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DEDICATED

TO

MY MOTHER

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**JHARKHAND MOVEMENT  
AND  
TRIBAL POLITICS IN BIHAR**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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**CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES  
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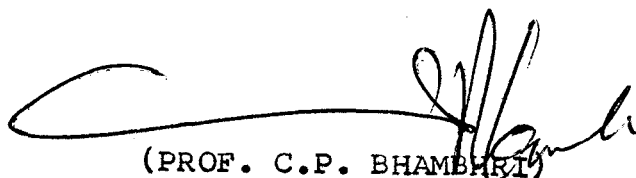
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## CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled  
**JHARKHAND MOVEMENT AND TRIBAL POLITICS IN BIHAR**  
submitted by Mr. **UPJEE SINGH BISHAI**, is in partial  
fulfilment for the award of the Degree of **MASTER**  
**OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University. This dissertation  
has not been previously submitted for any other  
degree of this University or any other University  
and is his own work.

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placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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Upjit Singh Rekhi  
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## C O N T E N T S

		<u>PAGES</u>
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
	INTRODUCTION	1 - 6
Chapter I	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT	7 - 36
Chapter II	THEORY OF TRIBAL POLITICS AND DELINEATION OF JHARKHAND MOVEMENT IN BIHAR	37 - 78
Chapter III	PROBLEMS OF THE TRIBALS IN THE JHARKHAND REGION OF BIHAR	79 - 162
Chapter IV	TRIBAL POLITICS IN THE JHARKHAND REGION OF BIHAR	163 - 260
Chapter V	CONCLUSION	261 - 274
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	275 - 287

## INTRODUCTION

/Social movements play important role in the social and political process. In the social process they influence the social structure, i.e. social institutions, social relations, values and norms, and bring about changes in them. In the political process they influence the political system and exert pressure on the policy-makers./

The first chapter deals with conceptual framework of social movement. It begins with the definition and characteristics of the social movement. It has been differentiated from the phenomenon of collective behaviour which is short lived. The typologies of social movements in terms of many criteria specially that of its consequence and orientation constitute an important part of this chapter. The main typologies discussed are: reformative, revivalistic, revolutionary, transformative, messianic, charismatic and emulative type of social movements. A social movement never remains of one type, but it changes from one type to another. /Any particular type of social movement is relative to a particular phase in its development, e.g. a movement may begin as reformative, but ultimately it may become transformative social movement.

There are four main theories that of Relative Deprivation, Revitalisation, Strain and Acculturation, in terms of which the origin of the social movement has been discussed. The ideology of the social movement is also an important concept which is the basis of group-cohesion and group-solidarity and from which the action programmes of the social movements are derived. The collective mobilization and leadership of the social movements are interrelated, and the organisation of the movement is very often federal in form. A social movement does not remain as such for all the times to come. At some juncture it becomes routinized with established institutional procedure of recruitment, commitment, code of conduct and sanctions for punishing deviants. It becomes a part of institutional system losing its innovative features. Thus when a social movement with a definite ideology becomes a political party it ceases to be a social movement and becomes a political movement to be spearheaded, henceforth, by a political party. Splits and schisms in terms of personal rivalry, and ideological differences over strategies to be adopted, are common phenomena in the process of a political movement. This chapter ends with a discussion on some of the important functions of the social movement. |

In the first part of the second chapter, the theory of tribal politics has been discussed. The tribes of India have been indigenous people of the land. They had a self-sufficient village economy. Many foreigners come from time to time into India but their self-sufficient village economy remained undisturbed. With the advent of the Britishers their traditional self-sufficient village economy underwent drastic metamorphosis. The Britishers introduced new revenue, administrative, legal and judicial system to transform traditional self-sufficient village economy into a market economy to facilitate the process of exploitation. This resulted in the emergence of many problems mainly alienation of land with which the tribals had sentimental attachment. Many tribal social movements very often taking the form of rebellions took place against the Britishers. Rebellions were ultimately crushed and the tribals had to conform to the British policies. Gradually consciousness began to emerge among the tribals. After independence the new constitutional arrangement added a new dimension to this consciousness. Tribal political elites emerged and political parties also extended their influence in the tribal zones. The tribal political elites politicised the tribal problems and began to extract concessions from

the government by launching various movements. Politics has emerged as an important instrument to protect and promote the tribal interests and solve their manifold problems. Recently there has been an important shift in the nature of their politics. From the politics of compliance and affirmation, they have moved over to the politics of pressure, protest and insurgency. They have come out of the 'Subjective political culture', and the newly emerged political culture is a mixture of 'parochial political culture' and 'participant political culture'. In the second part of the same chapter an attempt has been made to delineate Jharkhand movement in Bihar (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas) in terms of conceptual framework of social movement. The Jharkhand movement was preceded by 20 rebellions and movements which were multi-dimensional, i.e. they were reformative, revivalistic, revolutionary, transformative, emulative, messianic and charismatic movement. But from 1910 onwards elements of political organization began to emerge in the movement and in 1950 it became routinized and began to be spear-headed by a political party, viz., Jharkhand Party. Now it is a party-based political movement for a separate Jharkhand state consisting of 7 districts of Bihar and 9 districts of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

The third chapter deals with tribal problems in the so-called Jharkhand region of Bihar. Main emphasis has been given on the problems of land-alienation, forest, indebtedness, non-payment of minimum wages, bonded labour, migration of the tribals, atrocities on them and toll-tax. Apart from them some problems of social service infrastructure have also been discussed. The state government, from time to time, passed many Acts to solve these problems but due to loopholes in these Acts, the problems are persisting as usual which are grounds of discontent behind the Jharkhand movement and tribal politics in Bihar.

In the fourth chapter the tribal politics in Jharkhand region of Bihar has been discussed in detail. Main focus is on the evolution of the Jharkhand party through various phases from 1910 onwards, its participation in the general elections and its achievements, relation with the political process, Congress-Jharkhand merger, consequences of the merger, split and fragmentation of the Jharkhand party and emergence of splinter groups, 1967 General Election and installation of coalition governments, rise of urban pressure groups, 1972 General Election and waning of the popularity of splinter groups, radicalisation of tribal politics and rise of independent marxist political

organizations, Jharkhand-alliance between workers and peasants, cracks in the alliance, leadership pattern among the tribals of the region, national political parties and their attitude towards the demand of a separate Jharkhand state, their allegations on the Jharkhand movement that it is a secessionist movement and a foreign inspired conspiracy. An attempt has also been made to refute these allegations by some arguments that the Jharkhand movement is neither a secessionist movement nor it is a foreign inspired conspiracy, but it is a political movement for the attainment of a separate statehood on ethnic and regional basis within Indian federal set up.

The fifth chapter on conclusion has two parts. The first part deals with the findings of the entire study of Jharkhand movement and tribal politics, and the second part analyses the causes for the failure of the movement.]

## CHAPTER I

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Sociologists and Social Anthropologists have shown an increasing interest in the study of social movements and their linkages with social change. Social movements are becoming a matter of increasing concern for general public, administrators and are looked at with concern by policy-makers. Social movements belong to the area of process having connection with the social structure (social institutions, social relationships, values and norms) and social change. They cause change in the social structure and can be caused by it. It is, however, not necessary that only social movements lead to social change. Social change can take place independently of social movements.<sup>1</sup>

Social movement as an instrument of social change differs from imitative or emulative process of social change. The latter centres around acquiescence, request, obedience and loyalty and seeks to bring about change

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1. Partha Nath Mukherji, "Social Movements and Social Change: Towards a Conceptual Classification and Theoretical Framework", Sociological Bulletin, vol.26, No.1, March 1977, p.36.



without endangering the law and order situation. But the former focuses on protest, conflict, challenge and revolts. It very often endangers the prevailing law and order situation to bring about social change.<sup>2</sup> The emulative process of social change is identical to M.N. Srinivas's concept of 'Sanskritisation' according to which the lower castes emulate the cultural pattern of the higher castes to improve their social status without any formal protest and confrontation. But social change through emulation leads to positional change and not structural change as might happen in case of a social movement. It has been seen that social movements contain some features of emulative movements. Strict watertight compartmentalisation between them is not possible, e.g. in various social movements taking the form of revolts preceding the political Jharkhand movement, the traditional leadership apart from challenging the prevailing social order, emphasized on 'Hindu model of tribal absorption'. This 'Hindu model of tribal absorption' is identical to M.N. Srinivas's concept of Sanskritization, according to which the Indian tribes led by their

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2. M.S.A. Rao, "Introduction", in his (ed.), Social Movement in India, vol.I (New Delhi, 1979).

traditional leaders followed the cultural patterns of the upper caste Hindus of their locality to improve their social status and that way they lost some amount of their tribal identity. This model is different from the American model of 'reservations' for the Red Indians. There were reservations for the Indians in the New World under various treaties concluded between their chiefs and the coloniser's government, but still encroachment on reservations and restriction of their native rights continued. In the United States which has Red Indian population of 800,000 divided into 300 tribes living in 300 reservations, 40 percent of them live below the poverty line. Federal Government has been spending an incredibly large amount on their welfare and the Red Indians enjoy full rights of American citizens, but in spite of it they have refused to be assimilated and to give up their separate identity. In India the British government adopted the policy of protective administration for the tribal areas in view of special problems and social situation of the tribals. It was of the opinion that normal laws should not be applied in the tribal areas. In spite of it, the tribals continued to follow the cultural pattern of the Hindus.<sup>3</sup>

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3. K.S. Singh, "Transformation of Tribal Society: Integration Vs Assimilation", EPW, 14 August, 1982, pp.1318-20.

In the nineteenth century, the concept of social movement had a specific meaning. It was identified with the movement of industrial labour class (proletariat) with socialistic, communistic and anarchistic tendencies, and sought to create a social order which would abolish economic exploitation and give workers a chance to achieve full personality development. On the continent of Europe, this identification of social movement with the labour movement lasted until the second decade of this century, which attracted few people belonging to labour class with limited goals of eliminating bourgeois institutions. Today this narrow meaning of social movement is no longer possible. Now it refers to a mass movement aiming at comprehensive and fundamental changes in the social structure and social order. It is a social movement in its broader sense. It differs from classical sense of the social movement which implied creation of an entirely new socio-economic and political order specially concerning the institution of property and distribution of power.<sup>4</sup>

There are some important conceptual constituents of social movements - definitions, classification or typologies

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4. Rudolf Eberle, "Types and Functions of Social Movements", in David Shils (ed.), International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, New York, Mac Millan, vol. 14, p. 439.

and their orientation to the existing culture and consequences, origin, ideology, collective mobilization, organization, leadership, internal dynamics, routinization and functions. Let us look at some of the definitions.

Definition: "A social movement is an organized attempt on the part of a section of population to bring about qualitative changes either partial or total in the existing system of social relations, social institutions, values and norms, through collective mobilization based on ideology".<sup>5</sup> This definition emphasizes the part played by the social movement in the development of social change. It has ideological component, i.e. a set of ideas which specify discontent, proscribe solutions and justify change.

A much more comprehensive definition is as follows:  
 "A social movement occurs when a fairly large number of, or an otherwise identifiable segment of population deliberately band together for collective action in order to alter, reconstitute, reinterpret, restore, protect, supplant or create some portions of their culture or social order to better their life chances by redistributing the power of

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5. M.S.A. Rao, "Conceptual Framework of Social Movements", in his (ed.), Social Movements in India, vol.I (New Delhi, 1979), p.2.

control in a society".<sup>6</sup> These movements may continue over a length of time through repeated collective actions.

McLaughlin gives representative definitions of social movements. "Collective enterprises to establish a new order of life" has been considered a classic definition. Among the other definitions are "group behaviour directed in a concerned way of bringing about social changes", "a group venture extending beyond a local community or a single event and involving a systematic effort to inaugurate changes in thought, behaviour and social relationships", and "a collectivity which acts with some continuity to promote or resist changes in a society or a group of which it is part".<sup>7</sup>

Paul Wilkinson is concerned with the formulation of a working concept of social movement rather than giving a precise definition. The English word 'Movement' derives from the old French verb 'Mouvoir' which means 'move' or 'impel' and 'movimentum' (turn). After explaining this, he reproduces the definition of social movement from Oxford dictionary as "a series of

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6. L.K. Mohapatra, "Social Movements Among the Tribes of India", in K. Surosh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), p.399.
  7. Berry McLaughlin (ed.), Studies in Social Movements (New York, 1969), p.3.

actions and endeavours of a body of persons for a special object".<sup>8</sup> His working concept of social movement is based on these formulations - (a) a social movement is a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means; (b) a social movement must evince a minimal degree of organisation, though it may range from informal or partial level of organisation to a highly institutionalised or bureaucratic form; and (c) a social movement's commitment is to change and the *raison d'être* of its organization is founded upon the conscious volition, normative commitment to the movement's aims, beliefs and active participation on the part of the followers and members. Major characteristics of social movement, according to him, are: conscious commitment to change, minimal organisation, normative commitment and participation.<sup>9</sup>

According to J. Wilson, "Social movement is conscious collective organised attempt to bring about or resist large scale change in social order by non-institutionalized means".<sup>10</sup> To sum up, we can say that social movement is

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8. Paul Wilkinson, Social Movements (London, 1971), p.1.

9. Ibid., pp.26-27.

10. John Wilson, Introduction to Social Movements (New York, 1973), p.8.

an organized social activity or endeavour of a sufficiently large number of people who consciously and continuously involve or take part in it with some significant goals or objects before them - the objective being the establishment of a new social order or promotion or resistance to change in one's social environment.

Among some of the major characteristics of social movements are the following: (1) the social movements are group phenomena and the beliefs and actions are carried out by the group members. It is a group action rather than the individual eccentric behaviour; (2) the idea of the movement suggests efforts towards achieving change. Efforts consist in activities, demonstration, meetings, literature and campaign. It consists more than the passive sense of discontent, however, shared that may be. It also involves belief-perception of what is wrong with the society, the culture, institutions and what should be done about it; (3) movements are more than expressive, they need to change the society and thus put pressure on the non-believers and opponents. These are focal points of conflicts in the society and usually generate public issues; (4) social movements imply discontent with the existing situation and to create a new one - a policy, a set of rules, values and authorities and seek to change

the social order and the system; and (5) discontent with the existing social order is accompanied by new programmes, policies and demands for their adoption. Through social actions, men challenge the authorities, institutions, values and norms which other people cherish. The social movements are not sporadic occurring only once; they take momentum and growth. They call out responses from those who oppose them and defend status quo. So they are also important spheres of social conflict.<sup>11</sup> It is a particular significance of the social movement that it is one of the important media through which the new ideas and practices enter into the social fabric. Its appearance in a sign that the old social order is being challenged having lost its sacredness as it becomes irrelevant to the people's needs. Its rise is also an indication that the new world has been conceived, new hopes are being expressed and the faith has been renewed in the idea that humanity through its own efforts can make this world a better one. Social movements demand attention because they provide valuable clues articulated in the crises of anguish and declaration of hopes about the direction in which the future changes will take place. They are suggestive of how people cope with the social

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11. J.R. Gusfield (ed.), Protest, Reform and Revolt (New York, 1970), pp. 1-4.



stress by inventing and developing new social microcosms.<sup>12</sup> Social movement is a force which saves the society from destruction, although a dominant majority may not realise that at the time. This is probably one reason why it is difficult to suppress permanently a movement, whose aims and objects are in harmony with the tendencies of social change in a given society. If the suppression of the movement continues it may lead to the disintegration of the society.<sup>13</sup>

Social movement has to be distinguished from the 'collective behaviour' that usually takes the form of crowd behaviour, mob-action, riot, panic, etc. The phenomenon of collective behaviour may range from responses to the disaster, the disorderly street mob or radical social upheaval to the peaceful shift in the orientations of the individuals and small groups that occurring in mass can produce major changes in taste, fashion and public opinion. It usually takes place in a problematic situation in which the participant lack adequate guidance in their conduct. Whenever any custom which is conventionally and officially

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12. John Wilson, op. cit., p.8.

13. Rudolf Heberle, Social Movement - An Introduction to Political Sociology (New York, 1951). p.456.

accepted fails to take account of, or runs counter to deeply felt sentiments or common perception of reality, people create a current of agitation by their actions. The collective behaviour is a problem solving activity rather than a structural social action. It is endowed with bizarre behaviour, exaggerated emotionality, violence and extremist ideology. It occurs not only in the midst of widespread chaos, confusion and uncertain settings, but also in the midst of highly institutionalised settings. The phenomenon of collective behaviour very often remains confined to a particular society, though it might give rise to a chain of reactions at another place. But it is not as widespread as social movement. In it the behaviour of the participants is never determined by the prior expectations with the position they occupy in stable social structure. So collective behaviour is in fact ubiquitous which causes tentative disruptions, but introduces permanent modifications in the social structure.<sup>14</sup>

The collective behaviour occurs sometimes in complete isolation or sometimes it is part or an offshoot of a wider social movement. A social movement is very

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14. International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences  
(New York: Macmillan), vol.2, pp.556-58.

often preceded by collective behaviour against the established social order. The experiences in collective behaviour can be related to a conversion process, since it may produce new images (ideological commitments) or new groupings out of which a social movement grows.<sup>15</sup> But still there is some relation between the collective behaviour and social movement. Collective behaviour like demonstration, riot and sporadic acts are instrumental in generating social movements and articulating demands for change. They are symptoms of prevailing latent discontent. Both social movement and collective behaviour involve minimal organisation of the people and belief about what ought to be done and what will come to pass.

Typologies: The literature on social movements abounds with typologies or classification which is made in terms of various criteria which range from being purely descriptive in nature to those which have been deduced from a body of theory.

The locus of the movement is a criterion of social movements. On this count social movements may be classified into linguistic, religious, secular, sectarian, caste,

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15. Ibid., p.564.

peasant, worker, tribal, ethnic, feministic, student, political or non-political, etc. Scale and spatial spread is also a criterion in terms of which it may be classified into national, regional and local social movement. The dominant issue of interest such as temperance, women liberation and distinctive expressive art form provides another criterion.<sup>16</sup>

The most important criterion of the classification is that of consequences of the social movement and its orientation to the existing culture and the society. On this basis the movement may be reactionary or revivalistic, conservative, revisionary or reformative, transformative, revolutionary, nativistic and revitalistic.

When social movements advance aims seeking to bring back "the good old days" these are called a reactionary movement (Cameron), but these are generally known as revivalistic (Linton). Conservative movement seek to perpetuate the status quo and are organised to obstruct the current changes. Linton calls them perpetuative movements. For him both revivalistic and perpetuative movements are subsumed under nativistic movement which is

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16. M.S.A. Rao, op. cit., p.3.

"an organised attempt on the part of the society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of their culture". But both nativistic and revivalistic social movements have been considered to be the aspects of the same class of phenomenon. This large class has been termed as revitalisation movement and it has been defined as "a conscious, deliberate, organized effort on the part of some members of a society to create a more satisfying culture."<sup>17</sup>

Some movements oriented towards bringing about reforms in some areas of life or the other, involving new relationships, activities, norms and values, are known as reformative movements. These are also called revisionary because in these specific changes are desired, efforts are made to modify or supplant the existing customs, but the existing social structure as a whole is not to be replaced. "All movements organized for the purification of the culture or social order by eliminating 'evil' or low customs, beliefs and institutions typically social mobility movements can be characterised as revisionary. This category may be quite appropriately applied to the social mobility movements among the lower

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17. L.K. Mohapatra, op. cit., p.400.

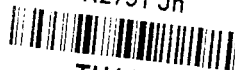
castes in the Hindu society. Other movements oriented towards bringing changes in super-ordinate and sub-ordinate relationships may be designated as 'transformative' movements. In the revolutionary movements, attempts are made by the protagonists to bring revolutionary changes in all the spheres of life and in all the basic values. The aim is to replace the entire culture and social order with another more suitable, adequate and progressive. But this is not to say that actually everything in the context is replaced and historically this has never been the case with any revolutionary movement.<sup>18</sup>

In terms of the criterion of leadership there are millenarian, messianic and chiliastic social movements. In a highly industrialised society traditional groups and institutions have lost control over loyalties and behaviour of the individuals. The weakening of primary group attachment and the impersonal character of large scale organisation alienate men from the source through which a democratic political process is mediated to citizens and achieves its legitimacy. Such alienated people are easily mobilized around charismatic qualities and symbolic

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18. Ibid., pp.400-01.

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goals.<sup>19</sup>

The term millenarianism derives from a Latin term 'millennium' which means a period of thousand years. According to millenarian tradition which is based on apocalyptic literature and revelation of St. John, Christ will reappear in the guise of warrior, vanquish the devil and hold him prisoner. He will then build the kingdom of God and reign in person for a thousand years. The term millenarian is now used not in its specific and limited historical sense, but typologically to characterize religious movements, which emphasizes imminent, total, ultimate, this worldly and collective salvation.<sup>20</sup>

In messianic movement, a messiah as a leader attracts the people with prophetic powers of inducing assurance in the minds of the people because of certain peculiar belief system in their culture. There is a general belief among the followers that the messiah will arise to bring back the good old days, the golden age, secure justice and

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19. J.R. Gusfield, "The Study of Social Movements", in David Shils (ed.), International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (New York; MacMillan), vol. 14, p. 449.

20. International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (New York; MacMillan), vol. 10, p. 349.

drive away the oppressors and get salvation.<sup>21</sup>

In chiliasmic movement a charismatic leader is supposed to attract the followers because of his charisma, his personal extra-ordinary qualities and alleged miraculous successes. A charismatic leader under divine inspiration can only initiate chiliasm which in the words of Prof. Rueshmann "is a collective preparedness to start anew towards securing or materialising the deeply craved for paradise like happy life on the earth".<sup>22</sup>

The millenarian and messianic both type of movements are similar in the sense that the majority of millenarian movements are messianic. Salvation is brought about by a redeemer who is a mediator between the human and divine. Another important mediator between the divine and the movement is the leader. Leadership tends to be charismatic. The intense and total commitment required by millenarianism is summoned forth by the leaders who are considered to be set apart from the ordinary men and endowed with supernatural powers. Millenarianism usually involves messianism but the two do not necessarily coincide.

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21. L.K. Mohapatra, op. cit., p.402.

22. Ibid., p.402.



Expectation of a human divine saviour is not always accompanied by expectation of total and final redemption. Conversely expectation of millenarism does not always involve the meditation of a messiah. Redemption in certain cases is directly brought about by the divine. Millenarism has religious ideology and most of them are restorative. Their aim is revitalisation of the indigenous culture and their view of the future is largely traditional. They are also innovative. The most important feature of millenarism seems to be composite 'intermediate nature'. It combines components which are seemingly mutually exclusive; it is historical as well as mythical, religious as well as political and most significantly it is future oriented as well as past oriented.<sup>23</sup>

The typologies of the social movement discussed above are bound to remain inadequate for a movement tends to acquire new features during its course and any typology can be relative to a particular phase in its development. It has been seen that a movement shifts from one type to another.

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23. International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences  
(New York: MacMillan), vol. 10, pp. 351-53.

There now exists a considerable literature describing various kinds of movements. There is no general consensus concerning the classification of movements. Different scholars have adopted different criteria of classifying movements. They even give different terminology to them. In this work we select a few criteria of different typologies convenient to our own interest, but of little value as an absolute typology for general use as a guide to observation.

Origin of Social Movements (Theories): An important issue in the study of social movements is concerning its emergence. There are mainly four theories which conceptualize the origin of a movement. These theories explain structural conditions and motivational forces which give rise to a movement. These are theories of Relative Deprivation, Strain, Revitalization and Acculturation.

The theory of relative deprivation has developed along two different lines - social mobility and social conflict. The former line of development is represented by Merton and Runciman. Merton systematically developed the concept in relation to reference group theory to analyse social mobility. Later Runciman following the the example of Merton developed the concept in relation to reference group and problems of inequalities and social

justice. In this approach relative deprivation is made the basis of a study of social mobility as acting through emulation and positive reference group behaviour. As against this approach Marx and Aberle developed the concept of relative deprivation emphasizing the element of conflict. Marx and Engels recognized that dissatisfaction with the status quo is not determined by absolute conditions, but by relative expectations. Aberle defining relative deprivation as a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and actuality, treated it as a bed-rock for the study of a social movement. He analysed relative deprivation in terms of material possession, status, behaviour and worth. Gurr considered relative deprivation not in terms of expectations, but in relation to perceived capabilities. He defined relative deprivation as a gap between expectations and perceived capabilities involving three sets of values - economic conditions, political power and social status. The gap may be caused when expectations remain stable, but capabilities decline (decrement of deprivation); expectations rise but capabilities decline (progressive decline); and expectations rise while capabilities remain the same (aspirational deprivation). The point conceded by relative deprivation theorists is that a position of relative deprivation alone

will not generate a movement. The structural conditions of relative deprivation provide only the necessary condition. Sufficient conditions are provided by the perception of a situation and by the estimate of capabilities by certain leaders that they can do something to remedy the situation.<sup>24</sup>

Smelser propounded the strain theory which treats structural strain as the underlying factor leading to social movement. Structural strain occurs at different levels of norms, values, mobilisation and situational facilities. While strain provides structural conditions, the crystallization of a generalised belief marks the attempt of persons under strain to assess their situation and to explain the situation by creating or assembling a generalised belief. But strain and generalised belief require precipitating factor to trigger off a movement. Smelser's analysis of the genesis of the movement is in structural-functional framework. He considers strain as non-adjustment of relations among various parts of the system and includes deprivation under strain. Wallace maintains that social movements develop out of a deliberate, organized and conscious efforts on the part of a group

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24. M.S.A. Rao, op. cit., pp.4-5.

of people in society to construct a more satisfying culture.<sup>25</sup>

The revitalisation theory propounds that adaptive processes are employed to establish equilibrium situations. Social movements on the one hand express dissatisfaction, dissent and protest against existing conditions and on the other they offer a positive programme of action to remedy the situation. Many nativistic and revivalistic movements have occurred among the tribal people in contact with European civilisation. This has sometimes led to the impression that acculturation pressure leads directly to fanatical social movements. This pressure produces a state of 'cultural shock' in which the tribal people experiences a sort of collective hysterical syndrome characterized by ecstatic but unrealistic commitment to a utopian social movement.

Ideology: The social movements strive to bring about entirely new socio-economic and political order. To justify all their aims all the social movements develop an elaborate and consistent set of ideas (ideology), which its members must accept uncritically as members

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25. Ibid., p.5.

of religious group accept a creed. From the ideology are derived action programmes of a more changing nature. It is a foundation of group cohesion and solidarity and its value is due to its appeal to the interests, sentiments and resentments of a certain social strata. Founders of modern socialism Karl Marx, Engels as well as conservative advocate of social reform Louis Von Stein deserve credit for having demonstrated that ideology is linked with social situation of certain classes expressing the socio-political interests or needs of those classes and if they are not linked in this way to the actual social situation of certain classes, the idea will remain without practical effect.<sup>26</sup> Ideology interprets the environmental and projects self-image. It codifies and recognizes beliefs, myths and outlooks and directs responses to specific social situation. It is not only a 'framework of consciousness' but also a source of legitimizing actions. The formulation of ideology is an important aspect of any social movement. The leaders work out different themes by which the concerned section in the movement attempts to improve its image, respect and honour. Ideology also provides the source of legitimization of new values, norms, institutions and

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26. Rudolf Heberle, n. 13, pp. 13-15.

relationships envisaged by the leaders. It provides the basis of interest articulation and of establishing new identities.<sup>27</sup>

The ideology is all the time not a determining factor for people to join a particular movement. Their motivation in joining a social movement may range from a rational belief in the movement's aim to pure opportunism, quite often the decision to join is more emotional than rational. In certain types of movements the mass of supporters are attracted by the personal charm of a leader rather than oriented towards an elaborate belief system or definite action programme. Sometimes it becomes traditional for some families to join a particular movement.<sup>28</sup>

Collective Mobilisation, Leadership and Organisation:

Collective mobilisation which is crucial in a social movement is related not only to the ideology but also to the nature of leadership and organisation. In case of charismatic leadership collective mobilisation is spontaneous. The process of recruitment is highly diversified on the basis of the talent of the people.

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27. H.S.A. Rao, op. cit., pp.7-8.

28. Rudolf Heberle, n.4, p.440.

Intellectual elite formulate ideology, business elite give financial support and political elite takes the leadership position. In some cases military elite has also interests in the attainment of the objectives of the movement. Very often the initial leadership of the movement and support to it come from the upper strata of the society which is under the influence of western culture and education. The support from the lower strata consisting of miners, peasants, plantation labour and other categories of labour come in the later period of the movement. The social movement tends to be characterized by the collective leadership with a division of work among the various types of elites.<sup>29</sup>

Social movement as an action group needs some kind of organisation that enables certain persons to act as authorized spokesman and representatives. The organisation can take the form of the committees, clubs, labour unions and political parties.<sup>30</sup> But normally the social movement tends to develop a loose federal structure with central and regional associations being held together by relation-

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29. M.S.A. Rao, op. cit., p.9.

30. Rudolf Heberle, ibid., p.441.



ships of local autonomy and external links based on common interests. One may identify different levels of commitment on the part of the leaders and others from faith to fanaticism. Commitment is manifest in the adoption of a belief system willingness to volunteer in performing various tasks, readiness to take risk of various kinds. The more committed persons are rewarded in terms of higher status, honour and tangible positions. In the process of collective mobilisation, the leaders tend to exploit the pre-existing kin, caste and linguistic ties of the individual recruits and use the traditional institutional framework. They also operate through idioms and symbols familiar to the people besides creating new units of organization.<sup>31</sup>

Internal Dynamic: A time comes when the organization of social movement becomes more formal and rigid, then there is a tendency for schisms to develop and splits, conflicts and rifts to occur during the course of the movement. While some conflicts are in the nature of personal rivalry, others are based on divergent ideological differences which lead to splinter movements.<sup>32</sup> The conflicts and

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31. M.S.A. Rao, op. cit., p.9.

32. Ibid., p.10.

splits also stem out of tactics and strategies to be adopted to attain the aims of the movement. More serious schisms and splits are over these long term strategies. The tactics, strategies, ideology and organization of the social movement are interdependent. The choice of tactics and form of organization also depend on the political system in which the movement operates and in part on the size of the movement and its influence. The tactics of the movements change as they grow - they may become less revolutionary as the movement gains in influence or they may become more aggressive as the chances of success increase.<sup>33</sup>

Routinization of the Social Movement: There is a threshold beyond which a social movement ceases to be a social movement and becomes a political movement. Under certain circumstances the social movement becomes routinized with an established institutional procedure of recruitment, commitment, code of conduct and sanctions for punishing deviants. It becomes a part of institutional system losing its innovative feature. Thus when a social movement with a definite and defined ideology becomes a political party, it ceases to be a social movement and becomes a

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33. Rudolf Heberle, n.e., p.442.

political movement. The political party codifies the earlier ideology of the social movement into its own belief system and provides institutional arrangement to implement and enforce a code of conduct.<sup>34</sup> The political party mobilises the support of the people who earlier identified themselves with the social movement. The people become politicized and conscious of their rights. They learn to use the political system's normal and institutional modes to challenge the governmental policies and decisions and seek to exercise influence and redress their grievances.<sup>35</sup> The party serves as the political spearhead of the movement, though the movement may be represented through several parties. The party may contain several movements or parts of them.<sup>36</sup> Even if a movement does not become routinised or does not aspire for political power, it has political implications.<sup>37</sup>

After routinisation of a movement, there are possibilities that it may die a natural death or it might

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34. H.S.A. Rec, op. cit., p. 10.

35. David H. Bayley, "Public Protest and Political Process in India", in J.R. Gusfield (ed.), Protest, Reform and Revolt (New York, 1970), p. 304.

36. Rudolf Heberle, n.s., p. 441.

37. Ibid., p. 439.

lie dormant for sometime and pick up new interests which will give it a new life or it might develop internal contradictions that will throw up new forces directed towards increasing radicalisation.<sup>38</sup>

Functions: The great changes which usually occur in the social order are very largely the direct or indirect result of social movements. For even if a social movement does not achieve all of its goals, parts of its programmes are accepted and incorporated into ever changing social order. These are the manifest functions of the social movements. Among the latent functions are - (1) social movements contribute to the formation of public opinion by providing for the discussion of social and political problems through the eventual incorporation of some of the movement's ideas into the dominant public opinion; (2) it provides training for the leaders who become part of the political elite and may eventually rise to the positions of leading statesmen. When these two functions have reached the point where the movement after having changed or modified the social order, becomes part of it; the life cycle of the movement comes to an end; it becomes

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38. M.S.A. Rao, op. cit., p.10.

an institution, e.g. in Soviet Union and China Communism can no longer be called a movement, but it has transformed itself into a regime.<sup>39</sup>

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39. Rudolf Hoberle, ibid., p.444.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORY OF TRIBAL POLITICS AND DELINEATION OF JHARKHAND MOVEMENT IN BIHAR

#### I. Theory of Tribal Politics

Rural India right from the beginning contained the largest number of tribal population. The tribals of India are the autochthonous people of the land in the sense that they had been long settled in different parts of the country before the Aryan people penetrated India to settle down here. After the Aryans there came to this land civilised foreigners from various parts of the world mainly central Asia from across the north and north-eastern border of the country and settled here some of them, of course, for the time being. But in spite of it the indigenous tribal communities of India lived in relative security, seclusion and isolation for centuries and in varying degrees of agglomeration and in varying levels of primary economy. (They (tribals) had come to acquire through centuries the knowledge and experience of certain technologies, weaving, use of certain metals and certain crafts and a primary low level agriculture). They also lived in varying levels and degrees of contacts and communication with the communities of the peoples of

the jati social organisation. But whatever the levels, degrees or stages, they were on the whole able to maintain their separate jana identity. Each tribal community maintained its own socio-religious and cultural life and its political and economic organisation.<sup>1</sup>

It was only after the advent of the Britishers that a stir was felt and experienced in the midst of these tribal communities. Such a stir was slowly and steadily brought about by several factors and forces which differed from region to region not only in their intensity but also in accordance with the colonial needs and aspirations of the British rulers.

