DIALECTIC OF STATE AND MOVEMENT

THE IDEA AND IDENTITY OF JHARKHAND

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
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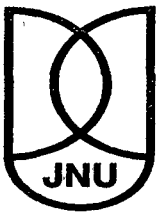
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SHASHWATI



CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
New Delhi-110067 INDIA
Tel. : 011-26704413 Fax : 011-2671603

Date: 29.07.2010

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled **'Dialectic of State and Movement: The Idea and Identity of Jharkhand'** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other institution.

Shashwati
SHASHWATI

CERTIFICATE

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

Rajarshi Dasgupta
Dr. Rajarshi Dasgupta
(Supervisor)
SUPERVISOR
Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Gopal Guru
Prof. Gopal Guru
(Chairperson)
Chairperson
Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
Delhi-110067

Contents

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—INTRODUCTION—

There is more to the understanding the concept of a 'tribe' than a simple imagery of semi-naked, bow and arrow wielding people who dance and sing their way through an idyllic life, tucked away in dense forests in the remote parts of the country, untouched and unaware of the *modern* day amenities that define progress, civilization and rationality. This is the most *commonsensical* imagination of the tribal that has dominated the psyche of the non-tribal population for almost all ages now. The link that is forged between the communities recognized as tribes with their natural surroundings forms a part of the same *essentialized* image, though it cannot be totally disputed that "for the tribal, his association with his geographical surroundings has a deeper influence on his beliefs, customs and values"[1]. The issue at present is, therefore, how our accepted ideas of modernity and the embedded notions of material progress, development and culture make us complicit in the process of '*othering*' the tribal. "This, naturally places the people and the civilizations lying beyond familiar motifs of mainstream culture, that is in the remote geographical territories in forests, deserts and mountains, in the other slot: the wild, the savage and the barbaric"[2]. As we know that this *other* is always a relational identity: one always tends to evaluate the tribes and their life-world according to the paradigms of the *modern* and the *present*[3]. The simultaneous placing of the term *modern* and the *present* is not a coincidence; it is a norm to consider the *present* as the *modern.* This 'progressive time of self-conscious modernity"[4] legitimizes its presence against the "crude representation of the earlier times (leading to) "self–assured, righteous, and even logical explanation offered for

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[1] Kumkum Yadav, *Tribals in Indian Narratives*, (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advances Studies, 2003) p.10

[2] Ibid, p. 7

[3] Ibid. The author tells us how "tribal reality in most non-tribal discourses is subordinately firstly, by making non-tribal definitions its point of departure, its reference point. Questions such as who is a tribal and what it means to be one are thereby regulated by alien parameters. Secondly, it has to contend with the task of proving the 'usefulness' of its own practices and values against basically non-tribal paradigms. It is placed in an unenviable and unsought for position defined in terms of an imposed vulnerability which denies tribal reality a role in the deliberations which seek to enlist its own attributes and arrive at decisions concerning itself".

[4] Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-writing in a Colonial Society*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 44

many biases, deliberate or not so deliberate"[5]. The identity of the tribe and its reference point in the non-modern, irrational, savage existence is one such bias which has over the time been *naturalized.*

How does this image of the 'tribe' as the normative *primitive*, then gets accommodated in the modern-day representative politics? The *fact* of the political identity of the tribe had been established long back, especially when the nationalist history in the course of working itself out, realized that it could not escape the question of the *primitive within*, owing to its over-dependence on the colonial history[6]. Therefore, denial of a political identity to the 'tribe' was out of question; but the nature of this political identity could be manipulated in order that its accommodation in the political mainstream could be one of choice[7]. This is where the sociological identity of the tribe was pressed into service, and the identity of the *un-modern, primitive* tribe was sealed so as to rob him off any political agency, transforming him instead into "objects of representational knowledge"[8]. The deployment of anthropology in the interests of the ruling regime, is not something new. As a matter of fact we know how anthropology, as a discipline, had served as an *objective* means in the hands of the colonial regime in India to *comprehend and discipline* society. The transfer of the sovereign power in the hands of the nationalist elite saw by and large the same process repeating itself. Though the nationalists were quick enough to recognize the inherent racism in the colonial knowledge discourse, they nevertheless employed it, ignoring its "bad anthropology because it is all done in a good cause"[9]. The *institutionalization* of the fact of *primordiality* taken to be inherent in the identity

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[5] Kumkum Yadav, *Tribals in Indian Narratives*, (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advances Studies, 2003) p. 8

[6] According to Prathama Banerjee, that the first kind of nationalist history writing happened in Bengal in the nineteenth century whereby the "colonized" Bengali historians tried to counter the accusations of being " 'backward', of lacking history, of lacking agency". However, As Banerjee maintains, "that in order to write history of their own, the colonized felt that they had to first deal with what had appeared as their own 'backwardness' in time, and, more importantly, with their everyday proximity with real-life 'primitives'". See Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-writing in a Colonial Society*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 7

[7] By this I refer to the politics of relegating the identity of the tribe to the cultural realm. This process has been termed as *culturisation* by scholars like Prathama Banerjee, which was responsible for denying any political agency to the people defined as the tribe. This aspect has been discussed in the third chapter.

[8] Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-writing in a Colonial Society*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 7

[9] Adam Kuper, "The Concept of Indigeneity, a Discussion", *Social Anthropology* (2006), 14/1, p. 22. By 'good cause' I refer to the attempts by the nationalist leadership towards 'integrating' the tribes of the country so that they could contribute to the cause of nation- building.

of the tribe has been the primary strain that has historically worked on and affected its political articulation. The dissertation seeks to explore this kind of identity creation, and in what ways the identity of the tribe remains a historically contested terrain. This question has been explored in the context of the Jharkhand movement.

The following chapters intend to study the Jharkhand movement in its different aspects. The formation of a separate Jharkhand in the year 2000 is important in several respects. It is hailed as the definitive victory after the years of *adivasi* struggle against the '*diku*' raj in the Chotanagpur region. The history of exploitation of the *adivasi* society in Jharkhand became *visible* in the national historical accounts since the beginning of the eighteenth century, because it was the time which has been chronologically recorded as the beginning of the *adivasi* revolts against their exploiters. The dissertation intends to explore this chronological history because it presents a rather linear and problematic history of the formation of Jharkhand, with not only a definite beginning but also an end which is perceived in the formation of the separate state of Jharkhand. This approach has a very strong implication in terms of the correlation it establishes between the aspirations of the communities of Jharkhand with the political recourse to a separate state. The objective is to review this correlation to see whether these aspirations are actually met in the formation of the separate state. The other thing is that very paradoxically, this uninterrupted and smooth narrative that is put forth as an account of the Jharkhand movement does not match the shifting identities of the *diku* or the *adivasi*. The history of the Jharkhand movement is in fact also a history of changing political identities; in different historical moments the identity of the *adivasi* and the *diku* acquired new meanings. In this context, the chapters seek to explore whether the Jharkhand movement can be accorded a singular history and identity, based as it is on a set of variables which keep transforming with the times. In the following chapters I propose to see whether we can reduce the nature, identity and demand of the Jharkhand movement as an outcome of a process of *timeless structuring*, which chooses to ignore any changes in either of the three factors.

The objective of the dissertation is therefore, to study the changes that the adivasi movements of the eighteenth-nineteenth century Chotanagpur have undergone which

witness their effective conversion into the Jharkhand[10] movement in the twentieth century. It is important to recognize the changes that the movement has gone through in order to make sense of the different actors that have figured in the course of the movement. It is through this process that we can understand how the *adivasi vs diku* axis has been configured from time to time according to different political imperatives. For example, one of the chapters explores how the independent state in India post-1947, does not remain the primary *diku* for the *adivasi* movement in Jharkhand. That is because of the dawning of the realization upon the leadership of the movement that the state serves an important channel of institutional resources, which could be benefitted from. In this regard, we must refer to the changing nature of the state in India due to the process of decolonization in 1947. However, it is this interaction with the state that forced corresponding changes in the identity and demands of the movement. The dissertation specifically focuses on this aspect of the state- colonial and the post-colonial- as an important agent of change *for* the movement. The interaction of the movement with the state has been explored ranging from its directly confrontationist phase in the pre-independent times to the more institutionalized interaction, suiting the contours of representational politics of the post-independent state. In my opinion the changing nature of this interaction is an indication of the peculiar strains put on the state and its governmental processes by the Jharkhand movement. Now, how the state responds to these strains is however another area of study because it has implications for the *nature* of the Indian state, and its assumed distance from the colonial state.

This brings us then to the ways in which the state functions or to be more specific, governs. The commonsense understanding equates the existence of colonial regime with the use of brute force and some kind of physical subjugation. The negation of these aspects is the most powerful justification accorded to establish how the independent state in India was *different* from its predecessor. A clear cut link is forged between the changed imperatives before the post-colonial Indian state- which in no

[10] When I say Jharkhand movement in the twentieth century, I use it in the specific sense of the demand for a separate state of Jharkhand. Though the term of 'Jharkhand' as a political identity is of recent coinage (it was first used in 1939 by Jaipal Singh of the Adivasi Mahasabha, to express the demand for a separation from the province of Bihar), the term as denoting the 'land of the forests' had been in use from much before. For example, see S.C. Roy. *The Mundas and Their Country*, (Calcutta: Authors Guild Publishers,1912) p. 62

way resembles the extractive colonial regime- and the way it governs its population. On the one hand this link needs further probing; this however, is beyond the purview of the present work. On the other hand, it does look into the continuities, if any, between the colonial rulers and the post-independent Indian state, in their methods as well the imperatives to *rule*. The dissertation looks into the process of *categorization* and *identification* as a methodology common to both the regimes to govern the Indian society. We have therefore provided accounts of how the colonial rulers in India developed a system of identification to make sense of the social space, and how this also served as a means to impress an *order* on it. The chapters ahead are going to review how this system continued in the post-colonial state as well. Some of the categories that have been explored in the process are 'tribe' and 'scheduled tribe' and how they had been employed within the Jharkhand movement and the state, to set rolling a process of identity creation which has serious repercussions on the way in which demands are articulated by the movement and how those demands are responded to by the state apparatus. Towards the end I also want to explore whether the state's access to a monopoly of force has a role to play in other governmental processes of the state.

By trying to read the interaction process between the state and the Jharkhand movement, I intend to understand the relationship between the state and society, which also involves challenging the rather conventional understanding of an antithetical relation between the two. The state and the movement interact in a more complex way than what is usually assumed to be. The complexity of the relationship is seen in not only how each transgresses the other's space in numerous ways, but it is also reflected in how they influence and reinforce each other. Whatever the nature of their interaction, it is always marked by an element of *contestation*. By discussing the nature of interaction between the state and society in a new light, one is able see the multiple ways the state structure enters the society, making the boundary between the two more and more indistinct. For example, in the second chapter I talk about the particular *experiences* of the state that impresses upon the consciousness of the tribal population in the nineteenth century; the state was seen as an *enemy* because it "assisted directly in the reproduction of landlordism"[11]. Likewise, the Santhal

[11] Ranajit Guha. *Elementary Aspect of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi: Oxford university Press, 1983) p. 26

rebellion of 1855 "established a well defined domain of insurgency in which their operations had a free play between all three categories of three foes (i.e the *sarkar*, *sahukar* and *zamindar*), and were permuted in all possible ways"[12]. These *experiences* of the state undergo radical transformation as the movement enters the twentieth century, not so much because the nature of the state changes, but more so because the interaction between the social movement of the state become more *diversified* with time. Thus, the institutional phase of the Jharkhand movement saw the emergence of such political parties and organizations which modeled themselves completely according to the criteria set by the national level political parties, dabbling with the state apparatus from a much closer distance. Moreover, the post-colonial state in India also transformed its primary way of *dealing* with society: it had now constitutional rights to offer, it set provisions for reservations for the tribes in the employment and education, and it sought to create equality in society by making citizens out of erstwhile colonial subjects. There is no denying the fact that "a significant number of tribals have successfully gained significantly from the policies of compensatory justice."[13] Similarly, the state-induced mobilization of the political identity of the tribe has rendered success to the tribes in "mounting a broader critique of the development programs in Jharkhand."[14] However, one has to contextualize these state provisions against a new kind of governmental process that the functioning of the modern states is identified with. This kind of governmental logic implies a methodological shift in the way the modern state seeks to *discipline* its population. How far this methodological shift is also indicative of a shift in the political rationale of the state is another important question. In the context of this dissertation, I have tried exploring the state- sponsored categories of the tribe and the scheduled tribes to see how they cast a different identity on the movement, thereby forcing a change in the demands of the latter.

The existing literature on Jharkhand has looked at the movement from different perspectives, responding to some of these questions in different ways. Each of these works count on a distinct theoretical perspective on the state and the nature of its

[12] Ibid
[13] Stuart Corbridge, 'Competing Inequalities: The Scheduled Tribes and the Reservations System in India's Jharkhand', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (Feb., 2000), 59/1 p 19
[14] Ibid.

relationship to the Jharkhand movement. Many of these works trace the Jharkhand movement from the Chotanagpur revolts of the eighteenth-nineteenth century till the time the demand for separate Jharkhand as a political idea was slowly gaining shape. Many of these works like that of Sajal Basu's *Jharkhand movement: Ethnicity and Culture of Silence* (1994), Victor Das's *Jharkhand, Castle Over the Graves* (1992) and Nirmal Sengupta's Jharkhand: *Fourth World Dynamics* (1982) predate the formation of Jharkhand[15] and provide rich analyses of how the process of concretization of the demand for the separate state of Jharkhand was in place, though they also differ somewhat in the imperatives behind such a state formation. Sajal Basu sees the demand for Jharkhand firmly placed at the interplay of the processes of *politicization of ethnicity* and *ethnicization of politics*.[16] The demand for Jharkhand is a simultaneous reflection of both: a case where the ethnic identity of the population has increasingly been transformed and diluted in terms of the way it is defined to suit the politics of state formation; at the same time, it is the ethnic identity of the population that forms a basis to their evolving political identity. Similarly, Victor Das gives a very conventional analysis of the Jharkhand movement stating how the struggle for the Jharkhand state in it post-independent India embody the struggles and aspirations of the *adivasi* masses of the pre-colonial and colonial India. Nirmal Sengupta on the other hand, identifies the struggle for a separate Jharkhand with the struggle of tribal peasants and the industrial workers coming together against the exploitative social relations resulting in increasing dispossession of the toiling masses from the means of production. It is in this work that ideas relating to the classificatory process of the modern state in its colonial and the pre-colonial form are discussed, whereby the state seeks to create divisions within the indigenous population by creating identities of the tribe and the scheduled tribe. Another seminal work on Jharkhand is by Amit Prakash called *Jharkhand: The Politics of Development and Identity* (2001) which presents a rich historical account of the evolution of the identity of the Jharkhand from the colonial times to the present. This work tries to look at the process of identity-formation in Jharkhand tracing it from the *adivasi* revolts of the pre-colonial and colonial times to the phase of institutional and representative politics of the post-independence phase. He analyses the various strains this process of identity

[15] Jharkhand was formed as the 23rd state of the Indian union in Nov., 2000.
[16] Sajal Basu, *Jharkhand Movement: Ethnicity and the Culture of Silence*, (Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1994)

formation in Jharkhand undergoes, before the culminating in the formation of the separate Jharkhand in the year 2000. Through such an analysis, Amit Prakash also seeks to explore elements of continuity between the colonial and post-colonial state in India, especially in the ways they respond to the *presence* of tribes in their midst. One common theme running through many of these accounts is how the identity of Jharkhand shifted from one of ethnicity to that of regionalism. For example, we can look at Arunabha Ghosh's work on Jharkhand Movement: *A Study in Politics of Regionalism* (1998). These works trace the transformation of the ethnic identity that is thought to represent Jharkhand, into a regional identity, representing a wider social identity, owing to a number of factors.

The dissertation draws considerably upon many of these works, but also in a way to expand the questions that have been put forth therein. I also seek to review a few assumptions that go into the making of some of these works. Like for example, the shift from an ethnic to a regional identity is seen by many as a dilution of the aspirations of the *adivasi* masses that informs the demand of a separate state. While this narration cannot be disputed, it does not explore how ethnicity and regionalism for that matter are themselves 'constructs' at any given time. What we understand by *ethnicity* or *adivasi* needs to be analyzed as identities that are constantly changing owing to changing circumstances and politics. One cannot at any point of time treat these identities as a *given* because there is an inherent danger of creation of an essential image of what we understand by Jharkhand movement by fixing its identity in time. Therefore, the dissertation seeks to problematize any idea pertaining to a fixed nature of either the identity or the demands within the Jharkhand movement. **As has been said earlier, the dissertation looks into the interaction between the process of identity-creation within the movement, the corresponding demands of the movement and the intervening process of state policy formulation based on the logic of identification and categorization.**

Chapterisation:

Corresponding to this larger question, the dissertation is divided into three chapters. The **first** chapter discusses the different demands that have been thrown up during the course of the movement, trying to say how the Jharkhand movement was not just about the singular demand of state formation. Instead it was constituted by a variety of different demands beginning in the nineteenth century Chotanagpur which get condensed in the final demand of the separate state of Jharkhand as the movement enters the twentieth century. The first chapter opens with a general discussion on the imperative to review our *entrenched* understanding with regards to the relation between state and society. It emerges as more important in the case of the Jharkhand movement because once we acknowledge the numerous shifts that the movement has undergone over the time, we also have to see how most of these changes were induced by the growing interaction with the state apparatus. Such an approach requires decentering the common understanding of the state-society relationship to grasp the complex levels at which this interaction takes place, which then reshapes the entire social space. The first chapter seeks to locate the shifting demands of the movement against this **dialectic of state and movement**, to understand how the demand for a separate Jharkhand, was induced at a specific time in history as a result of changed circumstances. The chapter seeks to explore this aspect through examples from the three major revolts of the nineteenth century, namely, the Kol rebellion (1831-1832), the Santhal *hul* (1855) and the Birsa *ulgulan* (1895-1900).

One of the primary ways through which the state intervenes in society is through the process of policy-formulation. As has been contended by many scholars, this process of state policy-initiation begins by *identifying* its target first, which may also include the process of *creating* one. The initial proposition about a shift in the demands of the movement has to be located against the state identification process which gave birth to the identities of the 'tribe' and the 'scheduled tribe'. This process of categorization is the subject of the **second** chapter. The identity of the scheduled tribe forms our basic understanding of the category of people called the 'tribe'.

Changes in demands of the movement imply a change in its identity too. For example, a particular set of demands are identified with a specific set of people; when the identity of this people or the community changes, then new demands are generated. In short, we mean to say that the process of state identification forced a change in the demands put forth by the movement, by defining the people who could make such claims in the first place. This process of identity creation is a contested process. The institutionalization of a particular identity by the state to define a particular group of people, say for example, the scheduled tribe, has several impacts on the movement, one of which is seen in the way the movement negotiates with the question of self-identity. The identity constituting Jharkhand has acquired different forms over the years, and the **third** chapter deals with some of these identities, which are in deep contestation with each other.

The dissertation therefore tries to map the different shifts in the Jharkhand movement in terms of its identity and the demands. As the title suggests, I seek to analyze the shift in the Jharkhand movement, in the nature of a shift from an *idea* to *identity*. By identity I mean to say how the history of the Jharkhand movement gets concretized in the identity of a separate state. I do not mean to essentialise any idea which I claim, represents the Jharkhand movement and which gets *diluted* with time. My intention is to analyze the factors that cast one impending identity on the history of the movement i.e. a movement for separate statehood. I see it as a historical transformation in the identity and nature of the movement.

—CHAPTER ONE—

Jharkhand Movement: Multiple Movements and the Early Demands

As outlined in the Introduction to this dissertation, the intent of this chapter is to study the "Jharkhand movement"[1] in terms of the different demands that have been thrown up in the course of its assumed singular history of more than two hundred years. By examining these different demands, this chapter in one way seeks to review this very conventional history of Jharkhand, which traces the formation of the separate state of Jharkhand back to the 'tribal'[2] revolts that swept through the region of south Bihar- also known as Chotanagpur- as far back as the 18th century. For example, one cannot help but notice how studies on Jharkhand and its formation start with a detailed account of the incidents of 'tribal' revolts that shook Chota-Nagpur region starting in the early 18th century- primary amongst them being the Kol rebellion of 1831-32, the Munda uprising of 1820s, the Santhal insurrection of 1855[3]. The post-independent phase of the Jharkhand movement owes its lineage to this earlier phase of the movement; and in this, the demand for a separate state is seen as an extension or corollary of the demand for tribal autonomy in the 18th century. Similarly, the contemporary phase of the movement very successfully invoked the iconic figures of the earlier times like that of Birsa Munda and Sido-Kanhu who had raised voice against colonial intrusion, and thereby creating a link between what is called the demand for tribal autonomy and separate statehood. This could not have been better expressed and embodied in the official website of Jharkhand Government which describes the formation of Jharkhand as: "The 28th state of the Indian Union was

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[1] The use of the term "Jharkhand movement" to denote the history of the entire region and its formation, is done for convenience sake and is not indicative in any way of the element of singularity that conventional historiography accords to the movement.

[2] The use of the term 'tribe' stands contested, entirely different connotations have been attached to it: in the discourse of the state; or by the discipline of anthropology, and even the movement which works with different meanings of the term in its different phases. This chapter looks into these different meanings in further sections

[3] It is debatable as to what extent can these incidents of revolts be attributed an exact date line. Scholars like Prathama Banerjee had argued how the attribution of chronology only serves as a mode of deciding what can be passed as authentic history. For further discussion, see Bannerjee "Historic Acts? Santhal Rebellion and the Temporality of Practice", in *Studies in History*, 15/1-2, 1999, pp. 209-246

brought into existence by the Bihar Reorganisation Act on Nov 15, 2000- (on) the birth anniversary of the legendary Bhagwan Birsa Munda"[4]. The Jharkhand Government thus at once successfully celebrates the legacy of the Birsa Munda and the struggle he led against the colonial rulers as well as constructs a legacy by equating it with the contemporary struggle for Jharkhand. As per this mode of history-writing, what is referred to as the Jharkhand movement, and its entire history, is aimed at and hence progressed towards the achievement of a separate state for its tribal population.

