.

23. Mahapatra Sita Kanta, "The Insider Diku" in *Kan in India*, Vol. 56, No.1, Jan-March, 1976, pp.37-48.

24. Arun Sinha, "Tensions Mounting on Jharkhand", in *Sunday*, Sept. 17, 1978, p. 51.

Lack of any ideology in the movement is intrinsic weakness in the demand for a separate state. Those leaders have never seriously tried to plan the strategy and lay out the ideology for Jharkhand. This is the reason why they are swayed by any bigger party and easily bought up by other to the great resentment of the people. Thus, the focus on the tribal and communitarian problems gets blurred and even diverted. They oscillate between their power-seeking desire and commitment to the party policy.

The public is less educated with regard to the election and the value of votes. Though Hul Jharkhand has built rapport in Santal Pargana only 14.19% were aware about it while 29.73% were aware of the Congress. Among the Mundas, 44.12% was aware of the Congress and only 32.55% were aware of Jharkhand. 64.44% of the Oraons know Congress while only 11.11% was aware of Jharkhand. The Oraons seemed to be more attracted towards the ruling Congress, due to the late Kartik Oraon. The higher awareness percentage was seen among the Mundas (32.35%).²⁵ Yet the intrusion of other parties was noticeable. In the Assembly by-election on 29th November, 1981, Karim Munda, was elected as B.J.P. candidate from Khijri Constituency, defeating his Cong.(I) rival Savana Lakra by 3000 votes.

25. Sachchidananda- Tribal voter in Bihar, op. cit. p. 28.

Among the rural population only 35.93% voted for Cong.(I) and 23.81% for Jharkhand. Among the urban population 31.25% voted for Congress but 50.00% votes for Jharkhand. The industrial workers were 37.29% and 33.90% for Cong. (I) and Jharkhand respectively. This is again an obvious sign that the Jharkhand party has become that of the urban (50%) and industrial (33.90%) set up. Religion-wise 30.60% non-converted voted for Cong.I and 33.21% for Jharkhand. 50% converted voted for Cong.I and 20.93% for Jharkhand. This is another evidence against Sachchidananda, that Jharkhand would be a Christian State, if granted.²⁶

With the divergence of purpose the percentage of voting also keeps changing. This is obvious from the following table :

TABLE 5.3

PERCENTAGE of Distribution of Respondent in respect of Participating in Voting:

Tribe	Desired participation	Actual participation
Santal	97.30	70.27
Munda	98.53	69.70
Oron	97.70	95.24
Ho	79.57	93.55
<u>Regional settings:</u>		
Rural	89.18	75.00
Urban	100.00	87.50
Industrial	100.00	84.21

Source: Sachchidananda - Tribal Voter in Bihar, p. 40.

Separate Jharkhand was the main focus for the highest percentage of tribal voting, but after merger they preferred Congress for other issue connected with the tribal welfare. The gap between the desired participation and the actual participation was biggest among the Mundas (98.53% - 69.70%) and the smallest among the Oraons (98.78% - 95.24%). There were some reasons given for not voting. They were not interested any more, lost faith in the party and in its goal. Some others boycotted the polling.

The reason for such a movement has been basically economic. To achieve this the tribals adopted political means and even went to the point of violence. But since their economic grievances were not redressed in the given system of government, they opted for a second alternative i.e., a separate state for Jharkhand. Mahasweta Devi wrote in the New Republic on this point : "That there is no longer any tribal right over forests, that money lenders have been usurping tribal land, and that mineral resources have brought prosperity to the area but not to the tribals... Under such conditions, the demand for a separate state is merely the reflection of crying need and cannot be called separatist."²⁷

27. Devi Mahasweta, "Jharkhand gets a High Priestess", in the New Republic, Aug. 15, 1981.

This has been the core-point of the whole tribal movement in Jharkhand area. The Jharkhandis wanted to restore their economic and social systems, thus secure and maintain their identity. The political measures in the present situations have been termed "Anti-social", "Separatists", "Naxalites" by the government and they are not spared by the police force. The four police firings which have been mentioned earlier in this chapter bear witness. The Jyoti Basu Govt. not only has opposed the Jharkhand activities in the district of Midnapore but even banned voluntary agencies to work among the poor tribals. This way political parties are out to exploit the tribals for their end. The adivasis, today, in this democratic India, continue to be oppressed, now perhaps, more subtly, systematically and politically, behind the policies of tribal welfare, integration and assimilation in the mainstream of national life.

CHAPTER - VITRIBAL IDENTITY ANDD DETRIBALIZATION

In the foregoing chapters we have analytically examined the set of processes which were instrumental for the adjustment and retention of tribal identity among the adivasis of Ranchi district, and Chotanagpur division, at large. Sociologists and particularly the anthropologists, have tried, in the past, to study the transforming processes among these adivasis applying various conceptual models; such models were Sanskritization, Christianization, Modernization, Industrialization, Urbanization, Assimilation, Detribalization etc.¹ In the mid 1960s the issue connected with 'Detribalization' caused stir in the district of Ranchi when Mr. Kartick Oraon, the then Congress M.P., elected from Lohardaga reserved constituency, introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha claiming that, the tribals who had been converted to any religion other than their own tribal religion, should be considered tribals no more and the privileges given to Scheduled Tribes should cease to apply to them. The bill was never passed but the event put many social scientists to study the phenomenon more deeply.

To understand the process of detribalization and to evaluate it properly, it is necessary to define 'tribe'.

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1. Hazel Lutz and Ram Dyal Mund, "Tribal Change and Development" in the Passing Scene in Chotanagpur, Ed. Dash Sharma, op. cit. pp. 82-100.