The British rulers had to open up the entire country to be able to rule effectively and intensively which obliged them to evolve eventually an effective and extensive communication system including postal, telegraphic, roadway and railway services. Effective and intensive rule called for a common administrative system that aimed at drawing as much as possible the entire country within its orbit, obliging the administration to set its officers, police

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1. Niharranjan Ray, "Introductory Address", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp. 10-17.

and army to the farthest and deepest depths of the land. There remained the primary obligation of the British colonialism to make military conquest as complete as possible from one end of the country to the other from east to west and from north to south. This called for internally a political and military policy that demanded maintenance of a strong thrust into all the resistance areas including the forest depths and hill sides and hill tops. This affected the tribal areas all over the country. New administrative, revenue, legal and judicial systems were evolved to transform the traditional self-sufficient tribal village economy into a market economy. New upper class of landlords, money-lenders, contractors and officials came into existence as a result of the British policies, and it constituted the backbone of the newly established British empire. This newly emerged upper class was instrumental in the economic transformation of the country. Christian missionaries penetrated deep into many tribal communities all over India, and converted a good many of them and exposed them to the modern world.<sup>2</sup> So the Britishers through the instrumentality of their policies created new social, economic, political and administrative

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2. Ibid., pp. 17-19.



institutions to serve their own selfish interests but which were detrimental to the tribal interests.

The cumulative effect of the new British policies was far reaching. This brought about tremendous changes in the life of tribal communities. The very fact that they were exposed to a wider life, quicker tempo, a modern legal and administrative system and altogether to a different way of life, the pressure of which was ever on increase, meant a great disturbance in those communities, economic, social and psychological. The first sign of such disturbances and stirrings started making themselves manifest already about the second quarter of the nineteenth century and in the civil disturbances that followed the great 1857 rebellion in which a fairly good number of these communities of people, spread over a wide area, found themselves involved. Even later in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first four decades of the twentieth century sporadic disturbances among the tribes and clashes with the authorities were frequent. The immediate and remote causes of these disturbances included interference in their social and religious customs and practices which were considered barbarous by the British authority, introduction of cash cropping in the areas of shifting and low level cultivation, alienation of their

community land, their exploitation by landlords, money-lenders, contractors, middlemen, police, forest and other officials and their claim for higher social status were attempts which were very often resisted by Jati Hindus.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the tribal communities were uprooted from their tribal mode of production. They lost their moorings from the tribal social organization, tribal religion and tribal cultural life. A large section of this tribal population was reduced to the status of bond slaves and serfs of moneylenders, samindars or landlords and contractors. They were also reduced to the category of near slave labourers working in plantation, mines, railway, road construction and other such enterprises. They were uprooted from their habitat and lived a wretched existence. A section of these tribes was branded as criminal tribes, as members of these tribes could only survive by methods officially described as crimes because of the loss of land and their non-accessibility to alternate occupations. They suffered from economic and political measures adopted by the Britishers to enhance their economic exploitation of the country. They also suffered from the new laws which were specifically formulated to serve the economic interests

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3. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

of the newly emerged upper class.<sup>4</sup> The British government adopted the policy of protective administration for the tribal areas in view of special problems and social situation of the tribals. It was the opinion of the government that normal laws should not be applied in the tribal areas. This principle underlay the passage of Scheduled Districts Act (1874) and shaped the concept of 'backward areas' under the Government of India Act of 1935. The tribal areas were termed as 'Excluded Areas' and were placed under the direct British administration. Institution of Development Boards for the excluded areas established by the British did not substantially alleviate their (tribals') alienation.<sup>5</sup>

Before Independence, the stirrings and civil disturbances among the tribal communities took the form of sporadic revolts and uprisings like Revolts of Assam tribes under GONDHAR KONWAR in 1828, Revolts of Khasis of Assam in 1829, Great Kol insurrection in Bihar in 1831-32, Kol revolts in Gujarat in 1838, Bhil Revolts under KUNWAR JIVE

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4. A.R. Desai, "Tribes in Transition", in A.R. Desai (ed.), Rural Sociology in India (Bombay, 1969), p.225.

5. K.S. Singh, "Transformation of Tribal Society: Integration Vs Assimilation", EPW, 14th August 1982, p.1320.

Vasavo in Gujarat in 1840, Revolts of Chakra Bisoyi, the Khond tribal leader in 1850, the Santhal Rebellion of 1855, Birsa uprisings of 1895-1900, Rani Gaidallo's Nagar non-Christian revolts (Assam) in 1932, etc.<sup>6</sup> These revolts were under the leadership of local traditional elites. These tribal uprisings on the whole had social and religious overtones of abolition of feudal and semi-feudal forms of land ownership and transfer of land to the actual tillers. These uprisings in the course of time also became political when they joined the wider national movement for independence and no-tax campaign against the alien government. But most of the uprisings were suppressed and in the long run, the tribals had to comply with the British policies which were detrimental to their interests. By the third and fourth decades of this century, in many of these tribal communities signs were evident enough that a new self-consciousness and a consciousness of their social, economic and political rights was introducing new disturbing elements into their overall political life and activities.

The problems of the tribals continued after independence despite the strategy of developmental change adopted by the

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6. V. Raghavaiah, "Tribal Revolts in Chronological Order: 1778 to 1971", in A.R. Desai (ed.), Peasant Struggle in India (Bombay, 1979), pp.23-27.

government. Therefore, the old tribal problems in the course of time also acquired new dimensions. Some new problems of sharper edge have also emerged such as security of job, decent standard of living, easy accessibility to resources of civilized life, acquisition of education which can enable them to decide what customs, what rituals, and what aesthetic cultural elements they should retain, eliminate or absorb from their own and alien cultures. The tribal problem is the issue of the establishment of a social order founded on the basis of equality of opportunity and elimination of exploitation.<sup>7</sup> In other words, their problem is their involvement in the mainstream of national life, economic development and social progress.

In post-independence period, the already emerged consciousness among the tribals also acquired new dimensions. The specific constitutional arrangements and the pledges of the government such as inclusion of democratic way of life, principles and procedures, adult suffrage, fundamental rights, directive principles for the guidance of the central and state governments and administration, secularism, economic system aiming at socialistic pattern of society and safeguards for the scheduled castes and scheduled

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7. Ibid., p.231.

tribes, proved conducive to the tribal consciousness and the tribal political activities.<sup>8</sup> Under the influence of new constitutional arrangements and already emerged consciousness an articulate and effective political elite emerged in several tribal areas. The new tribal political elite has not only acquired a taste for politics, but it is also vigorously contributing to the emergence of a new political idiom. It is not constrained by the conventional rules of political game; it makes its own rules as the play progresses. This elite rejects the solitude of those in power and has no use for their condescending benevolence. It is conscious of the tribal rights and is capable of making shrewd and calculated moves to gain their acceptance. Where such an elite does not exist, political parties, national, regional or local are moving in to fill the vacuum.<sup>9</sup> The various political parties are extending their zones of activities in the tribal areas. They have created numerous organisations in the tribal areas and even launched various movements to redress the grievances of the tribal population. The vocal, educated and richer section of the tribes all

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8. Miharranjan Ray, op. cit., pp.21-22.

9. S.C. Dube, "Inaugural Address", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Sinha, 1972), p.30.

over the country have also started independent political organisations of the tribal population with a view to securing concession which they feel to be beneficial to the tribes.<sup>10</sup> The problems of the tribals and their grievances are being politicised increasingly. These are being manipulated by the tribal elites and their political organisations to mobilize the tribal support behind them to enhance their own status, to occupy powerful political positions and to serve their own selfish interests.

Today the entire gamut of tribal problems have to be seen in a political perspective. Politics has emerged as the principal avenue through which they look forward to finding solutions to their manifold problems that have persisted in one form or another through centuries. The tribals through political actions, i.e. membership of political parties, participation in rallies, demonstration, voting, petitioning, marches, spontaneous revolts, armed struggle and guerilla warfare, seek to change their physical and social environment. They have evolved local political institutions as a shield to protect their social, economic and cultural interests. They also use the method of ballot box and elected representatives to the state assemblies

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10. A.R. Desai, op. cit., p.222

and House of the people to achieve their aims and demands. They use both parliamentary and non-parliamentary methods of struggle.<sup>11</sup>

In the last two decades there have been many new additions to the tribal needs, for the tribals have also undergone a limited revolution of rising aspirations. They are aware that in the contemporary politics, competitive pressures determine one's place and share in the decision making process. By being a part of this process they feel they can ensure not only the preservation of their self-interests but also gain proportionately larger share of scarce resources of economic development. In many areas they have discarded the satellite role they have played so far in the political process. There has been a noticeable shift in their political attitudes and strategies. From the politics of compliance and affirmation, they have moved over to the politics of pressure and protest. The tribal political elites in their efforts to capture the minds and votes of the tribals are adopting radical postures and fomenting militant agitations. The fire of discontent

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11. Joel S. Migdal, Peasant, Politics and Revolution: Pressures towards Political and Social Change in the Third World (London, 1974), pp.1-30;  
A.R. Desai, op. cit., pp.50-51.



is being fed by interested tribal and non-tribal agencies. The politicisation of the tribal scene in a sense is a natural and logical culmination of the democratic process. The political culture of the tribals is undergoing a radical transformation. The tribes are emerging from their 'subjective political culture' in which they did not question the validity or usefulness of the higher political decisions, and visualised their own role as one of compliance. In other words, they concerned themselves with output functions of the political system and were not bothered about its input process. But the emerging political culture is disturbing in several respects. It appears to be a cross between what Almond and Verba would call a 'parochial political culture' and 'participant political culture'. It is oriented more to subnational tribal identities than to a broader national identities. Where interests of smaller unit and larger unit clash, the tendency is to ignore or sacrifice the latter. This constriction of perspectives resulting in exclusive or excessive focus on purely regional, local or tribal interests and on their solutions unlinked with broader national interests imparts parochial overtones to the emerging political culture. The protagonists of this trend retort that they are not the only one in the country to

adopt this strategy and the realities of the contemporary social situation is on their side. On the other hand, there is also some welcome evidence of the emergence of a 'participant political culture' in which the people take an active interest in framing issues and formulating policies, question the validity and usefulness of higher political decisions when necessary and suggest rectifications to what are or what appears to be unjust decisions and policies. They have developed a concern both for the output and input process of the political system. This is a wholesome trend and it can be channelised to strengthen India's roots of democracy. But the uneasy mix of parochial and participant elements in this intermediate type of political culture raises as many problems as it solves, the main is harmonisation of national and tribal interests. Further this bi-faceted political trend visible in tribal India today is both conjunctive and disjunctive on the one hand a new tribal solidarity is being forged and on the other the tribals as a category are being alienated from the rest of country's population. Tribalness is now a powerful political factor and to exploit its full potential tribal groups at different techno-economic levels and representing different cultural ethos and patterns are being linked politically which has given rise to

separatist tribal political movements all over the country.<sup>12</sup>

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## II. Delineation of Jharkhand Movement

Across the belt of middle India running from the border of Gujarat through Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal lies a vast tract of undulating upland interspersed with hilly spurs and fertile valleys. The area is generally forested and the eastern part is richly endowed with valuable mineral deposits. It is peopled by and large by the tribal communities. There are 16 districts in this region belonging to Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Orissa<sup>13</sup>. This region is known as Jharkhand region. The proposed state of Jharkhand is supposed to consist of 7 districts of Bihar, 3 of West Bengal, 4 from Orissa and 2 from Madhya Pradesh. In the state of Bihar this region is covered by the Chotanagpur division (consisting of five districts Ranchi, Palamu, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad and Singhbhum) and Santhal Parganas and Giridih districts. The schedule

12. S.C. Dube, op. cit., pp.30-33.

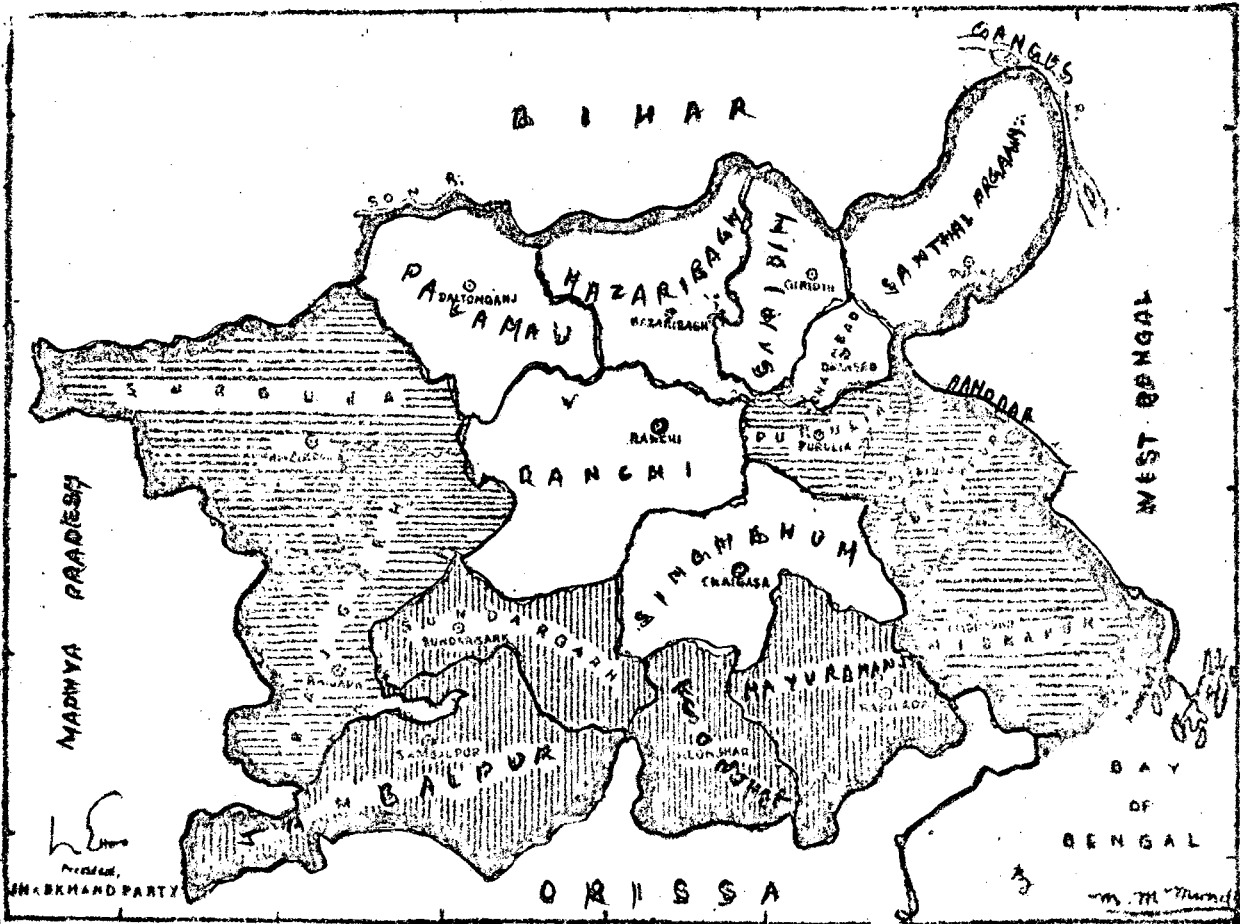
13. The word 'Jharkhand' means a 'Tract of forest' or 'Forest Region' or 'Bush land'. It is also known as 'Khukha'. The Moghul emperors gave the name of Jharkhand to this region due to vast and thick forest. Britishers called this region as Jungle Mahal.

area in the state of Bihar are restricted to Ranchi district, the Lathohar and Dalbhum subdivisions in Palamau and Singhbhum districts respectively, and Raj Mahal, Godda and Dumka subdivisions of Santhal Parganas district. The tribal areas in Orissa are Kconjhar, Borai, Bombra, Gangupur and Mayurbhanj; in MP, Sarguja, Jashpur, Udaipur, Korea; in West Bengal this region is covered by Purulia, Bankura and Midnapore. Ninety percent of the tribal population in this so called Jharkhand region is concentrated in the 7 districts of South Bihar. The density of tribal population in Bihar differs from district to district. Ranchi has the highest concentration of tribal population 58.08 percent. The next highest concentration of the tribals is in Singhbhum about 46.1 percent. In Palamau, Dhanbad, Giridih, Hasaribagh and Santhal Parganas districts, the tribals constitute 19.1 percent, 10.6 percent, 13.7 percent, 8.7 percent and 36.2 percent respectively. Taken together the total tribal population of Bihar is about 49.33 lakh, which constitute about 8.76 percent of the total population of Bihar.<sup>14</sup>

The tribals of this Jharkhand region belong to the proto Australoid stock, though traces of Mongoloid strains

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14. Census of Bihar, 1971.



### THE PROPOSED JHARKHAND STATE

According to a document of the Jharkhand Party (Jharkhand State: What, Why, How? Jharkhand Party Manifesto, Church Press, Ranchi, 1979), the proposed State would comprise 16 districts (7 from Bihar, 3 from West Bengal, 4 from Orissa and 2 from Madhya Pradesh). The document says that the Jharkhand Party will not insist on the inclusion of parts of Gaya, Shahabad, Munger, Bhagalpur and Mirzapur districts of Bihar, though they form part of Jharkhand — because that would disrupt the administrative unity of Bihar. Therefore, the real area and population of Jharkhand State as conceived would be more than stated below:

The proposed State will have an area of 1,87,646 sq. kilometres. Its population according to the 1971 Census was estimated to be

25,984,748. The community-wise break-up is:

Tribals	9,239,769
Scheduled Castes	3,752,605
Non-tribals (non-Scheduled and non-exploitative communities living in Jharkhand for fairly long time)	12,992,374
Total	25,984,748

(The non-tribal population consists of those who have been living in Jharkhand since ancient times plus those Marwari, Bengali, Oriya, Punjabi and Gujarati traders who came to Jharkhand several decades back and today consider themselves Jharkhandis. These figures do not include migrant industrial workers from north Bihar.)

have also been found in parts of Santhal Parganas. They are of average height, darkbrown in colour and generally healthy.<sup>15</sup> They belong to about thirty different tribal communities each with distinctive culture and institutions, like Munda, Oraon, Ho, Santhals, Kherwar, Birhors, Birjia, Lohra, Bhuiya, Chik-Baraik, Binjia, Asar, Sauria Paharia, Maler, Banjara, Corait, Karmali and Korwar, etc.<sup>16</sup> But the most important tribes are those of Munda, Ho, Oraon and Santhal and they constitute about 80 percent of the total tribal population in Bihar.

The tribes of Bihar have a number of languages of their own. Most of the tribal languages fall into two categories - the Austrie and Dravidian. Mundari, Ho, Santhali, Kharis, Birhori, etc. belong to the Austrie family, while Kurukh, the language of Oraon and Malto, and the language of Maler of Santhal Parganas belong to the Dravidian group. Mundari, Santhali, Ho and Oraon are well developed languages and these have their own literature. The script is either Devnagri or Roman. The large number of the tribals of the region speak Hindi or one of its

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15. Sachchidanand, "Tribal Situation in Bihar", in K. Suroch Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), p.170.

16. L.P. Vidyarthi, Cultural Contours of Tribal Bihar (Calcutta, 1964), p.394.

dialect like Magadhi, Bhojpuri, Gowai or Sadani. 17.64 percent of the tribes in Bihar speak Hindi as their mother tongue. Another 17 percent are bilingual and besides their mother tongue they speak Hindi or one of its dialects as a second language. On Bengal and Orissa border they speak Bengali and Oriya as secondary languages. In Chotanagpur the language of the weekly market and smaller towns is Sadani or Gowari whose script is like Hindi but vocabulary contains a large number of tribal words. <sup>17</sup>

It is this so called 'Jharkhand region' where a political movement popularly known as 'Jharkhand Movement' is going on. But this Jharkhand movement did not begin as such. As a matter of fact, it was preceded by a number of social movements, which very often took the form of revolts like 'Santhal Rebellion of 1855' and 'Birsa uprising of 1895-1900' extending over about more than two centuries. The movements and rebellions preceding the present Jharkhand movement were mainly ethnic and aimed at tribal awakening and social and economic upliftment. In addition to being religious and cultural, (they also aimed at transforming the then existing society in general and tribal in particular and getting salvation

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17. Sachchidanand, op. cit., pp. 170-71.

from the exploitation and oppression by the outsiders. They asserted their tribal identity not inferior in any sense to that of their exploiters. They aimed at increasing ethnic unity, purity and prosperity through reformed religion and to resist the encroachment by the outsiders on their ancestral land and institutions.

The various tribal communities of the region lived in villages peacefully in freedom and relative isolation upto the sixteenth century. It was from this century onwards that the infiltration of the outsiders into this region began to take place. The Moghul emperor Jahangir invaded this region mainly Chotanagpur and began to take annual tribute from the king of Chotanagpur. The king of Chotanagpur and various tribal chiefs became feudaries of the central Moghul authority. The Raja in order to strengthen his feudal base gave land to the caste Hindus and Muslims for their religious and military services, who migrated from the adjoining areas of north into this region and this way the exploitation and oppression of the tribals of the region began. The advent of East India Company in the second half of eighteenth century added a new dimension to the socio-economic exploitation and oppression of the tribals. The British colonialists exploited and oppressed them in collusion with Hindu



landlords, Bengali moneylenders, traders and contractors. So with the advent of the 'Dikus',<sup>18</sup> the early traditional social, economic and political relations, traditional order and institutions began to disintegrate. The traditional tribal economy was transformed into market economy by the 'dikus' to protect and promote their own interests. just as there had been a clash of economic interests, similarly there had been a clash of culture also between the tribals and the non-tribal vested interests bulwarked by the ruling authority, the Britishers. The tribals reacted fiercely when their religious beliefs were scoffed at, their independence was attacked, their traditional customs and manners, civil rights, judicial systems, standards of etiquette, prestige and code of conduct were brushed aside and their deep rooted conventions were ignored, insulted and violated.<sup>19</sup> Thus the tribal

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18. Diku is a tribal term which is used for the foreigners, i.e. those who came from outside into this tribal region and indulged themselves in the exploitation and oppression of the local tribals of the region. It is interesting to note that the connotation has changed from time to time. Originally the term 'Diku' was used to mean zamindars and his employees, who were non-tribals. Later on, it began to be used to mean non-tribals of upper caste including Britishers. At present it is used to mean the people from North Bihar. See Surajit Sinha, Sen and Panchbhai, "The Concept of Diku Among Tribes of Chotanagpur", Man in India (Banchi), 1969, vol.49, No.2, pp.121-36.

19. V.R. Raghaviah, "Background of Tribal Struggles in India", in A.R. Desai (ed.), Peasant Struggle in India (Bombay, 1979), p.14.

people were never able to recover from the inferior economic position to a marginal subsistence level in which they were placed as a result of the super-imposition of the new economic system by the dikus. Quite logically, therefore, insecurity and frustration led to angry revolts and movements, the purpose of which was to preserve their land under traditional system of land tenure, and their social, cultural, economic and religious beliefs - a way of life which is clearly bound up with their traditional land-tenure system.

Dr. Raghavaiah reports that there were more than seventy tribal revolts in India extending over a period of nearly two hundred years. Out of them, about 20 revolts took place in the so called Jharkhand region.<sup>20</sup> Some of the important tribal revolts and movements which took place in this region were: the Revolt of Raja of Dalbhum, Bhumi Chaur of Manbhum, Revolts of Kolar Hos, and Mundas in Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargans (1795-1800), Tamar Revolts in 1801, Chotanagpur Tribal Revolt (1807-08), the Great Kol Insurrection (1831-32), Santhal Uprising (1855-56), Bokta Rising and Rai Movement of 1857, Sardari

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20. F. Raghavaiah, Tribal Revolts in India (Bellare, 1971), pp.261-66.

Larai or Mukti Larai Movement 1858-1895, Kherwar Movement of 1833, Tamar Revolt of 1820, Birsa Movement of 1895-1900, Bhagat Movement of 1902, Kol Insurrection of 1931-32, etc. We shall give a short description of some of the tribal revolts and movements which would be helpful in the delineation of the current Jharkhand Movement in this region through various phases since its inception.

Among the earliest tribal revolts was the Tamar Revolt which was repeated over 7 times between 1789-1832. Under Bholanath Sahay of Tamar the tribals revolted against the British authority and its army in Midnapore, Koelpur, Bhaicha, Ghatshila, Jhalda, Silli, Tamar and in the adjoining areas. This revolt was very much due to the faulty and alien system of government.

In 1832, the arrows of war were circulated throughout the region. The Oraon, Mundas and Hos or Kols who are ethnically, linguistically and culturally distinct joined the insurgents under the leadership of Ganga Narain Singh, a member of Banbhum Raj family. The main stronghold of this rebellion was the present Singhbhum district with Chaibasa as the administrative headquarter. In each village of the area, the dikus were murdered and their houses were burnt and plundered. From this time onwards,

the 'Kols' came to be known as 'Lakra Kols' because they proved to be splendid fighters. The British authority was not prepared for the outbreak of a rebellion of such a magnitude. Finally, the revolt was put down in 1832-33. Kolhan or Ho country was annexed as government estate. Simple rules for the administration of Kolhans were drawn up, though the system of government through the 'Ho' tribal head was maintained.<sup>21</sup>

The Kherwar Movement of the Santhals in 1833 was motivated by the desire to return to an idealised past of tribal independence. The word 'Kherwar' is said to be an ancient name of Santhals and in their minds it is inseparably associated with the golden age of their history when they lived in an absolute independence and they had not to pay tribute to the king except a small offering to their leaders in virtue of their offices.<sup>22</sup> This

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21. R.O. Dhan, "Tribal Movement in Chotanagpur", in S.C. Mulic (ed.), Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilisation (Simla, 1977), p.202; Phillip Ekka, "Revivalist Movements Among the Tribes of Chotanagpur", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp.429-30; L.P. Vidyarthi, "Leadership Pattern Among the Tribals of Chotanagpur", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), p.442.
22. Letter to the editor, The Statesman (Calcutta), Nov. 8, 1880.

movement started under the charismatic leadership of Bhagirath Manjhi of Godda subdivision, who assumed the title of 'Babaji' and announced that he would restore the Golden Age of the Santhals if they return to the worship of one God and clean themselves from their sins. As a king of the new Santhal Raj he endeavoured to liberate the Santhals from the oppressors like Sahibs, samindars and Mahajans. He exhorted the Santhals to worship the Hindu deity Ram who he identified with the Santhal 'Cando' and banned eating pigs and fowls. He assured them that their land would be recovered. Their present oppression and exploitation, he explained, is a divine punishment for abandoning the worship of one God and turning to the veneration to the minor and evil spirits. Later on, he imposed on the Santhals the rules of behaviour which reflected Hindu notion of ritual purity and pollution. Fuchs suspects Christian influence in the early phases of this movement. Later on it took more political turn by planning a revolt for driving away non-Santhals out of their habitat.<sup>23</sup>

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23. Joseph Troiso, "Social Movement among Santhals", in M.S.A. Rao (ed.), Social Movements in India (New Delhi, 1979), vol.II, p.434; Stephens Fuchs, Rebellious Prophets (Bombay, 1965), pp.46-59.

Bokta Rising, Sardari Larai or Mukti Larai Movement of 1858-95 took place in various parts of Chotanagpur. Sardari Larai (the war of leaders) Movement was restorative, i.e. to attain their ancient rights on land by expelling hated landlords through revolution. According to K. Suresh Singh, Sardari Larai Movement evolved through three phases - Agrarian phase (1858-1881), the Revivalistic phase (1881-1890) and Political phase (1890-1895).<sup>24</sup>

The Santhals further revolted in 1855 against the exploitation and oppression by the zamindars who were endowed with unjust powers of ownership of the land which the Santhal cultivated for many years as their own land. This rebellion of Santhals was also against the village moneylenders and official autocracy who were empowered to imprison the poor peasants in the event of their failure to repay the debts. The Santhals never thought that they could be evicted from their ancestral land holdings and forests and that they will be deprived from their cattle and grain crop due to failure to pay taxes and debts, but that came to be the order of the day. Two brothers Sidhu and Kanhu provided leadership to the discontented Santhals.

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24. B.K. Roy Burman, "Social Movements Among Tribes of India", Secular Democracy, Annual Number, vol.IV, Nos. 3 & 4, p.29.

They met at Bhagnadih where Sidhu and Kanhu announced that it is a divine order for the Santhals to get ready to do away with the exploitation and oppression by the outsiders, take possession of their land and establish a government of their own. As many as 35,000 Santhals formed the bodyguard of their leaders. They armed themselves with their traditional weapons bow and arrows, axes and swords and marched towards Calcutta to place a petition before the governor to free them from their oppressors. But one police inspector obstructed their march and provoked them into violence. Thus started their rebellion and their resultant massacre at the hands of the Britishers. The rebellion lasted for 60 days. The Santhal rebellion forced the government to review its policy towards the Santhal tribals. An area of 5,000 sq. miles was carved out as 'non-regulation' district and it was named as 'Santhal Parganas'. One administrative authority was set up to recover alienated lands from the immigrant landlords in order to return them to the tribals, the original owners. So this Santhal rebellion was absolutely a restorative movement which aimed at complete annihilation and expulsion of the exploiters and oppressors both indigenous and foreigners, and reversion to the previous government and earlier rules of agrarian and social

relations.<sup>25</sup>

In 1895, due to encroachment of Munda land by the immigrant landlords, allurements of Munda labourers to the tea estates of Assam by wily recruiting agents and a famine, Birsa Munda arose as a prophet and started preaching a new religion.) Birsa received teachings from both the Lutheran missionaries and Hindu ascetics, but later reverted to his Munda religion bringing with him beliefs and images from both the major faiths. He taught the Mundas that he was a divinely appointed messenger who came to deliver them from the foreign rule. (He came to be popularly known as 'Bhagwan' and Dhartiabha (the father of the world).) He claimed that his mission was to save the faithful from destruction in imminent flood, fire and buimstone by leading them to hill top of a mountain. Beneath them all the Britishers, Hindus and Muslims would perish, after which Munda kingdom and self-rule (Abua Raj) will usher in. Birsa preached Hindu ideals of ritual purity, morality and asceticism. The Birsa movement was a revitalisation movement but it started in a typical way of nativistic movement. This movement

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25. Dr. K.K. Dutta, Sonthal Incurrection (Calcutta, 1940).



contained elements of both resistance and emulation. It was also reformative and messianic-cum-chilistic movement. It was emulative in so far as it borrowed a lot of cultural practices of Hindu and Christian religion. On the eve of Christmas in 1899 several murderous attacks were made by Birsaite on the landlords, moneylenders and British officials. They refused to surrender to the soldiers and when the first volley of British bullets fell short of range, the rebels were convinced that the bullets had indeed turned into water, and so they rushed at the soldiers who shot down some twenty of the rebels at point blank range. Birsa was captured and put into jail where he died. He was publicly crucified in order to convince his followers that he was not a God, but a mere mortal like other ordinary man. Yet many still believe that Birsa is not dead and he will return some day to save his people.<sup>26</sup>

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26. S.P. Sinha, "Portrait of Munda Leader Birsa Bhagwan", in L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), Leadership in India (Bombay, 1967), pp. 169-76; S.C. Roy, The Mundas and Their Country (Calcutta, 1912); J.P. Sinha, Life and Times of Birsa Bhagwan (Patna, 1964); K. Suresh Singh, Dust, Storm and Hanging Mist - A Study of Birsa Munda and His Movement in Chotanagpur (1874-1901) (Calcutta, 1966).

The Tana Bhagat movement among Oraons of Western Chotanagpur in 1902 was a product of economic pressure, oppression, exploitation and deprivation from land. Like other tribal communities, the tana Bhagats attributed all their ills and troubles to the tribal system itself, i.e. their God and spirits who failed to safeguard their interests. The remedy was thus to reform their old customs and find out a new system which would raise their present degraded position to such a higher level as was occupied by the Hindus and the Christians. Tana Bhagat was a 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 against the oppressive samindars, moneylenders and new administrative, judicial, legal and land-tenure system. The new movement passed through two phases. The first was that of cleaning and purging, i.e. by destruction and expulsion of old spirits and Gods which had brought nothing but misery. The second was that of building up and consolidation of a new faith by proscribing special rules of conduct on the pattern of Hindu rituals of purity and pollution. This movement began as a religious movement under the leadership of Jatra Oraon. But later on, it became revivalistic and reformative and

political, when Tana Bhagats joined the non-cooperation movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in 1921.<sup>27</sup>

In the third decade of the twentieth century, the most important uprising was of Kolé in 1931-32 which began under similar circumstances and it was similar to other movements in terms of nature. ✓✓

Thus the history of this so called Jharkhand region has been one of continuous exploitation and dispossession of tribal people punctured by disorder and rebellions, firstly, in order to express their grievances and vindicate their rights, the tribal communities of the region, from time to time, rose in rebellions intending only to kill and expel the Hindus and Muslim landlords, moneylenders and Britishers, who grabbed their land. But they found themselves committed to hopeless fight with spears and axes, bows and arrows against an armed government. The government with political and military power in its hand was able to suppress with ease the various rebellions and movements, yet it did hardly anything to investigate

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27. S.C. Roy, "A Religious Movement Among Oraons", Man in India (Ranchi), 1921, vol.I, No.4, pp.266-331; R.O. Dhan, "The Problems of Tana Bhagats of Ranchi", Bulletin of Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Ranchi District, 1960, vol.II, No.1, pp.136-86; Stephens Fuchs, op. cit., pp.35-46.

into their living conditions and passed laws to protect its own interests. Secondly, the various rebellions and movements which took place in this region were sporadic, isolated, unorganized and spontaneous incidents. In each rebellion and movement only one tribal community was involved and, moreover, it was confined to only one particular locality and directed against local oppressors and exploiters despite the fact that all the tribal communities of the region suffered from the deprivation of same kind. That is why alien government could easily suppress all the rebellions and movements. ~~Thirdly,~~ these rebellions and movements had a mixed character, i.e. these had economic, social, religious and political content. These were mainly due to economic exploitation and oppression of different tribal communities by the Britisher which was hand in gloves with indigenous landlords and moneylenders. Just as there had been a clash of economic interests, similarly there had been a clash of cultures also between the tribals and the non-tribal vested interests bulwarked by the Britishers. The tribals reacted fiercely when their religious beliefs were scoffed at, when their independence was attacked, when their traditional customs, manners, civil rights, judicial system, standard of etiquette, prestige and code of conduct

and honour were brushed aside and deep-rooted conventions were ignored, insulted and violated.

Sometimes during the rebellions and movements, the tribal communities made a common cause with the freedom movement when it made inroads into this tribal region. This was under the leadership of nationalists and later on under Mahatma Gandhi. The leaders of various tribal communities saw in the freedom struggle an opportunity for the recovery of tribal raj, earlier rights and agrarian relations, which they lost gradually under the alien domination.<sup>28</sup> But in spite of it, these rebellions and movements were not political in absolute sense of the term.