It is not assumed that the different demands articulated in the course of two hundred years and more, bear no relation to each other. The tribal revolts starting from the 18th century were against practices such as: land-usurpation and illegal rent collection, the main responsibility of which was on a class of *zamindars* and *thikadars*, as well as the *mahajans*. This class- largely composed of non-tribal population- was seen partially as a creation of the colonial government owing to its administrative and revenue needs, and which was instituted amongst the tribal communities from outside by the alien government. Thus the tribal revolts of the earlier phase directed their attacks against this ever-increasing interference of the "outsiders" who had taken over their land, forest and ultimately, their livelihood. The contemporary phase of the movement also invokes the notion of "outsider" who had to be displaced so that self-rule by the tribal communities in terms of a separate state could be established. The concept of the 'outsider' is best expressed in the traditional term used by the indigenous communities called the '*diku*'. The incidents of land-alienation and displacement in the present times can thus be seen as a continuation from the past; the main reason behind this is the supposed lack of ability to self-rule on part of the tribal communities, and hence the primary demand of separate statehood. The memorandum "Formation of Jharkhand State with 21 Districts of the Jharkhand Area" which was submitted to the President of India by the Jharkhand Coordination Committee on 10th of December 1987 articulated the problem as: "thus in the absence of political power at the hands of the Jharkhandis the forces of 'development' have turned to be that of 'destruction for them"[5]. The Jharkhand Committee assumes that the creation of the separate state of

[4] Official state website : http://jharkhand.nic.in/, accessed on 13.06.2010
[5] Quoted from R. D. Munda and S. Bosu Mullick ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2003) p. 369

Jharkhand will be the ultimate cure for all the ills that have inflicted the region and its people; it also stated that the contemporary demand for a separate Jharkhand is nothing but, "*just the continuation and extension of the movement for the Jharkhandi's emancipation*" which has been, since the 19th century, witnessed in the "countless revolts and liberation movements led by the people of Jharkhand to preserve and protect their identity"[6].

One cannot help but notice certain dominant linkages between the different phases[7] of the movement. In all its phases, the movement has been characterised by an element of ethnic assertion, which means that the different communities were mobilised on the basis of a cultural identity. The revolts of the early nineteenth century against land dispossession put forward the logic that land is not just an economic source of livelihood for the communities inhabiting the region, but is also a marker of the cultural identity of these very communities, especially the tribes. Thus encroachments of any kind especially by 'alien' exploiters: jagirdars, thikedars, mahajans, the British etc., was perceived as a threat to the autonomous cultural lives of the tribes. Many scholars regard this as the core issue pertaining to the indigenous people of India; as Samyadip Chatterji and B. Mullick phrase it: "that their identity is closely linked to the natural resources and the environment"[8], thereby implying a close link between the cultural traditions, ecology and economy. The importance accorded to the autonomous existence of cultural systems of indigenous populations lies in the fact that they ensure "social control mechanisms"[9]. These mechanisms see to the continuation and sustenance of economic resources for generations to come. Thus the struggles to safeguard indigenous rights over land and other natural resources are analogous to saving several indigenous communities, especially the tribes from extinction. Similarly, in the phase that began after independence, the Jharkhand movement in the context of a wider social base[10] deploys ethnicity as adhesive to bring together

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[6] Ibid, pp. 365-366

[7] Again, the use of the term 'phases' does not rest on any presumption of a teleological movement which can be neatly divided into phases: each phase with a set of demands of its own. Such a narration has however dominated what many scholars term as "disciplinary" history; say for example, nationalist history in India, which renders its own chronology on time to make sense of "events".

[8] See Samyadip Chatterji and B. Mullick in *Alienation Displacement and Rehabilitation*, (Uppal Publishing House, 1997) p. 3

[9] Ibid.

[10] By this I refer to the new challenge faced by the leaders of the movement to include not only the so-called tribes but also non-tribe or *sadan* population in the course of the demand for separate of

different communities which have equal stakes in the movement. As Sajal Basu says, "Ethnicity and the symbols of identity assertions may be active at various stages of development. The recent ethnic movements in India, of which Jharkhand happens to be the most significant in this aspect, have illustrated how such assertions could transcend economic factors and become effective in mobilising mass sentiment. Rather, sometimes economic factors or deprivation issues have been catered through ethnic cultural symbols. Instead of being divisive, it may prove to have unifying effect"[11]. He further adds, "the movement has built up myths and supermen with divine power to establish a historical legacy of ethnicity. The divine oracle bestowed on Sidhu-Kanhu, myth of Birsa God, the myth of autonomy of the revolts etc. has authenticated the rebel personality of Jharkhand figures"[12].

Despite these well-established linkages, one really needs to be wary of the dangers inherent in the uniformity that is attributed to the movement, whether be it in terms of its demands, its nature or identity. For example, the ethnic character of the movement is seen as an indicator of the 'tribal' identity of the movement. Nirmal Sengupta explains how the "tribal movements of the 19th century were identified as 'tribal' long after their occurrence, only when the term 'tribe' came into existence"[13]. It is now commonplace to see Jharkhand movement being referred to as a "tribal" movement; and the state of Jharkhand as a "tribal" state or a state that is meant for the tribes. To put it very simply, **this is one instance of how the identity of the movement gets fixed in time and history, as well as physical space or territory**. There are several implications that follow: the fixed identity of the Jharkhand movement in its 'tribal' origin also dictates the demands that the movement is assumed to have put forward, which in this case, might be the downscaling of tribal autonomy, reduced to capturing of political power through the formation of a separate Jharkhand state. The specific

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Jharkhand, and this was because of several new reasons and developments that the movement had to deal with. Such new developments have been discussed further on in the chapter.

[11] Sajal Basu in "Ethnocide and Ethnic Identity", Jharkhand *Movement: Ethnicity and the Culture of Silence*, (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1994) p. 56

[12] Ibid, p. 57. This is what Sajal Basu terms as the element of 'authenticism' in the later phase of Jharkhand movement, namely '(assertion) of ethnic affiliation as a means of mobilization', which the 'radical' politics of the Marxist groups in Jharkhand had failed to comprehend. This is, according to him, is the basis whereby both tribal and non-tribal ethnic groups like the Mahato and Sabars who are 'dissimilar in class positions have been mobilized in the Jharkhand demand'.

[13] Nirmal Sengupta, "Reappraising Tribal Movements- I: A Myth in the Making", (May 7, 1988), *Economic and Political Review*, p. 944

nature of demands then calls for specific kind of policy formulation, not only on the part of the state but it also shapes the kind of claims that the movement then lays upon state resources. Take for example the special nature of constitutional and legal provisions aiming at the 'protection' and 'development' of tribes as a target population. These provisions are tied to a particular notion of the "tribe" and often do not take into cognizance, for one, the differences that exist within the so-called tribal communities. With creation of a fixed geographical area termed as Jharkhand, what is also territorialised and fixed is the nature/extent of the rights of the indigenous communities. The rights of the communities who have lived of this land since times immemorial are therefore tied with the physical territory of Jharkhand. As result of this, the original Jharkhand envisioned on the basis of the cultural contiguity between the indigenous communities of not only Chotanagpur (Bihar) but also those living in parts of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bengal, has gotten reduced to the bounded territory of South Bihar[14].

Thus, it is not simply the case that the movement throws up certain demands, and that the state responds by formulating corresponding policies. In face it is far from being a one-way process; in fact the policies formulated by the state modify the nature of the movement as much as the movement affect policy formulation. For example, it is because certain group of communities have been categorised as 'tribes' in the state discourse, that has actually contributed in rendering a particular identity to the movement. The new wave of ethnic assertion within the Jharkhand movement since the 20th century is as much a result of state categorisation of population into 'castes' and 'tribes' for either administrative and/or other reasons as it is rooted in "such reaction against the prescribed norms set by the dominant community, state or the ruling party"[15]. Similarly, we see how the state policies of reservations for the Scheduled Tribes have led to an increased sense of competition and rift between different communities to achieve "scheduled" status. One is not denying the fact that these provisions have benefitted a considerable section of the tribal population in the country. However, one needs to review these constitutional provisions in their entirety to see how they not only recognize but also de-recognize populations to fit into their

[14] This territorial identity is just one of the identities associated with present day Jharkhand. The issue of identities is further discussed in detail in the third chapter.

[15] Sajal Basu in "Ethnocide and Ethnic Identity", *Jharkhand Movement: Ethnicity and the Culture of Silence*, (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1994) p. 53

scheme of compensatory justice. Stuart Corbridge gives a critique of the "ideology of tribal economy and society" which underlines the reservation systems in India, he sees reservations as, "attempts by the state in independent India to create a new class of modern (ex) backwards by virtue of economic and legal interventions apparently designed to reposition India's troublesome 'marginal groups'"[16]. While these classifications take a very static view of the movement and the masses in terms of their unchanging nature, they also determine and hence limit the extent of public space and the resources that these movements can make claims on[17]. Any effort therefore, to forge a link between the policy formulations of the state, for example reservations for SC/ST, and the struggle or movement of the indigenous people in these regions must be wary of one of the very decisive processes that direct state policy formulation: and that is, a process of classifying the population into categories that are often very essential and static. This classificatory process of the state effects any movement in more than one ways. By deeming the demands of the movement as fixed and unchanging in time, the state, as one of the very important actors, plays a pivotal role in conferring a particular identity to the movement.

Thus, we see how the processes of identity creation, policy formulation and the demands of the movement constitute three crucial aspects of any movement which are interrelated and exert considerable influence on each other. This interrelationship can be furthered elaborated by means of several other examples. One element that was common to the several memoranda submitted to the Government of India reiterating the demand for the formation of Jharkhand as separate state was the usage of the term '*Jharkhandi*' to address the population of the region. The main basis of this identity is the element of "historical continuity"[18] inherent in the nature of *Jharkhandi* society which is "basically community based, classless, egalitarian and close to nature"[19]. It is

[16] Stuart Corbridge in, "Competing Inequalities: Scheduled Tribes and the Reservations System", India's Jharkhand. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 59/1, Feb., 2000, p. 64

[17] The policy of reservations have been seen by many as a part of the logic of numbers, proportionality and quantification that is seen to be lying in the heart of modern governmentality, which manages to convert public sphere into a matter of competitive politics. This aspect is elaborated on in the second chapter.

[18] See Memorandum submitted to the President of India by the Jharkhand Coordination Committee on 10th of December 1987, called "Memorandum to the Government of India, Sub: Formation of Jharkhand State with 21 Districts of the Jharkhand Area" in R. D. Munda and S. Bosu Mullick ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2003) p. 359

[19] Ibid.

further assumed that, "there is a *Jharkhandi* cultural ethics which binds people together, cutting across the artificial boundaries existing today[20]. This leads to the description of *Jharkhandi* population as: "all the sons of the soil, both the tribes, Sadans and the 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' and 'Christians' and 'Hindus' or 'Sarnaits' and 'Muslims' are to be repelled with iron hands"[21]. Going by these definitions, the concept of ethnicity needs to be seen in an entirely new perspective than what it used to be; and this is made more imperative owing to the new developments in the later phases of the movement and the way it articulated this identity in terms of its demands. It will also be interesting to the see how this identity of *Jharkhandi* relates to the identity of a 'tribe'. Ethnicity in the later phases of the movement, especially in post-independent India, turned into a thing peculiar to not only the tribes but also the non-tribes, recalling how ethnicity became a point of mobilisation of the almost all the marginalised communities in the struggle for a separate state of Jharkhand. It is important to take note of the changing bases of this element of ethnic assertion in different moments in the movement. This is what Susan Devalle means when she says that "discourse of ethnicity in Jharkhand is not a single discourse"[22]. She adds, "Ethnicity forms basis of political movement at one moment in their development. Ethnicity therefore should be seen as a historical phenomenon, subordinated to existing class and centre-periphery contradictions"[23]. Through this, she means that it is through the historical interaction between the elements of class and race with ethnicity that one can have a better understanding of the system of inequality and exploitation that is seen in present day Jharkhand.

One of the main points in citing all these examples, as said earlier, is to show how the three processes: of identity creation, demand formulation within the

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[20] Ibid.

[21] *Declaration of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee.* Jharkhand Coordination Committee, 1988 Ranchi. p. 377

[22] Susan Devalle in *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand,* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992) p. 94 Through examining the shifting meanings of the term 'ethnicity' in the course of the movement, Devalle tries to show how ethnicity serves as a focal point not just to mobilize masses but is also used as an instrument of colonial domination.

[23] Ibid.

movement and the simultaneous process of policy formulation by the state, are not only contingent upon each other in multiple ways but also impact each other considerably. The efficacy of such an approach lies in the fact that it creates space to review the conventional understanding pertaining to the question of state, the social movement as well as the relationship between them. One of the foremost questions concerns with how one looks at the state. A conventional understanding of the state posits it as an external agency, acting as a neutral arbiter of competing interests in the social space; and in this the boundary between the state and society is assumed to be distinct and significant. In these types of analysis, state is seen as the prime signifier of the 'political', unrelated to the social whole[24]. Such a conventional understanding gets displaced in the first instance when it is understood that state represents the dominant interest which is only one amongst several contending interests in the social sphere. The boundary between the state and society is not as distinct as it is made out to be. Thus, power stands negotiated and dispersed between different actors in the social space, of which the state and the movement are two competing interests.

In this context, it is simplistic to reduce the interaction between the state and the social movement to a mere antithetical one. This helps one to avoid falling into a very straightforward, universalist understanding of both state and social movement. Any social movement draws considerably upon the institutional resources provided by the state. Similarly state ceases to be one central locus from which power emanates; rather, it seeps into society in more than one visible way as a policing state or an organisation that maintains law and order. The method of the modern state now is to produce the *effect* of rule[25] through a set of governmental processes, which depends on the "the reformulation of subjectivities and re organisation of social spaces in which subjects act and are acted upon"[26]. The process of identity-formation within any social movement is subject to these governmental processes. For example, the country at present is a witness to several mass-based struggles for the rights of the indigenous communities, which in the state discourse, gets translated to the rights of the 'tribes'.

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[24] Often in the nature of a Weberian state as a bureaucratic organization with its various administrative institutions, army and police personnel is imbued with a formal legal rationality.

[25] David Scott in , "Colonial Governmentality", *Refashioning Futures: Criticism After Postcoloniality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) p. 25

[26] Talal Asad, as quoted in David Scott, "Colonial Governmentality", *Refashioning Futures: Criticism After Postcoloniality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) p. 23

Through this, then the state manages to regulate the relation between the tribes and the non-tribal populations, both of which may in different historical conditions, or even similar ones, belong to the category of indigenous population of the country[27]. This is how Jharkhand movement was once designated as a 'tribal' movement. Therefore, identity formation does not proceed at the level of the movement only; the movement cannot be detached from the social whole and in this it cannot stay isolated from the various changes taking place in that social space. To elaborate in the context of Jharkhand, one can quote Stuart Corbridge who when dealing with ethno-regionalism in Bihar writes that the following dimensions must be kept in mind: "first, the changing socio-economic and demographic transition in South Bihar, and second, the contradictory nature of state tribal policies which continue to provide space for the (limited) pursuit of ethnic politics"[28].

So how do we envisage the role of social movements vis-à-vis the governmental logic of the state? In a different context Deborah Poole and Veena Das ask the same question as to how the state is imagined and its effects reproduced at its 'margins'[29]. Through this, both choose to critique the "entrenched image of the state as a rationalized administrative form of political organisation that become weakened or less fully articulated along its territorial or social margins"[30], instead trying to reflect on how the 'practices and politics of life in these areas shaped the political, regulatory and disciplinary practices that constitute, somehow, that thing we call 'the state'"[31]. They extend their analysis to review the gap between the state and the margins, i.e. how margins are created as "necessary entailment of the state"[32] and how, "the forms of illegibility, partial belonging and disorder that seem to inhabit the margins of the

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[27] Andre Beteille in *Chronicles of Our Time*, (Penguin Books, 2000) p. 182. Beiteille gives a very interesting account of the politics behind the 'myth' created in the name of indigenous population of the country, which serves only to disengage this concept from the historical context it represents and serves. In the similar vein, one can read Kaushik Ghosh's work on the transnational discourse on indigeneity which produces 'a very different kind of indigenous subjectivity' based as it is on a sense of 'liberating transnationalism' which, however, ends up marginalizing that vast section which goes by the name of indigenous population in India. See Ghosh's article: "Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenousness, Locality and the Transnational Sphere" in *Jharkhand, India, Cultural Anthropology*, 21/4, 2006, pp. 501-534

[28] Stuart Corbridge in, "The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society: Politics in the Jharkhand, 1950-1980", *Modern Asian Studies*, 22/1, 1988, p. 37

[29] Veena Das and Deborah Poole in "The State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies", *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 1

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid, p. 2

state constitute its necessary condition as a theoretical and political object"[33]. It is in the same lines that one can conceptualise the relation between any social movement and the phenomenon of governmentality as that which is characterised by constant strains. Though the phenomenon of governmentality shapes the movement in more than one way, yet not without being transformed and negotiated in the end. This is what Kaushik Ghosh implies when he says that the element of heterogeneity in the processes of governmentality needs to be recognised, so that it is not turned into "a form of all-encompassing, omniscient and omnipresent knowledge"[34]. This he substantiates by explaining the history of adivasi movements in Jharkhand like the struggle against the Koel Karo project, when they emerge in a complex relation with the history of governmentality as colonial and national mode of power"[35]. He says that the governmental processes do not just work towards containing the movements, but also create openings for the movements to build up resistance even more[36].

Objectives

The above exercise was to prove how the different elements within the movement: its demands, the specific nature or identity it assumes in a given historical time, its access to state resources etc. are not independent variables; they interact with each other and with the other elements in the wider social environment. Shifting nature of the movement has a bearing upon the demands of the movement. **Thus, instead of saying that the main objective of the movement was the achievement of Jharkhand as a separate state, one can say that this demand came up as a shift in the nature and hence the identity of the movement.** The term 'Jharkhand[37]' to denote the demand for a sub-nation was used for the first time in 1938 by the Adivasi Mahasabha.

[33] Ibid, p. 6

[34] Kaushik Ghosh in, "Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenousness, Locality and the Transnational Sphere", *Jharkhand, India, Cultural Anthropology*, 21/4, 2006, p. 504

[35] Ibid, p. 513

[36] Ibid, pp. 509-513. Kaushik Ghosh gives example of how the essentialized image of the *adivasi* as being "not interested in money but only in land" serves to benefit the *adivasi* only, because this is what has been the basis of the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act 1894 which provides for land-for-land rehabilitation plan as opposed to monetary compensation. This was one of the bases on which the legal case was filed against the land acquisition for the Koel Karo project in Jharkhand.

[37] According to some scholars, the term Jharkhand finds reference in texts and other sources as old as medieval period, though the basis of it keeps shifting. For further discussion see Areeparampil "Historical Basis of the Name 'Jharkhand'" in Munda and Mullick ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGAI, 2003) p. 349

However, the indigenous struggles in Chota Nagpur have been articulating themselves against the exploitation of the 'diku' *raj* since the 18th century. Thus, the demand for the autonomous state is only one part of the movement[38]. So what were the other demands that were thrown up in the course of the movement? Does the formation of Jharkhand as a separate state capture the essence of tribal autonomy which was the main aim of the revolts of the 18th-19th century? The **first** objective of this chapter is to explore this continuity, through the different nature of demands over a period of time. This also calls for a thorough re-reading of nineteenth century uprisings, taking into account in all their differences and similarities, which are otherwise clubbed together as tribal 'insurgencies'. Through this, the chapter intends to look at the implications of assuming the 'tribal' nature of these uprisings: the element of agency inherent in each of these uprisings is considerably influenced by the way they get defined in the dominant discourse. "The typical characterization of the so-called 'tribe' would be that being primitive, a 'tribe' would necessarily be body-centric, unthinking, extravagant, and even violent, and its perpetually rebellious state was a function of precisely this primordiality and passion"[39].The point in highlighting the differences between the revolts of nineteenth century is not to show the extent to which these 'incidents' were unconnected to each other[40], but instead, to see the difference in terms of the role played by the specific nature of each 'incident' in encompassing a varied nature of demands, and how these different demands linked to the aspect of tribal autonomy. Many of these uprisings were specifically agrarian in nature and were against immediate grievances like forceful rent-collection, exorbitant taxes and land grab by the 'dikus'. In the context of Kol rebellion of 1832, John MacDougall talks about how "the victims of the adivasis' anger were those individual 'dikus' who had been particularly exploitative of the adivasis, and village servants and

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[38]Nirmal Sengupta in, "Background of the Jharkhand Question" in Sengupta ed. *Fourth World Dynamics: Jharkhand*, (Delhi: Authors Guild Publications, 1982) pp. 5-6. In fact, Sengupta maintains that the assumption that the "only significant content of the movement is to establish an autonomous state", is a misreading of the Jharkhand movement.

[39] Prathama Banerjee, "Culture/Politics: the Irresoluble Double-bind of the Indian Adivasis", *The Indian Historical Review*, vol.33, 2006 p. 100

[40] This is not to say that the uprisings were sporadic to the extent of being disconnected from each other entirely or being 'unorganised' which is a common way to also delegitimize peoples' movements. These uprisings took place almost in a succession and in this they drew constant invocation as well as inspiration from each other. Mahashweta Devi's *Jangal ke Davedar* (translation: *Aranyer Adhikar*) is an excellent account which brings out this aspect very clearly. The point of contention is whether they were part of one coherent movement with a definite objective of political power in terms of separate statehood.

traditional landlords were usually spared by the rebels"[41]. He further adds, "the santhals probably did not seriously think of ejecting their British rulers, since some rebels submitted petitions to the government and in one petition they declared 'we have no protection but government'".[42] It was only later when the petitions etc. were found to be futile in getting the santhals justice that these movements turned to more violent forms of articulation[43] and it was in this context that the rebelling adivasis understood the complicity of the colonial government in their oppression. Ranajit Guha says in the context of the Kol rebellion of 1832 that it had "landlords and moneylenders among the *suds* as its hostility, but ended up as a war against the Company's government itself"[44]. Many of these uprisings were preceded by the channelizing of protest through legal means like petitioning and memoranda. In other words, different rebellions varied in terms of the method they adopted to achieve their goal of getting back their land. The Munda uprising, the Santhal rebellion had very strong religious dimensions: these uprisings also initiated the process of religious revivalism, in which new rituals forming the basis of a new and democratic religion were introduced. Many of these uprisings were entirely independent of each other because of the different areas and therefore different conditions they erupted in. For example, Ranchi district the hotbed of Kol rebellion- was much more politically unstable and had a greater presence of British army than say the Santhal Parganas which saw the Santhal rebellion of 1855. The point here is to understand is that there were considerable differences between these different incidents which are otherwise classified under one category. The next part of the chapter tries to answer some of these questions as well as reviews the existing scholarship on this early 'phase' of the Jharkhand movement. The aim here is to understand a certain process of history writing which accords legitimacy to the present in terms of the past. The resurrection of past, and consequently history-writing is a political process and one needs to see

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[41] John MacDougall, *Land or Religion? The Sardar and the Kherwar Movements in Bihar, 1858-95,* (Delhi: Manohar,1985) p. 22

[42] Ibid, p. 33

[43] Ibid, p. 66. As MacDougall says in the context of the Sardar movement in 1858, "it is possible that between 1885 and 1895, the government and the missions gradually lost legitimacy and Sardars began to think seriously about more violent and more radical type of protest'.

[44] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspect of Peasant Insurgency,* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983) p. 26. This Guha sees as a tendency in rebel consciousness "to extend its domain by a process of analogy and transference" in identifying those elements who are involved in their exploitation directly or indirectly, and this for him is also indicative of the element of developing political consciousness of peasant insurgencies in India.

how it structures our understanding of not only the past but also the present. Prathama Banerjee sees this as a result of the self-inflected bifurcation of the modern discipline of history into 'history of practice' and 'the history of knowledge', whereby historical knowledge "attempts to textualize and discipline"[45] historical practice by ruling out any hostility, if not forging a succession, between the historical past and the present[46].

