

**Ethnic Identity, Territoriality and conflict in South Asia :  
A Case Study of Jharkhand Movement**

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### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled, "Ethnic Identity, Territoriality and conflict in South Asia: A Case Study of Jharkhand Movement", is being submitted by Miss Aparajita Mohapatra, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. It has not been submitted for any other Degree of this University or any other University. This is her own work carried out under my guidance and supervision.

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

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**Dedicated to**

**The person I love most - Mommy**

**&**

**My favourite Leo - Daddy**

**Also**

**Reita and Ishan**

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(APARAJITA MOHAPATRA)

## **CHAPTER 1**

**(I) INTRODUCTION**

**(II) CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**(III) LITERATURE REVIEW**

**(IV) OBJECTIVES.**

## Introduction

Until recently, most states conceived of ethnicity as an expression of pre-modern and pre-rational form of social and political organisation. From this stand point, one would anticipate that the incidence of ethnic conflict as ethnic identification in political spheres would decline as societies modernize. However, just the opposite has taken place. A common assumption of "developmentalism" as a modernising project and ideology has been that ethnicity is destined to wither away as an anachronism to give way to a totally secular social order. But history does not seem to be following this developmental path to secular identities. The more rapid the development of a region, the more modernised its infrastructure, ethnic identities seem to deepen and ethnic conflicts seem to intensify. The world today is witnessing the deepening of ethnic identity and conflict with the acceleration of the process of modernisation. Diverse communities respond to the universal culture of developmentalism and the hegemony of the Market by turning to their religions and cultures eg. the Punjab conflict have at one level a genuine cultural upsurge as a corrective to the commercial culture spread by the Green Revolution. The revivalism of the tribals in Jharkhand can be seen as

corrective response to the homogenising and commercialising force of modernisation and development.

It is today a political commonplace to say that the most serious challenge both to the consolidation of new democracies and to the health of well established ones is posed by the problem of ethnic conflicts. A glance at almost any daily newspaper shows that ethnic conflicts are the scourge of the century.

One of its most obviously recognizable aspects, is the broad continental sweep of the phenomenon of ethnic conflict. In the past few years, the world has witnessed the dissolution of three important federations-Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia as a result of the disintegrative, centrifugal pulls of ethnicity. In North America, Canada, though being one of the most peaceful, prosperous and long established democracies is now facing separatist threats not only from the French speaking Quebec, but also a host of new challenges connected with the rise of multiculturalism. Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, has already had abortive attempts at democratization but is beset by the problems of ethnic rivalry; ethnic strife in Rwanda is staining the land with the blood from the brutal massacres. In South Asia, India, which has been remarkably successful in accommodating religious, linguistic and other



diversities, is today under strain or seige by a host of increasing radical religious tribal, separatist movements for autonomy. The whole sub-continent is rife with what V.S. Naipaul calls a "million little mutinies".

The dreams, expectations and hopes of liberals and rationalists in practically every country, it appears, have been the dissolution of ethnicity, the transcendence of nationalism and the internationalisation of culture; but in practically every country of the world they have been confounded and disappointed. Today, ethnic loyalties have become more deeply rooted than ever and a new spectre is haunting the power elite of our times—the spectre of ethnicity. Ethnic issues have overflowed the frontiers of established nation-states and emerged as one of the foci of international politics.

There are various approaches to the problem of ethnic conflicts. The primordial approach to rise of ethnic consciousness lays emphasis on the psychological bond that joins a people, derived from assumed givers of social existence like race, tribe, religion, caste etc; this is in contrast to structural theories which opine that ethnicity and ethnic consciousness are subservient to material considerations.

The volatility of ethnic conflict can also be traced to the gradual erosion of the traditional normative frameworks and an increasing impetus to the, ideologies of democracy, equity and distributive justice, with the perception and projection of the policies and performance of the ruling regime being partisan and discriminatory in ethnic terms. This linkage of ethnic consciousness has occurred in the context of the socio-economic changes and politico-electoral dynamics of the South Asian States.

Another reason for increasing ethnic conflicts has been the increasingly interventionist role of the state and the penetration of the central activities in the local realm. Current economic realities, and the break up of Soviet Union have already led to the scrapping of a 'planned' socialist economy and movement towards liberalization. But unitary features of the Indian system of government have not only braked further liberalization and development, but because the central government dictates the pace of liberalization, the state governments have not been able to adopt economic liberalization and pursue initiatives of their own within national guidelines; this creates discontent in the region.

The progress in science and technology, widening of communication network, demographic changes, maldevelopment in the economic sectors, intended or unintended consequences

of participatory turned plebiscitary electoral political processes have tended to be catalysts of the process of social change in South Asian States. Such processes have affected the normative order of the existing social framework and generated in the process social conflicts, with ethnic conflict being one of its many manifestations.

In India, the trend of ethnic conflicts show that they may tend to become endemic, expansive and protracted. Thus, the solution to the burning issue of communalism, the secessionist demands of Punjab and Kashmir, the insurgency in the North - East is yet to be found.

The Jharkhand imbroglio also threatens the domestic peace of the Indian nation. The Jharkhand movement is basically a revolt of the tribals against exploitation by the "dikus" or non-tribal outsiders. The imperatives of planning and development, turned the mineral rich region of Chotanagapur into a major industrialized region of the country. Yet this also meant the erosion of Chotanagpur tribals' cultural identity, their basic survival threatened, with their lands being alienated from them due to deforestation, the setting up of industries and multipurpose projects; deep resentment is also felt at being treated as "objects" for development and a denial of basic human dignity. The culture of oppression imposed on them has unleashed a counter

hegemonic culture of protest, with the Jharkhandis demanding a "tribalstan", a separate Jharkhand state.

Conceptual Framework:

The key concepts in this work are "ethnic identity" "territoriality" and "conflict". It is important to understand what specifically is meant by these terms and the linkages between them.

The term "Ethnic" has been derived from the Greek word "ethnikos" meaning heathen, pagan, non Jewish non-Christian nations, races or groups of people with common traits and customs, groups in an exotic primitive culture etc. An ethnic group connotes a historically formed aggregate of people with a real or imaginary association with a specified territory sharing a cluster of beliefs and values connoting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups and recognized as such by others. Gordon says..."the term ethnic group... is defined or set off by race, religion or national origin, or some combination of these categories ... all of these categories have a common social-psychological referrent, in that all of them serve to create, through historical circumstances, a sense of peoplehood".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Milton Gordorn, Assimilation in American life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origin, (New York 1964), pp 27-28.

Schermerhorn says, "I define an ethnic group as a collectivity existing within a larger society, having real or fictional common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic element defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism) religious affiliation language or dialect form, tribal affiliations, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these".<sup>2</sup> The major attributes of the ethnic group are thus, : (a) belief in real or assumed descent; (b) association with a symbolic or real territorial centre; (c) shared cultural emblems like race, religion, language, folklore, dress, diet etc. or a combination of them; (d) self-ascribed awareness of the distinctiveness of the group connoting group solidarity; and (e) a recognition by others of such group differentiation<sup>3</sup>.

"Identity" is probably the most widely used concept to describe the individual's sense of who he or she is. There are two major sources of a person's identity: the social roles that constitute the shared definitions of appropriate

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2. R.A Schermerhorn, Ethnic Plurality in India, (Tuscon, 1978), p.15

3. Urmila Phadnis, "Ethnic Dynamics in South Asian States," South Asia Journal, ( New Delhi )Vol. 3, No. 3, July - Dec. 1989, p.262.

behaviour and the individual's life history. Both, the person and others base their conception of his or her identity on these two sources. Combining these two dimensions, we get four facets of identity: social identity, self-conception, personal identity and ego identity. We are primarily concerned with social identity which refers to how others identify the person in terms of broad social categories or attributes such as ethnicity. Identity in any one of its facets is built up through a series of identifications. Erikson says, "Identity thus is not the sum of childhood identifications, but rather a new combination of old and new identification fragments". Identification subsumes two processes: "identification of" and "identification with"; it is the latter which gives rise to "identity". When a person identifies himself with a broad category of persons, e.g. an ethnic group, then ethnic group identification occurs.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of "territoriality" introduced by animal psychology has contributed to the development of the idea that interpersonal relations are not limited to verbal exchanges; the possession of space and also its defense represent an important modality of social exchange. The

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4. Arnold Dashefsky, ed., Ethnic identity in Society (Chicago, 1970), pp 5-8.

theory of territoriality basically says that animals, persons and groups identify with and defend territories of various spatial extents. Research in territoriality has defined attachment to place and space largely in terms of fear, protection, exclusiveness and preservation. According to Soja, territoriality is a behavioural phenomenon associated with the organization of space into spheres of influence or clearly demarcated territories which are made distinctive and considered at least partially exclusive by their occupants or definers.

Territoriality is an identifiable patterning of spatial relationships resulting in the exclusion of certain categories of individuals from the space of the territorial individual or group.<sup>5</sup> The essential role of territory is emphasized in the survival of the species and the group, since territory is a guarantee of safety and survival, and affirming the identity of the individual and his species membership.

Conflict is an inescapable part of social interaction. Conflict is defined as a process i.e. "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize injure or

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5. Claude Levy - Leboyer, Psychology and Environment, David Canter, Trans. (California, 1982) pp. 123-125).

eliminate the rivals". The type of conflict dealt here is "protracted social conflict", the focus of which is religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity which in turn are dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs such as those for security, communal recognition and distributive justice.<sup>6</sup>

The linkages between the concepts can be understood or proved when one sees the manifestation of ethnic identity related conflicts or ethnic group conflicts for territory or space. This is particularly noticed in South Asia, with its multi-ethnic society torn apart by various separatist, secessionist and regional movements.

The crisis in South Asia has been analysed in terms of the failure of modernisation in cementing ethnic cleavages rather than the course of development, has heightened regional imbalances and economic disparities. The ethnic upsurges have resulted from a sense of "relative deprivation" among the different ethnic groups.

Following the political economy approach, a variation of the relative deprivation theory, "internal colonialism" has also been used to explain the dynamics of ethnic conflicts. The basic idea here is that "nationalism has re-

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6. Edward E. Azar, The Management of Protracted Social Conflict Theory and Cases, (Hampshire, 1990), p.2



emerged in... the periphery largely as a reaction to this failure of regional development."

The challenge to the integrity of the state by various ethnic identities has also been analysed in the context of federalism. The philosophical moorings of federalism is contained in the relationship of "I" and "WE". What federalism in India basically aimed at was sustaining the "I" and operating as "WE"; meaning regional units, groups should retain their identity but still operate as one nation. The failure to achieve this has resulted in the growth of fissiparous tendencies which threaten the Union.

The study of the Jharkhand movement also has been undertaken in the light of the concepts mentioned above. While applying the term identity to this case study, a point has been developed that identity has been imposed on him (tribal) by those who had power over him by virtue of their class, caste and official stand. It was they who made him aware of his place in society as a measure of his distance from themselves - a distance expressed in differentials of wealth, status and culture. His identity amounted to the sum of his subalternity. In other words he learnt to recognize himself not by the properties and attributes of his own social being but by a diminution if not negation of those of

his superiors.<sup>7</sup>

While relative deprivation syndrome has fuelled the tribal demands for territoriality, internal colonialism also has contributed its share by developing the core at the cost of the periphery. The benefits of development, have also not accrued to the tribals; instead modernisation and development have created a sense of alienation among them.

Literature Review:

The concept of ethnicity is being widely discussed today, although the term is not a new one or the phenomenon unrecognized previously. The literature pertaining to ethnic politics and conflict has represented one of the major growth areas in the publication industry during the past decade. Not only has ethnicity become an important intellectual concept but it is also an important focal point for the formulation of public policy in most societies. The analysts of ethnicity have been from multidisciplinary backgrounds and are multidisciplinary in their approach. Given this diversity of intellectual traditions, analytical perspectives and research foci it is not surprising that there is little agreement over the content of ethnicity.

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7. Ranajit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India, (Delhi, 1983), p. 18.

An important book referred to, is the work of Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia. Besides dealing<sup>8</sup> with the concept of ethnicity, the various approaches to studying it, the book gives an overview of ethnic groups in South Asia, the various secessionist movements and the ways of conflict management.

Ethnicity, Politics and Development edited by Dennis L. Thompson and Dov Ronen gives an analysis of the relationship between ethnicity, politics and development which is fundamental to the study of change in both developing and developed nations. The contributions to the volume have indicated that ethnicity is a matter of ascription but it is politicized into the ethnic factor when an ethnic group is in conflict with the political elite over such issues as the use of limited resources or allocation of benefits.<sup>9</sup>

Anthony. D. Smith's book, The Ethnic Revival, deals with the resurgence of ethnicity or ethnic renaissance which the world has been witnessing.<sup>10</sup> Smith has attempted to fill the lacuna left by the existing theoretical interpretations of the causes, origins and significance of ethnic

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8. Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and National Bulding in south Asia, (New Delhi, 1989).

9. Dennis. L. Thompson and Don Ronen, ed., Ethnicity . Politics and Development, (Colorado, 1986).

10. Anthony D. Smith, The Ethnic Revival, (Cambridge, 1981).

movements in the modern world with their predominantly economic approach. According to him, nationalism has contributed much to the ethnic renaissance. Somewhat the same theme is also attempted in Dawa Norbu's Culture and the politics of Third World Nationalism, where he says that nationalism does not begin with economics but with cultural symbols.<sup>11</sup>

The concept of "relative deprivation" has been admirably dealt with by the book, Why Men Rebel.<sup>12</sup> Besides in his analysis of political violence, Michael Hechter's work "Internal Colonialism: The Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966" presents the theory that ethnic solidarity among any objectively defined set of individuals is due primarily to the existence of a hierarchical cultural division of labour which promotes reactive group formation. This cultural division of labour is typically found in regions that have developed as internal colonies i.e. ethnically enclaves of advanced nation-states.<sup>13</sup>

The South Asian scenario has been dealt with by S.D.Muni, Urmila Phadnis and others in two volumes of Domes-

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11. Dawa Norbu, Culture and the politics of Third World Nationalism, (London, 1992).
  12. Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism The celtic Fringe in British National Development, (London, 1975).
  13. Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel, (Princeton, 1970).

tic Conflicts in South Asia, the ethnic, economic and political dimensions; <sup>14</sup> also by S.D..Muni, ed., Understanding South Asia. A series of essays in the memory of the late professor Urmila Phadmis deal with the complexities and deep cleavages existing in South Asia, the problems of disintegration and integration faced by the seven nations, the structures and process of politics.<sup>15</sup> South Asian Perspectives: Seven Nations in Conflict and Co-operation by Bhabani Sengupta is a collection of articles on problems and issues in South Asia; particularly relevant is the chapter on ethno-political interstate tensions and conflicts.<sup>16</sup>

Books relating to the Jharkhand movement specifically are Fourth World Dynamics: Jharkhand edited by Nirmal Sengupta; Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and protest in Jharkhand by Susana B.C.Devalle mention of tribal movements, among them Jharkhand is made in K.S.Singh ed. Tribal movements in India, Volumes I,II and also his edited book.

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14. S.D. Muni & Others., ed., Domestic Conflict in South Asia , Vol.I,II, (New Delhi - 1986).

15. S.D. Muni, ed., Understanding South Asia, (New Delhi, 1994).

16. Bhabani Sengupta, South Asian perspectives: Seven Nations in conflict and co operation, (Delhi, 1988).

Tribal Situation in India.<sup>17</sup> Besides numerous articles in journals and magazines like "Probing the Jharkhand Question" by Arunabha Ghosh also "Jharkhand Movement in West Bengal". "Jharkhand Movement: The Questions of Identity and Sub-Nationality by K.L. Sharma. "Jharkhand movement: from realism to Mystification", by Victor Das<sup>18</sup> have been used.

### Objectives

The basic objective in the first chapter is to provide the definitions of the key concepts used in the work along with a short literature review.

The second chapter delineates the regional diversities in South Asia and gives an account of the ethnic structure in each country.

Instances or examples of ethnic conflicts in South Asian States with special reference to India are examine in the third chapter. It also contains the various factors which lead to the expression of ethnic conflicts.

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17. Nirmal Sengupta, ed., Fourth World Dynamics Jharkhand (Delhi 1982) Susana B.C. Devalle Discourses of Ethnicity ; Culture and Protest in Jharkhand, (New Delhi 1992) K.S. Singh, ed., Tribal Movements in India, Vols I,II., Tribal Situation in India, (Shimla, 1972).
  18. Arunabha Ghosh, "Probing the Jharkhand Question," EPW, May 4, 1991 "The Jharkhand Movement in West Bengal," EPW, Jan 16-23, 1993; K.L. Sharma "Jharkand movement : The Questions of Identify and Sub-Nationality", Social Action, Oct - Dec 1990,; Victor Das, "Jharkhand movement: From Realism to Mystification", EPW, July 28, 1990.

The territorial claim, ethnic composition, levels of economic development resource base, political groupings of the Jharkhand region are dealt with in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter highlights the basic issues on which the movement is based, the sequential development of the movement and also the central and state government's perception on it.

The conclusion reviews some of the proposals for a solution to the problem, and also a broader perspective for regional peace.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **ETHNIC PLURALISM AND REGIONAL DIVERSITIES IN SOUTH ASIA**



The South Asian Region dominating the northern half of the Indian ocean and extending from the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca occupies an important strategic location in an area which has been a hotbed of international politics and conflicts for more than two decades. The region is inhabited by almost one-fifth of the human race in about three percent of the world's land surface.<sup>1</sup> Geographically, besides the seven countries of the Indian subcontinent with common land frontiers - Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Burma, the region includes Sri Lanka and the Maldivé Islands with common maritime borders with India. But because of their infrequent interactions with this region and their distinct social and cultural identities, Afghanistan is generally accepted as part of Central Asia and Burma as part of Southeast Asia.

Covering an area of 3.28 million sq.km, India has a population of 841 million. Bangladesh, the second most populous country in South Asia, has an area of 144,020 sq. km. and a population of 100.59 million. Situated in the Eastern Himalayas and bounded on the east-west and south by India, Bhutan covers an area of 46,600 sq. km and has a

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1. R.P. Anand, South Asia in Search of a Regional Identity (New Delhi, 1991), p.1.

population of little over 1 million. Pakistan has a total area of 804,000 sq. km. and a population of about 94.93 million.

The Republic of Maldives 400 miles south-west of Sri Lanka consists of some 2000 low-lying coral islands (only 220 inhabited) covering an area of 298 sq.km. and a population of 0.195 million. Sri Lanka, lying South-West of India has a total area of 65,610 sq.km. and a population of 16.4 million. Nepal covers an area of 147,400 sq. km. and has an estimated population of 16.14 million.<sup>2</sup>

South Asia is a realm of one of the oldest civilizations in the world, where people from all races, religions have co-existed, displaying a multitude, of cultures that have a parallel only in Europe. The region is a kaleidoscope of varied and deeply rooted regional cultures, displaying one of the most intricate ethnic mosaics in the World.<sup>3</sup> The demographic picture of South Asia is changing extremely rapidly due to population growth, by the end of the century it is predicted to be around 1,350 million.<sup>4</sup> Such a trend

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2. Taken from SAARC Perspective Vol. 1, no. 3, (1987); Asia Year Book, 1989.

3. Ashok.K. Dutt & M. Margnet Geib, Atlas of South Asia, (London, 1987), pp. 1-2.

4. Lok Raj Baral, Regional Migrations Ethnicity and Security The South Asian Case, (New Delhi, 1990), p.17.

poses a formidable task for South Asian nations which are in the throes of a "systemic flux".

The South Asian canvas whether in terms of number or the web of inter ethnic relations is perhaps one of the most varied, intricate and complex in the world. It is difficult to find another region of the world in which a more heterogeneous group of great cultures flourish.<sup>5</sup>

All the major religions of the world have their followers in the South Asian region, namely Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. The majority however profess Hinduism in India, Islam in Pakistan and Buddhism in Ceylon. Approaching the subject of religion in South Asia and its subsequent impact on politics one is struck by the situation of unusual complexity, with a richness of phenomena that is intriguing. Religion in South Asia provides each group whether Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist with a focal point of identity and social solidarity; also religious symbols represents groups interests and group self-esteem.<sup>6</sup>

Racially, the Caucasian Indians and the predominantly Mongoloid peoples of the rest of the area are members of two

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5. Philips Talbot, ed., South Asia in the World Today, (Chicago, 1950), p. 28.

6. Donald. E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion, (Princeton, 1969), p. 22.

distinct stocks. In addition there are innumerable minor racial variants of these main themes. But the Euro-American attitudes does not exist among the South Asian people. Ethnic particularism does exist but these people have not rationalised their prejudices in terms of body forms. Therefore, varieties of physique have not yet been used to express antagonism.<sup>7</sup>

Linguistically the variations in South Asia exceed those commonly faced even in Europe. The Indo-European and Dravidian languages of India alone profoundly divide the sub-continent, the variation further emphasized by varying scripts.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the ethnic mosaic of South Asia is extremely complex and volatile. When such strong culture markers are coupled with socio-economic inequalities deprivation and discrimination, the society feels the backlash of ethnic upsurges.

#### ETHNIC STRUCTURE IN INDIA

Among the seven South Asian nations India displays the greatest ethnic heterogeneity. There are various categories of cultural markers for group or ethnic identity. Thus, we have race, religion, caste, language, tribe etc. In his

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7. Tablbot, n. 5, p. 28.

8. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

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study on ethnic groups in India, Schermerhorn lists 10 ethnic minorities: scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, Jains, Jews, Sikhs, Muslims, Anglo-Indians, Parsees and Chinese.<sup>9</sup> The omission of linguistic groups in Schermerhorn classification is fallacious; his justification is that there are too many linguistic groups which by their highly fractionalised nature make it impossible for them to be treated on a societal basis; secondly, linguistic states cannot be treated as minorities as they are formal units of government. But the core of an ethnic group is to be determined not on the basis of size or status or the majority-minority continuum but on the criteria of subjective-objective variables which makes a majority group qualifiable for ethnic group status. Linguistic states need not necessarily be a substitute for linguistic groups since all members of the latter reside therein.

Although India is predominantly a Hindu nation, yet other religious groups also have a place here. According to the Census of India, 1981, the Hindus constituted 82.64% the Muslims, 11.35%, the Christians 2.43%, the Sikhs 1.96%, the Buddhists 0.71%, the Jains 0.48% and others 0.43% of the total population of India.

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9. R.A. Schermerhorn in Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia, (New Delhi, 1990), p. 34.

The present day Muslim, population in India consists mostly of smaller peasantry, landless labourers, the artisans in the villages and lower middle class in the cities. Muslims constitute a majority in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Although an overwhelming majority of the followers of Sikhism came from within the folds of Hinduism, the early part of twentieth century witnessed the rise of Sikh sectarian organisations that emphasised the distinct Sikh identity. They look upon the North-Western State of Punjab as their homeland and Punjabi as their religious language.

The Christians in India are more numerous than the Sikhs but less politically vocal. The bulk of Indians Christians live in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, but the concentration is densest in the North-Eastern part of India. The Christians of the North-East are basically converts from tribes and are culturally distinct from Christians of the South.

Language in India is as critical an ethnic group marker as other cultural labels like religion and tribe. It is somewhat bewildering to think that no less than 1,652 spoken languages, including 63 non-Indian languages are current in

this sub-continent.<sup>10</sup> The 8th schedule of the constitution of India, contains the 18 officially recognized languages in India. These are Assamese Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.<sup>11</sup> Beside these major languages, hundreds of dialects and regional variations of a language are to be found.

The tribes in India also form a distinct ethnic group. According to the census of India, 1991, out of a population total of 838.58 million, there are 67.67 million scheduled tribes constituting 8.08% of the population.<sup>12</sup>

Caste is a social institution peculiar to India. Although they have not exhibited any separatist tendencies the various castes can be considered to be distinct ethnically owing to their descent, organization etc. There are the four major castes, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra; however, numerous sub-castes or 'Jatis' exist too. The 1991 census lists 132.88 million scheduled castes constituting 16.48% of the population.<sup>13</sup>

#### ETHNIC STRUCTURE IN PAKISTAN

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10. D.d. Basu, Introduction to the : The constitution of India, (New Delhi, 1992), p.365.
11. *Ibdi.*, p. 445.
12. Census of India, 1991, p. 39.
13. *Ibid*, p.13.

Society in Pakistan is predominantly Muslim, yet ethnically diverse.<sup>14</sup> The people reflect a diverse mix of Dravidian, and Aryan combined with later infusions of Greeks, Persians, Arabs, Afghans, Turks and Mongols, Ethnically the population is of 5 components; the Punjabis of Punjab, accounting for about two-thirds of the population and percentage wise, about 66% . The Sindhis of Sind account for 13% of the population ; The Pushtus occupy the North West Frontier Province making up 8% of the population, while the Baluchis of Baluchistan measure 2% ; finally there are the Kashmiris of Pakistan occupied Kashmir area (POK).<sup>15</sup>

Within a major ethnic group for example the Baluchis, the distinction between Marris, Bugtis, Bizenjos and Mengals, appears to impart them a distinctiveness, necessitating their treatment as separate ethnic groups. Thus, the Pathans of NWFP , although Pushto-speaking and adhering to Pakhtun ideals differentiate between the Yusufzais, Mohammads, Khattaks etc.<sup>16</sup>

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14. Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia, (New Delhi, 1990) p.37.

15. Dutt & Geib, n. 3, pp. 12-13.

16. Phadnis, n. 14, pp. 193-195.



## ETHNIC STRUCTURE IN SRILANKA

In the case of Sri Lanka, "its ethnic structures, have been dominantly influenced by the process of colonisation, conquests and conversions from India in the North spanning several centuries".<sup>17</sup> The original inhabitants of the island are called "Veddahs", numbering no more than a few thousand individuals; The rest 90% of the population show the predominance of Indian antecedents. The Sinhalese claim descent from the Aryans while the Tamils do the same from Dravidians . The low country Sinhalese account for 42.8% of the population while the Kandyan Sinhalese account for 29.2%. The Ceylon Tamils make up 11.2% and the Indian Tamils 9.37% of the population. The Ceylon Moors or Moslems and the Indian Moors account for 6.5% and 0.2% respectively. The Burghers, a community of Eurasian and European descent owing to intermarriage between Veddahs and Portuguese as well as Dutch Colonialists account for 0.8% to 1% of the population.

Religion wise the Sinhalese are Buddhists accounting for 67.3% of the populations; The Tamils are Hindus making up 17.6% of the population. The Burghers practice Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Phadnis, n. 14, p.42.

18. Dutt & Geib, n. 3, p. 209

### ETHNIC STRUCTURE IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is linguistically the most homogeneous state in South Asia ; like Pakistan it is Islam dominated but by far more culturally homogeneous. The defined Bengali region, in Bangladesh covers all areas except Chittagong Hill Tracts; in India all of West Bengal except Darjeeling, two-thirds of Tripura along with Cachar district of Assam are in this region. This Bengali region is 53% longer than Bangladesh and with a population that is 56% greater also; here Moslems numbers 60% while Hindus number 30%. But in Bangladesh, the Bengali Muslims constitute 86.6% while Bengali Hindus constitute 12.1%.

The tribal population in Bangladesh is about one million or 1% of the population; the four major tribes are the Chakmas, the Marmas or Maghs, the Tiperas or Tipras and the Mros or Moorangs. the tribals are basically Buddhists and Hindus with smaller tribes being dominated by Christianity. They speak Tibeto-Burmese rather than Indo-European languages.<sup>19</sup>

### NEPAL'S POLYETHNIC STRUCTURE

The Himalayan kingdom of Nepal exhibits great ethnic

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19. *ibid*, p. 151.

diversity, it is influenced by Tibet in the North and India in the South. The caste system is prevalent due to the influence of the Hindus tribe and caste separatism has caused prevalence of individual ethnic groups such as "Newars" of Western Hill areas and "Bhotias" or mountain climbing Sherpas of the North.<sup>20</sup>

People of Mongoloid origins came to Nepal from North and Sikkim; the northern and eastern areas of Nepal are largely inhabited by this race. The Indo-Aryans moved from South, thus, making the "Tarai" inhabitants of Caucasoid origin. The mid-mountain region comprises a mixture of Mongoloids and Caucasoids.

Nepal is influenced by two different families of languages - Tibeto-Burman and Indo Aryan. The Nepali language is a subgroup of an Indo-Aryan language (Sanskrit) and is the official language of the State "Maithili", "Bhojpuri", "Kukaono", dialects of Hindi are spoken in the Tarai region as extensions of languages whose core area lies in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh. The Newari, Margarkara and Gurunghma speak the Tibeto-Burman languages.

The non-Tarai Hindus number the largest, constituting almost half of the population followed by Tarai Hindus accounting for one-fourth of the population. The Tamangs

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20. Phadnis, n. 14, p.41.

account for 5% with the Kiratis, Newars as well as Tharus accounting for about 4% each of the population. Ethnic groups like Muslims, Gurungs, Sherpas, Magars are numerically small making up 1 to 3 percent each of the population.<sup>21</sup>

#### ETHNIC GROUPS IN BHUTAN:

Bhutan's multi ethnic structure has evolved due to its geo-physical features as well as due to the socio-political twists and turns in its neighbourhood.

The conglomerate of various ethnic groups are broadly identifiable region-wise.<sup>22</sup>

Inhabiting the northern and central regions of Bhutan, are the Bhote or "Ngalops". They constitute 60% of the population. They adhere to Mahayana Buddhism belonging to the "Drupka" sect and speak "Dzonkha" - a Tibetan dialect written in classical Ucaen Tibetan script, the language of the Drupka religious order. The traditions of the Bhotes are deeply rooted in Tibetan culture.