In the various rebellions and movements mentioned above, mainly tribal interests were involved, i.e. the locus of these movements was tribalism and they remained at the local and regional level. Their dominant issue of interest was emancipation from socio-economic exploitation and oppression by the outsiders (Dikus). Therefore, it was both against imperialists and indigenous exploiters.

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28. K. Suresh Singh, "A Study in Tribal Politics and Movement in Chotanagpur from 1900 to 1975", in S.C. Kulic (ed.), Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilisation (Simla, 1977), pp.317-18.

In terms of consequences, differential orientation to the existing culture and society, goals, ideology and methods of organization, these various tribal rebellions and movements were of five types - (1) Restorative movement to drive out alien rulers and oppressors and restore earlier rules and social relationships, (2) Religious movements for the liberation of a region or an ethnic group under a new form of government, (3) Social Banditry,<sup>29</sup> (4) Terrorist vengeance with ideas of meting out collective justice, (5) Mass insurrection for the redressal of particular grievances. The first and second of these types are transformative in the sense that they sought from the beginning and sometimes briefly achieved a large scale restructuring of the society. Restorative revolts were, however, backward looking. Religious tribal movements have been nativist in combining traditional cultural elements and values with new themes, sometimes derived from oppressive group in a utopian vision of golden age. The third, fourth and fifth types were initially reformative in the sense that they aimed at only partial changes in

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29. This term has been used by Hobsbawm. See E.J. Hobsbawm, "Primitive Rebels" (Manchester University Press, 1959), pp.13-29; E.J. Hobsbawm, "Bandits" (The Trinity Press, London, 1969), pp.13-23.

the society. But the third and fifth types, however, sometimes became transformative and led to seizure of liberated zone. The fourth type 'terrorist vengeance' took place sporadically and spontaneously with little or no organization. It occurred many times in all areas of the region in the form of small outbursts of retaliation against local landlords, moneylenders, etc. Occasionally, this terrorist vengeance developed into an organized movement involving religious cult. It was usually present to some degree in all the other four types. The religious movements were not only confined to attempt to liberate an ethnic group or a region; some bandit groups and terrorist movements had special religious cults and both restorative and insurrections had usually been inspired by normal religious sentiments. The religious movements for the liberation very often involved messianic, millenarian and chiliaotic characteristics. There were at least ten tribal movements with messianic and millenarian overtones. All of them had divine or prophetic leaders who were believed to possess supernatural power and looked forward to a terrestrial state of righteousness and justice in which their enemies would be defeated and removed. Most of them were transformative rather than reformatory in their expectation of a sudden and total change and most

believed in Golden age to be imminent and subject to some kind of supernatural intervention. They were directed against Britishers and those familiar foes, the landlords, merchants, moneylenders, revenue agents, bureaucracy, troops and police. It is to be remembered that the various rebellions and movements which took place in this region did not belong to one particular category. They had mixed character in terms of consequences and orientation to the then existing society and culture. They were reformatory, revolutionary, transformative, revivalistic, nativistic, revitalistic, chthonic and messianic in various phases of their evolution. They began in sporadic and unorganised form as reformatory movements, but gradually they became revivalistic and then transformative. They were also pre-political and primitive in the special sense that they were not addressed to the future of the nation state and thus were doomed to failure when they aimed at revolution. They were, however, politically progressive in the sense that they sought a new state of tribal society which could combine freedom from alien rule together with some traditional virtues and modern technology and popular government rather than merely reverting to pre-British social structure. They amply illustrated the remarkable organizing ability of the tribals, their potential discipline and solidarity



their determined militancy in opposing imperialism and exploiting class relations, their inventiveness and potential military prowess and their aspiration for a more democratic and egalitarian society.<sup>30</sup>

The rebellions and movements mentioned above occurred under the condition of relative deprivation, i.e. deprivation considered outrageous relative to the past, present expected or feared future status. The tribals of the region were subjected to multiple deprivations due to multiple factors. They were deprived economically owing to the introduction of the system, e.g. rent, bagari, thikadari and samindari, which received fresh impetus with the abolition of khuntkatti<sup>31</sup> or Bhuinhari rights. They were culturally and emotionally deprived because of non-redressal of their grievances despite their conversion to Christianity, and experienced the impact of Hindu values - the latter led even to their social ostracisation. They experienced political deprivation in the sphere of decision-making, which in the later phases led them to agitate for

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30. Kathleen Gough, "Indian Peasant Uprisings", in A.R. Desai (ed.), Peasant Struggle in India (Bombay, 1979), pp.94-112.

31. The meaning of this term will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

a separate state. It was their perception of exploiting situations which led them to launch movements and rebellions against the then existing social situation.<sup>32</sup>

The early tribal rebellions and movements very often contained important features of social mobility through emulation, or we can say that they were also emulative movements in certain respects which aimed at emulating cultural patterns of higher Hindu castes which surrounded the various rebellious tribes in the region. The traditional tribal elites who spearheaded the rebellions and movements realised the low inferior status and so they emphasized on, incorporating Sanskrit religious symbols and practices such as giving up eating meat, drinking rice-beer and other intoxicants, taking to vegetarianism, adopting the habits of daily purificatory baths and use of sacred threads, worship of one God and giving up worshipping the evil spirits, etc. Though the tribals hated Hindu oppressors like anything and wished triumph over them but still they emulated their cultural patterns which were definitely superior to their own. They were influenced by the traditions

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32. K.K. Verma and Romesh Sinha, "Socio-Political Movements among the Mundas and Oraons", in Bhupinder Singh and J.S. Bhandari (ed.), The Tribal World and Its Transformation (New Delhi, 1980), pp.12-14.

and institutions of their neighbouring Hindu communities. They borrowed heavily from the Hindu ideas and institutions. As a result various aspects of tribal life, viz. material, social, economic, linguistic and religious, had been affected by the Hindu culture. Martin Orsons calls this phenomenon of emulation process the 'Rank Concession Syndrome'. The pattern of socio-cultural activities of attaining higher rank is guided essentially by broad nature of "Rank path". If the rank path is essentially economic, then the tribes, particularly their upper strata move in the direction of emulating the cultural patterns of dominant Hindus. It further means the acceptance of social inferiority. By conceding rank to the dominant Hindus, the tribals placed themselves in an inferior status. Their resentment of low status produced in them a tendency towards emulation of what Orsons calls 'power incorporative borrowing'. The entire process is similar to Srinivas's concept of 'Sanskritisation' and Bose's 'Hindu Model of Tribal Absorption'.<sup>33</sup>

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33. Martin Orsons, The Santhals - A Tribe in Search of Great Tradition (Detroit, 1965), p.33; Surajit Sinha (ed.), "Intra Ethnic Relations and Social Mobility Movement among Some Tribes of Eastern and Central India", Anthropological Bulletin, No.8, Calcutta, 1958.

Earlier uptill 1910, the tribal grievances in the region found expression in the rebellions and movements which remained localized. They were sporadic, unorganized isolated and spontaneous. Each revolt was started by one tribe in one locality against the local oppressors and exploiters. But from 1910 onwards, the political elements began to emerge in the tribal movements and revolts of the region, when the Christian tribal elites began to realize the need of a pan-tribal organization which would cut across all the tribal localities of the region, unify all the tribal communities under its banner, and fight for the redressal of their grievances. They further realized that unless and until they reject the outsiders from the position of power, they would not be able to protect and promote the interests of tribal communities of the region. This trend gradually culminated in the organisation of pan-tribal organisation, viz. Jharkhand Party in 1950, which began to spearhead the Jharkhand movement in the region. The earlier tribal movements were transformed into a party based movement and a new secular model emerged, which symbolized the aspirations and needs of the local and regional people. The basic underlying forces of the Jharkhand movement are still economic and ethnic and not political, the political

culture of the movement is a strategy or a consequence of these forces rather than a determining factor. The Jharkhand movement has been initiated in response to deprivation relative to present expected and feared future, by the tribal elites. They perceive deprivation relative to opportunity of getting scarce economic resources, share in political decision-making and feeling of powerlessness, for the removal of their agrarian grievances. [The activists of the Jharkhand movement sensitized the masses that they were being given less than what they (tribals) should get. [The ideology of the movement has been drawn up on the basis of relative deprivation in the areas of economic, political, civic and educational spheres of tribal life. This ideology is giving a motivational force to the movement, and modern strategies are being adopted to mobilize the support of the tribals. The Jharkhand movement aims at, rightening those wrongs under which the tribal communities of the region suffer, getting share in the state (Bihar) power structure and political machinery in the region represented by the Jharkhand, and finally winning autonomy in the tribal blocks and a separate state of Jharkhand.] The Jharkhand party aims at extension of democratic rights of the tribal people. It has drawn up a constitution - a statement of principles and objectives

like any other political party. By holding conferences and meetings it seeks to stimulate political awareness among the tribals of the region and keep them united. It provides an effective leadership to the tribals of the region and the movement itself in a sort of training in political education and democratic way of life. This movement has acquired a sub-national character which finds expression in tribalism, regionalism and localism and as such it compels to give a second thought to the issue of reconstruction of Indian polity along healthy federal principles. This also indicates a shift from 'subjective political culture', in which though the tribals opposed the governmental policies through revolts and movements, but they were suppressed and made to conform to the said policies, to what is called a mixture of 'parochial political culture' and 'participant political culture' in which the tribals are concerned more with their own problems at regional level and they want to play important role in the decision-making process of policy formulations which are likely to affect their interests in the region.

Thus now the earlier tribal revolts and movements have been replaced by one unified Jharkhand movement. It has become routinised in the form of political party with an established institutional procedure of recruitment,

commitment, code of conduct and sanctions for punishing deviants. It has become a part of institutionalized system losing the innovative features of social movement. Now it is absolutely a political movement and promises to be a more effective means of expression of attitudes and actions of tribal communities in the region. As a political movement, it is also endowed with all the characteristics of political movement and political party in its process.

### CHAPTER III

#### PROBLEMS OF THE TRIBALS IN JHARKHAND REGION OF BIHAR

The various tribal communities in the so-called Jharkhand region of Bihar (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas) lived in villages peacefully in relative isolation and security until the sixteenth century. The tribals had a very simple way of life and economic activities. Their main means of production were land and forest over which they had 'Khuntkatti'<sup>1</sup> or 'Bhuinheri' rights. Khuntkatti was a system of land tenure. The individual cultivators were known as 'Khuntkattidars' or 'Bhuinheris'. Each tribal Khuntkattidar paid some amount of land produce to his respective tribal chief for his maintenance, but it was a moral requirement, not legal.<sup>2</sup> In addition the tribals

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1. The word Khuntkatti consists of two words - Khunt meaning poles, i.e. jungle which was cleared by a particular tribal community and which has been demarcated by fixing poles. Katti means felling of trees. Literally, it means those who cut the first poles. The tribals cleared the forests to make land cultivable and which has ever since been passing over from one generation to another. Khuntkatti rights in forests means, the traditional rights of the tribals to use the minor forest products, e.g. firewood, etc. for the domestic consumption and commercial purposes without any intervention on behalf of the authority.
  2. R.O. Dhan, "Tribal Movement in Chotanagpur", in S.C. Mukic (ed.), Dissent Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization (Sikla, 1977), pp.199-201.



also practised weaving, basket-making, fishing, hunting, food-gathering, etc.

The tribal communities of the region also developed a good pattern of traditional leadership and general administration. The traditional leadership consisted of both secular and sacerdotal village headmen who were known by different names in different tribes. General administration was run by tribal chiefs, the clan council and village panchayats. The office of the secular headman was hereditary while sacerdotal headman was chosen from a particular family by the method of divination from the dominant clan of the village. Among some tribes there were union of villages called 'parha', 'parganas' or 'pir' over which a divisional headman presided. This office was also hereditary. In Munda and Orson tribes the head of the parha used to preside over 'parha panchayat' whose office bearers had titles based on the officials in the court of the Maharaja of Chotanagpur. In Santal and Ho tribes the divisional headman enjoyed certain revenue and police powers too. In Kolhan and Singhbhum area the traditional leadership consisted of both the village headman (Mundari) and the divisional headman of the pir (Nanki). In Orson tribe the village headman was known as 'Mahto' and the parha head was known as 'parha-Raja'.

The village panchayat and the council of elders enforced the customary laws of kinship, marriage and inheritance. The 'union of villages' or 'perhas' evolved by the Mundas and Oraons were there to settle inter-village disputes and to enforce the customary tribal laws. About the sixth century A.D. the Mundas and the Oraons jointly selected a common leader or Raja. He was not the sovereign of land but acted as 'primus inter pares' during defence operations. He was given voluntary contribution in kind and a few days of free labour every year by the people.<sup>3</sup> This way the tribals of the region managed their own affairs until the beginning of Akbar's reign. After this, conditions began to change and many problems began to emerge gradually which have been discussed under the following sub-headings.

### Land Alienation

The problem of land alienation emerged due to four main factors.

The first factor operated towards the end of the sixteenth century when due to external conquest, the

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3. Phillip Ekka, "Revivalist Movement among Tribes of Chotanagpur", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), p.425; Sachchidanand, "Tribal Situation in Bihar", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), p.176.

tribal chiefs and the Raja of Chotanagpur became tributary of the vast Moghul empire. The Moghuls got attracted towards this tribal region mainly Chotanagpur by its reputation for diamonds, and after its conquest the governor of Bihar sent frequent detachments to Chotanagpur to collect diamonds as tribute. Since the roads were not garrisoned and the jungles impenetrable, the rulers had to remain satisfied with a small tribute of two or three diamonds. However, Jehangir sought to bring Chotanagpur into complete subjugation because he was not satisfied with the few diamonds and elephants that the Raja Durjan Sain the 46th Raja of Chotanagpur used to send to him. The entire region was overrun in 1616. The Raja was sent to Gwalior Fort as a prisoner for 12 years. Eventually the Raja was restored to his kingdom with a promise to pay an annual tribute of rupees six thousand. In the intermediate period there had been considerable infiltration of both the Hindus and Muslims into this region. The Raja gradually became Hinduised by marrying into the Rajput families of panchate in Singhbhum and Manbhum, and later in other Rajput families outside Chotanagpur. In the later half of the eighteenth century the Rajputs, Beraiks, Routees and Brahmans were brought into the region by the Raja to perform military and religious services. With the passage

of time they became a part of the Chotanagpur socio-economic fabric. Hindu warriors and Brahmin priests who came to the Raja's court had to be supported. The Raja assigned to many of them his own customary rights in land. But these alien assignees were not satisfied with what they got from the Raja. They made every effort to acquire proprietary rights on the land in tribal villages, and through this process succeeded in reducing the tribal proprietors to the position of tenants. Thus began the powers of the Raja and the alien assignees, who henceforth became saindars or landlords. The Raja and his saindars claimed legal ownership of the land and collected revenue. They acquired economic rights over tribal lands. The council of clan elders (parha council) and village panchayats were superseded and these were replaced by the council of Raja composed of his followers and companions. Moreover, in order to maintain his administrative staff, the Raja made gifts of land to his followers. The new set up led to the breakdown of the traditional 'Khuntkatti' and 'Bhuinhari' system of land tenure. Khuntkattidars and Bhuinharis were converted into the tenants. The rent-receiving middlemen reduced the tenants to the landless labourers.<sup>4</sup> Later on, the Raja and his courtiers farmed

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4. R.O. Dhan, op. cit., pp.201-02.

their villages to thikadars, whose debts they were unable to meet. The immigrant samindars and thikadars introduced land-rent in the tribal villages of Chotanagpur and forcibly ousted many tribals from their freeholds when they showed reluctance to pay rent or to render unlimited amount of begar or forced labour.<sup>5</sup>

Second factor responsible for the problem of land alienation was grant of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East Indian Company in 1765. With this Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas also passed into the hands of the Britishers. They wanted to convert the traditional self-sufficient village economy into the modern market economy in order to facilitate exploitation. Their first target was the land. In 1793 the traditional Khunkatti and Bhainheri land-tenure system was replaced by saindari and Ryotwari system of land tenure. This resulted in the advent of Hindu saindars, Bengali money-lenders, Muslims and Sikh traders from the adjoining areas into this region. The cumulative influence of this new set up was the land alienation of the tribals and their exploitation by the outsiders. Under the new set up the cultivator was required to pay the land revenue in cash

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5. Phillip Ekka, op. cit., p.425.

which very often affected him adversely owing to the fluctuating prices and failure of the crop. The land settlement of East India Company had commercial motive namely squeezing as much revenue from the tribal peasant as one could secure irrespective of his inability to pay the enhanced assessment fixed at an exaggerated estimate of the yield of the soil. The samindars paid a fixed amount to the British government, but released much more from the poor tribals. It was difficult for the tribals to arrange cash to pay revenue after domestic consumption and it drove them into the clutches of moneylenders. The tribals in order to pay revenue in cash mortgaged their lands and took loans from the moneylenders at exorbitant rate of interest. The tribals usually failed to pay revenue and loans and so their khuntkatti lands passed into the hands of samindars and moneylenders.<sup>6</sup>

The new legal and judicial system introduced by the Britishers was also instrumental in legalizing the occupation of the lands of the tribals by samindars, moneylenders and other outsiders. The immigrant landlords and moneylenders took advantage of the introduction of

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6. Ibid., p.425.

the Hindu police officers into Chotanagpur and opening up of new British courts at Chatra and Hazaribagh districts to obtain expert decrees to legalise their proprietary rights over tribal lands. The tribals were unfamiliar with the newly introduced British legal and judicial system and therefore they could not avail it to protect their interests in land. Before the advent of the Britishers the tribals were habitual to the village justice which was summary. It was meted out by the village elders who could be expected to know the merit of each case personally in some cases and by reliable horesey in other and did full justice to the disputing parties. The trial did not cost the tribals anything and they had no need to walk scores of miles to the British law courts for numerous adjournments, pay lawyers and argue out their cases, not by themselves as they would do in their own village justice but in different language through an intermediary who could not have grasped the implications of tribal customs and culture and could have no knowledge of the locality or its surroundings. In civil matters even when they at least got relief it was only on papers and they had to wait for longer durations executing their decrees and meeting endless hair-splitting, technical objections relating to irregularities in the process of attachment and sale, etc. This put the tribals into

unnecessary troubles and they ultimately realized that it was not the course of events so much as it was the skill of the lawyers and length of the client's purse that brought success in law courts, they got quite bewildered and lost faith in the fairness of British justice.<sup>7</sup> The Christian missionaries who entered into Chotanagpur around 1845 tried legal constitutional approach to regain tribal's lost rights in land. But the legal petitions of Christian leaders asking for an enquiry into land alienation problem and for return of alienated Khuntkatti and Bhuinhari lands were rejected by the British Government. Instead, the immigrant landlords and moneylenders were recognized as the owners of the ill-gotten land on the grounds of prescriptions.<sup>8</sup> The tribals resented the alienation of their Khuntkatti lands. They virtually do not distinguish between their land tenure system and their way of life; land is not only a possession but a real source of security, that is an integral part of the community life. Land is not only a source of food but spiritual home of ancestors and their descendants and the tribesmen believe that it has been granted to them

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7. V.R. Raghavaiah, "Background of Tribal Struggle", in A.R. Desai (ed.), Peasant Struggle in India (Bombay, 1979), pp. 14-15.

8. Phillip Ekka, op. cit., pp. 425-26.



by their ancestors. It is, therefore, symbolic of their exclusiveness as a community clearly distinguishable from the non-tribal community, in which the system of land tenure is completely different. It is apparent then that their social, cultural, religious beliefs and ways of life are clearly bound up with their traditional Khuntkatti system. Consequently any attack on the traditional system is a threat to their very existence as a separate tribal community.<sup>9</sup> The idea still persists in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas that the tribal descendants are the real owners of lands and it is still the main motive force of the present Jharkhand Movement and the tribal politics in Bihar.<sup>10</sup>

Third factor responsible for the problem of land alienation has been industrialisation and urbanisation of the region. This region is very rich in minerals. Coal, iron, copper, limestone, phyllite, chromite, asbestos, graphite, kyanite and steatite are found in abundance. The first wake of industrialization was felt in Chotanagpur with the exploitation of coal mining industry in Jharis,

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9. R.O. Dhan, op. cit., p.200.

10. Phillip Ekka, op. cit., p.430.

Bokaro, Karanpura coal fields in Dhanbad district in 1856 and installation of Tata Iron and Steel factory in Janshedpur in 1907. These twin industries of coal and iron marked the beginning of large scale exploitation of minerals and other industrial resources in Chotanagpur. The pace of industrialisation and urbanisation was accelerated in the post-independence period and it led to cultural mutation. Once isolated tribal communities of the region were exposed to the outside world. Mainly two reasons - sociological and technical - haunted the Government to select industrial sites in the region. The sociological reason was the question of development of an underdeveloped tribal area and providing them opportunities for employment and improving their standard of living. The technical reason was that since the land in the area is not fertile to produce enough crop for the subsistence of the tribals so it would be justifiable in opening up industries so as to give them alternate employment. Whatever be the reasons of industrialisation and urbanisation, it compelled the Government to acquire tribal land for the construction of railway stations, schools, colleges, roads, dams, hydro electric projects and thermal power stations, etc. The expansion of mining, and reservation and development of forests also put heavy demand on tribal lands and they

began to be forcibly ousted from their land and villages.<sup>11</sup> Particular attention should be given to development projects like dams, for instance, at Kamadara in Ranchi where the Keel Karo river valley project comprising two big dams and four power stations, and Subarnarekha projects are in progress, are expected to submerge about 350 villages affecting two lakhs of tribals. Since 1947 over six lakhs of tribal people have been made homeless as a consequence of development of Chotanagpur.<sup>12</sup> The Subarnarekha multi-purpose project under construction in Singhbhum alone has uprooted 95 villages and submerged 45,000 acres of agricultural land. During first three five year plans more than 60,000 families in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas have been uprooted to make room for public sector industrial projects.<sup>13</sup> The Jharkhand districts in Bihar supply 75 percent of the state's revenue and are said to contain 99 percent of its mineral wealth but get only 25 percent of the development expenditure. They generate 90 percent

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11. L.P. Vidyarthi, Socio-Economic Implications of Industrialization in India - A Case Study of Tribal Bihar (New Delhi, 1970), pp.5-39.

12. Arun Sinha, "Recurrent Adivasis", BPE, September 9, 1978, p.1544.

13. Ghanshyam Parassi, "Submerged Masses in Rich Area", Mainstream (New Delhi), 26th July, 1980, p.26.

of the state's electricity but only 5 percent of the tribal villages are electrified.<sup>14</sup> In acquiring tribal land for development projects, the Government also made discrimination in terms of acquisition rate which differed from place to place, e.g. in non-tribal area like Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela the acquisition rate per acre ranged from 30,000 to 40,000 while at Bokaro in Chotanagpur it was only 9,000 per acre. Since almost entire economy is based on land so the loss of land means loss of subsistence. Today with the development of this region the land alienation problem of the tribals is also increasing. As a result the ratio of land to the tribal population has gone down. There is so much pressure of the tribal population on the land that the tribals cannot make a living even during normal years.<sup>15</sup> While acquiring land the Government promised to rehabilitate the uprooted tribals, give them employment and compensation.

The amount of compensation paid to the displaced tribals was not adequate and it varied from place to place in accordance with the quality of the land acquired.

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14. Gail Omvedt, "Jharkhand Movement", Third World Unity (New Delhi), 22 September, 1979, p.39.

15. R.O. Dhan, op. cit., p.207.

According to the law, compensation could be given to displaced persons. This was not easy. There had been no survey settlement to assess the ownership in land. Tribals usually cultivated lands for years by reclaiming them from the forests without any legal rights over them. Very often the compensation paid to the tribals was a paltry amount in contrast to the amount paid to the non-tribals of the adjoining places. The amount received was readily spent in various ways. A study conducted in the region showed that although the tribals received the cash compensation for the loss of land, they spent most of the amount within three months for unproductive purposes due to lack of experience and knowledge. Moneylenders availed the opportunity to claim their dues. Liquor vendors and traders also claimed a good portion of the amount. Hence the tribals could not acquire new <sup>land</sup> level in lieu of the land they lost.<sup>16</sup> Middlemen like speculators in land, ploaders, munshis and clerks also cheated the simple tribals of a considerable amount of the compensation. Government promptly took remedial measures such as opening of postal savings, bank accounts, and post-masters were

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16. Nityanand Das, "National Projects and Displacement of Tribals", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp. 519-20.

sent to the places where the compensation money was to be paid to the tribals, to collect it and credit it to the account of the tribals concerned. Alternate land and other facilities like electricity, water, etc. were also given whenever feasible. Priority was given to provide employment to the qualified tribals in the industries for which their land had been acquired. A senior officer of the rank of Additional District Magistrate was placed in charge of rehabilitation and welfare of the uprooted tribals.<sup>17</sup>

Fourth factor responsible for the problem of land alienation was moneylending operations conducted by moneylenders, traders and progressive cultivators. They gave loans ranging from 500 to 1,000 to the poor tribals at exorbitant rate of interest during the period of scarcity, and fraudulently got receipt of amount ranging from 2,500 to 5,000. The ultimate result in all these cases was that the tribals had to part with their lands. The tribals still feel difficulty in retaining their land due to lack of credit facilities and they easily become victims of land grabbers, who are easy source of credit.

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17. I.N. Thakur, "Bihar", in S.N. Dubey and Ratna Murdia (ed.), Land Alienation and Restoration in Tribal Communities in India (Bombay, 1977), pp. 168-69.

The tribals of Chotanagpur still feel that all lands at present being owned by the non-tribals according to the last revisionary survey of 1924-29 actually belong to them. <sup>18</sup>

Legislative Enactments for the Containment of Land

Alienation: The problem of land alienation was the main reason of various tribal rebellions and movements in the region. Therefore, the Government passed many legislations from time to time to govern agrarian relations and to prevent alienation of the tribal land, viz. Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1869, Bengal Settlement Act, Bengal Tenancy Act and later Bihar Tenancy Act of 1885 and Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1903.

The first comprehensive legislation to prevent land alienation was Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 (C.T.A. of 1908) which covers the districts of Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Palamu, Dhanbad and Singhbhum. The major work of this Act was that the land of the traditional village headman came under the protection of the courts. The introduction of new <sup>levies</sup> ~~levies~~ (abwabs) and reintroduction

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18. Twentysixth Report - Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 1978-79 (New Delhi, 1980), Part I, pp.148-49.

of forced labour (begari) as part of rent demand were disallowed, and commutation of rent in kind into cash rent was emphasised once more. It restricted transfer of land from the ryots. After the enactment of this legislation the courts came to have possession of specially tailored law and also written records of rights which showed different rights and duties pertaining to the land. It improved the economic situation of the rural population to some extent.<sup>19</sup> Besides these no major changes were introduced through this Act in the subsequent years and most of its provisions are still in force despite some amendments in 1914, 1920, 1923 and 1929. Though the Act restricted the transfer of land, but in certain cases land was made transferable to mining companies but compensation was to be fixed by the Deputy Commissioner (D.C.). The power of the revenue authorities were also increased.<sup>20</sup>

In the district of Santhal Parganas the first Legislative Act concerning land reform was 'Santhal

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19. Detlef Schwerin, "The Control of Land and Labour in Chotanagpur", in Dietmar Rothermund and D.C. Wadhwa (ed.), Zamindars, Peasant and Mines (New Delhi, 1978), pp.64-66.
20. Dietmar Rothermund, "Tenancy Legislation for Chotanagpur", in Dietmar Rothermund and D.C. Wadhwa (ed.), Zamindars, Peasant and Mines (New Delhi, 1978), pp.81-82.



Parganas Settlement Regulation Act III of 1872'. This Act had been amended since that time in the light of new developments to protect the interests of Santhal peasants. In 1908 this Regulation of 1872 was amended in one important respect. Among many provisions one was emphasised by the settlement and accepted by the ordinary courts of the Santhal Parganas in the disposal of agrarian cases that ryot land cannot be made the subject of transfer. It empowered the D.C. to interfere with illegal alienation and enforce the provisions of the settlement records. This regulation also provided for the infliction of penalties on proprietors, headmen and ryots, who commit certain specific breaches of the record of rights.<sup>21</sup> The tenancy laws in Santhal Parganas were supplemented by Santhal Parganas Tenancy (Supplementary provisions) Act 1949 (S.P.T. Act of 1949) which is much more comprehensive. The most striking aspect of S.P.T. Act of 1949 is that a ryot cannot transfer his right in his holding by sale, gift, mortgage, will, lease or any other contract or agreement expressed or implied, unless it is specifically recorded in the record of rights and only to the extent to which

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21. P.C. Chaudhury, Bihar District Gazetteers - Santhal Parganas (Patna, 1965), pp. 471-74.

such right is so recorded. To prevent the land from going out of the hands of the aboriginal population, sub-clause 2 of the section 20 prohibits the transfer of land to a non-aboriginal; the transfer is permitted only in case of a bona-fide cultivating aboriginal ryot of the Parganas or Fuka or Topo in which the holding is situated or to his gharjamai (son-in-law) residing with him. The Act has been partially relaxed through section 21 to permit usufructuary mortgage of land on bhugatbandha to a land Development Bank or a recognized grain gola or a registered co-operative society or to a ryot of Santhal Parganas to the extent of one-fourth of his holding. Such a provision has been considered necessary to provide them institutional credit. Further, relaxation has been given in clause 22 which permits a ryot to transfer land to any ryot of Santhal Parganas for cultivation temporarily on trust on grounds of health, absence, loss of plough, cattle or if ryot is a widow or minor.<sup>22</sup> The S.P.F. Act of 1949 aimed to provide better protection to the tribals in respect of transfer of their land. The extent of land alienation is reported to be some what limited in Santhal Parganas because the said

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22. Gyaneshwar Ojha, Land Problems and Land Reforms: A Study with Reference to Bihar (New Delhi, 1978), p.75.

Act is more stringent and allows transfer of land only in exceptional circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the existence of C.T.A. of 1908 and S.P.F. Act of 1949, the land alienation problem of the tribals continued, because of the loopholes in the said Act. C.T.A. of 1908 has a provision to prevent transfer of land belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) and Backward Classes but the tribal lands continued to change hands and went to the non-tribals in disguise. To avoid legal complications the moneylenders have successfully manipulated to prove that the lands are still in the possession of the tribals.<sup>24</sup> The land alienation continued both through legal and illegal methods.

#### 1. Legal Methods:

(1) Section 46 of C.T.A. of 1908 permits temporary alienation by a tribal to a non-tribal, if the alienation is made as a simple mortgage or a lease for a period of 5 years or Bhugutbandha mortgage not exceeding 7 years

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23. H.L. Gupto, "Bihar", in S.N. Dube and Ratna Murdia (ed.), Land Alienation and Restoration in Tribal Communities in India (Bombay, 1977), pp.180-81.

24. M.L. Patel, Changing Land Reforms of Tribal India (Bhopal, 1974), p.44.

in case of individual mortgage and not exceeding 15 years  
in case of a mortgage with a registered co-operative  
society.

(ii) Under section 47 of C.F.A. of 1908 alienation  
can be effected through the sale of a holding in execution  
of a decree for arrears of loans and the recovery of land  
improvement and agricultural loans under certificate  
proceedings.

(iii) Under section 49 an occupancy ryot or any member  
of Bhuinhari family can transfer his holding for any  
reasonable and sufficient purpose which may be charitable,  
religious, educational and industrial development, however,  
the document of alienation can be registered only with the  
consent of D.C.

(iv) Sections 240, 241 and 242 of the Act do not  
impose any restriction on alienation on Bhugutbandha  
mortgage for 7 years or Lukarrari lease.

(v) Legal transfer of land can also be effected  
through provisions of 'Land Acquisition Act', but such  
incidence of transfers were rare in the rural areas.

(vi) There is also a provision in C.F.A. of 1908  
according to which agricultural land on its conversion

into homestead land may be sold. D.C. can also allow transfer to enable the tribals to get medium and long term loans for consumption and production purposes.

## 2. Illegal Methods:

(i) Collusive title suits - lust for land has led to use of several ingenious and fraudulent methods by non-tribals to acquire control on tribal land. One such method which has been very popular in transfer of land through collusive title suits, is known as declaratory suits.

(ii) Defacto possession - In many cases even the formality of a declaratory suit is not done, though defacto possession of land passes into the hands of the non-tribals on receipt of a consideration or in satisfaction of a loan taken earlier. In such cases, though the de jure possession of the tribals continue, the defacto possession passes over to the non-tribals. In many cases tribals enter into a share-cropping agreement with a non-tribal moneylender. Either a percentage share of the produce or a fixed quantity is agreed upon orally as payment towards the interest account of the loan. The principal amount, therefore, can never be repaid.

(iii) Transfer in fake names - Instances have come to light where land is purchased by a non-tribal in the name of some fictitious tribal, and rent receipts are issued and mutation is done in his name. In this way the non-tribals succeeded in circumventing the provisions of the C.T.A. of 1908. In some cases a regular registration deed is effected though actually it is a fake transfer.