According to Andre Betelle, there are two ways of setting about in search of a definition of the term tribe. The first is to examine the existing definitions which have been worked out on general considerations. The second is to analyse the specific conditions in India and to find out the attributes which are distinctive of groups conventionally regarded as tribes.²

"The tribe is a society having a clear linguistic boundary and generally a well-defined political boundary. It is within the latter that 'regular determinate ways of acting' are imposed on its members. The tribe also has a cultural boundary, much less well defined, and this is the general frame for the mores, the folkways, the formal and informal interactions of those members".³ This definition conforms fairly well to the usual text-book definition of a tribe.

Betelle seems to give less importance to cultural boundary because according to him, field-workers throughout the world have realised that no iron wall exists where one culture begins and another ends. Commonness of culture is very much a question of degree. Clearly, then, the position

2. Betelle Andre, "The Definition of Tribe" in *Tribe, Caste and Religion*, ed. Ramach Thakur, 1977. Meerut, pp. 7-14.

3. *Ibid*, p. 10.

of a 'common culture' can hardly be considered as a primary criterion in demarcating the boundary of a tribe, or of any society for that matter.⁴ Another characteristic of a tribe is its primitiveness. The author dismisses this also by saying, "this also is somewhat misleading, since none of these attributes is universal among tribal societies or, for that matter exclusive to them. The same may be said of the ecological characterization of tribes."⁵ They do not necessarily live in isolated hills and forests. Tribal societies have been known to flourish under all kinds of ecological conditions.

The ideal-typical definition of a tribe is worked out by Beteille thus: "The tribe as a society with a political linguistic, and a somewhat vaguely - defined cultural boundary; further as a society based upon kinship, where social stratification is absent".⁶

According to the author, therefore, in today's India tribes which answer to the anthropologist's conception of the ideal type are rarely to be found. Even the territorial, political, linguistic and cultural boundaries are being broken gradually. There is nothing exclusively tribal in these spheres. The process of 'give and take' has been continuously true in the case of the Indian tribes. The tribes are

4. Ibid. p. 10.
 5. Ibid. p. 11.
 6. Ibid, p. 13.

entering into the industrial productive system of economy. Distinctions on the basis of wealth have begun to appear in tribal societies which were unstratified at one time. The tribes are finding a new identity in changing conditions. The process by which tribes have been transformed is a historical one. And only by going into the antecedents of a group can one say whether or not it should be considered as a tribe.

Constitution Order 1950 declared 212 tribes located in fourteen States as "Scheduled Tribes". It is pertinent to point out that no single criterion has been hitherto adopted to distinguish the tribal population from the non-tribal population. However, if we have to look for common features in the purest of tribal groups, which have been resisting acculturation or absorption, we find the following :-

1. They live away from the civilized world in the most inaccessible parts of both forests and hills;
2. They belong either to one of the three stocks - Negritos, Austroloids or Mongoloids;
3. They speak the same tribal dialect;
4. They profess a primitive religion known as 'Animism' in which worship of ghosts and spirits is the most important element;

5. They follow primitive occupations such as gleaning, hunting and gathering of forest produce;
6. They are largely carnivorous or flesh or meat eaters;
7. They are either naked or semi-naked, using the tree barks and leaves for clothing; and
8. They have nomadic habits and a love for drink and dance.⁷

Verrier Elwin divides the tribes into four classes.⁸
 The Anthropologists and workers who met at the Tribal Welfare Committee, at Calcutta suggested the following classifications of the existing tribes:

- (1) Tribal communities or those who are still confined to the original forest habitats and follow the old pattern of life;
- (2) Semi-tribal communities or those who have more or less settled down in rural areas and have taken to agriculture and allied occupations;
- (3) Acculturated tribal communities or those who have migrated to urban or semi-urban areas and are engaged in modern industries and vocations and have adopted modern cultural traits; and
- (4) Totally assimilated tribals in the Indian Population.⁹

7. C.B. Manoria, Tribal Demography in India, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1958, pp.21-22, quoted in "Tribes in Transition" by A.R. Desai, in Tribe, Caste and Religion, op.cit.p.18.

8. Ibid, p. 19.

9. C.B. Manoria, op. cit, pp. 22-23.

G.S. Ghurye, in his book the 'Scheduled Tribes' in Chapter II (Assimilational Stresses and Strains) has divided the tribes into three classes:

First, such sections of them as the Raj Gonds and others who have successfully fought the battle, and are recognized as members of fairly high status within Hindu society; Second, the large mass that has been Hinduized and has come in closer contact with Hindus; and third, the hill sections, which have exhibited the greatest power of resistance to the alien cultures that have pressed upon their border.¹⁰

These attempts to classify the tribal societies are the obvious evidences to prove that there would not be one single definition, so comprehensive as to encompass all the existing Tribes. Secondly, the tribals themselves are passing through the stages of cultural developments (A.R. Desai). The tribals (Adivasis - Oraon, Munda and Kharia) more or less come in the 2nd and 3rd classes according to Ghurye's list. While on the one hand many adivasis have shifted to urban centres and industries the greater majority still stay in the villages as settled agriculturists.