In Eastern Bhutan, comprising 15% of the population live the Sharchops"; They are of Indo-Mongoloid origin and are related to the Burmese and North-Eastern Indian people.

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21. Dutt & Geib, n. 3, p.215.

22. Phadnis, n. 14, pp. 218-220.

They are considered to be the earliest major inhabitants of present day Bhutan.

Southern and South-Western Bhutan is inhabited by the Nepalis, constituting 25% of the population. They were originally Nepalis, brought to work in Bhutan; as such they follow Hinduisim, the Hindu caste-system and maintain extended associations and familial connections in Nepal.<sup>23</sup>

#### ETHNIC STRUCTURE IN MALDIVES:

The ancestral antecedents of the people of Maldives as well of their religious cultural heritage has been much influenced by Sri Lanka; Since the twelfth century, approximately, Maldives has been under the dominant influence of Islam. The people of Maldives speak a common language called "Divedhi", derived from "Elu" ie an old form of Sinhala prevalent in early medieval centuries; the script has both the influence of Arabic and South Asian scripts. Although there are regional and dialect differences in the various atolls of North and South, yet Maldives shows a remarkable degree of cultural homogeneity.<sup>24</sup>

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23. Phadnis, n. 14, p.42.

24. Urmila Phadnis and Ela Dutt Luithui, Maldives Winds of Change in an Aloll State, (Delhi, 1985), pp.1-10.

Thus, South Asia presents the picture of a truly ethnically dispersed system or society. But it must be borne in mind that a checklist of ethnic groups at all-country levels in various South Asian States can at best be tentative at a given time. This fact besides, it has to reckon with the other fact of (a) the non-monolith characters of an ethnic group and (b) the changing locus of interaction at the various political administrative levels below the centre, i.e. the state/provinces/districts/divisions/villages. To all this, one must add the rural-urban divisions also.

Summing up, the broad categories of ethnic configuration in power terms may be as follows.

(1) A politically dominant and a subordinate minority or several such minorities : Sri Lanka (Sinhalese Tamils, Moors, Burghers).

Pakistan (Punjabis Sindhis, Pathans, Baluchis) ; Bangladesh (Bengali tribal groups).

(2) A politically dominant minority Vs. a subordinate majority as in most colonial situations. Bhutan (tribal groups) Nepalis) ; Nepal (Valley Hindus >Tarai people, Newaris, tribal groups).

(3) A multiplicity of ethnic groups of various size and power confounded by a multiplicity of loci of contacts among them to the extent that ethnic configuration in terms of

politically dominant and subordinate groups at the state level becomes well nigh impossible. India falls into this category. However, the locus of ethnic political interaction on ethnic lines assume dominant-subordinate configuration and even stratification - a critically in the federal polity at the tiers below the central authority.<sup>25</sup>

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25. Urmila Phadnis in S.D. Muni and others, Domestic Conflicts in South Asia : Economic and Ethnic Dimensions Vol.II, (New Delhi, 1986), p.109.

**CHAPTER 3 (I)**

**TERRITORIALITY, ETHNOCULTURAL  
GROUP IDENTITY AND EXPRESSIONS OF  
ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN SOUTH ASIA WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA.**



The impact of ethnicity on South Asia has assumed a marked salience and turbulence in the second half of this century; the restructuring of South Asian State System in 1947 as well as in 1971 has been followed by all the seven nations being in the throes of a persisting and pervasive flux; there is disquiet and internal tension of varying intensity. The project of nation building has gone awry for the South Asian States; their pursuit of finding an equivalence between ethnicity and nationhood in the hope that it will give a cultural basis to their newly founded states after Independence has launched an endless and turbulent process of ethnic strife within these societies.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the prevalence of numerous ethnic groups, widespread regional disparities as a result of the development process going awry have accentuated the cleavages in society. The demonstration effect of large scale nationalism in South Asia with its colonial past, upon ethnic nationalism cannot be underestimated. According to Anthony Smith, the single and most potent influence on ethnic reviv-

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1. D.L. Sheth, "Nation-building in Multi-Ethnic Societies: The Experience of South Asia", Alternative, (New York), Vol.XIV, 1989, p.383.

al has been birth and diffusion of nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Richard Sterling also notes that it is "nationalism that shaped the politics of separatism in the modern world".<sup>3</sup>

Ethnic conflicts, separatist movements, demands for autonomy, today, haunt India. The case of India vividly illustrates what happens to a society of civilizational proportions trying to work with the concept of the nation-state. The newly independent Indian State was a creation of the big ethno religious divide in the continent. Since its birth, the country has been plagued by communal rioting between the Hindus and Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs following Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination; violent caste conflicts, tribal uprisings, demands for separate statehood on the basis of language etc. Creation of States on a linguistic basis saw the birth of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh; the state of Assam was also reorganized to create Meghalaya.

The Punjab problem has assumed monstrous proportions today with the demands for Khalistan. The Sikhs in Punjab have vacillated from carving out a majority Sikh State to autonomy and from autonomy to secession. There are four

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2. Antony. D. Smith, The Ethnic Revival, (Cambridge, 1981) p.18

3. Dawa Norbu, Culture and Politics of Third World nationalism (London, 1992), p.200.

analytical theories of the present Punjab situation. First, that the whole problem is the handiwork of Congress (I); Second, that the Sikhs are deprived politically and economically; third, that the Akalis (members of the Shiromani Akali Dal, a political party of Sikhs) have resorted to the agitational approach whenever they have been out of power and fourth that the Green Revolution, has given the 'Kulaks' (landed aristocracy) immense financial power to manipulate politics.<sup>4</sup> The Punjab problem has remained a festering sore for the government with normal life in Punjab disrupted by terrorism; the Sikh terrorists have also tried to widen their base by infiltrating into Delhi, Haryana etc. Operation Bluestar launched by Mrs. Gandhi worsened the situation and heightened the civil dislocation of the region. The Rajiv-Longowal Accord was a significant step in ethnic crisis management but nothing very fruitful was achieved out of it. Punjab has suffered immensely from tension and uncertainty; the Indian Union also faces immense pressure with foreign vested interests trying to fish in troubled waters and destabilize the country.

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4. Surendra Chopra, "Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society: A Case Study of System Breakdown in the Punjab" in Dennis. L. Thompson & Dov Ronen, ed., Ethnicity, Politics & Development, (Colorado, 1986), pp. 196-197.

Talking about destabilization, the Kashmir problem has been used by Pakistan consistently to mar the internal peace in the country and also to embarrass India, accusing her of human rights violation and trying to internationalize the whole issue. The cry of the militants of Jammu and Kashmir is for "azadi" or freedom; it is a secessionist movement demanding to break away from the Union. The crisis in Kashmir is not just due to relative deprivation, impoverishment and unemployment but the roots of it lie primarily in the Kashmiris' fears for their cultural identity in the face of Hindu/Hindi notion of nationalism.<sup>5</sup>

The Kashmir imbroglio is not a solitary aberration in Indian politics, but a typical manifestation in an extremely violent form of the crisis brought about by the ruling powers at the centre due to their failure to resolve the various contradictions that fragmentize Indian society at different levels. Instead of attempting a national cohesiveness based on decentralization through equal distribution and devaluation of powers among the regional units and the various ethnic and linguistic communities within these units, the centre had followed the path of 'integrating' them under a centralized authority. The Indian situation,

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5. "Defending National-Cultural Identity, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 25, No. 9, March, 1990.

marked as it is by heterogeneity, such a path is doomed to end in a cul-de-sac.

Gupta says that the element of violence, secessionism spread of ethnic conflict, depends to a great extent on how the state is perceived. If the state is perceived as neutral then the secessionist movement does not take off; but if it is seen as the guardian of a particular community, then constitution, laws and nation-state lose their emotional appeal. This is what is happening in Punjab and Kashmir where they perceive that the state guards the interests of Hindus only. Thus, it becomes a "triadic" situation with the antagonistic ethnic groups and state being the actors.<sup>6</sup>

By the treaty of Yandabo, 1826, Assam became a part of British India, who treated Assam as a province of Bengal. The Bengalis were employed in most of the administrative and special posts on account of their being more educated, and enterprising than the average Assamese. Many Bengalis from over populated Bengal settled in Assam. Yet, despite many years of residence, they never assimilated and remained exclusive. Bengali labour from Bangladesh took the unoccupied lands. A situation arose when the Assamese were threatened with the prospect of being swamped by the non-

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6. Dipankar Gupta, "The State and Ethnicity in India", Asian Studies (Calcutta), Vol.10, 1992, pp.69-70.

Assamese migrants. The Assam agitation was basically an attempt to reassert their identity and claims to the land by the Assamese led by all Assam Students Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad.<sup>7</sup> The underlying cause was no doubt economic with the region being a victim of imbalanced regional growth. The people of Assam have long-standing grievances against the policy followed by successive governments in the matters of extension of various amenities, creating infrastructure of growth, generating productive activities and fixing prices of raw materials extracted from the region and processed elsewhere. Continuation of the legacy of colonial rule; geopolitical constraint, adoption of a development model where growth and justice are virtually treated as mutually unrelated processes, ramification of linkage with neo-colonial powers in the form of internal colonialism are some of the arguments to explain the disharmony in Assam.<sup>8</sup>

The tribal movements in the North-East also have proved of concern because living on the international boundaries

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7. Sanjib Baruah, "Immigration, Ethnic Conflict and Political Turmoil: Assam, 1979-1985", Asian Survey, (California), Vol.26, No.11, Nov.1986, pp.1184-1200.

8. B.K.Roy Burman, "Points and Counter-points in North East India", in A.D.Pant & Shiva. K.Gupta, ed., Multi-ethnicity and National Integration: a politico antropological view, (Allahabad, 1985). p.139.

they are not only not integrated within the politics-economic system of the country but also remained isolated from the cultural systems of the mainland. Since they have never been a part of the broader pan-Indian society and continue to retain a high degree of social autonomy,<sup>9</sup> threats of secessionism are more pertinent. Thus the Naga insurgency, the Mizo movement and the Khasi movement all threatened the integrity of the country. Moreover in the North-East we find the concept of "micro-nationalism" operating amongst the various tribes i.e. each tribe is trying to assert its own unique identity and domination; witness the ongoing ethnic massacres of the Kukis and Nagas.

In 1986, the Nepalis living in the Darjeeling hill areas came out openly demanding a Gorkhaland state within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Before crystallizing such a demand they were only sticking to the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution which was endorsed by the CPM government in Bengal. The Centre's non compliance created animosity which culminated in a more radical demand for the creation of a State for Nepalis. For giving shape to a movement, three ingredients are essential. They are ideology, organisation and

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9. S.K.Saha, 'Historical Premises of India's Tribal Problem', Journal of Contemporary Asia, (Manila), Vol.16, No.3, 1986, p.287.

leadership. In the Darjeeling hill areas, the objective was a state within which the allround development of the otherwise backward Nepalis was envisaged. An organisation-the Gorkha National Liberation Front-was created to rally the Nepalis. Finally, a messiah was born to lead in the person of Subhas Ghising.<sup>10</sup> The GNLF movement is the latest example of the relevance of language and ethnicity to politics in India. The Bodoland movement in Assam carried on by the All-Bodo Students Union demand a separate homeland for the Bodo tribe who are concentrated in the districts of Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Kamrup, Darrang and chiefly Kokrajhar, but do not form a substantial majority. In the Bodo ethnic revival, land and language have proved the rallying points; this the manifestation of language, territoriality and the problem of integration.<sup>11</sup> The ABSU has highlighted the socio-structural imbalances and economic disparities of the region. The massive infiltration of people from Bangladesh has adversely affected their population and economy. The loss of lands to the outside settlers has upset the tribal

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10. Lok Raj Baral, Regional Migrations, Ethnicity and Security: The South Asian Case, (New Delhi, 1990), pp.56-57

11. For details on the Bodo movement see, Udayon Mishra, "Bodo Stir: Complex issues, Unattainable Demands" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.24, no.21, May 27th, 1989, pp.1146-49.



population. Violent upsurges and terrorism<sup>12</sup> mark the Bodoland agitation.

Besides, the Jharkhand movement in the Chotanagpur region, the Uttarkhand in West Bengal, the Uttarakhand in Uttar Pradesh, the demand for Vidarbha in Maharashtra are movements for regional and cultural autonomy which according to regionalists will save them from domination of the majority as well as alleviated cultural repression.

The nation-state of Pakistan came into being after a prolonged inter-religions conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims during the British rule, culminating in bloody and large-scale riots. The one shared identity of religious nationalism soon begin to yield to another principle of nationalism - the assertion of ethno-linguistic identity. This led to a process which culminated in the creation of Bangladesh. Supplementing the ethno-linguistic cleavage was the regional disparities between East Pakistan and West Pakistan with the dominance of the non-agricultural sector by the West Pakistan based bourgeoisie.<sup>13</sup>

Pakistan after the creation of Bangladesh is still being rocked by internal violence along regional-ethnic

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12. Tribune, (Chandigarh), June 17th, 1992.

13. Rehman Sobhan, "Regional disparities and National Question", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.13, 1983, p.103.

identities. The ethnic domination of one ethnic group, Punjabis, of others like the Sindhis, Baluchis and Pakht is resented by the latter. In the North Western Front Province, the call for a Pakhtun entity predates the creation of Pakistan; the ethnic conflict in Sind is reflect of the deep-rooted sense of deprivation among the Sindh. The nature of the grievances of the Sindhis pertain to what is perceived by them as a denial of job opportunities, acquisition of their land by outsiders and almost total absence of representation in or access to corridors of power and the cultural oppression by the government.<sup>14</sup> Ment must be made of the Baluch movement which has been fairly volatile. The goals of the Baluch national movement range from autonomy confederation, secession to irrendentism.<sup>15</sup>

The case of Sri Lanka illustrates even more acutely the loss of cultural stability and political viability among ethnicities getting politicized. Sri Lanka's problems started when the democratic state began, obviously for reasons of economic growth and development, to mobilize majority Sinhala ethnicity as a means of establishing

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14. Uma Singh, "Ethnic Conflicts in Pakistan Sind a Factor in Pakistani Politics", in Urmila Phadnis and others, ed., Domestic Conflicts in South Asia: Economic and Ethnic Dimensions, (New Delhi, 1990), p. 175.

15. Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and Nation-Building in South Asia, (New Delhi, 1990), p.175.

equivalence between the State and the nation. In the process, the old equations between ethnic communities got disturbed; the Sri Lankan Tamils now demanded their own "Eelam", an autonomous political arrangement for themselves. Sri Lanka is trying to arrive at a political solution to the problem, which is not easy in an atmosphere polluted with gunpowder and bombsmoke.<sup>16</sup> The future, even if a separate political arrangement for Tamils becomes possible, there will be a substantial Sinhala "minority" living in the Tamil-dominated areas and a "Tamil minority" living in Sinhala dominated areas. The question of ethnicity and subsequently conflict would remain alive.

Bengali ethnic nationalism having achieved its own nation-state Bangladesh, now finds Bengali ethno-linguistic identity simply does ~~to~~ provide a solid enough basis for nationhood nor can one derive a governing principle from it. The Bengali ethno linguistic identity could not fully accommodate the ethnic aspirations, even survival of the Hindu Bengali and Buddhist Chakma minorities. Tribal insurgency has been going on for years in the Chittagong Hill Tracts bordering the Indian State of Tripura as well as Arakhan

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16. Newton Gunasinghe, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Perceptions and solutions", South Asia Bulletin, (London) Vol.VI, No.2, 1986, p.37

region of Burma. The Bangladesh government and mainstream political elements have failed to integrate this tribal segment in the body politic of the republic; the government has adopted a policy of "detrribalization". The tribal however do not demand a separate state but their grievances are political economic and cultural.<sup>17</sup>

Nepal's main problem of national integration comes from the Tarai region bordering India, because people from one cultural background migrated into a region over which people of another cultural background have established political control. The Tarai region contributes over 50% to its GDP; it is also Nepal's main food grain producing area. The economic power in the Tarai resides with the Indian immigrants. This region creates ethno-political tensions of two interesting dimensions; first, domestic, where there is a big divide between the Hindi-speaking people of the Tarai and the Nepali-speaking hill people who have been migrating to the Tarai in large numbers for years.<sup>18</sup> Nepali ethno-nationalism has come into direct confrontation with the Hindi speaking group of Tarai. Members of Kathmandu's governing elite tend to view Hindi as a symbol of the plains

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17. Bhabani Sen Gupta South Asian Perspectives: Seven Nations in Conflict and Co-operation, (Delhi, 1988), p. 21.

18. *ibid*, pp. 27-28.

people's resistance to the hill culture. The second dimension of ethno-political tension involves Nepal's relations with India that can be foreseen due to Nepal's enormous dependencies on India and the latter's hegemonic attitude towards the former. The cleavage between the two countries is basically because of the blurred frontier and uncontrolled population movement across the frontier. Current ethnic relations in Nepal when looked at from the perspective of land rights reveal tremendous conflict between politically and economically dominant high caste groups (Brahman, Chetri, Thakuri) and Buddhist and Aminist ethnic minority groups like Limbu, Chepang and Tharu tribes.<sup>19</sup>

Ethnopolitical tensions in Bhutan relate to interactions between its two major ethnic groups, Drupkas and Nepalese Bhutanese. The Nepalese perceive, that they are being treated as second-class citizens, because till the 1950s the Bhutanese ruling elite made no efforts to integrate them into the political system of the country.

The atoll State of Maldives is relatively free from ethno-political tensions, but as a result of the developmental thrust there is an increasing penetration of the centre

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19. Thomas Cox, "Land rights and Ethnic Conflict in Nepal", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXV, Nos. 24-24, June 16th-23rd, 1990, p.1318.

in the local units on the one hand and avenues for greater accessibility to the institutions of power and authority at the Centre. The government is well aware of the negative aspect of developmental process and accordingly has been careful in its emphasis on co-coordinated development of the atolls and Centre as well as development of the atolls as independent units. Even so in the event of the widening of the narrow based elite, the possibility of the north-south division turning regional cannot be ruled out.<sup>20</sup>

Evolving out of a nexus of socio economic and political formations, the varied manifestations of ethnic assertions and separatist movements in South Asia reflect the dynamics as such structural formations as well as the management and manipulation of ethnicity by the power elite. The South Asian experience shows that is not the objective difference among the ethnic communities per se, but the awareness of such difference as also the mobilization vis-a-vis the reference group that sets the tone for ethnic competition and movements.

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20. Phadnis, n.15, p.129.

**CHAPTER 3 (II)**

**FACTORS FOR THE GROWTH AND  
SPATIAL EXPRESSIONS OF ETHNIC  
CONFLICTS, SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS IN INDIA.**

Today, in India, haunted as we are by secessionist phantoms, it is particularly worthwhile to critically examine the various factors which are responsible for the growth and spatial expressions of ethnic conflicts. Endless platitudes abound about the "National unity" and the catholicity and durability of "Indian culture"; yet this very unity symbolized by Indian national identity is being thwarted, mocked at. The need of the hour is to address the issue of the crisis of the nation-state, which the politicians, the ruling class are loath to do, contenting themselves as they are with the routine rehtoric of "sovereignty", "territorial integrity" of the "socialist" Republic of India. It seems, like what Gramsci had said in another context, "It may well be that nobody has the courage to pose the question exhaustively because it was feared that vital dangers for the unified life of the nation would immediately result from such a rigorously critical and consequential formulations".<sup>1</sup> Such a fear is however baseless, and more so, it is detrimental - the causes of this malaise afflicting the country should be diagonosed quickly and remedial measures i.e. the management of conflict should be embarked upon.

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1. Antonio Gramsci in David Forgacs & Geoffrey Nowell - Smith. ed. Selections from Cultural Writings, (London, 1985), p.211



"Among the most persistent problems encountered by scholars studying ethnic politics is the question of why these issues become politically salient. The diversity of variables of potential importance in explaining any single one, let alone several is astounding".<sup>2</sup> There is also little consensus as to their order of significance or importance.

Thompson and Rudolph list a multiplicity of factors that influence the development of ethno-territorial movements.<sup>3</sup> Among those which are relevant for the Indian case are, firstly, the "predisposing factors" which are "a sense of group identity incorporating a 'We/they' differentiation from other members of the political system founded on perceived biological or cultural differences, socialization experiences and/or a prior, separate political existence. A multinational setting and group awareness thereof. This element may be initially dormant".

Secondly, there are the "causal factors" which include structural/environmental elements like relative economic, cultural or social deprivation vis-a-vis other groups in the state, aggravated by a modernization process which (a)

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2. Robert J. Thompson & Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr; "Ethnic Politics & public in Western Societies: A framework for comparative analysis" in Dennis L. Thompson & Dov. Ronen, ed. Ethnicity Politics and Development, (Colorado, 1986), p. 37.

3. ibid, pp. 39-41.

heightens perceptions of regional differences by increasing communications inside the state;

(b) accentuates the growth of the centre, aggravating center/periphery relations by leaving outlying ethnies outside or on the edge of events at the Center;

(c) attacks traditional life style (such as utility of the regional tongue in social mobility);

(d) may result in a social welfare state in which the benefits of modernization are unevenly distributed among the national groups present in a multinational states.

(2) "relative economic superiority/advantage resulting from a sudden improvement of the groups regional economy vis-a-vis the centre;

(3) "The erosion and depolitisization of cross-cutting (non-ethnic, non-territorial) issues and cleavages, resulting in the relative increase in the importance of ethno-regional cleavages in a multi-national state";

(4) repression of groups by the centre;

(5) decline of overarching loyalties including an erosion of state nationalism, which formerly made ethnic particularism appear illegitimate;

(6) the growth of post industrial value system emphasizing political decentralization and regional populism; more

broadly the ideal of self determination applied inwardly in multinational states;

(7) a decline in the global prestige of the multinational state relatedly a decline in its internal performance a loss of its aura of effectiveness in solving socio-economic problems;

(8) the changing international setting, which formerly encouraged large state systems as a necessary path to political security;

(9) external models - achievement of regional self-government by communities in other democratic polities;

(10) growing willingness of political leaders at Center to entertain regional demands for increased political participation in decision making.

Thirdly there are the "attitudinal changes" or changes in political culture, like:

(1) anomie derived from a sense of alienation from the impersonal, bureaucratic state and resulting in a yearning to return to the ethnic.

(2) frustration within a potential leadership cadre, resulting from their increased access to higher education but limited career opportunities in peripheral regions or a state dominated by another, numerically superior or culturally "overvalued" ethnic group. A sense of ethnic discrimination;

(3) A renewed sense of ethno-regional identity resulting from the structural changes influencing the groups environment a (re)discovery of ethnicity and a companion desire for rationalist objectives.

Fourthly there are "political factors" like, (1) depoliticization of cross-cutting cleavages by system-wide political elites.

(2) emergence of a skillful group of political leaders capable of mobilizing the regional community on the basis of its sense of national identity in order to press communal demands within the established political order ;

(3) incompetency of elites at centre to deal with political issues confronting the state.

When we picturize the Indian scene, keeping the above framework in mind the predisposing factor of ethnic identity is very prominent; this ethnic identity is formulated in a highly segmented and unequal society like India by several cultural markers, as noted below.

LANGUAGE : People speaking the same language have common socio-cultural characteristics, which give them a feeling of oneness which has been variously described as unity, homogeneity or identity that distinguishes them from a different linguistic group. According to Chalmers, "more than anything else, language shows 'we belong', providing the most natural

badge of public and private identity".<sup>4</sup> The issue of personal linguistic identity becomes very tangible in relation to the question of ethnicity and nationhood; language is also inextricably linked with the concept of territoriality. Language has the potentiality for cultural identity. It can replace religion in some aspects; and like religion it binds people vertically i.e. the poor and the rich.<sup>5</sup>

According to Ghose, movements demanding regional autonomy during 1955 were broadly linguistic;<sup>6</sup> thus we witnessed the bifurcation of Bombay in 1960, of Punjab in 1966, and the unsuccessful Vidharbha agitation for a separate state.

The States Reorganisation Commission submitted its report in 1955, September, recommending that states should be formed on the basis of language; but there was a great deal of criticism of linguistic states which created boundary disputes, riots and enmity among the people of different states.<sup>7</sup> Criticising the policy, Rajagopalachari said "the regional consciousness never contributed to India's oneness

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4. David Crystal, The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language, (Cambridge, 1987), p.17.

5. Surendra Mohan, "Political Trends Since Independence," Samata Era, Vol. 6. (Jan- Mar 1987)

6. Arun Ghose, "The Challenge of Nationality Formation," Asian Studies, (Calcutta), Vol. 6. (1988)

7. Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, (New Delhi, 1970), p. 328

in the past. In fact it is inherent in the narrow loyalties, whether based on communal, provincial or linguistic considerations that they ally themselves with centrifugal forces and become instruments of the inter-state discord and disruptive trends. The idea of such nations and nationalities which foment resistance to the growth of national unity is implicit in the demand for a reorganisation of states or a rectification of their boundaries on the basis of exclusivist factors such as linguistic and cultural homogeneity".<sup>8</sup>

The DAR commission (1948) had already rejected the idea of linguistic states; the commission felt that in forming provinces the emphasis should be primarily on administrative convenience; the homogeneity of languages should enter into consideration only as a matter of administrative convenience not as a linguistic entity. The commission also emphasized that everything which helped the growth of nationalism had to go forward and everything which implied it had to be rejected to stand over.<sup>9</sup>

The criticisms became true predictions and linguistic states failed to solve the problem; rather it became more complicated and aspirations of people in several parts of

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8. State Reorganisation Committee Report, 1955, p.3.

9. Report of Linguistic Province Commission, 1955-1957, pp. 131-147.

India for a separate political entity got a new impetus. Thus Selig Harrison predicted that India would be torn into pieces if she did not find a solution to her language problem in the next few years.<sup>10</sup>

RELIGION : Religion is a major divisive force in India today; witness the alarming growth of Hindu. Muslim riots in the country, the Kashmir and Punjab problem with a definite communal colour to it.

Ethnic separatism incorporates dissent as a basis of group and of individual status and spiritual confirmation; cultural separateness reinforces the sense of unique descent and provides a "mission/destiny" view of historical development. One of the salient markers by which it operates is religion, a phenomenon which is capable of both uniting and dividing populations at a local and universal level.<sup>11</sup>

Five aspects of religion are relevant while discussing its major political implications.<sup>12</sup> Firstly, the view of history taken by a religion, i.e. whether human history is

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10. See for details, Selig Harrison, India: The Most Dangerous Decades, (Princeton, 1960), pp.71-78.

11. Colin. H. Williams, Identity Through autonomy : Ethnic Separatism in Quebec", in Alan. D. Burnet & Peter J. Taylor, ed., Anglo -American essays on Political Geography; Political Studies from Spatial Perspectives, (New York, 1981), p.397.

12. Donald. E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics & Religion, (Princeton, 1969), pp 3-4.

regarded as real and important, is a vital point. A religion which regards history as unreal or relatively unimportant will not be concerned with maintaining temporal power. But a religion which believes the course of history to be crucial and central to its task in the world, is bound to rely upon political power to influence history. Thus for Hindus history is ultimately not significant; for Christians it is significant but not decisive and for Muslims it is decisive but not final.<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, the attitude of a religion towards another is crucial as religious intolerance affects political behaviour by reinforcing the tendency to use political process for the exclusive benefit of one's own religious community. Thus, Islam can be considered quite intolerant towards other religions; this factor was effectively seized for partitioning the Indian sub-continent.

Thirdly, it is important to note what capacity a given religion has demonstrated for effective ecclesiastical organization. The more highly organized the religion, the greater involvement in politics as amply proved by Sikh separatism in Punjab.

Fourthly, historical traditions of separation or fusion of political and religious functions have to be considered.

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13. *ibid.* p.5.



Should the idea of fusion of two functions be supported, there is an increase in a religious movement in politics; both Islam and Sikhism serve as examples.

Fifthly, is the extent to which a religion has tended to regulate social life. The stonger the tendency to regulate society, the greater is the potential and area for religious conflicts.

Communalism can be defined as the tendency of socio-religious groups to attempt to maximize their economic, social and political strength at the expense of other groups. Religious communalism is related to politics in several basic ways : (1) the legal recognition of communities as political units (2) communal loyalties in political behaviour (3) communal political parties and pressure groups and (4) the political problems of preventing and controlling communal violence.<sup>14</sup>

Communalism, especially the Hindu-Muslim divide can be attributed to the colonial legacy. The British in India sowed the seeds of communalism in two ways. Firstly, unbalanced economic change and development under colonial rule caused differential rates of mobilization among communal groups. The consequence of differential rates of mobiliza-

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14. *ibid.* p. 23.

tion is that some groups gain a head start in competition for the scarce rewards of modernity. New socio-economic categories coincide with communal boundaries and consequently the modern status system is organised on communal lines; the intensity of communal confrontation cannot be ameliorated. The fewer the cross-cutting socio-economic linkages, the more naked such confrontations and the greater likelihood of secessionist and other movements of communal nationalism.<sup>15</sup>

Communalism is also a direct outcome of British imperial diplomacy which believed in 'divide and rule' policy; they encouraged communal divisions, by introducing separate communal electorates, in order to keep the larger community divided so as to ensure the permanence of their own dominion. Their prime aim was "to check the politicisation of the Indian people, to end their consolidation and unification and to disrupt the process of the Indian nation in the making."<sup>16</sup> The communal virus rampant in Indian political life is also a hangover of the freedom movement. The growth of nationalism came to be subjected to dialectical inevitability and attracted its anti-thesis within the form of

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15. Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernisation and the Politics of communalism : A Theoretical Perspective", American Political Science Review, (Wisconsin) Vol. LXIV, No. 4, 1970, p.116.