(iv) A novel method of land alienation came into light when non-tribals began to get possession of the land by marrying a tribal woman or in some cases by keeping her as concubine or adopting a tribal child.<sup>25</sup>

Similar loopholes existed in S.P.T. Act of 1949 and major portions of tribal lands came to be recorded in the names of the moneylenders or Mahajans and other well-to-do non-tribals. Korfanona (a kind of base), rent eviction suits, collusive titles, adverse possession, etc. are some of the methods which provided base appearing legal and plausible for change of names and conferment of titles. These methods were all covered with black design of fraud, collusion, etc. Many a time the tribal faced a rent-eviction suit without knowing the fact that he defaulted in paying

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25. I.H. Thakur, op. cit., pp.170-72.

rent. Petty allurement eased out his admission in the court of law of adverse possession to the other party and his granting of Korinama to him. Now the tribals understand all these misdeeds and they want them to be undone. The failure of S.P.F. Act of 1949 to grant relief to the tribals had made them restive and resentful and this developed a sense of frustration amongst them. Before section 5j of S.P.F. Act of 1949 was struck down by the Patna High Court, lands were acquired from the Ryots even for individual or sectarian purposes by the revenue authorities. Now when the section has been annulled, the tribals want back their lands. This Act for lack of appropriate provisions is not in a position to undo the past action of the revenue authorities. Hence the demand of the tribals remain unfulfilled. The village wasteland, the settlement of which is the prerogative of the village pradhan, mostly serves the cause of the moneyed and influential persons and the tribals remain alienated of their due share in this land.<sup>26</sup> The defective legislation and tardy implementation was also the mark of other tenancy

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26. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - (On the spot Study Report of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Godda sub-division of District of Santhal Parganas of Bihar State) (New Delhi, N.D.), pp.36-37.

legislations made by the British. This continues even in case of land reform legislation of Congress Ministries after Independence. Bihar State government enacted Bihar State Scheduled Area Regulation Act 1969 and promulgated it in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas to plug the loopholes in C.T.A. of 1908 and S.P.F. Act of 1949. This Regulation Act sought to restore the alienated land to the dispossessed tribals through legal process, prevent further alienation of land in the future, and protection of the tribals from exploitation by usurious moneylenders.<sup>27</sup> The Regulation Act contains comprehensive and stringent provisions to deal with the problem of land alienation and its restoration. Under this Act D.C. can evict the non-tribal transferee from land illegally acquired from the transferor. In case no heir of the original transferor is available, the land can be given to any tribal person in accordance with the village customs. According to the section 46 of the Act, the non-tribal transferee can be imprisoned for three years or he may be fined upto Rs. 1,000. When the transferee makes construction on the alienated land he may retain the same by fulfilling certain conditions

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27. Eighteenth Report - Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - 1968-69 (New Delhi, 1969), Part I, p.27.



like giving compensation and alternate land as determined by the Act. In this case D.C. will take necessary action.<sup>28</sup>

The Regulation Act of 1969 prima facie appears to be beneficial to the tribals. But a deeper examination of the Act will show that this only vitiates the pious nature of S.P.T. Act of 1949, the main aim of which is to preserve the non-transferable character of the land. This Act has increased the tendency of the non-tribals to grab big chunk of tribal land by erecting substantial structure because this Act ultimately helps in regularising this transfer. What tribal may get by way of compensation is no substitute for his valuable land. Land of the ryot is also alienated in another way, o.g. oral usufructuary mortgage which continues for length of time which is completely disproportionate to the amount of loan advanced to the tribal. Moreover, the tribal shares the produce of his own land with the moneylender in pursuance of an agreement entered into by them clandestinely, loan being the consideration point.<sup>29</sup> After passing of this Regulation Act of 1969, the defacto transfer of land on the basis of oral agreement

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28. I.N. Thakur, op. cit., pp.173-74.

29. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.26, p.38.

between the transferor and transferee is becoming very common. There is a continuous game of hide and seek going on between the Government and the non-tribal people of vested interests. As increasingly new legal restrictions are put by the Government to prevent land alienation or for its restoration, the non-tribals in their never ending ingenuity discover novel methods of defeating governmental measures.<sup>30</sup> The legislative Acts and executive orders to prevent land alienation contain many loopholes so the problem is still continuing in one form or other. From June 1975, the prevention of land alienation and its restoration to the tribals has been accorded time bound priority. As a result the State Government has amended and enacted fresh legislations to check land alienation and to accelerate land restoration in the tribal areas.

In spite of the efforts by the State Government to protect the rights of the tribals in land, illegal alienation of land is taking place due to, (i) inadequate legislations, regulations and their defective implementation, (ii) poverty ignorance and apathetic attitude of the tribals, and (iii) coercion and fraud by the non-tribals

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30. M.P. Pandey, Land Records and Agrarian Situation in Bihar (Calcutta, 1980), p.60.

to gain illegal possession of the tribal land.<sup>31</sup>

Recommendations: Among the important steps for controlling alienation of land of the tribals would be firstly to conduct a detailed scrutiny of all legislations and regulations passed by the Government to prevent land alienation and plug the loopholes. Secondly, there should be a general prohibition of all transfers whether by sale, mortgage, gift or loans under any kind of agreement or contract entered into by the tribals in favour of non-tribals without the permission of the collectors. Thirdly, collectors should be empowered to institute enquiries and restore possession of the land without payment of any compensation to the transferee. Fourthly, it is necessary to launch campaign to educate the tribals through non-official agencies regarding the laws and regulations made for their benefit and provide necessary financial and legal assistance to secure advantage thereof. Fifthly, for more effective implementation of the provisions of the legislations and regulations a special administrative machinery should be created in the Scheduled area to make summary enquiries into the ownership of land under occupation

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31. Ratna Murdia, "Land Allotment and Land Alienation", EPTU, 9 August, 1975, p.1213.

of non-tribals and to restore them to the original owners, where they can be traced or reserve them for assignment to the landless tribes where the original owners cannot be traced, or do not come forward to claim them. Sixthly, a committee consisting of local leaders and officials should be constituted in the state to investigate the causes of land alienation and allied problems and recommend to the Government measures for restoring to the tribal owners the lands which have been illegally alienated and to prevent land alienation in future.<sup>32</sup> The issues of prevention of land alienation and its restoration are interlinked. Steps taken for the prevention of land alienation will reduce the dimension of the problem of restoration of land in future. Similarly energetic actions for the restoration of land will prevent non-tribals from attempting illegal land-grabbing. The prevention of land alienation and its restoration should be backed by massive developmental efforts for improving the productivity of lands particularly of the uplands through increased use of scientific inputs and changed methods of cultivation. It has been observed that where agricultural conditions have improved through better farming and adoption of some

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32. Ibid., p.1214.

productive vegetable cultivation, the incidences of land alienation have gone down.<sup>33</sup>

(The Indian Constitution has not only provided many safeguards to protect and promote the interests of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes, but it has also spelt out administrative arrangements for the effective investigation of the working of these safeguards. The Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Commissioner of SC/ST) appointed in 1950 under article 338 of the Constitution is required to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for these communities and submit an Annual Report to the president suggesting recommendations.)

(The Commissioner of SC/ST in his 1969-70 Report pointed out that the relief which should have reached to the tribals on account of series of Acts to prevent land alienation did not reach them actually. The weakness existed in the Acts themselves. The organisations which could have helped the tribal communities in securing relief were few and far. The tribal communities very often were oppressed by the feeling that after all they have to live

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33. I.N. Thakur, op. cit., p.178.

in the same villages amongst their neighbours who extended credit in times of distress. In 1971-73 Reports, the Commissioner recommended that the jurisdiction of ordinary courts should be excluded in matters relating to the implementation of protective Acts, under article 31(b) of the ninth schedule of the Constitution. It should be utilised by including in the ninth schedule of the Constitution so that it would not be possible to challenge such Acts as violative of fundamental rights. It was also suggested that no right of a member of a schedule tribe in his immoveable property should be transferred to a female member of scheduled tribe who is not married to a member of her respective community. In his 1977-78 Report the Commissioner suggested detailed examination of the working of various Acts to prevent land alienation and tightening up their provisions and their implementation as well. Executive instruction should be given to the officers of the Revenue, Welfare and other departments to remain vigilant about the actual working of these Acts. In 1979 he suggested some amendments in the existing C.T.A. of 1908 in the light of land disputes and clashes between the tribals and non-tribals. Therefore, Bihar Government promulgated "The Chotanagpur Tenancy Amendment Act in 1979", whereby the provisions of the said Act was made applicable to the

tribal lands alienated in the areas or parts of the areas which have been constituted into municipalities or notified area committees or which are within the cantonment. The said Act enabled the tribals to mortgage their lands to Banks or societies in order to raise loans for agricultural purposes. But the Act is running short of expectations and much still remains to be done in this respect.<sup>34</sup> Despite the legislations, executive orders and developmental agencies land alienation remains a point of discontent with the tribals.]

### Indebtedness

The moneylenders have been exploiting the tribals of the region right from the British period. In the districts of Chotanagpur, and Santhal Parganas the tribals live in the midst of non-tribal outsiders. In rural areas the tribals work on the land of caste Hindu landlords and also borrow money from them. In urban areas the moneylenders are non-tribal petty traders. There is a functional interdependence among them or a sort of jajmani system prevails

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34. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, p.152.

among them.<sup>35</sup> The needs of the tribals have increased considerably. They require money both for production and consumption purposes. There are many religious ceremonies and rituals related with birth and death on which the tribals spend lavishly. In certain tribal communities the value of bride price has gone much high. It is very difficult for the tribal family to arrange money to meet all its needs. So the tribals are compelled to go to moneylenders, mortgage their land and take loans at exorbitant rate of interest. These loans thus are not put to any productive use and are consumption loans. In the event of failure to pay back the loans, their lands pass into the hands of moneylenders.<sup>36</sup> In order to prevent this the C.F.A. of 1908 restricted the transfer of tribal land to the non-tribals. A queer result of this provision was the rise of a new class of tribal moneylenders which engaged itself in part time moneylending business and accentuated the strata differentiation in the tribal society and deepened the gulf between the intelligent and affluent sections and those who were impoverished and heavily indebted.

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35. Sachchidanand, "Tribal Situation in Bihar", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp. 1972-73.

36. R.S. Mann, "Problems of Indian Tribes", in R.S. Mann and N.N. Vyas (ed.), Indian Tribes in Transition (Jaipur, 1980), pp. 14-20.



In Santhal Parganas the tribals allege that the moneylenders charge exorbitant rate of interest as a result they have always remained economically subservient to the moneylenders. Sometimes Santhal tribals mortgage their gold and silver ornaments. Even when the tribals are ready to pay the entire loan with interest, it has been found that moneylenders are in no mood to return pawned ornaments. All this is due to soaring prices of gold and silver every day. The reluctance on the part of the moneylenders for not returning the pawned ornaments of the Santhals and their desperate bid to get them back has accentuated the tensions.<sup>37</sup> It has always been seen that the tribals being illiterate cannot keep track of their repayment if they make any. Sometimes in lieu of the interest the moneylenders have been found cultivating the land of the tribal debtors and claiming its produce. Even if the tribals continue to cultivate the mortgaged land they have to part with a major portion of their produce as an interest on the loans.<sup>38</sup>

In Dhanbad district of Chotanagpur a high rate of indebtedness is prevalent among the coal miners. Among

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37. Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.26, p.19.

38. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, p.20.

the tribal women working in the coal mines of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (B.C.C.L.), at least 60 percent of them are in the clutches of the moneylenders who are very often North Bihari Rajputs, Bhojpurias, Punjabis and Kabuliwaleas. Owing to illiteracy they are not aware how much they owe and so continue to give away their entire monthly wages.<sup>39</sup> Nationalisation of Coal Mines has certainly improved the daily earning of the coal miners but the benefit of each wage increase has gone largely into the pockets of the moneylenders. In the beginning wages were not sufficient. Workers were left with little amount after sending money to their families in the villages. This together with the habit of drinking led them to the moneylenders. The moneylenders also perform one more exploitative function. They work as labour agents to recruit labourers for the management of coal mines. The moneylenders with the help of muskmen, goondas and trade union charge and release high rate of interest on the loans given to the coalminers who are unable to put any resistance. The rate of interest varies from 10 percent to 50 percent. The usual practice is to charge so high rate of interest

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39. Gautam S.C. Vohra, "A Raw Deal for Mines", Times of India (New Delhi), 11 August, 1981, p.6.

that in making the payment the principal amount is never liquidated. Moreover, the moneylenders often take thumb impression of the loanees on a blank paper and record whatever commitment they wish to make. They snatch away their identity cards and bonus cards in order to directly receive wage payments at the counter. The payment clerks are also in league with the moneylenders.<sup>40</sup> Thus the tribals have been badly overpowered economically, politically and socially by the moneylenders. There is extreme poverty among the tribes of the region and other factors apart, the moneylenders are chiefly responsible for their misery.

( To deal with the problem of indebtedness the Bihar Government first of all passed Bihar Moneylenders Act of 1938, and a little later in order to remove some doubts regarding the validity of certain provisions of this Act it passed Bihar Moneylenders Act of 1939. These Acts are applicable in the entire state but have no specific provisions for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Therefore, Bihar Scheduled Area Regulation Act of 1969 was passed to make certain amendments. The amendments

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40. Report of the correspondent "Indebtedness among the Colliery Workers", EPI, August 2, 1975, pp. 1147-50.

require every moneylender to declare and maintain record about the date and amount of the loan advanced by him to a scheduled tribe person along with details of the interest, repayment of loans if any and other terms and conditions of loans. In the event of failure to declare these loans within specified period, it is to be presumed that no loan was advanced to the scheduled tribe person concerned. The Regulation Act also empowered the court to fix instalments for repayment of loans and also postpone the repayment of first instalment for a period not exceeding five years from the date of order without any interest for that period in case of a scheduled tribe debtor. The Regulation Act also provided for the constitution of a conciliation Board for amicable settlement of disputes between the moneylenders and debtors in case where the amount of loan exceeds one hundred without involving any transfer of land.<sup>41</sup> The Government further passed Bihar Moneylenders Act in 1974 which entitled all debtors to redeem land mortgaged in lieu of interest after seven years and prohibited moneylenders from extracting total interest payment of more than double of the principal amount. It provided that any land mortgaged before or after the commencement of this Act shall be deemed

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41. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.27, p.27.

to have wholly redeemed on the expiry of a period of seven years from the date of the execution of the bond. Also no court shall in any suit pass a decree for the realization of interest at a rate exceeding 12 percent per annum where the loan is secured and 15 percent where the loan is insecure. The court shall also not entertain a suit filed by an unregistered moneylender for the recovery of loans advanced by him after the commencement of this Act.<sup>42</sup> Recently state Government has enacted the Bihar Moneylenders Act of 1975 to regulate moneylending more effectively. Besides general provisions relating to the regulation of moneylending and asking for maintenance of accounts there are two other important provisions: (i) It has been laid down that the maximum amount which a moneylender can realize from the debtor on account of principal and interest, should not be more than double the amount of the loan advanced by him in case of a loan in money and one and half times in case of a loan in kind; (ii) In the case of usufructuary mortgage relating to agricultural lands the principal amount and interest shall be deemed to be fully satisfied and the mortgage fully redeemed on the expiry of a period of 7 years

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42. Arun Sinha, "More Laws against Bonded Labour", EPW, 11 October 1975, p.1602.

from the date of the execution of the mortgage. In 1975 the Government also promulgated an ordinance declaring that the debts owed by scheduled tribes holding less than one acre of land shall be deemed to have redeemed.<sup>43</sup>

These Acts and amendments have brought some relief to the tribals. However, unless the credit needs of the tribals are adequately and promptly met by credit institutions, these Acts and amendments will remain futile and the tribals will be likely to fall into the clutches of moneylenders. It is important, therefore, that credit is advanced to the tribals both for production and consumption purposes, if their dependence on moneylenders is to become a thing of the past.<sup>44</sup>

[The Government made credit facilities under Block Development Programmes in the region. Since the Block officials were non-tribal it was practically difficult for the tribals to get loans without greasing the palm of the Block officials. Efforts were made to impart short training to the officials in the tribal life and culture<sup>but</sup> it was not effective. The policies framed by the Government for economic

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43. I.N. Thakur, op. cit., p.175.

44. R.L. Gupta, op. cit., p.184.

betterment of the tribals were not realistic. Everything that were specifically framed for the tribals failed at the operational level, due to bad administration, lack of co-operation and unavoidable red-tapism. Most of the funds were cornered by the non-tribals under the Block Development programmes.<sup>45</sup> The Commissioner of SC/ST suggested the State Government to take necessary action to arrange for the sanction of consumption credits to the tribal through the 'Large-Sized Multipurpose Co-operative Societies' (LAMPS)<sup>46</sup> so that the tribals would not depend on the moneylenders for their urgent needs. Therefore, the State Government established a number of LAMPS to provide production and consumption loans. But there are many hinderances in their successful functioning, and therefore the tribals continue to remain at the mercy of moneylenders and shopkeepers. The various types of co-operative societies functioning at the

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45. Sachchidanand, op. cit., pp. 173-74.

46. The purpose of Large-Sized Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS) is to purchase agricultural produce and minor forest products from the tribals directly on reasonable rates to avoid intermediaries, and contractors who purchase them on pretty low rates and by selling them in far off places earn much profit. These societies also provide long-term and short-term loans for production and consumption purposes and also sell to the tribals the necessities of daily life on reasonable controlled rates.

village level have been amalgamated in the LAMPS but the problem of outstanding dues to shopkeepers and moneylenders does not allow them to take necessary help from the LAMPS. Moreover, the LAMPS are functioning as fair-price shops and they are not performing their stipulated functions. The Government should ensure regular supply of essential goods to these agencies and she should see to it that the benefits from them accrue to the tribals.<sup>47</sup>

### Forests

The forests play very important role in the economic life of the tribals. The tribals of the region had Khuntkatti rights over the forests which means they had traditional and customary rights to use the minor forest products (M.F.P.), e.g. firewood, flowers, fruits, leaves, honey, housing material, edible nuts, medical herbs, grass, etc. They depended on the forests for grazing their animals and shifting cultivation. This way the raw forest materials were helpful to the tribals to supplement their agricultural economy. Forests were and still today are connected with the vital aspect of the tribal economy in the region. The

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47. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.147-208.



importance of the forest in tribal economy has been depicted by the Ranchi Settlement Report which reported, "There are, however, other factors to be considered besides the total value of crops. The aborigines and low caste Hindus who spring from the same race are remarkable for their physical childhood. They can, therefore, subsist on conditions in which members of the more civilised race could not exist. When the crop fail, jungle fruits and vegetables of all kinds (Sag) are valuable reserve with the help of these they succeeded in tiding over the period of stress which would play havoc".<sup>48</sup> This relationship between the tribal economy and forests has been recognised but it has not been articulated in terms of clear policies and programmes.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the British forest policy recognised the tribal rights to use the H.F.P. But the tribal interests in the forest began to be affected by the forest policy of 1894, which stated, "The sole object with which State forests are administered in the public benefit.....the cardinal principle to be observed is that the rights and privileges of the individuals

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48. K. Suresh Singh, "Famine, Scarcity and Economic Development in Tribal Areas", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp. 389-90.

must be limited, otherwise than for their own benefits only in such degrees as is absolutely necessary to secure that advantage". This forest policy affected the tribals very deeply and was the root cause of the delicate relations between them and the Forest Department which still continues. In general the growth and preservation of the forests involved the regulation of the rights and the restrictions of privileges of the tribals and the neighbouring population. After Independence the Forest Policy of 1952 further restricted the indiscriminate use of the forest by the tribals. It imposed greater restrictions by saying that the village communities in the neighbourhood of a forest will naturally make greater use of its products for the satisfaction of their domestic and agricultural needs. Such use, however, should in no event be permitted at the cost of national interests.... Therefore, the needs of the local population must be met to a reasonable extent, national interests should not be sacrificed because they are not directly discernible nor should the rights and interests of the future generation should be subordinated to the improvidence of the present generation. The two forest policies were of different nature and they adversely affected the interests of the tribals living near the forest: (1) The old policy envisaged the release of forest land for

cultivation subject to certain safeguards. The new policy withdraws this concession; (2) The policy restricted the use of M.F.P. by the villagers from the reserved forests and prescribed that there should be village forests for this purpose; (3) Controls were extended to private forests; (4) Free-grazing was scaled down to minimum and fee was introduced for this purpose; (5) The new policy made one concession. It admitted that while it was emphatically opposed to the shifting cultivation, persuasive, and not coercive measures, should be used in a sort of missionary rather than in an authoritarian manner to attempt to win the tribals from their traditional methods. So the tribal rights in the forest were greatly restricted through a deliberate process of law. The traditional rights of the tribals were no longer recognised as rights. Their rights became 'concessions'. They were brought under the control of the Forest Department. Regeneration of the forests was emphasised under the new forest policy. Uncontrolled grazing in the forest was restricted and minimum wages were introduced for the tribals who serve under the Forest Department. The tribals living near the forests and having no employment were directed to be employed by the Forest Departments as far as possible.<sup>49</sup> Now the forests are at the disposal of 'State

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49. P.K. Bhowmick, "Forestry, Tribe and the Forest Policy in India", in L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), Tribal Development and its Administration (New Delhi, 1981), pp.33-35.

'Forest Corporation' and 'Forest Department' whose management of the forest is detrimental to the tribal economic interests. Despite several attempts on the part of forest administration to adjust their programmes to the special needs of the tribals living near the forest areas, the general attitude of the tribals to the forest administration is that of suspicion. It is not always due to present day lapse of the forest administration, sometimes it is also due to the historical reasons. From times immemorial the tribals enjoyed freedom to use forest and its products and this has given them a conviction that remains even today deep in their hearts that forests belong to them. The gradual extension of the authority of the Government in these areas and the natural desire of the forest officials to exercise ever closer control over the use of H.F.P. has deeply disturbed the entire tribal economy and introduced psychological conflict. There have been many complaints from the tribals and their representatives against the forest administration and therefore a state of tension and mutual distrust exists and interferes with the development of the forests too.<sup>50</sup>

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50. B.K. Roy Burman, "Forest and Tribals in India", in L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), Applied Anthropology in India (Allahabad, 1968), p.203.

Tribals have to pay royalty to the Forest Department and get licences from it to collect M.F.P. to meet their cash requirement. The buyers of the M.F.P. are very often the contractors and the agents of the Forest Department. They purchase M.F.P. from the tribals at low prices and earn much profit by selling them in far off places. Since the contractors pay royalty to the Forest Department for the contract of felling trees so they pay low wages to the tribals. They also employ the tribals for plucking kendu leaves for bidies and give them low wages. A woman plucks leafage for 12 hour, but ~~she~~ gets only one rupee as wages. So the rate of exploitation is very high. Sometimes the tribals do not get employment in the adjoining forests of their villages. The prices paid to the tribals for M.F.P. collected by them, is calculated in terms of their labour inputs ignoring the cost of transportation because of variation in distance. There is no co-rolation between the prices paid to them for M.F.P. and their actual market prices. Bihar Government realises 30 crores from the forests of Chotanagpur, what must the contractors be earning. In return of this royalty of 30 crores, the Government spends very meagre amount for the development of the tribals, which even does not reach them in full.<sup>51</sup>

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51. Mahasveta Devi, "Contract Labour or Bonded Labour", EPI, 6 June 1975, p.1013; Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.10-11.

In Singhbhum district of Chotanagpur the main forest problem is that of cutting of 'sal' trees and plantation of teak trees by the Forest Development Corporation. This is resented by the tribals of the area who consider sal trees as sacred and economically more useful. Sal trees are closely associated with the religious and socio-economic life of the tribals. Beneath clusters of sal trees are located 'Jaherethans' (Holy groves) of the tribals, where stones representing their deities are installed. They provide virtually in-exhaustible leaf crop to the tribals. Thousands of tribal women, men and children visit forest to collect the leaves and prepare 'leaf plates' and 'leaf-pots' to supplement their income. Small branches and twigs of them are also collected for use as 'tooth-sticks'. Sal-seed oil is consumed locally. The non-oily fat constituents are used in the preparation of chocolate while the rest of the oil is considered fit for other industrial uses. Sal wood is used to manufacture furniture, agricultural implements and bullock-carts. It is also used in the construction of houses and it yields good quality of charcoal. The tribals of the area have grievances regarding 35 khuntkatti villages. They say that these villages were acquired by the British Government in 1899 and declared as reserved forests. Now the tribals want restoration of these

villages to them.<sup>52)</sup>

To sum up the tribal grievances and problems relating to the forests are - cutting of sal trees, and their replacement by teak (Sagon) trees, non-recognition of tribal khunkatti rights in the village forests, non-plantation of fruit bearing trees, inadequate supply of bamboos, necessity of taking permission to fell trees, and seek transit passes before they are allowed to collect H.F.P., restricting and questioning the traditional rights of the tribals in the forest produce and their harassment by the forest officials.<sup>53</sup>

The State Government has recently set up a Tribal Co-operative Development Corporation to organise tribal marketing co-operatives so that the tribals may get fair prices of their produce. Government has also undertaken a number of steps for increasing the inflows of low interest institutional credit to the tribal farmers through co-operatives

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52. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.148-49; Times of India (New Delhi), 12 October, 1981.

53. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - Report on the spot study of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Singhbhum District (New Delhi, N.D.), pp.42-43.

and banks. The Forest Department extended a number of facilities to the tribal people living in and around the forests. Steps have been taken to organise labour cooperatives with a view to eliminating exploitative forest contractors.<sup>54</sup> In 1978 it launched 'social forestry programme' to harmonise the tribal economic interests and state commercial interests in the forest. Under this programme the Forest Department provided seeds to the tribals for the plantation of trees, and purchased M.F.P. directly from them by eliminating middlemen. Previously the middlemen and contractors were exploiting the tribals by exchanging such valuable commodities with articles of daily use like salt, kerosene, oil, etc. on a barter system. The sal seeds are collected by the tribals when there is hardly any employment in the areas. But recently the collection and marketing of sal seeds has been given up due to the agitation organised by the middlemen with the support of political parties. So in spite of forest Department's Welfare scheme it is being scuttled by the vested interests. What is missing in the whole scheme is non-involvement of the local tribal people and lack of political will on the part of the Government to withstand the pressure of local contractors, middlemen

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54. I.N. Thakur, op. cit., pp. 178-79.



and shopkeepers.<sup>55</sup>

The Commissioner of SC/ST has suggested that teak trees should be planted but not by cutting sal trees. Whenever the sal trees are to be cut, the local leaders of the tribals - Hanki and Hundas should be taken into confidence. Tribals do not resent if big trees old and ringed are cut, but not the green trees. Cutting of sal trees in mass scale hurt their sentiments because they have been conserving them all these years. The khunkatti rights of the tribals in the forests should be recognized and they should be allowed to use the M.F.P. not only for domestic consumption but also for commercial purposes. Forestation responsibility should be given to them. They should be given plots to grow trees which would belong to them. Large scale plantation of fruits fodder and fuel trees should be undertaken with usufruct rights to the identified tribal families even on the forest lands without involving any transfer of title over the land. Tribals should be allowed to meet their domestic requirements with regard to fuel wood, thatching and fodder grass, bamboo, and timber for house construction and agricultural implements. They should be allowed to use

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55. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.212-14.

M.F.P. not only from the protected forests but in certain cases even from the reserved forest and that too without any permission. For regulating the misuse of privileges, the Manki and Munda should determine a working policy. As regard checks on selling forest produce by the tribals for meeting their daily requirements, it should be regulated in consultation with the same local leaders. It is also suggested that a district level advisory committee comprising D.C., officials of the forest Development Corporation and representatives of manki and munda may be set up. Association of the tribals in the forest management is strongly suggested. The lower forest officials with whom the tribals come in touch have not been properly oriented in the dynamics of the tribal culture and behaviour. The forest-officials should lay great emphasis on practising regulations and persuading the tribals to follow them. To issue a challenge and register a case against them is very easy but its consequences are grave. The interpretation of forest regulations and their enforcement in the tribal areas should be as simple as the tribals themselves, and it should be different from the forest management in the non-tribal region.<sup>56</sup>

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56. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.53, pp.52-55.

Bonded Labour

Though the bonded labour has been abolished by the article 23 of the Indian Constitution but it still continues in this tribal region in one form or other. In Palamau and Hazaribagh where this system is widely prevalent, is known as 'Kamia-system' but in other parts of the state it is known as 'kami-anti' or 'Savakia-system'.<sup>57</sup> This system consists of a person agreeing to serve out a loan he may take from the moneylender and the landlord. Though the money loan is small but the manipulation of the account is so arranged as to require the debtor to spend his lifetime as a bondman, and very often, even his son is also found paying out his father's debt by rendering similar service. This system is identical to serfdom. The system of advancing money for purposes of marriage to a domestic servant or farm servant on the understanding that he may pay it off by serving his creditors in the family is widespread in the region. Under this system cultivation is sometimes practically carried out by the serfs. Bonded labour also exists in the form of compulsory labour for the creditor at such times as may be decided by the latter. This system serves to highlight the economic hardships

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57. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.389.

suffered by the tribal communities and it is a source of vexation.

The first Act against the bonded labour was passed in 1920 known as 'Bihar and Orissa Kameoti Agreement Act'. This legislation banned any worker-employer compulsory labour but it could not bring about desired results. Recognizing that rural indebtedness is the root cause of the problem, the Bihar Government passed a bill to end such indebtedness. This was 'Bihar Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and Denotified Tribes Relief Act 1974' which stipulated sweepingly that an agreement whether entered into before or after the commencement of this Act whereunder a scheduled debtor or any member of his family is required to work as a labourer or otherwise for the creditor shall be void, and any such custom or tradition shall cease to prevail. The Act provided that every debt advanced to a scheduled debtor before the enforcement of this Act including the amount of interest shall be deemed to have been wholly discharged and no such debt shall be recoverable from him or his movable or immovable property nor shall any such property be liable to be attached or sold or proceeded against in any manner in the execution of a decree or order relating to such debt. The Act was applicable to all scheduled debtors owing one

acre of land or less and it debarred the civil courts from entertaining any suit or proceedings against a scheduled debtor for recovery of loans.<sup>58</sup> During emergency the abolition of bonded labour got specific attention in Prime Minister's 20-point programmes. It stated that the practice of bonded labour is barbarous and will be abolished. The Central Government prepared Central law for the entire country abolishing the bonded labour system. This was promulgated in October 1975 by the President. This ordinance has now been replaced by an Act of the Parliament. This Act extinguished liability of bonded labourer to repay the bonded debt and bars filing suits in any form for its recovery. It also provides that whenever a complaint is made by a bonded labourer, the burden of proof that the debt is not a bonded debt shall lie on the creditor. The property of bonded labourer under any mortgage, etc. stands free. The bonded labourer has been given legal right to secure restoration of possession from the creditor of his property by applying to the prescribed authority. It prohibits eviction of freed labourer from his homestead or other residential premises. Offences attracting the provisions of this Act are cognisable and bailable and may

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58. Arun Sinha, op. cit., pp.1601-02.

be tried summarily by an executive magistrate who has been entrusted with judicial powers. Each of these offences except the one relating to restoration of property is punishable with imprisonment extending to three years and a fine upto Rs.2,000. This Act also provides for setting up of a vigilance committee at the district and sub-divisional level to ensure proper implementation of the Act and provides for economic and social rehabilitation of the bonded labourers.<sup>59</sup>

Despite these Acts the problem of bonded labour is still continuing particularly because of slow and ineffective implementation of these Acts and ignorance of the poor and innocent tribals. These Acts also do not contain provision regarding the rehabilitation of the freed bonded labourers.

It has also been seen that the causes of bonded labour are quite often not reported as the affected persons are totally dependent for their subsistence on the moneylenders who are also the landowners. In order to do away with the system of bonded labour the practice of moneylending itself should be gradually stopped by evolving the co-operatives

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59. Twentythird Report - Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - 1974-75 (New Delhi, 1976), pp.116-17.

in tribal areas to provide loans on nominal interests. The term bonded labour has not been properly defined and the enforcing authority has also not been very efficient.<sup>60</sup>

### Non-Payment of Minimum Wages

Non-payment of minimum wages to the tribal workers is fairly widespread in this region. It is alleged that the tribal workers are paid wages at rates much less than those prescribed under the minimum wages Act. Both the agricultural and forest workers are victims in this respect. The tribals therefore feel a lot of resentment.

The wages given to the tribal workers are not uniform in this tribal region of Bihar. Palamu is the only district in Bihar where the minimum wage is Rs. 4.00 and 500 gms light meal. In Santhal Parganas the rate of wages is Rs. 4.00 for irrigated land and Rs. 5.00 for unirrigated land but no meal. The minimum wages for child worker is Rs. 2.50 plus a 500 gms light meal in the districts of Ranchi, Singhbhum, Dhanbad and Giridih.<sup>61</sup> In some villages of Santhal Parganas the

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60. | Buddadeb Chaudhuri, "On Some Tribal Problems", in Buddadeb Chaudhuri and Samita Chaudhuri (ed.), Tribal Development in India (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 92-93.

61. Wolf Ladejinsky, "Minimum Wages", EPW, 19 July, 1975, p. 1076.

Brahmin landlords pay wages to the tribals less than what is prescribed by the state Government. Sattu is given as wages in a most humiliating and degrading manner. Sattu is never given in utensils and the tribal workers are asked to eat it by making pit in the earth.<sup>62</sup> In Singhbhum the forest contractors also do not pay minimum wages prescribed by the law and, moreover, they extract more labour ranging from 8 to 12 hours. The Forest Corporation and contractors pay Rs.4.50 as wages whereas other industrial units like mines pay Rs.5.80 per day. The tribals in Singhbhum also demand Rs.5.80 as daily wages. In the interior parts of the forests, wages are never disbursed weekly. Sometimes it takes 15 to 20 days for getting payment.<sup>63</sup> In the same district agricultural workers are not given minimum wages and moreover the work is also extracted for pretty long duration. There is no parity between the wages paid to the female and male labourers. Female workers get 2½ kg. of paddy while the male workers get 3 kg. of paddy. During the off-season the wages are further low.

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62. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.26, p.14.

63. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.53, p.42.



To relate wages to the cost of living the Government wants employer to pay workers wholly in stable foodgrains such as paddy, rice, wheat and gram. The quantities of food-grain equivalent to minimum wages rate were stipulated separately for all the districts. The working hours were fixed for adult workers at 9 hours, for children at 4 hours and for adolescents at 6 hours, in accordance with by-law (1) of rule 24 of the Bihar Minimum Wages Act of 1951. According to the same Act an adult worker who toils for more than 9 hours a day or 48 hours a week was entitled to get double the wages for extra work put in. This was the second upward revision of agricultural wages in Bihar since they were fixed under Minimum Wages Act of 1948. Under the Minimum Wages Act of 1951, the minimum wages were first fixed for Patna district and by 1959 the whole state was declared as covered under this Act. The minimum wages were again revised in 1966-67 following sharp rise in prices. However, evidence provided by a number of surveys indicated that the minimum wages were in fact not enforced. The wages were much lower than what was proscribed by the Acts. A study conducted in 1974 in Sonthal Parganas found that the average daily income of a farm worker during the peak season was Rs. 1.25. Uptil that time only the chief inspector of agricultural wages was in-charge of the enforcement work.

But in 1975 the Bihar Government set up a separate directorate of agricultural labour with a joint labour commissioner at its head. For quick disposal of cases concerning labour disputes Land Reform Deputy Collectors in all the districts were given arbitrary authority. The Government also encouraged the formation of farm labour unions under Trade Union Act.<sup>64</sup> In the district of Singhbhum, the district administration convened a meeting of the representatives of the political parties, small and big farmers and labourers. The leaders of agricultural labourers demanded that agricultural labourer should get 4.5 kg. of paddy and tiffin per day. The cultivators stated that the area under double crop is very negligible and the yield from the unirrigated land is also poor. Thus they would not be able to pay more wages. With regard to implementation of minimum wages Act, the Agricultural Labour Superintendent of Singhbhum district stated that the proportion of female labourers is more than male labourers who are paid less wages but they do not make written complaints because they are afraid of being discharged by their employers. It was also felt that the number of labour inspectors is low, and moreover, they do not have facilities, e.g. vehicle for the

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64. Wolf Ladejinsky, op. cit., p.1076.

intensive coverage and enforcement of minimum wages Act.<sup>65</sup> The wage registers are also not maintained by the employers and they by bribing the officials of the labour Department make good escape from the labour laws.