The subsequent part of the chapter looks at some of these 'tribal insurgencies'. Due to the limitations imposed by the chapter, it is not possible to look at each and every of such uprisings separately in this limited space, therefore, we will be looking at examples from only the primary ones, namely the Kol rebellion (1831-1832), the Santhal insurrection (1855) and the Munda(1895-1900) rebellion or the Birsaite movement will be examined. The aim is not just to explore these uprisings but also to examine them in the context of the later phase of the Jharkhand movement thereby reviewing whether or not they can be weaved together in a singular history of Jharkhand. The attempt is also to see whether these uprisings, otherwise 'events' in nationalist history, can be explored as sites of multiple histories which problematize the sort-of grand narrative that is constructed in the name of the Jharkhand movement and the consequent formation of the state of Jharkhand. This question is important in so far as it manages to unearth the underlying question of self-identity of the *adivasis* of Jharkhand, and whether or not this self-identity finds a resonance in the idea of the present state of Jharkhand. The next section is divided into two main parts, each dealing with one 'phase' of movement. The two different 'phases' have been assumed only for the sole purpose of seeking an answer to the questions raised in this chapter and in no way implies any actual demarcation in the history of the movement/s. As said earlier, the first phase deals with the three main tribal uprisings of the 19th century in Chotanagpur, and the next phase talks about the Jharkhand movement in the contemporary phase, especially when institutional politics in terms of representation

[45] Prathama Banerjee "Rebellion: Act and Event" in *Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-writing in Colonial Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 188

[46] Ibid, p. 159 Banerjee explains thus "And this meant that history writing had to try to reconstruct this Santal *act* of temporal contestation into an *event*, such that a 'primitive' rebellion could somehow be put in succession to other events of nationalist history; and chronology, as a purely formal succession of moments could be restored. Only through this restoration of chronology could the clearly temporal contradictions between Santal rebellious practices and the colonial modern teleology be defused". For similar discussion see Bannerjee "Santhal Rebellion and the Temporality of Practice", *Studies in History*, 15/1-2, 1999, pp. 209-246

and party politics became a marked feature of the movement, and the interaction of the movement with the state expanded and became more complex.

The Revolts of the Nineteenth Century

The utility of the notion of 'revolt' to describe the 'upheavals' of the nineteenth century is severely limited. The temporality that is attached to any 'incident' of a revolt in terms of the disruption it causes in the otherwise normal flow of things, fails to capture the depth of its occurrence and the expanse of the transformation it envisions. The attempt is not to essentialize the idea of a revolt; but to challenge the narrow definition of 'revolt' that emerges in the course of writing history. As has been said earlier, conventional historiography presumes not only an exact beginning of any 'event' but also pre-empts an end to it. This anticipation in terms of the exact beginning and end of any revolt serves a larger purpose which seeks to marginalise the broader idea which the revolt represents or thrusts forward. By this definition therefore, the Birsa *ulgulan*[47] is never seen as a millenarian movement in mainstream history, and thus, what gets marginalised is the epochal change it envisaged in terms of a "new millennia for their distressed people, of freedom and salvation, status and power, opportunity and fulfilment in the new world in place of the old one which lay shattered within a few decades of colonialism"[48]. The triviality with which these 'events' are included in conventional history is reflected in the way these events have been approached by scholars. Many scholars are of the opinion that these revolts were not 'political' in their content, and they have been reduced to being either agrarian or religious revivalist, ethnic and economic etc.[49] While it is not easy to dispute any of such analysis, however, movements of the earlier period cannot be type-casted in one

[47] Ulgulan means rebellion in the traditional language of the Mundas.

[48] K.S. Singh in preface to the Second Edition in *Birsa Munda: Centennial Edition*, (New Delhi: Seagull Books, 2002) p. xvi. In the context of Birsa movement, Singh says that it nurtured "millennial dreams" in the form of establishment of the "ideal order i.e. Birsa's Raj and religion....liquidation of the enemies, the *dikus*, the European missionaries and officials, and the native Christians. The Mundas would recover their lost kingdom". For further reference, see Singh, *Birsa Munda and His Movement 1874-1901*, (New Delhi; Manohar,1983) p. 199

[49] K.L. Sharma, "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar", vol.11, no.1/2, *Economic and Political Review*, 1976. Sharma mentions how the 19th century movements in Santhal Parganas and South Bihar were largely economic and ethnic; and they turned 'political' only after the 1940s. He says that "the 'political culture' of the movements was a strategy or a consequence of these forces rather than a determining factor". He characterizes the movements in the Jharkhand region prior to 1940s as "reformative as well as religious and revolutionary".

or the other category. This only leads to marginalisation of the political content of these movements even further, and it also overlooks the fact that the these struggles of the nineteenth century were probably the first set of organised resistance through organised violence[50] directed towards state induced appropriation and dispossession of land and livelihood. One also needs to see the linkages between these different aspects, say for example, the economic and religious aspects. The spread of Christianity amongst the tribes of Chota Nagpur cannot be explained merely by sole reference only to the religious factor, but also to the fact that it was only with Christianity that, there was an "appreciation of their rights as original clearers of the soil which rights in many instances, they have asserted and established"[51]. Thus, more than anything else, it was the "secular benefit...rather than (to) the spiritual side of the new religion"[52] that attracted the adivasi population. This was precisely the point of contention between the Christian missionaries and the largely Hindu-dominated class of land holders and zamindars; the latter eying the former with a great deal of distrust and contempt[53]. Religion in a sense had also become a basis to mobilise masses against the atrocities of the foreign government[54]. Similarly dispossession of ancestral land and other resources was not just a matter of agrarian crisis; it was also an indicator of social degradation, whereby a threat was perceived to indigenous culture and social organisation. Thus, "the source of tension and conflict between the Santals and the outside world lay not in the changed economic circumstances, rather it came of their desperate struggle to preserve and protect their cultural identity and values in the face of the alien society that had surrounded and invaded them. The Santal capacity to retain their identity was reduced by their loss of autonomy, by the economic changes of the mid- 19th century, and by their growing dependence on Bengali 'middle-men'"[55]. This was one primary basis of a reformed Birsaite religion which was introduced as an important part of their political programme to free the

[50] Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, in the foreword to *Birsa Munda: Centennial Edition*, (New Delhi: Seagull Books, 2002) p. xxiii

[51] S.C. Roy, *The Mundas and Their Country*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House,1912) p. 131-132

[52] Ibid, p. 139

[53] Ibid, p. 133, Roy mentions how the Hindu zamindars and land holders would leave no stone unturned to harass or repress not only the converts but also the missionaries: "the Hindu Zamindars and the Thikadars had the crops of the Christians cut, their cattle taken away, set fire to their houses and properties, and instigated false lawsuits against them".

[54] K.L. Sharma "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar", vol.11, no.1/2, *Economic and Political Review*, 1976, p. 40

[55] Elizabeth Rottger-Hogan, in, "Insurrection...or Ostracism: A study of the Santal Rebellion of 1855", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 16/1, 1982, p. 81

tribal society of the evils that had crept in due to breakdown of social setup. For example, the new religion tried to address others social evils like "the incidence of liquor-drinking (introduced and encouraged by the new excise policy) and the migration of Munda labourers to tea-gardens and elsewhere"[56]. Therefore religion and political economy were entwined in far more than a simple commonsense manner.

These examples persuade us to rethink whether or not the revolts of the nineteenth century were "political" in their nature or content. Not only this, one is induced to rethink the content of this "political" as well. What has been described as the millennial goals of establishing a Birsa *raj* or Munda *raj* cannot be equated with the present day political power that is visualised in the separate state of Jharkhand resting on the claims of being a state for the upliftment of the tribes. This question becomes important when one tries to look at it from the other end i.e. whether the idea behind capturing political power, especially in the present day connotation of the term, ensures what the nineteenth century revolts put forward as the demand for tribal autonomy. This leads us then to explore what is implied by the terms "tribal autonomy". In the context of the nineteenth century revolts, the notion of tribal autonomy translated into securing an autonomous and indigenous socio-cultural organisation, free from the encroachments by 'outsiders'. The Munda movement, therefore "had its roots in the break-up of tribal economy, the dilution and disintegration of the socio-cultural life. It was a deliberate, organised and conscious effort made by the Mundas to construct a more satisfying culture; it was the expression of group solidarity and social cohesion and acted as a unifying force for groups under conditions of social disorganisation"[57]. Another important aspect which is often overlooked, or more often relegated to the realm of the culture[58], is the importance attached to indigenous institutions: tribal autonomy rested firmly on the functioning of indigenous institutions, and therefore, the nineteenth century revolts

[56] K.S. Singh, "Nature and Significance of the Movement" in *Birsa Munda and his Movement 1874-1901*, (New Delhi: Seagull Books,1983) p. 202

[57] Ibid, p. 207

[58] Indicates the refusal the see tribal institutions as a marker of political advancement of society; rather they are seen as an indicator of indigenous culture, which is, in the words of Prathama Banerjee, "in need for recording, conservation and special display". For further discussion see Banerjee, "Culture/Politics: the Irresoluble Double-bind of the Indian Adivasis", *The Indian Historical Review*, vol.33, 2006, pp. 99-126

were geared towards reinstating all of this that was lost to external encroachment[59]. It is in the context of the above that one has to analyse whether the present day Jharkhand represents that which constitutes tribal autonomy. **Analysing in this context, the first thing that comes up and that which is strikingly antagonistic to what we understand by the notion of tribal autonomy, is the centralized notion of power that the present state of Jharkhand represents. This centralisation is then put into effect through a set of political institutions.** It does not take much to account how one of the instigating factors of the nineteenth century movements was the centralisation of power and authority that the colonial government brought into effect. One is not assuming here any direct co-relation between the two aspects, but this process of centralisation can be analysed in terms of the repercussions it had on the indigenous society. So how was this centralisation brought into effect? The primary way through which this was achieved was by bringing the entire area under one centralised administration and jurisdiction, and this was done in several steps. In the span of several years, Chotanagpur had become an experiment ground for several administrative models introduced by the colonial rulers and in this therefore, it assumed several administrative statuses. Chotanagpur was made a part of Ramgarh Hill Tract in the 1780s, it was subsequently transformed into South-West Frontier Agency in the year 1833 and finally got designated as the Chotanagpur Division in the year 1854. In the intermittent period between these changes, several 'upheavals' were noticed in this area, of which the Kol rebellion and the Sathal insurrection are the important ones. One cannot overlook a direct link between these administrative 'reforms' and growing unrest amongst the inhabitants[60]. But the response of the colonial administrators was to respond by a greater degree of centralisation until Chotanagpur was completely brought under the direct jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-

[59] By external encroachment, one is referring to not just the intrusion of colonial state; even before the advent of colonialism, the tribal society had started to witness transformation, primarily due to factors like increasing Hindu influence, which led to increasing incidence of stratification along class and ethnic lines, within indigenous society. There is no intention to valorise pre-colonial society or even the fact of indigenous society as something whose 'purity' had been altered by external factors. What is intended instead is to show how it was a matter of different cultures or systems, and how the tribal society transformed for the worse due to factors which were largely absent therein.

[60] See K.L. Sharma's analysis of how one of the factors core to the Jharkhand movement had been "the administrative unity of the region" in *Jharkhand Movement in Bihar*, vol.11, no.1/2, *Economic and Political Review*, 1976, pp.37-43

Governorship of Bengal as a 'Non-Regulation Province' by the Act XX in 1854[61]. Many scholars believe that the major flaw with the colonial administration was that it ceased to look at the problems of the region beyond an administrative and diplomatic point of view[62] and that it treated incidents of unrest or outbreaks as "some petty disturbance and robbery, which a few policemen would soon eventually suppress"[63].

As said earlier, centralisation brings in its own set of institutions and also a process of institutionalisation. This exercise saw a simultaneous and complete undermining of the indigenous institutions of the tribal society. Before coming of the British, a considerable level of "internal social stratification"[64] had already crept in these communities, on the bases of ownership of land and labor; the nascent process of state-formation by the creating the position of 'Raja" in the late Mughal period, and similar processes like these which had already divided the Chotanagpur society into interest groups. The Raja was surrounded with a class of middlemen, "a new class of Dikus or alien landlords styled *Thikadars"* who were "mostly Mahomedan traders of valuable clothes and other articles who stuffed the young Maharaja full with their merchandise, but could not ultimately be paid in cash"[65]. Due to this, they had to be granted villages on lease or *thika.* According to S.C.Roy, "it was against the new class of Thiccadars or Jagirdars who, armed with a grant of the Raja's...wanted to encroach upon the immemorial rights of the villagers which the Maharaja had never dreamt of questioning, that the aborigines were mightily incensed"[66]. Similarly the increasing incidence of Hinduisation amongst the Rajas was another reason which saw large scale in-flow of "non-tribal advisors, and servants from the plains of Bihar and Orissa- the priests, the *diwans*, the *tehsildars*, adventurers and fortune-seekers"[67], who he rewarded with "transfer of his rights over various villages"[68]. **In all this, one cannot overlook how the institutionalisation of the fact of ethnic difference amongst the people assisted in speeding up these processes.** Thus, Hinduisation

[61] For more information on this see S.C. Roy, in *The Mundas and Their Country*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House,1912) p. 130
[62] J.C. Jha, *The Kol Insurrection of Chota Nagpur*, (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. Private Ltd.,1964) p. 4
[63] Ibid, p. 130
[64] Susan Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand*, (New Delhi: Sage,1992) p. 58
[65] Roy, 1912 p. 107
[66] Ibid.
[67] J.C. Jha, 1964 p. 120
[68] Ibid.

was not only about emulating the lifestyles of rich Hindu Zamindars, but also "looking down upon (his) tribal ryots as marauders and savages", as "wild mountaineers and robbers who (were) incapable of understanding any order and (would) not listen to any reason"[69]. We need to dwell a little more upon this aspect of the sharpening ethnic divide between the people of Chota Nagpur, and how it has been used as an ideological weapon by the state to establish its hegemony. The element of ethnicity has been conceptualised by the state as being core to the existing diku-adivasi binary in Jharkhand. In this context, the ethnic identity has been reduced to the identity of the 'tribe' (and consequently conferring a state of primordiality) which is then pitted against the non-tribal communities in this region, and in this way the state sought to regulate the relation between the two. The repercussions of such an assumption are many. The element of ethnicity is utilized to sharpen the differences between the tribes and the non-tribal communities in the region, and in this sense, all the non-tribal communities are '*dikus*', and the Jharkhand movement appears as a 'tribal' movement. As against this, the movements of the nineteenth century threw up an entirely different concept of the *diku*. As said earlier, *diku* translates into 'outsider', and this expression has been used to the designate the traditional enemy of the adivasi community: the earlier revolts were against the *dikus* who had acquired control over much of adivasi land and the indigenous communities lost access to their own land and forest. However, the specific sense in which the term is used should be noted: not all outsiders were *dikus,* and the *dikus* were identified not just by their non-tribal origin but also by their exploitative nature or rather as an exploitative group. Thus, the traditional village headmen who were given land grants by the colonial government sometimes "claimed to be village proprietors rather than merely the first among the equals as they were before British rule"[70], and because of this they were the object of wrath of the discontented rebels. In this context, we must also rethink the relation between tribal and non-tribal communities in Chota Nagpur. Almost all the revolts of nineteenth century saw the participation of the non-tribal communities as they were also e hard –pressed by the arbitrary nature of colonial rule. K.S Singh in the context of the Birsa movement recalls that, "a major feature of the movement was the absence of any animus against the non-tribal elements who were socially and economically

[69] Ibid.

[70] John MacDougall, *Land or Religion? The Sardar and the Kherwar Movements in Bihar, 1858-95*,(New Delhi: Manohar,1985) p. 25

subordinate to the Mundas. The Mundas did not look upon the communities performing economically and socially necessary functions *dikus*"[71]. In the context of the Kol rebellion, Ranajit Guha adds, "Some of the most oppressed amongst the non-tribals such as bonded-labourers and domestic servants helped the rebels actively against their masters."[72] Many of these communities were migrant communities, and had been an important part of the society of the tribes. "The tribal world of the Mundas and the Oraons co-existed with other non-tribal communities"[73], with the latter mostly providing services as weavers, blacksmiths, cowherds etc. These people were often given plots of land in return for their services[74]. Keeping this in mind, one needs to understand ethnicity in the context of the co-existence of different communities in the region. Chota Nagpur has been described as an "ethnic aggregation of tribal and non-tribal cultures"[75], and ethnicity translates into, according to several scholars, a set of distinct features, like a caste-free social structure, participatory culture and economy, naturalistic religious pursuits, communitarian values. These were some of the features which characterised the ethnic society of which both the tribals and the non-tribals were a part. So when it is asserted that the Jharkhand movement was a struggle to preserve ethnic identity of the people, it meant that the struggle is precisely to preserve and restore these very values. However, this was not the way ethnicity was perceived by the colonial state in Chota Nagpur. It was increasingly institutionalised as a fact of difference between the tribes and the non-tribal communities, and this was done partly through administrative restructuring whereby distinct areas were marked as 'special' areas or 'non-regulation'[76] zones, and

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[71] K.S.Singh, *Birsa Munda and his Movement:1874-1901*, (Delhi: Seagull Books,1983) p. 202 . Singh describes these groups as "the Ghasis (the drum-beaters), the Swansis (the weavers), the Hajams (barbers), the Lohars (iron-smiths) and the Kumhars (the carpenter)".

[72] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspect of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983) p. 173. He explains in the context of the Kol rebellion, how class solidarities and other solidarities like ethnicity are not "mutually exclusive" they have overlapping boundaries "although the pre-dominance of one or other element would tend to determine the basic character of the movement".

[73] Victor Das, *Jharkhand: Castle Over The Graves*, (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1992) p. 51

[74] Ibid.

[75] Javed Alam, "The Category of 'Non-historic' Nations and Tribal Identity in Jharkhand" in S. Bosu Mullick and R.D. Munda ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2003) p. 195

[76] S.C. Roy tells us how non-regulation did not mean that the ordinary laws which were in force in other parts of the country were not applicable in these regions. These laws were many much there, however, some new regulations were all framed which according to Roy, were in nature of "special laws for the protection of particular classes or for particular purposes". There was "special enactment for the relations between the land-lord and the tenant, and one for the protection of the encumbered

accordingly special laws were framed to 'protect' the 'tribes' from the 'non-tribes', and paving way for even more centralisation, direct control and a complex web of police, law, courts and administration. Thus, in the name of non-regulation in Chota Nagpur, the Cornwallis system that was devised for the plains of Bengal Presidency was replaced by an even more complex legal-administrative system which was filled with "foreigners from Bengal and Bihar unacquainted with the customs, the land tenures and the languages of the people"[77].

Administrative restructuring also meant an entire network of new offices to man the new regions like the police, judiciary, rent collectors, jagirdars, tehsildars, zamindars etc. and in this the existing hierarchies were fully utilized and strengthened. The colonial government's fetish with codification of land rights and tenures probably benefitted this class of middlemen like zamindars and thikadars the most, because they seem to be the only people who could procure any written document as a proof of their ownership of land as compared to the tribal and other indigenous communities whose rights over land and forests were a matter of customary heritage. The new land tenure system did not recognize the traditional land use patterns, and the communities' ownership over land was not recognised precisely due to the lack of any legal title, as per the new legal system introduced by the colonial government. The entire Chotanagpur area was, before it got converted into one administrative unit, divided into *parganas* or *parhas*, each with an autonomous set up of its own, headed by a Raja who was nothing more than a nominal head, installed and paid a fixed sum only for defence purposes. In each of these *parganas*, the *Bhuihari* or *Khuntkhattidari* system of land ownership prevailed, which according to the custom meant, 'that whoever cleared the land became the owner of the same, free of rent, only in return rendering to the then head of the villages such services as common good required"[78]. The very first casualty of the codification of land ownership rights was this indigenous system of holding land. The fact that land was now turned into a commodity, generated an impression of a kind of "economic freedom"[79] which along with "indiscriminate enforcement by the courts of law, attracted a large number of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh

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Zamindars". There were special enactments for the rural police. See Roy, Mundas and Their Country, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House,1912) p. 130

[77] Ibid, p. 106

[78] Roy, 1912, p. 108

[79] Jha, 1964, p. 119

grabbers, jobbers and traders and usurers in this area"[80]. The introduction of individual ownership through the Permanent Settlement of 1783 meant not only a blow to the livelihood of people, at the same time it was also an attack on the egalitarian and collective nature of society which they identified with. There was a corresponding change in the agrarian economic relationships. Traditional patterns of land use were replaced by a new complex land tenure system based on rent and tax[81] collection. The criterion for revenue from land changed to ownership irrespective of the income generated from it. The process of gradual sub-infeudation had started which pushed the population of the region towards further pauperization. Introduction of money economy, along with the emergence of the money lending class, and several layers of landlordism, accentuated the process of land dispossession among the communities.

Given this context, let us return to our question regarding the main demands of the movements or revolts of the nineteenth century. **The primary grievance which all these revolts addressed was the decline in status of indigenous communities as the hereditary proprietors of land.** By the time the colonial government sought to address these grievances in the form of the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act in the year1869, it was too late and most of the land had already passed into the hands of the *suds* or the foreign proprietors as they were called, mainly through grants. Money lending was institutionalised and legalised though government provisions, and often the zamindars and the moneylenders were one and the same. There was a thin line between rent-collection and extortion and there was no easy way to escape from the clutches of moneylenders and the zamindars, "backed as they were by the police and the adalat'[82]. The three institutions of the police, the judiciary and the law courts worked in tandem to facilitate each other's functioning. "Increasingly it had become the practice to draw the police from the same castes and ethnic groups as the *diku*

[80] Ibid.

[81] Besides the land tax, there were six other taxes that were levied: "*batta* or exchange compensation for changing copper into silver; an excise tax on spirits; a proposed tax on opium which the government sought to cultivate; village salamis- forced labor on the road; fines for supposed or real crimes, and postal taxes on villages. See Roy (1912) p.119. Similarly J.C Jha talks about the fine by the name of 'gunahgiri' which the *darogas* and their subordinates used to exact, for 'offences real or pretended. If a person committed suicide or even died a natural death, someone in his village would be accused of murdering him and would only escape on the payment of a bribe". In addition, there was liquor tax called *akbari* tax. See Jha (1964) pp. 163-164

[82] Roy, *Mundas and their Country*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1912) p.119

landlords and the moneylenders"[83]. *Adalats* were seen as oppressive because they were manipulated into exacting exorbitant rents out of the masses. The *adivasis* were taxed on almost everything, due to which they were also forced to borrow, and when they were unable to repay, *begari*[84] was forced on them. All these were different facets of oppression of the same system of colonial rule which had completely transformed the nature of existing social relations between people. The transformations induced by the colonial state must not be seen only in terms of the large scale policies and huge structural changes that were instituted, but also how they translated into every-day oppression in the lives of the people. The impact of an alien sarkar and its allied system has to be examined in the day-to-day life of the people. To put it in other words, it is important to see how the different communities perceived the colonial state in their daily interaction with, say the *mahajan* who duped them on almost all occasions precisely because money had become imperative for survival; or the law courts, where adivasis were susceptible to corruption and fraud because they were ignorant of the language of the proceedings and the *law itself*; or the *zamindars* who forced them into bonded labour because that was legalised as a mode of repayment[85] in lieu of incapacity to pay rent. The question was therefore, not so much to do with the oppression faced by the struggling adivasis due to their ignorance or inability to grasp the complexity of the new system that was put in place by the colonial state[86]. More than anything else, **it was *about* the incapacitating or debilitating nature of the law itself**, followed by the destruction of everything that

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[83] John MacDougall, *Land or Religion? The Sardar and the Kherwar Movements in Bihar, 1858-95,*(New Delhi: Manohar,1985) p. 21

[84] *Begari* translates into forced labour.