16. Moin Shakir "Communalism, and Secularism in Indian Politics," Teaching Politics, (New Delhi), Vol. XI, No. 2, 1985, p.4.

communalism, the sponsors of which made use of religion as an instrument of contemporary politics.<sup>17</sup>

The recent demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, on December 6th 1993, and the subsequent communal rioting which followed, show the alarming tenacity of the communal virus. In 1989, there were 18 major riots in which 1,174 persons were killed. The number of persons killed in 1986 was 418, in 1987 it was 383, in 1988 it was 223 and in 1990 it was 693.

The effects of the partitions in 1947 and 1971 are there in the two Muslim-States which flank Hindu-India; but Hindu-Muslim enmity is endemic within India because a substantial urban-based Muslim population arouses all the familiar tensions of majority-minority hostility.<sup>18</sup> The deterioration in the communal situation in India is also directly related to the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and its corresponding majoritarian ethnic nationalism based on Hindutva.<sup>19</sup> Political vested interests have also played a

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17. M.N.Das, Indian National Congress Versus The British, Vol.1. (Delhi, 1978), p. 260.
  18. Dennis Austin and Anirudha Gupta, "The Politics of Violence in India and South Asia," Conflict Studies (London) No. 232, June, 1990, pp 7-12.
  19. S.D. Muni, ed., Understanding South Asia: Essays in the Memory of Late Professor (Mrs) Urmila Phadnis, (New Delhi, 1994), p. 149.

decisive role in this case - "the most important aspect or interconnection of communalism in contemporary India", is that "the Indian ruling class have always found religion, religiousity or 'dharmika', as recent coinage goes, most useful for reinforcing their hegemony, their ideological dominance and social control over common people... ", "also their political parties have never been averse to the exploitation of religion, or communalism, to a greater or lesser degree, in their struggle for power at different levels in the Indian state".<sup>20</sup>

#### CASTE

Kothari argues that Indians have traditionally experienced a sense of insecurity and discomfort, when confronted with large-scale collectivities, institutions, organizations and identifications.<sup>21</sup> Thus family, caste, faction have taken precedence over party, government and nation.

Face to face contact and primary group feelings are still very important in politics while suspicion, uneasiness, and considerable difficulty accompany efforts to

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20. Randhir Singh, "Theorising Communalism: A Fragmentary Note in the Marxist Mode", Economic and Political Weekly, (Bombay), Vol. XIII, No. 30, July 28th, 1988, pp. 1542-44.

21. Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, (Boston, 1970), p. 226.

create and operate large and impersonal organized and institutionalized groups.<sup>22</sup>

Caste in general is defined both by distinctions of birth and occupation. Formerly, basically an instrument or device for the division of labour to achieve, enhance efficiency, caste today in India has taken on a different dimension. The social system in India is organized around caste structures and caste identities; caste under the impact of politics has taken on a different form. "The process of politics is one of identifying and manipulating existing structures in order to mobilize support and consolidate positions. Where caste structures provide one of the most important organizational clusters in which the population is found to live, politics must strive to organize through such a structure".<sup>23</sup> We are witnessing today the "politicization of caste".<sup>24</sup>

By drawing the caste system into its web of organization, politics finds material for its articulation and moulds it into its own design. In making politics their

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22. Steven Hoffman, "Social Psychology, Policy and National Integration in India," in Milton Israel, ed., National Unity : The South Asian Experience, (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 79-80.

23. Kothari, n. 21, p.225.

24. *ibid.*

sphere of activity caste and kin groups get a chance to assert their identity and strive for positions.

The restraints of caste, linked to duty, can be a source of social cohesion but in a number of states, especially Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, caste rivalry has been extremely violent.<sup>25</sup>

Caste conflicts have taken on a new turn with the introduction of 'Reservation for Scheduled Caste and Tribes Bill' in 1989 by the government. With the implementation of the Mandal Commission report, that provides a high percentage of reservation for the other backward castes (OBC's), the country has got polarized on caste lines. Conflict is thus unavoidable when there is a persisting endorsement of conducting politics on the basis of social divisions.

Castes, however do not pose the same kind of potential threat to the nation-state as tribes, religious communities and linguistic groups do. They have not demanded separate political identities. "When castes come to mobilize themselves politically, they are concerned with the distribution of values, status, and resources within a political system, not with the realization of nationhood, although such a demand is not beyond the bounds of possibility, however

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25. Austin and Gupta, n.18, p. 12.

unlikely it may be".<sup>26</sup> A caste like the Jats of Rajasthan. Punjab and Uttar Pradesh which spreads across present state Boundaries, has a contiguous territorial base, and possesses a viable political history, might develop "national" aspirations.<sup>27</sup>

According to Edward Shils, "The survival of the caste system cuts human beings off from each other. It inhibits the growth of sensibilities which are required for the perception of the moral quality of other human beings....It is the caste system which helps deaden the imagination to the state of mind of other human beings".<sup>28</sup> The anaesthetizing of fellow feelings, which helps men share perceptions, rationality, symbols and a sense of common destiny, contributing substantially to the creation of bonds of nation-hood by caste can catalyze the already existing crisis of nation-state.

### **TRIBE**

According to the Census Report of India, 1991, the aggregation of the Scheduled Tribes or group of tribes

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26. Lloyd. I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition: Political development in India, (Chicago, 1967), p. 68.

27. *ibid.*

28. Edward Shils, The Intellectual Between tradition and Modernity: The Indian Case, (The Hague, 1961), p. 70.

notified together comes to 573; <sup>29</sup> the population of the country excluding Jammu and Kashmir where census was not held, is 838.58 million, out of which 8.08% or 67.76 million are the Scheduled Tribes. The tribals inhabit particular areas in clusters, the main ones being "the north-eastern periphery of the Himalayas, on the Meghalaya plateau, in Chota Nagpur, on the eastern flanks of the Aravallis and the Vindhayan uplands in East Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and in the Sahyadris as well as in Gujarat in the Himachal Valleys". <sup>30</sup>

In the Websters Third New International dictionary (1967) a tribe is defined as "an endogenous social group held to be descended from a common ancestor and composed of numerous families, exogenous clans, bands, or villages that occupies a specific geographic territory, possesses cultural, religious and linguistic homogeneity or is commonly united politically under one head or chief". The sixth revised and rewritten edition of Notes and Queries on Anthropology also defines tribe as a politically or socially coherent and autonomous group occupying or claiming a particular territory.

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29. Census of India, 1991, p.39.

30. Aijazuddin Ahmed, "Cultural Roots of Tribals in India", Contemporary Affairs (New Delhi), Vol.2, No.2, April-June 1988, p.52.



Officially, the word "tribal" came into use after its inclusion in a "Schedule". of the Indian Constituion. The official policy of scheduling certain groups as tribes is a legacy of the thirteenth century if not earlier. By the end of the thirteenth century when state power passed from the elite Hindu to the Muslims, there came to co-exist two different and segregated systems of social organisation, one controlled and dominated by the elite and the other remaining outside its control until several centuries later. This historically determined schism of differentiating between the Pan-Indian mainstream of caste society and the peripheral tribal societies, which are not yet fully incorporated in the mainstream, gave the basis for the concept of tribe.<sup>31</sup>

Tribal upsurges whether in Middle India or in the North-East are major sources of conflict and tension in the country. According to Singh, tribal movements can be divided into three phases. The first phase was between 1795-1860 and coincided with the rise, expansion and establishment of the British Empire. The second phase, from 1860 and 1920 coincided with the intensive phase of colonialism "during which merchant capital penetrated into tribal economy af-

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31. Surajit K. Saha, "Historical Premises of India's Tribal Problem", Journal of Contemorary Asia, (Manila) Vol 16, No. 3, 1986, p.286.

fecting their relationship with the land forest". The third phase covers the period from 1920 till independence in 1947. During this phase tribals started launching the so-called "separatist" movements, at the same time participating in nationalistic and agrarian movements.

Shah traces the analysis of tribal problems even before British arrival. He believes that the widespread disaffection and disinterest that is prevalent in current tribal societies in India stem "from the processes of institutionalised economic exploitation and socio - political marginalisation operating against them in a broader non - tribal, mainly Hindu society they now find themselves engulfed in." <sup>32</sup> The tribal unrests in Middle India today retain their earlier shades when they became militant, as a "reaction to the exploitation and oppression of the aboriginal by Hindu landlords and money lenders who had established themselves in tribal areas, and were sheltered by a government which had instituted a system of land settlement and administration of justice favouring the advanced communities at the expense of simple aboriginals." Today, tribes react against a culture of oppression - to their lands being alienated, their culture dismantled and their very existence threatened.

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32. *ibid.*, p. 275.

**Relative deprivation:**

The tendency to define ethnic upsurges in preponderantly economic terms has a long history. We have on one hand the roots of it in the fragmentary writings of Marx and Engels on the subjects of nation and classes; secondly, there is the more recent "industrialisation" theory which in turn harks back, to its liberal laissez-faire economic origins and its debate with later nineteenth century protectionists. The Marxist legacy has proved to be more useful for recent economic theories of ethnic change and conflict.

The basic contention of the Marxist position is the functional equivalence of nation and class in certain situations. Marx's theory of capitalist development posits the polarisation of class interests between the owners of the means of production and the exploited wage labourers, a polarisation which will produce a revolutionary struggle and the overthrow of the capitalist class. In a series of articles and pamphlets, Marx and Engels developed the idea that nations can be divided into "progressive" and "reactionary" along the lines of their equivalent classes. Ethnic nations were assimilated to the roles and positions of social classes; and their national discontents, and demands for

autonomy were treated as so many forms, disguises and masks for real material discontents and aspirations.<sup>33</sup>

This marxist legacy has expanded to accomodate two other elements recently. The first is the economic role of intrastate regions; typically the role is viewed as dependent, even parasitic, and the region itself backward and lagging behing the rest of the economy on all indicators. This concern with regions is partly a product of ethnic protests themselves and is also a reaction to overcentralisation of political control overthe economy. Ethnic nationalists give great importance to this argument, no doubt, but even spokesmen of the dominant elites, untouched by nationalism, are well aware of the economic disparities between geographical areas within their states, and of the disadvantages of excessive centralisation.<sup>34</sup> According to Bardhan, "In India . . . , the civil society was already dominated by a relatively overdeveloped State at the time of Independence". (overdeveloped in relation to the economic structure). The extraordinary powers of control and regulation vested in the state can be attributed to the colonial administration ruling an alien land; but this overdeveloped state actually

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33. Anthony. D. Smith, The Ethnic Revival (Cambridge, 1981), p. 26.

34. *ibid.*, p.27.

goes back to pre-colonial days and was very evident during the peak of the Mughal rule in India. But there can be no doubt that "over the last three decades the State has accumulated powers of direct ownership and control in the economy to an extent unparalleled in Indian History....".<sup>35</sup> The autonomy of the Indian state is reflected more often in its regulatory or patronage-dispensing rather than developmental role. Thus, in the quest for 'devolution' the region has emerged as the natural unit for the exercise of a genuine, if circumscribed 'rational' authority.

The second element to have made its impact is the concept of "relative deprivation". Relative Deprivation is defined as, "a perceived discrepancy between mens value expectations and their value capabilities". Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled; value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining given the social means available to them.<sup>36</sup>

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35. Pranab Bardhan, The Political Economy of development in India, (Delhi, 1984), pp.37-38.

36. Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel, (Princeton, 1970), p.12-13.

Gusfield says that the principle of relative deprivation as a cause for social movements explains "the relation between perceived deprivation (or threat of deprivation) and the expression and organisation of discontent caused by unfulfilment of their expectations with regard to the improvement of their conditions or even a deterioration". Further, he says, revolutions may, and often have, occurred just after revolutionary segments of the population have improved their condition. The emphasis, is not on the word 'deprivation' but on the word relative.<sup>37</sup>

Among the various factors, listed by Gupta, which cause structural strain in the social structure thereby giving rise to conflicts, primacy is given to relative deprivation; the other related factors are the structural economic and political weaknesses of the system, new situations where power is placed in the hands of a new group of people and maladjustment in the social order, attracting marginals to movements.<sup>38</sup>

Runciman gives three dimensions to the relative deprivation syndrome: (a) The magnitude or the size of discrepan-

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37. Joseph R. Gusfield, "The Study of Social Movements", in David L. Sills, ed., International encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (London 1972) p. 447.

38. Dipankar Gupta, Nativism in a Metropolis: The Shiv Sena in Bombay (New Delhi, 1982), p.5.

cy between the aspirations and the actual situation; (b) the frequency or number of those who feel deprived; and (c) the degree or the intensity of feeling of relative deprivation.

Thus, there is a basic shift from the Marxist position of absolute to relative deprivation. The basic idea here is that social groups, and their members, only compare their position and fate with a limited range of other groups or individuals, usually those a little higher in the social scale. Although the position, social and material, of the group may have improved in absolute terms, what matters for their perceptions and actions is their progress relative to that of similar groups. Social movements and political action are the outcome of perceived frustrations on the part of individuals or groups, who feel disadvantaged and deprived relative to others and handicapped in the race for wealth, status, services and power.

Thus, ethnic protest and ethnic nationalism are the outcome of regional relative deprivations. Since the ethnic communities are generally located within specific regions which are typically backward, with lower growth rates as compared with the neighbouring areas or the core, the regional ethnic groups become frustrated and discontented, turning to separatism, violent political action; they argue for a total break with the political system which is respo-

nisble for their economic plight. Like the deprived lower classes of marxist theory ethnic regions seek to redress their disadvantaged situation through political movements and revolutionary action.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, the concept of balanced regional development is assuming mileage today. It advocates the achievement of social goal of economic development of the whole region, without losing the insight of economic needs and potentiality of area forming homogenous groups within the region. The concept implicitly argues a case for economic equality in resource allocation to develop various economic activities so as to reduce the economic distances within the areas of the region and between different regions.<sup>40</sup>

In India insurgencies and anti-national movements in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab, or disharmony in Assam and the North-East, are mainly due to unbalanced regional development and chronic manifestation of the relative deprivation syndrome. Thus, balanced regional development is of paramount importance for ensuring political stability in a democratic country.

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39. Smith, n. 34, pp. 28-29.

40. M.L. Patel, Planning Strategy for Tribal Development, (New Delhi, 1984), pp. 7-8.



## INTERNAL COLONIALISM

A recent variant of relative deprivation theory is the model of an "internal colonialism", derived from the studies made by Andre Gunder Frank and his followers of the unequal relationships between the economies of Latin America and the West. The former are characterized as 'peripheral' and "structurally underdeveloped", and their stagnant, dependent character is attributed to the exploitative needs of the Western economies, whose dynamic expansion was fed by the extracted resources and exploited labour of the peripheral territories. Thus, Western capitalist development has been achieved at the cost of the necessary and permanent underdevelopment of the Latin American colonies.

The notion of "peripheral regions" characterized by a stagnant, dependent economy has obvious attraction for economic theories of ethnic change. Most ethnic groups are concentrated in particular regions within the states territory and their situation is therefore inextricably bound up with the economic progress of their region. This means that disparities between regions must be reflected in inequalities between the ethnic groups in a plural state. Keeping this view point in mind, ethnic regions are treated as internal colonies of the 'metropolitan' 'nation-state'.<sup>41</sup>

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41. Smith, n. 34, p.30.

Michael Hechter argues that ethnic solidarity among any objectively defined set of individuals is due primarily to the existence of a hierarchical cultural division of labour which promotes reactive group formation. He defines 'internal colonialism' as "malintegration established on terms increasingly regarded as unjust and illegitimate". This cultural division of labour is typically found in regions which have developed as internal colonies or ethnic enclaves of advanced nation states.

In a brilliant analysis, Hechter says that, the cultural division of labour produces a system of stratification where objective cultural distinctions are super-imposed upon class lines. High status occupations tend to be reserved for those of metropolitan cultures, while those of indigenous culture cluster at the bottom of the stratification system.<sup>42</sup>

Painting the reality in graphic strokes, Hechter characterises some of the consequences of the territorial expansion of Western European states within Europe in the quest for "internal Americas", the same consequences can be seen when we attach the "core" label to the overdeveloped

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42. Michael. Hechter, Inernal Colonialism : The Celtic fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966 (London, 1975), p.34.

centralised central government in India, the states being the 'peripheral' regions. Thus "commerce and trade' among members of the periphery tend to be monopolised by members of the core. Credit is similarly monopolised... The peripheral economy is forced into complementary development to the core... economic dependency is reinforced through juridical, political and military measures...",<sup>43</sup> Thus the peripheral group may come to desire independence from a situation which is increasingly regarded as oppressive, which accounts for current nationalistic cultural rebirths. Most of these groups actually do not uncover evidence of their ancient cultural past. Their culture sometimes is created contemporaneously to legitimate demands for the present day goal of independence or the achievement of economic equality.

#### **MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Many scholars were of the view that cultural differences between the core and the peripheral groups of a nation-state would gradually diminish, under the impact of industrialisation, mass communication increasing activities of national government and above all, individual and group mobility. But today most scholars hold the view that "politicized ethnicity has increased with the increasing pace of

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43. *ibid.* p.30-33.

modernization and increasing levels of modernity in different countries", as Joseph Rothschild says.<sup>44</sup> According to Connor, "ethnic consciousness is definitely on the ascendancy as political force", and that "multi ethnic states of all levels of modernization have been afflicted".<sup>45</sup> Modernisation operates like a gigantic steel hammer smashing both traditional institutions and traditional structure of meaning. It deprives the individual of the security which, however harsh they may have been, traditional institutions provided for him. It tends to deprive him of the cosmological security provided by traditional religious world views. Although modernisation gives him new opportunities of choice, that is, of freedom, this new freedom is purchased at a high price of what Durkheim calls "anomie", or "alienation".

According to Kothari "There is taking place an increasing alienation of diverse local communities from the State which is in some respects a more far - reaching development than even the growth of violence and terrorism which of

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44. Joseph Rothschild, Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework, (New York, 1981), p.3.

45. Walker Connor, "Nation - Building or Nation - Destroying?" World Politics (London) No.24, 1971, p.327.

course thrive on such alienation".<sup>46</sup> Kothari says that communalism, conflicts thrive on this larger canvas of societal breakdown. Of destruction and decay of institutions. Of erosion of legitimate authority. Of the decline of civil society and the collapse of the democratic state that had for so long given cohesion to civil society without undermining its diversity and plurality. Today what is growing alarmingly "is one's identity with one's own caste or linguistic or religious community and often a withdrawal into still narrower shells of primary and secondary loyalties - peer groups and family - and often into just one's own lonely miserable self". It is a frightening situation and accounts for growing rates of violence and anomie directed against both self and the other.<sup>47</sup>

Talking in a different tone is, Myron Weiner, in his analysis of social and political consequences of internal migration in a multi ethnic low - income society like India. His two basic hypotheses are: (a) the process of modernization by providing incentives and opportunities for mobility, creates conditions for increasing internal migration and (b)

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46. Rajni Kothari, Rethinking Development: In search for Humane Alternatives, (Delhi, 1988), pp. 205.

47. *ibid.*

the modernization process nurtures the growth of ethnic identification and ethnic cohesion.<sup>48</sup>

Coming to the issue of development, the significance between the dynamics of development and ethnic conflicts is widely recognized. In the West, ethnicity is on the rise because developmental efforts have been failing. Esman observes that "rapid economic growth", the spread of state providing welfare services, and expanded educational opportunities have undermined the ideologies of class conflicts and of religious authority that for three generations had oriented much of the political organization and activity in industrialized countries. Their loss of appeal has been reinforced by erosion of the once powerful ideologies of liberal individualism and state associated nationalism, which together had illegitimized ethnic particularism and relegated it to the status of backwardness and even subversiveness.... This development represents not end of ideology...but the emergence of a competing ideology.<sup>49</sup>

Reetz says that, "ethnic and national group formation could not be separated from modern socio - economic development trends of emerging capitalism. The growth of market

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48. Myron Weiner, Sons of the Soil :Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India, (Delhi, 1978), pp.3-4.

49. Milton J. Esman ed., Ethnic Conflict in the Western World, (New York, 1977), p. 11-12.

relations at regional and national levels was the driving force behind the increasing articulation of both separate ethnic and common national interests".<sup>50</sup>

In India, nation and region experienced high rates of growth backed by industrial growth and commerce brought diverse regional and ethnic interests together to interact, collaborate and compete. But the integrative pulls also had disintegrative implications. The politicization of ethnicity and preponderance of conflicts was due to a perceived sense of economic deprivation by ethnic groups in the course of economic development in India.

Thus, Tambiah says, "the present plethora of ethnic conflicts coincides with an increasing sense of shriveling economic horizons and of political battlement. Many things have gone awry with economic development, the declining terms of trade dictated by the industrialized West: internal bottlenecks, agricultural under employment and migration to cities, increasing disparities of income among the expectant participants in the literacy explosion, and the visible

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50. Dietrich Reetz, The Dilemma of General Zia-ul-Haq "National Consolidation or Fragmentation of Pakistan: in Diethelm Weidemann ed., Nationalism Ethnicity and Political Development in South Asia (New Delhi, 1991), p.1266.

pauperization of the urban underclass ...".<sup>51</sup>

Economic maldevelopment has fuelled diverse ethnic insurgencies in India. The Punjab problem, can be seen as arising from prosperity combined with unequal distribution of wealth resulting from the Green revolution boom. The rich Punjabi farmers in search of markets to invest their surpluses for better returns found it compelling to capture state power. Moreover, marginalization of small and landless peasants forced them to militancy for bare survival. The situation in North East, Kashmir, Assam was due to economic neglect and discrimination in the perception of the affected masses. Even when national funds were allocated, they did not reach the targeted people due to corruption of bureaucrats, politicians and other mediators.

Furthermore, we tend to have taken the wrong or warped, myopic and shortsighted view of development; our philosophy of development has relegated 'man' to an inferior position. Our policy makers have to realize that "development is a question concerning human beings, and not a question of geographic space. When one refers to a backward region it really means the economically and socially backward inhabitants of that region, and the question of development of

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51. Stanley J. Tambiah, "Ethnic Conflicts in the World Today", American Ethnologist, (Washington D.C.) , Vol. 16, 1989, p. 347.



that region is really one of development of those backward people."<sup>52</sup> Had this been incorporated, today, we would not have to see the Jharkhand movement.!

### **FEDERALISM:**

The founding fathers of the Indian constitution chose a federal set up for the country concerned as they were with the achievement of unity and integrity of a culturally diverse India. Wanting to anaesthetize the nation against possible disintegrative tendencies, the Constituent Assembly members advocated that India was to be structured as a federation for administrative convenience; it was not a result of an agreement of states to join the federation as in the U.S.A. Therefore, the states had no right to secede from the Union.

The federal relations in India have been described by scholars as "coalition administration" of "one high degree of collaborative partnership."<sup>53</sup> Much of this is due to the elaborate structure of power devolution between the centre and states. The irritant in centre state relations was the

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52. Nirmal Sengupta, Destitutes and Development : A Study of Bauri Community in Bokaro Region, (New Delhi, 1979), p.18.

53. Satish K. Sharma, "Social Mobility and growing resistance : A Study of Social Development and Ethnic Conflicts in India", Social Action, (New Delhi), Vol 41, No.1, Jan - March, 1991, pp. 64-77.

allocation of economic resources by the Union to the states, which was done by the Planning Commission in the area of developmental expenditure. The states complained that they were dole getters and wanted to raise their own revenue. The Sarkaria commission also rejected the "Gadgil plan" regarding financial relations between centre and states.; Successive finance commissions have gradually enlarged the scope of devolution of taxes to states. The 8th finance commission raised the level of such tax revenues in favour of states from 55% to 85%.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the working of federalism has been one of coalition and consensus building across culturally and ethnically diverse political formations.

But the functioning of federalism has had undesirable implications for the ethnic scene in India as well. The linguistic reorganisation of states gave an impetus to the various groups of specific cultural markers and ethnic identities to seek political expression and legitimacy; this was so because ethnic identity was provided a territory under the reorganization scheme, which has proved, disastrous. Ethnic territory is very crucial in any ethnic conflict as Punjab Kashmir and Assam prove. Thus potential for conflict formation along ethnic identity was encouraged.

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54. K.Rangachari, "Centre-State Dialogue : Focus' on Finance Commission," Statesman, (New Delhi), Jan. 31st, 1988.

Further, the linguistic organization in a vast and diverse country like India, was far from perfect. On the periphery of the newly formed linguistic states, unassimilated linguistic minorities continued to exist. Many linguistic groups continue to remain in the larger Hindi speaking states without being accommodated in the new political arrangement. Some unrecognized linguistic minority groups profess disenchantment like Konkansis, Nepalis of Darjeeling, Sikkim, Assam, Maithali and Bhojpuri groups in Bihar.

Misuse of certain articles in the constitution have also proved detrimental. The use of article 356 which provides for President's rule in a state in the "event of failure of constitutional machinery" has been an important factor behind the alienation of Punjab, Kashmir and Assam.

Creation of specific provisions like the Disturbed Areas Act, Armed Forces Special Powers Act of 1958 for the Eastern region, and in 1983 for Punjab, Chandigarh and TADA, at the local level by Army, state governments or police force have distanced the common people from the union. Consequently the social bases of ethnic' conflicts have been widened and consolidated.

#### **ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICS'**

Analysis of the relationship between state and ethnici-

ty often reflects contrasting view points concerning the role of state in creating or solving an ethnic problem. Michael Banton, argues that state itself is the cause of ethnic conflict. He states that, ethnicity only becomes a political problem when "groups are crystallized in polarization because the political structure renders impossible the kind of bargaining that might otherwise modify the boundary between the communities", In contrast D.L. Seth argues "the forces generated by democratic polities prevent the state from choosing a single cultural identity, even majoritarianism as the basis of nationhood. Thus, the project of nation building in a democratic polity becomes building a civil society....", civil societies do not host ethnic conflicts or movements in any negative sense of the term.<sup>55</sup>

But democratic politics in India has a darker side to it also. Political mobilization in the highly stratified, diverse and clustered society takes place on the group basis. Thus we have the caste blocks acting as basic and lasting vote banks. The primary factor of growing recourse to caste and ethnic mobilization in India's democratic politics has been the erosion of ideology and viable socio-economic programmes around which electoral and political

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55. D.L. Sheth, "Movements, Intellectuals and the State," Economic and Political Weekly, (Bombay) Feb, 22nd, 1992, pp. 425-430.

mobilization should take place; the ideological vacuum created has been filled in by primordial mobilization along communal, caste, religious, regional and tribal lines.

A particularly lethal aspect of India's emerging democratic politics has been the ruthless and cynical use of communal and ethnic contradictions by political parties for reaping short term and narrow political gains. witness the mass hysteria whipped up by the BJP on fundamentalist lines in its Ayodhya Temple-Mosque controversy or Janata Dal's projection of the Mandal issue. The so-called secular Congress party created a monster of ethnic separation and conflict for political expediency; examples are the building up of Bhindranwale by Mrs. Gandhi and her Sikh associates like Zail Singh and Buta Singh to contain the Akali Challenge in Punjab;<sup>56</sup> also encouraging GNLFF leader Subhas Ghising in Darjeeling to weaken CPM's hold over West Bengal. While Bhindranwale's shadow blocks out rationality in Punjab, Ghising threatens to provoke the Nepali ethnic explosion on the Indian State.

Analysing the various factors which give rise to ethnic conflicts, one sees a clear division of approaches. The first school or approach is called the "primordialist", for

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56. Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, Amritsar : Mrs Gandhi's Last Battle, (London, 1985), pp. 52-60.

which a sense of peoplehood forms the essence of ethnic identity. Primordial attachments are derived from the "assumed givens" of social existence. These are region and kin connection and include communities based on shared religion, language and social practice. "These congruities of blood, speech custom and so on are seen to have an inef-fable, and at times overpowering co-erciveness in and of themselves". While describing the 'overpowering coercive-ness' of the assumed givens of social existence, Geertz conceptualizes the intangible dynamics of ethnonationalism.<sup>57</sup>

The second approach takes exception to the primordial perspective and advocates an instrumental approach for studying ethnicity; these theorists believe that the essence of ethnic mobilization lies in the ways in which ethnicity is "situationally determined".<sup>58</sup> This approach tends to conceptualize the mobilization of ethnicity in terms of competition of scarce economic and political resources. A central assumption of this approach is that the process of modernization intensifies competition among groups making

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57. Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures : Selected Essays, (New York, 1973), p. 259.

58. Joanne Nagel & Susan Olzak, "Ethnic Mobilisation in New and Old states: An extension of the Competition Model, Social Problems, (Oregon), Vol. 30, No. 2, Dec-1982, p. 127.

the ascriptive basis of ethnicity a functional and effective vehicle for advancing group interests.

However, the present day ethnic upsurges are a synthesis of both the irrational, primordial bonds and the material considerations of economic forces.