The problem of the non-enforcement of minimum wages Act has given rise to 'people's court' by CPI (Marxist-Leninist) workers whereby the exploiters are being compelled to pay minimum wages for 8 hours as prescribed by the Act. In the event of failure to do so fines are imposed, crops are forcibly harvested and life is threatened. This has created a reign of terror in some tribal villages of Singhbhum district. This is because agricultural labourers are not organized as industrial workers are. So they appear to be redressing their grievances through political parties like CPI (Marxist-Leninist) whose leaders resort to violent methods.<sup>66</sup> Recently a new movement for the enforcement of minimum wages has started in the region. The agricultural labourers have organized 'Kisan Samities' for this purpose. That is why landowners have become quite hostile to the Kisan

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65. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.53. pp.62-64.

66. Ibid., pp.26-27.

Semitics.<sup>67</sup>

### Seasonal Migration

The problem of seasonal migration is also much more acute in the region. Due to bad harvest, drought conditions, poverty and lack of employment the tribals are compelled to migrate to the towns in search of employment. The contractors and their agents are active here who lure the tribals with the promises of getting them employed at handsome wages. Very often the young tribal boys and girls become the victims of the recruiting agents. Such cases of migration are common in Singhbhum where it takes place between the month of May and November every year. The migration is usually to the states of U.P., Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal, Assam and Maharashtra. Once they migrate to other states, they become source of cheap labour because they are hard pressed by time, do not have money to return to the village and they are not in the position to bargain with their employers. It has also been reported that the employers visit the hutments of the migratory tribal girls and make them victims of their lust. Tribal girls are also used for

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67. Report of the Correspondent, "Singhbhum: Exploitation, Protest and Repression", EPE, 2 June 1979, p.942.

immoral purposes.<sup>68</sup>

In connection with this problem the 'Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1979' has been passed but has not been notified by the Central Government. Under this Act the particulars of the contractors and migrating workmen will have to be registered and contractors will have to get licence before they are allowed to take the workers out of the state. Since the Act has not been notified, the problem of unauthorised migration is continuing as usual.<sup>69</sup>

### Toll Tax

The weekly hats (local markets) play important role in the tribal economy of the region. The tribals not only sell and purchase in the 'hats' but these also offer a meeting place where their socio-economic and political activities are conducted. In the hats the tribals hold meetings, express their grievances due to the exploitation by the

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68. ✓ Janak Singh, "Law of the Jungle in Jharkhand", ✓  
Times of India (New Delhi), 11 February, 1982,  
p.5; R.O. Dhan, op. cit., p.207.

69. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, p.149.

contractors, police and other officials, and decide the course of action to be taken against them. These meetings have often led to the police firing resulting in the deaths of the tribals. The tribals do not like the system of toll tax collection because they are exploited by it. The village hats lessees buy the hats in auction for say 10,000 and they want to earn thrice by extracting more toll tax. Moreover, there is absolute lack of urinals, drinking water and resting sheds in the venues of hats. Tribals are harassed by the private contractors (hat lessees) and local officials. The toll tax collectors charge exorbitant rate of tax without giving official receipt. The collectors and police misbehave with the tribal women. Sometimes the commodities brought in the hats for sale are snatched, women are abducted and men are beaten up by them. It has often been seen that policemen collect meat, vegetable, poultry birds from the tribals without payment on the pretext that a warrant has been issued in their names and they would be arrested. The tribals request the policemen to allow them to attend the weekly hat for carrying out sales and purchases and for managing the affairs of the family until they have to remain in the police custody. This sort of exploitation is common phenomenon in the weekly hats, and the circle officer, under whose supervision weekly hats are held, is a silent spectator

and helpless government official. From time to time many suggestions have been made to end this sort of exploitation in the weekly hats. It has been suggested that toll tax collection by private contractors should be abolished and this responsibility should be conferred on the tribal co-operative societies. At prominent places in the hats the rate of toll tax should be displayed and the lessees charging more than what is prescribed should be prosecuted. The police patrolling in the weekly hats should be minimized or they may be allowed to move in the plain clothes. The exploitative tactics of the lower rank of police officials should be brought to an immediate halt with firm determination.<sup>70</sup>

### Atrocities

Atrocities on the tribes of the region have been registering a perceptible rise giving cause for greater concern. Loud voices are heard whenever any atrocity is reported. The state machinery down to the district level start probing into the incidents of the atrocities and some cases are also registered, but seldom are the root causes

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70. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.53, pp.64-66; Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, p.147.

properly analysed so as to keep on effective vigil on the bases of socio-economic tensions.<sup>71</sup>

The main causes of atrocities on the tribals are land-alienation, non-restoration of lands to the tribals, bonded labour, wage-labour, non-enforcement of minimum wages Act, non-recognition of tribal khuntkatti rights in the forests, collection of excessive toll tax, indebtedness, etc. This presents a total picture of exploitation and injustice, and any attempt to shake off any of these forms of exploitation, under the impact of awakening of the age or in order to avail the benefits of the various measures launched to uplift them, easily invites the wrath of the vested interests. The result is atrocity of any proportion. Lack of adequate efficient law and order machinery and inadequate legal protection have also contributed to a large extent to the rising trends in the incidents of atrocities.<sup>72</sup> In Santhal Parganas the police has been hand in glove with dominating Brahmin landlords in perpetrating atrocities on the Santhals tribals. Santhals are afraid of police so much so that they even do not go to the police station to register complaints

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71. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, p.2.

72. Ibid., pp.146-66.



of exploitation and atrocities. It has become a common phenomenon in this region that after each clash between the tribals and the non-tribals, Central Reserve Police (CRP) and Bihar Military Police (BMP) is deployed which conducts so called 'combing operations' to arrest the accused tribal leaders in the night without proper legal warrants and in that process beat the tribals, rape the tribal womenfolk and sometimes their household articles are also taken away. The institution of 'informants' evolved by the police does more harm than good to the tribals. Informants use police uniforms. Sometimes the moneylenders also use the police uniform and pretend to be informants, and that way exploit the tribals.<sup>73</sup>

There are legal provisions in the state for paying compensation to the tribals in case of injuries, rape and death of the tribals due to clash between the tribals and the non-tribal exploiters and police. The state Government has also established special cells under Inspector General of Police and constituted study teams under the supervision of Sinha Institute of Social Studies to check atrocities well in time and to scrutinise their causes.<sup>74</sup> The Government

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73. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.26, pp.26-33.

74. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.230-57.

has also established Harijan cells under Home Department to check atrocities and following the steps initiated by these cells, it has issued orders to the district magistrates and superintendent of police that they would be responsible for checking atrocities on the tribals and people belonging to weaker sections of the society. In case of even minor slackness strict action will be taken against the concerned officers. The fire-arms of the perpetrators of atrocities on the Harijan and the tribals will be confiscated.<sup>75</sup>

Some suggestions have been made to check atrocities. The police should at once register a case on receipt of a complaint from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (SC and ST) as a 'specially reported case' in so far as it relates to the atrocity or practice of untouchability, and prosecution should be immediately started. The local administration should get the list prepared from the Block Development Officer of the actual losses suffered on account of looting, arson, assault, death, rape, molestation, etc. and the victims should be liberally compensated monetarily and otherwise instead of sticking to the schedule monetary relief. The existing police force

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75. Arun Srivastava, "Using Naxalite Bogey", EPF, 29 March, 1980, p.629.

with the State Government appears to be extremely inadequate in relation to the prevention of atrocities against SC/ST. There is centrally sponsored scheme, viz. the enforcement machinery for the protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 under which funds are being released by the Government of India to the State governments/Union territories administration. During 1978-79 the state Government of Bihar was provided with the funds to the extent of 5 lakhs by the Central government for the purpose. Under this scheme the State government can strengthen the existing police force so that cases of atrocities against the members of SC/ST are not repeated. No indiscriminate use of the CRP/BMP should be made by the state Government for 'combing operations' on the tribal houses, and in case of accused persons the normal police force may be deputed for initiating actions and that too with search/arrest warrants against the accused. Raids by the police should not be conducted during night as the womenfolk feel insecure to protect their honour in the absence of their menfolk who leave their houses out of panic/terror created by such raids. In fact lady magistrate may be included in the police force at the time of combing operations. The police Department should be manned by the persons having upto date knowledge of criminology and imbued with sympathetic approach to persons driven to crimes with

a view to bring them back to the fold of civilized life. The institution of informants evolved by the police does more harm than good to the people as the informants in police uniform tend to exploit the villagers. This system of 'informant' should be done away with.<sup>76</sup>

### Excise Policy

The tribals of the region have similar problems with regard to the way in which Bihar Excise Act 1915 is enforced. Tribals of the region take rice beer or Haria (local brew) as necessary part of their food. It is not considered a sinful act. No tribal would hesitate in confessing frankly that he takes rice beer as a food and as restorative. Pure Haria made at home is fit for offering it to their Gods and ancestors. It is also health giving and invigorating. Though Haria induces intoxication, but it helps the poor live without food for long periods. Several tribals say that with an intake of two glasses of Haria they can do without food for 10 to 12 hours. In spite of it everyday tribals are caught for infringing the provisions of the Excise Act and prosecuted in the law courts. The

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76. Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.26, pp.34-35.

tribals yet to be convicted wonder, if they have really committed any offence. They cannot understand why so much stress is laid on 'prohibition'. To keep themselves healthy in mind and body they should remain free from such treatments.<sup>77</sup>

### Unemployment

The tribals of the region could not get benefit from the industrialisation in terms of employment. They were promised that one person from each tribal family will be employed in the industries. They were employed only as cheap labour as they did not have any technical and industrial training. Industries required skilled labour which came from the adjoining non-tribal areas. The launching of Block Development programme (BDP) and establishment of communication Department also required skilled staff that too came from the North Bihar and other adjoining states. Right from the beginning the local tribals faced and are still facing alien outsiders in getting employment, which has increased their frustration all the more. This is still one of the main

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77. K.B. Srivastva, "Administration Through Stages among the Tribes of Chotanagpur", in L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), Tribal Development and Its Administration (New Delhi, 1981), p.105; Janak Singh, "Adivasi Struggle for Survival", Times of India (New Delhi), 12 February, 1982, pp.1 & 5.

propaganda material of the Jharkhand leaders which has helped in the growth of internal solidarity and out-group antagonism. A strong antipathy has been generated towards the Dikus.<sup>78</sup>

Due to nationalisation of coal mines in 1971 about 50,000 Jharkhand miners lost their jobs and they were replaced by the people mainly from North Bihar. Several thousand of telegram were sent, over night, from Dhanbad district alone to the people at Arrah, Ballia and Chapra informing that jobs were available. During emergency several were retrenched and with rare exception they were all tribals and Harijans.<sup>79</sup> In Chotanagpur alone lakhs of skilled and unskilled workers have come from outside. They have captured the white collar jobs and position of power. Even the business activities have been captured by the outsiders. Administrative staff to run industrial projects is largely from the non-tribal region coming from Southern states (clerks) and North Bihar (officers). Marwaris, Bengalis and Gujaratis control wholesale and retail trade. Punjabis

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78. Jyoti Sen, "Jharkhand Movement", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Siala, 1972), p.436.

79. Nirmal Sengupta, "Class and Caste in Jharkhand", LPU, 5 April, 1980, p.666.

have grabbed transport and contracts. Considering the rapid industrialisation and fast increase in commercial activities it was natural that large scale migration took place into this region.<sup>80</sup> The number of the outsiders have increased so much so in the region that they have outnumbered the local tribals who are afraid of losing their cultural identity.

### Irrigation

In spite of the industrialisation of the region the majority of the tribals are agriculturists but their agriculture is at subsistence level. The settled tribal agriculturists suffer at numerous fronts. A vast acreage is unirrigated and the cultivators grow only one crop which is also rain fed. Drought, famine and scarcity are very common phenomena in this region. The primitive stage of tools and technology is another handicap. The use of chemical fertilisers, improved implements, seeds and technical know-how is at minimum level. In case the cultivators are motivated to go for say high yielding varieties the necessary pre-requisites are not available. Therefore, tribal farmers continue to remain out of the fold of agricultural

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80. Chanchayan Pardesi, op. cit., p.27.

innovation.<sup>81</sup> According to one estimate the total irrigated land in this tribal area is less than 1 percent as compared to 25 percent in the country as a whole. In the state of Bihar a big chunk of total investment on major and medium irrigation goes to the on-going projects. Such a policy operates against the tribal region as most of the on-going projects are located outside this tribal region. It has been observed that the State Government does not take up new projects unless on going projects are completed. In Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas, the lift irrigation from the river beds is most conducive due to circumstances prevailing around in the region. Lift is operated through diesel which is in short supply. Even if this facility is provided, the percentage of the tribals actually benefitted will be much low.<sup>82</sup>

### Health

The health of the tribals in the region is still very poor. Family diet generally contain minimal allowances of the protective food necessary to maintain health and

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81. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., pp.388-89.

82. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.219-20.



fight diseases. Under such conditions the children are the biggest sufferer as they are most vulnerable, and the highest mortality rate occur among them. Proper antenatal care and competent natal services are negligible making infant and maternal mortality very high. Most of the children suffer from the diseases and most common of them being intestinal, respiratory and communicable diseases. Under nourishment and malnutrition following weaning is largely responsible for mortality age-group. Children under five are also susceptible to diseases like malaria, small pox, trachoma, diarrhoea, parasitic and skin infections and leprosy. All these are difficult to deal with as their control depend upon measures that prove effective only over an extended time period such as better nutrition, improved environmental sanitation and mass health education. Whatever little medical facilities provided are not availed by the tribals. Tribal communities of the region continue to be superstition ridden. The predominance of superstition has not been shaken even under changing conditions. They still believe that diseases are caused by spirit and can be warded off by appeasing them. Traditional medicine men (Bhagats) are popular among them and guide the destiny of the sick person. Most of the tribal children and youths are deprived of little medical service available due to

their parent's ignorance and traditional attitude. Even if medical facilities in the hospital are availed, but in case of death of the diseased, the tribals loose faith in the hospital and again depend totally on the Bhagats and quacks.<sup>83</sup> Where the death and disease or epidemic visit

very frequently the lonely villages, the villagers launch a witch-hunt, identify someone as witch and kill her.

'Chiriburu Mahila Samaj' under the leadership of Laru Jonko a courageous Ho woman has launched a mass signature campaign against witch-hunt. This Samaj is demanding adequate medical facilities. The witch-hunting is barbarous and wrong.

Doctors and medicine will bring succour to the people. We achieve nothing by killing innocent women.<sup>84</sup> The health conditions of tribal coal-mines in Dhanbad district is very poor. There is much that still needs to be done for the colliery workers. A survey of the mines in the coal-fields of Dhanbad conducted by the Indian Medical Association showed that 70 percent were either sick or in an indifferent state of health and 35 percent suffer from major or minor ailment requiring medical treatment. 20 percent to 40 percent of

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83. Sachchindra Narayan, "Children of Bihar", Illustrated Weekly (Bombay), vol. C1, 44, December 14-20, 1980, p. 15.

84. Mahasveta Devi, op. cit., p. 1012.

the inhabitants were victims of filariasis and 10 percent of hook-worm infections leprosy and tuberculosis.<sup>85</sup>

There has been considerable expansion of medical facilities in this region from second and third plan period onwards but the benefits have not been commensurate with the efforts made. The reason is that many hospitals and dispensaries in the tribal areas have been without doctors for months. Doctors and para-medical staff hesitate to go to serve in the interior parts of the region even with special pay and allowances because of the difficulty in finding any suitable residential accommodation and lack of adequate means of transport and communication. It is no use of establishing hospitals if doctors and other ancillary staff cannot be found to man them. Residential accommodation should invariably be provided for the doctors and the staff. The conditions of work should be made sufficiently attractive by offer of special pay. The need at present is less for the expansion of existing facilities than for their consolidation.<sup>86</sup>

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85. Gautam & S.G. Vohra, op. cit., p.6.

86. Indian Planning Commission, Report of the Study of Tribal Development Programmes (New Delhi, 1969), pp.29-30.

### Communication

The tribals in the most interior parts of the region are cut off in terms of communication. In many areas of thick forest and high hills, the tribals are less benefitted from the programmes of planned change. The problem of physical isolation debars them of many advantages. The objective of bridging the gap between the tribal areas and surrounding developed areas, and undertaking suitable developmental programmes has not been attained. The main obstacle in this respect has been that the infra-structure has not been adequately developed in these areas. A network of roads, railways and facilities like tele-communication and electricity are important if full benefits of the investment in these areas have to reach the tribal people of the region. Whatever little means of communication and transport exist, they are to serve industrial belts and complexes.<sup>87</sup>

### Inadequate Supply of Drinking Water

There is acute shortage of drinking water. In most cases the tribals of the region depend on jungle streams,

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87. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.18, pp.220-26.

ponds, wells and irrigation tanks as sources of drinking water. The water of the village tanks is used for bathing, washing, cooking and drinking. Cattle is also made to take bath in these tanks. The tribals further suffer from the acute shortage of water in summer when even limited sources of water go dry.<sup>88</sup> In the district of Singhbhum there is shortage of water in the thickest forest. Due to lack of pumps and wells, the tribals living there had been depending for generation on couple of streams passing through jungles for drinking water supply. With the location of washeries like India Iron, Steel and Company and Bokaro Steel Complex, the water flowing in those streams not only contain chemicals but it is also very turbid. This has deprived the people and cattle of their only drinking source of water. Few pumps and wells that exist do not function properly because the earth is rocky and they have not been dug very deep.<sup>89</sup>

### Housing

The housing system is also bad in this tribal region. While it is appropriate to build tiled houses for the tribals

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88. Indian Planning Commission, op. cit., p.30.

89. Janak Singh, "Adivasi Struggle for Survival", Times of India (New Delhi), 12 February, 1982, pp.1 & 5.

but in remote villages it is sheer extravagance because the tribals cannot maintain them. A tribal knows how to plug a leak in a thatched house but this is not the case with the tiled house. In building houses for the tribals consideration should be given to tribal customs and practices. In Damodar valley where villages are built to rehabilitate the tribals, displaced by the construction of dams across Damodar River and its tributaries, went untenanted, because the planning of the villages and the design of the houses went not in accordance with their ideas of lay out and design. So the housing scheme in this region should be chalked out in consideration of tribal wishes, rituals and ideas regarding lay out and design.<sup>90</sup>

### Education

There is no dearth of educational facilities in this tribal region, however, the tribals are unable to avail these facilities being provided by the Education Council of Bihar Government, District Board, Adimjati Seva Mandal and Missionaries - Roman Catholic and Lutheran. It is difficult to attract the tribal children to the schools, because the schools are organised without taking into

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90. Indian Planning Commission, op. cit., p.30

consideration the cultural and economic conditions of the tribal communities concerned. The plans for tribal education being implemented in the region can in no way be distinguished from those in non-tribal areas. There are some problems that need consideration for the scientific planning of tribal education.

Educated tribal youths in general look down upon their own norms, values, economic system and polity and laugh at their own customs and practices. Though the tribals learn the three R's yet they are uprooted from their socio-cultural milieu, and conditions are rapidly formed for cultural disintegration or maladjustment. The 'Dhunkurias', the traditional educational institution to impart education to the tribal adolescent no longer play any role in modern education. Tribals have to struggle hard for their existence and the children are not spared from this struggle. Due to scarcity and heavy agricultural engagements the tribal peasants and landless agricultural labourers do not find it possible to spare their children for the schools as they are needed in the field. There is total lack of training in agriculture craft and other vocation so that the tribal youths can earn even when learning in the schools. Various parts of the syllabus are not yet integrally related to the environment of the child. The syllabus requires

modification in the light of cultural needs of the tribal people. The life and culture of the tribal people are closely associated with their seasonal occupations. After harvesting in winter they are well off and are in a mood to spare their children for schooling. But during rainy season specially at the beginning of sowing they have to do odd jobs to get even one meal for the whole day. During this period they are not in the position to send their children to the school. Children can learn better through languages spoken at home than through a foreign language. One notes with grave concern that from the very elementary classes, the tribal children in Bihar are taught in Hindi and their mother tongues are neglected. At present teachers working in Chotanagpur are mainly non-tribals from North Bihar who do not know languages, customs and practices of the tribal children they teach. They maintain a social distance and look down upon tribal children to be dull and unintelligent. Unless they undergo a short training in social anthropology and tribal culture, such prejudices are unlikely to disappear. As regards scripts most of the tribes in the region do not have their own script except Santhali script which has never come into general use. Roman script was prevalent in some tribal sector under the influence of missionaries but since 'Devnagri' is not the only script



of the regional language but also of the national language, the Roman script has not been given up altogether and Devnagri has been accepted as the script of the tribal languages of Bihar. As regards textbooks they are not in conformity with the needs of the tribal society. The books recommended by the Education Department deal more with the cultural contents of the more advanced people and give distorted picture of the tribal life. New text books are required to deal with tribal mythology, traditions, heroes, their games and other means of recreation at least upto primary stage.<sup>91</sup> Most of the tribal areas in the region do not have school buildings and adequate number of teachers. Teachers give more attention to their own business rather than to teach the students. Stipends for SC/ST students in primary schools are a great blessing to the teachers who take a nice cut from the money which is sent in lump sum.<sup>92</sup>

Education has major role in bringing about socio-economic changes among the tribes. In fact, it is a key to their development. It is therefore essential that high priority should be accorded to education in all development

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91. L.P. Vidyarthi, Cultural Contours of Tribal Bihar (Calcutta, 1964), pp.195-203.

92. Mahasveta Devi, op. cit., p.1012.

programmes. It has been found that in Bihar the number of non-enrolled students is much low. Even those who enrol themselves drop it in the middle. It is, therefore, desirable that Government would give suitable incentives like universal coverage under the scheme of award of pre-matric stipends, opening more Ashram schools, backward class hostels, book-banks, change in curricular, adjustment of school timings according to the needs of the tribals, free distribution of stationery, uniform and mid-day meal, etc. to the tribal students to encourage more of them to enrol and continue after primary level. problems like absentee teachers, insufficient posting of staff, lack of adequate leave reserves, building of infra-structure and teachers quarters, which are so common in the region should be solved. There is lack of tribal teachers, so that community feeling may induce them to work for the development of the tribal people.<sup>93</sup>

In spite of many educational problems, there has been phenomenal growth of education among the tribals during the last two decades. But with this the problem of unemployment has also increased among them. Most of the tribal students after their secondary and university level education go back

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93. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n. 18, pp. 220-26.

to their villages and look for employment outside. Unemployment among the educated tribals has been mounting very fast. 7½ percent reservation for the tribals in central, and state services, public and private sector has benefitted only a few tribal elites and their family. The real benefit of the reservation has not reached to the tribal downtroddens. The posts reserved for the scheduled tribes have also not been filled for one reason or other. This has driven them to disappointment and frustration. It has been noticed that unemployed tribal youths who are matriculate are actively taking part in all sorts of agitations whether they are related to forest problems, minimum wages, or movement for separate Jharkhand state.<sup>94</sup> These objective conditions have led to the feelings of discontentment and alienation which express themselves in different demands raised from time to time by organisations, groups and parties espousing the tribal cause.

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94. Sachchidanand, op. cit., p.178; Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, n.53, p.68.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRIBAL POLITICS IN JHARKHAND REGION OF BIHAR

The tribal politics in the Jharkhand region of Bihar began in absolute sense of the term from 1910 onwards. The current Jharkhand Movement and related tribal politics has its seed in the little student organisation which was shaped by its founder J. Bartholmon, a young orphan from Chaibasa. He was studying in the 1st year Arts in St. Columbus College, Hasaribagh, in the year 1910. Though the youngman lacked parental affection, he was brought up under the divine parenthood of Anglican missionaries of Chaibasa. He had warm feelings for his poor colleagues, who suffered more or less the same plight. His own livelihood and education was dependent upon a little loan of Rs.25 per month, received from his college. He spent Rs.17 each month on his maintenance and saved Rs.8 every month for an outing during the Summer or Puja Holidays. His own bitter experiences of hard life gave him a strong urge to help his fellow students. He was very much eager to solve the problems of the poor tribal students, and so he formed 'Dacca Students Union'. He collected some Christian students and patrons and held series of meetings in which some professors and missionaries were asked to give religious discourses. He

proposed to raise funds to help the needy Christian students. This was a challenge from a poor orphan boy which was accepted by everyone with the sense of true Christian brotherhood. Funds were raised in the shape of monthly subscriptions and donations from a few generous missionaries and laymen. Sometimes in 1912 a play 'Alibaba and Forty Thieves' was staged in Ranchi by the union to collect money. Being encouraged by all this, next day the students of the union called a meeting of Lutheran and Anglican students in which they explained their aims and objects. Their views were accepted, and subsequently handsome amounts were collected, and a new branch of this Dacca Students Union was opened in Ranchi, under the supervision of a similar active person Peter Heward. By this time J. Bartholmon completed his B.A. (1915) and got a job of assistant teacher at St. Paul's School, Ranchi. Here too he was an active participant, but when his efforts were to blossom he was thrown out of the scene.<sup>1</sup> The union established by him mobilised the tribal students on the demands like educational facilities, job opportunities, etc. The Britishers could easily concede the demands of the

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1. L.P. Vidyarthi, Cultural Contours of Tribal Bihar (Calcutta, 1964), pp.153-54.

students for they wanted to carve out an elite sub-group from among the tribals. This student union was the nucleus of a political party which rallied the tribals for over six decades.

When the era of constitutional reforms dawned after 1918, and the demand for the promotion and protection of regional and sectarian interests grew, the educated Christian tribals mainly Munda and Oraon students belonging to Lutheran and Anglican Missions reorganised the 'Dacca Students Union' and renamed it 'Chotanagpur Improvement Society' at the instance of Anglican bishop of Ranchi. A Munda Peter Huard, its secretary led this inter-denominational body. It voiced its concern in 1916 over the absence of security for the tribals and stressed the need for the preservation of tribal identity in the changing political context. It also offered various suggestions for the economic advancement of the tribal community.<sup>2</sup> In 1928, this society was renamed 'Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj'. Its objectives were, (1) to uplift Chotanagpur from its backwardness, (2) to improve

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2. K. Suresh Singh, "From Ethnicity to Regionalism - A Case Study of Tribal Politics and Movement in Chotanagpur 1900-1975", in S.C. Mulic (ed.), Dissent Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization (Simla, 1977), p.320.

the social, political and economic conditions of the tribals, and (3) to secure employment for the educated tribals, reservation in services and legislative bodies and formulation of a sub-caste joined to Bengal and Orissa. Though it sought to spread its activities among the villages, but it remained essentially an urban movement.<sup>3</sup> The membership of the Samaj was confined to the tribals both Christians and non-Christians. No non-tribal could be a member of the Samaj. Its leaders were educated tribal Christians like Paul Dayal, Bandi Oraon, Rev Joel Lakara, Theodore Huard and Anand Mashri Topno. The Samaj met the Simon Commission and raised for the first time the demand for a separate tribal state. This was the first time that a political demand, which in the subsequent years aroused the entire tribals in the region, was raised. The Simon Commission did not take the demand very seriously. However, the 'Chotanagpur Landlords Association' under the leadership of Thakur Mahendra Nath Shah Deo of Jharis estate immediately opposed the demand.<sup>4</sup> The movement under the Samaj was unique of its kind, as it was led by educated groups of

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3. K.K. Verma and R. Singh, "Social-Political Movement among Munda and Oraon", in B. Singh and J.S. Bhandari (ed.), The Tribal Worlds and its Transformation (New Delhi, 1980), p.10.

4. Ghanshayam Pardeesi, "Jharkhand-I Origin of the Movement", Mainstream (New Delhi), 19 July 1980, p.8.

the tribal youths, and it was silently revolutionary in character. Its leaders had burning zeal and true devotion for their people. But they still lacked one who could lead them to their destined object. However, it was an experiment and they fared well. They put forward their grievances along with the demand of a separate state which, though not seriously considered by the Simon Commission, had its impact at the time of framing of the Government of India Act of 1935, that provided for the establishment of an All-India Federation and a new system of government for the provinces on the basis of provincial autonomy.<sup>5</sup> The period of its activities also witnessed the development of a mini-revivalism among the tribes very much on the pattern of Indian renaissance, which stressed return to the Golden age of the tribal community, and formulated an individualistic approach to the reform and service of the community.<sup>6</sup>

Educated tribal leaders of the Samaj had a strong urge to uplift their society and organise themselves on a single platform. They were also touched by political

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5. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.R. Sahay, Dynamics of Tribal Leadership in Bihar 1967-71 (Allahabad, 1976), p.87.

6. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.320.



currents in the mainstream of the country. Some of the leaders of the Samaj were not satisfied with the set up and functioning of Unnati Samaj, because the urban oriented middle class leadership of the Samaj failed to penetrate the rural hinterland which had massive fighting potential. Peasantry could not be mobilised so long as the land problem was not the central one. The more radical elements like Theble Oron sensed the weakness of the movement under the Samaj and walked out of the Samaj to form 'Kisan Sabha'. There was no significant difference between the Samaj and the Sabha the two tribal organizations, except in their method to solve the problems of the tribal community. The 'Kisan Sabha' was radical in its attitude and believed in pressurising the government through radical actions by mobilizing the support of the peasantry, whereas Samaj believed in the instrumentality of memorandums and petitions. Except this basic difference, the leadership of the two organizations was homogenous. The leaders of the two tribal organisations belonged to the same social category. Most of them had been to the universities in India and outside, and were quite familiar with the life and the ways of the communities living outside their tribal zone and in urban areas. They not only had no faith in the magical practices but took them as a sign of backwardness and as an obstacle in the way of progress. They had by and large a secular

and rational frame of mind. But this did not mean that their community sentiment was weak. It was on the contrary so strong that when Simon Commission visited, they led a delegation to present their grievances and demanded their redressal. In 1935 elections, the Sabha set up its candidates for the assembly, but fared very badly, and nothing was heard of it after that.<sup>7</sup>

Till the late thirties, these two organizations were mainly restricted to the Christian tribals belonging to Anglican and Lutheran Mission members. Catholics were out looking for an organization of their own to protect and promote their interests. Baniface Lakara and Ignos Beck two important Catholics from the Christian tribal communities under the inspiration of the Arch Bishop of Chotanagpur organized 'Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha' under their joint leadership. Though they declared that this Sabha stood purely for socio-religious advancement and economic betterment of the community, they took active interest in political issues too. Ignos Beck and Baniface Lakara contested election in 1936-37 for legislative bodies, and both of them were elected. Other tribal leaders

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7. Shashishekhar Jha, Political Elite in Bihar (Bombay, 1972), pp. 108-09.

elected were Charan Murmu, Debu Murmu, Ram Bhagat, Rasika Ho and Tikaram Manjhi. 'Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj' and 'Kisan Sabha' also set up their candidates in the election, but they lost to their rival candidates belonging to the Catholic Sabha. The reason was that the Catholic Sabha had gained much popularity because of the better organized Catholic Mission, and this put the two other organizations at serious disadvantage.<sup>8</sup>

Ignes Beck's experiences in the legislature since 1935 sharpened his political skill and he dreamt of a pan-tribal organization like 'Adivasi Mahasabha' to fight more vigorously for the all round development of the entire tribal population of the region.<sup>9</sup> While representing and attending the meetings of the legislative bodies during 1935-40, a feeling of suspicion and contempt cropped up in the mind of Ignas Beck in respect of various political parties in general and Congress in particular. He thought that Congress Party being a party in power would not do any good to the tribals, but look after its own partisan interests. He drew conclusion from the various meetings and discussions in the

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8. Ibid., p. 109.

9. Ibid., p. 109.

parliament that if all the tribals wanted good for themselves, it could only be gained through their own efforts. These were the feelings, Ignès Beck said, "that haunted at the back of my mind; when on one occasion Mohammed Ali Jinnah spoke in the parliament session and gave vent to the similar feelings, my conviction grew stronger". When Ignès Beck was contemplating on this subject he visualized that unless they (tribals) remove denominational differences among themselves and stood united for the common cause, the aboriginal masses will not attain salvation from the social, economic and political backwardness.<sup>10</sup> Another source of influence was that in 1937 election held under the Government of India Act of 1935, the tribal leaders had very bitter experience. In this election Congress had swept the polls. This phenomenon persuaded the Christian and non-Christian tribals belonging to various denominations and their respective organizations to close their ranks and form a joint body.<sup>11</sup> Similarly in the mid-thirties national movement for independence grew in strength. As a result, in 1936 provincial autonomy was granted in 11 provinces. Orissa became a province separate from Bihar. All this

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10. L.P. Vidyarthi, op. cit., p.157.

11. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.320.

had its repercussion on the minds of the educated tribal leaders. It dawned upon them that the way to political power and progress lay in the formation of a separate state.<sup>12</sup> For this it was necessary to have an organisation to represent the tribal interests before the government.

All these factors were instrumental in persuading Ignace Beck to organize a bigger tribal organization. But it was not an easy task. His first difficulty was to convince the leaders of the three different tribal organizations, above all his own organisation (Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha). He thought that once he had convinced the members of his own organisation, other organizations will follow the suit. Hence he approached the then Arch bishop of Ranchi and explained the whole situation to him. He was convinced and a meeting of 'Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha' was called. Beck placed his proposals before the meeting but he faced strong opposition on behalf of the priests and laymen. However, he was asked to contact the leaders of other parallel organizations. Subsequently he approached the individual leaders and made them understand his view points. All of them agreed to his views and proposals to meet at

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12. Jyoti Sen, "Political Development in Tribal Bihar", in Ratin Mitra and Barun Dasgupta (ed.), A Common Perspective for North-East (Calcutta, 1967), p. 144.

'Catholic Ashram' the present site of 'Gram Gauri Office' Purulia Road. They met at the appointed place and after long discussion all of them agreed in principle to form at least a temporary alliance to fight out elections in the ensuing Ranchi Municipality election. They prepared so well and gave such a tough fight that they won the election. This gave such an effective impression to the people and the leaders that they expressed their desire to maintain the unity for ever. The leaders met again and organised 'Adivasi Mahasabha' (A.M.), a so-called pan-tribal organisation to represent all tribal communities of the region in 1938 to fight the diku raj, to improve the socio-economic and political conditions of the tribals, and finally to win a separate state of Jharkhand.<sup>13</sup>

In the beginning of 1939 Jaipal Singh,<sup>14</sup> who was

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13. L.P. Vidyarathi, op. cit., p.158.