10. Ghurye, G.S. The Scheduled Tribes, Popular Book Dept., Bombay, 1959, p. 23.

The tribals of Chotanagpur have always been open to adjust to changing situations. No tribe to-day can exist in complete isolation. There is a degree of integration and adjustment. For non-adjustment of any tribe would be possible only at the cost of its extinction. (The tribes of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district have passed the primitive stages and coped with the modern industrial world which brought them in contact with the non-tribal groups. While on the one hand the Oraons, Mundas, and Kharias have been influenced by such outside cultures they are far from being absorbed fully into them. These tribals fall in the fourth group. According to Stephen Fuchs, "A fourth and perhaps most important group is formed by those tribes who live in more compact and numerically strong communities. They have developed some degree of tribal consciousness, and meet non-tribals on a more or less equal footing. They refuse to be completely absorbed by non-tribal culture and society. In central India, the tribes of Chotanagpur belong to this group."¹¹

The refusal to be completely absorbed by non-tribal culture implies on the one hand changes in certain traditional tribal characteristic features and on the other the retention of a certain amount of the indigenous culture. The identity according to Sahay, consists in self-image, self-estimation

11. Stephen Fuchs, Central India Tribes, in Caste Tribes and Religion, op. cit. pp. 50.

and their relationship with other groups. What a tribe thinks about itself can be explained by analysing the etymological meanings of the names one bears. For instance, the word 'Naga' means 'Hillmen', 'Horo' for the Mundas means the 'man' and "Kurukh" means a "cultivators" for the Oraons. In every tribe there is a legend tracing the origin of the same.

The traditions relative their original characteristics. In this connection, S.C. Roy has narrated a legend about the origin of the Nagabansi Raja among the Mundas, who was traditionally a tribal chieftain. According to Martin Orans (1964) ecological setting, endogamy, practice of tribal religion (animism), and conformity to of tribal religion culture and tradition are the distinguishing features of tribal identity. In this context "conversion to another faith would amount to detribalization ... Conversion is the escape from reality, the reality of being a tribe and, a person on conversion completely disowns the tribal religion and it may safely be said that detribalization is pre-requisite to conversion."¹²

While the Tana Bhagats modelled their new religion much on the Hindu puritanistic observances, they are not

12. Quoted by K.N. Sahay, in the Article "Tribal Self-Image and Identity", in Identity and Interaction, ed. S.C. Dube, p. 49, Also ref. Kartik Oraon, Tribe and Tribalism, in Journal of Social Research, Vol. III, No.1-2, 1964, pp. 36-52.

strictly Hindus because they still believe in the supreme spirit of the tribals-'Dharmes' and do not call Brahmins to officiate at their rituals. This is the reason why Philip Elka, who wrote his doctoral thesis on the "Tana Bhagat Movement" did not categorize them as Hindus. Tana Bhagat movement was not strictly a process of "Sanskritization", but was more a revitalization of a culture emerging from socio-economic pressures. It was not just a religious movement but also a political one in nature. R. Olive Dhan described the nature of the movement in these words: "Tana Bhagat was the new faith, which assured its followers that it was only through the worship of Dharmes and by following certain prescribed patterns of behaviour that they would be able to fight the oppressive Jamindars, money-lenders, and the new land laws."¹³

K.N. Sahay, however, in his study of the Hindu Impact on the Tribals", has highlighted the Hindu religious elements ignoring the traditional residues, and thus deliberately forced. The conclusion that the Bhagats were totally Hinduised.^{13a} The Hindu elements

13. R .O. Dhan, "Tribal Movements in Chotanagpur", in Dissent Protest and Reform, ed. S.C. Kalik, 1977, p. 204.

13a. Sahay K.N., "Hindu Impact on the Tribals", in the Passing Scene in Chotanagpur, op.cit.pp.56 ff.

were found more in the Bishnu Bhagats, Kabirpanthis and the Bachchidan Bhagats but whether they were totally Hinduized is open to question. One reason is to question whether the Hindu hierarchy has accepted them as such. The same author, however, has a different image of the Tana Bhagats who began a new religion, originally called the Kurukh Dharam (original religion of the Oraons). "Unlike other Bhagat movements, the Tana Bhagat is characterized by the inclusion of strong social and economic adjustments".¹⁴

"Proceeding according to the rationale that these gods were in reality not Oraon, but alien deities that had been imported from Munda religion, the originators of the Tana Bhagat movement embarked on a programme of proselytization and agitation for the exorcism of the foreign spirit. The cult emphasized a return to original, or real Oraon religion which consequently became known as the Kurukh Dharam"¹⁵. Return to the original religion by purging the present one is also evident in the study of Philip Ekka, "the new cultists not only abandoned the worship of the Bhuts, but they expelled them out of the country ^{with} which a mass exorcism...". From their endless repetitions of "tana baba tana", (pull out father, pull out).

14. K.N. Sahay, Hindu Impact on the Tribals' op.cit. p. 59.

15. Quoted by K.N. Sahay, ibid, p. 59, from Roy S.C., 1929: 339-341.

in their exorcism hymns, the new cultists came to be nicknamed "Tana Bhagats" by the outsiders",¹⁶

'Birsa Dharam (1895) was a similar movement which had both the religious and political elements in it. This movement was meant to expel the foreigners and exterminate the missionaries and the landlords. At this point a parallel could be drawn among three well known tribal movements. As early as in 1885 the conversion movement of the great missionary, Father Constans Lievens, aimed at purifying the tribal religious beliefs and liberating them from the fear of spirits. He campaigned against the excesses of the landlords and the police. In 1922 the Bhagat Movement asserted the need of purifying the tribal religion by casting out the lower spirits in preference to the supreme spirit, the Dharmes. The movement, particularly the Tana Bhagat, insisted on driving out the inferior spirits and the oppressors. In 1895-1900 the Birsa movement stood for the purity of religion and driving out foreigners, missionaries and landlords (dikus).¹⁷

The Birsa Dharma has assumed much of Hindu practices but could not be totally Hindu, for the Birsites have

16. Ekka Philip, "Revitalist movement among the Tribals of Chotanagpur", in Tribal Situation in India, op. cit. p. 427.

17. This triple parallel was analytically built by A. Van Exem, the present Director of Catholic Cooperative Bank at Ranchi. This was obtained in an interview with him.

strongly protested against the Dikus who were all Hindus at that time. The argument of K.L. Sharma that the Birsa Dharam was more a social movement and not a new religion*, has been refuted by Sachchidananda pointing its religious character. In fact even to this day there are people in certain pockets of Munda regions who identify themselves as followers of Birsa Religion. We can say, therefore, that a change over to another faith may not mean cutting off entirely from one's traditions and culture. It may seek a new identity in the process of adaptation and acculturation.