## **CHAPTER 4**

- I. JHARKHAND MOVEMENT IN INDIA**
- II. TERRITORIAL CLAIM**
- III. RESOURCE POTENTIALITIES**
- IV. LEVELS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- V. POLITICAL GROUPINGS**



The political references to "Jharkhand go as far back as 13th century when Jaysingh Deo a king of Northern Orissa declared himself to be the 'king of Jharkhand'. This forest content is reflected in many names of place in the area such as Jhagram, Jharsuguda, Jharudin etc. The Bhakti era saint Chaitanya, on his historic religious journey from Jagannath puri to Vrindavan in the 15th century refers to this part of the land as "Jharkhand"; later the Muslim rulers also have referred to the area alternatively as "Khokhra" and "Jharkhand".<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest Shiva temples in eastern India in Deoghar is called the abode of the "Jharkhand Mahadeo". Today the Jharkhand area of Bihar comprises practically half the state's territory, consisting of the districts of Palamau, Hazaribagh, Santhal Parganas, Dhanbad, Ranchi and Singhbhum. Jharkhand however, denotes more than a geographical region. Together with the adjacent districts of the states of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh it forms a part of a distinct socio-cultural region. Greater Jharkhand.<sup>2</sup> Culturally this is the only area in the entire country where the three major cultural streams Aryans,

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1. M.S. Pandey, The Historical Geography and Topography of Bihar (Delhi, 1963), p. 111 ; S.C. Roy, The Mundas and their Country (Calcutta, 1912), pp. 151, 176, 359. (2nd ed, of 1970 used).
  2. Susana B.C. Devalle, Discourses of Ethnicity Culture and Protest in Jharkhand (New Delhi, 1992), p. 54.

Dravidians and Austroasian, represented through various languages- have converged to create a cultural synthesis of its own kind.

TERRITORIAL CLAIM : The Jharkhand region is spread across four states of the Indian union - Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Major part of the region is hilly, dissected by plateau, highly forested and undulating. In the North, it is bound by lowlands; while in the east lies the fertile land of lower Ganga Plain which has produced an extensive agricultural land to support the densely populated regions of Bihar and West Bengal. In the West and South lie the Bengalkhand plateau, Maikal Range and Orissa Highland respectively. The Damodar valley runs eastward through the North-eastern region: Thus the Jharkhand Region consists of four sub-regions namely South Bihar Hills and Plateaus; West Bengal uplands; the Orissa Hills and Plateaus and the Central Madhya Pradesh Plateau; the Jharkhand region presents a picture of geographical compactness.

Jharkhand has an area of 187,646 km. state wise distribution of its area is as follows:

Bihar .....	79,638 sq. k.m.
Orissa.....	45,897 sq. k.m.
West Bengal.....	26,864 sq. k.m.
Madhya Pradesh.....	32,247 sq.k.m. <sup>3</sup>

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3. Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the Jharkhand Party, March 12th 1973. p.4.

The Jharkhand region has its major territorial base in Bihar. Of the 21 districts combining to form the Jharkhand state, the maximum number are in Bihar. These districts are Palamau, Hazaribagh, Giridih, Sahebganj, Lohar Dagga, Ranchi, Godda, Santhal Pargana, Jamshedpur, Gumla, Singhbhum, Deogarh and Dhanbad. The districts in Orissa are Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj.

Jharkhand region in West Bengal comprises of the three districts of Purulia; Medinipur and Bankura; in Madhya Pradesh, the districts are Raigarh and Surguja.

#### ETHNIC COMPOSITION:

The majority of the population in the Jharkhand region are the Scheduled Tribes. According to the 1971, Census Report of India, Jharkhand had a population of 30,598,991 people with 5,810,867 persons registered as Scheduled Tribes out of an all-India total of 51,628,638, the State of Bihar has one of the largest proportions of indigenous ethnic communities i.e. 8.31% of the population of the total Scheduled Tribes population in Bihar, 5,329,283 persons, i.e. 91.7% are located in its Jharkhand region.<sup>4</sup>

The major tribes inhabiting the Jharkhand area are the Santhals, Oraons, Mundas, Bhumij and the Hos; other adivasi communities are the Gond, Mahli, Kharia and the Kharwar.

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4. Census of India, 1981, series 1, part II- b, (iii)

The Santhals have the highest percentage in tribal population followed by the Mundas, Gonds and Hos respectively.

The following table, (TABLE-1) shows the population of tribes and their rank in the proposed Jharkhand State according to the 1961, Census of India report:

**TABLE - 1** Population of Tribes and rank in Proposed Jharkhand State (1961).

Sl.No.	TRIBE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE TO TOTAL TRIBAL POPULATION (STATE)	RANK
01.	SANTHAL	2429901	16.88	1
02.	ORAON	355468	2.46	5
03	MUNDA	858400	5.96	2
04	BHUMIJ	149564	1.04	7
05	MAHLI	79086	0.55	9
06	Ho	491648	3.41	4
07	GOND	559897	3.41	3
08	KHARIA	192814	1.34	6
09	KHARWAR	119629	0.83	8

Source : Census of India 1961.

TRIBAL POPULATION LIVING IN DISTRICTS TO THE TOTAL TRIBAL POPULATION IN THE STATE:

The omnipresence of tribes can be seen in the Jharkhand region. There are about 30 scheduled tribes, in this region as notified in Article 342 of the Constitution of India. Although the Scheduled tribes in Jharkhand show a dispersed pattern of settlement yet they form 43.28% of the total tribal population in the country.

Table 2 shows the percentage of tribal groups to the total tribal population of the district:

TABLE 2 - Percentage of Tribal Groups to the total Tribal Population of the District.

DISTRICTS	TOTAL TRIAL POP.	HAL	ORAON	MUNDA	BHUMIZ	HO	GOND	KHARIA	KHAR- WAR	MAHLI	KORA	MAL MAHA- RIA	KOHA- RA	BEDIA	KOMA- LI	KORWA	SAVAR	BIR- HOR	GORA- IT	CHIK BAR- AIK
1. SINGHBHUM	969807	22.4	2.27	10.3	10.15	4.68	1.52	0.07	0.08	1.24	0.1	0	1.01	0	0	0.07	0.16	0.03	0.08	0.1
2. RANCHI	1317513	0.06	4.31	35.03	0.06	7	1	0.58	0.57	1.85	0	0	5.31	0.14	0.19	0.14	0	0.07	0.24	2.22
3. HAZARIBAGH	218693	6500	5.77	10.19	0.02	0.02	0.59	0.04	0.35	1.92	0	-	0.38	7.3	6.08	0.07	0	0.4	0.07	0.31
4. DHANBAD	128385	84.31	3.05	2.67	0.39	0.15	0.29	0.01	0.05	3.94	0.26	-	0.39	0.1	0.18	3.81	-	-	0.08	0.02
5. SANTHAL PARGANA	1023078	85.77	0.61	0.04	0.11	0	0.03	0.05	0.26	1.87	0.61	4.18	0.34	0	0.62	0.02	0	-	0.03	0
6. ORISA SAMBALPUR	439405	0	2.76	8.11	0.02	1.01	3.8	1.53	-	0.05	0.5	-	-	-	-	18.79	-	-	-	-
7. SUNDERGARH	44.91	0.51	25.88	25.72	0.97	0.18	8.9	12.01	-	0.33	0	-	-	-	-	0.15	-	-	-	-
8. KEONJHAR	350389	7.75	0.28	7.8	2.32	2.58	9.9	0.08	-	0.05	0.1	-	-	-	-	2.4	-	-	-	-
9. MAYURBHANJ	72964	46.64	0.24	0.65	10.81	3.71	12.8	1.5	-	0.53	0.04	-	-	-	-	0.29	-	-	-	-
10. WEST BENGAL PURULIA	262858	67.29	2	4.77	14.72	0.06	-	-	0.43	1.93	2.85	0.8	0.77	0.45	0.39	1.1	0.83	0.04	-	-
11. MIDNAPUR	329736	70	0.48	0.35	0.64	0.03	-	-	-	1.68	3.47	0.73	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. BANKURA	173389	87.81	0.32	0.2	4.44	0.02	-	-	-	0.57	4.68	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. MADYA PRADESH SARGUJA	576288	-	-	0	-	-	41.27	0.04	3.38	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. RAIGARH	477936	-	-	0.15	-	-	14.35	0.05	4.27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
15. BIHAR PALAMAU	228589	0.08	36.48	4.04	0	0	0.55	0.01	28.69	0.2	-	-	2.3	0	0	5.71	-	0	0.02	-

RANCHI: Ethnically, the tribes of Ranchi are proto-Australoid; excepting the Oraon, most of them speak the Mundari dialect of the Austro-Asiatic family. The Mundas are the main tribe of this region accounting for 35.03% of the total tribal population of the district among the other main tribes are the HOS 7.00%, the Oraon 4.31%, Kohara 5.31%

Singhbhum: The Santhals are the main tribe in this district; with Bhumij 10.15%, Hos 4.68%, Gond 1.52% and Oraon 2.27%.

DHANBAD: Santhals again form a majority in this region with 84.31%, followed by the Mahli 3.941%, Oraon 3.05% Munda 2.67%.

HAZARIBAGH: The Santhals have the largest share in the population with 65%, the Munda 10.19%, Bedia 7.34%, Kamali 6.08%, Oraon 5.77% and Mahli 1.92%. Girdih, which is a sub division of Hazaribagh in 1961, had 38.25% of tribal population to the total tribal population of Hajaribagh.

PALAMAU: This district shows a different pattern of tribal concentration than the rest of Bihar with Oraons constituting 36.48%, Kharwar 28.69%, Korawa 5.71%.

SANTHAL PARGANA: The district derives its name from the dominance of the Santhal or "Sonthalis" accounting for 85.77%, Mal Pahariya 4.18%, Mahli 1.87%. When we look at

the percentage of tribal population in Table:3, (1961) Deoghar has 7.42%, Godda 14.16%, Sahibganj 0.30% to the total tribal population of district. Table No. 4 (1981) shows Deoghar to have 7.92%, Godda 15.32% and Sahibganj 0.44%.

SAMBALPUR: This district of Orissa has 18.79% of Savar and 8.11% of Mundas. The Oraons constitute 2.76%.

SUNDERGARH: The Oraons and Mundas have approximately same percentage with 25.88% and 25.72% respectively. The Kharia constitute 12.01%, Gonds 8.9%.

KEONJHAR: Four tribes in this district have approximately the same percentage - the Gond 39.9%, Munda 7.8%, Santhal 7.75%, Kalha 9.05%.

MAYURBHANJ: The Santhals constitute 46.64%, Kalha 16.43%, Bhumij 10.81%; some other tribes which have quite a significant share are Kalha 16.43%, Bhuiya 4.06%, Hos 3.761% and Kharia 1.50%.

PURULIA : The largest tribes is the Santhal with 67.29% of population; then are the Bhumij 14.72%, Munda 4.77%, Kora 2.85% and Oraon 2%.

MEDNIPUR: The Santhals are 70%, Kora 3.47%, Mahlis 1.68% of the population.



BANKURA : This district of West Bengal, being on the periphery of the Santhal Parganas is dominated by the Santhals with 87.81%; others like Bhumij are 4.44% and Kora 4.68%.

SURGUJA: This district of Madhya Pradesh shows a different combination of tribal groups with Gonds constituting 41.27%, Bhunnia 4.67% and Sahariya 2.56%.

RAIGARH: The Malha have the largest share at 22.2% followed by Gonds 14.35%, Bhunnia 2.54% and Majhi 1.31% of the total tribal population in the district.

Besides in Bihar, two out ten million persons registered as Scheduled Castes in the State live in the Jharkhand region. Over 98% of the Scheduled Castes of Pan or Sawasi, Ghasi and Bauri live in this area. They are viewed a part of original inhabitants of the area and also considered to be of "tribal" origin.<sup>5</sup>

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5. B.K. Mehta, "Historical and Cultural Basis of Jharkhandi Nationality" in Nirmal Sengupta, ed., Fourth World Dynamics : Jharkhand, (Delhi, 1982), pp. 91-103.

**TABLE : 3 Tribal Population of Jharkhand 1961.**

(% of Tribal Population in district to total tribal population in state)

STATE /DISTRICT	TOTAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE	STATE /DISTRICT	TOTAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE
1. BIHAR	T 9938085 R U	29.21	14. ORISSA	T 4223757 R 4136206 U 87551	13.62
2. SANTHAL PARAGANA	T 1023078 R 1017381 U 5697	7.10	15. SAMBALPUR	T 439405 R 428393 U 1102	3.05
3. DEOGHAR	T 75941* R 74444 U 1497	7.42	16. SUNDARGARH	T 440910 R 403162 U 37748	3.06
4. GODDA	T 144878* R 144326 U 552	14.16	17. KEONJHAR	T 350389 R 339404 U 10985	2.43
5. SAHIBGANJ	T 3039 R 2768 U 271	0.30	18. MAYURBHANJ	T 729764 R 727074 U 2690	5.06
6. PALAMAU	T 228589 R 226191 U 2398	1.58	19. W. BENGAL	T 2054081 R 2005965 U 48116	5.32
7. HAZARIBAGH	T 270693 R 264637 U 6056	1.88	20. BANKURA	T 173889 R 172013 U 1376	1.20
8. GIRIDIH	T 103548* R 100074 U 3474	38.25	21. MIDNAPUR	T 329736 R 32455 U 5179	2.29
9. RANCHI	T 1317513 R 1273766 U 73747	9.15	22. PURULIA	T 262858 R U 1299	1.82
10. LOHARDAGGA	T 38511* R 36496 U 2015	2.92	23. M. PRADESH	T 6678410 R 660325 U 75085	7.32
11. GUMLA	T 354876* R 350664 U 4212	26.94	24. SARGUJA	T 576288 R 571790 U 4498	4.00
12. DHANBAD	T 12385 R 119310 U 9075	0.89	25. RAIGARH	T 477936 R 473520 U 4416	3.31
13. SINGHBHUM	T 969807 R 932503 U 37304	6.73	26. JHARKHAND#	T 14397155 R 6932990 U 7464165	48.18**

\* These districts were included in referenced districts also.

# Total population of Jharkhand.

\*\* To the Tribal population of India.

**TABLE : 4 Tribal Population of Jharkhand 1981.**

(% of Tribal Population in district to total tribal population in state)

STATE /DISTRICT	TOTAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE	STATE /DISTRICT	TOTAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE
1. BIHAR	T 5810867 R 5448750 U 362117	42.78	14. ORISSA	T 5915067 R 56442376 U 272691	29.74
2. SANTHAL PARAGANA	T 1367868 R 1358063 U 139805	10.06	15. SAMBALPUR	T 620665 R 576312 U 44243	4.56
3. DEOGHAR	T 108434 R 106093 U 2331	7.92	16. SUNDARGARH	T 1337871 R 928536 U 409333	9.84
4. GODDA	T 209593 R 208829 U 764	15.32	17. KEONJHAR	T 499501 R 465462 U 16896	3.67
5. SAHIBGANJ	T 6061 R 5278 U 783	0.44	18. MAYURBHANJ	T 1581873 R 149335 U 90538	11.64
6. PALAMAU	T 351432 R 346538 U 4894	2.58	19. W. BENGAL	T 232705 R 221729 U 10976	8.38
7. HAZARIBAGH	T 198792 R 175306 U 23486	1.46	20. BANKURA	T 250590 R 249205 U 1385	1.84
8. GIRIDIH	T 224878 R 214236 U 18642	1.65	21. MIDNAPUR	T 538877 R 528091 U 15786	3.96
9. RANCHI	T 1732032 R 1584907 U 147125	12.75	22. PURULIA	T 348375 R 345442 U 2933	2.56
10. LOHARDAGGA	T 134854 R 131444 U 3710	7.78	23. M. PRADESH	T 11987031 R 11552881 U 434150	22.64
11. GUMLA	T 68460 R 61934 U 6526	3.95	24. SARGUJA	T 1633476 R 1491508 U 141968	12.02
12. DHANBAD	T 192777 R 150882 U	1.41	25. RAIGARH	T 1443197 R 1322664 U	10.62
13. SINGHBHUM	T 1261504 R 1161491 U 100013	9.28	26. JHARKHAND (Total Population, of)	T 13583638	26.31

## JHARKHAND: RESOURCE POTENTIALITIES

Bihar has been called the "Ruhr of India".<sup>6</sup> The largest mineral deposits in the state are located in the heart of Jharkhand, where more than a fourth of the mining in India takes place.

In 1980, coal production in Bihar reached 44.35 million tons out of an all India production of 109.10 million tons. Important coal fields are located in Jharia, Bokaro, Ramgarh and Girdih. Inferior grade coal is mined in Santhal Parganas. Iron Ore is mined in Singhbhum, where Gua and Noamundi are the main mining centres. This district is also the only producer of copper; manganese ore deposits are found together with iron ore deposits. Ranchi and Palamau districts produce bauxite, mostly used for making aluminium. Mica is found in North Hazaribagh; Chromite in Singhbhum; Clay in Singhbhum, Ranchi and Santhal Parganas; fire clay in the Jharia coal fields and in Hazaribagh; apatite which is useful as a fertiliser in Singhbhum.<sup>7</sup>

Table 5 shows the production of minerals in the year 1970. The importance of the Chotanagpur Plateau as a treasury of minerals can be seen or gauged from this:

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6. Devalle, n. 2, p. 82.

7. *ibid.*, p.83.

**TABLE : 5 Production of Minerals, (1970)**

(in Value)

Sl. No.	NAME OF MINERAL	ALL INDIA VALUE (RS. LAKHS)	TOTAL PRODUCTION AS % OF TOTAL MINERAL PRODUCTION	PERCENTAGE JHARKHAND	PRODUCED AT REST OF BIHAR
1.	COPPER	374.8	0.77	100.0	NIL
2.	KYANITE	261.1	0.54	85.0	NIL
3.	QUARTZITE	16.0	0.03	60.5	5.3
4.	MICA (CRUDE)	201.4	0.41	58.5	NEG.
5.	ASBESTOS	21.1	0.04	53.0	NIL
6.	APATITE	9.8	0.02	48.6	NIL
7.	COAL	29292.7	54.27	44.5	NIL
8.	SAND	10.4	0.02	37.3	NIL
9.	FIRECLAY	44.8	0.09	33.0	NEG
10.	BAUXITE	174.6	0.36	32.4	NIL
11.	CHINA CLAY (PROCESSED)	84.1	0.17	28.7	NIL
12.	IRON ORE	3680.1	7.59	22.4	NIL
13.	LIMESTONE	2302.3	4.75	3.7	7.5
14.	MANGANESE ORE	771.9	1.59	0.6	NIL
15.	PYRITE	56.3	0.12	NIL	100.00
16.	OTHER MINERALS	12733.9	26.28	-4.37	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>48447.6</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>27.77*</b>	<b>0.47*</b>

\* Figure excludes value worth 1.15% accountable by other minerals produced in Bihar for which distribution between Jharkhand and rest of Bihar not easily available

Source : N.Sengupta, ed., Fourth World Dynamics Jharkhand, (Delhi, 1982), p.12

Table 6 shows the mining industries and employment in Jharkhand, 1979. There were 858 mines in Jharkhand in which more than three lakhs average daily works were employed:

**Table:6 Mining Industries and Employment in Jharkhand, 1979.**

Serial No.	Minerals	No. of Mines	Average daily employment	Percentage of employment to total average daily employment in India.
(A)	METALLIC			
1.	Bauxite	14	1477	34.288
2.	Chromite	4	1293	28.65
3.	Copper	5	5665	66.81
4.	Iron ore	91	19216	41.58
5.	Manganese Ore	41	9301	22.01
(B)	NON-METALLIC			
6.	Apatite	1	338	13.79
7.	Asbestos	3	780	39.45
8.	Barytes	1	230	38.10
9.	Clay	2	1656	23.62
10.	Coal	438	247291	49.56
11.	Dolomite	13	2003	23.29
12.	Felspar	2	38	12.50
13.	Fireclay	58	1485	45.63
14.	Graphite	11	331	19.19
15.	Kyanite	1	1043	54.18
16.	Limestone	26	12550	29.70
17.	Mica	122	3166	53.56
18.	Quartzite	11	300	22.59
19.	Silica Sand	6	16	1.07
20.	Sand Stone	1	170	89.00
21.	Stealite	6	41	1.03
22.	Wol From	1	297	37.83
Jharkhand		858	308657	45.12

Source: Statistics of Mines in India, Vol II, Non-Coal, 1971.

Besides, the important minerals found in Jharkhand, the area being densely forested also has major forest resources and forest produces.

### LEVELS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The economic development of a region is usually judged by the level of industrialisation of that particular region. When this view is kept in mind, Jharkhand presents the picture of a highly industrialized region. The core region of Jharkhand has acquired the status of a heavy industrial region, although its West Bengal subregion comprises agriculture based industries, besides the mining in Western Bankura, Purulia and the petrochemicals in coastal parts of Midnapur.<sup>8</sup> Before 1961, the share of Jharkhand in industrial production had only been from Damodar valley and Subarna- rekha basin. Since the middle of the 19th century, coal mining cum washing, mica mining and processing and light manufacturing were the main activities. Till the end of the 19th century, this region had been linked with Calcutta, a part of industrial export of this region. Raniganj and Jharia in the beginning and Bokaro and Karanpura in later phase have been established as the hub of coal mininigs. These four coal fields are the chief coke supply centres to the heavy and basic industries in the surroundings.

Jharkhand receives a fifty of the total public sector investments in industrial pursuits. The majority of the

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8. *ibid.*

iron mines in Singhbhum are worked under the Indian Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. (ISCO) and the Bokaro Steel Plants, subsidiaries of the Steel Authority of India (SAIL). ISCO is responsible for the Gua, Chiria and Manoharpur mines and Bokaro for Kiriburn and Megahataburu mines.<sup>9</sup> The Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. (TISCO) is one of the most profitable concerns in the private sector running a number of mines including Noamundi. Other important landmarks in Jharkhand are the steel plant at Jamshedpur, the Heavy Engineering factory at Ranchi, the copper plant at Ghatshila, the mica industry at Girdih, the aluminium factory at Muri and uranium mining at Jaduguda. The production of cement, brick and tiles, glass and glassware in Bihar is overwhelmingly carried out in Jharkhand where six out of the ten cement factories, and five out of the total six glass and glassware factories in all of Bihar are found. Half of the states factories making heavy machinery and tools and nearly half of the manufacturing and assembly of non-electrical machinery and general engineering goods are located in Jharkhand.

In India, from the very beginning of the plan development there was an utmost need of diversification of industrialisation so that other areas could get the benefits of industrialisation which were lagging behind. Dispersal of

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9. *ibid.*, p.84



industries was also necessary for dispersal of urbanization.<sup>10</sup> The public sector was to play an important role in the dispersal of new industries several new mining fields have been discovered in tribal districts of Chotanagpur and Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Surguja and Raigarh districts. Production of coal, iron-ore, manganese, bauxite, dolomite, fire clay and several other metallurgical and non-metallurgical minerals contributed to start a "new era" of industrialisation.<sup>11</sup>

During the Third and Fourth Five year plans, owing to neighbourhood effects, several industrial estates were put up near established industrial centers; these are namely Jasidih, Raigarh, Jharsuguda, Baraipali, Baripada, Ambikapur, Kalunga, and Halda.<sup>12</sup>

After the nationalization of mining 1971, extractive industries got manifold incentives for growth and expansion. Table 7 gives a district wise situation of enterprises and their employment in 1979-80. Studying the table, one sees that there were more than two lakh enterprises in Jharkhand

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10. V. Nath "Urbanization in India : Review and Prospects", Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay), vol. 21, No. 18, February 1986, pp. 339-52.

11. G.K. Shirokov, Industrialisation in India, (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 169-75.

12. Devalle, n. 3, p.77.

in 1979-80 where 25 lakh workers were employed. Dhanbad, the smallest district in the area, accounts for 17.08% permanent and 17.53% hired labour force. The other aspect of industrialisation of this district is that the average labour force per enterprise is the highest. On the other hand, Mednipur has the highest number of total enterprises (19.18%) but accounts for 14.51% and 14% permanent and hired labour force respectively. This is mainly because, in West Bengal, the majority is household industries which require a small size of labour force.

Studying Table 7 which shows industrialisation at the district level, it is seen that Chotanagpur is as industrially advanced as any other advanced region in the country. Dhanbad, Ranchi and Singhbhum districts form the creme de la creme of manufacturing industries. The high level of industrialisation can be seen in the fact that Singhbhum had acquired the status of "industrialized| district since the turn of the century while other districts began to produce their manufacturing goods after the second five year plan started.

**Table 7 : Jharkhand Districtwise Aggregate of Enterprises and their Labour Absorption**

Sl.No.	District	No.of Units	Seasonal	Cooperative	Public	Permanent Work Force	Hired Workers
1.	SANTHAL PARGANA	14470	659	387	7212	64828	56657
2.	PALAMAU	5403	252	80	2578	24028	21492
3.	HAZARIBAGH	9698	207	270	3968	64879	58742
4.	GIRIDIH	7364	158	150	3231	57147	50064
5.	RANCHI	15330	392	314	5957	107272	93835
6.	DHANBAD	13565	433	454	3985	229716	213267
7.	SINGHBHUM	13999	255	383	4626	94307	83126
8.	SARGUJA	5907	68	145	4021	22631	21044
9.	RAIGARH	6408	116	218	3609	25898	23683
10.	SAMBALPUR	17966	1397	860	7686	106036	97701
11.	SUNDARGARH	12829	789	299	5348	125796	120186
12.	KEONJHAR	7172	423	269	4146	46114	44144
13.	MAYURBHANJ	8888	261	352	5323	36164	33634
14.	BANKURA	13954	942	295	5395	72842	64113
15.	MIDNAPORE	38882	2425	1168	13215	195151	170540
16.	PURULIA	10783	614	174	4718	71611	65409
<b>JHARKHAND</b>		<b>202618</b>	<b>9391</b>	<b>5859</b>	<b>85020</b>	<b>1344393</b>	<b>1217632</b>

Source : Economic Census, 1980.

**POLITICAL GROUPINGS AND LEADERSHIP PROCESS:**

Before going into an analysis of the politics of the Jharkhand region, it is important to delineate the historical events pertaining to this area that provide a background for the development of the Jharkhand movement:

1. 1765 East India Company becomes the Revenue collecting agent of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II.
2. 1771 Jharkhand comes under the East India Company.
3. 1780 Formation of the military collectorship of the Ramgarh Hill Tract.
4. 1797 The Munda uprising of Bundu, under Bisnu Manki.
5. 1798-99 The Bhumij revolt of Maubhum.
6. 1800 The Chero rising of Palamau under Bhukhan Singh.
7. 1807 The Munda uprising of Tamar under Dukhan Manki.
8. 1819-20 The Munda uprising of Tamar under Rudra & Konta.
9. 1832-33 The Kol Rebellion under Singhray and Binray Manki.
10. 1833 Introduction of Wilkinson Rule under Regulation XIII of 1833; formation of the Non-Regulation Province of the South West Frontier Agency, vide Regulation XIII of 1833, after abolishing the Millitary Collectorship of the Ramgarh Hill Tract.
11. 1834 The Bhumij revolt under Ganga Narain.

12. 1845 Introduction of Christianity in the area.
13. 1854 Agency administration abolished, vide Act XX of 1854 and powers of the Agency vested in an officer appreciated by the local government, known as commissioner, placed directly under the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. Continues to be a Nonregulation province with a new name, Chotanagpur Division, consisting of the districts of Birbhum, Lohardagga, Hazaribagh, Maubhum, Singhbhum and the tributary states of Chang-Bhakar, Korea Surguja, Jashpur, Udaipur, Gangpur and Bonai.
14. 1855 The Santhal insurrection under Sidhu and Kanhu. Vide Act XXXVIII of 1855, Santhal Parganas formed into a separate Non-regulation District, under a separate commissioner of Bhagalpur division.
15. 1856-57 The Sepoy Mutiny (leaders: Bisnath Sahi, Ganpat Rai; Sheikh Bhikhari, Budhu Bir)
16. 1859 Introduction of sale and rent law in Chota Nagpur Division.
17. 1869 Chotanagpur Tenures Act.
18. 1872 Santhal Parganas Settlement Regulation.

19. 1874 Non-regulation districts changed to Scheduled Districts vide the Scheduled Districts Act.
20. 1875-95 The Sardar Movement in Chotanagpur.
21. 1878 Indian Forest Act.
22. 1879 The Chota Nagpur landlord and Tenant Procedure Act.
23. 1886 The Santhal parganas Rent Regulation.
24. 1895-1900 The Birsa movement.
25. 1903 The Chotanagpur Tenancy (Amendment) Act, introduced restrictions on transfer of land.
26. 1908 The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act. The Santhal Parganas settlement Amendment) Regulation, introduced restriction on transfer of land.
27. 1912 Separation of Bihar and Orissa from Bengal.

The national wave of political and cultural renaissance arrived in this area with the beginning of the Tana Bhagat movement under the leadership of Jatra Bhagat in 1914.

The initial development of an ethnic consciousness among adivasis of Jharkhand can be thus traced to the colonial period, a period where adivasis unmistakably appear as actors on the stage of history. This process of emergences of an ethnic consciousness and its development in the course

of political actions became expressed in Jharkand's "tradition of protest".<sup>13</sup>

Prior to Independence, the tribal movements had two distinct features: (a) the mobilisation of the masses against the appropriation of native resources such as forests and minerals and (2) social and cultural upliftment of the adivasis through various organisations such as Unnati Samaj and Adivasi Maha Sabha.<sup>14</sup>

With the formation of Unnati Samaj in 1912, the emphasis shifted from tribal autonomy to reformation in terms of abandonment of traditional customs and practices and adoption of education and new values. The Adivasi Mahasabha was formed in 1938 with the merger of the "Unnati Samaj", the "Kisan Sabha" and the "Catholic Sabha" and in the form of asocio-cultural movement. It began with a certain degree of militancy for rejuvenating and revitalising the tribal society.