14. Jaipal Singh was an Oxford educated Christian Kunds. He was born in pahan (priest) family in Takara village near Ranchi. He excelled in the field of sports, and eventually obtained a 'Full Blue' in Hockey at Oxford. He captained the Indian Hockey team which won world championship at the 9th Olympiad at Amsterdam, and consequently received special congratulation from the Viceroy of India. He also held some important and responsible positions in the other fields as well. His excellent career made the tribals in Bihar feel that he has exceptional powers, otherwise he could not have achieved so many distinctions in foreign lands. Eventually he came to be looked upon as an incarnation of Birsa Bhagwan, and he was accepted as 'Harang Gomke' (Supreme leader) due to his so called Charismatic qualities.

then a minister in Bikaner state came over to Ranchi on his way to Patna. His fame was already known to the leaders of A.M. They picked up this opportunity to request him to preside over the meeting of the A.M. Jaipal Singh was himself interested and keen to take active part in the improvement of Chotanagpuris. He accepted this invitation willingly. The big meeting of A.M. took place in Ranchi between March and April 1939 with a great tribal pomp and show. From this time onwards he became a regular member of the A.M., and a little later he became the president of this Sabha.<sup>15</sup>

A.M., represented an advance on the earlier movement, commanded a wider political base, and claimed a pan-tribal composition and objective. A.M. in the beginning got support from the Bengalis as a result of Bengali-Behari controversy.<sup>16</sup>

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15. Ibid., p.158.

16. This controversy was concerned mainly with the economic interests of both the Bengalis and Beharis. With the advent of the Britishers and introduction of permanent settlement, the Bengalis came from the adjoining areas into this region. They practised moneylending, retail and wholesale business. The poor peasants mortgaged their lands to the Bengali moneylenders and took loans at exorbitant interests. In the event of failure to repay the loan, the land passed into the hands of Bengalis instead of going to the landlords who were very often Beharis. The Bengalis also earned much profit by purchasing the land produces of the peasants and selling them in the far off places. The Bengalis were also educated and skilled and so they captured most of the white collar jobs, when this region began to be industrialised. The Beharis wanted to drive the Bengalis out of the region. The Bengalis felt that their interests in Bihar were not safe, and therefore, they could combine with the tribals to form a separate state in which their economic interests would remain protected.

It also got support from the Muslim league which during 1940s played with the idea of forming a corridor passing through the tribal area to link East and West Pakistan. They sympathised with the tribals and gave financial support to the A.M. The A.M. on the whole remained outside the mainstream of nationalist politics and freedom movement. Its president Jaipal Singh gave support to the British war efforts and played a personal role in recruiting the tribals for the British army in the hope that Britishers will sympathetically consider his demand for a separate state. By this time A.M. began to be led by professional political workers, some of them highly educated and articulate. It became a Chotanagpur Movement extending over both the urban and the rural areas. It demanded not only the formation of a tribal sub-state, but also complete separation from Bihar. It also became militant to attain its objective of separate state of Jharkhand. By 1947 militancy failed to pay off. The A.M. was routed by the Congress in the elections for electing members to the Constituent Assembly in 1946. The link with the Muslim League was broken, and the Bengali-Behari controversy also died down.<sup>17</sup> But the A.M. continued to enjoy the support of Forward Bloc (the name of Subhash

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17. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.321.



Chandra Bose was dragged in), Congress Socialist Party and few others who were to join it a little later.<sup>18</sup> The A.M., as a political organization wanted close ties with the Congress, and demanded representation in the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee and Working Committee. Both of these demands were rejected. Several clashes took place between the Congress workers and, members of the A.M. Jaipal Singh also fought election for the provincial council in 1946, but he was defeated by the Congress candidate. His defeat found expression in the slogan "We shall take Jharkhand, Jharkhand is the land of adivasis and non-advansi exploiters will be turned out of the region even by violence". Some of the other demands of the A.M. were reservation of seats in higher education and employment, 1/4th representation in administration and white collar jobs. They further demanded that only Chotanagpuria should be given employment in the industries of the region.<sup>19</sup>

Upto the late fifties the A.M. was confined exclusively to the Christians and the non-Christian tribals. After this it was considered necessary to include the non-tribals living

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18. L.P. Vidyarthi, op. cit., p.159.

19. K.L. Sharma, "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar", BPC, 10 January, 1976, pp.41-42.

in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas in this organization, both to extend its cadre base, and to universalise the cause of a separate Jharkhand state. To press this view point Justin Richard organized "United Jharkhand Bloc" in 1948. This brought about a new turn. The members of the A.M. wanted to introduce changes in its constitution as well its objectives. It was at the same time that non-tribal residents of Chotanagpur established a separate association at Daltongunj in order to place their voice in the parliament for a separate state of Chotanagpur. Its first president was Deokinandan Sinha of Daltongunj. How to accommodate the non-tribals in the A.M. was the most vital point before the leaders of the A.M. How to reconcile the controversy of the non-tribal residents over the interests of the tribals of the region was the difficult problem, that had to be sorted out. This was indeed a difficult question in principle, but to make the demand for a separate state more strong, the reconciliation was equally important. Hence in Jamshedpur session of the A.M. in 1949-50 it was decided, that though Sabha would not loose its identity, it will extend its membership to the non-tribal residents of the region. [In order to avoid the controversy of the tribals and non-tribals, it (A.M.) was renamed as 'Jharkhand Party' in 1950. Since then it became a full-

fledged political party, the A.H. existing within it as a cultural unit. Jaipal Singh became its president, and Ignes Beck its secretary.<sup>20</sup> With formation of the Jharkhand party, the tribal movement in Bihar evolved into a modern political organisation. It functioned like any other political party, and it has been led by professional politicians. These politicians were not different from the political men of other parties and they had similar political motivation and orientation as the Hindu and Muslim politicians had.<sup>21</sup> With its formation, the separatist movement was transformed into a party-based movement, and a new secular model emerged which symbolised the aspirations and the needs of the local and regional people.<sup>22</sup> Jaipal Singh was able to bring together Christians and non-Christians urban and rural people under the common banner. The movement spread all over the region and even beyond among the tea garden labourers of Bengal who were emigrants from this region.<sup>23</sup>

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20. L.P. Vidyarthi, op. cit., p.159.

21. Shashishekhari Jha, "Tribal Leadership in Bihar", LPU, 13 April, 1968, p.608.

22. K.K. Verma and R. Singh, op. cit., p.3.

23. Jyoti Sen, "Jharkhand Movement", in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1977), p.434.

Earlier the tribals of the region had been recognised as minority. The framers of the Constitution were giving the country a secular system which assured the missionaries and minorities. Further it was discovered that census of 1941 gave an exaggerated figure of the tribal population in Chotanagpur. The census of 1951 like that of 1931 showed that the tribals were not a very large community. In fact they had been a majority in the Chotanagpur region. Therefore, the Jharkhand Party was thrown open at least in principle as embodied in its constitution to all Chotanagpuris. This affected a transition from ethnicity to regionalism. This was partly in keeping with the large political and secular stance current in those days that the language, and not ethnicity, should determine the formation of the state. Some elements of the Congress Socialist Party and quite a few members of non-Behari moneylending community, erstwhile known as 'diku', joined the party. The concept of Jharkhand was enlarged to include all the regions that once formed parts of the Chotanagpur administrative division. Thus the tracts inhabited by the Chotanagpuri tribals, which now form parts of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, were included in the Jharkhand.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the Jharkhand Party

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24. K. Surech Singh, op. cit., p.322.

claimed and still claims that Jharkhand state will comprise apart from Chotanagpur and Sonthal Parganas of Bihar, 9 districts of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. It shows signs of ethnicity and regionalism.

Tribes in general all over the world are known by their respective totems. Many primitive tribes are divided into sibs (clans). The sib name is derived from an animal, plant or natural object; the sib mates display special attitudes towards these creatures or things, which are designated by the anthropologists as totems. The institution which comprises the sibs, their totems and the attendant beliefs, customs and rituals is called totemism; whereas the sum total of totemic features in a particular tribe or a tribal group is usually designated as a totemic complex. Perhaps half of the core primitive tribes of India have totemism. Animals are generally preferred as totems. Birds and plants also occur as totem in certain tribal groups. Totems represent cultural traits. The totem is regarded as a friend, a protector, something of one's own kind; it is usually treated with respect, but it is not God. The imagination of the totemite endows the tribal group with powers greatly beyond the human. Psychological attitudes towards totems are always of a kind to reveal the totems

as objects of enhanced emotional value.<sup>25</sup> The Jharkhand Party of the tribals of the region adopted 'Cock' as its symbol, and it has been a source of sentiment for the tribals. It is associated with all of their rituals and sacrifices. Cock is considered to be a favourite object of sacrifice to their Supreme Being. Again it is cock which awakes them in the morning to begin their daily life. In other words, it meant 'the day break', 'arrival of the dawn' and 'tribal awakening'. The flesh of the cock also serves as a favourite dish to the tribals and to many it is a source of income. So cock has assumed a great value for the tribals, and hence a party having the symbol of cock must have a strong appeal to the tribal mind.<sup>26</sup> Again the symbol of cock symbolized for them 'the creative God and all pervading bonga'. It acted as a magic stick for the tribal electorate. The cadres of the Jharkhand Party convened their election meetings by the sound of crowing. Hundreds of people gathered whenever they heard human beings crowing. Even the illiterate old and short-sighted women made sure that the ballot box had the symbol of cock before casting their

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25. Alexander Golden-Weiser, "Totemism", International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, New York, Mac Millan, vol. 13 & 14, pp. 657-60.

26. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, op. cit., p. 328.

votes.<sup>27</sup>

So far as the membership of the Jharkhand Party was concerned there was no prescribed membership fee. Each tribal was to be considered a member of the Jharkhand Party by his very birth in the tribal family.<sup>28</sup>

The first general election was approaching, so Jaipal Singh convinced the tribal people of the need for a separate Jharkhand state, persuaded them to realize its importance and prepared them psychologically for it. He also gave relevant slogan during the election. The mobilisers of the party and the movement led by it echoed the slogan "Jharkhand abua, daku daku senoa" (Jharkhand is ours, the dacoit daku will go).

The first general election of 1952 marked the zenith of the popularity of the ethnic Jharkhand Party and the movement led by it. In this election the Jharkhand party had electoral alliance with the Janata Party which had the support of both the peasants and ex-sarindars. The size of the votes polled by the Jharkhand party remained all time

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27. S.V. Kogekar and R.L. Park (ed.), Report on Indian General Elections 1951-52 (Bombay, 1956), pp.29-30.

28. L.P. Vid'yarthi and K.N. Sahay, op. cit., p.91.

record and so was the number of seats captured by it; 32 seats in the Bihar state assembly and 5 in the Lok Sabha. Through the achievement in this election, it became the main opposition party in the Bihar legislative assembly, and so it was in the position of strength to bargain with the government and clinch the issue in its favour.<sup>29</sup> In addition to capturing 70 percent of the reserved seats, it also captured some general seats, whereas Congress was able to secure 20.59 of the seats reserved for scheduled tribes in Bihar. The rest were divided between the Lok Sevak Sangh and the Janata Party.<sup>30</sup> (See Table-1 and Table-2)

The success in the election brought the party in favourable position of strength to bargain with the Government. It intensified the demand for a separate Jharkhand state, which assumed great height at the time of demonstration of the tribal men and women of Chotanagpur before the State Reorganization Commission (SRC), when it visited Ranchi in the year 1955. "Jharkhand Aag Front" was the main slogan of the demonstrators. The demonstration was the biggest so

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29. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., pp.331-33.

30. Sachchidanand, Tribal Voters in Bihar (New Delhi, 1976), p.17.



TABLE-1BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA  
GENERAL ELECTION 1952

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Congress	241	45
Socialist Party	23	3
Jharkhand Party	32	5
Krishak Masdoor Praja Party (KMPP)	1	-
Lok Sevak Sangh	7	-
Janata Party	11	-
Forward Bloc	1	-
Centantra Parishad	1	-
Ram Rajya Parishad	1	-
Jan Sangh	-	-
CPI	-	-
Hindu Mahasabha	-	-
R.S. Party	-	-
Other Parties	-	-
Independents	13	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>54</b>

Source: Shashishekar Jha, Political Elite in Bihar (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1972), p.57; Sharda Paul, 1980 General Elections in India (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1980), p.330.

TABLE-2

PERCENTAGE OF RESERVED SEATS FOR THE SCHEDULED TRIBES  
OWN BY POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Political Party	Election Year					
	1952	1957	1962	1967	1969	1972
Jharkhand Party	70.59	65.63	59.38	--	13.79	10.34
Congress	20.59	25.00	9.37	48.38	34.49	58.62
Hul Jharkhand	--	--	--	--	13.79	3.45
Jan Sangh	--	--	--	17.24	17.24	--
Swatantra Party	--	--	18.76	6.89	3.45	--
Socialist Party	--	--	9.37	3.45	3.45	--
Independents	--	3.12	--	24.14	13.79	24.14
Other Parties	1.82	6.25	3.12	--	--	3.45
No. of Seats	34	32	32	29	29	29

Source: Sachchidanand, Tribal Voters in Bihar  
(New Delhi: National Book House, 1976)  
p. 16.

far taken out by the local tribals on any other occasion in the past. The SRC also visited Dumka in Santhal Parganas, and there also a demonstration on a magnificent scale was led by the tribals. There were also counter demonstrations which supported the integrity of Bihar, and were opposed to the Jharkhandis. It is said that the whole Jharkhand Movement specially the demand for a separate Jharkhand state as well as its expression in the form of demonstrations before SRC were masterminded by the foreign Christian missionaries. They were behind the movement from the very beginning. The common argument put forward in this connection was that the tribals are very simple and unsophisticated people, and such a wider movement cannot have any wider strength behind it, unless planned and guided by the missionaries. 'Kiyogi Committee' set up by the Madhya Pradesh Government also supported this popular argument and considered foreign missionaries specially Roman Catholics responsible for it, though the missionaries as usual reacted very sharply to it.<sup>31</sup> The executive committee of the Jharkhand Party submitted a memorandum to SRC emphasizing the economic, political and cultural imperatives for the formation of a separate state of Jharkhand. The memorandum

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31. A Soares Conversion, "Peace and Love in Truth shall prevail", The Catholic Association of Bombay (Bombay, 1957), pp. 63-64.

stated that ethnically, linguistically and culturally, the tribals are distinct from the non-tribals. Besides this, the proposed Jharkhand area provided certain geographical contiguity and administrative separateness, so they pleaded their claim for a separate state. But the Commission rejected the demand on the point, that since multiplicity of languages persisted in the area, so the claim for a single linguistic state was not tenable.<sup>32</sup>

The performance of the Jharkhand Party and its image in the 1957 general election was not satisfactory as compared to the 1952 elections. There was a slight decline in its popularity. It was due to many reasons. The Jharkhand Party could not get its demand for a separate state accepted by the SRC. The tribals of the region on the eve of 1957 election had become disillusioned and disheartened, mainly because of non-fulfilment of their demand for a separate Jharkhand state. Some sections of them had started thinking that the slogan of a separate Jharkhand state was just a means of exploiting the sentiments of the simple tribal people on the part of their leaders like Jaipal Singh, who served only their selfish interests of attaining power.

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32. K.L. Sharma, op. cit., p.38.

They began to feel that lavish promises being made by the then leadership would not be fulfilled. Thus Jaipal Singh, who was adorned by his people as 'Marang Gomke', became a leader worth name only, and he began to fall down in the estimation of the people. This feeling grew all the more strong when during election in 1957 Minoo Massani, a parsee least known to the tribals of Chotanagpur, was associated with the Jharkhand Party. He was invited to fight election from Ranchi on the Jharkhand seat, and he really succeeded in winning the seat. This was not liked by the tribals, and it was felt that Jaipal Singh took money from Massani for allowing him to fight election on the Jharkhand ticket and canvassing for him.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the rise in the number of voters, the votes polled by the Jharkhand Party in the 1957 General Election was small in number, though the number of seats bagged by it in the Bihar state assembly remained intact.<sup>34</sup> Jharkhand Party did not increase its strength but it retained its bloc of 32 seats. It lost some safe seats reserved for the scheduled tribes but made up the loss in general

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33. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, op. cit., p.98.

34. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.333.

constituencies.<sup>35</sup> Though the party got majority of the reserved seats, but its influence was declining. It could capture 65.6 percent of the reserved seats. The Congress gained some more of the reserved seats as compared to the previous election. Some independent candidates also appeared on the scene.<sup>36</sup> For the Lok Sabha the Jharkhand Party fielded 14 candidates but only six of them could be elected.<sup>37</sup> So it was in better position as compared to previous Lok Sabha election in which it could send only 5 candidates. On the whole, the period between 1952-57 was in many ways, the peak period for the Jharkhand Party and the movement led by it. (See Table-2 above and Table-3.) The Jharkhand Party remained a major party in Chotanagpur and Santbal Pargana regions. It displayed remarkable unity, laid down the law in the Jharkhand region, and it could mobilise thousands of people and take out mammoth processions at short notices.<sup>38</sup>

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35. Shachishekhar Jha, n.7, p.57.

36. Sachchidanand, op. cit., p.16.

37. Shiv Lal, Lok Sabha Elections Since 1952 (New Delhi, 1978), p.12.

38. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.322.

TABLE-3BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA  
GENERAL ELECTION 1957

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Congress	210	41
Praja Socialist Party (PSP)	31	2
Socialist Party	1	-
CPI	7	-
Janata Party	23	-
Jharkhand Party	32	6
Jan Sangh	-	-
S.C. Federation	-	-
Gantantra Parishad	-	-
Other Parties	-	3
Independents	14	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>318*</b>	<b>53*</b>

\* The delimitation commission had reduced the assembly seats from 331 to 318, and Lok Sabha seats from 54 to 53 in the 1957 General Election.

Source: Shashishekar Jha, Political Elite in Bihar (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1972), p.59;  
Sharda Paul, 1980 General Elections in India (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1980), p.331.

In the late fifties and early sixties there was decline of the Jharkhand Party, which could be attributed to many factors. There was the growing impact of development programmes and increasing involvement of the tribals in the development process. The split between the advanced Christians and relatively backward non-Christian tribals arising out of the competition for better educational facilities, employment opportunities and control development inputs and resources deepened. The non-tribals started looking to other parties. Many All India Parties, viz., Congress, Jan Sangh, Swatantra Party and Communist Party of India (CPI) appeared on the scene. The experience of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa which had given representation to the tribal interests in the government and council of ministers had made it clear, that the tribals needed a share in the power to protect and promote their interests, which could as well be secured by joining the Congress or by coming to some sort of understanding with it as it was in Orissa. Jharkhand Party did not have any agrarian programme.. Its leaders were town based professionals who had little consideration for the rural problems. Its ally was Janata Party which represented the interests of exploiters, the samindars. Moreover, it appointed a secretary from the moneylending community. The situation was gradually becoming



radical and so the tribal masses wanted a radical programme which the Jharkhand Party could not afford. 'Garibi Hatao' programme of the Congress was also facilitating its success. There was dissidence within the party arising out of the style and performance of the leadership particularly at the time of re-organisation of the states, when the Jharkhand party had not only failed to press its demand at the higher level, but had also seen a miscable chunk of Jharkhand, viz., Manbhum or Purulia being given away to West Bengal. The party had always been handicapped by want of funds which could sustain an organisation, which never functioned efficiently at the higher level. The search for money led to strange alignment with the elements such as 'dikus' the traditional enemy of the tribals. The non-Behari diku had vested interests in the movement to keep the Beharis away. Party support was also given to many outsiders. All this created a strain within the party.<sup>39</sup> The government sponsored development policies benefitted only the upper class tribals mainly Christians. They were members of the legislative assembly, landlords and elites. The upper class wanted to maintain their position. To divert the attention of the tribal downtrodden masses, the upper class

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39. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.323.

continued to incite them against the poorer non-tribal dikus. They were actually hand in gloves with the rich non-tribal industrialists who helped them with funds and obliged them in hundred other ways. It was this upper class from which stemmed the demand for a separate Jharkhand state. Although the Christians formed only 10.6 percent of the total tribal population, there was a fond hope among them that Jharkhand will be a Christian state and they would have much say in it. Naturally this demand had the backing of the Christian Churches.<sup>40</sup> The Jharkhand Party leaders had become self-complacent and they were losing their close contacts with the tribal masses. An impression was gaining ground that the tribal leaders were having their fine time at Delhi and Patna and did not care much for their electorate. The demand for a separate state was declining and so was the influence of the Jharkhand Party. The leaders also failed to provide leadership to emerging industrial labour. During this period there was also decline in the activities of the Jharkhand Party and there were favourable circumstances for both the Congress and the Jharkhand Party to come closer in one way or another. The influence of Jaipal Singh was on

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40. Sachchidanand, "Tribal Situation in Bihar", K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp. 177-78.

decline whereas that of Sushil Kumar Bage was on increase.<sup>41</sup>

It was under these circumstances that the third general election was held in 1962. The strength of the Jharkhand Party declined from 32 to 20 seats in the Bihar legislative assembly losing 12 seats. The number of votes polled by it fell down to 4.67 lakhs as against 7.6 lakhs in 1957. The party lost not only some general seats but also some reserved seats to its erstwhile ally Janata Party (now Swatantra Party) and Jan Sangh, Congress and CPI who had made significant inroads into its strongholds.<sup>42</sup> It secured only 59 percent of the reserved seats. The Congress also suffered heavy loss. It secured only 9 percent of the seats. Swatantra Party in which the Janata Party had merged made a good start. It won 19.75 percent of the reserved seats. Among the rest three went to Samyukta Socialist Party and one to the Communist Party.<sup>43</sup> In the third Lok Sabha the Jharkhand Party could return only 3 candidates which showed its waning popularity.<sup>44</sup> (See Table-2 and Table-4.)

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41. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.H. Sahay, op. cit., pp.98-99.

42. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.333.

43. Sachchidanand, n. 30, p.17.

44. G.G. Mirchandani, 320 Million Judges: An analysis of 1977 Lok Sabha and State Assembly Elections in India (New Delhi, 1977), p.33.

TABLE-4BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA  
GENERAL ELECTION 1962

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Congress	185	39
Swatantra Party	50	7
Jharkhand Party	20	3
Proja Socialist Party	29	2
CPI	12	1
Socialist Party	7	1
Jan Sangh	3	1-
Jan Kranti Dal	-	-
Other Parties	-	-
Independents	12	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: Mahendra P. Singh, Cohesion in predominant party: Pradesh Congress and party politics in Bihar (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1975), p.37; and Shashi Chakher Jha, Political Elite in Bihar (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1972), p.67.

Congress-Jharkhand Party Merger: In the post third general election period the prevailing circumstances were very much conducive for the merger of the Jharkhand Party with the Congress. The factors which were responsible for the decline of the Jharkhand Party were also instrumental in bringing the party closer to the Congress. In addition to them there were also other factors. Congress Party by this time realised that without the aid of the Jharkhand Party its chances in the region were doomed. The Jharkhand Party leaders on their part were tired of sitting in the opposition and believed that once in the government they could actively pursue policies for the tribal welfare, and they would also be able to fight for a separate state from within the Congress. The Janata Party which merged with the Swatantra Party was also increasing its influence in the strongholds of the Jharkhand Party. The Jharkhand Party was also facing difficulties in raising resources for the organizational work.<sup>45</sup> The formation of states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Nagaland had profound effect on the Jharkhand Party leaders. It was mentioned again and again in the public meetings and gatherings that these states have been formed from within the Congress. "If we also

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45. Sachchidanand, n.40, p.175.

follow the course taken by the leaders in those states and be a little militant we shall also achieve our goal". One group of leaders also thought that students should be organized and given training in militant methods.<sup>46</sup> After 1962 general election, the Jharkhand Party leaders smelt the feeling of the people's discontent who had been promised the separate Jharkhand state if they voted for the party. The people felt that their dreams of a separate state would blossom into reality immediately after the general election and they would be relieved from their sufferings. As their dreams remained unfulfilled their faith on the leaders began to fade away gradually. Hence, the Jharkhand Party leaders thought to meet their promise by merging with the Congress. After the same election the top brass leaders became far away from the tribal masses. The local leaders were not helpful. Thus a vacuum was created in the leadership.<sup>47</sup> Factions emerged both in the Congress and the Jharkhand Party around the leaders who were likely to be in a position to distribute patronage. They were looking around to acquire political skill to survive in the state

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46. Jyoti Sen, n.21, p.434.

47. Sachchidanand, n.30 pp.17-18.

politics.<sup>48</sup> After the organisation of the Jharkhand Party a 'political rank path' was opened before the tribals of Chotanagpur. In the course of time tensions along ethnic as well as religious lines arose within the Jharkhand Party and, in order to countervail that, merger was considered necessary.<sup>49</sup> The Congress also emerged weak after 1962 General Election. While Jharkhand Party needed strong alliances, a faction led by Binodanand Jha in the Bihar Congress needed its support in the power game being played at that time. The Jharkhand Party had lost its traditional ally Janata Party. So the compulsion to seek fresh alliances became evident to it. A resolution forming an opposite bloc with Praja Socialist Party was adopted in 1962. Negotiations with the CPI for evolving a strategy on the labour and industrial front was settled.<sup>50</sup> Its talk with the Congress for electoral understanding had broken down, when it wanted general seats in its area of influence to be left to it. It was also in no mood to concede any of the tribal reserved seats to the Congress. The Congress on its

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48. Ibid., pp.110-11.

49. Pranab Dasgupta, Impact of Industrialisation on a Tribe in South Bihar (Calcutta, 1978), p.105.

50. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., pp.331-32.

part could not let down the four members of the Jharkhand Party who had joined the Congress legislature party and others who had loyally stuck to it at considerable risk to themselves.<sup>51</sup> All these factors were responsible in inducing both the Congress and the Jharkhand Party to come closer for eventual merger.

The efforts for the merger were actively pursued when Binodanand Jha was the Chief Minister of Bihar. Jaipal Singh was persuaded through his wife Jhanara to merge the Jharkhand Party with the Congress. Nehru, according to N.B. Hore, President of Jharkhand Party, promised to Jaipal Singh that Congress would create a separate Jharkhand state.<sup>52</sup>

The agreement for the merger was finalised on 20th June 1963, which stipulated: (1) Constitution of a development Board for Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas and parts of Bhagalpur, Monghyr and Shahabad districts for the purpose of economic, industrial and agricultural development of the people and general development of the area as a whole; ~~(2) Merger of Congress Party and the Jharkhand Party and~~

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51. Shiv Lal, Elections under Janata Rule (New Delhi, 1978), pp.6-7.

52. Ghanshayam Pardeesi, op. cit., p.9.



constitution of a sub-committee of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee to co-ordinate political and organizational activities in the region.<sup>53</sup> The move for the merger was the result of factionalism and opportunism. It was not based on any common understanding on the question of tribal cause. It was a sort of political bargaining by the two sides and complete integration did not, therefore, take place.

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Consequences of the Merger: The merger was announced without even calling a general meeting of the Jharkhand Party. It was not realised that the Congress was a vast party in which the identity of the Jharkhand Party will be lost. The merger generated schism inside the Jharkhand Party and the leadership came to be divided in the form of factions. Jaipal Singh led one faction and the other was led by S.K. Bage. A third faction wanted to revive the old party and functioned independently. The reasons which kept factional politics alive in the Congress also worked here. Personal interests motivated the leaders to action. The rise of the new leaders threatened the supremacy of the old leaders and so the cleavages took place. This secular phase

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53. K. Sarosh Singh, op. cit., pp.331-33.

of the tribal politics was not integrative but factional in nature.<sup>54</sup> The merger also shocked the hard-core Jharkhandis and some sections of the dominant Christian elite who feared loss of leverage they could have exercised and who were keen to maintain their separate identity. The merger was not ratified by the general body of the Jharkhand party, and so it was technically defective. As soon as the merger was effected it began to be criticized by the rump. The behaviour of the leadership which had sought the merger did not help mutual bickerings and personal rivalry delayed the implementation of the terms of the merger and its consolidation. Some members though technically members of the Congress encouraged the criticism of the merger and worked secretly against it towards the close of 1966.<sup>55</sup> Merger was effected at the apex of Jharkhand leadership because Jaipal Singh was absolutely fed up with the church masters and wanted rightly that political questions of the region should not be settled in the church campus and throw the ball in the Congress maidan. Most of the Jharkhand leaders and tribal masses did not accept the merger, because the leaders who spearheaded the merger process were themselves

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54. Shashishekhar Jha, n.7, pp.110-11.

55. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.324.

the target of attack and criticism. The integrity of Jaipal Singh was challenged. The rumour was spread all around that Jaipal Singh took bribe from Binodanand Jha and sold the tribals of the region to the Congress. Others said that Jaipal Singh did it out of his craze for power as a minister in the Congress government. The merger was supported by only 20 members of the Jharkhand Party in the assembly. N.E. Horo and rank and file opposed it. Most of the Jharkhand electorate did not know about the merger until 1967 General Election.<sup>56</sup> During this election when they came to vote for the Jharkhand Party having the symbol of cock, crying 'murga' 'murga' (cock, cock), but learnt to their great disappointment that the murga was eaten by the 'yoked bullocks' (Congress election symbol).

Jaipal Singh was included in the cabinet as a minister. This brought an important tribal leader into the active participation in the government. Other important Jharkhand leaders were accommodated in the Congress committees at the districts and state level. At this juncture S.K. Bage also emerged as an important leader and challenged the leadership monopoly of Jaipal Singh by supporting the rival faction of

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56. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, op. cit., pp.99-100.

K.B. Sahay in the then caste politics of Bihar.<sup>57</sup> After sometime Binodanand Jha retired from the post of Chief Minister under the famous 'Kamaraja Plan'<sup>58</sup> and fresh contest for the post began. In the factional and caste politics of Bihar Binodanand Jha group was isolated. An earlier attempt by Binodananda Jha to build up an entirely new base of support through merger failed. Finding himself out of office, Jha faction could not keep a good many of his newly acquired Jharkhand followers under the leadership of S.K. Bago, from defecting to the potential Chief Minister Krishna Bhallebh Sahay's faction, who was willing and eager to oblige Jharkhand leaders with patronage.<sup>59</sup> On becoming

57. Ibid., pp.99-100.

58. This plan was proposed by K. Kamaraj, the Congress Chief Minister of Madras (now Tamilnadu), and subsequently president of Indian National Congress. This plan was intended to 'revitalise' the Congress organisation. It suggested that leading Congressmen in the government should voluntarily step down from their ministerial posts and offer themselves for full time organisational work. All Congress chief ministers and all union ministers resigned in response to the Congress High Command. Six chief ministers and six union ministers were relieved to do organisational work (S. Kochenok, The Congress Party of India: The dynamics of one party (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1968), pp.77-80).

59. Mahendra Pratap Singh, Cohesion in a Predominant Party: The Pradesh Congress and Party Politics in Bihar (New Delhi, 1975), p.64.

Chief Minister K.B. Sahay turned his face against Jaipal Singh taking him to be an ally of Binodanand Jha. He turned over S.K. Bage another powerful leader next only to Jaipal Singh. This phenomenon accelerated dissension in the Jharkhand group, because S.K. Bage supported Sahay faction and became minister against the wishes of Jaipal Singh. Jaipal Singh publicly accused K.B. Sahay and told a press conference in Patna in 1964, "that none of the terms and conditions of Jharkhand-Congress merger agreed upon in June 1963 had been implemented by the Congress in Bihar though the Congress president and chief ministers of Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa were party to it".<sup>60</sup>

The 1967 General Election was approaching, but the popularity of most of the important Jharkhand leaders, viz. Jaipal Singh and S.K. Bage had already started waning due to Jharkhand-Congress merger. Though both of them had been in the ministry but the lot of the tribals did not improve. It was during this period, i.e. 1966 that two separate states of Haryana and Punjab were formed but not that of Jharkhand. Encouraged by the formation of these two states Jaipal Singh called upon his people to act in these words "the days of

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60. Shashishekhari Jha, n.7, p.91.

begging are gone, we shall have to act in Birsa Munda fashion to get our legitimate demands. Tribals should raise their heads against wrong-doers and if necessary use bows and arrows". But nothing came out of it. There was also a proposal to revive the old 'Adivasi Mahasabha' but it could not be done.<sup>61</sup> Around this time the great leader image was fading. Jaipal Singh realised that the merger was a blunder. He is stated to have told H.E. Hore, a little before his death in 1970 that "Nehru cheated him". He was more concerned with the fact of his being cheated by others but he did not realize that he himself cheated his people who had great expectations from him. In 1968 he thought in terms of reviving the Jharkhand party which, he told Hore was his 'first love'. Before his death he was quite optimistic and wanted Jharkhandis to join hands with Jagjivan Ram so that the combined strength of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes could triumph over the entrenched feudal elements.<sup>62</sup> Dissatisfaction with the work of Jharkhand leaders allied with the Congress caused much resentment due to which glory of Jaipal Singh waned and his followers deserted him. Its impact was felt in 1967 General Election.

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61. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.324.

62. Ghanshayam Pardesi, op. cit., p.9.

In the 1967 General Election, the Jharkhand leaders suffered the blast of anti-Congress wind. The collaboration with the ruling party thus proved a millstone in their neck. The various splinter groups of erstwhile Jharkhand party contested the election. Since they were in the opposition they were popular with the masses. But the result was disastrous because they fought election as independents. The trend noticed in the third general election developed further. The Jan Sangh, Congress, Swatantra and CPI gained while Jharkhand splinter groups could capture only 9 seats and 1.72 lakh of the valid votes polled. This was the lowest ever performance. The reason was the splitting of votes, e.g. there were as many as 119 candidates contesting 15 seats in Ranchi as against 73 in 1962, 69 in 1957 and 59 in 1952.<sup>63</sup> Security deposit of S.K. Bago was forfeited and many tribal leaders lost their seats. Even Jaipal Singh narrowly escaped the defeat in the election. The leaders who were popular with the masses for their being in the opposition won 24 percent of the reserved seats. The Congress held the largest share of 48 percent and Jan Sangh secured 17 percent of the seats. The Swatantra Party won three seats.<sup>64</sup> (See Table-2

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63. K. Surosh Singh, op. cit., p.334.