Olive Dhan has studied the search for a new tribal identity through the growth of political consciousness among the tribals of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district.¹⁸ Through the organization of Jharkhand Movement and other socio-economic processes, major changes have occurred in the traditional socio-political system of the Oraon community. Through Jharkhand movement they have encouraged the growth of nationalism among the tribes of Chotanagpur. Urban conditions encourage the creation of ties cutting across tribal affiliations. According to the same author, Jharkhand has brought rural and urban

18. Dhan, Olive, R., These are my Tribesmen, G.E.L. Press, Ranchi, 1967.

* K.L. Sharma, "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar" B.P.W., Vol. XI, Nos. 1-2, Jan. 10, 1966, p. 37-43.

Christian tribals and non-Christian tribals and its sympathisers together. It has created wider Adivasi image and a new tribal solidarity. Dhan has a reasonable ground for argument since she has focussed on the emergence and formation of a new identity which is wider and more inclusive.

Dilwar Hans, a prominent tribal leader and Anglican Bishop stressed very much the possession of land as essential for the tribal identity. The attachment to the land has been expressed tersely, "We have been in this land of ours since the dawn of history. Our records of rights are not in paper and ink; our burial and memorial stones prove our possessions. Consequently, we love this land of ours with ardent love which cannot be compared with the love of it by others."¹⁹ He deplored the rising and spread of industries at the cost of tribal land. "We have seen those artistically terraced rice-field, built-up with the loving labour and precious sweat of generations of our ancestors, slip out of our fingers into the possession of others giving place to modern industries. We have clung to our ancestral land because land has been our livelihood, without which we had no life and livelihood at all."²⁰

19. Quoted by K.N. Sahay in 'Tribal Self Image and Identity', op. cit. p. 50.

20. Ibid.

It is important to recall what has been stated earlier that land is not just an economic asset to the tribals but it is also a symbol of social and religious status in society. The Khuntkaidars among the Mundas and the Bhinharis among the Oraons were like the landlords, who were regarded highest in the village society. The Pahan, Mahto and Pujar, the village official heads were elected from among them.

Kartik Oraon evolved a rough test on the basis of which one can judge whether a community was a tribe or had ceased to be so.²¹ According to him these were the essential features of the tribes of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district.

1. The place of inhabitats is not necessarily hills or forests because we find the settled agriculturists dwelling in the plains.
2. The practice tribal endogamy and clan exogamy.
3. They profess the tribal religion (Animism)*.
4. They must have different rank and status and not having a common rank.
5. They adhere to tribal culture and tradition.

21. Oraon Kartik, "Tribes and Tribalism of India", in Journal of Social Research, Vol. VII, No.1-2, March-Sept.1964, pp. 36-52.

* = The religion "Animism" is too vast in its meaning. It is the term used to cover the miscellainy of superstitions which prevail among primitive tribes in all parts of the world. But the more precise

6. They must have a common problem, common affinity, common defence, aspirations and should have their common ego for maintaining the tribal culture and tradition.²²

These are the six text-stones provided by Kartik who made the issue of detribalization a political one in the late sixties.

Accordingly, if a tribe was converted to another faith, his conversion amounts to detribalization. He was excommunicated. Conversion, according to text No.3, was therefore, the escape from reality - the reality of being a tribe and a person on conversion completely disowns the tribal religion and it may safely be said that detribalization was a prerequisite to conversion. Therefore, it was obvious that a tribe must have been detribalized before being converted under the canon of tribalism.

As soon as the person was converted, he gave up all his tribal culture and tradition. Wissle has roughly analysed culture under several heads, for instance, tools, art, or rituals and we find that nothing is left in common with the tribes on conversion. Social customs and rituals,

22. Kartik Ozaon - op.cit. pp. 43,44.

*= term for the religion of Ranchi Tribals is Sarana Dheram. It certainly is not equated with "Animism".

for instance, with regard to birth, death and marriage were completely abandoned by the converts. Therefore, a convert did not stand, the test of unity of tribal culture and tradition.

According to test No. 6 after conversion a convert became a new man and was made part and parcel of that particular faith to which he had been converted which was a heterogeneous community made up of converts from adherents of different religion, different culture and tradition and could therefore have any common affinity, common defence and common aspiration and ego for maintaining the tribal culture and tradition. (A convert, therefore, severed all his connections with the tribal and would no longer be considered to be the life and limit of the tribe. He was to be excommunicated according to the canons of tribalism.²³ According to him "A tribe is a tribe in just the same way as a Hindu is a Hindu, a Christian is a Christian and a Muslim is a Muslim."²⁴ Any non-Christian, non-Hindu, non-Muslim, non-Buddhist is a real tribe. Only a real tribe should be included in the list of the Scheduled Tribes. Constitution does not provide a passport of Indian Christians to enter the

23. Ibid, p. 45.

24. Ibid, p. 48.

realm of "Scheduled Tribe". Where is the passport for Indian Christians to enter the field of "Scheduled Tribes"? Is there a clear notification to the effect that Indian Christians on cessation of privileges meant for them in pre-independence age would be considered as "Scheduled Tribes".²⁵

These were the arguments which served the basis for the introduction of the Bill of Detribalization of the Converts (particularly of Christian converts) in the Lok Sabha in 1968, and the same provided the blue-print for his election campaign on the Congress ticket, strongly supported by the Jana Sangh Party.