In 1939, the Anglican Munda Jaipal Singh became prominent in the Adivasi Mahasabha and was made its chairman later. Oxford-educated, pro-British and a hockey wizard,

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13. Devalle, n.3

14. K.L. Sharma, "Jharkhand Movement; The questions of identity and Sub-nationality", SOCIAL Action, Oct-Dec, 1990, p. 372.

Jaipal Singh rechristened the Adivasi Maha Sabha as the Jharkhand Party" in 1950. Jaipal Singh had backed the British in the war and was involved in the war effort recruiting adivasis for the army.<sup>15</sup> This westernized adivasi elite, not involved in the Indian National movement, dismissed more than a century of adivasi anti-colonial struggles. In the end, the Mahasabha launched a struggle against the "Diku" Raj.<sup>16</sup>

The Jharkhand Party became extremely popular among the tribals; Jaipal Singh was regarded as "Marang Gomke" (The Great Leader). It is also said that Jaipal Singh exploited the image of Birsa and his ideas; Sachchidanda writes that Jaipal Singh acted as if he was the reincarnation of Birsa.<sup>17</sup> The rhetoric of Jaipal Singh was packed with emotion trying to emulate, the charismatic authority of Birsa. As President of the Mahasabha he had once said "Arise and wake up, recognise ourselves, you all who had been toiling

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15. K.S. Singh, "From Ethnicity to Regionalism : A study in Tribal Politics and Movements in Chotanagpur from 1900 to 1975", in S.C. Malik, ed., Dissent Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization, (Simla, 1977), pp. 317-43.

16. "Diku Raj", meaning a sense of domination of non-adivasi 'outsiders'

17. Sachidananda, The Tribal Voter in Bihar, (New Delhi, 1976), p.14



and sweating, under the exploiting wolves for the last hundreds of years.... get this firmly nailed down in your heads that you have not been destined to cut grass and draw water for the dikus all your lives. You have to take your place in the society on the basis of equality with others. So wake up, you are not inferior to anyone. Assert yourselves, and fight for your rights".<sup>18</sup>

From 1952 to 1957, the Jharkhand Party dominated electoral politics in the region. Jaipal Singh's cavitation to Masani, a Parsee unknown to the tribal's of Chotanagpur, to fund elections from the prestigious Ranchi seat as a Jharkhand Party Candidate, was viewed with suspicion.<sup>19</sup> Many suspected money transaction between Masani and Jaipal Singh. The final betrayal came from Jaipal Singh, when in 1963, he entered into a controversial merger with the congress Party under the persuasion of the then Chief Minister of Bihar and a Congress partyman Binoda Nand Jha. As a reward for the merger, Jaipal Singh was offered a berth in the Bihar Ministry.

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18. as quoted in K.L. Sharma, n. 14, p. 373.

19. Victor Das, "Tharkhand movement : From Realism to Mysticification", Economic and Political Weekly, July, 28th in 1990. p. 1625.

A new Jharkhand Party was formed by leaders who had opposed the merger like N.E. Horo, Hariharnath Shahdeo, S.K. Bage, Joyel Lakra, Panl Dayal, Instin Richard and Bagun Sumbrui. The "Sim Sandi" (the cockbird) the election symbol was sought to be resuscitated.

From 1963 onwards recurrent splits fragmented the Jharkhand Party; splintered groups mainly emerged due to personal problems among their leaders and because of major differences in programme.<sup>20</sup> Thus the All-India Jharkhand Party was formed in 1967 was in turn divided as a result of alliances with various Indian Parties. The "Santhal Hul Jharkhand Political Party" was formed in 1968 from which emerged the "Progressive Hul Jharkhand Party".

Some organisations like, "All India Sido-Kanhu Baisi". and "Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association" emerged, which basically took up a verbal defence of adivasi land right.<sup>21</sup> The "Birsa Seva Dal" formed in 1967 was a radical, militant group with connections most probably with the CPI (ML) - as an urban pressure group it focussed on industrial complexes and on the demand for jobs and educational reservation for Adivasis. Its direct involvement in

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20. Sachidananda, n. 17, p.19

21. Devalle, n. 3, p. 140.

the re-appropriation of urban lands in Jamshedpur led to police repression in 1968.

The seventies saw the linking up of the agrarian protest in Santhal Paraganas, Dhanbad, Giridih, adjacent regions of West Bengal with the struggle for colliery workers in Dhanbad. The coming together of the workers, the Santhal peasants and the non-advansi peasantry crystallized at the end of 1972 in the linking of the struggles of the "Shivaji Samaj", formed in 1970 among Kurami peasants, the JMM mostly among Santhal peasantry and the "Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union" (BCKU).<sup>22</sup> The Coalition operated under a temple leadership of the Kurmi lawyer Binod Bihari Mahato, Sibusoren and the Dhanbad trade-unionist A.K. Roy of the "Marxist Coordination committee" (MCC). In 1973, the Shivaji Samaj was replaced by the Morcha led by Mahato, Soren and Sadanand Jha.

The years 1973, 1974 were peak years of worker peasant alliance; the "Dhan-Kato andolan" (Recover your paddy) was forcible harvesting done on alienated paddy lands. A.K. Roy engaged himself in a struggle against coal companies in Dhanbad and Hazaribagh.<sup>23</sup>

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22. Devalle, n. 3, pp. 142-3.

23. *ibid.*

During 1974-75, Sibusoren entered into a compromise with the Congress (I). In 1978, demand for a separate Jharkhand State was put forward to the Janata government on a United front basis: nine parties and organisations formed the front's committee. The Jharkhand Party led by A.K. Roy, the JMM with general secretary Sibusoren, the CPI (NL), The Birsa-Seva Dal, the Jharkhand Muslim Morcha, the Hui Jharkhand, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India and the Congress (I). In the year 1980, sharp differences prevailed between Soren and Mahato which resulted in the split of JMM to JMM (Subusoren) or JMM (SS) and JMM (Mahato). The JMM (SS) formed a student wing "Jharkhand Chatra Yuba Morcha" in 1988 to mobilise tribal students to the parties folds.

The "All Jharkhand Students Union" was formed in 1986 at the instance of Dr. Ram Dayal Munda by the JMM (SS); officially a front organisation, but ASSU under the leadership of Surya Singh Beara was independent from JMM (SS). Beara's militant extremes, his obsession to attain a Jharkhand state in 1988 did not gel with Soren.

In 1987, Professor B.P. Keshari under the advice of Dr. Ram Dayal Munda convened a meeting at Hazaribagh in which 54 splinter groups including Jharkhand Kranti Dal, of Santosh Rana, the Jharkhand Front of IPF led by P. Choudhary and JMM (Mahato) took part. AJSU severed its link from JMM (SS) and

joined the meeting. The Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee was formed; only the JMM (SS) did not take part.

The "Jharkhand Kranti Dal" has its base in Midnapore, Bankura and Purnlia. In 1991 November, the Dal split into "Jharkhand Kranti Dal" led by Khuken Mazumdar and "Hul Jharkhand Kranti-Dal" led by Santosh Rana (pro CPML).

The All India Jharkhand Party split into one group led by N.E. Horo and the other by Naran Hansda (AIJF)- Hansda in March 1992.

With a view to forgoing a limited point among the political groups agitating for Jharkhand State, an all party Jharkhand Struggle Committee (Jharkhand Sangharsh Samiti) was formed in Ranchi on 1,2,93 taking in the JMM (SS), AISU, JPP, AIJP (Hansda), JMM (Mardi), CPI, RSP and Janata Dal (A).

Coming to the leadership pattern among the various leaders of Jharkhand one sees a distinct change. Birsa, was the last revolutionary leader with traditional authority. He was a mystic leader, his simplicity dominating and his image was of a saint who cannot be corrupted; witness for example the song composed by Ram Dayal Munda for Birsa in 1967.<sup>24</sup>

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24. Devalle, n. 3, p. 132.

Looking for you again,  
Muchia Chalkad is asking for you...  
Dombari Hill is searching for you....  
with the (metallic) sounds of arrows and axes.  
The rumbling of guns is searching for you  
Bows and arrows jingle  
for our mother country....

The leadership pattern since then has been one of rationalistic authority.

Much can be said about the commitment of the leaders to their people or rather their lack of it. The brutal murder of Father Anthony Murmu, and 14 of his associates, by the Bihar police in Banjhi of Santhal parganas for demanding traditional fishing rights of the tribal was borne silently by Sibu Soren; perhaps due to his regular hobnobbing with Congress leaders during that period, Soren turned a blind eye to this atrocious crime committed by the Congress government. Numerous such examples can be cited, like the murder of Jetha Murmu secretary Sona Santhal Samaj Samiti by hired mercenaries etc.<sup>25</sup>

It is the memory of these grass root movement leaders like Anthony Murmu, Jetha Murmu which will sustain the

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25. Das, n. 19, p. 1626.

movement; or the works of the likes of P.Majumdar the har-bringer of socialism in Jharkhand and fiery trade unionist, who despite old age and sickness incessantly visits all the mines and industries of this region so that owners do not cheat labourers, that will bring the 'promised land' to the Jharkhandis.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **GENESIS AND FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR ETHNIC GROUP BEHAVIOUR IN JHARKHAND, SEQUENTIAL DEVELOPMENT; CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS PERCEPTION AND ACTION.**



Different scholars have evolved different typologies of tribal movements; L.K. Mahapatra applies the typologies widely used for social movements to tribal movements: (1) reactionary which tries to launch a movement to bring back the "good old times", (2) conservative which tries to maintain the status quo, (3) revisionary or revolutionary which are movements organised for "purification" or "improvement" of the social or cultural order. Surajit Sinha classifies the movements into : (1) ethnic rebellion (2) reform movements (3) political autonomy movements within the Indian union. (4) agrarian unrest, (5) secessionist movements. K.S. Singh makes the same classification more or less but uses the term "Sanskritization" instead of reform movements and cultural movements instead of ethnic movements.<sup>1</sup>

Broadly the typologies can be formulated as (1) ethnic movements (2) agrarian movements and (3) political movements. There is a great deal of overlapping among all three types and they are also interconnected where one leads to the other.

The Jharkhand movement combines the features of ethnic movement with its strong antipathy towards the "Diku" or non

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1. Ghanshyam Shah, Social Movements in India: A Review of the literature, (New Delhi, 1990), pp.88-89.

- tribal; shades of agrarian unrest with the Santal peasantry figuring prominently in forcible harvesting of paddy in alienated lands; the demand for statehood and politicization of the tribal issue, bringing in elements of a political movement.

The central question which social movements put forward is "why do men rebel"?. Applying this to the Jharkhand issue one finds various factors which have led to this upsurge.

The present movement of the tribal of the south central part of the country for a separate state of Jharkhand is in very many ways a continuation and extension of their heroic tradition of struggle against the British imperialism and local feudalism. A series of tribal revolts marked the Jharkhand history in the 18th centuries - revolt of Tilka Majhi (1780), the Kol revolt (1831), the Santhal hul (1855) and the Birsa revolt (1900).<sup>2</sup>

The progressive erosion of the tribal ways of life, values of communal and co operative systems, the breakup of land systems and land alienation on the one hand and dominance of non - tribal on the other all have spread discontent among the tribal, creating anomie and alienation amongst them, where they have started questioning the legit-

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2. A.L.Raj, "Ideology and Hegemony in Jharkhand Movement", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXXVII, No.5, Feb. 1st, 1992, p.200.

imacy of the state. The tribal movement in Jharkhand as with all other tribal is a holistic movement in protest against the totality of non tribal intrusion and dominance at all levels of life.<sup>3</sup>

Tribal groups in India like so many backward castes were used to accepting their unequal economic positions without much hue and cry even a couple of decades ago. But today spread of education and rising consciousness have led these groups to challenge the fatalistic theory of deprivation, put forward by the privileged classes to keep the deprived in subjugation for good. There are four basic issues which are instrumental in mobilizing the tribal people of Jharkhand to protest against subordination and injustice done to them by the migrants. These are land and forest alienation, migration and erosion of cultural identity.<sup>4</sup>

**Land and forest alienation:** : Alienation as a concept and framework defines the state of human being in a social situation of the total socio - economic formation of a society.

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3. *ibid.*

4. Arunabha Ghosh, "Probing the Jharkhand Question", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 26, No.18, May 4th 1991, pp.1178-1180.

Starting with Hegel, it was used by Marx in his early writings to describe and criticize a social condition in which man far from being the active initiator of the social world seemed more a passive object of determinate external processes. Alienation in Marx's conception of man in the capitalist society is the process which facilitates the exploitation of many by a few. Marx deals with the concept of alienation of man from four different dimensions:

- (a) from the product of his labour
- (b) from himself - life activity
- (c) from his species being
- (d) from other man.<sup>5</sup>

The essential part of the concept of alienation is "alienation from the product of his labour", which gives insight into the analysis of land alienation in tribal areas. The tribal who had cleared off forest tracts for cultivation purposes were no longer masters of the land but the outsiders took them over. Thus, tribal lost control over products which they had created were transformed into agricultural labourers working on the same farms which were under the possession of an "alienated object." The application of the concept of alienation to the problem of land

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5. B. Janardhan Rao, Land Alienation in Tribal Areas, (Warangal, 1987), pp.25-28.

alienation in tribal areas is to be understood in the light of issues like dawn of private property relations and commoditisation of the means of production and the very penetration of state capital in these areas.<sup>6</sup>

Land to the tribal is a part of their 'socio - cultural heritage'. The emotional ties with the land resulted from the fact that it contained the burial ground of their ancestors with whom they would be united after their death and the sacrificial grave where they propitiated their spirits.<sup>7</sup>

Land alienation started on a massive scale with the advent of the British. The introduction of Permanent Settlement in 1793, after British annexation of the region and the subsequent Sale and Rent Law 1859, encouraged transfer of land from original inhabitants to the "dikus". The British intent on collecting revenue, auctioned landed property of tribals. The fertile lands passed into the hands of money lenders and absentee landlords. Land grabbing became a routine phenomena. The outsiders took advantage of the tribal innocence and ignorance of cash economy; the absence

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6. *ibid.*, p.30.

7. K.S. Singh, The Dust Storm and the Hanging Mist: Story of Birsa Munda and his Movement in Chotanagpur, (Calcutta, 1966), p.190.

of land records also greatly aided this process.<sup>8</sup>

Glaring loopholes in the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act 1908, the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1949 and the Scheduled Areas Regulation 1969, did not stop the non - tribals from grabbing lands.

Land alienation took place in various forms. Primary was by indebtedness; according to Ghurye, "the most important feature of life of tribal as must be clear from the account of their doings and of the views of a number of writers is that they, get into debt, because of their simple nature their ignorance of laws regarding debt regulations".<sup>9</sup> Gross violence of protective legislation lays bare some other forms of land alienation.

Primary among them is the manipulation of land records; secondly by benami transfers; leasing and mortgaging of land also had dire consequences; encroachment of land where there are no land records; concubinal or marital alliance where lands are registered under the names of tribal women; also fictitious adoption of the non - tribal by the tribal families is also prevalent. Many a times land lords produced false medical certificate to establish the incapability of the

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8. Philip Viegas, Encroached and Enslaved: Alienation of Tribal Lands and its dynamics, (New Delhi, 1991), p.33.

9. G.S.Ghurye, 'Appraisal' in A.R.Desai, ed.; Rural Sociology, (Bombay; 1979), pp.260-261.

Adivasis to cultivate their lands and managed to get these lands on lease for fixed periods.<sup>10</sup>

The government of India, since independence has launched a major industrialization drive involving huge investments in the construction of developmental infrastructure. But the manner of implementation of this development process proves that it is myth or a chimera for the rural poor. An essential component of developmental infrastructure in a predominantly agricultural country is the construction of dams for irrigation, power etc. The irrigation projects might have helped irrigate large tracts of land, but to tribal and forest dwellers this has generally meant the pain of being involuntarily uprooted from their home land with little concern for their rehabilitation.

During the course of first two / Five year plans, the number of households displaced due to development projects in Bihar was 46,664; the number of tribal households displaced was 7961 (17).<sup>11</sup> The process of modernisation and industrialization had struck at the very roots of the tribal socio - economic fabric. The public and private sector

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10. Rao, n.5, pp.39-43.

11. Subodh Hansda, "Agricultural Developments in Tribal Areas", in S.N.Mishra & Bhupinder Singh, eds., Tribal Area Development, (New Delhi, 1983), p.23.

projects had become islands of prosperity amidst large scale poverty. Rapid urbanization had also been taking place in areas around the complexes as a result of which tribal lost their rights over local resources on which they had command by tradition.

Compensation paid to them was highly inadequate and insignificant when tribals compared it with their earlier forest resources. The following table shows the extent of land taken for various projects;<sup>12</sup>

TABLE 1.

Project	Land acquired in acres
1. H.E.C.	7,711
2. Bokaro	34,227
3. Adityapur	34,432
4. Benughat	97,843
5. Koel Karo (in progress)	45,112
6. Subarharekha (in progress)	85,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>304,325</b>

Ghanshyam Pardesi wrote that more than 60,000 families in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas have been uprooted to make room for public sector industrial projects.<sup>13</sup> Displacement of tribal from their lands have been reported from a

12. Report of the Communioniser for Schedule Castes & Scheduled Tribes 1979-80, 1980-81, p.312.

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



number of studies conducted.<sup>14</sup>

The forests are also intimately connected with tribal life, like land. The forests provide the tribal with food, fuel, fodder, fertiliser, farm equipments and material equipment for family use. Further, "it is the abode of the spirits, the place of worship, ('Sarna') and the seat of life cycle ceremonies including burials". ('Sadsandira')<sup>15</sup>

Along with being a means of livelihood, the need for leaves and twigs after birth and death and many other religions rites and rituals starting from 'senda' or "desh sikar" to the erection of "mandap" or canopy for marriages unmistakably point towards a symbolic relationship between forest and tribal communities.

The restriction of forest rights goes back to the British Forest policy resolution 1894, according to which the adivasis could no longer claim the forest as their own. The forest policy of independent India formulated in 1952,

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14. See for details, Arun Sinha, "Singhbhum: Exploitation and Repression", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.XIV, No.22, June 2nd, p.940, L.P.Vidyarthi, Socio-economic implications of industrialisation in India: A Case Study of Tribal Bihar, (New Delhi, 1970) pp.5-39; B.D. Sharma, "Industrial Complexes and their Tribal interlands", (occasional paper on tribal development), Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, (New Delhi, 1975).
  15. K.S.Singh, ed., Tribal Movements in India, vol.11, (New Delhi, 1983), pp.13-14.

clearly stated that village communities would not be allowed to use forests at the cost of national interest. One of the national needs was to generate "the maximum annual revenue in perpetuity".<sup>16</sup>

The outcome of this policy was disastrous with rights of adivasis to cultivate food crops and to collect forest products were transformed into "concessions"; simultaneously from the 1950's more forests have been declared 'reserved'. The collection and sale of forest products like lac, honey, "mahua", is becoming difficult for adivasis. The introduction by forest development corporation of teak plantation in Jharkhand for purely commercial goals has resulted in violent tensions on account of peasants being displaced. Moreover, teak besides useless to tribals unlike 'Sal', it adversely affects the soil. The massive deforestation has brought the total area under forests from 33% in 1947 to 10% in 1980, resulting in soil erosion and droughts. Forests legally owned by Government of India have been auctioned by state governments and rights handed over to paper mills.<sup>17</sup>

Restrictions under Indian Forests Bill and commercial mono-

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16. S. Kulkarni, "Towards a Social Forest Policy", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. No. 6, February 5th, 1983, pp.91-99.

17. "When the Forests disappear, we will also disappear", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XVII, No.48, Nov.27th, 1982, pp.1901-02.

culture in forests have been opposed by tribals and the rationale questioned by experts in the field.<sup>18</sup>

**IMMIGRATION:** Myron Weiner says that the process of modernization by providing incentives and opportunities for mobility, creates the conditions for increasing internal migration analysing the concept of ethnic demography he puts forward three principles which can be applied to the Jharkhand issue.<sup>19</sup> First, is the notion of territorial ethnicity, the notion that certain ethnic groups are "rooted" in space; the adivasis believe that they exclusive proprietary right over the region. Second, is the notion of a dual labor market with its conception of two jobs - 'Traditional' "marginal", "unorganized" sectors with low wage rates versus the "modern" "formal" "developed" sector employing skilled workers with high wages.

In Jharkhand, the tribal belong to the former category while out siders belong to the latter. Third, is the idea of an ethnic diversion of labor which causes uneven development amongst people.

The people of Chotanagpur have witnessed steady flow of outsiders to the region ever since the 4th century A.D.

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18. Kulkarni, n.16, pp.91-99.

19. Myron Weiner, Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic conflict in India. Vol.I, (Delhi, 1978), pp.3-5.

Rapid industrialization and development of surface communication facilities under the British, further facilitated immigrants in increased volumes to come and settle in the region.

Since independence the Chotanagpur area has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country in terms of population growth the industrial cities of Ranchi, Jamshedpur and Dhanbad and their peripheries have exploded with population.

The influx of outsiders has just reversed the tribal and non tribal ratio. While the ratio was 60/40 in favour of tribal in 1951 it has been reversed in 1981. Santal Parganas, Palaman, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Dhanbad and Singhbhum - all registered a decrease in tribal population between 2% and 10%. In Singhbhum district alone the Scheduled tribe population fell from 54.08% in 1931 to 44.08% in 1981.<sup>20</sup>

Besides being made a minority in their own land the tribal did not benefit from "development". Sengupta very poignantly says that "Jharkhand is not merely a geographic region, its real implication is a land of depressed people. Jharkhand means a "mass of destitutes".<sup>21</sup> He says that Jharkhand is developing fast but not the Jharkhandis. The access

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20. Ghosh, n.4, p.1179.

21. Nirmal Sengupta, ed., Fourth World Dynamics Jharkhand, (Delhi, 1982), p.11.

of tribal to industrial jobs and training facilities is severely curtailed. They are deliberately kept as a reserve work force of cheap, segregated, unorganized labourers in the interest of industrialist and business houses. In 1971, following nationalization of coal mines, nearly, fifty thousand 'Jharkhandi miners lost their jobs to be replaced by people mainly from Bhojpur.<sup>22</sup>

Table 2 provides a rough idea of the proportion of scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes, most of whom are Jharkhandis in the different non - agricultural occupation.

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2. *ibid*, p.15.

**TABLE : 8 Workers engaged in Industrial Categories, Jharkhand - 1971**

Industrial Category	No. of Total workers	SC's/St's	Sc & St as% of Total workers
1. *Mining & Quarrying	250,104	79,912	32
2. Household Industry	112,295	40,151	36
3. Other than H.h. industry	213,748	43,241	20
4. Construction	42,275	10,500	25
5. Trade & Commerce	145,100	6,781	5
6. Transport etc.	102,620	23,815	23
7. Other Services	245,026	65,131	7

\* Share of SC, ST drastically reduced after nationalization of coal mines, 1971.

Source : 1971 Census, in N.Sengupta ed., Fourth World Dynamics. Jharkhand (Delhi, 1982) p.16.

Thus, inspite of constitutional provisions regarding reservation for the tribal and local people in training and jobs under public sector, nearly 90% of training facilities in general education, engineering and medical spheres as well as in government jobs ar filled up by outsiders. Vested

interest groups often frustrate the efforts of government to provide privileges for the weaker section. Non - tribal outsiders also very often deprive the genuine schedule tribal by acquiring fake certificate through various unscrupulous means.

#### **EROSION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY:**

The tribes, as long as they were living in isolation, had preserved their culture. But with the influence of the non - tribal outsiders the tribal society is under tremendous pressure leading to socio - cultural disruption and disharmony. According to Keesing, the areas where culture change tends to occur rapidly are (a) instrumental technique (b) elements of taste and self expression (c) secondary group relations and (d) low status position.<sup>23</sup>

Contacts with the outside world have created a dilemma in the tribal life, resulting into an identity crisis for the Jharkhandis. They are neither in a position to preserve and pursue their own traditional rites and customs nor are they able to acclimitize to the alien urban values; the Oraons and Hos are gradually losing their identity because of their accommodative nature and readiness to mix with outsiders. Under the influence of forces of modernization

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23. Keesing, in L.P. Vidyarthi & M.Jha, Growth and Development of Anthropology in Bihar, (New Delhi, 1979), p.80.

tribal language, religion, customs and traditions are being submerged.

Jharkhandis generally are worshippers of nature - but large scale devastation of forests owing to industrialisation urbanisation and unscientific mining and social forestry schemes planting trees for commercial purposes have adversely affected their religious beliefs. The adivasis now follow Hinduism and Christianity instead of "Animism" and "Sarna Dharam" their food habits have changed with Santhals refraining from eating beef etc. Thus denying themselves a rich protein diet they fall prey to disease; their natural immunity is also breaking down. The egalitarian tribal society is also getting segregated on communal lines and even hierarchical lines of caste and class.

Frustrated with the inability to cope with such pressures the adivasis are earning a negative identity for themselves; they are being branded as "lazybum", good for nothing, drunkard, etc.<sup>24</sup> Further, adivasi women are exploited and used for immoral purposes,. The intake of liquor is accepted in tribal society. But non - tribal outsiders generally have the opinion that the tribal women, because

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24. R.D. Munda, "The Jharkhand Movement: Retrospect and Prospect", Social Change, Vol.18, No.2, June 1988.p.34.



they drink liquor are loose charactered.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, in Jharkhand, "the culture of oppression" exists side by side with the counter productive "culture of protest".<sup>26</sup>

Amongst various other problems faced by Jharkhandis are poor irrigation facilities to an area where rainfall variability is low Jharkhand's irrigated area has been substantially reduced since the 1950's adversely affecting the agrarian economy; Consequence are drought and famine. In 1967, drought and famine affected 73% of the population in central and south Bihar on account of deficient rain fall from 1965 to 1967.<sup>27</sup> From 1979 to 1982 Santal Panganas experienced drought in various degrees cultivating in 1982 in the loss of 72% of paddy crops and her starvation of peasants. No proper rehabilitation measures were taken and response to relief appeals by government was one of repression.

Atrocities - Committed on adivasis are also appalling. Social degradation, racial discrimination deculturalization and cultural distortion have reinforced exploitative econom-

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25. Susana B.C. Devalle, Siscourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand, (New Delhi, 1992), p.90.

26. *ibid*, p.196.

27. S.R.Bose, Economy of Bihar, (Calcutta, 1971), pp.127-35.

ic measures. The condescending and derogatory attitude of the civilized, world treat the advisasi as an "object".

The benefits of various developmental schemes undertaken for scheduled tribes has not reached the interior of tribal areas. Corruption by bureaucrats and middle men government institutions siphon off the funds. It has been suggested that state government should ensure that LAMPS in sub-plan areas were established in predominantly tribal pockets so that benefits from them accrued to tribals.<sup>28</sup>

In spite of the inability of the various political groups and parties involved in the Jharkhand issue to put up a united front, their basic demands, have been the same - the socio - economic upliftment of the people of Jharkhand which can only be achieved by the creation of a separate state of Jharkhand. According to the memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister. On March 12th 1973 by the Jharkhand party, the tone of the demand ran as "The will of the people has been expressed in different ways and at different ways and at different levels within constitutional and democratic limits. We want peace and justice...

our demand is solid and determination is firm... we wish that our demand is considered above party considerations and in national interest and is not weighed against the vested

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28. Report of Commissioner, n.12, p.306.

interests.... The Jharkhand Party, therefore, commends this demand of a separate state of Jharkhand...

The inclusion of non - tribals of the Jharkhand region has broadened the base of the movement turning it from ethnic upsurge to territorial or regional movement. The political groups, Jharkhand activists, tribals and the mass of humanity in the area echo Jaipal Singhs roar that "we want Jharkhand".

The Jharkhandis are loath to accept any thing like the autonomous hill council of Gorkhaland issue. Various measures of the central government and state government have failed for they are bent on carrying out a separate state for themselves. One finds some logic in the arguments of the movement leaders when they point out, that if Andhra Pradesh could be created out of Madras Presidency in (1953), Maharashtra and Gujarat out of Bombay (1960) Haryana out of Punjab (1966) and Assam could be divided into many states, why should the demand for an additional Jharkhand state be labeled as anti-national or one going against national integration?.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Sequential development of the Movement**

The development of the Jharkhand movements spans almost

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29. Ghosh, n.4, p.1180.

five decades. The tribal homeland demand got a fillip for the first time during 1935-47 with the rise of the Adivasis Mahasabha under the leadership of Jaipal Singh. In 1950, Jaipal Singh formed the Jharkhand party out of the existing Mahasabha. The party put up a good show in the first general elections capturing 32 seats to emerge as the second largest party in the state assembly after the Congress. The movement got a slight set back after the State Reorganization Committee rejected its demand on the ground that the Jharkhand party had not got a clear majority. The party however continued to dominate elections, showing influence in Orissa too during the General Election. The General Elections of 1962, saw very poor performance of the party.