64. Sachchidanand, n.30, pp.18-19.

TABLE-5BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA GENERAL ELECTION 1967

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Congress	128	34
Sanyukta Socialist Party (SSP)	68	-
Jan Sangh	26	1
Praja Socialist Party (PSP)	18	1
CPI	24	5
Jan Kranti Dal (JKD)	13	3
Swatantra Party	3	-
CPM	4	-
Socialist Party	-	7
Other Parties	1	-
Independents <sup>a</sup>	33	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>53</b>

<sup>a</sup> Independents also included 9 candidates who were not satisfied with 'Congress-Jharkhand Merger' and fought the election as independents under the name of Jharkhand splinter groups with different symbols. They won because they were in the opposition and popular with the tribal masses.

Source: Mahendra P. Singh, Cohesion in Predominant Party: Pradesh Congress and Party Politics in Bihar (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1975), p.38; and Shashishekhar Jha, Political Elite in Bihar (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1972), p.67.



above and Table-5.) In this election despite the good performance as compared to the Jharkhand Party and other parties, Congress was defeated. It could not attain the required majority to form government and this paved the way for the installation of coalition government in which the splinter groups of Jharkhand party played minor role to wrest some gains. But on the whole, the hopes, ideals and aspiration of the tribal leaders were totally shattered. Even those who stood for the Jharkhand-Congress Merger<sup>65</sup> became disillusioned, disheartened and the idea of Jharkhand was again there to haunt them. This gave fresh impetus to the crippled and faction ridden Jharkhand Party. Fresh efforts were made by the new leaders to revive the Jharkhand Party in their own way to get popular support on the one hand, and recognition by the government and the election Commission on the other.

From 1938 till 1967 Jaipal Singh more or less dominated the tribal politics in the Jharkhand region through one party, i.e. Jharkhand Party. During this period Jharkhand was fought on papers. As Horo says, "that was a war of memorandum" along with some occasional demonstration no doubt. But

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65. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, op. cit., pp.87-106.

never in this period was any effort made to drive home the point by mass struggle.<sup>66</sup>

Split and Fragmentation of the Jharkhand Party: The process of split and fragmentation within the Jharkhand Party had already started after its merger with the Congress but this process culminated and came to surface during and after the 1967 General Election.

After the merger, Lal Harihar Nath Sahdeo, a local Hindu advocated of Ranchi became the leader of the anti-Jaipal Singh group, and claimed to continue the old Jharkhand Party. He had support of a few tribals. He memorialised the election Commission to reserve cock symbol for them in the name of 'Sahdeo Jharkhand Party'. In addition to 'Sahdeo group' there were 'Paul Dayal group', 'Lakara group', and few others on the eve of 1967 General Election. Since these groups were not aligned to any major party, they were treated as independents. The symbol of cock was not given to any of them, but other symbols like 'Lion' and 'Rising Sun' were given to them. After the general election it was realised that so long as there will be more than one group working

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66. Arun Sinha, "Containing Jharkhand Movement", EPU, 7 April, 1979, p.648.

in the name of the Jharkhand Party, none can win the support of the tribals. As a result there was a move to unify all the splinter groups. A two day conference of all the groups was held at Hazaribagh in November 1968. Among the important leaders were David Munzmi, S.K. Bage, N.E. Horo and Simon Tigga. There were sharp differences among them mainly between Bage and Horo, and many allegations were made by one against the other.<sup>67</sup> But despite the differences one unified 'Jharkhand Party' emerged from this conference as a result of compromise which came to be known as 'All India Jharkhand Party'. Bagun Sumbrai became its first president and N.E. Horo as its secretary. One of its first act was to declare the merger of the old Jharkhand party with the Congress in 1963 as unconstitutional, as it was not approved by the general body. But again there was a split within the 'All India Jharkhand Party'. Factionalism emerged once again under the two rival leaders Bagun Sumbrai and N.E. Horo. There was temperamental incompatibility and conflict between the two leaders. Later on with the split in the Congress in 1969, Horo led faction supported new Congress or Congress (R), and Bagun Sumbrai led faction supported the old Congress and Jan Sangh. Finally the faction led by Horo walked out and

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67. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.H. Sahay, op. cit., pp.102-04.

formed 'Jharkhand Party'. The major split occurred again in the old Jharkhand Party when the Santhals also separated themselves from the Chotanagpur tribals and formed their own party named after Santhal insurrection (locally called 'Hul'), i.e. 'Hul Jharkhand Party'. The Santhals always nursed grievances, that though, they were more numerous than the Mundas and Oraons, they did not command adequate influence in the Jharkhand politics. This simmering discontent had already expressed itself in a demonstration against the Jharkhand Party leader Jaipal Singh in 1957. This explains why despite the attempts to widen the political base of the party to include parts of Singhbhum and Hazaribagh it became essentially a Santhal organization. In December 1968 'Bihar Prant Hul Jharkhand Party' was formed. There was a further split in it into two factions in 1972 for the same reasons, which caused split in the All India Jharkhand Party, i.e. personal differences and rivalry. The break away factions called themselves the 'progressive Hul Jharkhand' and 'Rajya Hul Jharkhand'.<sup>68</sup> Here it is very important to note that this process of split within the split, and factionalization within the Jharkhand Party was on denominational and ethnic lines. The 'All India Jharkhand Party' functions mainly among

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68. K. Surosh Singh, op. cit., pp.324-26.

the Hos of Singhbhum with its headquarters at Chaibara. 'Jharkhand Party' is popular among the Mundas of Ranchi, and 'Bul Jharkhand Party' among the Santhals at Santhal Parganae.<sup>69</sup> Later on Bagun Sumbrai left All India Jharkhand Party and joined Janata Party in 1977. Now the All India Jharkhand Party is headed by Salkhen Murmu.

Rise of Urban Pressure Groups: It was after 1967 General Election that some urban pressure groups came into existence like Birsa Seva Dal (BSD), 'Krantikari Morcha', and 'Chotanagpur plateau Parishad'. Among them 'BSD' was most important. BSD was formed on the suggestion of Jaipal Singh at Ranchi by a group of youngmen Lalit Kujur (General Secretary), Prom Kujur (Additional Secretary), Pius Lakare and others, which is said to be an independent tribal organization engaged in uniting the tribals in a well-knit and socially conscious organisation to work for moral, mental and economic uplift.<sup>70</sup> It was formed with the objective of securing a better deal for the tribals in the matters of employment, and functions mainly in Janshedpur now. Behind its formation two influences were at work. First, the missionaries of

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69. Pranab K. Dasgupta, op. cit., p. 105.

70. New Republic (Ranchi), 15 August, 1969.

different denomination had been shocked by the fragmentation of political structure of the Jharkhand Party and were dismayed at the erosion of Christian leadership as revealed by election results. Therefore, a new organization had to be established to safeguard the interests of the educated tribals in the urban areas. Second, extremist elements were active seeking to establish a base of their influence and operation in this tribal region. They managed to influence the BSD's ideology, programmes and methods considerably. The co-existence of pro-missionary faction and pro-CPM faction within BSD, was not happy one and subsequently there was a split. But the two worked together for some time. The constitution of BSD spoke generally of the commonality of the interests of the tribal backward classes and other exploited sections of the population. However, its objectives were primarily geared to securing interests of the tribal people. It demanded action to (1) bring about a wide awakening among the tribal people to secure their deliverance, (2) remove fear, inferiority complex, sense of isolation and correct the habit of silent submission to the tyranny and exploitation, (3) organize the tribals to secure fundamental rights and democratic/regional rights, (4) to end and expose colonial exploitation which has been the root cause of sufferings, (5) secure priority in matters of employment in administrative

and private institutions, (6) prevent loot of land and secure restoration of alienated lands, (7) establish the rights of the tribals to secure admission to educational institutions on priority basis, (8) organize workers and students to secure their demands, and (9) instil love and devotion for the tribal culture and forge unity among the people and teach them how to exercise their collective will to secure their rights. The action programme, however, was limited to securing employment, and admission to educational institution amidst the slogan for regionalisation (even tribalisation) of the local administration. There were two phases in the development of the BSD. The first from 1967 to 1969 was the militant phase. Violent methods of struggle to secure tribal rights were advocated. Meetings and processions of the youths armed with bows and arrows, pheroes and celebration of Birsa Day, were the modes of mobilization. The slogan was "Jharkhand Hamara Hai, Jharkhand Larke Lenge, Teer Ke Bal Par" (Jharkhand is ours and Jharkhand will be won by a fight with the force of arrows). BSD demanded creation of separate state, expulsion of non-Chotanagpuris, agrarian reforms and measures against money-lenders. The situation became worse in 1969. In the March of that year the CPM launched a Naxalbari type of movement. Some elements of BSD supported its pro-Mao slogans which

appeared on the walls of Ranchi town and elsewhere. But the movement under BSD failed to strike root among the Ranchi tribals. But after this the influence of CPM and the missionaries gradually waned. BSD plodged itself to play a constitutional role and adopt peaceful methods of struggle. Violent incidents ceased. The organization was undermined by the conflict between the two factions. Some of the BSD leaders sought refuge in the All India Jharkhand Party and now it functions mainly in the industrial town of Jamshedpur. BSD is not a political organisation though it works in unision with All India Jharkhand Party. It is mainly a socio-political organisation, and not a political party in absolute sense of the term, as it never contested any election.<sup>71</sup> The emblem of BSD is a 'white flag with a bow and arrow embosed in red on it'. There is a prescribed code of conduct in the matter of exchange of greetings. When the members of the Dal meet, one raises his right hand straight up and shouts 'Jai Adivasi' (victory for adivasis), and it is replied in the same manner by raising right hand and uttering 'Jai Birsa' (victory to Birsa).<sup>72</sup>

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71. K. Surosh Singh, op. cit., pp.326-28.

72. Pranab K. Dasgupta, op. cit., pp.105-06.



In the 1967 General Election not a single party could get majority enough to form the government. The dominance of Congress Party came to an end. This was followed by the politics of coalition and defection. From 1967 to 1969 coalition government was led by Shoshit Dal and Samyukta Vidhayak Dal under the Chief Ministership of M.F. Sinha, D.P. Mishra, and B.P. Mandal. Defection remained the main instrument in the toppling game of coalition government. Jharkhand splinter groups played minor role.

1969 General Election and accentuation of the politics of Coalition and Defection: In the 1969 mid-term election all the splinter groups of Jharkhand Party participated in the election. All India Jharkhand Party led by Begun Sumbrai and Jharkhand Party led by N.S. Horo together won 10 seats from the region. The former almost swept the polls in Singhbhum. It won all the seats which were previously in 1967 held by Jan Sangh, Congress and CPI. Hul Jharkhand Party fielded 18 candidates among whom 5 won from Santhal Parganas and 2 from Singhbhum. So the Jharkhand splinter groups were able to regain lost grounds in 1969 mid-term election. The pendulum swung back to the 1962 position. The Jharkhand splinter groups captured 17 seats and 3.17 lakhs of the valid votes. They came into a position to

further extract concessions but it did not mean that they could return to 1957 position. The decline of the party continued.<sup>73</sup> In the same election Jharkhand Party and Hul Jharkhand Party each won two seats in the Lok Sabha.<sup>74</sup> The rise of Jharkhand Party and Hul Jharkhand Party checked the influence of the Congress which came down from 48.3 percent to 34.5 percent. Jan Sangh appeared to be a potential rival by winning 17 percent of the seats. Independent candidates secured 14 percent of the seats. Jharkhand and Hul Jharkhand parties won almost equal number of seats (13.79 percent).<sup>75</sup> (See Table-2 above and Table-6.) Bagun Sumbrai, N.B. Horo and S.K. Bage were important leaders of splinter groups who won the election. David Munzmi, a self-designated president of the All India Jharkhand Party was defeated along with 38 candidates nominated by him on behalf of the party.

Even in this mid-term poll of 1969, none of the party could win enough majority to form the government, and this accentuated the earlier politics of defection and coalition.

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73. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., pp.326-34.

74. Shiv Lal, Indian Elections Since Independence (New Delhi, 1972), p.41.

75. Sachchidanand, n. 30, p.19.

TABLE-6

**BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA  
MID-TERM GENERAL ELECTION, 1969**

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Congress (R)	118	24
Jen Sangh	34	1
Congress (O)	-	8
Sanyukta Socialist Party	52	5
CFI	25	5
Praja Socialist Party	18	1
Lok Congress Dal (LCD)	9	-
Janata Party	13	-
Shoshit Dal	6	2
Bhartiya Kranti Dal (BKD)	5	1
CPM	3	-
Hul Jharkhand Party	7	2
All India Jharkhand Party	4	-
Jharkhand Party	6	2
Swatantra Party	3	-
Other Parties	3	-
Indopondents	12	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: Mahendra P. Singh, Cohesion in a Predominant Party: Pradesh Congress and Party Politics in Bihar (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1975), p. 38; and Shiv Lal, Lok Sabha Election Since 1952 (New Delhi, Election Archives, 1978), p. 16.

The splinter groups of Jharkhand Party also joined coalition ministry which was bound to be unstable. From 1969 to 1971 six coalition governments were installed. During this period of coalition, ideology played minimum role. Conflicts stemming from the ideology were by and large successfully resolved through the methods of excluding controversial issues by agreeing in advance upon common minimum programmes shelving of any new or unforeseen issues with potentiality of aggravating conflicts, and moving cautiously by the consensus.<sup>76</sup> There were mainly two sources of conflict and tensions that jeopardized the stability of these coalition governments: intra-party dissensions within the Congress, and wrangles over ministerial positions among the smaller coalescing parties.

After the mid-term poll fresh efforts were made to effect an alliance between the various splinter groups of erstwhile Jharkhand Party. On Prakash Rajgaria the general secretary of All India Jharkhand Party was asked to make a unity move which in due course did materialise. One 'Jharkhand Legislative Party' on the basis of working alliance was formed

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76. Mahendra Prasad Singh, op. cit., pp.75-76.

to give support to the coalition government and extract concessions. N.E. Horo was made education minister in the Congress led ministry. But within six weeks this ministry was toppled and president rule was imposed for the second time. It is notable that splinter groups gave support to coalition governments on the conditions that government will set up a statutory regional boards for Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas with complete autonomy which could take independent decisions in matters related to education, employment, appointment of vice-chancellors, and welfare of its people, and development of the area. The Jharkhand legislature partymen were making consistent efforts to exert pressure on Harihar Singh ministry to give concrete shape to the proposals and terms of conditions of support. Moreover, they pressed the demand for the creation of Jharkhand state by pressing logically that if there could be Nagaland and Khasia Jaintia Hill States, there was no reason why there should not be a separate Jharkhand state in Bihar for the tribals on cultural, linguistic and geographical grounds. This coalition ministry led by Harihar Singh was also toppled on 20th June 1969, because Jharkhand and Hul Jharkhand parties along with others crossed the floor during voting in the assembly on the budget

demand for the animal husbandry Department.<sup>77</sup> This was followed by the installation of Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD) ministry led by Lok Congress Dal (LCD) leader Bhola Paswan Shastri, on June 22, 1969. The Jharkhand parties participated in it. Soon the elements of fission appeared. The 10 member Jharkhand and All India Jharkhand Party expelled two of its members who were minister in Shastri government, and demanded their replacement by fresh nominees. Congress was trying to topple the SVD ministry through defection and SVD was also trying to defect the Congress members within its fold by luring them with ministerial posts. It was at this juncture that 7 members Hui Jharkhand Party after extracting an assurance from the Chief Minister for setting up a regional planning and Development Board for Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganae region, decided to join the government, but Jan Sangh a coalition partner did not want to include Hui Jharkhand Party in the ministry perceiving it to be a separatist organization. Bhola Paswan Shastri, the Chief Minister could not please the Jan Sangh which in turn withdrew its support reducing the ruling SVD government to a minority. Bhola Paswan Shastri resigned and that was followed by the president's rule, though the assembly was not dissolved.

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77. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.H. Sahay, op. cit., pp.105-06.

The split in the Congress created confusion in the politics of Bihar. New Congress led by Daroga Prasad Rai formed coalition government in which both the Jharkhand parties and the Hul Jharkhand Party along with others participated. At this time Jharkhand Party and Hul Jharkhand Party manipulated the weakness of Rai government to get maximum number of their party members nominated as ministers. This ministry also collapsed due to defection of coalition partners on December 18, 1970.<sup>78</sup> After the collapse of D.P. Rai ministry, Sanyukta Socialist Party (SSP) Chairman Karpoori Thakur formed the new SVD coalition ministry on December 22, 1970, whose partners among others was also the Hul Jharkhand Party. But the minor coalition partners brought about the fall of ministry within 160 days. Despite recommendation for the President's Rule by the outgoing Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur it was not imposed. Bholu Paswan Shastri was again given opportunity to form the government. This time he also got the support of Hero led Jharkhand Party. This government resigned to pave the way for the fresh assembly election in February 1972. The resignation of Shastri government was followed by the

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78. Mahendra Pratap Singh, op. cit., pp.75-96.

President's Rule.<sup>79</sup> So during this period (1969-71) the Jharkhand Party splinter groups played the role of 'weights' to tilt the balance either in favour of the ruling coalition government or in that of the opposition to topple it.

1972 General Election and waning of the popularity of Jharkhand Party splinter groups: After 1967 though the objective conditions of the Jharkhand Movement were present, and there were spurts and there was even a sustained rhythm of the movement, there was no unified political system. The structure of the Jharkhand Party had been fragmented; parent body had broken up into smaller parties formed by tribal sub-ethnic groups. The Jharkhand Movement was like a splintered glass. There was a movement but no composite party.<sup>80</sup> Whatever splinter groups were there, their popularity continued to wane gradually, which is evident from the above election results. This trend continued in the coming election too.

On the eve of 1972 General Election Congress had become very popular. People in general and tribals in

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79. R.C. Prasad, "Social Polarisation and Political Instability", in Iqbal Hameed (ed.), State Politics in India (Meerut, 1976), pp.61-67.

80. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.323.



particular in the Jharkhand region attributed India's victory in Bangladesh to the leadership of the Congress. This led Congress to win a spectacular success in 1972 election. About 59 percent of the 29 reserved seats went to it. The number of successful independent candidates swelled to 24 percent. The position of Jharkhand and Hul Jharkhand parties went down. Only 10.3 percent and 3.4 percent of the seats were secured by those parties respectively. The CPI also secured one seat.<sup>81</sup> The Jharkhand Party splinter groups polled 3.6 lakh votes and captured only 7 seats in the assembly, while Congress captured 47 seats out of 79 from Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas region. So the Congress swept the polls in tribal areas of Bihar. This trend indicated the growing integration of the tribal into All India political system. At this the statesman observed "this clearly indicated repudiation by the adivasis of the Jharkhand Party's demand for a separate state of Chotanagpur with Santhal Parganas".<sup>82</sup> In the Lok Sabha All India Jharkhand Party could send one candidate in 1971 election. (See Table-2 above and Table-7.)

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81. Sachchidanand, n. 30, pp. 19-20.

82. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p. 334.

TABLE-7BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTION OF 1972  
AND BIHAR LOK SABHA ELECTION 1971

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly in 1972 Election	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha in 1971 General Election
Congress (R)	167	39
Congress (O)	30	3
Socialist Party	33	2
Jan Sangh	25	2
CPI	35	5
Swatantra Party	1	-
All India Jharkhand Party	4	1
Bihar Prant Hul Jharkhand Party	1	-
Progressive Hul Jharkhand	1	-
Jharkhand Party	1	-
Hindustani Shoshit Dal	2	-
Other Parties & Independents	18	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: India, Election Commission Report on  
Fifth General Election in India 1971-72  
(New Delhi), pp.100 & 159.

Towards the mid and late seventies the Jharkhand Party and its various splinter groups remained passive political channel. H.E. Hore presented two memorandums, one in 1973 and other in 1975 to the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Despite fragmentation, the Jharkhand Party splinter groups sought the support at All India level for the formation of a separate state in the context of rational re-organisation of the states. On September 10, 1974, three regional parties, viz., Maha Vidarbha Sangharsha Samiti, the Vishal Haryana Party and Jharkhand Party jointly proposed to hold a convention of all the regional parties in India to chalk out a programme for reorganization of the states. The splitting up of the bigger states became necessary according to the spokesman of this party to eliminate regional imbalances and economic backwardness. The creation of similar states would strengthen the country economically and politically, it was stressed.<sup>83</sup>

In 1977 General Election, H.E. Hore supported Congress of Indira Gandhi and so he suffered the anti-Indira wave. He was defeated in the contest for the Lok Sabha seat, though he could elect two members of his party to the state assembly.

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83. Ibid., p.332.

Bagun Sumbrai was supported by Janata Party so he won the Lok Sabha seat and so was A.K. Roy of Marxist co-ordination Committee. The All India Jharkhand Party returned one member to the state assembly. (Table-8.)

In 1980 mid-term election Hero won Lok Sabha seat for the Jharkhand Party from Khunti constituency. Bagun Sumbrai won on Janata Party ticket from Singhbhum district. Both the leaders due to their personal influences in their respective constituencies could win Lok Sabha seats. But their respective political parties, viz., Jharkhand Party and All India Jharkhand Party could not win any seat in the assembly in 1980 election. The Jharkhand Party splinter groups have been totally eliminated from the political scene in the state politics of Bihar and they no longer play any major political role. (Table-9.) Hero led Jharkhand Party has confined its activities only to the petitions and memorandums.

A study of voting behaviour in this tribal region revealed that Jharkhand Party and its various splinter groups are losing their base in the region. Other parties like Congress, Jan Sangh and CPI have entered into the region. The Jharkhand Party has failed to put forward its stand as the champion of the poor. The split of the party into

TABLE-8BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA  
GENERAL ELECTION 1977

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Janata Party	218	52
Congress	57	-
CPI	21	-
CPM	4	-
Socialist Unity Centre (SUC)	1	-
Jharkhand Party	2	-
All India Jharkhand Party	1	1
Sanyukta Socialist Party	1	-
Bhartiya Lok Tantric Dal	1	-
Bul Jharkhand Party	-	-
Marxist Co-ordination Committee	-	1
Independents	18	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>54</b>

NOTE: No. of Assembly seats and Lok Sabha seats were increased from 318 to 324, and from 53 to 54 respectively in this election.

Source: Shiva Lal, Election to India's State Legislatures since 1952 (New Delhi, Election Archives, 1978), p.9; Sharda Paul, 1980 General Election in India (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1980), p.335.

TABLE-9BIHAR ASSEMBLY AND LOK SABHA  
MID-TERM ELECTION 1980

Political Party	No. of Seats won in the Assembly	No. of Seats won in the Lok Sabha
Congress (I)	167	30
Congress (U)	14	4
Janata (S) <u>Raj Narain Group</u>	1	5
Janata Party (Charan Singh)	42	-
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)	13	-
CPI	23	4
CPM	6	-
Marxist Co-ordination Committee (MCC)	1	1
Forward Bloc	1	-
Bhartiya Janata Party	21	-
Janata Party	12	8
Jharkhand Party (Horo Group)	-	1
Independents	20	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>54</b>

NOTE: Election was counter manded in 3 constituencies of Bihar assembly. Election was held for 321 constituencies.

Source: G.G. Mirchandani, Assembly Elections 1980 (New Delhi: Vikas Pub., 1981), pp.37-50; S.K. Chaturvedi, The Seventh Lok Sabha Election (Kanpur: Grantham, 1981), p.126.

different groups is also a cause for the shifting of people's choice to other parties, particularly to the Congress which eagerly wanted to win their favour. Though the Jharkhand Party still enjoys the confidence of some tribals as the party leaders belong to the tribal communities, but it is no longer a supreme party for them. They have begun to doubt its bona-fides.<sup>84</sup>

Radicalisation of Tribal Politics and Rise of Independent Marxist Organizations: During 1970-75 the Jharkhand Movement became passive under Jharkhand Party and its various splinter groups. So independent Marxist groups came ahead to spearhead the movement under whom the tribal politics became somewhat radical. This radicalisation of tribal politics was due to the following factors. First was the agrarian factor in the tribal situation. The Jharkhand Party in its constitutional role as a regional party had played down the agrarian issue. The agrarian situation had become worse. Incidences of alienation of land belonging to the tribals had shown upward trend. Unemployment of tribal educated youths, construction of industrial complexes like Bokaro Steel Plant, and displacement of tribals from their land,

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84. Sachchidanand, n.30, p.76.

their non-absorption into the industrial culture were instrumental in radicalising the movement. Though there was some development in the tribal region but it was on a small scale than elsewhere and it was outstripped by rising aspirations among the new generation of the tribal community. The participation of a section of tribal leadership in the government no doubt resulted in distinct improvement in some matters. More tribals were employed in the administration, the quota reserved for them was by and large filled, more attention was paid to their region and there was also a large flow of funds. But evidently this was not enough. The Census of 1971 disclosed an alarming state of affairs. The percentage of the tribals in the population of the districts of tribal Bihar had sharply fallen. This was not due to slow growth of tribal population, but because of heavy influx of people from other parts of Bihar and adjoining states. Second, this radicalization was due influence of the Naxalite Movement. There was infiltration of extremist elements in the tribal organization and entry of leftist parties in the region in a big way. The latter had generally kept themselves out of the tribal politics and their interests had been limited to the section of workers engaged in mining and industries. The left orientation to the tribal politics meant a great stress on the political



education of the workers and agrarian issues, linking up of local and All India politics, violence and militancy of the means and a better organisation. There was also a commitment by All India leftist parties to the concept of tribal autonomy as distinct from that of the formation of a tribal state. Third, as the political character of the Jharkhand receded into the background, the agrarian aspect came into prominence. The former political slogan of a separate state was not given up but it had weakened and there was great stress on the nature and consequences of exploitation, isolation and neglect. There was a better articulated demand for more dominant role for the tribals and other Chotanagpuris in the regional administration, better educational facilities and more employment opportunities. There were also demand for restoration of alienated lands and provisions for legal and institutional safeguards to protect tribal interests and to end all forms of exploitation.<sup>85</sup>

In 1969 Binod Bihari Mehto<sup>86</sup> was emerging as an important leader of the detribalised 'kurmi' caste in

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85. K. Surech Singh, op. cit., pp.323-24.

86. Binod Bihari Mehto is a lawyer and trade unionist. He is also a leader of 'kurmi' caste, but he got integrated with the tribals of the region due to his long association with them. Earlier he belonged to CPN but was expelled from the party due to his extremist views.

Hazaribagh and Dhanbad districts which were not until that time among the strongholds of Jharkhand Movement. The economic conditions of both the tribal and backward caste (kurmi) was almost the same. They very often formed joint fronts to fight against the exploiters under the influence of Naxalites. B.S. Mahto organised 'Shivaji Samaj' in 1971 and first of all started social reforms among the local poor people of 'kurmi' caste. Special emphasis was given on the restoration of alienated lands to the peoples of tribal communities and backward castes being displaced in the wake of rapid industrialisation of the region. The 'Shivaji Samaj' also highlighted the backwardness of the sturdy peasant community and sought to remove it by forging alliance with Santhals. The result of this alliance was the formation of 'Jharkhand Mukti Morcha' (JMM) under the leadership of Shibu Soren,<sup>87</sup> B.S. Mahto and Sadanand Jha.<sup>88</sup> JMM also got

87. Shibu Soren is a son of a Santhal farmer who was killed by the moneylender; Since then he joined the struggle against exploiters. He claims to be a Marxist but he has not read Marxist literature and has no leftist background. He is considered to be 'Dhesam Guru' and Chando Bonga (the Greatest God). He is a charismatic leader. It is also propagated that he has supernatural power. It is said that he crosses the river on motorcycle, is not burnt by the fire; dives into the pond and comes out through some hole somewhere in the earth, bullet cannot pierce his body and so on. It is also propagated that Indira Gandhi has given him licence to rule this part of Jharkhand territory. Surprisingly not only some tribal officials of the state but also some others are very soft towards this extremist leader and let him have his way.

88. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.329.

support of Marxist Co-ordination Committee (MCC) led by A.K. Roy,<sup>89</sup> because by this time the influence of the communists from West Bengal began to increase. A.K. Roy and Immanuel Hai Khan asked the tribal peasants and the workers of the region to join the issue together and fight to attain a separate Jharkhand state and end exploitation. So in the early seventies significant developments took place under the leadership of JMM and MCC. The Jharkhand Movement became mass based drawing support from both the tribals and non-tribal peasants and workers.<sup>90</sup>

The JMM combined in its operations elements of agrarian radicalism and cultural revivalism. The tribals under its leadership forcibly harvested the crop standing on their lands which were illegally occupied by the money-lenders and landlords. The Morcha also launched operations to recover alienated lands from them and in this process

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89. A.K. Roy earlier belonged to CPM but he was expelled from the party for his extremist views. Since then he laid the foundation of Marxist Co-ordination Committee with headquarter at Dhanbad. He belongs to colliery Kangar Union and he has mass following in the collieries of Dhanbad district. He claims to represent the CPM at district level, but actually CPM is opposed to his activities.

90. Ghanashyam Pardeai, op. cit., p.9.

many incidents of arson and murders took place in the region. JMM got support from the Hul Jharkhand Party and it also supported Prime Minister's 20-point economic programme. The Santhals of Hazaribagh, Giridih and Dhanbad formed common front with those of Santhal Parganas.<sup>91</sup>

JMM realized that main reason for the indebtedness of tribal peasants and workers is liquor for which they are entrapped in the clutches of the moneylenders who in turn charge exorbitant rate of interest. Side by side the action against exploiters, the JMM also turned inward to redeem the oppressed from their own weakness. One such weakness was liquor. The JMM succeeded in boycotting liquor in the rural areas. One of the slogan raised by JMM was 'Kalali Toro, Jharkhand Choro' (Smash the liquor shops and quit Jharkhand). They could force the recalcitrant Bihar government (which earned Rs.8 crores as excise duty by keeping the tribal addicted to the liquor) to ban the liquor in rural Dhanbad in 1976.

The morcha also tried to combat illiteracy both among the adults and children. Funds for this was raised from among the villagers themselves. 'Akli Akhadas' the

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91. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.329.

local name for the night school had, apart from making the tribals literate, other political role to play. Unlike the education in modern institution which only increased the dependency of the oppressed on the system, JMM's scheme was for liberating the young militant activists and all the peasants by educating them the reason for their age old miseries, helping them to identify the real enemies and fighting against the oppressors and exploiters.<sup>92</sup>

Morcha also realised the need for credit institutions. The government as usual did not help them (tribals) to their expectations. The people under JMM devised indigenous institutions. Every village set up its own Grain Coles (Banks) from where the needy peasants could borrow grain during lean seasons. The interest rate is nominal. Through campaign and persuasion, the Morcha activists could also reduce extravagance on marriages and other social ceremonies. In selected pockets it also introduced collective farming.

JMM also revived ancient tribal government. 'Baishi' (People's court) functions as a court without fees and hears simple cases for speedier justice. Local moneylenders and

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92. Mahajan and Iyer, "A Preliminary Report on Agrarian Movement in Dhanbad", National Labour Institute Bulletin, vol. 1, No. 5, May 1975.

landlords can also be sued in these courts and can be punished if found guilty.<sup>93</sup>

So a new thrust on agrarian problems, more militant struggle against the moneylenders and their allies (usually government officials) and emphasis on social reforms are the distinct features of the Jharkhand Movement under JMM.

Jharkhand Alliance: The JMM and MCC attempted to set the things in a correct perspective, so as to make 'Jharkhand alliance' between the peasants and workers possible. A Jharkhandi according to JMM and MCC is a person who produces irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Conversely a 'diku' is a person who exploits. Since then workers and peasants participated in the struggle shoulder to shoulder against exploitation and to win a separate Jharkhand state. Workers and Peasants became parts of 'Jharkhand alliance' and united Korcha began to be held with the slogan 'Lalkhand Jharkhand' (Red area, forest area). Red flag (MCC's flag) was placed by the side of Green flag (JMM's flag). The number of participants in the procession and demonstration rose to 50,000. The slogan 'Jharkhand is ours, go back dikus', began to be echoed all around. The dream of Jharkhand

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93. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.330.

became to create Lalkhand. Joint demonstrations were gestures which helped bridge the gap between the workers and peasants.

Jharkhand Divas (Jharkhand Day) was celebrated on February 4, 1973 which was followed by a long procession of armed peasants and workers. Encouraged by this JMMI became assertive and advised the tribals to forcibly cut the crops from the lands which they cultivated but right over which was usurped by the landlords and moneylenders. Most affected areas were Giridih, Dhanbad and Hazaribagh districts. In Pirtaur landlords opened fire on the tribals in 1974. The tribals retaliated and two landlords died. Police repression followed in the entire region. The landlords and moneylenders changed the method of their attack. They decided to finish off the leaders, so they collaborated with the government to apply new methods to check the tribal peasants and worker's uprisings. A.K. Roy was arrested. B.B. Mahto was falsely implicated<sup>in</sup> Pirtaur case (in which a police inspector was kidnapped and killed subsequently by the tribals of Eoptanchi in Dhanbad district), although he was attending the office of Dhanbad Zila Parishad in his capacity as a member. Some anti-social elements killed Sadanand Jha, under whose leadership tribals and

workers had paralysed Gomoh railway station and transport on G.T. Road to press the demand for employment of local people in the railway, etc. Sadanand came into conflict with Kalyan Singh a Congressman and the leader of hoodlums in the region. After Jha's murder, Kalyan Singh's house was burnt which was followed by massive repression by the police against the workers and peasants. An award of Rs. 10,000 was placed on Shibu Soren's head. In spite of repression by the police Shibu Soren led an 8 mile long procession consisting of about 30,000 peasants and workers armed with bows and arrows and gheraoed Deputy Commissioner's office at Dhanbad as a protest against B.B. Mahto's arrest. The railway strike in 1974 further strengthened the unity of peasants and workers. Many railway workers forced out of their quarters in Dhanbad and Gomoh took shelter with the peasants and colliery workers. The nationalization of coal mines also contributed to this unity. After nationalization goondaism in the collieries greatly increased under the auspices of Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). Many workers lost their jobs and so peasant and workers again came closer to fight it. In fact a situation had never been reached where trade union struggle could lead a peasant struggle and peasant struggle could sustain trade union struggle. In 1974-75 harvest was marked by a large number



of clashes, as tribal peasants intensified their struggle against landlords and moneylenders. The movement under JMM also spread to neighbouring Santhal Parganas and West Bengal. The leaders of the struggle also took part in all the democratic programmes of the movement under Jai Prakash Narain in 1974 under the banner of 'Janavadi Sangram Samiti' of which Shibu Soren's brother was convenor. They maintained their independence of Jan Sangh dominated 'Jan Sangharsha Samiti'. Soon the emergency was clamped and it helped the propertied class and government to raise the bogey of Naxalites and send Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF) and Bihar Military Force (BMF) into the area to defend the moneylenders and landlords. B.B. Mahto and Shibu Soren were put behind the bars under 'Maintenance of Internal Security Act' (MISA).<sup>94</sup>

In 1977 General Election Janata party came into power which had its influence on Bihar state assembly election too. In this assembly election MCC was partner in the United Front comprising Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and Forward Bloc. They had put together 60 candidates

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94. Arvind Narayan Das, "Struggle of Workers and Peasants", EPW, 1 March, 1975, p.384.

for the election to the assembly.<sup>95</sup> For Lok Sabha election A.K. Roy himself contested election from Dhanbad constituency and due to the support of Janata Party he won. There was Co-operation between A.K. Roy led MCC and Janata Party.<sup>96</sup>

(Table-8 above.) Shibu Soren was by this time freed from the jail. He along with his followers joined the ruling Janata Party. So he left his previous messianic seal to pursue the cause, slowly JMM, like Jharkhand Party also became inactive. The issue of a Jharkhand state fizzled out.