[85] Jha in the context of the Kol rebellion tells us about the concept of 'sewukpattas' meaning that "when the tribesman became deeply involved in debt to the plainsmen, he sold his labor till the debt was discharged, which was in fact binding themselves to give their whole earnings to their creditor, receiving from him food and clothing, or to work for him exclusively, thus becoming his bondsmen for life". See J.C. Jha, *The Kol Insurrection of Chotanagpur*, (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. Private Ltd.,1964) p. 153

[86] Which then called for a solution in terms of 'simplifying' the complex 'legal-administrative' system so as to make it compatible with the 'simple' and 'uncomplicated' lives of the masses in Chota Nagpur. One cannot overlook the vulgar racism that dictated proposals such as these, and how any attempt to further 'simplify' led only to more codification, classification and ultimately exclusion. For example, under the proposal to frame special laws for the non-regulation province of Chotanagpur, certain changes were proposed in the criminal laws: a case was made for simplification of the laws so as to meet the "simple character of criminal trials, arising from the rude nature of the people, the practice of voluntary confessions, or the otherwise satisfactory nature of the proof adduced, rendering unnecessary here, the complicated system of jurisprudence, the grand object of which was to guard against the possibility of error in criminal justice". See Jha, *The Kol Insurrection of Chota Nagpur,* (Thacker, Spink & Co. Private Ltd.,1964) p. 136

these indigenous communities had in the name of customs and institutions. **The nineteenth century revolts demanded reinstating these indigenous customs and institutions and this is what constituted the idea of self-rule and tribal autonomy.** This is where the initial 'phase' of the Jharkhand movement emerges as a strong critique of its later 'phase' because the latter confuses an indigenous Jharkhand with the present form of political rule which is based on a complete displacement of the customary rights and institutions of its indigenous inhabitants. This part has been dealt in greater detail in the following section where we talk about the later 'phase' of the movement and the resultant formation of Jharkhand state in the year 2000.

So how did the nineteenth century movements in Chotanagpur perceive the idea of a centralized authority called the state? The question is not difficult to answer, because the relation of dominance and subordination which violently replaced the otherwise egalitarian nature of adivasi society- was seen as a direct outcome of the centralised authority that the colonial state represented. The authority of the colonial state was one of (the) "constitutive elements"[87] of the feudal structure that was put into place, stabilized as it was by the nexus between the *sarkar*, *sahukar* and the *zamindar:* "the collusion between 'sarkar' and 'zamindar' was indeed a part of the common experience of the poor and the subaltern at the local level nearly everywhere"[88]. This nexus was seen to have inflicted every aspect of the adivasi's life in one form or the other. This contrast with a system of centralised authority has been best captured by Alpa Shah in a recent article, though in an entirely different context, where she analyses the present state of Jharkhand in terms of the presence of "multiple co-existing notions of politics"[89]. She says that "a corrupt, self- interested, exploitative, and divisive politics associated with the secular state is contrasted by the Mundas to an idealized notion of an organic inter-village 'traditional institution': the *parha.* A sacred polity presided by ancestral spirits, the *parha* encompasses an idea of politics representing unity, inclusion, lack of self-interest, and amicable resolution of disputes"[90]. It is this contrast which can be abstracted to capture the essence of the revolts of the nineteenth century. The rebelling adivasis of the nineteenth century

[87] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspect of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983) p. 7
[88] Ibid p. 7
[89] Alpa Shah, "'Keeping the State Away': Democracy, Politics and the State in Jharkhand", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 2007, 13, pp. 129-145
[90] Ibid, p. 130

Chota Nagpur had no option but to "burn, plunder, murder and loot their oppressors"[91]. More than that, **the very act of revolting became a symbolic resurrection of those aspects of their customary traditions which had been destroyed by the presence of authority of the colonial state.** The struggles were, therefore, conspicuous by their high level of participation and public character. The public character of the revolt ensured its collective nature and also gave it the backing of a legitimate corporate activity[92]. The public nature of the revolt also meant that the objective of the revolt was made clear: "unlike criminals, they made no attempt to conceal violence by any pretence to conform to law and order"[93]. A very detailed analysis of the inclusive nature of the revolts has been given by Elizabeth Rottger-Hogan, when she tries debating whether the Santhal *Hul* of 1855 represented just insurrection or ostracism, which is a customary tradition amongst the santhals. She writes: "the Santals patterned their actions after a long familiar tribal ritual used to purify their community and to rid it of dreaded pollution- the rite of 'bitlaha' or tribal ostracism"[94]. The British with their brigade of the *Zamindars* and *mahajans* were seen as a source of pollution in the indigenous world of the Santhals, and their removal was seen as the overriding need to restore the values of the community. Therefore, Santhal *Hul* was modelled on tribal ostracism, which was "not just the judgement of the leaders of the community, but it (was) an activity which (involved) the entire tribe"[95]. This description of the Santhal rebellion attributes it a sacral nature, but the latter cannot be separated from the kind of politics that these rebellions brought to the fore, which however, disqualifies their inclusion in the discourse of "secular" politics prsojected by the modern nation-state.

[91] S.C. Roy, *The Mundas and Their Country*, 1912 p. 115
[92] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspect of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi; Oxford University Press, 1983). According to Guha, "the communal idiom most characteristic of rebel mobilisation in India was that of corporate labour" whereby insurgency was just another incidence of working together.
[93] Ibid, p. 111
[94] Elizabeth Rottger-Hogan, "Insurrection...or Ostracism: A study of the Santal Rebellion of 1855", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 16/1, 1982 p. 82
[95] Ibid, p. 88

The next section is an attempt to flag off the debate whether the present day state of Jharkhand captures all that the nineteenth century revolts were seen to represent and push for[96].

The Present-day Jharkhand: some remarks by way of conclusion

In the previous section we saw how the revolts of the nineteenth century put forward a wide range of demands which have little resemblance with the centralization of political power that the modern day Jharkhand state represents. In a way, the demand for a separate state of Jharkhand barely captures element of everyday-ness[97] that was inherent in preceding struggles. We can see how the modern day imagination of a separate Jharkhand as a step to institutionalise the customs of the indigenous communities is in fact rather inadequate, partly because it proceeds via a process of defining and classifying the indigenous communities as well as their rights. This aspect of the logic of the modern state and its process of policy formulation will be discussed in the next chapter.

The state of Jharkhand was formed in the year 2000. It took shape as a demand in the decade of the fifties when the veteran leader of the Jharkhand movement, Jaipal Singh proposed a separate state of Jharkhand before the State Reorganisation Committee. The movement in the 20th century witnessed many changes like: the spread of Christianity in the region[98], the framing of the Indian constitution, a post-colonial state with its vision of nation-building, huge decline in the adivasi population in this region, the entry of national level parties in the region, the entry of the Left parties and

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[96] This debate on the movement in its more institutional phase of struggle and thereby, its interaction with the post-colonial state, has been dealt with more elaborately in the next chapter.

[97] On the lines of giving a critique of conventional historiography which looks for a 'causal' explanation for 'events' like that of a revolt or rebellion, Prathama Banerjee talks about the 'everydayness' of the struggles of the Santals in the 19th century. She says, "this temporal imperative of rebellion, thus, lay not in the recognition of a sufficient cause- the circumstances of oppression were reasons enough to act but were too constant and ever-present in the everyday to explain the specific rebellious conjuncture". Therefore, she says that the act of rebellion needs to be seen as a practice that "cannot be fully justified in terms of past causes and a present realism of interests". See Banerjee "Historic Acts? Santhal Rebellion and the Temporality of Practice", *Studies in History*, 15/1-2, 1999 p. 220

[98] Christian missionaries have had a presence in Jharkhand since the mid- 19th century. However, it was in the beginning of the 20th century or even towards the end of the 19th century, that Christianity in Chota Nagpur emerges as a strong political actor in the power politics and negotiations that marked the contemporary phase of the Jharkhand movement.

their vision of Jharkhand struggle as a class struggle, as well as the fragmentation of Adivasi Mahasabha which had previously renewed the movement both in urban and rural centres- into numerous splinter groups. These were some of the changes that posed new challenges before the movement. In my opinion, one needs to see how all these new challenges were institutionalised by the growing intervention of the post-colonial state in India, which in turn cast a new identity on the movement.

When one says 'institutionalisation' of the movement, this in no way implies that the movement was 'co-opted' by the state and given a particular direction. Even if that was the case, one needs to see how contestation was a recurrent feature of this process of institutionalisation. The beginning of the 20th century saw several changes in different aspects of the society in Chota Nagpur. There were several reasons due to which the ethno-cultural base of the movement had to be expanded so as to open it to the non-tribal or the 'sadan' population. The sharp decline in the tribal population in the Chotanagpur region forced the Jharkhand party to open its fold for all the Chotanagpuris. Then the classification process by the newly formed state was initiated whereby groups in population were identified as either Tribes or Castes. In this process of classification, several groups which earlier fell in the category of the Tribes, now turned into Scheduled Castes. In keeping with its integrationist and protectionist policies towards "tribal' regions, the state included several provisions for the tribes in the constitution, which created internal rift and competition between different groups to be labelled as a Scheduled Tribe. Likewise, the spirit of the constitution of the newly independent nation called for a wider and more secular political alliance between different groups and communities in society. The result of all this was that alliances were formed between different political parties in this region, like that between the Jharkhand Party and the Congress in 1963. According to K.S. Singh this was one of the biggest reasons that gave a set-back to the movement[99]. In all, the meaning of the category of 'diku' underwent a sea-change. Now the movement did not just represent the struggle against the displacement of indigenous communities from land and forest, it was likewise a struggle of the exploited workforce in the fast growing industrial sector in Jharkhand; it was also a struggle

[99] K.S. Singh, *Tribal Movements in India*, Vol.2, (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1983) p. 67

against deprivation faced by the marginalised communities in the employment sector due to heavy influx of outsiders, and in the end, it was also a struggle for other regional interests that had cropped up in the region. In this context, the concept of the 'diku' saw a serious change in its meaning. The point is that even in its contemporary phase, the Jharkhand movement was constitutive of several demands corresponding to the wide-ranging changes that occurred in that period of time. It will be interesting to see how these different demands were accommodated in the singular demand for a separate Jharkhand, and how the post-independent state in India had a huge role to play in this process.

—CHAPTER TWO—

State and the Movement: The Identity of the 'Tribe' and the 'Scheduled Tribe'

The previous chapter discussed the demands of three major revolts that shook the region of Chotanagpur in the nineteenth century. One main motive of highlighting the demands was to analyze whether they gradually become accommodated in the final demand for the formation of a separate Jharkhand. The idea was to probe and unsettle it was intended that the singularity which is pressed upon the history of Jharkhand movement-in terms of its identity and *telos*- be also questioned. The current chapter takes off from this point, and attempts to locate the main elements that are assumed to constitute the idea of Jharkhand as a separate state. As touched upon briefly in the preceding chapter, the conditions[1] under which this demand was put forth were entirely different from the circumstances of the nineteenth century rebellions. Although we are yet to discuss these later conditions that gave birth to the idea of a separate state are yet to be discussed, we do know that the movement underwent many changes as it moved into of the twentieth century. Not only did the course of the movement shift but these changes also affected a radical transformation in the nature of demands. The current chapter intends to look into these factors that contributed to the evolving nature of the movement and its demands it put forward. **This chapter intends to focus on the emerging state structure in the Chotanagpur region as one of the main factors that interacted and transformed the movement.** At this point, one needs to reiterate the main idea of the correspondence between the consolidation of the state structure in this region, the demands that the movement puts forth and the process of identity creation within the movement. The previous chapter has also dealt with the issue of identity of the movement. The history of the movement suggests that there have been transformations throughout which makes it difficult to slot it in any

[1] The previous chapter flags off some of these changes in terms of the changing socio-demographic situation of this region, the expanding social base of the movement which cast the element of ethnicity in a new light, the consolidation of the hold of Christianity in this region and the way it emerged as a political identity, the emerging post-independent state and the entry of political parties in this region. See chp.1, pp. 24-25

one particular way or in any one specific category. In the process of discussing the demands of the movement in its different phases, the preceding chapter has tried to argue how the "tribal" identity of the movement has been just one of the identities[2] and also an outcome of a particular phase or time in its history. The previous chapter had also contended how the concept of "ethnicity" is better suited to describe the Jharkhand movement. One needs to see this argument especially against the common practice of mistaking the concept of ethnicity with that of "tribal", where both concepts are used inter-changeably. In this context, the identity of the 'tribe' and the 'scheduled tribe' will be further looked in greater detail in the current chapter.

One of the major factors that has a bearing upon the course and history of the movement is its interface and interaction with the state. The history of the evolving state structure in the Chotanagpur region has corresponded with the history of the movement in different ways, often impacting the way in which the movement came to be defined. However, it is not implied in any way that the history of the Jharkhand movement is entirely a constructed history, something that has been a mere by-product of the state discourse. What is emphasised instead is the how the state, through policies and institutions, impacts the movement, and how this interaction forces changes in the demands and hence, identity of the latter. However, **this interaction has to be located within a realm of contestation that exists between the two.** This issue was introduced in the previous chapter where I sought to analyze the monolith that is assumed in the name of the state and the oppositional nature of its relation with the larger society. The interaction between state and society tends to be much more complex than what is assumed to constitute the one-dimensional, simply antithetical relation between the two. This postulation has several implications. The boundary between the state and society needs to be recognized in critical areas therefore one also needs to review the function of state and not simply reduce its function as an controller of civil society. Such an approach helps us to review the nature of the state

[2] The other identities that the movement has been associated with are: Jharkhand as a regional identity, a territorial division, Jharkhand as a *land of the destitute* which figures prominently in the Left discourse, Jharkhand as a political idea as the land of the *adivasi* or *moolvasi* of Chotanagpur which is, according to Nirmal Sengupta, "if not the only one,...invented and used by the members themselves for their self-identity" (1988, p. 1003). All these different identities have been invoked in the movement at different times in its history, and they have been discussed in greater detail in the third chapter.

in all its capacities: "developmental, empowermental, protective and disciplinary"[3] which are of late cited as the major aspects of governance by the state[4]. It is precisely here that the notion of the "everyday state"[5] has been invoked by many scholars. The 'everydayness' of the state reflects upon the larger political society and its "possibility (in) serving as a medium within which aspects of civil society can grow and gain support"[6]. The chapter uses the term *everyday state* in a qualified sense. The term 'everydayness' figured in the last chapter as well, where it was used to narrate the nineteenth century revolts as they translated into a day-to-day struggle in the lives of the indigenous communities of Chotanagpur. **While on one hand the concept of *everyday state* is used to challenge the essential dichotomy with the society, on the other hand, in the nineteenth century Chotanagpur, the everyday nature of struggle that the nineteenth century revolts represented, assisted in putting this very dichotomy in place.** The *mahajan* represented the oppressive state and so did the *zamindar* at the everyday micro-level. The fact that in nineteenth century Chotanagpur, the only relation possible between a traditional head of the village and a tribal was reduced to that of exchange was seen as an outcome of the colonial state machinery. **Thus the imaginations of the presence of state in each and every aspect of a tribal's life can be simultaneous imaginations of the state as something distinct from as well as ubiquitous in society.** Hence, in a context where "the state in Jharkhand has been irredeemably foreign and run by high-caste north Biharis who

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[3] Stuart Corbridge, Glyn Williams, Manoj Srivastava, Rene Veron, "Making Social Science Matter - I: How the Local State Works in Rural Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 38, No. 24, Jun. 14-20, 2003, p. 2377-2389

[4] Ibid. In a very thorough analysis of the *Employment Assurance Scheme* in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, this group of authors interrogate the interrelationship between the aspects of "participation, governance and political society". In one way, they seek to understand the relationship between the political society and civil society, as has been distinguished by Partha Chatterjee and through this, they want to unearth the, "complexity and divergence of state action-conflicts within and between different agencies of the state, as also the challenges posed to these agencies by civil and political society groups".

[5] C.J. Fuller and Veronique Benei in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern Society*, Social Science Press, 2000

[6] Stuart Corbridge, Glyn Williams, Manoj Srivastava, Rene Veron in *Seeing the State: Governance and Governmentality in India*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 191. They talk about the "hybrid understandings of democratic norms and practices" through examples from Eastern India, where they attempt to "resolve the tension that exist between 'politics' and the 'political', where the former is understood to refer, following Chantal Mouffe, to the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions that seek to establish a sense of social order and organisation, and where the latter refers to the antagonistic dimension that is inherent in human societies and which is located in the struggles of diverse social groups for and resources".

have treated *adivasis* as 'savages'"[7], one needs to rethink the relationship that exists between the state and the *adivasi* society in Jharkhand. The 'everyday' relation that exists between the state and society, acquires a different nature altogether in the context of Jharkhand. The "historical experiences of the state"[8] and the allied "view of *sarkar* as a labyrinth of hidden dangers, ominous secrets, and opaque traps"[9] underlie much of the *adivasis*' attitude towards the state. **This highlights one key aspect of the element of contestation that marks the relationship between state and society and in our case, between state and any social movement.** Many contend that it is this element of contestation that enables the movement to draw upon the institutional resources and avenues that are provided by the state to articulate its demands better. A similar resonance is found in found in K. Sivaramakrishnan's analysis of the impact of colonialism on forestry in India[10]. Sivaramkrishnan's basic premise is the dialectical nature of relationship that exists between "discourses of rule and the discourses of protest"[11]. Drawing on Foucault, he maintains that "power needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the social body"[12]. Thus, he gives importance to the myriad ways in which local communities "interacted with the edifice of forest administration to influence its shape and design as it was being erected"[13]. Similarly, Vinita Damodaran, in her analysis of the making of the identity of the tribe[14], makes a strong case against taking a very simplistic view of British policies towards the tribes which is assumed to be rooted in a crude type of racial, evolutionary progressivism[15]. She highlights the 'humanitarian' streak in the colonial discourse which made the British take note of the distinct nature of the 'problem' in tribal areas, and this is what led to "institutionalize(ing) the fact of tribal autonomy"[16]. Thus, "that the tribes were

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[7] Alpa Shah, "'Keeping the State Away': Democracy, Politics and the State in Jharkhand", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 2007,Vol. 13 p. 141

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] K.Sivaramakrishnan in "Colonialism and Forestry in India: Imagining the Past in Present Politics", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37/1 Jan., 1995, pp. 3-40

[11] Ibid, p. 3

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid, p. 24

[14] Vinita Damodaran, "Colonial Constructions of the 'Tribe' in India: The Case of Chotanagpur", *The Indian Historical Review*, XXXIII/ 1 Jan., 2006, pp. 44-75

[15] Ibid, p. 55

[16] Ibid, p. 65, though in this, Damodaran also does not fail to mention the link between the humanitarian colonial policies and the 'civilizational' agenda of the same. Her purpose is to put forward the point that "despite the often racial, evolutionary ideas of tribes British attitudes towards indigenous peoples in India in the nineteenth century were not unchanging or homogenous". Thus, the contradictory and

'backward' and 'primitive' was clearly felt"[17] and this was, according to Damodaran, the impetus that invoked some kind of response from the British rulers. Another instance can be found in the manner in which the colonial state viewed the Jharkhand movement as basically "tribal" and thereby assumed and proclaimed the non-involvement of the non-tribal population and the peasantry in the movement. The categorisation of people inhabiting the region of Chotanagpur as "tribal", fuelled stereotypes which formed an integral part of the colonial discourse. In keeping with such forces, the entire endeavour of the colonial state to map the region in terms of neatly defined categories of 'castes' and 'tribes' highlighted a divisive ploy which weakened the movement in many respects. However scholars have maintained that colonial policies need to be viewed beyond broadly accusatory observations such as this, because much of the decision-making process on the part of the British was born out of a process of contestation. There are accounts of how the British policies were readjusted and reworked in the face of fierce opposition put up by the indigenous population in this region. Metcalfe says that it was "the fear of political repercussions"[18] which put the peasantry in a strong bargaining position in Bengal, because "they formed the chunk of military assistance to the zamindars"[19]. Thus, tenants' right to occupancy was recognized in this part of the region. Vinita Damodaran, on the other hand, maintains that "native resistance to European land claims forced recognition of Munda rights and highlighted the limits of colonial power"[20], and this according to her highlights the "ambivalence of the colonial state and the interaction of indigenous narratives of resistance and narratives of power"[21].

While much of this holds ground, one should refrain from confusing this element of contestation with a linear process of reciprocity between the narrative of resistance and that of power. It is also important to see how this interaction has been shaped over a period of time. The policy formulation aspect of state moulds according

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complex interaction of the 'humanitarianism" and the 'civilizational" aspects of the British towards the tribes were reflective of "some main strands in the thinking of the officials, administrators and anthropologists (which) need to be identified in order to assess the overall impact of colonial interventions in the lifestyles of the 'tribes'".

[17] Ibid, p. 66

[18] Thomas Metcalfe. *Ideology of the Raj*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 67

[19] Ibid.