It has been remarked by K.N. Sahay that Kartik Oraon developed a rough test of tribalism. If anyone were to look for a social scientist's critical and scientific analysis of the topic, ~~x~~ who was aware of the problematics of the same and understands the deeper implications of his statement, he would certainly be disappointed, for most readers would pass off the author's approach as more political than scientific in nature. Kartik Oraon was a shrewd politician beyond doubt.

While Kartik Oraon provided the touch-stone of tribalism, specially of the Adivasis of Chotanagpur and

25. Ibid, p. 48.

Ranchi district, he was not aware of the very problem of determining a uniform definition of a 'tribe' which was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. While Andre Beteille ignored the territorial and linguistic boundaries of a tribe he emphasised the cultural uniformity more which also was difficult to find.

Ironically, Kartik Oraon himself would be the first one to violate the canons of tribalism built by himself. He would not be able to stand the tests he has set up. Myron Weiner wrote, "Kartik Oraon came to symbolize this new political force in Chotanagpur, that is, those tribes who sought the support of Bihari Hindus and who spoke of "integrating" themselves into Bihar by asserting the Hindu identity. He explicitly calls himself a Hindu, wears a long strand ^{beard} ~~hair~~ from the centre of his head in the manner of orthodox Hindus, and is reportedly supported by Hindu politicians not only in Congress, but in Jana Sangh as well. He is known critic of Muslims, and freely attacks Muslim politicians, a gesture intended to establish further his Hindu identity."²⁶ He proved himself more of a shrewd politician and less of an anti-Christian by causing a cleavage between the converted and the non-converted tribal middle class. Thus the Congress Party won the support of the non-Christian tribals through

26. Weiner Myron, Sons of the Soil, op.cit. p.192

Kartik Oraon who openly identified himself with Hindu India. If Christianisation has alienated and done harm to the tribal community, the Hinduised and the Hindu influenced groups of Kartik Oraon have alienated and harmed the tribal community no less.

Kartik Oraon betrays the caste-biased view in regarding tribalism identical with religion. For a Hindu there could not be any other religion but Hinduism just as Islam is for a Muslim. This is not the case with the tribe. A tribe^a is not identified with a religion. For, in Hinduism there is no social mobility because of the closed hierarchical system. But in a tribe much more so in the modern times, there is social mobility because of economy and occupations.

Kartik Oraon contradicts himself on the question of reservation policy for the Scheduled Tribes, for while he claims the privileges of reservation on the tribal ground, he debars the converted Christians from such privileges on the economic ground. N. Minj agrees with others on the economic ground ^{for} ~~the~~ reservations which is implied by Kartik Oraon. In an interview with Myron Weiner, Nirmal Minj confided to him, "Personally I am in favour on economic criteria for reservation. I do not see why there should be reservation for me or for Kartik

Oraon. Let our children compete against the non-tribals.²⁷

In a number of interviews with some important tribal personalities, Myron Weiner exposes the existing crisis. Even the educated tribals find it a problem to identify themselves as tribals. But however much they may be educated they have to identify themselves with the community they belong to - as Oraon, Munda, Kharis or Ho - However much they might prefer to think of themselves as Christian, Hindu, or even lawyer, teacher or minister. But there exists a feeling of resentment in the minds of the advanced tribals for, while they are successful in economic sphere, they are denied the respect they deserve and instead are looked down upon by the non-tribals. These respondents have a very wrong notion of a tribe which has created a sense of humiliation and consequently an identity-crisis in their minds. This concept, indeed, would incur shame on anyone since this is a notion at the original stage of evolution of culture according to the earlier anthropologists. But, though "everyone in the world once belonged to a tribe", the present tribals have gone far advanced with modern technology and social organizations. The Germans, Belgians, French, Anglo Saxons, have evolved from the primitive European tribes. Now they are no more called

as tribes but they still maintain their ethnicity even in the most developed European countries. While they are detribalized in their structure and practice, they have developed themselves in accordance with the modern times, maintaining the inner tribalism (ethnicity). Total isolation of a tribal would mean its extinction. ✓

Detribalization according to the notion given above is a necessity. "We believe in detribalization. Some people want us to be proud of being tribal. They say that we should carry on the old culture...we should make rice beer, (wine), we should get drunk, we should sleep on a mat on the floor. I am more interested in what we should change than what we should keep".²⁸

If we look into the history of the tribals of Ranchi and Chotangapur, we find two trends emerging in the process of search for identity. The first trend is recession seen in the case of some tribes like the Birhor and the Korwar, who recede and isolate themselves and are ultimately faced with gradual extinction.²⁹ Vidyarthi, in his case study of Bihors in Ranchi district, points out many reasons for resisting developmental process by the Bihors while, it is not so strong among the Oraons, Mundas and Kharias. The latter are already settled agriculturists while the Birhor are still living in jungles

28. Ibid. p. 178.

29. Ref. L.P. Vidyarthi, "Cultural factors in Development Process: A case study from Tribal Bihar, in: Man in India, Vol.60, Nos.3-4, Dec.1980, pp.153-167.

and find their subsistence therein. They still hold to the jungle-culture, and anything, which interferes with their customary way of life is strongly resisted. This strong resistance by the Birhor in Ranchi district drove them back to their primitive stage of life.

The second trend, and most important for our study, is that of adapting and searching for a new identity in the changing conditions. This search for a new identity is seen both in religious movements as well as in political spheres. The Bika Dharma, Tana Bhagat Movement,³⁰ Sanskritization, Christian conversion movement, all these are efforts to seek a new identity either by purifying the old religion and adopting new ones or totally abandoning the old and adopting a new faith, or rediscovering the elements of new faith in the old. In the age of modernisation and change, these groups can not remain unaffected.