With only 20 seats, owing to weak leadership. Thereafter, Jaipal Singh entered into a controversial merger with the congress. The unity did not last and the party broke up into smaller parties of tribal sub-ethnic groups. Between 1963 and 1976, there was a distinct radicalisation of politics as a result of the agrarian factor and entry of the leftists in the region. During 1963-68 there were three groups claiming to represent the Jharkhand Party - the Santhals represented by Hembron, Mundas by N.E. Horo and Begun Sumbrai in the Singhbhum region.

The "All India Jharkhand party" was formed in 1967. The "Birsa Seva Dal" also emerged as an urban outfit. Faring badly in the 1972 elections, the JP did not contest elections in 1977.

By, 1972, The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) was formed under the charismatic leadership of Sibhu Soren, called popularly as "Guruji". Soren was joined by the trade unionist A.K. Roy and Binod Mahato. By 1977, all national and regional parties except the Janata Party had "Jharkhand cells" to keep abreast with the developments in the region.

The 1980 Assembly elections saw the Congress(I) emerging as a strong force and the JMM strengthening its base while other parties were wiped out.

The jungle agitation of 1977 in Singhbhum forest areas of Chotanagpur and Santal pangana region ushered the phase of tribal contraculturalism or revivalism. The year 1980 saw the coming together of the Congress and JMM which lasted till 1985. The emergence of Dr. Ram Dayal Munda, ex Vice chancellor Ranchi University lent more credibility and substance to the movement.

The "Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana regional development authority" was set up in 1981, following efforts of Congress (I) leader Mr. Kartik Oraon. In a memorandum to

Rajiv Gandhi in 1985, some 52 legislators headed by Congress (I) leader Mr. Devendra Nath Champion demanded central administration in the region.

The Jharkhand co ordination committee was formed in 1987, under the influence of B.P Kesri to chalk out a common strategy by all parties for realising the demand of separate statehood.

The "All Jharkhand students union", (AJSU) was formed in 1986, for explicit objective of creation of separate state.

The AJSU had some differences with the JMM initially but that eventually died down. The JCC meanwhile gave a deadline for creating a separate state by January 1988 - the situation in the state worsened and a series of dialogues were held by the state and central governments and the leaders of the movement.

In 1989 May 31st, a meeting was held in Patna at the behest of the Bihar government; the Soren Group boycotted it; Meeting was followed by a talk convened by the then Home Minister on June 7th, 1989.

A solution to the vexed problem was sought to be found within the framework of the constitution. A Committee of Jharkhand matters (COJM) was set up with representatives of Centre, Bihar government and Jharkhand movement. COJM held

that the creation of Jharkhand state was the majority view while setting up of autonomous development council was a minority view.

The centre shelved the report for two years and took no initiative in this regard; meanwhile the Janata Party came into power, which had support of the JMM,. The state government moved a bill for a "Jharkhand regional development council" and got it passed by the legislature. In July 1992, the Jharkhandis rejected the development council provision. The JMM withdrew support to the Dal, but itself split with JMM (Krishna Mardi) sector supporting the government.

The chief minister Mr L.P. Yadav said that the state was not willing to enter into a conflict over this issue with the centre. During this period the JMM (Soren) faction announced a Jharkhand bandh and economies blockade on September 1st., while AJSU did the same at Dhumka. The three rounds of talks initiated by the centre from August 24th remained inconclusive.

Following, the then Union Home Minister S.B. Chavans's assurance, that some positive solution would be found, the JMM (SS) called off all the blockade but implemented the bandh.

The Home Minister, Mr. S.B.Chavan made a startling statement that a separate state could be earned out which

led to violent denunciation by the Bihar Chief Minister.

He claimed that the centre was interfering because the State government was a non - Congress one and that Bihar would be carved "over his dead body".<sup>30</sup>

The central government has been quite firm on its decision not to create a separate Jharkhad state. Even after a certain section of the Jharkhand leaders helped in defeating a no - confidence motion against the Rao government, the Prime Minister says "a separate state is not in our mind".<sup>31</sup> The Centre's new found love for Jharkhand is not out of concern, it is a political move. The whole thing will explode in the face of this movement".<sup>32</sup>

The state government under the leadership of Laloo Prasad Yadav has managed to ward off the creation of Jharkhand. The wily machinations of the Chief Minister to keep the various parties divided has paid off. His concern is that if Bihar is divided the government will find it difficult to exist on the agrarian economy of north and central Bihar; royalties from the mineral rich south will go to the centre too.

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30. Financial Express, September 13th, 1992.

31. Hindustan Times, October 10th, 1992.

32. G.G.Swell, Financial Express, Oct.4th, 1992.



The centre's dilly-dallying tactic and no concrete action plan, and the state governments apathy blurs, the larger concern of tribals languishing in poverty in Jharkhand. 33

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33. Tirthankar Ghosh, 'Jharkhand State: How the dream went Sour', Hindustan Times, Sept. 6th, 1993.

**CHAPTER 6**

**CONCLUSION**

**JHARKHAND MOVEMENT AND QUESTION OF  
NATIONAL COHESION; FUTURE TRENDS AND  
PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL PEACE AND HARMONY.**

Acknowledging the fragility and even artificiality of united India, the late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi told a gathering in Punjab, "It takes a lot of effort to build a house but only seconds to destroy it". She was emphasizing the fact that distinctive inheritance of a region could wreck the country. The Jharkhand imbroglio like the other threats to national integration of the country from Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, the Uttarkhand movement, the GNLFF movement, the Vidharbha agitation for a separate state also the deep resentment in the South and aspiration for Telangana are typical manifestations of the crisis-brought about by the ruling powers at the centre (irrespective of their political affiliation due to their failure to resolve the various contradictions that fragmentize Indian society at different levels.

The demand of the Jharkhandis has been the creation of a separate state. Baladas Ghoshal argues against giving out right "independence" to ethnic, linguistic or religious groups in India: "given the past history of the subcontinent a further division or granting independence to any of the constituent units of today's India will not solve any religious, linguistic or other ethnic disputes". The existing cultural area has many overlapping population centers and ethnic cleansing apart from its hideous immorality would be

an impossibility given the checkerboard of mixed ethnic and tribal residential patterns in India. Neither a Centrist State nor a series of ethnic enclaves can provide an appropriate political structure; gradual move towards federalism is a better alternative. One could begin with administrative decentralization and delegation prior to actual constitutional changes.

The committee on Jharkhand matters (COJM) was appointed by Ministry of Home Affairs in August 1989 "to examine and recommend the modalities for meeting the just aspirations of the people of Jharkhand".

The committee comprised experts, Jharkhand activists, representatives of the centre and Bihar, recommended the formation of a Jharkhand General Council within Bihar. It also recommended a Jharkhand Advisory Council by the Chief Minister. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha recorded their reasons for wanting nothing less than a separate state in two dissenting notes. They argued that the council would not have adequate powers and since it excluded MLA's, MLC's and MP's there would be duplicate elections and a clash between the two sets of representatives.

The COJM noted that it should not be overlooked that the mere ushering in of a state or Union Territory cannot be a panacea for all ills. We are not certain that a reorder-

ing of the socio political dynamics of the present day will make its sudden appearance with the creation of a new unit of administration. Indeed the lot of the people, which is the rationale of the exercise can change only with a new calculus of socio-political status which may be a sine qua non. The committee visualised a whole range of possibilities of granting of positive, substantial, meaningful autonomy while maintaining and strengthening the safeguards for the tribal population.

First, the whole of Jharkhand, comprising 21 districts and spread over four states should be recognized as a distinct cultural area which should be developed as such, irrespective of the political and administrative boundaries into which it has been broken up. The tribal and regional languages should be introduced at all stages in schools, colleges and universities. There should be interaction across borders and cultural authorities may be set up under the aegis of the zonal cultural centers located at Shantiniketan. There should also be recognition of the political and administrative identity of the Jharkhand region within Bihar. The committee on Jharkhand matters visualises for the 16 tribal districts of Bihar, a new autonomous politico administrative structure, a Jharkhand general council, an apex body consisting of 50 members elected by an electoral

college composed of the village Panchayat chiefs, members of village Panchayats, "pramukhs" and members of panchayat samitis and members of zila parishads. The committee also proposed the creation of a eleven member Jharkhand executive council.

In August, 1991, the Bihar assembly passed the Jharkhand Area Development Council Bill, 1991, for the creation of 'Jharkhand Development Council for speedy development of the Santhal Pargana and Chotanagpur region'. Although the JMM accepted the Bill as an initiative to create a fully autonomous area in Bihar; the AJUS rejected it as "anti-tribal".

The proposal for an autonomous Jharkhand regional council has not found favour with the representatives of the Jharkhand movement who want nothing short of a Jharkhand state.

But many experts feel that creation of a separate state is not the answer to the tribals problems. The economic backwardness of the tribal belt can be removed by an autonomous council with the Jharkhand leaders at the helm of affairs; in the creation of a separate state, the poor illiterate tribals would suffer worse social, economic and political exploitation at the hands of the "Jharkhand Mafia" for after all exploitation is a class problem. Further

tribals of Bihar form a multi-tribal, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society; they do not constitute a homogeneous unit. Would the militant Mundas reconcile themselves to Mr. Soren's leadership in the proposed Jharkhand state.?

Rajni Kothari had remarked "slowly and imperceptibly we are moving towards a new political dispensation, backed by a new political ideology, which if not countered decisively and through the united intervention of all those who can for the country, will put an end not only to Indian democracy, but to the Indian State as well". This explained the political situation in the country, which also pointed out at the moral decay, economic miasma, encroaching authoritarianism, violent expressions of conflicts and separatist demands in India.

The unleashing of sub-national, primordial and ethnic conflicts threatens the integrity and very survival of the Indian nation. But for any multi ethnic society battling ethnic separatist demands, there are some key lessons to be remembered: (a) the suppression of ethnic identities particularly where there are inter ethnic tensions provides no long-term solution to those tensions. Eventually and in various political economic and social ways, the tensions re-surface with perhaps more intensity because of previous suppression (b) secondly, decentralisation of a federal

Constitutional order is not a substitute for a genuine political pluralism (c) self-determination as a principle for founding territoriality and demographically small and fragile nations or independent states is a formula for political and economic disaster. (d) the political leaders in multi ethnic states who play on ethnically defined identities, problems, and resentments for short-term political gains must be widely and immediately recognized as the criminals they are.

According to Michael Olivier, one way of offsetting the appeal of separatism is by investing tremendous amounts of time, energy and money in nationalism at the feudal level. A national image must be created that will have such an appeal to make any image of a separatist groups unattractive. The whole of the citizenry must be made to feel that it is only within the framework of the state that their language, culture, institutions, sacred traditions and standard of living can be protected from external attack and internal strife.

Coming to Jharkhand, one should not overlook the genuine grievances of the people of the region. The fear of being swamped by the dominant cultural streams, the suspicions of losing one's own identity as well as the feeling of alienation from the national mainstream, very often leads to



movements of self assertion which demand symphathatic consideration but certainly do not deserve contempt or negligence. The subnationalist movements like Jharkhand Gorkhaland and Bodoland can be managed with relative decentralization and antonomy at local and district levels.

Many avenues are being suggested by analysts to contain ethnic conflicts, but central to them is a deep-seated committment to pluralism and tolerance. Such is the path of political prudence in the late twentieth century.

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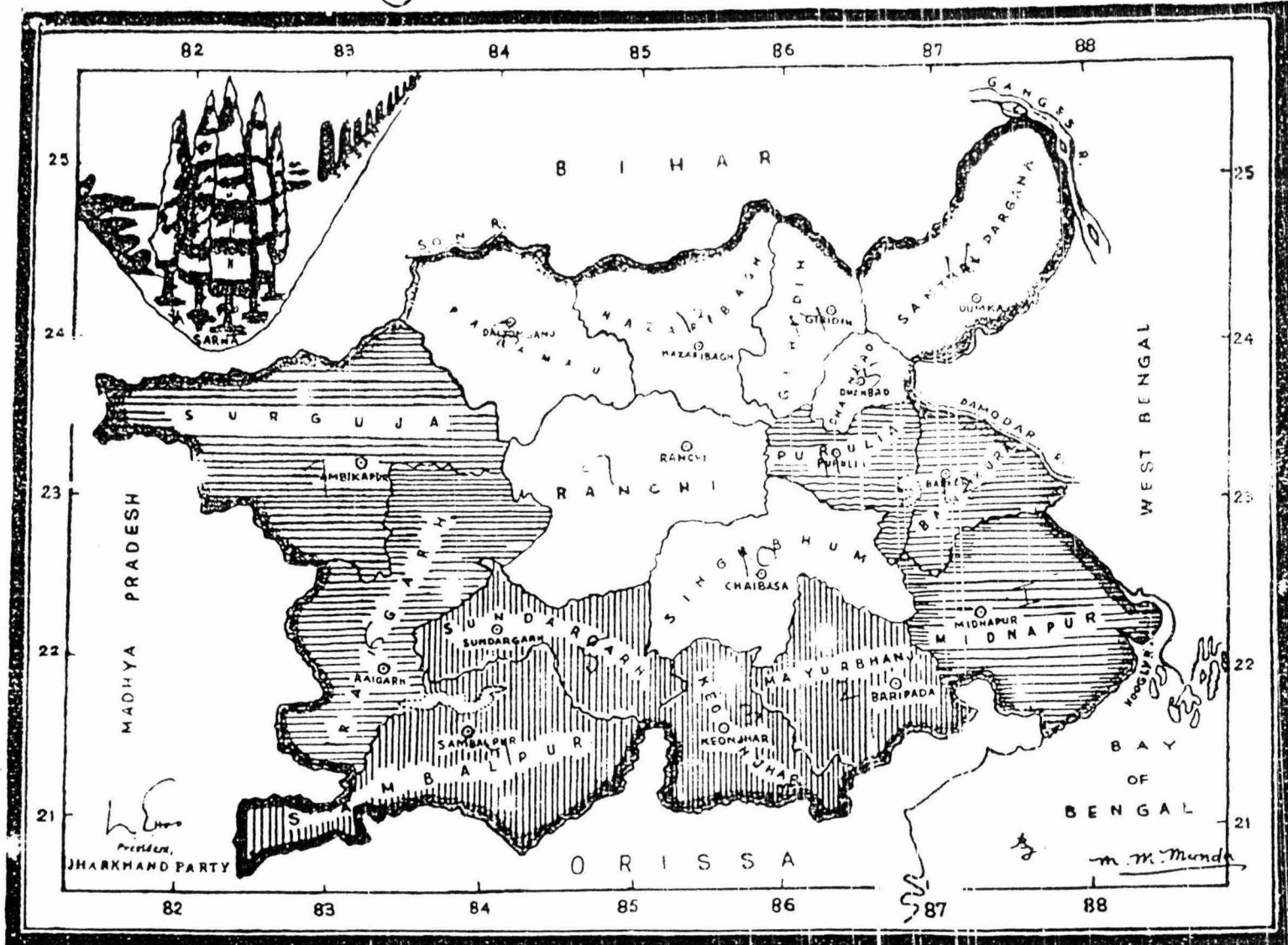
The Statesman (New Delhi)

# APPENDIX - I

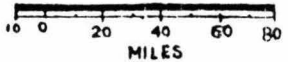
PROPOSED

# JHARKHAND

STATE

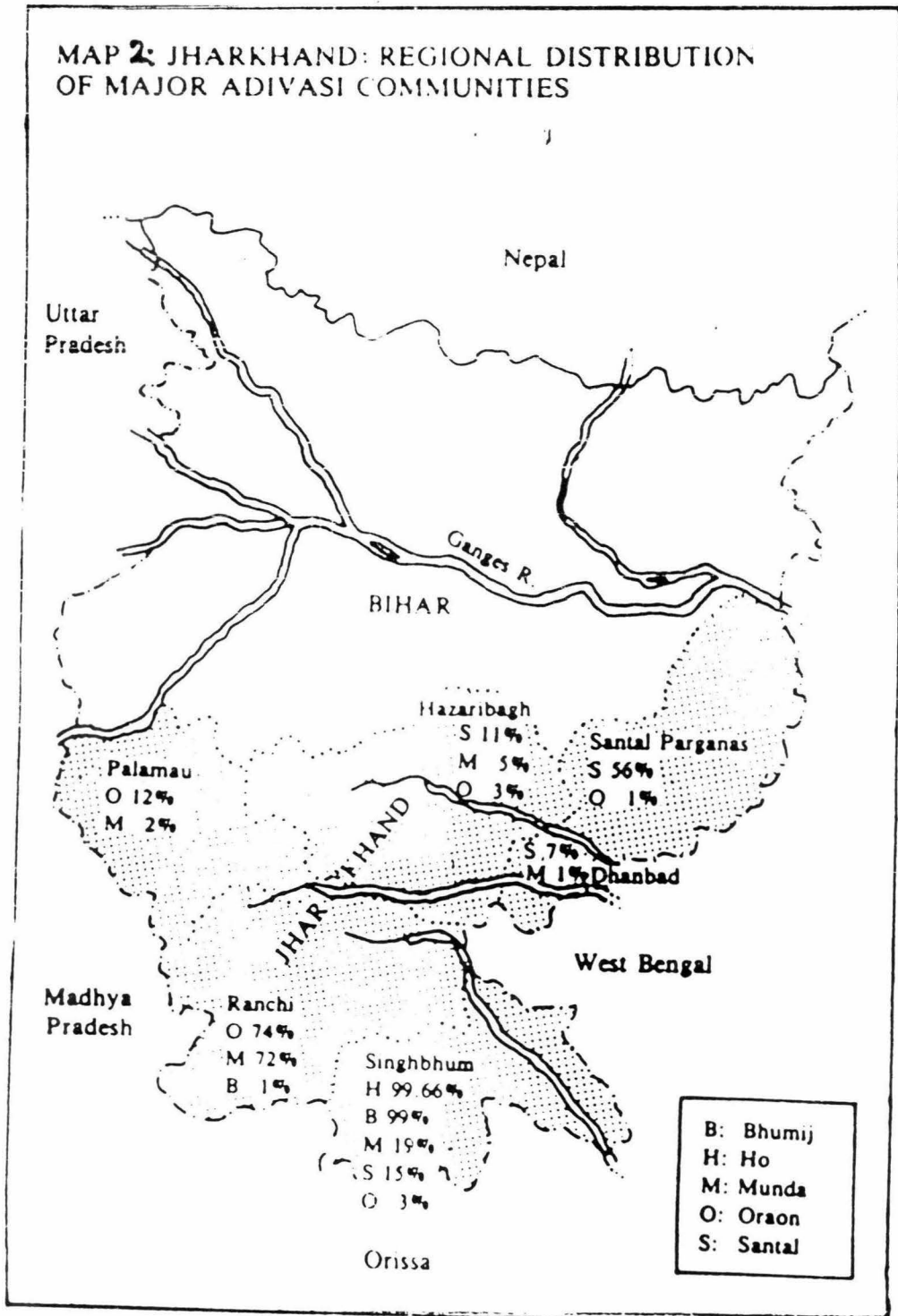


APPENDIX - 1



# APPENDIX - II

**MAP 2: JHARKHAND: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR ADIVASI COMMUNITIES**



APPENDIX - III

**A MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO**

**The Prime Minister of India**

**On March 12, 1973**

**By**

**THE JHARKHAND PARTY**

# A MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO

SMT. INDIRA GANDHI,  
PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

ON MARCH 12, 1973

BY

## THE JHARKHAND PARTY

JHARKHAND PARTY  
NEW DELHI

NEW DELHI  
The 12, March, 1973

Smt. Indira Gandhi  
*Prime Minister,*  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Memorandum re : CREATION OF JHARKHAND STATE.  
Hon'able the Prime Minister,

On behalf of over 30 million people of Jharkhand, the Jharkhand Party herewith desires to submit this memorandum for demanding creation of a new State of JHARKHAND comprising the Chotanagpur division and the District of Santhal Parganas in Bihar ; the districts of Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur in Bengal; the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Sambalpur in Orissa ; and the districts of Surguja and Raigarh in Madhya Pradesh ; and requests, that the Union Government and the Parliament of India may be pleased to establish this new State by law for good and efficient administration of this neglected and backward region by the people themselves of the region, in furtherance of functional democracy, socialism and secularism; and for upholding the basic human rights of the people, majority of whom are backward and belong to ethnic groups; and in support of which, sets forth the following reasons hereunder :

### Geographical situation

The Jharkhand Region consists of four sub-regions namely. South Bihar Hills and Plateaus; West Bengal Uplands; the Orissa Hills and Plateaus; and the Central Madhya Pradesh Plateau. It is geographically a compact area, mainly hilly and covered by forests with a beautiful climate. With its undulations, detached abrupt hills and forest tracts, the scenery of this hill region is most attractive.

The political map of India, however, distributes this compact region into four divisions, resulting in its neglect, isolation and backwardness. This is an example of the man's selfishness to destroy what Nature has ordained it to be, a beautiful and a rich country with its wonderful people on earth. The nature is the greatest advocate of this region for its re-unification as one compact state within the Indian Republic.

### Historical affinities

Mohammadan historical record, the "Akbarname" identifies this region of hills and forests as "Jharkhand", meaning the "forest country". Sir John Holton in his book called "Bihar, the Heart of India" writes that "Chotanagpur itself is the ancient Jharkhand or forest country, and consists mainly of a plateau about 2000 ft. above the sea. Mr. Bradley Birt called it a Province, in his book entitled "Chotanagpur, a little known province of the Empire". The entire region of hills and forests, of which we have said earlier is the tract traditionally called Jharkhand, bound by history, social traditions and a common cultural heritage. Nature has made it one composite region, which has evolved a common socio-cultural heritage. The political divisions of this region, in present day administrative set up, have very close and intimate affinities, which the rulers of this country sought to divide for selfish political ends.

The political, sentimental and psychological aspirations of the people of this area stand for its reunification, which is desirable, natural and historically necessary. It is administratively and politically necessary for the region's development through a uniform and homogeneous process. This is more intensively felt to-day after we have had seen the workings of the state governments of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh for quarter of a century since independence. We need no proof to say that the Jharkhand region spread over the four states mentioned above is most backward, and the regional economic imbalance is alarming. The performance of these state governments and the political framework which they possess, do not convince us that under their care this area and its people would ever live a better and fuller life with dignity and honour. The only alternative remains, is the creation of a new State of Jharkhand by unifying the areas now spread over the four states of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Hitherto inarticulate people, maintaining stoic silence are now awakened and alive to their rights. Their demand was voiced thirty years ago, and is to-day the oldest in the country. The States Re-organisation Commission completely mistook it as a minority demand.



To-day, again it may be scoffed at, but it must be realised that every age has its tide, its wave. It breaks upon the shores of the world. Every age also has its King Canute, who in his insolent pride wants the tide to halt, even orders it to stop. The tide sweeps away nevertheless.

Compulsions of history support our cause, the cause of the suffering humanity groaning under unnatural political divisions, under administrations with colonial orientations, who profess one thing and practice differently.

### Area and population

Jharkhand has an area of 187,646 sq k.m. with a population of 30,598,991 people according to 1971 Census Report. State-wise distribution of its area is :

Bihar ....	79,638 sq k. m.
Orissa ..	45,897 sq k. m.
Bengal ..	26,864 sq k. m.
M. P. ....	35,247 sq k. m.

District-wise break up will show that each district carries a population of over 10 lakhs of people. It is, however, remarkable that while the general population has increased considerably during last three decades, the population of the tribal and other backward communities has gone down to almost 30% in almost all the districts. There could be no other reasons but political suppression of their figures. Immigration could be another reason, but the fact remains that there are strong political elements who want to see the tribal and other backward people to be politically ineffective. In the name of integration and removing the distinction between Adivasi and other citizens, the best method they thought is to under enumerate them. This is a very dangerous process, which the awakened people will not let it lying. The break-up of district-wise figures will also show that the population of Adivasi and Scheduled Caste people is considerable :

#### BIHAR

District	Area	Total	S. T.	S. C
Palamau	12,677	1,504,350	287,150	382,684
Hazaribagh	18,060	3,020,214	331,758	364,654
Ranchi	18,331	2,611,445	1,516,698	126,240
Dhanbad	2,994	1,466,417	155,645	222,617
Singhbhum	13,447	2,437,799	1,124,317	87,962
Santhal Pr.	14,129	3,186,908	1,154,281	229,035
	<u>79,638</u>	<u>14,227,133</u>	<u>4,569,849</u>	<u>1,413,192</u>

<i>District</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>S. T.</i>	<i>S. C.</i>
<b>ORISSA</b>				
Sundargarh	9,675	1,030,758	550,101	82,692
Keonjhar	3,240	955,514	448,675	107,782
Mayurbhanj	10,412	1,434,200	839,835	103,713
Sambalpur	17,570	1,844,898	519,046	287,998
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	45,897	5,265,370	2,357,957	582,185
<b>BENGAL</b>				
Purulia	6,259	1,602,875	313,793	240,351
Midnapur	13,724	5,509,247	442,963	747,497
Bankura	6,881	2,031,039	208,735	573,162
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	26,864	9,143,161	965,491	1,561,010
<b>MADHYA Pr.</b>				
Raigarh	12,910	636,888	604,578	132,446
Surguja	22,337	1,326,439	741,894	63,772
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	35,247	1,963,327	1,346,472	196,218

They are a factor to be reckoned with politically and otherwise. The opportunity they seek to express themselves in the governance of the country must be recognised which is, legitimate and democratic, as such, any political manoeuvring to defeat it would be disastrous for the country.

### **Administrative Convenience**

The States Re-organisation Commission, while recognising the territorial individuality and special needs of Chotanagpur, did not consider it necessary or desirable to create a separate state of Jharkhand, wholly and in the exclusive interest of the residual state of Bihar, which they apprehended would "be a poorer area with fewer opportunities and resources for development." It was the same argument employed in rejecting other adjacent territories of Bengal Orissa and Madhya Pradesh for Jharkhand. They also thought that separation or bifurcation of the areas of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and M. P. would affect the entire economy of the residuary states. This is a strange logic which smacks of partisanism. Obviously, the opposition of the Chief Ministers of these states was given weightage over popular demands.

Things have not improved since then, and in the wake of popular demands, more states were created. Jharkhand's claim was never given a moment's thought.

Twenty five year's administration in Jharkhand area has amply proved, nay, highlighted the ills that are persisting with greater dimensions. The State Governments concerned have failed in the dispensation of equal care and justice to all their areas. Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas are still backward despite their mineral and forest wealth. The districts of Purulia, Midnapur and Bankura have no industries, and several agitations and demonstrations before the Writers Building has not moved the Bengal government. The forest wealth and minerals of Surguja and Raigarh in M. P. have been exploited for the upkeep of the State leaving these districts without any basic infra-structure for development. The mineral wealth of the northern districts of Orissa are the pride of the nation, but the people there are still in utter poverty and backwardness as ever before. There are historical and geographical reasons for the inability of the states concerned for their failure. The existing state governments are ill suited for the Jharkhand area for proper and sympathetic care. The seat of government in all these states are away from the hilly and forest regions of Jharkhand and they do not come easily within their ken.

A state government having different kinds of economy within its territory is naturally unable to give undivided attention to them alike. This is a factor to be reckoned with. Jharkhand area having only industrial economy would be easier to handle under one administration. The development programmes would be uniform, and it would be easy to assess their progress in the process. The planners and executives handling development programmes within the existing states are illequipped to take care of two types of programmes simultaneously. Industrially unoriented state government ignorant of the special needs of the people of hilly tracts, have bungled with their inherent inefficiency and incapacity to make decisions. Often they complain of economic stagnation and short of resources. Resources are there, only they are not resourceful.

One administration for the hill regions of Jharkhand will be most convenient, desirable and is the need of the hour.

### **Economic compulsions**

Rich in mineral and forest wealth, the percentage of contribution from Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas to the state exchequer of Bihar is comparatively very high. Percentage of revenue from forest, minerals, excise and commercial taxes from this area is the highest. Chotanagpur and S. P. contribute 75% of Bihar's total revenue, and gets only 25% for its expenditure. In actuality, this area gets nearly 20%, as funds are normally diverted to Bihar proper

in the name of emergency. During fourth Five-year plan period, this area was allowed ( Rs. 10568, 46 ( in lakhs ) out of the state's total of Rs. 30452. 08 (in lakhs) which comes to 33.76%. A close analysis of different heads will reveal that the money spent in this area in actuality goes to the benefits of those who hail from the plains of Bihar. Rs. 973.00 lakhs for Water supply, Rs. 82.35 for Housing, Rs. 6400.00 for power caters to the needs of the urban people mainly in industrial areas heavily populated people from outside Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas. The common man in the villages have yet to get water, housing and electricity. This area got during this period 6.88% for co-operation, 19% for P.W.D., 21.40% for education and 22.91% for irrigation.

The situation in Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh is not different either, so far the areas adjacent to Chotanagpur are concerned. The economic problems there are more or less the same. They are easily identifiable as most backward areas.

Prosperity is indivisible, so also economic and social care. What good is the set up which is not able to take care? Rural economy having been shattered, the people go hunting for jobs, which they can't get even in public projects for which they had to vacate their lands. With industrialisation sprawling on all sides, people with no skills except farming are elbowed out. In the name of public purposes, millions of poor people have been rendered homeless and landless without any hope of being rehabilitated. Rehabilitation is the responsibility of the state governments, but in Jharkhand area they have lamentably failed, resulting in acute economic distress to the people. It is a fashion with the governments to deny such lapses. They are compulsions which prod one to seek a remedy, and a permanent one at that.