#### Struggle for Jharkhand under United Front: From 1976

onwards the Movement for a separate Jharkhand state began on a united front basis. This united front comprised the Horo led Jharkhand Party, MCC, JMM, CPI-NL (SNS), Birsa Seva Dal, Jharkhand Muslim Morcha, Hul Jharkhand Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party and Congress. The United Front had 20 leaders all important and influential in their respective areas, however, small. The struggle under United Front may be called a third important period of the Jharkhand Movement and tribal politics. The main characteristics of

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95. Shivalal, n.51, pp.4-6.

96. Shivalal, n.37, pp.5-11.

this period was further involvement of the masses in the movement. The movement under United front became two dimensional - (a) political battle for the Jharkhand state, and (b) economic war against the exploiters. In this period none of the constituent organisation of the front was in a huff to get a separate state. The purpose of the movement was to help the oppressed masses train themselves in the mass-struggle. Shibu Soren said, "Even if Jharkhand state does not come into being in my life why should I be bothered". Our first concern is to chase away the blood-suckers and help the people lead a respectable, quite and fraternal life". A.K. Bhoj of NCC who is experimenting with the application of Marxism-Leninism to the tribal situation in Dhanbad area said that Jharkhand Movement is important because "the emancipation of the working class is impossible unless it is linked with the aspirations of subjugated nationalities of Chotanagpur". The primary aim of the movement under united front was liberation from the economic exploitation so long as the separate state of Jharkhand is not attained. It was a movement for political Jharkhand and not territorial Jharkhand, though this aim was never to be lost sight of. It was not that until Jharkhand is attained the liberation from exploitation should be postponed. What they (constituent political organizations of the united

front) would do as government when Jharkhand is attained, should meanwhile be done by the mass-struggle.<sup>97</sup> The united agitation took all forms of mass struggle from hunger-strike, sit-ins, mass-rallies and gheraos to conferences of intellectuals, meetings and propaganda. The slogan under united front for Jharkhand was "Give me blood and I will give you freedom".<sup>98</sup> During Janata rule there had been four highlights of this economic struggle against exploitation - agitation against afforestation policy, Jungle Kato programme to reclaim the fresh land for cultivation in Singhbhum, agitation against forest product purchase policy in Ranchi, agitation to restore lands to the tribals grabbed by moneylenders in Santhal Parganas, and agitation against public sector projects under construction in Singhbhum and Ranchi. For the first time these issues saw masses of people organize in the area on mass scale. Janata government in order to liquidate the movement in Jharkhand region pursued its well tested policy of annihilation and assimilation. On the one hand it packed the Jharkhand region with CDPF, BSF and BMP and gave them free hand to firmly deal, to use the Chief Minister's phrase,

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97. Arun Sinha, op. cit., pp.648-49.

98. Gail Omvedt, "Bihar-Jharkhand Movement", Third World Unity (New Delhi), 21-22 September-October, 1979, p.39.

"with anti-social and anti-national elements", and on the other, it set up three autonomous development authorities for North Chotanagpur, South Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas whose Chairmen were Janata leaders, and who openly backed the demand for a separate state of Jharkhand. While the policy of assimilation succeeded to some extent but it miserably failed to appease the masses and their leaders. For then the state let loose its armed forces which liberally used their weapons, attacked villages, arrested hundreds of tribals, plundered villages and humiliated defenceless tribal womenfolk.<sup>99</sup> The Marxist understanding of tribals cause aimed at a unity between workers and peasants without having a clear sight of the political question, i.e. the question of power both at the local, state and all India level. This allowed the leaders of the United front to align themselves with the all India parties with no ideological commitment either to abolish capitalism or to solve socio-economic problems of the tribals.

From early 1979 two new developments took place. First, the tribals of the North Bihar though outside the

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99. Arun Sinha, op. cit., pp.649-50.

periphery of proposed state of Jharkhand, came under the banner of 'Uttaranchal Bhartiya Adivasi Samiti' against the oppression of the landlords and police on March 21, 1979. This organization supporting the separation of Jharkhand led a demonstration which later turned into a rally in Patna. The 30-point charter of demand that the demonstrators submitted to the State government concerned mainly with the atrocities against the poor in Chotanagpur and North Bihar. The demand for a separate state of Jharkhand was 23rd in number in the charter.<sup>100</sup> Second, alien landlords and other vested interests who earlier opposed the movement tooth and nail came in active support of the Jharkhand state. Landlords like Basant Narain Singh of Ramgarh joined the Morcha.

Cracks in Jharkhand Alliance: In the beginning of eighties cracks began to develop within the Jharkhand Movement, and Jharkhand alliance between MEC and JMM. The differences were ideological and to some extent they also stemmed from the personalities of Shibu Soren, A.K. Roy and B.B. Mahto. A section of peasantry became more and more suspicious of the working class. The once discarded slogan of driving

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100. Ibid., p.650.

away the outsiders including the workers again surfaced in some quarters. Roy thinks that workers in the industrial towns of Dhanbad, Jamshedpur and Bokaro should lead a liberation movement in Jharkhand, why not peasantry. This is where the differences have arisen between Shibu Soren and A.K. Roy. Shibu Soren is a firm believer in the revolutionary role of the peasantry and this belief grew stronger as the working class increasingly adopted a middle class attitude towards the movement. That apart, the widening gulf between the incomes of industrial workers and agricultural labourers also proved detrimental to the alliance. This does not mean that all the workers are in the same category. Some workers are more gainfully employed than others. There are some workers who are in the state of great misery, not only do the employers exploit them, but their own brethren who control labour market and have become henchmen of the management, harass them. Such workers are closer to the tribal peasants and they joined them to celebrate the Jharkhand Divas on February 4, 1973.<sup>101</sup> JMM is much more militant and it has attracted people belonging to the lower strata of tribal societies. It has been trying

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101. Ghanshyam Pardeai, "Jharkhand III - Consequences of Inadequate Understanding", Mainstream (New Delhi), 9 August, 1980, p.30.

to make the movement broad-based and so its activities are mainly outside the legislature. Its main thrust is consolidation of the dalits and socially backwards. A.K. Roy's view is that typically tribal social and economic problems are not covered by any conventional Marxist class analysis. Combining the class and social question to build a movement of the dalits has now become the MCC's object. A.K. Roy is also aware of the organizational limitations of JMM and the fact of its being exposed to various external pulls and pressures. This became evident when JMM split between the pro-communists and rightist on the eve of 1980 assembly election. Shibu Soren did not clarify his stand but seemed to be more close to the rightists who came to a truce with Congress-I through electoral alliance in the assembly elections much against the wishes of A.K. Roy and B.S. Mahto who due to their left identity are opposed to the Congress-I central and state governments. There are also ideological differences with regard to Maxalites and Harjans. The Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by winning over Shibu Soren (as Congress has won over past tribal leaders) sought to neutralize A.K. Roy who derives his support from the Santhals and thus diffuse the demand for a separate Jharkhand state.<sup>102</sup>

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102. Times of India (New Delhi), 11 July, 1980.



During 1980 mid-term poll for the Lok Sabha, Janata and Congress-I candidates won from most of the Lok Sabha constituencies of this Jharkhand region. During this election Shibu Soren declared that he will support that party which in turn will support the creation of separate Jharkhand state. He won from Dumka from MCC platform and A.K. Roy won from Dhanbad constituency as an independent.<sup>103</sup> In Bihar state assembly election of the same year, MCC along with Forward Bloc could win only two seats. The MCC actually won only one seat. By the time of this election JMM had become quite influential in the Jharkhand region so much so that it defeated 3 Congress-I candidates though on the basis of electoral alliance. The Congress-I did not oppose JMM candidates in other 9 constituencies. JMM fielded 37 candidates for the assembly out of which 13 candidates won.<sup>104</sup> (See Table-9 above.) The main reasons for Congress-I and JMM alliance were, first, JMM had become quite popular and influential in some pockets of Jharkhand region and the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi favoured electoral alliance for

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103. S.K. Chaturvedi, The Seventh Lok Sabha Election - An Analysis of People's Verdict (Kanpur, 1981), pp.139-40.

104. G.G. Nirchandani, Assembly Elections 1980 (New Delhi, 1981), p.67.

immediate electoral gains, and also because her party sympathised with tribal plight.<sup>105</sup> Second, Bihar refused to accept Congress-I with wide open arms as elsewhere even though the party managed to scrap up absolute majority by winning 167 seats out of the 321 seats for which elections were conducted (in three constituencies elections were countermanded due to the deaths of three candidates). However, propped up by 13 members of the JMM, its election ally, the Congress-I has survived in the assembly. Third, was to isolate A.K. Roy who derives support from the Santals and erstwhile Janata party to defuse the demand of separate Jharkhand.<sup>106</sup>

After the newly forged alliance with the Congress-I Shibu Soren has been forced to make tactical withdrawal. In Hazaribagh, Giridih and Dhanbad where he has his largest followers, militant tactics and activities have been given up. In 1980 when BHP brutally massacred scores of tribals in 16 villages of Chakradharpur subdivision (Singbhum district), Shibu Soren chose to be more Gandhian than Gandhi himself.

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105. Ibid., pp.48-49.

106. Ibid., p.93.

Since electoral alliance with the Congress-I Shibu Soren has shifted his centre of political activities to the adjoining areas of West Bengal (Purulia Bankura and Midnapore) and Orissa (Mayurbhanj).<sup>107</sup> Shibu Soren's shifting focus from his own state (where the oppression of the tribals has increased under Mishra Government) smacks his political honesty. Despite his call for joint action, Shibu Soren and his supporters are by and large inactive in Bihar.

Leadership Pattern: The Jharkhand region witnessed a series of rebellions and revolts. About 20 tribal revolts as mentioned earlier took place against the Britishers, landlords, moneylenders and other oppressors. These revolts were led by religious prophets like Birsa, Jatra Bhagat, Buddha Bhagat and Ganga Harain, who were supposed to have charismatic powers. This charismatic leadership sought to emancipate the tribals from socio-economic and political oppression apart from sanskritising the tribal society on the pattern of Hindu model. These leaders were not educated but they were supposed to have received divine guidance through dreams or otherwise to lead the

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107. Shivdas Bannerjee, "Growing Militancy of the Tribals", Times of India (New Delhi), 11 November, 1981; Times of India (New Delhi), 10 May, 1982.

masses. <sup>108</sup>

This rural-bred charismatic and tradition oriented leadership changed into modern secular leadership due to many factors, among which mention may be made of urbanisation, industrialisation, contact with the outside world, community development programmes and establishment of social welfare agencies, missionary activities and spread of education. <sup>109</sup>

A little amplification is required here. The Christian missionaries of various denomination became very much active in the regional welfare work. They converted many tribals into Christianity and provided them higher education. The Christian tribals were urban-bred and in the wake of rapid industrialisation came into contact with the outside culture and civilisation, as a result their outlook got modernized. After independence introduction of democratic form of government and political institutions like legislature, panchayats and universal suffrage boosted their moral to assume political leadership. The facilities like reservation of seats in educational institutions and governmental jobs were mostly availed by the converted Christians who became

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108. L.P. Vidyarthi, "An Appraisal of Leadership Pattern among the Tribes of Chotanagpur", K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India (Simla, 1972), pp.441-43.

109. Shashishekar Jha, n.21, pp.604-05.

an elite class among the tribals of the region.

Due to all these factors, leadership came into the hands of the Christian tribals. They became responsible for interpreting and tackling political situations under different political organisations like Catholic Sabha, Adivasi Mahasabha and Jharkhand Party. The sources of their power were not their dreams and divination but their education and experience in political skill. They were based in urban and industrial centre of Jamshedpur and Ranchi. Their income was far above than that of a common tribal. Their status was achieved and not ascribed one. They were not hereditary chiefs or Christian priests, but professional political leaders with new functional roles. They fought for political rights, privileges, grants and concessions from the government to improve the material conditions of the tribals. They functioned in the realm of politics and not that of religion. The leadership of the Jharkhand Party was essentially political and secular. Though on the whole it remained in the hands of Christian tribals, but its membership was extended to some leaders who had non-tribal religions and ethnic affiliations.<sup>110</sup> Hindus and Muslims

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110. Ibid., p.607.

were given Jharkhand tickets to contest 1957 General Election. Some other vested interests like ploaders and businessmen also joined the Jharkhand Party. This indicated the consolidation of different types of leaders under one regional political party. The consolidation always took place on a political level when some higher objectives of the region became secularised and broad-based. This secularisation of leadership was due to needs of the region and injustices that were done to the backward areas of Chotanagpur. The new leadership symbolized the aspirations and needs of the regional people.<sup>111</sup> From the death of Birsa upto 1962 General Election the leadership of the tribals of the region remained in the hands of Christian tribals and only they were elected as members of the Lok Sabha and state assembly.

It was from this election onwards that consciousness began to emerge among the non-Christian tribals. This was due to many reasons. Christian tribals benefitted most from the governmental policies of tribal development in the region. They bagged most of the scholarships and governmental jobs and became educationally and economically

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111. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.D. Sahay, op. cit., pp.97-98.

more advanced. These facilities never reached the tribal downtrodden masses.<sup>112</sup> Gradually the attention of the non-Christian tribals was drawn to it, who began to revive their traditional institutions like 'Parha-Panchayats' and 'Adivasi Vikas Parishad'. They also made efforts to re-organize the non-Christian tribal leadership. In about the year 1963 under the leadership of Kartic Oraon, a member of parliament, a meeting was convened which was attended by several representatives of the adjoining tribal areas and there it was decided that some steps should be taken to improve the socio-economic conditions of the non-Christian tribals which could be done by reviving and re-organizing parha-panchayat system on village and area level with their functions remaining more or less similar to the old parha. 'Akhil Bhartiya Adivasi Parishad' was organized at All India level. Its state unit in Bihar aimed at making all round development implicitly of the non-Christian tribals. This rising consciousness witnessed a new turn when in November 1968, the non-Christian tribals led a large scale demonstration under the leadership of Kartic Oraon before the 'Chandra Committee' (a study team of joint committees of parliament) to deschedule the Christian tribals claiming that since

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112. Sachchidanand, n.40, p.180.

they (Christian tribals) had changed the traditional religion of their ancestors, they no longer remained a tribe. This demonstration marked an important phase in the development of non-Christian tribal leadership as it was the first organized attempt in the public when the non-Christian tribals wanted to make themselves free from the yoke of dominant Christian tribal leadership. This tendency on the part of the non-Christians alarmed the Christian tribals and they began to adapt themselves to the emerging circumstances by re-evaluating and re-adopting their indigenous customs so that there would be least cultural differences between the Christians and the non-Christian tribals.<sup>113</sup> The Jharkhand Party after 1963 began to be split and fragmented, by the individual Christian leaders to serve their narrow selfish interests which was also instrumental in making non-Christian tribals conscious. Jan Sangh Party also succeeded in winning the favour of non-Christian tribals by emphasizing the points of similarity between them and the Hindus and showing to them that it (Jan Sangh) can espouse their cause better than any other party. That is why in mid-term election of 1969, Jan Sangh consolidated its position by winning

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113. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.H. Sahay, op. cit., pp. 137-38.



7 and 4 seats gradually from Ranchi and Palamau districts.<sup>114</sup>  
 The Christians dominated Jharkhand Party merged with the Congress in 1963 and this proved a turning point in the political behaviour of the people because this merger was considered to be a betrayal to the tribal masses.

Due to these reasons, the non-Christian tribals became very much conscious. Their consciousness found expression in the fourth general election of 1967, in which out of 29 reserved seats in the state assembly for the tribals, 75.80 percent were won by the non-Christian tribals. Among the 5 reserved Lok Sabha seats 80 percent of them were won by the non-Christian tribals alone. The leaders who were elected mainly belonged to Santhal, Ho, Orson, and Munda tribes, though only 10 out of 30 tribal communities participated in the election. As regards their political affiliation the Congress was obviously the gainer by annexing almost half of the seats. The remaining went to Jharkhand Party, Jan Sangh and Independents. In view of the then prevailing defection among the elected legislators after the fourth general election in which the tribal legislators had been very much active, their own Jharkhand Party became

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114. Sachchidanand, n.40, p.181.

irrelevant to them. The most outstanding point in the tribal politics of Bihar was the loss of monopoly of the Christian tribals in winning most of the assembly and Lok Sabha seats, which reflected the awareness on the part of 90 percent non-Christian tribals to elect non-Christian tribals as their leaders. The mid-term election of 1969 also confirmed the same political trend noticed during fourth general election. Except certain alterations in the strength of the different parties, the ethnic and religious picture remained the same.<sup>115</sup>

It was the Jharkhand Party which provided leadership to the tribals of the region upto 1962 general Election by mobilising them on the issue of a separate Jharkhand state. From 1962 onwards the Congress, Jan Sangh, CPI and other parties also began to make inroads into the tribal region of Jharkhand and provided leadership to them though of course through their own brethren. These parties sympathized with the plight of the tribals and wanted to improve their socio-economic conditions but on the whole they never supported their larger cause, i.e. creation of a separate Jharkhand state. They took different stands

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115. L.P. Vidyarthi, n. 108, p.445.

with regard to their demand of a separate Jharkhand state.

Some Major National Political Parties and their Attitude towards Separate Jharkhand State: The Congress Party supported the creation of separate states on linguistic basis, as she did in the past. She never supported ethnicity except in the case of creation of North Eastern Hill states. The Prime Minister Indira Gandhi rejects the demand of separate Jharkhand state on the basis that it is not practicable and it would have bad effect in the country. The president of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) described the movement for separate Jharkhand state as politically motivated, inspired by parochial approach, a minister move raised by North Biharis settled in the region which would perpetuate exploitation of the tribals by them.<sup>116</sup>

The Jan Sangh (now B.J.P.) sees behind the movement the inspiration of the Christian missionaries and anti-national forces.<sup>117</sup>

The Communist Party of India (CPI) also rejected the demand and instead set in explicit terms the objective of regional autonomy for the predominantly tribal areas

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116. Indian Nation (Patna), 12 January 1975.

117. K. Suresh Singh, op. cit., p.332.

of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas, and of economic and cultural upliftment of the tribals. In its resolution adopted in May 1975 it was stated: (1) the existing political organisation of the tribals like Jharkhand party, Hul Jharkhand Party, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Birsa Seva Dal and Chotanagpur plateau Farishad lack clear political perspective for the tribals; (2) if a separate state of Jharkhand of their conception comprising Chotanagpur, Santhal Parganas and other areas of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh is set up it would reduce the tribals to a state of perpetual minority of 1/3 of the whole population, as a result they would not be in a position to solve any of their political and economic problems, which the tribals are facing. Instead it would enable reactionary forces to secure firmer stranglehold for plundering both the tribals and non-tribal people; (3) tribal regional councils according to the constitutional provisions should be formed for two compact tribal minority areas in Bihar - (a) consisting of major parts of Lohardaga sub-division of Palamu, Ranchi (except six anchals), Singhbhum and Hazaribagh districts, and (b) Santhal areas consisting parts of Santhal Parganas and Dhanbad districts. <sup>118</sup>

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118. The Patriot (New Delhi), 11 May, 1975.

Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPM) is also opposed to the demand of separate Jharkhand state. Its stand is that there is no Jharkhand nationality and that the bourgeois interests may capture the agitation. The CPM also alleged the demand for a separate Jharkhand state to be a secessionist demand and a foreign inspired conspiracy.<sup>119</sup>

But neither of these allegations as levelled by the CPM is true. The question of secession arises when a particular nationality has a state of its own as a constituent unit in a political grouping like federation. But the tribals of the region do not have a separate state as there is Punjab for the Punjabi speaking population and Bengal for the Bengali speaking population. The tribals of the region aspire to have a separate state on the same pattern but the problem is that there is multiplicity of tribal languages in the region whereas there should be only one language common to all the tribal communities in the region. Therefore, the tribals of the region demand ethnicity to be the basis of creating separate Jharkhand state, which runs contrary to the constitution. According to indications available the basis of this demand is shifting from ethnicity

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119. Gail Omvedt, op. cit., p.40.

to regionalism. Autonomy, i.e. giving necessary powers, responsibility and resources to the tribals for their socio-economic and political development, can be given to them, because this arrangement is within the federal constitutional framework. Attempts have been made from time to time to provide some amount of it specially during Janata rule (establishment of three Autonomous Development Authorities), but the tribals are not satisfied with it. They want nothing short of a separate Jharkhand state within the Indian federal set up.

The allegation that the demand for separate Jharkhand state is a foreign inspired conspiracy also cannot be true. It might have been true, when the leadership of the tribals was in the hands of Christian tribals of Jharkhand Party. May be that Christian missionaries were financing the movement at that time, because the centre of Jharkhand activities was Ranchi, a stronghold of Christian missionaries. But now this allegation cannot be true, because the leadership has come into the hands of indigenous tribals and the centre of their activities has also shifted from Ranchi to other district of the region like Singhbhum, Dhanbad and to the adjoining states.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The contemporary Jharkhand Movement did not begin as a party based political movement. It began as a social movement in the form of rebellions and revolts by most of the tribal communities of the region against exploiters both foreigners and indigenous. The early tribal social movements were directed against socio-economic exploitation and oppression. These movements were multi-dimensional in the sense that they were endowed with the characteristics of reformatory, revivalistic, revolutionary, transformative, emulative, nativistic, chiliastic and messianic type of social movements. It was on the whole a pre-political stage despite the fact that the charismatic leaders of these early tribal social movements joined the then national movement for independence and supported 'Swadeshi' and no-tax campaign programmes. The elements of political organisation in absolute sense of the term began to emerge from 1910 when a Christian tribal student J. Bartholman organized 'Dacca Students Union' to solve the problems of the poor tribal students. Later organisations like 'Unnati Samaj', 'Kisan Sabha' and 'Catholic Sabha' began to put forward political issues and problems and sought their solution

through the politics. This process culminated in the organisation of 'Adivasi Mahasabha' in 1938 and 'Jharkhand Party' in 1950. The Jharkhand Party claimed to be a pan-tribal organization to protect and promote the tribal interests in the region. From this time onwards the early tribal social movement assumed the character of a party based political movement. It aimed to solve manifold problems of the tribals of the region by capturing political power through political activities and manoeuverings and finally winning for them a separate Jharkhand state. In the course of time it also opened its doors to the non-tribals of the region and stressed its regional character. So, now the Jharkhand Movement is a political movement with elements of ethnicity and regionalism.

The tribal leadership of the movement adopted politics as an instrument to solve their problems. Many years have passed but nothing substantial has been achieved. Still today a majority of the tribals of the region are without land, without homes, without money, without minor forest products, without social service facilities, and on the top of it without education and technical training. Atrocities on them are increasing day by day. But, however, it does not mean that government is not doing anything for them. The



problem is that governmental policies of tribal development contain many loopholes. Whatever facilities the government is providing for the tribal development, a wide chunk of them is being availed by an elite class which has emerged among them during the recent years. The real benefits of the tribal development policies in socio-economic fields are not reaching to the tribal downtrodden. The loopholes in the governmental Acts to protect tribal economic interests are being manipulated by the vested interests and their problems, their exploitation and oppression persists usual.

A colonial type of relation exists between the Jharkhand region and nation at large. There is some difference. In colonialism, the colonial power or colonizer exploits the economic resources of the colony and sends them out of the colony for its own economic development and in this process it oppresses and exploits the indigenous people of the colony. In the Jharkhand region feudal elements mainly outsiders like landlords, moneylenders, contractors, traders along with upper echelons of bureaucracy and police oppress and exploit the tribals of the region. They exploit the economic resources of the region for their own development. They send the resources and incomes earned by dint of them out of the region but not out of the country. The amount

of money spent for the economic development of the tribals of the region is very meagre as compared to the revenue earned by the central and state government from the economic resources of the region. The Jharkhand movement which is almost half a century old now is a manifestation of popular revolt against this sort colonial oppression and exploitation. It is also a reflection of regional economic disparity and social injustice. Backwardness to a given region is identical to colonial status and it is a function of dominance within a larger political system.

The Jharkhand Party claimed itself to be a pan-tribal organization. Actually this pan-tribalism was limited in many ways. Whatever little amount of it existed also began to disintegrate after 1962 General Election. In the beginning the main support to the Jharkhand Party came mainly from Mundas, Oraons, Hos and Santhals. After 1962 election these tribes began to give up their membership of the Jharkhand Party and organized their own parties, viz., Jharkhand Party (Horo group) of the Mundas, All India Jharkhand Party of Bagun Sumbrai of the Hos of Singhbhum, Hul Jharkhand Party and later Jharkhand Mukti Morcha mainly represents the Santhals. The influence of Marxist Co-ordination Committee is confined only to the coal miners of Dhanbad

district. These tribes also began to be attracted towards other parties like Congress, Jan Sangh, CPI and CFM, etc. with the passage of time. Some of tribes like 'Birhors' of Ranchi and Hazaribagh districts, 'Pahira' and 'Khorwar' of Palamau districts, and other like 'Kharria' and 'Naler' never joined Jharkhand Party and remained out of the movement. These tribes right from the beginning supported Congress and Jan Sangh. It might have been a possibility that these tribes were not politically conscious by that time. It also substantiates that the leadership pattern of the isolated tribal communities like hunting and gathering 'Pahira' tribe living in the foots of Dalma Hill in Singhbhum district was relatively less crystallized and integrated with the regional pattern than that of the tribal communities like settled agriculturists who have been exposed to external influences and awareness. So pan-tribalism never existed.

Now Jharkhand movement is like a splintered glass. There is a movement but no composite party. It is characterized by splits and schisms. There is total breakdown of tribal solidarity and absolute lack of ideological formulations and tribal nationalism in the Jharkhand region. These splits and schisms can be explained in terms of many factors. Defection is one such factor due to which the

focus of tribal interest has shifted from the real welfare of the people to all types of petty politics and lust for power. (The politics of defection is being practised since 1967 General Election for petty political gains. This was also responsible for the instability of government in Bihar, between 1967-71. This defection is still continuing in the tribal politics in spite of the split in the party. Tribal leaders have become opportunistic and join the parties who seem to have good future in terms of capturing power. Factionalism also exists which stems out of ideological differences, personality of the leaders and personal rivalry for powerful ministerial positions. This factionalism was responsible for the Jharkhand-Congress merger. It still continues in various forms. Tribal population and the tribal leadership is also divided in terms of religious consideration (Christian tribal of various denominations and non-Christian tribals), ethnic consideration (Munda, Oraon, Ho and Santal) and territorial consideration. Such considerations have brought about mutual bitterness in the tribal leadership. Release of these forces have evidently been made with a view to catch votes in the election. In the entire tribal region ethnic concentration coincides with certain territories. This has resulted in the clash of interests among the respective political splinter groups.

Thus the Hul Jharkhand Party represents Santhals in Santhal Parganas, Jharkhand Party led by Horo represents Mundas and Oraons of Ranchi, All India Jharkhand Party represents Hos or Kalhans of Singhbhum, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha represents Santhals of Giridih, Hazaribagh and Dhanbagh and the influence of Marxist Co-ordination Committee of A.K. Roy is confined to the coal miners of Dhanbad only. All these splinter groups are committed to win a separate Jharkhand state. Most of them have not any base and subsist on emotionalism. There is mutual rivalry among these splinter groups and the genuine welfare of the tribals has been thrown into the background. At the leadership level the situation is also confused. Today B.B. Horo leads Mundas, Shibu Soren leads Santhals, Begun Sambrail leads Hos, A.K. Roy leads coal miners of Dhanbad and B.B. Mahto leads the Kurmi caste. )

The breakdown of Jharkhand Party has certain resemblances with the breakdown of certain national parties, viz., Congress, Socialist and Communist Party, etc. However, with the breakdown of nationalist parties, the regional parties like D.N.K., Akali Dal and Orissa Congress grew stronger. Perhaps the only regional party which has shown a departure from this general trend is the Jharkhand Party

which has sustained the setback. Jharkhand Party and its various splinter groups have functioned at the most the parties of only 30 percent of the people living in the districts of Chotanagpur, and Santhal Parganas.

(By and large the tribal leaders are not in the position to adjust with the new situation that they have to face in politics both at the state and central level. Their cultural compulsiveness stands in the way of smooth negotiation with their colleagues who are politically more assertive, vocal and crafty. Moreover, there are certain inhibitions on their parts to negotiate on the footing of equality as they hail from economically and socially poor tribal settings. With the breakdown of tribal solidarity they are not sure of their followings and hence they cannot play the role of equal partner with others in the party politics and gaining share for their own tribal communities.)

The demand for separate Jharkhand state by the Jharkhand Party splinter groups spearheading the movement is considered to be a secessionist demand. It is also alleged that Jharkhand movement is a secessionist movement. Communal elements have also tried to divide the Jharkhandis by spreading the rumour that it is a movement of the Christians by the Christians and for the Christians alone and that all the outsiders would

be thrown out of it, if the demand of separate Jharkhand state is accepted. It has also been alleged that the Jharkhand state will be a homestate of the tribals alone. But this allegation is without any substance behind it. N.E. Hore also refuted this allegation and said that it is neither possible nor practical. The aim of the movement and the Jharkhand Party is to improve the socio-economic conditions of the weaker sections of the people including the tribals. Moreover, the constitution of all the Jharkhand Party splinter groups speak of a set of regional objectives and programmes of action. This has been due to the realization that the tribals do not form the majority in the region as a whole and that there are backward communities in the region as a whole which could be brought together on a common political platform. / Again the demand for separate state is within the scope of Indian constitutional framework. The protagonists of the movement demand ethnicity to be the basis of separate state but the government accepts only one common language to be the basis of creating a separate state. The problem in their respect is that there is multiplicity of language in the region and not one common language. They do not seek to withdraw the tribal region from the Indian federation. What they want is a separate state within the Indian federation. The movement cannot be levelled as

secessionist for one more reason. "The protagonists of the movement have not indulged in any terrorist activities to fulfill their demand. They are also not being supported by any foreign country with arms and ammunition as it is the case with the Mizo National Front (MNF) activists. Of course some clashes have taken place between the police and the tribals of the region, when the tribals resisted some development programmes of the government which are detrimental to the tribal economic interests.

At this juncture it shall be appropriate to mention some of the important reasons for the failure of the Jharkhand movement, its development into a full-fledged regional movement and non-materialisation of its cherished dream of a separate state of Jharkhand.

There are primordial infrastructural impediments such as micro-identification by the tribal people with their own tribes and there is a phlegmatic response to the broad-based leadership.

Now Jharkhand Movement is not a tribal Movement in absolute sense of the term. The Jharkhand Party and later its various splinter groups extended their membership to the non-tribals. So now both the tribals and non-tribals



are pulling the movement in the opposite directions to serve their respective interests. The total non-tribal population is much more than the tribal population. Both of them are not on best of the terms. Tribal elite use the movement and the support of the tribals to serve their own selfish interests of attaining power and prestige. Moreover, Jharkhand Movement is no longer homogenous. There are conflict of interests between the tribal elites from more educated tribes and the rest. Non-tribal vested interests like merchants and traders have hitched on to the movement for their own ends. They have sought allies among the tribal elites by obliging them in many ways and they are exerting their own pressures upon them.

(There are schisms, splits and cleavages within the movement and the Jharkhand Party splinter groups due to ideological and personal differences. The tribals or we can say the Jharkhandis have lost faith in their leaders who are only power hungry politicians. They doubt their integrity and credibility and so they are being mobilised by the other parties who do not support the demand for a separate Jharkhand state.)

The protagonists of the movement always made alliances with the ruling party. First of all Jaipal Singh merged

Jharkhand Party with the Congress. After the split the various splinter groups of Jharkhand Party played the politics of defection and alliance between 1967-71. They made alliances with the ruling coalition government on some issues against the rival Jharkhand splinter group. All the splinter groups could not take any united stand against the government. During 1977 election N.E. Hore joined Congress. Bagan Sumbrai and J.K. Roy sought the support of Janata Party and in turn supported it in the election. After this election Shibu Soren also joined Janata Party along with his followers. In 1980 assembly election he made electoral alliance with the Congress-I, simply because it sympathised with the tribal plight. So we see that the protagonists of the movement have good record of alliances with the ruling party which has always given setback to their cause of a separate Jharkhand state.

It is also said that the demand for separate Jharkhand state does not hold much water. The example of the hill state of Assam cannot be held up for Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas region, as in the former tribals are in preponderant majority. In the Jharkhand region only 1/3rd of the total population is tribal. Out of 79 legislators who won seats in Bihar legislative assembly from the 7 districts of the

Jharkhand region in Bihar in 1969 only 18 stood for the separate Jharkhand state, the others opposed it. Thus only 23 percent of the legislators supported the demand. Evidently Jharkhand cannot be imposed on 77 percent of the legislators. In subsequent elections the number of the legislators supporting the demand for the separate state has further declined.

✓ The Jharkhand districts in Bihar supply to the state government about 75 percent of the state's revenue. They contain 99 percent of its mineral wealth and generate about 90 percent of the state's electricity. The territorial claim of Jharkhand state thus covers a major portion of coal and steel belt of India. This mineral rich area also boasts of massive industrial investments of about 10,000 crores. Acceptance of the demand of a separate Jharkhand state means loss of this extremely rich region and loss of revenue to the state and central government.]

In spite of it, the slogan of a separate Jharkhand state has not been given up. The splinter groups of Jharkhand Party are moving away from each other. There is a strong and firm government at the centre which is rejecting the demand for re-organizing the states. The splinter groups under the prevailing inimical conditions cannot capture

the pre-1962 position in the legislature and so cannot bargain with the government on the issue of separate Jharkhand state, though the movement continues as usual.

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