These processes, however, ushered large scale structural changes in tribal society. This apparently was understood as detribalization by many authors. Joseph Troisi has studied this problem of detribalization in the context of Christian Missions among the Santals in Bihar. His analysis seeks to discover whether conversion was an integrating or an alienating factor. According to him Christianity was not just for conversion but also for changes, to bring the tribals to a higher form of religious

30. Revitalization or Messianic Movements are aiming towards regaining of the Golden Age (Millenia) of Burrige, Kenelm, New Heaven New Earth, 1969.

consciousness and liberate them from miserable living conditions. This combined both humanitarian (social justice), and evangelical objectives. But there were allegations levelled that improvement in conditions of people led to detribalization, i.e. tearing apart of the converts from their moral and social sanctions. However, it is undeniable that to-day the missionaries have understood the tribals and their religion better than anyone else.³¹ Troisi has lauded the missionaries for their contribution in enriching Santali language and literature. Geronimo Phillips, a Baptist missionary, published a book, Introduction to Santali in 1854. E.I. Huxly wrote and published a vocabulary of Santali language in 1868. Horkoran Nara Hapramko Reek Katha (Traditions and Institutions of the Santals) - a Santal Dictionary was compiled by the missionaries in 1887.³² Fr. J.B. Hoffmann the great Missionary wrote the Encyclopaedia Mundarika in fourteen volumes. Besides, like the missionaries at any other place, they served the tribals through education, medical care, social and developmental works.

Troisi, however, came to conclude that because of Christian exclusivism and pervasiveness, the tribals in

31. Troisi, Joseph, "Christian Missions and Detribalization: Myth or Reality?" In *Vidyajyoti* (Journal of Theological Reflection), Vol. XLIII, No. 10, Nov. 1979, pp. 473-488.

32. Ibid. p. 477.

Santal Praganas felt themselves isolated from their own tribal community.

In order to protect the new faith of the converts, the missionaries regarded all tribal and ancestral spirits as demons, the source of all evil and enemies of man.³³ Thus, they were exclusivists. They were normative in approach. The Christian Missionaries tended to be highly normative in the sense that they set norms to control the behaviour of their converts, not only within the religious sphere, but also in other social matters.³⁴ Distinctive tribal customs of society were controlled with a heavy hand. Drinking, dancing, association (social interaction), worship, social customs, tribal festivals and observances, were censured by the missionaries. This shows the ethnocentric bias of the Missionaries. "Missionaries tended to identify Christianity with their own particular culture and often evaluated Santal laws and customs against this background. Change was therefore, unidirectional and adoption if any was minimal".³⁵ This affected tribal unity, cohesion and solidarity. As a result of Christian exclusiveness and normativeness, the converts were, by and large, being alienated from

33. Ibid. p. 481.

34. Ibid. p. 482.

35. Ibid. p. 483.

their village communities. Moreover, converts became estranged from their own kinsfolk.

The discoveries and conclusions of Troisi appear specific and exaggerated, hence far from being universal. There are equal number of instances, if not more, of rediscovering the values of tribal religion, traditions and values in the process of 'Indigenization' referred to earlier. Such alienating attitudes were only in the initial stages of conversion. Secondly, Troisi has observed only the external aspects of tribal identity.

Another dimension observed in the process of re-asserting and redefining tribal identity was given through the political movements. Kumar Suresh Singh has studied the problem of such movements which started on ethnic ground but was transformed to regionalism. Between 1920 and 1975 some distinct changes were noticeable in the behaviour at pattern and there was a rise in terms of ethnicity of a separatist movement and its transformation into a regional movement.³⁶ The formulation of a purely tribal ethnic movement (1896-1949) with the explicit impulse of the Missionaries and Christian students was gradually transformed into a political party (1939)

36. Singh, K.S. "From Ethnicity to Regionalism: A Study in Tribal Politics and Movements in Chotanagpur from 1900-1975", in Tribal Situation in India, op. cit. pp. 317-339.

with strong regional overtones. The rise of proto-nationalism was transformed into subnationalism, seeking its identity in political unity. According to B.K. Roy Burman Chotanagpur is currently passing through a phase of protonationalism.

In the phase of protonationalism new symbols strike root and an elite emerge out with vested interest in consolidating the expanded identities of small communities. At this stage there is an organized attempt to influence the regional and/or national market. Protonationalism has an ethnic soul and a regional body.³⁷

In this sense the political aspects of protonationalism is represented in different forms of Jharkhand movement seeking a political unity in the formation of a non-state nation. This unity certainly goes a step beyond K.S. Singh's formulations of ethnicity to regionalism.

In a strongly welfare-oriented state like India, where democracy couches pluralism and diversified patterns of livelihood are provided, the tribes particularly tend to become multinucleated social entities without l s

37. B.K. Roy Burman, "Ethnic Relations in Chotanagpur" in the Passing Scene, op.cit. pp. 164-165.

losing their distinct identities. They become proto-nations.³⁸

Protonationalism has several facets. In its social aspect there is a continuous redefinition of the concepts of diku (alien) and indigenous population. The political aspect is represented as referred to earlier, in different forms of Jharkhand movement. In its cultural aspect there is a revival of interests in the traditional festivals on a grand scale. The national ethos of welfare state seems to have reinforced the process.