[20] Vinita Damodaran, "Colonial Constructions of the 'Tribe' in India: The Case of Chotanagpur", *The Indian Historical Review*, XXXIII/ 1,Jan. 2006, p. 59

[21] Ibid.

to the resistance offered to it by any movement; however, **one needs to see the presence of force as a back-drop to this process.** Therefore, it is necessary to see to what extent the codification/enumeration process of the state was influenced by the tribal resistance of the nineteenth century in Chotanagpur, and how that led to a partial recognition of customary land rights of the original land-holders. At the same time, we must recognize that the British were able to put a system of codification through say, the census in place precisely because they had huge army and military forces at their disposal to enforce the code. This has effectively continued in the post-colonial state as well when all the major projects of the state in the tribal belts of say Jharkhand or Orissa, aiming at 'participatory development' and 'grass-root decentralisation-democratisation' are ironically mediated by the presence of military and other means of 'legitimate' violence. One must also see how the idea of resistance put up especially by the indigenous communities against the state has gone down in history. Such resistance has most often been recorded as an illogical violence which is intrinsic to the being of the 'primitive' *adivasi*, and therefore countered and treated as nothing more than a law-and-order problem. **The idea behind reviewing the twin aspects of 'everyday state and society' and 'contestation' that underlines this relationship is to see their specific nature in the *adivasi* society of Jharkhand.**

With this qualification in place, the current chapter will be looking into similar interactions between the state and the Jharkhand movement. By the term state, I mean both the colonial and the post-colonial state in India. Over time, however, as the movement grew into a much more concrete shape, so did the state and its frame of jurisdiction. We must remember that the imperatives before the post-colonial state are different from that of a colonial state; and it is important in this respect to analyse the extent to which the post-colonial state separates itself from the colonial legacy. In a way, this chapter tries to comment on the governing methods of both the sets of state in dealing with the indigenous communities of Jharkhand. Therefore, what is more important to study than merely the purpose for which the state does what it does , are the small but significant ways in which the state structure has a bearing upon the course of the movement. In the preceding chapter, the brief reference to the interplay between the state and the movement highlights how the two-fold processes of identity

creation and policy formulation reinforce each other[22]. The current chapter looks further into this process of policy formulation by the state. Policy formulation is not just a matter of social intervention or administering. It is preceded by identifying and defining the group of people for whom the policies are formulated, and it is through this process of *naming or classifying* that the state comprehends the social scene. However, the utility of such classification goes beyond mere means to understand or explore the social structure of the society. One of the earliest processes of enumeration undertaken by the colonial state in India was the census[23]. As scholars[24] have maintained the census is a mechanism to not only create categories and define them but also to impose, in the process, a particular order to what one is trying to understand. While on the one hand, the census, in the words of Arjun Appadurai[25], leads to "a new sense of category-identity in India, which in turn creates the conditions for new strategies for mobility, status politics and electoral struggle in India"; on the other, such categorisation was more often than not in keeping with the complex reality of the society in India. It is not difficult to understand then, how the state's classification of people becomes a mode of 'controlling' the later. There is a large body of scholarship which traces the roots of the modern state's power to this

[22] By defining the resistance movements of the nineteenth century as 'tribal', the colonial government sought a solution in administrative restructuring of the region, which was based on the conviction that 'special laws' had to be formulated for 'special region' targeting its 'different' population.

[23] The census operations introduced in India by the British authorities were in the form of provincial reports and district gazetteers which were region-bound, and these could be traced back to as early as the years 1807. It was in the year 1871 that the government introduced the decennial census which forms the basis of the present day census operation. For further discussion see N. Gerald Barrier ed. *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, (New Delhi, Manohar, 1981)

[24] See Kenneth W. Jones, "Religious identity and the Census" in N. Gerald Barrier ed. *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, (New Delhi, Manohar, 1981). Jones recalls how the census introduced by the colonial rulers in Indian society proved to be not just "a passive recorder of data but as a catalyst for change as it both described and altered its environment" in a way 'providing order to that which was being described, and at the same time stimulating forces which would alter that order". In this, one must not forget according to Jones, the changing nature of the census itself, which "created a cyclical effect" as it "fed back into itself, becoming in the process a crucial point of interaction between the British-Indian government and its subjects". See pp. 73-74

[25] Arjun Appadurai, "Number in Colonial Imagination" in Carol A. Breckenridge & Peter van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, (United States of America, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) p. 316. Appadurai tells us how the classificatory logic of the modern state "redirected important indigenous practices in new direction; by putting different weights and values on existing conceptions of group identity and, bodily distinctions and agrarian productivity". He terms the "utility" of numbers in a "complex including referential, justificatory and pedagogical techniques". Therefore, "agrarian statistics, for example, encouraged new forms of agrarian practices and self-representation".

particular aspect of governmentality. Dipesh Chakrabarty[26], for example, analyses the link between the ever increasing problem of ethnic conflict in India and the "modern governing practices that the British introduced in India as the historical bearers of Enlightenment rationality". There are many scholars who are highly critical of the way in which the modern states' governing capacity is contingent upon mapping of the social through numbers and statistics, which however has limited correspondence with the complex and the fast changing reality. They argue that the process of quantification that lies at the heart of modern politics of representation has severe limitations in terms of acquiring a capacity to represent "indigenous reality"[27]. A similar viewpoint is held by Talal Asad, for example, who talks about the colonial roots of modern governmentatily in terms of "discursive interventions by the means of which the modes of life of non-European people have come to be radically transformed by Western power"[28]. Thus, it was census reports, maps, ethnographic, anthropological, statistical surveys that came to structure early understanding of colonial Indian society. As mentioned earlier, the sole basis of the policies of both- the colonial and post-colonial state rested crucially on how well the 'target' groups could be defined. Thus, the official definitions of communities set limits to their access to institutional resources and in turn, to public space. In the words of a historian, "it is only in modern public space that the existence of administrative categories of ethnicity suggests a modern public career for ethnic tags"[29]. In this context, it became imperative for communities to rearticulate their position so that each could 'rightfully' claim that which was due to them as per the state provisions. Public sphere became, therefore, a matter of competitive politics, and thus in many ways "the British made the process of political representation 'communal'"[30].

It is not hard to imagine the kind of effect the governmental logic of the state has on the sphere of any social movement. **As has been said already, the operations of the**

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[26] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*,(Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2002) p. 80

[27] Arjun Appadurai, "Number in Colonial Imagination" in Carol A. Breckenridge & Peter van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, (United States of America, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) p. 317

[28] Talal Asad, "Ethnographic Representation, Statistics and Modern Power" in Brian Keith Axel ed. *Historical Anthropology and its Futures*, (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2002) p. 83

[29] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*,(Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2002) p. 92

[30] Ibid, p. 85

colonial state in Bengal, Bihar and especially those in the Chotanagpur region, pertaining to land, revenue, demography, agriculture etc., readjusted the contours of the movement in several ways. For example, the formation of Chota Nagpur as a distinct administrative unit in 1854 was preceded by the formation of *Damin-i-Koh*[31]. The formation of *Damin-i-Koh* was affected by the colonial masters through encouraging the resettlement of the Santals from the plain areas to the hills. This diktat destroyed years of fine balance maintained between the Santals and the *Paharias*. Thus, here was a kind of administration that arbitrarily divided territories without acknowledging the distinct socio-economic and cultural configuration of the region. The introduction of individual rights in such a landscape not only sharpened the difference between the *adivasi* and the *diku* but also served to distinguish who was more loyal to the British. The settlement operations of the British tied the distribution of power in society to propriety rights, and this completely changed the kind of value attached to land, thereby increasing the incidence of agricultural debt[32]. A similar analysis is given by Peter Robb[33] who describes how land in colonial India acquired the status of a *metaphor* when "state intervention over landed property (became) part

[31]Scholars like Susan Devalle and Sajal Basu have examined in detail the formation of *Damin-i-koh.* Devalle tells us how the colonial government enforced the re-settlement of the Santhals, through migration, in the area which was then demarcated as *Damin-i-koh* along with the *paharias,* only to reduce the former to "day labourers of lowland Bengal". This move was motivated by the recommendation that the "colonial government declare the hill tract and the adjacent plains in paharia and santal country to be government property". The colonial government assumed the direct proprietorship of the *Damin* from 1832. This area was intended to be developed as a "tribal reserve" by the colonial government for its own interests. The *paharias* as a tribe were seen to be 'thieves' and 'murderers' who were habituated to raiding the plainspeople for a living and who incidentally also put up huge resistance to the British designs in the area. On the other hand, the santhals were taken to be "excellent cleaners of land and cultivators". It was assumed that the settlement of the santhals along with the *paharias* would induce the latter to take up settled agriculture, whereby even the *paharias* could be incorporated in the colonial economy. The only thing that came out of this administrative arrangement was that the "santhals worked as day labourers to open the area to cultivation" turning into "tenants paying rent in cash on lands on to which the colonial governments brought new migrants". This also sharpened the animosity between the santhals and the *paharias* and the British were quick enough to take advantage of this situation: "santhals were sentenced on false charges of dacoity and murder, sometimes to death by the paharia councils that were set up by the British". See Susan Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand,* (Sage Publications, 1992) and Sajal Basu, *Jharkhand Movement: Ethnicity and the Culture of Silence, (*Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1994)

[32] Thomas R. Metcalf, "The British and the Moneylender in Nineteenth Century India", *The Journal of Modern History*, 34/4, (Dec., 1962) pp. 390-397. Metcalf explains how the advent of the colonial rule changed the "mutual dependence" that marked the relationship between the cultivators and the money lending class in nineteenth century India. The relationship now came to be governed and regulated as the "relations of debtors and creditors" under the "British legal practice and British Contract Law". This institutionalization led to the money-lending class replacing the old *zamindars* to a great extent and acquiring much control over "much of the best agricultural land".

[33] Peter Robb. *Ancient Rights and Future Comfort: Bihar and Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and the British Rule in India,* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997) p. 218

of an ever-extending categorisation, the attribution of 'properties' defining a wide range of people and institutions". As we know, the evolving structure of capitalist economy and market rested on the modern categorisation/ definition of 'labour' as that which was free-flowing and transferable, thereby justifying large-scale migration of tribals from their homeland. This trend continued in the post-independence period, when the imperatives of electoral politics compelled the movement to fix its boundary and review its membership to keep up with the needs of the time. Such changes are then institutionalised by the state which provides different set of rights for, say, the 'tribes' and the 'sadans' or, when the better educated Christian tribals are able to have greater access to state resources than their non-convert counter-parts. All these changes have considerable implications for the movement. One can then glimpse some of the assumptions that lent force to the logic of the state, both in its colonial and post-colonial form. The purpose of this chapter is to look into some of these assumptions and in the process, to interrogate the logic behind the modern phenomena of governmentality, whose primary modality is enumeration through census. The policy-formulation aspect of the state, both colonial and post-colonial, depends to a large extent, on strategies of the government. The chapter looks into how this form of governmentality comes to dominate the sphere of the state and what are its impacts not only on society but also on governance itself. The present situation is not very different in qualitative terms from the earlier times; the state identification and classification of citizens into categories is the driving force behind all official policies to this day. It is in this respect that the state becomes, in the words of Laura D. Jenkins "the arbiter of identity"[34]. The question that arises in this context is how such process of classification can be channelized towards empowerment of people, and also to what extent the civil society identifies or relates to this scheme of categorisation. The next part of the chapter deals with the general overview of the phenomenon of governmentality in India, followed by an analysis of the constitutional provisions specifically meant for the Chotanangpur region that is induced by such

[34] Laura D. Jenkins. *Identity and Identification in India*, (London and New York, Routledge Curzon, 2003) p. 3. Jenkins tries exploring the link between the "governmental practices of identification and identity-based political activism". Identity-based politics is mobilized to a great extent by state policy initiatives, though Jenkins looks into how the "categories themselves have become political catalysts, sparking challenges and counter-challenges to the definitions of the beneficiary groups". In this context she analyses whether the policy of reservations which not only induces group-based politics, also in a way "reinforce the very categories they are meant to undermine".

governmentality and the way the Jharkhand movement responds to these state interventions. It is through this interaction with the state provisions that we will see how the main demand of the movement in the twentieth century phase gradually simmers down to a separate Jharkhand, and how it stands distinct from the demands of the nineteenth century movements as discussed in the first chapter.

Colonial Governmentality and the Roots of Modern Power:

The colonial "encounter" with the aboriginal communities in Chotanagpur and elsewhere took place against a background where the British could not devise a suitable way to club together these communities, including the untouchables, within the Hindu fold. The category of religion played an important aspect of the British census operations, at least in India, and this was in sharp contrast to the British census in their own country, where "the British census ....exhibited either a disinterest in religion or an extreme reluctance to explore this field"[35]. Following religion, caste acquired the position of a central category in colonial operations, as religion and caste were taken to be two distinct aspects that characterised the Indian society[36]. The tribal communities posed a difficult problem for the British that refused to fit into any category readily proposed by the state. This was not due to any fancy belief; rather it was the result of the scientific discourse of ethnography deployed by the colonial rulers that proved so. Hence as Crispin Bates says about tribes becoming that "section of population about which the British were least informed; and from which they felt

[35] Kenneth W. Jones, "Religious identity and the Census" in N. Gerald Barrier ed. *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, (New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1981) p. 78. Jones argues that the use of religion as a category in the census operation in British India was one of the most "marked contrasts" with "its ancestor, the British Census". He further adds, "By contrast, since its very inception, the Indian census employed religion as one of its fundamental categories. Over time, this category expanded, running like a thread through much of the census material and through most of the statistics. The census officials were fascinated by religion and everything related to it".

[36] Susan Bayly, "Caste and Race in Colonial Ethnography in India" in Peter Robb ed. *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995). Bayly quotes the critique by "indianists" who opposed the western essentialization of India as a "politically impotent" society crippled by caste system. She writes, "by the end of the nineteenth century, European theorists and officials are supposed to have constructed a ludicrously flawed understanding of caste as the all-pervading 'essence' of Indian order". see p.165

they had most to fear"[37]. The ever-increasing expanse of imperial interests in India, however, necessitated that these communities too were integrated in the political economy of the colonial rule. **The only way for the British to accomplish what they wanted was through dismantling or rendering inactive those aspects of the existing social system and reality that they favour or understand; sometimes this took shape of direct physical subjugation, but often this operation would be accompanied by discursive or cultural displacement**. The British rule in India therefore tamed not only the present, but also re-wrote the past of the sub-continent in order that imperial interests were served; and in the process it became the legitimizing authority on the history of the nation. Colonialism in India was, therefore, as much a "cultural project of control"[38] as it was about direct occupation. Such colonial discourse reformulated the entire social space along the lines of new categories that proved the inevitability of the colonial rule and also rendered useless the indigenous forms of knowledge. **The huge reserves of colonial archives in India that mapped the country in its entire length and breadth, can be seen in this way of controlling the history of the nation**[39]. As an eminent anthropologist has pointed out, "the early colonial archive was itself a form of colonization...the different voices, agencies and modes of authorization that were implicated in the production of the archive were substantially lost once they inhabited the colonial archive"[40]. **It is in this context that Nicholas Dirks sees the transformation of the "revenue" state into an "ethnographic" state**[41] **which we shall discuss in some detail below**. One does not fail to notice the purpose behind the 'ethnographic' state: by the beginning of nineteenth century, the renewed focus of colonial archives on land records intended to

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[37] Crispin Bates. "Race, Caste and the Tribe in Central India" in Peter Robb ed. *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press,1995) p. 234

[38] See Nicholas B. Dirks in the foreword to Bernard Cohn's *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 1996 p. ix. According to Dirks, Cohn analysis of post-colonial society in India includes a study of the "specific careers" of terms like the "village", "tribe" and "caste" and how they were pressed in to the service of colonial rule as a "cultural transformation". Colonialism spread therefore from the restructuring of social relations in the Indian society through introduction of new legal system, or revenues system to "the domination of imagination in the arena of nationalist resistance and appropriation". Therefore, for Cohn, forms of colonial knowledge meant creation of "cultural forms" including "new categories and oppositions between the colonizers and the colonized".

[39] Nicholas B. Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History" in Brian Keith Axel ed. *Historical Anthropology and its Futures*, (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2002). In this article, Dirks insists on historicizing the "analytical schemas and institutional arenas of colonial knowledge and practice". He sees colonial archive as not just a source of history but rather as an object of "history" itself.

[40] Ibid, p. 48

[41] Ibid, p. 56

proclaim for the state the ultimate proprietary rights and more so to establish "colonial state's delineation of relationship between state and society"[42]. On the similar lines, David Ludden[43] has an given an account of the eighteenth century colonialism in India that rested on an edifice of "qualitatively new knowledge, much of which served instrumental functions for capitalist, military and administrative expansion by the English East India Company". **Therefore, in its attempt to completely conquer the present and reconstruct the past of the colonial society in India, the British left no stone unturned, deploying not just codified history as legitimate form of knowledge, but also statistics and the discipline of anthropology in keeping with its rhetorical commitment to scientific and factual 'truth'.** It is well established now that anthropology and its methodology of anthropometry have been instrumental in deciphering the "truth" about the tribes and the aboriginal communities in India, situating their 'otherness' and 'difference' in much more concrete terms than anything attempted before. Despite the complexities, the racial core of all these studies becomes too conspicuous to be overlooked.

The question that arises in this context, therefore, concerns the modalities whereby the colonial rule amassed "objective" knowledge about India. Many scholars have analysed a shift in the way the colonial power went about collecting, organising, sorting and codifying its newly acquired knowledge about the colony. The growing need to know more about India was initially felt by the East India Company which was slowly expanding its trade interests in different parts of nation. With the Company acquiring political authority in several parts soon after mid-eighteenth century, the economic imperative was added to the need to administer, of course, with the two facilitating each other. It was also the beginning of the deep anxiety that the British felt vis-à-vis the population it had to govern, as this was the time when the colonial rulers came face to face with the diverse nature of social-political and cultural systems in India. The initial phase of British imperialism in India was thus marked by proliferation of Oriental discourses especially those by the anthropologists roped in by the Company. As is well known, the Oriental imagination of India was built upon the study by foundational texts in the indigenous discourse of the nation. It had a basis in

[42] Ibid, p. 55

[43] David Ludden. Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge in Carol A. Brekenridge & Peter van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, (United States of America, University of Pennysylvania Press ,1993)

linguistic and cultural understanding, situating and in many ways, celebrating the "difference" which India as a colony offered in contrast to their own country. The link between these Oriental discourses and the ways in which they fed into the imperial control cannot be overlooked; however, this link became more evident and concretised when Oriental discourses were put to the test of science and precision. This was the time when ethnology as a modern-day scientific discipline was slowly evolving and fast replacing the early Oriental accounts. The development of the discipline of Indian ethnology was located in the shift from "the Orientalist articulation of knowledge on foundational text (to the) ethnological articulation of knowledge on *bodies*"[44]. This shift need not be seen as a complete rupture between the earlier Oriental accounts and the later ethnological studies, because even Orientalism cannot be reduced to a passive recording of what the British saw in India. However, since the beginning of eighteenth century, the central mode by which the colonial government functioned changed completely: As peter Pels has noted, "There was a colonial institutionalisation of science and statistics"[45], which amounted to or focused on "immobilizing, labelling and enumerating 'bodies'"[46]. The rhetoric of colonial administration rested on being fair and objective, and hence the emphasis on scientific rigour which alone could give the British the access to 'truth'. Thus, in a colony like India, colonial intervention had to be reformulated, limited not just to a broad and passive discussion of the differential nature of society and history. Rather, such interpretations needed to be put to the test of science and objectivity, in a way enabling the colonizers to develop a "critical judging epistemology"[47], and this epistemology was taken to be separated consciously from any kind of politics. The colonial government was guided, therefore by, "a scientific culture that objectified the world as a collection of scientific observations with universal validity"[48]. In sum Orientalism was sharpened against the test of

[44] Peter Pels, "The Rise and the Fall of Indian Aborigines" in Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink ed. *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology*, (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1999) p. 83. He attributes this shift to the taking over of colonial administration in India utilitarian Evangelists, replacing what he calls the "paternalistic cultural relativism of the Burkian tradition".

[45] Ibid, p. 45

[46] Ibid, p. 87

[47] Ibid .

[48] David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge" in Carol A. Brekenridge & Peter van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, (United States of America, University of Pennsylvania Press 1993) p. 252

historicism and through this it was converted into a concrete body of knowledge reflecting authoritative official wisdom of the colonial state.

One will therefore always need to interrogate and qualify the *objectivity* inherent in colonial knowledge on India against the presence of racism as one of most important constitutive elements in the European discourse on the 'other' part of the world. However, enlightenment rationalism bestowed upon the colonizers not just a belief in objective rational truth, but also a kind of inherent superiority of their own race, which made them natural bearers of such objective 'rational' truth. Seen in this context, the colonial quest to put together a body of knowledge about the Indian society was not only reflective of inherent biases which the authorities shared against the native population. But at the same time, it was a pedagogy of the values of civilization and science to the masses in India, destroying in one stroke, the indigenous sense of past and other forms of knowledge[49]. In this manner, the colonial rulers were equipped with a power to not only understand the world, but also to "organise understandings of the world"[50]. As said earlier, the racist element in such imagination is hard to ignore. For example, many scholars such as Bates, Bayly and Pels, to name a few,[51] have analysed **the racist interpretation of the idea of aboriginality and the question of so-called tribal communities in the colonial discourses.** They talk about the growing incidence of 'racialization' of caste, which was used not only to make a statement about the plight of colonial society in India, but also to make an argument against the aboriginal people as having no caste, and therefore outside the scale of evolution entirely. Bayly for instance, writes, "Brahmans

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[49] Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink in the Introduction to their edited *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology*, (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1999).This was in a way similar to the British trying to reinforce a "a single moral code; a source of authority, which was single and English".

[50]David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformation of Colonial Knowledge" in Carol A. Breckenridge & Peter van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, (United States of America, University of Pennsylvania Press 1993) p. 257. Arjun Appadurai in the article "Number in Colonial Imagination" in the same book, conveys a similar concern in different words when he says that the new focus of the state on enumeration followed by classification enable the state not only to reconstruct but also to "exoticize" and "imagine"- "exoticization and enumeration were complicated strands of a single colonial project and that in their interaction lies a crucial a part of the explanation of group violence and communal terror in contemporary India".

[51]See Crispin Bates, "Race, Caste and Tribe in Ancient India" and Susan Bayly, "Caste and Race in Colonial Ethnography in India" in Peter Robb ed. *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, 1995 (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995). See also Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink ed. *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology, (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press,1999)*

were identified as superior Aryan blood; other Indians, those identified in varying racial terms as Dravidians, as members of 'servile' classes, aborigines, wild tribes and those of the so-called 'mixed' racial origins- they were not thought to belong to a ranked Brahmanical order"[52].