The economy in Jharkhand area will be primarily related to industry, and it will have to be oriented with the social responsibilities. The infra-structure, which is completely negligible now, has to be built within a time limit. This needs singular attention, which only an administration exclusively dedicated to this area can tackle, hence, a separate state of Jharkhand, as proposed, is a compelling necessity.

### **Social and Cultural**

A great majority of the population now enumerated as general population is one, which is socially and culturally akin to the tribes. There are others who are ethnically close to the tribes.

There are others who are ethnically close to the tribes. This fact is little realised. Evidence is, that a large number of communi-

ties have approached the Law Ministry for enlisting themselves either as scheduled tribes or scheduled castes. There is a strong current of cultural and social homogeneity. The silent process of national integration has since been disturbed by outside interference. This process has also been greatly affected by the distribution of the homogeneous people in to four divisions in Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

To illustrate an example. Recently an inter-state seminar of Santhali Language was organised at Dumka, Bihar, where the question of one script for this language was discussed. Those Santhals living in Orissa wanted Oriya script, representatives of Bengal wanted Bengali script and people from Bihar advocated for Hindi, and Roman script was preferred by many. This is the curse of living apart under different influence, under different provinces. A community living under one administration would have evolved a common script long ago. In the matter of social and cultural development, similar situation block the way of natural process.

No state government under reference has prepared any primer in tribal languages till to date. The policy of teaching the child in his mother tongue has remained a wish much to the anguish of the people. The state governments have no wish to do so either for political reasons. In the name of integration, the tribal and other minority Languages will die their natural death, despite the efforts of non-official agency to preserve them. Governments do not come in the picture at all. In tribal areas, one can often see a teacher teaching children through languages which the children neither understand nor do they speak at home or outside, although teachers knowing tribal languages are available from among the tribes. It is difficult to understand this situation.

There is a cultural regeneration among the tribes, semitribes and other communities in this area, which can only expect its even growth in a homogeneous set-up.

### **Political Necessity**

The people of Jharkhand are at a critical stage of political evolution. The demand to have a separate State grows out of the strong desire of the people to liberate themselves from economic, social, cultural and political exploitation. It is a human problem affecting over 30 million people who desire to live with equality and justice. It is their just demand for better and fuller life for human dignity and honour, for recognition of their right to participate in social growth and development for freedom to shape their future.

This area is a compact and homogeneous region which must

acquire a political status of its own, in order to show its genius, to be able to deal directly with its problems, without which, chances of its coming out of the present depressed condition are not bright. It must shake off its colonial status with the states, and happily there is enough political confidence and determination to shape its future.

The people of Jharkhand will not rest until their demand of separate State is granted, as, in it, lies their future.

### Conclusion

We have discussed above some of the salient points in support of our demand which is, just and fair. It is a mass demand and cuts across party lines. The will of the people has been expressed in different ways and at different levels within constitutional and democratic limits. We want peace with justice. We want the government and the Parliament to consider this demand with justice and fairplay. We do not want to be subjected to drift and indecision. We do not want any situation to develop which would breed bitterness, strife and violence. Our demand is solid and determination firm. If we do not get what we want for thirty million of suffering humanity, we cannot promise that our people will maintain stoic-silence.

Our demand is one of the oldest in the country which involves people who have suffered for thousands of years. It deserves immediate consideration on merit.

We wish that our demand is considered above party considerations and in national interest and is not weighed against the vested interests.

The Jharkhand Party, therefore, commends this demand of a separate state of Jharkhand to the Union Government of India and its Parliament for their immediate consideration and constitution of the State of Jharkhand by an Act of the Parliament.

*Your Faithfully,*

On behalf of the Jharkhand Party

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>President</i> -N. E. Horo, M.P.        | 2. <i>Vice-President</i> -Jhama Singh                  |
| 3. <i>General Secretary</i> -Sohanlal Aneja. | 4. <i>General Secretary</i> -Nityanand Prasad Advocate |
| 5. <i>Treasurer</i> -Mohammad Rafique        | 6. C. D. Lugin<br><i>Member Working Committee.</i>     |

APPENDIX - IV

**TRUE COPY OF THE MEMORANDUM  
SUBMITTED  
TO THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA  
ON BEHALF OF THE OPPRESSED JHARKHANDI PEOPLE  
BY THE JHARKHAND COORDINATION COMMITTEE  
ON THE 10TH OF DECEMBER, 1987.**

The President of India  
New Delhi

Subject: Formation of Jharkhand State with 21 districts of the Jharkhand area.

Respected Sir,

For a long time, the inhabitants of the Jharkhand region have been conducting movements for the demand for the formation of Jharkhand State. On 11-13 September 1987, some 49 organisations supporting Jharkhand state have repeated their demand at Ramgarh, Hazaribagh, under the patronage of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee

(JCC). The success of the "unity rally" at Ranchi on November 15, on the occasion of Birsa's birth anniversary, defying the total "nakabandi" of Ranchi by the administration and the total success of "Jharkhand Bandh" on November 19, 1987 have proved beyond doubt that the demands raised by the JCC enjoy enormous mass support. Instructed by the JCC, we submit this memorandum to you and request you to take steps for the formation of a Jharkhand State in accordance with the provisions of Art. 2 and 3 of the Constitution of India. We place the following facts as background regarding the suitability of the demand of a Jharkhand state for your kind consideration.

### Background of the Demand for Jharkhand State

The north-eastern hill region of Gondwanaland, which was famous in ancient history as Ark-khand, Jharkhand, etc, remained an independent "Janpad" for a long time. The people of the region lived a happy life under autonomous rule. This region comprises 12 districts of present Bihar (i.e. Singhbhum, Jharia, Ranchi, Lohardaga, Gumla, Palamu, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Dumka, Godda, Deoghar and Jaganj); 4 districts of present Orissa (i.e. Bhubaneswar, Keonjhar, Sambalpur and Sundargarh); 3 districts of present West Bengal (i.e. Midnapur, Purulia and Purulia); and 2 districts of present Jharkhand (Surguja and Raigarh); altogether 21 districts. The area is nearly 1,87,646 sq. kms. and the population, according to the 1971 Census is 1,98,791. This region has its specific identity, forming a cultural unity in itself. Till the British partition, the political-cultural identity of the region remained unimpaired. Its autonomy was destroyed for the first time during British rule. The people of Jharkhand waged relentless struggles to defend their traditional autonomy and self-rule. But these struggles were defeated by the manoeuvres and superior armed force of the British Raj. Finally the Jharkhand region was split up between four states. The Jharkhandi nationality, divided between the four states, became a victim

of political, economic and cultural colonialism and this oppression led to the erosion of their identity.

The people of the region have been launching relentless struggles since 1769 against this political, economic and cultural exploitation and the resulting disintegration. Lakhs of Jharkhandis have sacrificed their lives for their autonomy and identity. But the Jharkhand region could not achieve its liberation from colonial rule and exploitation, through many heroes of the Jharkhand region like Kanta Munda (1820); Singrai-Bindrai Manki (1831); Tilka Majhi, Sidhu, Kanu, Chand, Bhairav (1856); Biswanath, Sahdev, Ganpat Rai, Sheikh Bikhari, Kurban Ali, Nilambar, Pitambar, (1857); Birsa Munda, Bharuri Munda (1900); Jatra Bhagat (1915), etc. As a continuation of this struggle, the movements of Unnati Samaj (1916), Adivasi Mahasabha (1930) and Jharkhand Party (1950) were started.

The people of Jharkhand region had expected that their identity and autonomy would be recognised in independent India. This region, full of mineral wealth, occupies a pride of place in India from the cultural viewpoint, too. Three great cultures of India—Aryan, Dravidian and Austric, have co-existed and interacted with each other for a long



time in this region. In this way, this region has preserved the precious elements of Indian history and culture from destruction. After independence large-scale industrialisation of the region created an unfavourable situation for the Jharkhand identity. Nearly 50 lakhs of outsiders were brought into the region, while the people of the region were evicted in large numbers. Today, the whole of big business, industry and employment are in the hands of outsiders. The people of Jharkhand are treated like foreigners in their own homeland. Majority of them have to leave their villages and travel long distances in search of a meagre living. The outsiders grab all the fruits of development, while the Jharkhandis remain in a condition of acute distress. Their wealth, honour, religion, language and literature and music are being systematically looted and destroyed. Under such circumstances, the people of Jharkhand are demanding a separate state within the Indian Union for the protection and development of their identity. They believe

that their identity will not be protected and developed unless they get state-power in their own hands. With this purpose, the people of Jharkhand have been drawing the attention of the Central Government through a political movement. Earlier, different organisations of Jharkhand had submitted their own memoranda to the Central Government. But the Jharkhandis have not yet got any redressal of their miserable plight.

In this background, the people of Jharkhand have become restless. They have brought together nearly all organisations fighting for the cause of Jharkhand and have formed the Jharkhand Coordination Committee to fulfill the dream of separate Jharkhand state. We, on behalf of this Coordination Committee, request you to take steps for the formation of a Jharkhand state and thus clear the way for the protection and development of Jharkhandis.

### Justification of the Demand for Jharkhand State

The States' Reorganisation Committee's verdict against the formation of Jharkhand state was based mainly on three grounds.

The SRC noted :

1. The tribes are a minority in the Jharkhand region;
2. There is no specific link language in Jharkhand; and
3. The economic balance of the neighbouring states will be disturbed if Jharkhand state is formed.

Later on, the Government reached the understanding that the problem of Jharkhand is a problem of development alone and that the people would be satisfied if development projects were taken up.

The considered opinion of the JCC on this issue is that the viewpoint of the government is not based on facts and that is the reason why the

movements is considered secessionist and anti-national. Sometimes the government has tried to discredit the movement by saying that it is "instigated" by Christian missionaries. But it should be noted that the Jharkhand movement has withstood severe repression and each time has emerged mightier than before. Now, the government should seriously consider this demand with sympathy.

The fact is that the Jharkhand movement is one for the protection and development of Jharkhandi nationality. Till now, the nationality question has not been seriously considered in our country and states have been formed arbitrarily on the basis of convenience. Sometimes it is based on language, sometimes on administrative convenience and in some cases it is based on ethnicity. We think that nationality is the only scientific basis for the formation of states. In the Soviet Union, the states were reorganised on this basis and the people got a happy road for development. In a multi-national,

multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India the unity and integrity of the country can be preserved and strengthened by awarding all nationalities equal rights for their protection and development. This right can be guaranteed by the formation of a separate state.

Considered from this viewpoint, all the conditions necessary for the formation of a state are present in Jharkhand. It consists of a specific geographic region which is different from the neighbouring states. It has its own history. It has its own economic and social formation and consequently, a distinct culture. The tribes and the Sadans living in Jharkhand region constitute inseparable parts of this cultural tradition. According to 1971 Census they constitute 85% of the population. If they get autonomy, they can present a model of democracy. On the contrary, if this is not given, and the present process of disintegration through industrialisation goes on, then the people of Jharkhand will meet the same fate as the Red Indians in American democracy.

The problem of Jharkhand region is not the problem of development alone. In the name of development, the wealth and the cheap labour-power of Jharkhand have been looted. Millions of rupees of foreign capital has flown into Jharkhand, but has it really brought any benefit to the people of Jharkhand or, for that matter, to the people of India? Due to plunder, all public sector enterprises are running at a loss. The profits earned by the private sector are utilised in the interest of neither the Jharkhandis nor the country. Corruption, nepotism, bribery and goondaism and unemployment are now common features of the region. Mafia groups are ruling the areas surrounding the mines and industries. It is loot and plunder that is going on in the name of development.

In this situation, the question is being raised whether any country or society can acquire a glorious life without self-reliance. This is the condition of Jharkhand. Real development in Jharkhand will take place only when the people of the region will be masters of their wealth and

sweat. They will not be able to move onto a path of self-reliant development unless they get the power to take decisions.

The JCC holds that the formation of Jharkhand state will be beneficial to the neighbouring states as well as to the country. In order to put an end to parasitic culture and to develop on the path of self-reliance, the formation of Jharkhand state will advance the democratic revolution in India. From this viewpoint, the demand for the formation of Jharkhand state is constitutional and is in the interest of the country. It is a natural aspiration of the people based on democratic values.

The Jharkhand region is the store-house of forest and mineral wealth, water resources and a huge labour power. Jharkhand is a soul of India. The semi-colonial slavery of Jharkhand should be done away with in the interest of India and the world. Even if somebody insists on a link-language, it should be considered that the people of Jharkhand are now using Hindi more or less all over the region. If Hindi-speaking states like M.P. and U.P. can be formed, then what is the objection to the formation of Jharkhand with Hindi as the link-language?

Looking at all the facts, it seems that the government, either consciously or unconsciously, is acting in a manner leading to the destruction of the oppressed Jharkhandi masses.

This memorandum is intended to draw your attention to the demand for Jharkhand state. If needed, we shall furnish further facts about our miserable condition and the justifications for the formation of Jharkhand state. Enclosed

We hope that the Government of India will take note of the above points and will seriously ponder upon the problem and fulfil the aspirations of the tribal and non-tribe masses of Jharkhand through the formation of Jharkhand state and thus take immediate steps for the protection of their existence and identity.

Yours sincerely

Members of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee

## Preamble,

Jharkhand is a geographical, historical, socio-economic, cultural and political reality in India. The Adivasis and sadans are the indigenous people of this region. They have traditionally maintained a distinctively different identity of their own in relation to their neighbours.

Kings and rulers have come and gone in Jharkhand, but the people here have maintained their unique socio-cultural identity in the midst of changing historical circumstances. Many socio-economic and political factors and forces have tried to destroy the Jharkhand cultural ethics, but the Jharkhandi people have successfully resisted them. These resistance movements have been well recorded and documented by the colonial and native administrators and social scientists.

Jharkhand movement is essentially a struggle of exploited and oppressed people against prevailing unjust socio-economic and political structures. It is a struggle for their liberation. It is a movement in search of an alternative to the present socio-economic and political structures undergirded by greed for wealth and power, at the cost of peoples welfare and human dignity. This movement aims at creation of the Jharkhand State within Indian Union by peaceful and constitutional means. The Jharkhandi people's movement, for creation of the Jharkhand State has been misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented by vested interests within Jharkhand region and outside it. Therefore, the aims and purposes of Jharkhand movement for the creation of Jharkhand State is presented here with all supporting facts for a sympathetic consideration and favourable action by the Government of India.

## I. Jharkhandi Identity :

✦ A people's identity is integrally bound up with the space (geography) they occupy and time (history) they live through. Without the proper knowledge of a people's geographical location and historical background their socio-economic, cultural and political identity can not be understood.

## I. I Geographical Contiguity :

Jharkhand is a hilly mountainous and plateau region extending in the East from Bankura district of West Bengal to Surguja district of Madhya Pradesh on the West and former Santhal Parganas of Bihar in the North and Sambalpur district of Orissa in the South. It includes 2 districts of South Bihar, 4 districts of North Orissa, 3 districts of West Bengal, and 2 districts of M. P. (altogether 21 districts) within its contiguous geographical region. The area of Jharkhand is approximately 1, 87, 646 square kilometers. It has a population of 35, 098, 991 people within its boundary.

In the opinion of geographers Jharkhand contiguous region consists of 'Dharwar rocks' which includes the Archaen granites with some sedimentary deposits. The plateau begins with about 500 ft. above sea level and gradually goes up through Ranchi plateau with 2000 ft. to 3000 ft. high and finally reaches to the pat of Netarhat and some hills south of Singbhum with an attitude of more than 4000 ft. from the sea level. The geological formation of Jharkhand region provides it with rich mineral resources like coal, iron, copper, mica, gold, limestone, bauxite etc. India's major mineral resources are located in Jharkhand.

This hill, mountainous and plateau region is blessed with rich varieties of roots, plants and trees. Maximum varieties of fruit, flowers, leaves and roots are used as nutritious food by the Adivasis and Sadans of Jharkhand. Sal, Karam, Mahua, Kendu, Kusum, Palas, Gamhar, Bija etc. are the main trees of Jharkhand. Bamboos and Sawai are still found here in abundance. Char, Pithor, etc. are famous even for commercial purposes. The extent of Jharkhand geographical contiguity could be determined to a great extent by the presence of sal trees in its hills, and valleys.

The great number of zoological species also are found in Jharkhand. From elephant to various kinds of creeping animals and worms are found in this region. One finds peacock to smallest birds here.

The Jharkhand plateau with its varying attitudes, and with a fair amount of rainfall, has a number of rivers like Damodar, Subarnrekha, North and South Koels, Sankh, Karkari, Kanchi, Karo etc. These rivers have their natural water falls. The flora and fauna of Jharkhand make it a beautiful region of India.

## I. 2 Historical continuity :

Recent archaeological findings in Jharkhand area throw much light on the pre-history and ancient history of this region. Archaeologists and historians maintain that there is trace of human habitations from about the 10,000 B.C. - 8,000 B.C. The Mundari speaking Asurs, Bhumij, Kharias, Mundas, Hos, Santhals etc. are accepted as the first settlers of Jharkhand. Then the Kurukhs (Uraons) and various Sadan communities joined them. Many others have moved into Jharkhand in more recent times.

Ancient literatures and Travel documents written by foreign travellers mention about the unknown hilly tract of Jharkhand. The Mughal historians made special mention of 'Jharkhand' in fourteenth century. The British colonial rulers finally explored Jharkhand country inhabited by the Adivasis and Sadan including the Maharaja, rajas and Zamindars. The British identified Jharkhand by many names serving their administrative and economic purposes. It has been known as 'Ramgarh hill tracts', 'South Western Frontier Agency', 'Chutianagpur', and 'Chotanagpur Division'. Each political change in the former Bengal Presidency brought an adverse effect on the political identity of Jharkhand. When Bihar was separated from Bengal a portion of Jharkhand was sliced off from the original area and was annexed to Bengal. When Orissa was separated from Bihar a big chunk of Jharkhand (Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar) was again taken away and kept with Orissa. During the same period and after Raigarh and Surguja districts were tagged up with Madhya Pradesh.

The political identity of Jharkhand has been damaged by the colonial rule of the British. But unfortunately even the national government after independence

has continued to support and act on the foreign colonial principle of divide and rule with respect to the geography, history and political identity of the Jharkhandis. Though politically and administratively Jharkhand is at present divided into four states of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh the socio-cultural unity of the people in Jharkhand is still maintained as one. There is a Jharkhandi cultural ethics which binds people together cutting across the artificial boundaries existing today.

Political history of Jharkhand has undergone changes but there is a historical continuity of the people of Jharkhand. This history can be discerned in the socio-cultural life of Jharkhandi people. Many common themes like migration from one place to another and finally to the present settlement here are found in the folklores of the Adivasis and the Sadans. Common themes of exploitations and oppressions by greedy outsiders run through the prose and poetry written in Mundari, Santhali, Kurukh (Uraon), Kharia, Ho and Sadani literatures. The past, present and future life conditions of the people of Jharkhand are sung in AKHRA (dancing group) of Adivasi villages. Many rajas and rulers (foreign and native) have come and gone, but the Jharkhandi people continue to remain here keeping the historical continuity of their unique identity as over against their neighbours.

## I 3 Socio-economic and political tradition :

Jharkhandi society is basically community based, classless, egalitarian and close to nature. Until the advent of the British colonial rule a primal socialism was practised in Jharkhand. In Jharkhandi community individual interest and welfare had always remained subordinated to the collective interest and welfare. Though patrilineal and patrilocal principles were observed in customary laws of inheritance the economic interests of the womenfolk were well protected.

Land, forest and water were trusteeship of the community (one lineage at one place or several places). Everyone's labour was creatively used for

production of food and all other goods and services. Production was carried on in and by the community with the cooperation of all. Literal physical labour became the means of cooperating with others in the community. Produce of goods and services were used for the good of all, and not for any individual selfish purposes, sharing with others, goods and services, was the dominant motive for human interpersonal and community relationships. Greed and grabbing for one's selfish ends were completely unknown in Jharkandi socio-economic structures. Therefore, exploitation and oppression of one by another were unknown in Jharkhandi socio-economic tradition.

Panch-Parha political system governed the Jharkhandi life in general. Panch had socio-political power to regulate life in the villages. Parha-patti were the bigger panches which included as many as 22 villages. Every adult was member of the village panch and so all members of 22 villages formed the Parha. Leadership was exercised by a group of elders in the village, though there were the village Munda, Mahto, Manjhi and Parha Raja in Jharkhandi tradition. Decisions in panch and parha-patti were taken in such a way that with very little chance of injustice, dissention and friction in the Jharkhandi socio-political life. Society was able to maintain its socio-economic and political identity with complete solidarity.

#### I 4 Cultural heritage :

Land is life in Jharkhandi cultural heritage. Land means the cultivable and uncultivable pieces of land including forest and bodies of water in and around a village. Land is given by God and the Jharkhandi has cleared and made it habitable and therefore, Jharkhandi people have inalienable rights on the land and forests, hills and mountains of Jharkhand. The privatisation of property introduced by the colonial rules in Jharkhand initiated a process of erosion of this traditional concept of land and it has been augmented in recent years.

Nature, ancestor, and human are integral part of reality understood by the Jharkhandis. Men and Women are treated as equals and there is no sharp differentiation of high and low in the Jharkhandi society. Common ownership of properties make equality more equal in human relationships. Dignity of labour is high social and human value among the Jharkhandis. 'No labour no food' and hence begging was unknown in this region till very recent times.

Words carried weight and meanings among the people here. Honesty and integrity were cherished and practised in the society. Strangers are always welcomed and accommodated in Jharkhand with a genuine human spirit. They are given shelter and share in the means of production and use of the produce. The attitude of sharing rather than grabbing land and money is a great human value among the Jharkhandis. Such human values are pushed at the corner today and therefore, Jharkhandis are at a loss. They do not know how to relate themselves with the presently dominant opposite and in human values. Others are taking undue advantage of the Jharkhandis treating them as ignorant people.

Life has stresses and strains in Jharkhand also. But the Jharkhandis have learnt to face life's situation with collective participation in songs and dance. Joy in singing and dancing has kept the Jharkhandi people alive even today. Without this cultural value they could have been crushed under the present exploitative and oppressive system imposed on their economic and socio-political structure.

The creation of Jharkhand state as an instrument of socio-economic and political power enabling the Jharkhandis to preserve, promote, and share their cultural values with the rest of India is an urgent need today. An analysis of their present socio-economic and political situations is required here to see the demand of separate state of Jharkhand in its proper perspective.

## **II Process of erosion of Jharkhandi identity :**

The Jharkhandi character distinguishes the people of Jharkhand from the dominant national society. The Jharkhandis consider their society as basically community-based, classless, egalitarian and close to nature. They are labour-oriented and they know to eat only out of their labour. They see the dominant society around them as highly exploitative, stratified, individualistic, anti-nature and highly secular.

Throughout the history of Jharkhand systematic and constant attempt have been made by vested interests to destroy this Jharkhandi character and to bring the Jharkhandis under the control of the exploitative structure of the dominant society. The history of Jharkhand is the history of resistance to these various attempts at conquest and assimilation of the Jharkhandis and their culture by the supposedly 'superior culture' of the dominant society.

The basic phenomenon that characterises the present situation of the Jharkhandis is the phenomenon of **dispossession**. The Jharkhandis are systematically and methodically being dispossessed of the ownership of their means of production, of the product of their labour and of the very means of human existence. They are dispossessed of their political autonomy and their communities are being broken up in the name of 'progress' and 'national interest.' They are dispossessed of their culture, their values, and their very identity through well-planned policies, such as the policies of integration and assimilation to bring them to the so-called 'national mainstream'. The process of dispossession of Jharkhandis started when colonization in search of resources began penetrating their areas. Jharkhand with its vast reserves of mineral, forest and cheap human resources became an important strategic area in the colonialist scheme of things. The guiding principle behind British colonial rule in Jharkhand was the strategic interest of British imperialism. With the departing of the British Raj external colonialism in Jharkhand ended. But the process of colonial exploitation of Jharkhandis did not stop with

Independence. In the name of 'progress' a new type of colonialism, internal colonialism, has been unleashed on them by the ruling classes of the country. The dispossession of Jharkhandis continues unabated. Let us now see how this dispossession takes place in the various spheres of their life : economic, social, political and cultural.

### **II I Economic sphere :**

#### **A. Privatisation of common property resources :**

The Jharkhandis have a special relationship with the land they occupy. For them land is life (not simply a factor of production as for other peoples, but a source of spirituality as well). The traditional land base holds important symbolic and emotional meaning for them as the repository for ancestral remains, clan origin sites and other sacred features important in their religious system. Regarding ownership of land the Jharkhandis have different concepts often incomprehensible to outsiders. Ownership of land is vested in the community. No individual has the right to permanently alienate the land from the community. The community is the trustee of the land it occupies. The community includes not only the living member but also the ancestors and future generations. That is why for the Jharkhandis land and blood are homologous. Their society, culture, religion, identity and their very existence are intimately linked to the land they hold. To separate them from their lands is tantamount to tearing them apart from their life-giving sources. But colonial exploitation of their territories has meant precisely that for the Jharkhandis.

The major way of dispossessing the Jharkhandis of their territories is through the process of privatisation of common property resources. This process was started by the British around 1865 and thereafter by making numerous permanent settlements on common property lands. Many areas were declared 'reserved forests', 'protected forests' and 'revenue land' and were made into State property. As a result the Jharkhandis lost their right for shifting cultivation, their food gathering, grazing and other

rights in most of the common property lands. Further, as against the collective ownership of land by the community existing among them, the British introduced the institution of private property holding right in land. This brought in aliens like zamindars, thikedars, money-lenders, traders and others and made way for a gradual process of land alienation. The forest policies in Jharkhand shows that the most important characteristic of both colonial and post-colonial forest policies has been the increasing assertion of state monopoly rights over forests at the expense of Jharkhandi communities. The forest policy statement of both 1894 and 1952 legitimised this exclusion in the name of 'national interest', which serves the interest of the dominant classes who control everything for their own benefit.

The progressive assertion of state monopoly rights over large areas of forests by turning them into 'reserves' has resulted in the eviction and uprooting of many Jharkhand villages. It also cut off the Jharkhandis from their life-supporting system. Further, many forestry projects were started which changed the character of the forest itself in such a way that they served exclusively commercial interests and no longer benefitted the Jharkhandis. Natural mixed forests on which they depended for their livelihood are being clearfelled and replaced by plantations of teak, eucalyptus and various coniferous trees for commercial purposes. The largescale commercial exploitation of forests has not only destroyed the source of livelihood for the Jharkhandis but also adversely affected the ecology of Jharkhand area.

## **B Industrialisation and Modernisation:**

After Independence the Government of India has launched a gigantic program of industrialisation and modernisation. The effects of this program is very much felt in Jharkhand because of its vast mineral and other natural resources. As a result many giant industries, mines, hydroelectric and Irrigation projects are being built in Jharkhand area. Private industries are also given incentives to

set up plants in this area. This has led to large scale alienation, both legal and illegal, of land belonging to the Jharkhandis. All over Jharkhand this has not only meant a further dispossession of sustainable resources from its people, it has also meant their brutal displacement, and pollution and degradation of their environment. The displaced Jharkhandis are neither properly rehabilitated nor given adequate compensation for their land and other property. The various benefits such as administrative, managerial and skilled jobs, arising out of these projects are taken by outsiders while the displaced persons are given unskilled and exploitative jobs. The Jharkhandis are being sacrificed on the altar of India's industrialisation and modernisation.

## **C Introduction of exploitative capitalist market system:**

The introduction of money and the onslaught of market forces further deteriorated the condition of Jharkhandis by dispossessing them of the product of their labour. Their self-sufficient and subsistence economy is shattered by converting it into market-oriented economy. Thousands of rapacious traders, money-lenders, etc. flooded their areas and snatched away their products at throw away prices. They are unable to compete with these well-organised capital intensive and highly exploitative market forces.

## **II. 2 Social sphere:**

As a result of the new forces that are being introduced among them the rapid change that are taking place in their economic condition the social structure of the Jharkhandis also has begun to break down. Their family life is getting disrupted. Their social controls are lost. Social tension is increasing among them. They are gradually becoming vulnerable to various diseases and emotional disorders. Many indicators of social anomie such as alcoholism, crime, suicide, delinquency and despair have suddenly begun to increase among them. Further, confronted with development and modernisation they often experience a loss of self-esteem.

They are feeling a deprivation of their sense of personal worth and a devaluation of their social identity. This feeling is further aggravated by the negative attitude and approach of the dominant society towards Jharkhandi culture. As a result of this continual and systematic process of dispossession and disruption of their society the Jharkhandis are reduced to a sub-human level of existence.

### II. 3. Political sphere:

In the political sphere the dispossession of Jharkhandis has taken place through a process of their political integration into the national government. Their traditional political organisations are destroyed. They are incorporated into the state and they have to conform to and are become integrated with the political institutions of the dominant society. In order to achieve their complete integration to the national polity political authorities belonging to the dominant society are appointed over them. As a result they have become politically powerless and are marginalised and exploited by the dominant society.