In the foregoing pages we have cited the different notions and approaches to tribalism and detribalization. All these approaches are clearly negative, in that they describe how a particular tribe has lost its traditional features. J.C. Mitchell, in his article, "Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Behaviour" has distinguished two levels of tribalism.³⁹ He has described ethnicity in parlance with tribalism. "Differences, supposed or real, in the customs, beliefs, and practices that are identified as characteristic of particular sets of persons have long been accepted as an almost universal aspect of human

38. Jain, R.K. "Social Anthropology of India: Theory and Method". ICSSR, Report - 1981, p. 82.

39. Mitchell, J.C., "Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Behaviour: An empirical Exploration" in Urban Ethnicity, ed. Abner Cohen, pp. 1-36.

behaviour. The awareness of these differences has been referred to as nationalism as tribalism and, more generally as ethnicity.⁴⁰

The most remarkable contribution which Mitchell has made in this article is that of the double distinction between 'ethnicity' as a construct of perceptual or cognitive phenomena and the 'ethnic group' as a construct of behavioural phenomena, and between commonsense notion and analytical notion of ethnicity. This distinction is, according to me, of prime importance to understand the process of detribalization. There is a difference between behaviour and cognitive structural phenomena. In Piere also observes this contradiction between attitude of the people regarding their race and the actual behaviour of the people.

The first feature to be noted is that though due to industrialization and urbanization many more Adivasis are flooding the cities, there is a structural detribalization but the ethos of tribalism persists even in the new situation. This ethos of tribalism or ethnicity is manifest in the fact that people of the same tribe or ethnic groups prefer to live, congregate together and make clubs, associations. The Oraons, Mundas and Kharias,

40. Ibid. p. 1.

who live either in Delhi, Calcutta or Bombay, have often been seen to behave in the certain pattern and, most of the time, group together for various purposes on occasions. Hence, though outwardly such factors like urbanization, migration, industrialization seemingly cause a breakdown of the cognitive structural phenomena of a tribe the ethos of tribalism persists.)

The sense of ethnicity becomes more acute in a new, changed situation, because here the fact of ethnicity becomes the platform for power,⁴¹ status and security. In a new situation members become a more compact ethnic group. Once uprooted from the rural areas, the same group of people begins to reunite into a solidary ethnic group. This process has been termed "Retribalization" by Cohen. "Retribalization is a process by which a group from the one ethnic category, whose members are involved in a struggle for power and privileges, with the members of a group from another ethnic category, within the framework of a formal political system, manipulates some customs, values, myths, symbols and ceremonials, from their cultural traditions in order to articulate an informal political organization which is used as a weapon in that struggle"⁴²

41. K.Singh, Tribal Transformation: (II)-Tribal Movements, Eighth Devraj Chandra, Memorial Lecture-1981, at Delhi University.

42. Quoted by Mitchell, J.C. op.cit. pp. 16-17.

The process of detribalization, therefore, is taken too simplistically. According to Mitchell's category it is a commonsense construct and not an analyst's construct. Ethnicity in commonsense construct is that which makes people's action intelligible to the observers. From this point of view 'ethnicity' at the commonsense level is simply the significance that is attributed to perceptible cultural distinctions in so far as public is concerned. In so far as the social action is concerned the analyst must start rather from the fact of these attributes and proceed to show how they are used or ignored, - by actors in different situations.⁴³

Hence, the study of detribalization from both the view points of the observer and the actor has not been probed into. The present study shows only the unidimensional, one sided consideration. The mind of the actor, either in using or ignoring the attributes, has been neglected in this field.

43. Ibid. p. 31.

CHAPTER - VII

CONCLUSION

B.K. Roy Burman's critique of Indian Tribal ethnography, reported in a survey undertaken by L.P. Vidyarthi, points out a serious flaw among the ethnographers. "..... Without sensitising themselves about these historical realities, the ethnographers of tribal societies are writing about the impact of industrialization and urbanization.... Obviously the stereotypes and myths which come to be associated with the frameworks of little tradition-great tradition, sanskritization, urbanization, industrialization and so on, could not have been continued unchallenged had methodologies of research received more meticulous care".¹

Tribal history is unknown to many Anthropologists and yet they have attempted to study tribal societies applying one model or the other. Apart from such methods, the changing tribal societies have been studied also under modernisation and detribalization. But due to lack of historicity comprehensive and adequate understanding of tribal societies remain incomplete. The aforesaid models fail to give us a comprehensive picture of the tribal societies over the centuries. Rather, such models depict one aspect of a specific segment of people and period. Hence, this phenomenon cannot be applied universally. For

1. Quoted by R.K. Jain in his I.C.S.S.R., Report, 1981, Social Anthropology in India : Theory and Method, p. 82.

example, the revivalist movement of the Tana Bhagats in Chotanagpur, was restricted to a section of Oraons, just as Bhakti movement of Vaisnavaites influenced only the Mundas from Bundu and Tamar areas in Ranchi district. Besides, the process of sanskritization is almost a finished-up concept. The ethos of industrialization and urbanization in India still remains in the air. Very few of the tribals in Ranchi district are living in urban centres and still less number absorbed in the industrial complexes. The influence of Christianity remains far from being universal. These methods, therefore, provide bases for micro-level studies.

Changes among the tribals have been multi-faceted because of the opulent choices of occupations in present society. One may not assume anymore now, that the entire population of tribals are peasants since there are diversities of livelihood pattern. They become multi-nucleated social entities without losing their distinct identities. Hence, the nature of changes also is more diversified rather than uniform.

There is a need, therefore, of searching for a different method ^{to} of study changes in tribal societies, particularly in Chotanagpur. In my opinion historical method seems more suited for studying tribal societies here in Ranchi district. While the other methods give

only a partial picture of a reality, the historical method encompasses the entire process of evolution of a tribal society. It has been remarked earlier that the adivasis of Chotanagpur have shown tremendous amount of adaptation and adjustment capacity down the history. Historical method, then, helps to review and assess the attempts and processes in adapting to new conditions at various points of time in history. This is one of the reasons for the survival of the adivasis as against some tribes like, Bishor, Korwa, Maler and other minor ones, who are nearly wiped out because of complete isolated^{ion} and strong resistance to any change.