Coming back to the question of the different modalities whereby the colonial government ruled over the colony, the focus shifted to enumeration of *bodies*, which alone could acquaint the colonial administrator with the reality lying outside him. We must remember that these changes in the mode of 'investigation' of the colonial state corresponded with the purpose for which it functioned. For example, in the context where there was an increased emphasis on 'scientific' nature of reality, the old methods of personal accounts, travelogues, narratives etc had to give way to scientific modes of official investigation like census operations, surveys, reports, archives etc. All these new methods were assumed to be fool proof when it came to investigating reality. Not surprisingly, by the end of the eighteenth century, imperial interests had acquired new dimensions, which made it extremely important that the people and the cultures be studied so that effective means to control them, could be devised[53]. The racist perspective made the rulers categorise the local population as *different* in very problematic terms, and this was especially evident in cases where the communities fiercely opposed British domination. For example, Ajay Skaria[54] mentions how the Dangis of the Western Ghats were constantly portrayed as "jangli' with constant reference to their "wildness" as "similar to being in chronologically prior state of nature, some pre-discursive base which civilization transcended and overcame". **Another important aspect in this context is a proliferation of identities with which the British divided the entire population into watertight categories. These categories not only quantified the population in a way as to facilitate easy**

[52] Susan Bayly, "Caste and Race in Colonial Ethnography in India" in Peter Robb ed. *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, 1995 (Delhi, oxford University Press, 1995) p. 202

[53]Nicholas B. Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History" in Brian Keith Axel ed. *Historical Anthropology and its Futures,* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2002). Dirks cites the example of how after the rebellion of 1857, it became necessary on the part of the colonial state to identify the communities that were loyal to them and thus could be recruited as martial races in the colonial army. Dirks in the foreword to Bernard Cohn's *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton, Princeton University Press,1996) describes colonial law as that which "institutionalised British notions of how to regulate a colonial society made up of 'others' rather than settlers" and this was similar to "dominating imagination in the arena of nationalist resistance and appropriation". See pp. x

[54] Ajay Skaria. *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India,*(Delhi, Oxford university Press,1999) pp. 38-40

administration of 'manageable' parts, but also facilitated increased surveillance on the population. Categorisation as enabled by enumeration became, therefore, the centre of colonial imagination of India, and this has continued in the post-independence era. For colonial rulers, true knowledge was possible only when it became measurable or quantifiable, and that which could be converted into statistics. It was this approach that was applied to implementation in all realms, be it justice, law, representation, and access to public sphere. Communities could have a share in the public resources only if they fell in line with the proportionality proposed by the colonial state[55]. It is through such process of categorisation that the colonial state began to control the 'legitimate' representation of any community in the public sphere. Likewise, the participation of communities in public life turned contingent upon the arbitrary categories of the colonial state and that in turn became the criteria to judge how "progressive" any community was[56]. Cohn calls this "objectification of India-coding of India in ways that rendered it increasingly available for colonization"[57]. It also resulted in **dividing the population in fixed and unchanging categories, without recognising that exchanges between different communities- be it socio-economic, political or cultural- were a defining factor of their respective identities.**

The documentation of 'project India' by the colonial state would not be complete without mentioning the series of census operations conducted since the mid-nineteenth century. It was one amongst the three primary methods whereby the British produced written records on India- the other two being settlement reports and gazettes. The census operations played an "important role in influencing legislation and bureaucratic procedure concerned with the overall preservation of information on India"[58]. It is important to realise that census records were not only a source of historical

[55] In this respect, Dipesh Chakrabarty's analysis of "dynamic nominalism" is most appropriate when "people come to fit the categories that the colonial authorities had fashioned for them". See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies,* (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2002) p. 86

[56] Talal Asad, "Ethnographic Representation, Statistics and Modern Power" in Brian Keith Axel ed. *Historical Anthropology and its Futures,* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2002) p. 83. He explains how the "material and moral progress" of different communities "presupposes the continuous use of comparative statistics", he further adds, "statistical knowledge and statistical reasoning have become central to the way we conceptualize and respond to our modern hopes and fears".

[57] Bernard Cohn. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge,* (Princeton, Princeton University Press,1996) p. xv

[58] N.G. Barrier. *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, (New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1981)

knowledge, they were an object of research themselves. Census operations did not only help the colonial state to impose an order on the population; **it also modified the understanding of the subjects themselves with regards to the colonial institutions around them.** As the census reports described the population on the basis of certain categories that became the basis on which political representation was actualised. The people on the other hand, responded to the census in different ways; for many, census became a reference point of their own identity and socio-economic status in society. In this context Kenneth Jones writes, "many groups recognized a sense of legitimization from these census reports. As time passed, they too turned to the census reports for a record of their own success and failure"[59]. Perceiving the social whole in terms of essentialised enumerated categories serves the purposes of the state, which can be different in different times and in different capacities. Thus, Nandini Sundar[60] borrows the term "substantialization" from K. Sivaramakrishnan to describe the concretization of identities, especially that of the caste "which is otherwise fluid and contextual". The racial basis of colonial discourse was clearly manifest in the way the census went about collecting and organising data about the castes, arranging them according to a kind of social precedence. It was in Herbert Risley's census in 1901 when for the first time census brought together the categories of caste and race.

We must realise that all policy initiatives by the state are based on this process of enumeration. The next section looks into some of the identities that are *born* out of this governmental process of the state. By this, I do not mean to say that these identities are entirely a creation of the governmental processes of the state. **What must be grasped however, is that this phenomenon of modern governmentality has always been in a dialectical relation with the different social processes that characterise the specific nature of society in India.** The way in which the abstract principles of modernity get contextualised in a specific historical context, it also

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[59]Kenneth W. Jones, "Religious identity and the Census" in N. Gerald Barrier ed. *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, (New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1981).Jones gives an analysis of how the census operations gave a qualified meaning to the concept of religion and a corresponding definition of what was meant by a religious community. In this, they sharpened the differences between the different religious communities and also intensified the sense of competition between them. In the words of Jones, "religious identity was now seen in terms of a community as defined by the census reports, a community possessing among many qualities, a particular claim to political power and a share in the economy".

[60] Nandini Sundar, "The Indian Census: Identity and Inequality" in R.Guha and J.Parry ed. *Institutions and Inequality*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 100-127

underwrites a transformation in numerous ways. The identities of the 'tribe' and the 'scheduled tribe' must be reviewed in this light of the governmental process. We have already mentioned that both identities have been used to describe the population of Chotanagpur at different points of time and this process of identification has had a correspondence with the changing aspects of the movement. Let us recall that there was a mention of the different set of conditions in the introduction to this chapter that faced the Jharkhand movement in its twentieth century. The next part of the chapter discusses these new aspects within the movement, by way of contextualising them within the changing shift from the identity of 'tribe' to that of 'scheduled tribe' in the post-colonial period. The next section, thus, contains a brief description of the tribal policy of independent India and its basic premises. The discussion of the so-called tribal policy is extremely important in so far as it forms the basis to all the state provisions for the welfare of the 'tribal' population. **It is in this context that we must rethink how constitutional provisions, say of reservations for the scheduled tribes can be utilized as a tool of ensuring equality in society, precisely because of the fact that many of these policies are based on often abstract and essentialized categorisation by the state.** One must also deliberate upon the role played by the civil society including social movements in challenging the narrow perspective within which the state deals with the issues of political representation and by extension, that of rights.

The Identity of the 'tribe' and 'scheduled tribe': an overview

The scheduled area status of the state of Jharkhand implies the presence of the 'scheduled tribes' in this state. The identity of the 'scheduled tribe' is used to describe the 'tribal' population of Jharkhand, as also that present in other parts of the country. Besides the state of Jharkhand, the Fifth Schedule[61] of the Constitution includes the tribal areas of eight other states which are: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal

[61] The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India is concerned with the "administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any state" but it does not include the states of Assam, Meghalaya. Tripura and Mizoram, which are in turn included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. See The Constitution of India, Fifth Edition, (Universal Law Publishing CO. PVT. LTD., 2004) p. 217

Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan. **Looking into the Constitution of India, one finds no definition of either of the terms- 'tribe' or 'scheduled tribe'.** The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution derives the idea from the colonial system of demarcation of 'tribal' regions as 'Partially Excluded" and 'Excluded' Areas[62], and therefore, the definition of the 'tribe' or a tribal population included in the Schedule is also a derivative of what was included in the latter. The term 'scheduled tribe' is an administrative category put forward by the post-colonial state in India to identify the 'tribal' population as that "collective identity"[63] which then "could be the basis for administrative and representative policy"[64]. The idea of this collective identity has been challenged by many scholars who maintain that such identification is based on narrow definitions which almost border on stereotyping, and therefore is incapable of addressing the changes that identities undergo over time. This process of categorisation is seen therefore as not different from that in the colonial times, when several "communities located at all sites of conflict were bundled together by the colonial government under the term 'tribe'- the historic, linguistic and cultural differences among these communities were so vast and complex that it would have been impossible for any rational scheme of sociological classification to place them in a single social category"[65]. This category of the 'tribe' has remained unchallenged in

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[62] The resemblance between the Fifth and the Sixth Schedules of the Constitution of India with the colonial arrangement of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas has been explored in the third chapter. The latter was a response to the British to the 'law and order' problem in the face of fierce resistance put up by the indigenous communities of Chotanagpur. Therefore, the administrative rearrangement that was affected through the establishment of the Chotanagpur division in 1850s as a Partially Excluded Area was a colonial response to the differential nature of the 'problem' of the population in that region. Demarcation of the region on the basis of the 'distinct' population therein, meant the identification of the population as such, and in this, one cannot overlook the biases which ruled the British conception of the 'tribal' population of Chotanagpur. The link between that process of identification and the present perception of Jharkhand is very evident and this presents us with more urgency to review the narrow definition that is accorded to the new state itself.

[63] Alistair Macmillan. *Standing at the Margins: Representation and Electoral Representation in India*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 111

[64] Ibid.

[65] G.N. Devy, "Elwin for Tomorrow" in *The Oxford India Elwin: Selected Writings*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2009) p. xvi. Devy tells us how the birth of the term 'tribe' was rooted in the attempts by the colonial government to "create a special department for surveying the patterns of" the "attacks" it faced in several parts of the country, especially after they acquired political control over different territories in India after 1757. This survey was in response to "contain the general atmosphere of insecurity prevailing in north-east and central India" , and led to the "profoundly misguided piece of legislation called the Criminals Tribes Act 1875"; it "covered itinerant entertainers, singers performers, coin makers, snake-charmers, acrobats and such other wandering groups that were semi-peasant and given to seasonal migration". Similar to this, Devy says, was another list of tribes that had put up huge resistance to the British designs to take over the forests "to provide good quality timber for building railways and naval ships". See p. xv

history and is assumed to be "constitutive of the primitive in the Indian society"[66]. Parts of the previous chapter explored this concept of the 'tribe' in the context of the revolts of the nineteenth century, Chotanagpur and their categorisation as 'tribal' uprisings. **The idea of scheduled tribe draws considerably from this notion of the 'tribe' because the latter concept was never challenged or reviewed by the Indian intelligentsia and the lawmakers in the post-independent period.** Nehru, for example, described the British policy towards the tribals as being based on the idea of an "anthropological zoo"[67]: the nationalists charged the British policy of using the "protection of tribals as an excuse to prolong their rule and prevent the incursion of Congress politics into tribal areas"[68]. The fact whether Congress rule was seen as imperative to bring the 'liberating force"[69] to the tribal regions is debatable, but one can see the element of continuity in the approach of the colonial rulers and the same nationalist leaders towards the tribes. Most of their concerns towards the 'assimilation' of the tribes into civilization were based on the stereotype of the tribes as the primitive towards who "(we) must have a receptive attitude". Therefore Nehru spoke of the tribes of India as a "virile people who *naturally* went astray sometimes. They quarrelled and occasionally cut off each other's heads. These were deplorable occurrences and should have been checked"[70]. Arguing beyond an agenda of mere political integration, Nehru talked about the need for "psychological integration"[71] with the people who, above all, were "a people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life; not people who sit in stock exchanges, shout at each other and think themselves civilized"[72]. Similar biases therefore, partly romantic and partly political, infused the

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[66] Ibid, p. xvi
[67] Alistair Macmillan. *Standing at the Margins: Representation and Electoral Representation in India*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 113
[68] Ibid.
[69] S.S. Shashi, *Nehru and the Tribals*, (New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1990) p. 27. In a speech delivered at the opening session of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Areas Conference held in new Delhi on June 7, 1952, Nehru was perplexed with the question of how the "liberating force" which was the "essence" of the freedom movement in India, had skipped the tribal people especially those living in the frontiers, and this was primarily due to the inability of the mainstream society to develop "any genuine understanding of the tribal folk". It must be mentioned that many of the concerns of the Indian National Congress for the tribes especially those living in the border areas or the frontiers, was channelled through the urgency it posed as a security issue. This continues even today when the nationality movements in parts of the north-east are seen as security threats to the nation and its frontier interests, and are responded to with more and more militarisation and deployment of army in these regions.
[70] Ibid, p. 23
[71] Ibid, p. 27
[72] Ibid, p. 25

thinking of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India which framed the initial set of provisions for the scheduled tribes of the country. We discuss that in the chapter ahead. **Most scholars agree broadly on two oppositional viewpoints that influenced policy initiative of the state towards the scheduled tribes: isolation and assimilation.** Each forwarded a particular logic behind its particular stance towards the tribes. To put it very simply, isolationism implied *enabling* the tribes to retain their original way of life-style and social setting which also meant *protecting* them from the evil influences of the 'outside' civilisation; whereas, assimilation implied integration of the same communities with the "civilized communities of the country in order to share with the advanced communities, the privileges and duties on equal terms in the general social and political life of the country"[73]. One must see how each of these categories contained more than what is conveyed by their simple meanings. Not much thinking is needed to see how both the approaches converged on various grounds. The orientation of each was towards *enabling* the tribes, with all their innate 'primitiveness', to lead a more 'meaningful' life. **In this, both began with the transitory nature of the identity of the tribe**: "tribes (are) primarily seen as a stage and type of society. They represent(ed) a society that lacks positive traits of the modern society and thus constitutes a simple, illiterate and backward society"[74]. Thus the identity of a tribe was always viewed as being relational; it was always compared and contrasted with the identity of the rest of the society, and in this both sets of identities; that of a tribe and the 'outside' society was assumed to be fixed and homogenous. **These approaches, therefore, conceptualized a particular view of the relation between the tribes and non-tribal population, which was inevitably hostile and contradictory.** The isolationist policy of the British colonial rulers translated into a set of legal provisions to maintain "a state of semi-autonomous rule in tribal areas (to) deal with certain problems associated with the tribal areas, notably land alienation and exploitation by money lenders"[75]. Besides the fact that these provisions were plagued by ad-hocism and manipulation at the hands of the British themselves, they also institutionalized the *fact* of a *natural* divide between the tribes

[73] G.S. Ghurye, *The Scheduled Tribes of India*, (Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1963) p. 150
[74] Virginius Xaxa. "Tribes as Indigenous People of India", 34/51 (Dec. 18-24, 1999), *Economic and Political Weekly*, p. 3589
[75] Alistair Macmillan. *Standing at the Margins: Representation and Electoral Representation in India*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 112

and the non-tribal population. Through this, the colonial rulers were able to cover up their own complicity in the system of extraction and exploitation, by rendering it a 'problem' between the tribal and the *diku* moneylender. By proposing a series of legislative measures to 'protect' the *adivasis*, they managed to thrust the 'problem' of extortion as being something innate to the identity of a moneylender as a *diku* and the *adivasi* who was always available to be duped and maneuvered, "primitive, simple and unsophisticated"[76] as he was. Thus the isolationist stance of the British was conspicuous in its translation into more and more centralized and paternalistic control over the tribes[77]. To reframe in a few words, the identity of the 'tribe' was reformulated so that it could be established as a social *given*; followed by a complete invisibilisation of the revamped structure of social relations in which the identity of the 'tribe' and the non-tribe' emerged as differentially placed, and even polar opposites, whenever required.

These were some of the overlapping assumptions that were also present in the nationalist policy towards the assimilation of the tribes into the 'mainstream' of civilization. The element of the imperativeness inherent in this integration was supported by the image of the tribal who *needed* upliftment; it was a push to divest him of his 'primitiveness'. Jawaharlal Nehru clearly had a paternalistic attitude in his approach, he wrote: "one must always remember, however, that we do not mean to interfere with their way of life but want to help them live it"[78]. The national fervor attached to this project of tribal assimilation, grew out of a need to counter the isolationist policy of the British who 'museumised' the tribes into excluded areas, deploying their isolation as a means to curb the growing strength of the Indian national movement. Thus the question of the tribes became more realistic or essential for the nationalists when it was seen as a part of their struggle against foreign

[76] Ibid. According to Macmillan, the British policy towards the 'tribal' groups was guided by a "mixture of paternalism, fear and indifference: paternalism was reflected in the view of these groups as primitive, simple and unsophisticated people. The fear of the British was evident in the designation of the 'criminal tribes' and the reactions to tribal uprisings. In difference was engendered by the geographical, economic and political distance between most of the 'tribal' groups and the British". In fact, it is the latter argument which made the British view the 'tribes' as isolated, and as a corollary, characterised by "ignorance and unworldliness, incapable of governing themselves, or functioning within the developing structures of representative governments".

[77] This aspect of centralisation inherent in the colonial system of administration has been discussed in the previous chapter, and how they were one of the main reasons for the eruption of the nineteenth century revolts.

[78] Quoted from S.S.Shashi. *Nehru and the Tribals*, (New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company,1990) p. 29

colonizers[79]. The 'divide and rule' policy of the British provided a readymade context to the nationalists, against which they visualized a solution in terms of decolonization followed by national integration thereby giving an entirely new meaning to the question of the tribes. The debates of the Constituent Assembly on the question of the tribes were also marked by similar considerations, being aloof of any urgency to review the identity of the tribe as a given and the implicit understanding of its relation with the outside world. **The Constituent Assembly debates are in fact adequate examples of how the evolution of nationalist thought was often little more than the internalization of different aspects of the colonial discourse, more so in the case of the scheduled tribes.** The draft of the Constitution of India retained the ambiguity of the colonial discourse in their use of the term 'tribe' and 'tribal area'. Moreover, the question of tribes was now tied to many different considerations, ranging from national interests to pacifying the "discontented majority"[80] which could prove to be adverse to the *stability* of the nation. There seems to be a lot of anxiety over the idea of scheduling certain areas itself as "the remedy (did) not lie in separating one part or area and doing something here and there"[81]. It must be noted that provisions for the scheduled tribes and the scheduled areas, as proposed by the Drafting Committee was supposed to be time-bound i.e. for a period of next ten years, after which the Parliament should have this "stigma removed and enable these people to become assimilated with and part of the general population of the country"[82]. The

[79] The debate between assimilation and integration was very conveniently transformed into a point of contention between the colonizers and the nationalists. Ghurye for example, in his book on the Scheduled tribes in India talks about the "two schools of thought pertaining to policies for welfare of the tribals", where he attributes the policy of 'isolationism' primarily to the "anthropologists and the British members of the ICS and other government officers"; whereas, 'assimilation' was "sponsored by the nationalist politicians and Indian social workers". One needs to rethink this neat dichotomy because many of the presumptions of both the sets of policies overlapped. Similarly, if we look at the Constitution of India, the entire set up pertaining to the Fifth and the Sixth Schedules is based on the colonial arrangements of the Excluded and the Partially Excluded or Backward areas. It is here maybe that one can bring in Amit Prakash's conceptualization of the "discursive" colonization that characterizes the independent state in India, whereby the latter proceeded only to institutionalize the categories created by the colonial state. Therefore 'assimilation' of the nationalist intelligentsia in India drew upon the 'isolationism' of the British in their dealings with the question of tribes.

[80] Savyasachi. Tribal Forest Dwellers and Self-Rule: the Constituent Assembly Debates on the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule,(New Delhi, Indian Social Institute, 1998) p. 90

[81] Ibid, p. 93. A one Babu Ramnarayan Singh was of the opinion that the presence of "backward people in every part of the country, in every village, in every town, even in the city of Delhi" could not be countered with or dealt by scheduling areas. In this, he also sought to challenge the British rule's common stance towards the aboriginal people as requiring "special treatment".

[82] Ibid, p. 88. According to Prof. Shibban Lan Saxsena, "the existence of the scheduled tribes and the Scheduled areas are a stigma on our nation just as the existence of untouchability is a stigma on the Hindu religion".

main thrust of the debate was on bringing the tribal population to the level of the general population through development: "I only want that these scheduled tribes and scheduled areas should be developed so quickly that they may become indistinguishable from the rest of the Indian population and that this responsibility should be thrown on the Union government and the Parliament"[83]. These debates were also marked by an overwhelming thrust placed on the necessity of bringing the tribal areas under one central rule which was "of course the ideal form of government"[84]. One cannot help notice the element of permanence that is attributed to this link between development and centralization; it was the ideological base of the colonial state and it is still evident when the Indian state plans to "conquer, hold and develop" the tribal belts of Chattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal. This element of continuity between the colonial discourse and their nationalist counterpart is seen as indicative of an unsuccessful decolonization at the discursive level[85]. Amit Prakash talks about how the independent state in India "accepted the colonial model of development consisting of integration and industrialization"[86], with a "rationally organized bureaucracy as the delivery mechanism for public policy"[87]. While political equality was ensured for all the marginalized sections of population including the scheduled tribes in terms of a basic set of fundamental rights and affirmative action like that of reservation, the issue was limited only to the question of political representation of these communities in the public sphere. It was in many ways similar to the situation of the tribes in the colonial times when "political representation of

[83] Ibid, p. 86

[84] Ibid, p. 89. It is amidst these arguments in favour of a centralised and direct rule in the tribal areas that a case was made against the "emasculation" of the Tribal Advisory Council. These Councils have been provided of in the Constitution "to advise the Governor or Ruler of the State on all matters pertaining to the administration, advancement and welfare of the scheduled tribes of the State". It was the leader Jaipal Singh from Jharkhand who raised a voice during the Constituent Assembly debates against limiting the power of the Council by "the whims and fancies of the executive authority". See pp. 82-85

[85] Amit Prakash. "Decolonisation and the Tribal Policy in Jharkhand: Continuities within Colonial Discourse", *Social Scientist*, vol. 27, no. 7/8 Jul.- Aug., 1999, p. 113. The author is of the opinion that the independent state in India was able to '"decolonize'' the administrative and political structures, by "actively purge(ing) the 'rule of difference' that had upheld the colonial state" and through policies such as "universal franchise and equality before law". However, the same could not be replicated for the discursive structures, he maintains, where the nationalist leadership continued to cherish the "ideals and goals put forward by the colonial state". It was this discursive colonization which according to him, was reflected in the trust which the Indian intelligentsia placed in the "vision of political future of democratic and constitutional governance accompanied with modern industrial development, as projected by the colonial state". It is through this that Amit Prakash tries to decipher the main lacuna of the nationalist discourse as reflected in its continuity with the colonial discourse.

[86] Ibid. p.16

[87] Ibid.

tribals under the British administration did not address to any extent the question of who a tribal was and how they related to the rest of the society"[88]. It is in this context that the Indian National Congress was initially opposed to the idea of the separate state of Jharkhand because the colonial discourse and the nationalist leadership became one on the "desirability of greater social and economic integration of the tribal population"[89].