### II. 4. Cultural sphere:

Upto now we have seen how in the name of 'progress' and 'national interest' the Jharkhandis are increasingly being dispossessed of their land and how their social institutions and political autonomy are being destroyed by the state controlled by the dominant society. These actions in themselves are causing the gradual disintegration of their culture. This process of disintegration of Jharkhandi culture is further accelerated by deliberate programmes of forced cultural modification designed and executed by the state and its agencies. The policies of 'integration' and 'assimilation' followed by the Government to bring the Jharkhandis to the so-called 'national mainstream' have led to the dispossession of their cultural autonomy and to the loss of their very identity. The spread of modern urban value-based education has speeded up the process of disintegra-

tion of their culture. Every area of their life from language to marriage, customs and religion has come under attack. Language is the main cementing factor which expresses the identity of a given community. There is a non-declared policy to suppress the language of the Jharkhandis and to impose on them the dominant Hindi language.

### III. 5. The consequences of dispossession

As a result of this systematic dispossession the Jharkhandis are reduced to a situation of extreme poverty. Majority of them live in a situation of starvation, squalour and disease. Further, the large-scale capitalist exploitation of the wealth of Jharkhand required a vast army of cheap casual labour. The Jharkhandis who are reduced to destitution are forced to accept this role of casual wage labour in industries, mining, forestry and other operations. The capitalist development and exploitation of Jharkhand has thus operated in a vicious circle for the Jharkhandis, on the one hand it has rendered ever increasing numbers of them destitute through evictions of the sources of their livelihood etc. and on the other hand it has utilized their destitute condition to employ them for a specific role in this process, viz that of sweat labour of sub-proletariat.

Deprived of economic power the masses of Jharkhand have become powerless in the political sphere also because in the present society economic power is synonymous with political power. Money power gives the rich the power to control the lives of others. As a result of their powerlessness the Jharkhandis are reduced to amorphous objects for the use and abuse of the exploiter class. They have become victims of exploitation. The exploitation that takes place is systematic, methodical and purposeful. It is structured and rooted in the entire existing system.

For the process of exploitation to continue for a long time oppression of the masses is required. If the masses try to organise themselves against



the exploitation they undergo, than they are suppressed with a heavy hand. Killing of the Jharkhandis by police firing, burning of their houses and rape of their women folk have become common phenomena which have continuously been reported in the media.

No economic exploitation and dispossession is possible on a continued basis unless it is supported by another process that is purposefully initiated and methodically carried out by the oppressor class on the oppressed. This process is called **dehumanisation**. As a result the masses are reduced to impotent beings incapable of thinking differently or acting contrary to the will of the oppressor. Immersed in this state they are incapable of being historical persons, because they have been marginalised from the flow of history. The reduction of the oppressed to this state is a *sine qua non* for exploitation to continue. The oppressed are immersed so to say, in a **culture of silence** a culture that debilitates and destroys not only their personality but through it their humanness. The **culture of silence** is the culmination of the process of exploitation, oppression and dehumanisation.

### III. I The Jharkhandi people's struggle for protecting their identity :

There have been countless revolts and liberation movements led by the people of Jharkhand to preserve and protect their identity. The series of grim battles fought by the Jharkhandis since early 19th century form part of the heritage of the Indian people's struggle against domination, slavery and exploitation. Some of these movements like the Maler revolt (1772), Tilka Manjhi's revolt (1784), Tamar revolt (1793), Kol Insurrection (1820), Ho revolt (1820), Great Kol Insurrection (1832), Ganganarain revolt (1832), Santal Hul (1855-57), Sardar Larai (1859-95), Birsa andolan (1895-1900), Jharkhand andolan etc. are revolts and solidarity movements.

These movements protest against oppression by alien exploiters like the thikedars, jagirdars, the British, mahajans, merchants and money-lenders. These movements centered round land and forest rights. Each of these uprisings expressed the desperation of the Jharkhandis and invariably they were ruthlessly suppressed. Following these rebellions, and in certain cases even without such precedents a number of reformatory and revitalisation movements were started by the Jharkhandis with the idea of constructing a more satisfying culture. The following movements were of this type Sapha Hor, Tana Bhagat, Birsa movement in the earlier stage, Bhumij Kshatriya movement, Haribaba movement, Kripa sindhu, etc. These movements were mostly socio-religious and cultural in character and took different forms in different situations.

The two kinds of resistance and reformatory people's movements clearly show that Jharkhandis never accepted the colonial and are reacting against the post independence internal colonial socio-economic and political structures. They have resisted against them, even though they have been suppressed by military and money powers. The people's movement against unjust socio-economic and political structures is a sign of their search for an alternative to the prevailing ones. Jharkhand movement is, therefore, just the continuation and extension of the movement for the emancipation of the Jharkhandis. Their demand for a separate Jharkhand state within the Indian union is a major step to achieve the just socio-economic and political structure based on human values already found in their own traditional cultures. It is a movement for emancipation from internal colonisation and to preserve and promote the Jharkhandi identity through the socio-economic and political instruments of proposed state of Jharkhand.

## **IV. Justification for the Creation of Jharkhand State**

### **IV. I A Critique of the State Reorganising Commission's Reports :**

The age-old demand for the creation of a separate Jharkhand State within the Indian Union, to be carved out of the four states, e.g., Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, has so far been misinterpreted as the demand of particular group of people, bracketed by the Government of India as the Scheduled Tribes, inhabiting the indigenous people, of which certainly the scheduled tribes constitute a major part, of the land historically known as Jharkhand. The Union Government turned down this popular demand 30 years ago unjustifiably and undemocratically on the basis of the faulty information and, wrong interpretation of the situation put forward by the State Reorganisation Commission in 1956. The S. R. Commission looked at the questions of granting statehood to people of Jharkhand from an altogether faulty premise which served better the vested interest of the then ruling cliques and people welding dominance in the socio-economic power structure of the four concerned states. The passing time has, however, proved that humiliated souls of Jharkhand have remained far from being convinced of the decision taken by the Union Government on that score and their struggle to achieve the just demand of self-determination in the form of statehood has gained unprecedented momentum in recent years inspite of inhuman suppression unleashed by the concerned state governments.

To substantiate the above observation a class look at the 'rationale' propounded by the Union Government on the basis of the S.R. Commission Report rejecting the demand of a separate Jharkhand State is necessary. The State reorganising Commission, formed on the 26th of December, 1953 (with the recommendation of the Home Ministry, vide, No. 53/69/53 public), looked into the justification of the demand of a

separate Jharkhand State and prepared its Report in 1956. The Report negated the demand on the following grounds.

1. It is the demand of the Scheduled tribes consisting of only a little more than one third of the total population of the proposed area. (para: 618)
2. These tribes have no common language. (para. 618)
3. The majority of the population is not in favour of this demand. (para: 617)
4. The people outside the proposed region is opposed to this demand.
5. The creation of this state will usher in an economic imbalance between it and the residual state of Bihar. (para: 619 & 620)
6. The problem is basically a problem of under-development of the people concerned and its solution lies not in the formation of a separate state but in the allocation of necessary funds for development projects and proper administration of the area so that tribes inhabiting Scheduled areas (under 5th schedule of the Constitution) can integrate themselves in the general administrative system as soon possible. (para: 621 & 622)

Obviously these biased observations of the S.R. Commission were based on the informations fed by the concerned state governments, particularly the state government of Bihar, to safeguard the economic and political interests of the people other than the Jharkhandis.

The report of the S.R. Commission was challenged on the floors of about Parliament and the assembly of Bihar by the elected representatives of the people

The S.R.C. report anticipated economic imbalance between the Residual state of Bihar and Jharkhand if it was granted. The facts as have emerged during last 30 years defeated S. R. C. position throughly. The industrial potentialities of Jharkhand, on the one hand, have been exploited ruthlessly and, on the other, her backward agriculture, the only source of livelihood of her majority of the population, has been neglected unpardonably. As a result of that migration of the Jharkhandi to other states has phenomenally increased. The Jharkhandis have become much poorer than they were 30 years ago. But the economic growth of North Bihar has remained steady during these 3 decades. This is also true in the cases of other three states of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

The report of the S. R. C. thus not only suppressed the facts and propogated misconceptions but also played at the hands of the vested interests dominant in the political power structure of the four concerned states of its days by giving importance to the so called "Public Opinion outside South Bihar" disfavouing the creation of Jharkhand. It was a case of clear self-contradiction. In the paras 55, 62, 79 and 229 of the same Report the commission quotes authorities of the Nehru Committee Report, the J. V. P. Committee Report and the Dar Committee Report and concedes the principle that the wishes of the people concerned should be the main consideration in readjusting the territories of the State.

• Therefore, the Jharkhandis were denied justice chiefly because of the wrong premises the S. R. C. chose to stand on while looking into the matter.

#### **IV The Question of Nationality: The Right Premise of determining the question of statehood.**

India is a nation state consisting of many peoples with distinct cultural identities. There is no denying of the fact that inspite of the presence of cultural commonness there is a marked cultural diversity among the masses of the country. It cannot also be denied that along with the process of nation building

a paralled process of identity fulfilment on the part of the cultural units, which may be termed as nationalities, has been going on in pluralistic Indian society.

The process of nationality formation in the cultural mosaic of the country began long before the colonial period. During the Mughal and the following colonial periods owing to several favourable socio-economic factors some nationalities could consolidate their position and achieved share in Indian Polity. But the rest failed to complete their process of nationality formation. During the independence movement and consequent development of Indian nationalism both of these groups got involved in a greater cause of anti-colonial struggle. Regional identities remained, nevertheless, a reality though secondary to the question of great national or Indian identity. After the independence, however, question of identity of these people surfaced again. The former group achieved political and cultural recognition in the federation of India with statehood. But the other groups failed to do so. The quest for identity fulfilment on their part was, however, misunderstood by the national leaders and thus they were left out of the focus while S. R. C. was formed and guiding principles were laid for it. The former group of people was naturally benefited by the adoption of the concept of "linguistic state". But those whose process of nationality formation was still to be completed could not make any profit out the S. R. C. and thus their cause was blatantly defeated.

Now since the aspirations of these peoples to whom justice was denied could not be suppressed and moreover under a situation of political and economic discrimination their consolidation became ever more strong the Government of India had to concede to their demands. As a consequence a number of new states emerged during last few decades. The Government has infact already rejected the premiss of the S. R. C. without naming it.

For the larger interest of the nation it is very urgently needed that the Government should spell of its guiding principles in recognising politico-cultural identity of so far undermined peoples.

The Jharkhandis certainly constituted a nationality, practicing a distinct way of life as compared to their neighbouring nationalities such as the Bengalis, the Orias and the Beharies. Even during the Mughal period Jharkhandi people received socio-political recognition from the Delhi Sultanate. The British Raj also accepted the separate identity of the people and the region in the form of chutianagpur province (Raj) quite distinct from Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. Previously these four provinces were administratively united as Bengal. The Royal Proclamation of 12th December 1911 granted the people of Bihar, Chutianagpur and Orissa a separate status from Bengal. Subsequently Orissa was separated from Bihar and Chutianagpur in 1936. In the same logical consequence 'British Chotanagpur' should have been separated from Bihar. But unfortunately Chotanagpur Raj and its tributary princely states were forced to remain with Bihar even after independence and on the basis of the faulty and motivated state Reorganising Commission Report the Government of India put an end to this question.

#### **IV 3 Formation of a separate Jharkhand State will serve national interest better.**

Jharkhand has become an alluring grazing ground of the selfish exploiters belonging to the neighbouring nationalities. By grabbing the overwhelmingly major portion of job opportunities of the area the vested interests of these nationalities have created a social base to perpetuate its economic plunder and loot. They do not consider this region as their own country. The utterly corrupt administrative system run by them has created a counter-productive situation and atmosphere in Jharkhand. The children of the soil have been put out of the focus of all developmental activities. Their participation in the nation building process in the region has been intentionally debared to further the selfish ends of the people enjoying socio-economic and political power. The Jharkhandis have thus continually been marginalised. As a result of this all the developmental activities and productive forces have been virtually stranded despite the investment of a huge sum of money and

energy. The planned way of deprivation of the Jharkhandis in various ways including systematic change in demographic pattern by inviting people from outside the region in mass and forcing the children of the soil to out-migrate have been adding fuel to the fire of people's wrath which will, as a natural consequence, along with being self-destructive halt the wheel of progress in the region.

The people of Jharkhand are basically honest and simple. They are laborious and hard working. They know to eat out of their own labour. For the progress of any country these are the key qualities required on the part of its population. Once the rich natural and human resources of Jharkhand is combined and so far locked doors of self-initiative of the people of Jharkhand is opened free Jharkhand will become the nerve centre of both economic and spiritual progress of the country.

Creation of Jharkhand will also help the development of the neighbouring nationalities. The feudal aristocracy and corrupt administrative officials getting fattened on the easy source of black money will crumble down. The luxury of maintaining uneconomic land-holding pattern with absentee landlords will have to be given up. Land reform will become absolutely necessary and thus the unproductive poverty stricken millions will become productive and the widening gap between powerless majority and powerful minority will start decreasing.

Creation of Jharkhand State will thus not only enhance the Jharkhandis faith in the democratic structure of Indian polity by fulfilling their sense of identity but also help the nation march ahead to the doorstep of the 21st century by the Jharkhandis' vigorous participation in the mechanism of economic progress of the country.

#### **V Precedents and constitutional provisions, area and population :**

V. 1 Jharkhand is a constitutional demand under the provisions of the Indian Constitution. The Jharkhandis have constitutional right to place this demand

and to carry on peaceful struggle for achieving this goal.

The parliament has power to create a new state and pass bill for the same under article 2 of the Indian constitution. Under this constitutional provision the 1953 Andhra Act for creation of Andhra Pradesh, 1966, Bombay reorganisation Act for creation of Bombay state, 1966, Punjab reorganisation Act for creation of Punjab state and 1962 and Nagaland Act for creation of Nagaland were passed, and many other states have been created under the same article. Under article 2 (a), (b), (c), and article 3 parliament is empowered to exclude a portion of land from a state, to add to the area of a state, to reduce the area or name of a state. Parliament has used such powers vested in it in the creation of new states by making necessary changes, and addition and reorganising states. And required amendments have been made in schedule 1 and 4. Under the circumstances mentioned above the demand for the creation of Jharkhand state comprising 21 districts by adding (annexing) few districts from Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh to Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana is neither unconstitutional nor impractical, because adequate (step) provisions have already been made for such actions in the constitution itself.

As it is required to take opinions only of state assemblies of affected states, and if the Central Government accepts the genuineness of separate state of Jharkhand, the Central Government has power to take steps for the creation of state of Jharkhand in spite of the adverse opinions of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh state Governments.

In the light of clear constitutional provisions stated above the demand of separate state of Jharkhand constituted of 21 districts is quite constitutional and fulfils all the requirements for the creation of new states within Indian Union.

A few years ago the Government of Bihar created smaller commissioners, districts, subdivisions, blocks and panchayats out of bigger ones in view of administration and development. In such situations creation of Jharkhand state out of a big Bihar state

would be in line with the policy of the Government. This would facilitate solving administrative and development problems. Therefore, the demand of separate Jharkhand state is quite constitutional and necessary in the light of accepted policy of divisions into smaller units of existing administrative units. Besides, even in the light of fundamental human rights granted in the constitution creation of Jharkhand state is genuine as it is still backward in economic, social, political and educational spheres. The Central and State Governments have admitted this fact and again and again. Under the given circumstances the Jharkhandis be given the right to develop themselves according to their own hopes and aspiration by creating the separate state of Jharkhand. When creation of smaller state gives an opportunity to the oppressed, exploited and backward people of this region to develop themselves then it should be welcomed from the point of view of national development also.

Tragedy is that the demand of separate state of Jharkhand has been made time and again even after independence supported by all democratic way and means, yet the Government has been ignoring and sidetracking the issue. Moreover the Government has turned this demand into a law and order problem and has tried to put down the democratic movements of Jharkhandis by using all kinds of repressive measures against them. As the Government itself is using the repressive and violent methods and policy and trying to suppress the just movements of the people, then it is quite clear that Government policy itself is unconstitutional and undemocratic. Such wrong policy of the Government and violation of law and orders, and democratic principles have created great indignation and illfeeling towards the Government among the Jharkhandis. A growing feeling in Jharkhandis slowly building up that the Government which so lauds the democratic principles is not going to yield to the demand of separate state of Jharkhand by peaceful and constitutional means. Thus the Government is compelling the Jharkhandis to adopt undemocratic methods for which Government itself will be held responsible.

The process of Jharkhand movement is self-evident truth because people's aspirations

for centuries is now taking its shape as people's movement. Jharkhand coordination committee (J.C.C.) is promoting its programme according to the people's aspiration and therefore, mass support to its is quite natural. The all pervasive corruption in administration, loot in the name of development, open dacoity of forest products, land alienations and displacement of innocent people, grave political exploitation, deprivation of human rights, and rejection of the constitutional demand for separate state of Jharkhand and thereby suppressing the democratic people's movement by state power are symptoms of the general failure of the Government. Moreover the Government is trying to save its face by destroying the democratic people's movement in the name of law and order and thereby creating disturbance in a peaceful region like Jharkhand which is not healthy for the state and detrimental to the peace and unity of the whole country.

It can be said that concerned state Governments have always kept the central Government in dark in this matter. And to save its face from failure it has adopted the policy of hiding facts. If the central Government was sincerely informed about real situation in Jharkhand, the problem would have been solved long ago. Due to negative attitude of the state governments and their anti-people measures have pushed the people to the extreme to react against it and it has begun to be explosive here and there. Now particularly the government of Bihar is in panic and trying to give the impression and understanding to the Central Government that Jharkhand movement is being dominated by extremist elements and it is adopting violent policy and therefore deploy of military is essential to meet the growing unrest here. This logic of the Government of Bihar is completely wrong and baseless. On the contrary, the truth is that due to a total neglect to the age old Jharkhand movement and attempts to suppress it either by military power or by adopting the policy of divide and rule instead of trying to solve this problem across the table by negotiation and discussion using democratic means,

people have lost faith in the good will of the state Government. Now all Jharkhand people are united under the banner of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee (J.C.C.) and ready to take the movement to its logical consequence in solidarity with people of good will all over the country. The Central Government should know it for sure the reality of the situation and that it should consider the long pending demand for creation of Jharkhand state with all seriousness.

Jharkhand has always remained a peaceful region and still is. The state governments are responsible for making it a disturbed region. If the representatives of Jharkhand are given chance to appear before the Central Government and present the attitudes and activities of state Governments then the entire situation will become clear that the peaceful Jharkhand region is being turned into a battle ground by the concerned state Governments.

## V. 2 Political and geographical boundary of Jharkhand state:

21 districts are included in the proposed map of Jharkhand which are as follows:

- (1) Ranchi (2) Lohardaga (3) Gumla (4) Singhbhum
- (5) Palamau (6) Giridih (7) Hazaribagh (8) Dhanbad
- (9) Dumka (10) Godda (11) Deoghar (12) Sahebganj
- (13) Keonjhar (14) Mayurbhanj (15) Sundergarh
- (16) Sambalpur (17) Surguja (18) Raigarh (19) Purulia
- (20) Bankura (21) Midnapur.

These 21 districts are geographically, historically, sociologically and culturally the integral part of Jharkhand.

According to 1971 census the total area of Jharkhand (21 districts) is 1,87,646 square kilometers and population,

3,05,98,991 of which 92 lakhs are Adivasis and the remaining are Sadans of all communities. 85% people consist of Adivasis and Sadans (scheduled castes, descheduled tribes and other backward classes etc.)

The above statistics—area and population of Jharkhand prove the proposed separate state of Jharkhand quite viable and strong.

## DECLARATION OF JHARKHAND CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

### PREAMBLE

1. It is the demand of the Jharkhandi people that every organisation, be it political, social, cultural or literary in nature, supporting the demand of a separate Jharkhand state should come together, without further delay to form a joint forum. And on the basis of a common minimum programme they should immediately gear up the age old movement for the reconstruction of Jharkhand and emancipation of her humiliated people.

2. The strong voice of the people of Jharkhand in support of this demand is being heard throughout the land in different seminars, conventions and meetings. Particularly the convention held at Jamshedpur (20-21 October, 1986) and at Hazaribagh (30-31, December, 1986) emerged as the most representative forums, participated by all the prominent social and political representatives of the people, to put forward this demand on the logical ground of a historical analysis of the movement.

3. Summing up the experiences of the half a century old Jharkhand movement the activists and the intellectuals unanimously declared through the aforesaid forums that the Jharkhand question is in essence a nationality question and the problems of the Jharkhandis cannot be solved without securing autonomy in the form of a separate Jharkhand state in accordance with the provisions enshrined in the constitution of India.

This would, however, only initiate the process of democratisation of Jharkhand and reconstruction of Jharkhandi identity, and, therefore, would be the first step towards the achievement of the final objective of the movement, the dreams of the Jharkhandi martyrs, of building a new Jharkhand where there would be no exploitation.

4. To explore the possibilities of the formation of a co-ordination committee on the basis of a common minimum programme, the Jharkhand Intellectuals Form convened a Delegate Conference of all organisations supporting the cause of Jharkhand at

Ranchi on 27-28 June, '87. The representative of 21 organisations attended the conference and after a threadbare discussion agreed to the proposals of the Forum. Accordingly an ad-hoc co-ordination committee was formed with 25 representatives of the participating organisations. Dr. B. P. Keshri was nominated as the convenor of the same.

5. In the delegate meeting a strong opinion emerged in favour of adopting a logical point of view with regards to the nature of the Jharkhand movement by analysing different and even contradictory positions of various organisations on this question. Thus a 'Draft Committee' was formed to carry on the responsibility in the meeting.

The ad-hoc Co-ordination Committee, in its meeting held on 23rd July '87, accepted the "Draft Declaration of the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee" prepared by the "Draft Committee" with some modifications. The Committee also decided to circulate the "Draft Declaration" among different organisations supporting the cause of Jharkhand so that they could reflect on it seriously and later on the final shape could be given to it on the basis of unanimity and thus initiatives could be taken for the formal constitution of the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee. In accordance with this decision a conference was organised in Ramgarh from 11th till 13th September, 1987. It was attended by 439 registered participants representing 49 organisations. The participants discussed over the draft declaration in details and made certain modifications. Finally it was adopted unanimously by them with great enthusiasm.

The text of the declaration, adopted in the Ramgarh conference and presented in the meeting of the Jharkhand co-ordination Committee held on 4th October 1987 after giving final hope to it, is as follows.

6. After reviewing different proposals on the questions of the nature of the demanded autonomy of Jharkhand and its politico-geographical boundary the Co-ordination Committee agrees upon the popular demand of the statehood for Jharkhand

comprising the present 21 districts of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and W. Bengal (i. e., Singhbhum, Ranchi, Lohardaga, Gumla, Palamu, Giridih, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Dumka, Godda, Deoghar, Sahebganj, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sambhalpur, Surguja, Raigarh, Purulia, Bankura, and Midnapur.

7. The foundation of the claim of this politico-geographical territory is its cultural unity, geo-physical uniformity and structural oneness of economic life, which differ conspicuously from its neighbouring areas. Since all the 21 districts form the integral part of this cultural unit having the same historical background and tradition any proposal which narrows down the proposed territory is bound to be anti-people because it disregards the aspiration of the people, divides them and is unable to solve their basic problems.

With this unanimously accepted understanding the Co-ordination committee finds the proposal of demanding a union territory comprising Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas alone in the name of Jharkhand as unacceptable. The Co-ordination Committee turns down other similar proposals too, such as, the areas under South West Frontier Agency or erstwhile Chotanagpur province.

8. Jharkhand has become a grazing ground, the most alluring of the country; of not only national capital belonging to the nationalities other than the Jharkhandis but more of the big monopoly capital of which major portion belongs to the multinational foreign companies capitals invested in the companies of the Tatas and Birlas, Heavy Engineering Corporation of Hatia, Steel Industries of Bokaro and Rourkela, Suvarnarekha multipurpose Project, Koel-Karo Hydro-electric Project, Dams of Kutku and Hirakund, different Tiger Projects etc. are of this nature. The formation of separate Jharkhand state goes directly against the interest of these monsters because that will curb the unhindered exploitation of the natural resources and cheap labour power of Jharkhand. Secondly, it will also go against the interest of the ruling classes of neighbouring nationalities and their political parties because the shifting of political power from them

to the people of Jharkhand will immediately put a strong check to their national and class oppression on the latter. And finally it goes against the interest of the central government too, which represents a corrupt, anti-people and oppressive state power serving the interest of the capitalism, feudalism and the super powers. Therefore all these forces are to be fought against to achieve the just demand of the Jharkhandis. The Co-ordination committee declares these forces as the real enemies of the Jharkhand movement.

9. Though the Jharkhand movement faces powerful opponents, still it can achieve victory if it unites all sections of the Jharkhandis and forges unity with movements of all oppressed people of the country fighting for identity, equality, democracy and justice, the people who are fighting against the capitalist, feudal and imperialist exploitations, against cast and sex discriminations, against national oppression, and against denial of constitutional safeguards.

10. The Co-ordination Committee categorically declares that all the sons of the soil, both the tribes, the Sadans and others who share a common history and cultural heritage and practice a common value system of Jharkhand do constitute the Jharkhandi population. Therefore, Jharkhand movement is the movement for the emancipation of these people and every attempt to divide them in the line of 'tribes' and 'Sadans', 'Christians' and 'Hindus' or 'Sarnaits' and 'Mulims' are to be repelled with iron hands.

11. A considerable section of people belonging to other nationalities and identities, such as Biharis, Marwaris, Bengalis, Orias etc., are living in the Jharkhand region. The Co-ordination Committee feels that their co-operation should be sought to strengthen the Movement. Jharkhandis should unite with them on the basis of fraternal relationship. What they should oppose is the present state of affairs in which the outsiders are exercising hegemony over the Jharkhandis. An attempt should be made to isolate those outsiders who belong to working class from those who are exploiters. The movement should always be spearheaded against the latter.



12. Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee feels that the Jharkhand movement should not be kept confined within the level of politics alone but should also involve social, cultural and literary movements which also reflect the aspirations of the Jharkhandi people. To intensify the movement, J.C.C. resolves that a strong unity among the workers, peasants, petty traders, students, women, intellectuals and people engaged in services should be forged immediately on the basis of equal status for all the communities, such as The Mundas, Santals, Hos, Oraons, Kurmis, Kharias, Paharias, Sadans etc., and for all religious faiths, e. g., Sarna Dharam, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism etc. The C. C. further declares that in the proposed Jharkhand state equal rights of all the minority groups in the process of decision making would be guaranteed.

13. Along with the struggle for the achievement of the Jharkhand state, J.C.C. feels the importance of launching a united struggle against the forces which have been devastating the Jharkhandi people and their land, such as the fast moving strides of the anti-people industrialisation and urbanisation, denudation of forest and construction of big dams, alienation of lands and displacement of the Jharkhandis in the name of 'development'. The member organisations should take up also some other important issues, such as, the demand for the recognition of Jharkhandi languages by putting them in the 8th Schedule of the constitution of India, the construction of adequate hostels, release of hostel grants and proper implementation of reservation of STs, SCs and OBCs, the implementation of the Mondal Commission Report, economic deprivation and sex exploitation of Jharkhandi women, the restoration of alienated land belonging to the Jharkhandies in general and tribal land in particular, the implementation of the disbursement of minimum wages, the practice of engaging Jharkhandis as contract labourers, the absorption of the Jharkhandis in both government and private factories and establishments, fixing up of just prices for agricultural and forest produce, rescheduling of tribes descheduled in 1931, acceptance of the policy of uniform schedule-status to communities presently having different status in

different states of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, Police atrocities, Corruption in administration, Practice of bribery etc.

To solve the contradictions among the people, such as, litigations related to land and forest, conflicts on social issues, disputes on religious questions, etc., J.C.C. emphasises on the activation of traditional village panchayats and Manki Munda Parha-patti-Manjhi-pargana system of the past.

14. The Jharkhandis are peace-loving people and they prefer a peaceful solution of their problems. However, as experience shows, the exploiters of Jharkhand have always imposed violent repression on the Jharkhandis. The people have no way but to resist this brutality if they want to carry on the struggle forward.

15. The organisation enrolling themselves as members of J.C.C. will maintain their own independent status and organisational setup. But all of them will implement the common programme as will be decided by JCC from time to time.

16. In view of the contradictory views prevailing among the member organisations regarding participation in the assembly and parliamentary elections the JCC decides to conduct debate and discussions on this subject to achieve unanimity on this issue, and agreed that until a broad consensus was achieved the member organisations might follow their own policies in this respect.

17. JCC resolves to organise leadership training camps time to time to educate the activists of the member organisations. A training institute will be established in an opportune time.

18. With a view to keep the member organisations informed about the struggles of the people in different areas and to exchange views and experiences the CC would publish occasional bulletins.

19. To advance the literary and cultural movements the CC would help to recognise and activate the Jharkhand Sahitya Academy, presently known as Tribal and Regional Languages Academy.

20. Millions of Jharkhandis have been living a wretched life outside Jharkhand. In Assam, for instance, they are recognised neither as STs nor as SCs and thus denied of any facilities of education and reservation in jobs. They have no identity of their own except for the derogatory identity of the 'coolies'. There is a systematic attempt to destroy their cultural tradition. The situation is no better in the tea gardens of North Bengal. The CC decides to fight in solidarity with these diaspora Jharkhandis in their struggle for identity and against discrimination.

21. The financial burden of the CC would be borne by the member organisations in the form of monthly subscriptions.

22. The CC would take initiative to form its branches in the district levels too.

23. The CC is placing this declaration on behalf of the member organisations before the people of Jharkhand and calls them up to rise like a mighty storm to destroy all the forces of national oppression, discrimination and economic exploitation and to materialise the dreams of the hundred-martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Jharkhand.