The adivasis of Chotanagpur were primarily land-owners. But because of the introduction of aliens the conditions changed, when the new-comers gradually began to deprive the former of their land. Even in this new situations the adivasis were flexible to adjust their living.

These adjustments and integrations were not easy transitions in the past. While contradicting the proposition of N.K. Bose regarding tribe-caste interaction Surajit Sinha illustrated, "There is an underlying assumption in Bose's proposition that, on the whole, this process of slow integration provided the tribes with

sufficient economic, social and cultural security as not to generate large-scale rebellion. My own impression is that inspite of this general pattern of harmony the tribes are not without an awareness that they were looked down upon and given a low status".²

This phenomenon has been viewed by G.S. Ghurye, as support to what has been said above, from a different standpoint. He is of the opinion that the various groups labelled by the Government as 'tribes' are not isolated from the Hindu castes of the plains in distribution, language, economy and religious traditions. Hence, Ghurye is inclined to regard the officially labelled tribal group of Central India as 'Backward Hindus', i.e. groups imperfectly integrated with the caste system.

The tribes in Ranchi district rose against the British Govt., Landlords and Dikus, time and again, to defend, protect and preserve their tribal integrity and traditions. Yet fewer examples of rigidity and more evidences of adjustments were found in the history. In this process of adjustment and adaptation hazards and conflicts, even bloodshed were not absent.

There are some reasons why adaptation method may be

2. Quoted in R.K. Jain, "Report I.C.S.S.R., op.cit. p. 80.

preferred to the earlier ones. Firstly, adaptation is a phenomenon which has come with the start of history in so far as the time dimension is concerned. Secondly, deriving from the first, this phenomenon is an on-going process as against time and space bound models of the past.

Thirdly, therefore, this adaptation model is more comprehensive and universal. Fourthly, adaptation method is looking at the process from the recipient's stand point. This approach enables us to feel the parameters of the extent and intensity of the adaptation process.

Adaptation is a fine intertwining and dovetailing of continuity and change. In a change the new is built upon the old. Not all the aspects of the old are entirely eliminated. But the distinctive features of the old continue to keep the identity. Adaptation is such a model in which continuity and change become patent. Tribal societies are adept to gradual transformations because sudden and radical changes offset the tribals very much. Hence, this model seems more suited to tribal societies. The other models seem more like impositions to which the tribals succumb instead of interacting.

Adaptation model provides an alternative to the controversy of isolation and assimilation integration of tribals

into the main stream of national life. While on the one hand Verrier Elwin fears the disappearance of tribe through absorption and advocates the theory of 'isolation', G.S. Ghurye, on the other, comes out with the opposite theory of "Assimilation". The latter theory is, of course, based on the contention of Ghurye who considers the tribes as 'backward Hindus'.

The challenge lies in finding a solution between the bipolar approaches of Verrier Elwin and Ghurye. Adaptation model falls midway since in this process, the essential features of one's identity are retained on the one hand and on the other adaptations to new changed conditions are achieved. In this process the identity of the tribe is not only maintained but also enriched and emboldened. Isolation is unto extinction and assimilation unto annihilation. But through adaptation, a tribe is enriched and can make a unique contribution to national life.

A strong desire to preserve a separate socio-cultural and political identity of a tribe is justified in view of evolving a tribal region into a sort of non-state nations. A non-state nation is an identity unlike the secessionist movement in the North-East Regions in India. The concept of a non-state nations goes beyond a political identity without creating much trouble in administration or impairing etc. nations' integrity. As

such the tribal regions would be less thorny problems to deal with.

In the past, and particularly in the post independence period, there has been lots of efforts in national integration. But this ideal of national integration has been very much in the air because there is no 'Indian Nationalism' worth its name. The states with diverse people and cultures and are forced and bundled up together. The constant conflicts between the North and the South, the Centre and the States, and India and the North-East Regions are obvious signs of the forced unity of India as a nation. India is a country of the politicians and not of the people.

Instead of this tug-of-war for dominance by one section or the other, sufficient autonomy of developing one's socio-cultural heritage would help in cementing the unity and achieving the integration of India. On this line, ~~when~~ the evolution of a non-state nation of tribal regions would solidify the unity of a nation when there is external forces imposed to achieve integration it is rebelliously resisted. But if its socio-cultural and political identities are allowed to flourish it is accomplished and enriched.

Hence, there is a two-fold challenge before the tribals of Ranchi and Chotanagpur. The first one is to give an ideology to a geographical entity of Jharkhand region and the second, by adapting to and enriching its socio-cultural life by the new changing conditions, provide a viable alternative of integration. Through the enrichment of their socio-cultural and political life then the tribals of Chotanagpur and Ranchi district can make a unique contribution to the vast multi-cultural national life of India.

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GLOSSARY

Begar(1)	: Unpaid labour
Bhoot Kheta	: Service land
Bhumihari	: Land obtained by an Oraon by clearing the jungle; Original.
Dharmes	: Supreme Spirit of the Oraons
Dhunkuria	: Youth dormitory in a village
Diku	: Outsider, alien
Khuntkatti	: Land obtained by a Munda by clearing the jungle; original.
Mahto	: Administrative head of a village
Pahan	: Village priest
Pancha	: Work of co-operation
Parha	: Confederacy of villages
Pujar	: Pahan ¹⁶ assistant at ritual functions
Sasandri	: Burial place (stone)
Singh Bonga	: Supreme Spirit of the Mundas