These were some of the debates that informed the state categorization of 'tribes' and 'scheduled tribes'. **This process has been, since the colonial times, more obsessed with the *identifying* populations as tribes, than with properly and uniformly *defining* them**[90]. The inconsistency which characterizes this defining process has led to a proliferation of identities over time identifying people as 'tribes'. It is not surprising to find that the identity of the scheduled tribe has a legacy of preceding terms like the aboriginal tribes, backward tribes, primitive tribes, forest tribes, forest and hill tribes, indigenous tribes, aboriginal forest and gypsy tribes etc, most of which were in the nature of "incomplete exercises and complicated sub-categories....produced to meet the political necessities"[91]. It is needless to say how each of these categories, ended up excluding more people and communities, shuffling them between endless lists and categories[92]. The previous section talked about the ideology working behind this process of state categorization, tracing it from the colonial times till the present, highlighting the element of *continuity* that exists between the present day state and its colonial counterpart, especially in their treatment of the 'tribes'. We saw how both the isolationist and assimilationist policy drew upon almost the same assumptions and were guided by similar biases, and the

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[88] Alistair Macmillan. *Standing at the Margins: Representation and Electoral Representation in India*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 117

[89] Amit Prakash. "Decolonisation and the Tribal Policy in Jharkhand: Continuities within Colonial Discourse", *Social Scientist*, vol. 27, no. 7/8, Jul.- Aug., 1999, p. 120

[90] Virginius Xaxa. "Tribes as Indigenous People of India", 34/51, Dec. 18-24, 1999, *Economic and Political Weekly*, p. 3589

[91] Nirmal Sengupta. Reappraising Tribal Movements: II: Legitimization and Spread, 23/20, May 14, 1988, *Economic and Political Weekly,* p. 1003

[92] Ibid. Nirmal Sengupta tells us how in independent India, it was the "backward tribes" that were categorised as scheduled tribes: "No substantial changes since then have happened in this list". He mentions the case of Chotanagpur where "Bauri, Ghasi, Bhogta, Rajwar and Turi, scheduled castes at present, were declared 'indigenous' tribes in the 1931 census. Another community called the Bhuiya was noted as a 'primitive' tribe in the 1931. In 1936, all these communities were declared as 'backward tribes'. Kamar and koli described as the 'backward tribes in 1936, have been dropped altogether from the two schedules. See p. 1003

contradistinction posed between them was itself an outcome of a politics. In both cases, the tribes were assumed to be a homogenous category; rather, it was this image that was cast upon a section of the population with an intention to 'administer' them. The question of the tribe finds expression only as an administrative[93] concern and the issue of political representation and rights invoked in this context is, therefore, only in so far as these concerns are appeased. The role of Tribal Advisory Councils- as was fiercely debated in the Constituent Assembly, and which stands as a very important constitutional provision- has been limited to advising the Governor in the administration and welfare of the tribes and tribal areas. One is yet to see **whether it can be conceptualized as the first step towards strengthening self-governance in these areas. The right to self-governance has to be seen not just as a pre-requisite to democracy 'initiated' by the state through its system of rights; the indigenous communities of Chotanagpur and for that matter any region, governed themselves before the state came in.** Therefore, provisions like Tribal Advisory Council or even PESA (Panchayati Raj Extension Act) must be conceptualized and developed *only* to revert back to these earlier conditions.

How do the process of state categorization relate to, say a movement like Jharkhand which throws up a set of identities of its own. The next section of the chapter explores the correspondence between the movement and the "enlistment exercise"[94] of the state. **The question is also one of self-identity of the movement**, which does not depend merely on the identity *at* any given time, for example, that generated out of state induced census operations, it is also dependent on the concept of identity *through* time[95]. In other words, it is important to understand how the Jharkhand movement has seen transformation in the process of either internalizing the state categorization or even challenging it. In the words of Xaxa, one needs to see how "the identity of adivasi has entered into the consciousness of the tribal people...Not only has it

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[93] Virginius Xaxa. Tribes as Indigenous People of India, 34/51 (Dec. 18-24, 1999), *Economic and Political Weekly*, p. 3589. Xaxa tells us how "the the question of tribes in India is closely linked with the administrative and political considerations. Hence there has been increasing demand by groups and communities for their inclusion in the list of scheduled tribes of the Indian Constitution".

[94] Nirmal Sengupta. "Reappraising Tribal Movements: II: Legitimization and Spread", 23/20, May 14, 1988, *Economic and Political Weekly,* pp. 1004

[95] Mrinal Miri. "Identity and the Tribesman" in Mrinal Miri ed. *Continuity and Change in Tribal Society*,(Simla, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1993) pp. 165-174

become an important mark of social differentiation and identity assertion but also an important tool of articulation for empowerment"[96].

Jharkhand Movement and the Identity of the Scheduled Tribe

The end of the nineteenth century in colonial India was a time when the anti-colonial nationalist movement was vociferous in its demand for more representation in the governing bodies. Issues like political representation and representative government provided fresh impetus to processes of state identification and categorization: communities had to be identified first so that they could be represented later. These processes were, therefore, simultaneous exercise in making the population *fit* the categories of the state. It is not hard to imagine then that the control over whom to give representation and in what capacity was a prerogative of the state. The previous sections briefly delved into this question and highlighted the fact that this is not a one way process. The governmental processes of the state are susceptible to challenges from societal forces and both exert considerable influences on each other. Administrative categories over time cease to be limited only to administrative practices; they acquire a socio-political meaning[97]. This section looks at some of the transformations in the Jharkhand movement linking them to the institutional politics of the state. In this we explore how the state categorization of scheduled tribe has a bearing upon the movement and how it remains a contested category in the sphere of the movement. Thus, the shifting dimensions of Jharkhand movement can be studied in terms of various factors like the "compulsions arising from the nature of the movement itself as well as by the efforts of political parties and the state to undermine, co-opt and support the movement, depending on the political contingencies"[98]; but more so only **in terms of the inter-linkages between these different factors.** In the previous chapter we saw how the colonial state sought to

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[96] Virginius Xaxa, "Tribes as Indigenous People of India", 34/51, Dec. 18-24, 1999, *Economic and Political Weekly*, p. 3589

[97] Alistair Macmillan. *Standing at the Margins: Representation and Electoral Representation in India*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005), p 112

[98] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and identity*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 85

'administer' the indigenous communities of Chotanagpur by playing around with categories of tribe and the non-tribal; thereby aiming to contain the political idea of tribal autonomy within the physical contours of the administrative unit going by the name of Chotanagpur division. The constant resistance put up by the nineteenth century revolts was in a way, a challenge to the narrow approach of the colonial government, forcing it to rethink its own categorization and the result was some progressive legislation, for example, in the form of Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNTA), whereby the government sought to regulate the process of land acquisition and ownership[99]. In the twentieth century, the state identification process and the resultant category of the scheduled tribe have had an important role to play in Jharkhand movement. There are different levels at which this correspondence can be analyzed. Due to limited space, the chapter explores this question at the level of institutional politics that took shape in Jharkhand since the beginning of twentieth century; and by institutional politics, we mean the different political parties and political organizations that emerge during this period in Chotanagpur region, each with a particular notion of self- identity, and criteria for membership. We explore the history[100] of the Jharkhand movement in its institutional phase from the formation of the Adivasi Mahasabha (1938) to Jharkhand Party (1949) covering its merger with the Congress in 1963, and also its break-up in the different factions in the ensuing years. Thereafter we also discuss the emergence of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in the later years of the twentieth century as a strong force, mainly responsible for the renewal of the demand for a separate Jharkhand. As a context to this trajectory, one must keep in mind the changing contours of the background: the changing *nature* of the state and the concretization of its identity as a political sovereign in 1947, which also meant that the objective of national integration sought to do away with all kinds of *sectarianism* or *provincialism*; the concretization of the political rights of the minorities including the scheduled tribes, which set the rules for institutional politics;

[99] There is no disputing the fact that the main objectives of a law like the CNTA was to 'record' the ownership rights of the 'original owners and tillers of land' aiming to secure them their hereditary rights; however, this codification process was to some extent faulty because of the particular definition it employed in identifying these 'original tillers'. Besides, it also made the procurement of a legal title to land a pre requisite to claim ownership which many communities lacked.

[100] This history has been discussed only in so far as it can help analyze the overall implications it had in terms of the kind of politics that gets unraveled in this region. We have picked up the main political organizations only, like the Adivasi Mahasabha, the Jharkhand Party and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. The history of political organizations is much more complex than what has been included here.

the mediating force of Christianity which emerged as a major political identity arbitrating different interests in Chotanagpur, and the entry of left politics in the decade of the 1970s owing to development of a new industrial mass base in Jharkhand. A noted scholar maintains that "the Jharkhand movement has been a struggle between (these) two images: the officially sponsored one and the concept of the adivasis themselves"[101]. While this is true to a great extent, we must see how this struggle was rendered complex owing to the presence of a variety of factors, some of which have been already mentioned. **The aspect of self-identity of the *adivasi* that is visualised in a separate Jharkhand is not easy to interpret because none of these variables- that of self–identity, the *adivasi* and the idea of Jharkhand- are settled concepts in themselves.**

The earliest of political organizations in the Chotanagpur region can be traced back to the formation of the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj in 1918. It was formed along the lines of the Christian Improvement Society by some Anglican and Lutheran tribal youths, looking specifically into the problems faced by the tribal students. The main agenda of the Unnati Samaj or the Chotanagpur Improvement Society as it was called, was to reform the tribal society, ridding it of various evils like alcoholism, illiteracy etc., and it also included mobilizing people in agitations for reservations in services and other governing bodies; registering demands for employment of educated tribal youths. According to many scholars, this was the preliminary stage when the demand for a sub-state was first conceptualized and put forward. The political activities of the Samaj intensified when it decided to mobilize the rural population by taking up their grievances as well. This was a way of overcoming its own drawback to move beyond its limited reach amongst the urban-based, educated Christian tribals. It is important to mention that the Samaj remained loyal to the colonial rulers in its activities, trying to 'win' them over so that their demands could be acceded. This was probably one of the reasons why factionalism crept into the Samaj: several splinter groups grew out of this organization, due to disagreement over either the latter's methodology or their Christian orientation. This state of affairs continued till the latter half of the 1930s, when the Unnati Samaj was converted to Adivasi Mahasabha in 1938. Lots of hopes were pinned on the Mahasabha in that it would overcome factionalism that had

[101] Nirmal Sengupta. "Reappraising Tribal Movements: II: Legitimization and Spread", 23/20, May 14, 1988, *Economic and Political Weekly* p. 1003

plagued the political society of Chotanagpur for a long time. This organization was developed along the lines of a pan-tribal and pan-denominational group, expected to bridge the gap between its urban base and rural masses. Many see this phase of the movement as a radical phase because for the first time the demand for a separate state was put forth and the term Jharkhand was coined. It was in the year 1949, that Adivasi Mahasabha was given a new name: Jharkhand party, and what also changed with it was its social base. Due to several new conditions cropping up in that period, Jharkhand party had to 'open' itself to the non-tribal population too. Under the pressures of national integration and working towards a secular wider politics, along with several other compulsions (which have been discussed later in the chapter) the Jharkhand Party had to accommodate the non-tribal population as well. Many scholars see this move as a key to the transformation of the movement into a regional one which represented all the social groups and communities inhabiting this region. This also paved the way for the party's alliance and merger with the Congress in the year 1963, and the further entry of numerous other political organizations in the Chotanagpur region. New alliances were formed between different political organizations, which however, alienated masses from the Jharkhand party on several grounds. The party also began to face factionalism owing to these very factors, and consequently, there was no more a single unified party in this region. It is by taking advantage of this political vacuum that the Left forces entered the region, which formed a major force behind the formation of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in 1973. The JMM eventually radicalized the Jharkhand movement in the sense that the identity of the *jharkhandi* was established as the producer, irrespective of the caste, tribe or nation, residing in Jharkhand[102]. The struggle for Jharkhand was not just a struggle of the *adivasis* but also a struggle of the mass of industrial workers in Jharkhand.

How do we read the history of the Jharkhand movement since the beginning of the twentieth century? Scholars have termed it as the institutional phase, very different from the earlier times. Now the movement enters into a much more complex but *mature* phase of politics, having at its disposal many new avenues to the articulate its demands in a better fashion; and maybe this is why the demand for a separate state

[102] K.S. Singh, *Tribal Society in India, An Anthropo-Historical Perspective*, (New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1985) p.197-232

witnessed more resonance since the onset of twentieth century. In a way, one cannot but notice the fact of *institutionalization* of the demand for separation in this phase. This process of institutionalization ensured that the demand for a separate Jharkhand became firmly linked to the sphere of representative politics. This is not to imply that such an approach led necessarily to dilution of the demand, but one cannot overlook **how it also gave rise to a certain kind of identity politics which is based on exclusionary categories, contoured by the politics of representation of the modern nation state.** For example, throughout its span of functioning, political organizations in this region like the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj (1912), Adivasi Mahasabha (1938), and later the Jharkhand Party (1950) were perplexed with the increasing gap between the rural poor and the urban base of the organization. The leaders of the Samaj "realized that unless the land problem was made a central plank of their activities, the peasantry could not be mobilized"[103]. It is out of this concern that the Adivasi Mahasabha was sought to be developed along the lines of a pan-adivasi and pan-denominational organization in Jharkhand region to "effectively promote and protect the interests of the tribes and bring about social, economic and political advancement"[104]. Similarly, the Jharkhand Party was fated to decline- so the scholars maintain- because it limited itself to an urban professional leadership who had no idea about the problems faced by the rural masses. These different organizations did try to overcome this limitation in several ways, though most them failed to harvest any popular appeal for a long period. The reasons behind this failure were many. This element of 'middle class-ness'[105] that had crept in all these political organizations was not accidental. It was also cultivated and kept intact by the environment in which these different organizations functioned. We have to look at the role of Christian Missionaries at this juncture. The very long history of missionary activities in

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[103] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 97. The author tells us how the ChotaNagpur Unnati Samaj was "dissatisfied with the urban and middle-class bias of their organization and were eager to make it a broad-based and unified platform for the uplift and advance of tribal society". The Samaj faced a split towards 1931 on the same issue when several members disassociated form the Samaj to form the Kisan Sabha. Both these factions differed on the methods to be adopted to raise the problems faced by the tribal population: "the Kisan Sabha believed in radical action- mobilization of the peasantry to force the government to act- whereas the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj sought deliverance through petitions and memoranda". One needs to see whether this was just a difference on methodology or it spilt over in the sphere of ideology as well.

[104] Ibid, p. 98

[105] One cannot totally dismiss the role of this class because it went on to provide leadership in the later phases of the movement, emerging as one of the primary brokers in the bargaining of power in the representative system of the state.

Chotanagpur region matched their number and expanse: they ranged from "the German Evangelicals, Lutherans, Anglicans (to) the Roman Catholics"[106] each working towards "carry(ing) the 'civilizing influence of the word of God and Western rationalist thought to these areas"[107]. As has been mentioned before, the primary role of the Missionaries was to establish such institutions which would work towards *reforming* the tribal society: ridding it of evils like alcoholism, imparting education and other *civilizational* values, helping free the tribals from the clutches of the *mahajan*. Many of the problems were perceived to be in-bred and for the "preservation of the tribal identity in the changing political context"[108], the communities had to be strengthened and reformed from *within* so that they could be prepared to face the changing times. The missionaries were the only probable channel through which the tribals could have some access to the legal means for redressal of their grievances[109]. The missionaries proved to be a boon for the colonial government because they helped in the institutionalization of the fact of the *adivasi-diku* divide even further. Here, the *diku-adivasi* divide, does not only mean the tribe- non-tribe dichotomy which has gone down in history as such; but also the 'diku-isation' of the *adivasi* community itself. The Christian missionaries facilitated the 'diku-isation' of the movement because it created a middle class of educated urban-based *adivasis*, who had little awareness about the problems in the rural areas. This class of educated *adivasis* shared the concern of the Christian missionaries for the 'illiterate poor lot' of the *adivasis* and their need for advancement; and sharing the biases that came along: "they had little patience with the superstitions of the tribal population and regarded them as signs of backwardness"[110]. This increasing gulf was also played upon by the state, both colonial and post-colonial, when such provisions were formulated in the sphere of employment, reservations, education etc., which could be utilized more by

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[106] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 90

[107] Ibid.

[108] K.S. Singh, *Tribal Society in India, An Anthropo-Historical Perspective*, (New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1985) p. 199

[109] This worked in favor of the colonial government most of the times, because it helped in containing the recurring revolts in the region. The role of the missionaries can be compared to that of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the present day. Neither of them, in their respective capacities ever questioned the impeding nature of law itself. The missionaries for example were the ones who introduced the importance of individual property rights to the *innocent* tribals, without pondering over the alien nature of this right as a complete *misfit* in the socio-cultural setting of the tribes.

[110] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*,(New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 97

the educated Christian tribals who fared better than their non-educated tribal counterparts. Many scholars cite the increasing incorporation of a huge number of educated, city-bred Christian tribals in the state services and other government jobs[111], as one of the reasons for the weakening of the movement.

Set against this, one needs to rethink the assumption that with the coming into being of the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1938, the agitation for the separate Jharkhand increased widely in terms of its social base. **Despite an increase in its base, the fact remains that the gap between the masses and the party kept increasing.** This calls for reviewing the compulsions behind this so-called opening up of the party to the wider masses. It was after the defeat of the Adivasi Mahasabha in the state legislature elections in 1946, that there was a sudden realization that the support of the non-tribal population was essential in the struggle for the separate province of Jharkhand. This was also the time when state categorization of scheduled tribes and its generic difference with the non-tribals was gaining stronghold via the censuses of 1931 and 1951. The leaders of the Jharkhand realized that according to new state directions, not all *jharkhandis* were scheduled tribes[112]. The scheduled tribes were numerically weaker and this necessitated that inclusion of the non-tribal population within the folds of the Adivasi Mahasabha. **This also implied a complete revamping of the idea of Jharkhand itself.** Similarly the political dynamics between these organizations and the other political parties like the Indian National Congress and later the Jan Sangh, proved to be decisive in many ways. Riding high on its nationalist agenda, the Congress was very uncomfortable with the demands of special representation for the tribes in legislatures, educational institutions and employment. In fact, this was their major point of opposition to the colonial rulers who, as a matter of policy, chose to treat the tribes differentially as if they required "special treatment"[113]. So the 'mellowed down' approach of the Jharkhand Party to include all the social groups of Chotanagpur as constituting the identity of the *Jharkhandi* was tactical enough to appease the INC. In this context, we need to see how this

[112] Nirmal Sengupta. "Reappraising Tribal Movements: II: Legitimization and Spread", 23/20 (May 14, 1988), *Economic and Political Weekly,* p. 1004

[112] Nirmal Sengupta. "Reappraising Tribal Movements: II: Legitimization and Spread", 23/20 (May 14, 1988), *Economic and Political Weekly,* p. 1004

[113] S.S. Shashi. *Nehru and the Tribals*, (New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1990) p. 29

restructured the identity of the *diku*[114] itself. In the words of Amit Prakash, "Jharkhand movement gradually evolved into a full-fledged regional movement commanding support from all sections of the population"[115].

Conclusion

At one point in the above analysis, I have mentioned how the gap between the masses and the political organizations of Chotanagpur kept on increasing. This is assumed by many as an indicator of the weakening of the agitation for Jharkhand. While it is true to a large extent, it would be incorrect to completely merge the movement with the activities of political parties. If we still attempt to forge a link, we need to qualify this phase against the background of the nineteenth century revolts and the nature of demands put forth by them. Through this, we can understand the different ways in which the movement itself challenged the limitations of institutional politics, say for example, the electoral politics. As we know from the previous chapter, the nineteenth century revolts in this region found a mass base in the combination of indigenous communities- both 'tribal' and 'non-tribal' *if* we are to go by the state categorization. **Electoral politics in Jharkhand internalized this dichotomization only to place both categories at different positions at different historical times according to arising political contingencies**. So, the fact that Jharkhand party "succeeded in retaining the essential premise of tribal heritage as the basis of their identity (and) manage(ing) to extend membership to the non-tribal members"[116] needs to be reviewed in the light of the limitations of this kind of representative politics. We saw

[114] The *diku* became very much part of the struggle for a separate Jharkhand post-1940s. They had their own vested interests in this, and their biggest facilitator emerged in the form of compulsions of electoral politics which caught the political organisations of Jharkhand in its fray. Several people also came from the land owning classes, and thus were the primary fund raisers for the Jharkhand party. This gave them the opportunity to join the party, and thus they consolidated their positions as the 'elites' within the party. This was one of the primary reasons why the masses felt alienated from the party because they had to share a space with the same exploitative *dikus*, who constituted their main 'enemies'.

[115] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 101

[116] Ibid.

in the above section how the concept of *diku* changed with time. The interaction of the nineteenth century movements with the colonial state was also characterized by the specific nature of the *adivasi's* experiences *of* the state. It is important to notice how this specific experience transcended or became modified in the later phases. The state, in its post-independent phase, did not remain the 'primary' *diku* any more; the independent state in India had different goals to achieve. However, in a variety of ways including new governmental practices- and not unlike its colonial predecessor- the state managed to further diffuse this contradiction in the *adivasi's* experiences of the state. There is no denying that the process of state identification managed to mobilize the identity of the *adivasi* bringing them to the center stage, but the bases to such mobilization needs to be seriously reviewed, because it ends up transforming that identity itself. The introduction of representative politics, especially through elections, led to the de-institutionalization of the indigenous community paving way for more and more centralization. This reflected the inability to envisage any alternative form of "community formation"[117] which then fuelled the stereotype of the *adivasi* as being politically passive.

[117]Amit Prakash argues that the political demand for a separate state of Jharkhand drew upon the nationalist/post-colonial dichotomy between the material and the cultural domain, and the demand for an autonomous political identity in the material domain by the tribal communities was seen as a replication of the model employed by the nationalists at the centre: "Thus began a process of imagination of a tribal community that desired political representation". These sub national communities employed the same avenues that the nationalist had employed vis-à-vis the British colonial rule to invent and declare their political identity in the spiritual/cultural realm. Once such a community was created, it began to seek political recognition from the Indian State". The Memorandum of the Chotanagpur Improvement Society to the Simon Commission demanded "political recognition which was in a way, similar in character to the demands of the Indian nationalists". This he sees as part of the "sub-national" discourse in Jharkhand which contested the colonial discourse, which was emerging in the later part of the 1930s. This Memorandum tried to "break away from the colonial stereotypes and suggested an alternative framework for looking at the problems of tribal Bihar. The autonomous form of community formation that was seen at the national level was replicated at the level of the Jharkhandi community". See Amit Prakash, *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001)

—CHAPTER THREE—

Jharkhand and the idea of 'Jharkhandi'

As discussed in the previous chapter, the term 'Jharkhand' was coined in the year 1939[1] when the Adivasi Mahasabha placed its demand for a complete separation of Chotanagpur from the state of Bihar. Coincidentally, it was also the phase when institutional politics in this region necessitated the mobilization, and consequently, accommodation of the non-tribal population within the fold of the movement[2], thereby expanding its social base. The previous chapter closed on how the demand for a separate Jharkhand acquired the nature of a regional identity since the beginning of the twentieth century. **The identity of the *Jharkhandi* is, therefore, taken to be located within the shift from ethnicity to regionalism.** Many scholars see this shift as the dilution of the 'ethnic' edge of the demand.

In my opinion, and as the previous chapters have sought to explain, one cannot place these two different aspects- ethnicity and regionalism- as entirely opposite to each other. As we know from the previous chapter, despite the widening of the social base of the movement, the ethnic factor remained *the* point of mobilization of the different communities of Chotanagpur. The Jharkhand Party (JHP) in the 1950s "drew upon tribal symbolism by making the cock its symbol, which was able to achieve a great appeal in the tribal belt. It was a simple symbol to be used in elections and yet had a

[1] Arunabha Ghosh, "Ideology and Politics of the Jharkhand Movement : an Overview", *Economic and Political Weekly* , 28/35, Aug. 28, 1993, p. 1788

[2] One needs to be cautious with regards to use of the phrase 'social base of the movement'. Many scholars like K.S. Singh and Amit Prakash refer to this phenomenon of the widening base to the expansion of the political parties like the Jharkhand Party (JHP) to include the non-tribal population as well. Thus, Prakash talks about how the "history of the JHP in some ways is the history of the translation of this essentially tribal identity into a regional identity". Similarly Singh traces the emergence of the multi-party politics in Jharkhand, rooted in the break-up of the JHP into numerous splinter groups as indication of the emergence of question of regional identity in the name of Jharkhand. The previous chapter raised the question whether the movement for a separate Jharkhand can be seen as limited to the institutional realm of the political parties only; and whether this question should be contextualised against the politics of *defining* this social base *first* in one particular way and then discussing its 'opening up'.

potent message for the *Jharkhandi* identity"[3]. Similarly, the colonial deployment of the term ethnicity to frame the administrative jurisdiction of the Chotanagpur division underlines the *ethnic* base to this *regionalism*[4]. Another major instance which is cited to substantiate this shift from ethnicity to regionalism is the entry of the Left in Chotanagpur region in the decade of the 1970s. Many scholars maintain that the emergence of the Left as a major force in the Jharkhand movement and its insistence on a class analysis has diluted the ethnic edge of the movement and has severely undermined the specificity of the nature of adivasi struggle in Jharkhand. It has been argued that the question of autonomy in the movement has been successfully replaced by questions of development of the region, and the Left has been instrumental in bringing about this transformation. The dominant discourse on development does not take into purview the specific conditions of the ethnic communities in Chotanagpur: "the Jharkhand indigeneity based on language, ethnicity and culture which in turn should motivate development process, has little commonality with class-based Marxist viewpoint on the backwardness of ethnic communities."[5] Thus, the entry of the Left in the region is seen as "the first ideological victory of the dominant communities over the tribals within the movement."[6] Posing the Jharkhand question as a nationality[7] question the Left talks about communities coming together on the basis of a regional

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[3] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 2001), p. 101. In this way, according to Prakash, the JHP managed to "successfully construe" the "cultural aspects...to represent a geographical region instead of a specific social group. All the supporters of the JHP, tribal as well as non-tribal, would soon come to see the tribal premise and symbolism as representing them all".

[4] This refers to the separation of the Chotanagpur Division in the 1854 into a separate region with a corresponding set of special provisions for the ethnic population inhabiting this space. This ethnic population was defined as the tribes and simultaneous tropes of the 'primitive', 'primordial', 'aboriginal', '*junglee*' etc. were invoked to lend support to the racist bias that underlined this colonial identification and demarcation.

[5] Basu, Sajal. *Jharkhand Movement: Ethnicity and the Culture of Silence*", Indian Institute for Advanced Studies, 1994

[6] G. Aloysius in S. Bosu Mullick and R.D. Munda ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGIA , 2003) pp. 208

[7] The left scholarship talks about the need to view the Jharkhand question as one pertaining to nationality issue; correspondingly they press for something called a "proletariat nationality", as G. Aloysius puts it, which means that "the organised workers of the industrial centres of Jharkhand would combine with the rural masses to form and achieve a socialist Jharkhand". Such a scholarship finds support in the changing context of the Chotanagpur region post-independence: the beginning of the 20th century saw a proliferation of industries, mining work and "development" projects in this region and consequently a burgeoning working class in all these places. At the same time, these factors also led to an increased in-migration of non-tribal workforce to Jharkhand. Under these new circumstances, it was necessary to reframe the various dimensions of the Jharkhand movement, and hence we see the emergence of nationality question within the purview of the movement. See G.Aloysius. Ideologies and Hegemonies in Jharkhand Movement in S. Bosu Mullick and R.D. Munda ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2003)

identity. Aloysius sums it up as a politics concerning the area and not the people- "Political and developmental discourse within the movement today is mainly in terms of the 'area' rather than 'communities'"[8]. The position of the Left on the ethnic question has attracted much criticism. It has been argued that the class paradigm does not take into account the specific "cultural configuration"[9] of the people of this region. Javed Alam says that while there exists conditions in Jharkhand that forge a national identity, however, the premise of such a national identity will be entirely different from what the Left perceives it to be[10]. The specific nature of ethnic discourse in this region implies that it is wrong to club different marginalised communities in Jharkhand under one category, because there is hierarchy in what is called the working class in Jharkhand. One cannot fail to notice that majority of the ethnic population is extremely poor and has been concentrated in low-paid and low-skilled jobs in the industrial sector in Jharkhand, like peons, *khalasis* etc; resembling what Javed Alam terms as 'ethnic sub-proletariat.'[11]

While the critique of the Left stands justified to a large extent, one cannot be too sure of the basis to this critique. The critique proceeds by privileging one aspect- ethnicity in this case- over the other; however, it fails to contextualise this kind of *essentialisation* that arises as an outcome of a politics of taxonomy. The element of ethnicity in this context has been privileged as constituting the *essence* of the idea of Jharkhand, and this is evident in the accounts which portray the latter as the "separate province for the tribals."[12] Therefore, many saw it as a compromise when due to electoral and other strategic concerns, "the leaders of the movement had to broaden their definition of 'Jharkhandi' (to) include all those residing in the region who observed local festivals, worshipped tribal deities, shared tribal culture and took pride

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[8] Ibid, p. 209. Therefore, Aloysius makes a case for the analysis of "ethnicity and regionalism as two distinct and different phenomena" and to "substitute one for the other means certain shifts in emphasis and point of view and when considered against the political thrust of the movement towards change, signify again a compromise and concession".

[9] Javed Alam in S. Bosu Mullick and R.D. Munda ed. *The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*, (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2003) p. 197. This specific *cultural configuration* of the people of Jharkhand, Alam describes as, "social existence of diverse indigenous groups- marked by absence of caste divisions; distinct concepts and practices on a whole range of specific life situations".

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid, p. 198

[12] Arunabha Ghosh. "Ideology and Politics of the Jharkhand Movement : An Overview", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28/35, Aug. 28, 1993, p. 1790

in the martyrdom of local heroes."[13] This has been located as the primary ideological basis for the split in the different political parties at that time, especially the Jharkhand Party. As opposed to this, there is the element of regionalism as the basis to the identity of the *Jharkhandi*, of which the Left is taken as representing one strand. *Jharkhandi* as a regional identity has been introduced before and the dangers inherent in such an approach have been flagged off, especially as the lacuna in the Left discourse[14] in Jharkhand. **The important point is to understand that the mere juxtaposition of the elements of ethnicity and regionalism in the form of a narrative of shift from the former to the latter, will fail to capture the implicit element of complementarity in their relationship.** The identity of the *Jharkhandi* therefore cannot be assumed to be either a regional identity *or* an ethnic one alone. We can see how the aspects of ethnicity and regionalism have been deployed by different political actors, for example the state in India, to generate specific identities in time. The state identification process and the resultant identities of the tribe and the scheduled tribe are also based on similar politics. Thus, the association of the tribes of Chotanagpur is assumed with the territorially bounded region visualised in the name of Jharkhand. The region of Jharkhand in turn has been identified as the 'homeland of the tribals' and finds its predecessor in the special administrative division designed by

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[13] Ibid, p. 1789

[14] One needs to qualify the aspect of regionalism in the Left discourse against that which characterized the general turn of politics in this region since the mid 1930s. In fact the former can be taken as a critique of the politics of organizations like the Adivasi Mahasabha and the Jharkhand Party especially since the mid- 1930s when these organizations opened up to accommodate and represent all the different social classes and aspirations in the region; this also implied that these organizations opened their ranks for the land owning classes and other powerful, moneyed sections which became the primary source of finance for these organizations. The previous chapter dealt with this issue; how the meaning of the *diku* changed with this kind of regionalism. The Left on the other hand talks about the Jharkhand struggle as representing "class problem", and this form of struggle became strong under the leadership of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Marxist Coordination Committee (MCC) since the better half of the 1960s. They sought to bring together the marginalized sections both in the "agrarian struggles, in particular anti-money-lending struggles, which had more or less subsided under the Adivasi Mahasabha or the Jharkhand Party", and the fast developing industrial sector which includes the public sector industries, coal mines that have been nationalized by the state, "forests and parts of the trading activities, which were earlier in the domain of the private sector". Nirmal Sengupta in *Fourth World Dynamics: Jharkhand* (Delhi: Authors Guild Publication,1982) tells us of several demonstrations starting from the early 1960s against "land acquisitions and even struggles to oppose nationalization, which constitutes important part of Jharkhand movement today". Similarly organizations like the Birsa Seva Dal (1968) "introduced a new trend in the politics of Jharkhand through its anti-feudal postures and socialistic pronouncements". See Arunabha Ghosh, "Ideology and Politics of the Jharkhand Movement: An Overview", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28/35, Aug. 28, 1993, p.1790. The identity of the *diku* did undergo change in this context also, but it in no way brought together the identities of the oppressor and the oppressed on the same platform in the name of regional development.

the colonial rulers for the ethnic population of Chotanagpur. The state provisions for Jharkhand are thus to be designed keeping in mind its scheduled status and its population of scheduled tribes. All these are instances to show how the concepts of ethnicity and region have always corresponded with each other. The inability to see this correspondence brings in its own set of limitations. This is made explicit for example, by the idea of the *Vrihat Jharkhand*[15], which was developed on the basis of an essential *ethnic* identity, bringing together tribes from twenty five districts across four states. Then, similar demand was made on the basis of the regional identity conferred by the colonial rulers: "an important basis for this demand was also that the entire region had been under the similar kind of administration during colonial rule...the Jharkhandi leaders began talking of the entire region that was covered by the Chota Nagpur Division during the British rule as being within the geographical scope of their demand"[16].

The main purpose of highlighting the *fact* of interaction between variables like ethnicity, regionalism and even class for that matter, is to understand the shifting nature of the identity of *Jharkhandi* itself. If at all the identity of *Jharkhandi* is taken to be fixed in time as being an ethnic identity or a regional one, a tribe or a scheduled tribe, one then needs to be wary of the politics that underlines this process of *naming* itself. For example, the identity of *Jharkhandi* as a state developmental subject has to be seen in terms of the administrative categories that define the population of Jharkhand as 'tribal'. We know from the second chapters how this category of 'tribe'- which later translated into scheduled tribe in the Constitution of independent India- evolved on a particular logic of culture, history and political economy. The development of this section of the population has always been attached to a stereotypical image of people *needing* to be developed. In this way, the Indian state has always ensured its patronising hold over certain communities, retaining the prerogative to *regulate* the aspect of self-determination of these communities.

[15]Refers to the demand for Jharkhand expressed in terms of a *rajya* comprising of tribal communities, not only from Bihar but also from neighbouring states of Madhya Pradesh, Bengal and Orissa: "comprising the districts of Ranchi, Gumla, Lohardaga. Palamau, Singhblhum, Giridih, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Godda, Sahebganj and Dumka of Bihar; Mayurbhanj,K eonjlhar, Sundergarh and Sambalpur of Orissa; Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur of West Bengal and Raigarh and Surguja of Madlhya Pradesh. See Arunabha Ghosh, "Ideology and Politics of the Jharkhand Movement: An Overview", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28/35, Aug. 28, 1993, p. 1788

[16]Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, (New Delhi; Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 102

Following this, one can understand how the rights and provisions designed for the communities identified as scheduled tribes flow out of similar *considerations* corresponding to the particular identity conferred by the state on such population. This is not just a post-independence phenomenon. As we have seen in the previous chapter; such identification has been at the roots of colonial governmental processes as well[17]. For example, the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution contains special provisions for Scheduled Areas in the country, and the laws incorporated in this section are maintained to be different from the laws applicable to the rest of the country. These provisions are seen to be an extension of the colonial arrangement of Excluded and Partially Excluded areas which were set up with the purpose of safeguarding the differential set of interests of the 'tribal' communities. These policies were based on a distinct way the colonial state defined 'tribal' communities as occupying a distinct geographical space, in the nature of a homogenous community with a set occupational structure and sharing similar assumptions. **If the post-colonial state borrows to this extent its tools from the colonial discourse, then it is interesting to see to what extent these policies can adapt to the changing socio-political and demographic facts of these so-called 'tribes'.** For example, **if the state accords a definite territorial identity to Jharkhand, how does it reflect on the identity of the communities which have been forced to migrate to other regions, which nevertheless claim an identity of original inhabitants of this particular piece of land**? It is here that the state can be seen to change its administrative stance, setting the criteria whereby it recognizes and simultaneously de-recognizes population as belonging or otherwise. The identity of the *Jharkhandi* is, however not just a reflection of this interaction but also of the product of the efforts of the state to sustain the administrative categories which it conjured at a particular moment in history. The chapter is an exercise to see **how the identity of the *Jharkhandi* gets institutionalized on the lines of these categories or it poses as a challenge to these very categories and the process of institutionalization.** The idea is also to look simultaneously at the changing/unchanging nature of administrative categories of the

[17] The previous chapter discusses the different aspects of the state governmental processes, laying bare its numerical logic and the process of categorization that goes along side. The chapter also argued how this particular logic of governance remains the element of continuity between the colonial and the post-colonial state in India.

state themselves in constant interaction with the larger social space which is steadily changing.

The chapter looks into the identity of *Jharkhandi* that has come into popular and public parlance with the formation of the new state of Jharkhand in the year 2000. Ever since the formation of a separate Jharkhand, a lot of debate has gone into defining this new space. The debate centers on the set of meanings being attached to this idea of Jharkhand, the two primary ones being in terms of a territory and in the sense of a political idea or identity[18]. The identity of a *Jharkhandi* is of course contentious because it has overlapping claims not only to a definite territory but also to a larger political aspiration. One cannot deny the relation between the two aspects: a linear history of the movement is an account of how this larger political aspiration of an autonomous Chotanagpur region is territorialized by the name of Jharkhand. The current chapter explores the relationship between these two aspects with state governmentality as the third intervening factor. The previous chapter gave us a sense of the attitude exhibited by the Indian state in its dealings with the population it identified as the 'scheduled tribes' since the beginning of its career as sovereign nation in 1947. The next section of the chapter sets off from that point to highlight another set of equally important assumptions that form the bedrock to this attitude. We also try to analyze here how the unchanging nature of these assumptions put strains on the way Jharkhand and *Jharkhandi* came to be defined. The following section offers both an analysis of Jharkhand as a regional/territorial identity and what I will propose in terms of a larger political identity of Jharkhand, as a possible critique of the former. In the process, we will discuss ideas of *adivasi*, *moolvasi* and indigenousness.

[18]When I use the phrase "larger political idea or identity" to describe Jharkhand, I intend to refer to another contentious space of different meanings. For example, this larger political aspiration inherent in Jharkhand has been expressed by many in terms of the idea of *vrihad* Jharkhand, which is claimed to be resting on the identity of a cultural oneness, with ethnic oppression at its core. This can be seen as but one kind of expression of this larger political aspiration. In the first chapter, I tried arguing that the idea of tribal autonomy which the revolts of the nineteenth century sought to safeguard against the ever-increasing incidence of centralisation and de-institutionalisation of *adivasi* society- constitutes another form of this political aspiration which gets subdued in the new state of Jharkhand. The current chapter intends to explore the identity of the *moolvasi- adivasi* as being central to this larger political objective sought in the idea of Jharkhand. In other words, the chapter explores the aspect of indigeneity as challenging the narrow confines of the definition accorded to the separate state of Jharkhand. The identities of adivasi, moolvasi have been discussed in the chapter ahead.

The idea of Jharkhand as a territory is linked to the idea of the Jharkhandi identity as a regional identity. As said earlier, the same idea finds resonance in the colonial demarcation of 'tribal' areas into distinct territories known as Excluded Area and in the case of Chotanagpur, as Partially Excluded Area. Like the colonial government who chose to demarcate and then 'administer' through 'exclusion', we will see how the post-colonial state also identifies a definite territory for the 'tribal' communities of Chotanagpur, and then accordingly formulates policies for the region. This approach has several implications. On the one hand, the **development of this region is taken akin to the development of the people of Jharkhand.** Such a regional approach completely disregards the history of the struggle of the indigenous communities of the region. It was not merely a struggle to reclaim a piece of territory. From the first chapter we know how the society in Chotanagpur slowly witnessed changes due to a process of stratification, which only accentuated with the coming of the colonial rulers. This speeded the cropping up of differential and antagonistic interests in society, which according to most historical accounts, was a divide between the interests of the *adivasis* and the *outsiders* who formed a part and parcel of the exploitative colonial machinery. This divide has become institutionalized over the years, and in some way it also feeds into the demand for a separate Jharkhand to restore the *adivasi* society in its original form. Therefore, the regional development approach of the state towards Jharkhand cannot do justice to these demands because it ends up clubbing together the *adivasi* and the class of exploiters in the name of regional interest. The other aspect of this regional approach is that quite paradoxically the state has come to define Jharkhand as a 'homeland' to scheduled tribes inhabiting this region. **The development policies of the state for this region since the time of independence are, therefore, always in a highly tenuous relationship with the constitutional provisions devised for the scheduled tribes of Jharkhand.** It will be interesting to look at some of the development policies of the state in the region-like the Koel-Karo project, Subarnarekha project , DVC project, etc. - which strongly conflict with the constitutional safeguards provided to the indigenous communities. This also gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the nature and tenacity of the constitutional provisions for the scheduled tribes of India. The constitution boasts of a wide range of safeguards for the scheduled tribes, the main thrust of which is safeguarding the socio-cultural distinctness of these communities. Therefore the

provisions for scheduled tribe areas are different from that formulated for the rest of the country. This chapter looks into some of these constitutional provisions as well, for example, the nature of Fifth and the Sixth Schedule, Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) and the like, to interrogate how well they equip these communities to cope with the phenomenon of the modern nation-state building. Looking at the wide array of constitutional provisions for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, one cannot miss out on the preservatory nature of these safeguards. Tribal rights are primarily seen through the lens of minority rights: the rights of the minority communities that need to be protected and preserved. **The question is, to what extent these rights can be perceived in terms of the right to self-determination of the indigenous communities, because that is exactly what these communities tend to lose very quickly in the face of development projects. The question can further be extended to study what kind of citizenship rights are envisaged as constituting the identity of the *Jharkhandi*, though this has not been dealt with in this dissertation, given its limited space.**

In contrast to this idea of *Jharkhandi* as a regional identity, is the political identity which is not necessarily bounded by the physical contours of a territory. **It invokes the identity of an *adivasi* or/as *moolvasi* and in the process, challenges the narrow confines of the identity of a 'tribe' or a 'scheduled tribe'. This identity rests on the idea of Jharkhand as a land of *adivasis* which literally translates into the original inhabitants of this land**[19]. The reference to land here is not just in a narrow physical or economic sense; the land is symbolic of the cultural ethnic identity of its original inhabitants. It is an identifier of the independent lives of its rightful owners. When the initial encroachments were made by the colonial forces in their autonomous lives, it was this idea of the rights of the '*adivasis*' that was invoked to bring together different communities. The struggle for Jharkhand was likewise a struggle to reclaim

[19] One cannot fail to notice that even the identity of a *moolvasi* or *adivasi* or indigeneity, like any regional identity, invokes some notion of attachment to an ancestral land or territory. However, the cultural identity which such an attachment invokes does not depend on any territorial confirmation; in this we are also trying to look at the politics of territoriality and the ensuing process of demarcation which is deployed to reshape this cultural identity. I use the notion of 'culture' in a qualified sense; often one of the biggest after-effects or for that matter, an intention of such territorial *reining in* is to root the identity of certain communities in an essentialized cultural sphere, or simply, to concretize their existence as a cultural identity, which is then sought to be *exoticized* and *protected.* Such an approach not only forms a basis to *deny* any element of political consciousness and agency to such communities; it also gives rise to a very restricted notion of rights envisaged for the betterment of these communities.

the rights of the indigenous communities to their land, labour, forest, livelihood and identity. This part of the chapter will look into the identity of the *moolvasi* as informing the idea of Jharkhand, making it much more inclusive of and representing the rights of different communities in this area. **This identity also manages to challenge the essentialized dichotomy posed between the 'tribal' and the 'non-tribal' population: the identity of an *adivasi* or *moolvasi* incorporates both; and in this way it appears better equipped to address the diverse nature of exploitation faced by the *adivasi* communities of Jharkhand.** This approach also helps to break the abiding myth that the Jharkhand movement was always a struggle for a separate territory. The Jharkhand movement was an amalgamation of different struggles over a period of time: it was an agitation against the forest policy of the government, it was likewise a struggle against forcible land acquisition. It also included the struggle against the burgeoning industrial sector that gave the *adivasis* nothing more than displacement, and very little in the name of rehabilitation. The chapter makes a case for how the demand for separate statehood cannot be divorced from addressing and resolving issues like these. In this, **it also highlights the basic flaw inherent in the policy formulations of the state towards the uplift of the scheduled tribes, based as they are on the forced dichotomy between the 'tribal' and the 'non-tribal' communities.** Besides the state governmental process, the movement is mediated by other political actors, especially post-independence, of which, political organisations and parties form a major part. Starting with the Jharkhand Party in 1950 to the Congress and the BJP, and thereafter to the Left Parties (the Marxist Co-ordination Committee, the Communist Party of India ML), most of these organisations put forward their respective accounts of what constitutes a *Jharkhandi*, on the basis of the main axis of tribal- non-tribal dichotomy.

The identity of the Scheduled Tribe: post-colonial history and the idea of Jharkhand

In independent India, the Constitution provides a wide range of safeguards to secure the interests of "certain communities...suffering from extreme social, educational and

economic backwardness"[20] on several accounts, which in the case of Scheduled Tribes, gets translated into " primitive agricultural practices, lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation"[21]. In fact, these are considered as the markers of the communities that have been notified as the Scheduled Tribes in Clause 1 of Article 342 of the Constitution of India. The main indicators that guide the definition of the scheduled tribes by the Indian State are "geographical isolation, use of simple technology, living conditions, general backwardness, practice of animism, tribal language and physical features"[22]. **It is not difficult to understand that the ambiguity inherent in each of these concepts makes it impossible to reach a well formulated definition of the scheduled tribes.** The "Commission on Scheduled Castes and Tribes says that a group is included in the Schedule of tribes if it has tribal origins, a 'primitive' way of life, habitation in remote and inaccessible areas, and is generally backward in all respects"[23]. Guided as they are by the "administrative and political considerations"[24] to identify a group "in need of positive discrimination and protection"[25], these criteria back the entire process of scheduling of tribes. However, as Shereen Ratnagar maintains, **they in no way define tribal societies**[26]. **What gets overlooked is that different tribal communities are born out of different historical and social conditions and do not constitute a homogeneous block.** The Scheduled Tribes list, therefore, "includes groups and communities strikingly different from each other in respect of not only the size of population but also level of development"[27]. For example, in Jharkhand *Asur*, *Bathudi*, *Birhor*, *Birjia* are some of

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[20] *National Commission for Scheduled Tribes : a Handbook, Government of India*, New Delhi 2007 p. 1

[21] Ibid.

[22] Virginius Xaxa. *State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India,* (Dorley Kindersley (India), 2008) p. 4. According to Xaxa, these different criteria that define the administrative and political category of the 'tribe' are not without a "conceptual base", implying that "there is a certain special sense in which the term tribe has come to acquire its meaning in the Indian context". This is, according to him, the primary reason for the discrepancy between the concept of tribe, say for example in sociological and anthropological writings, and "its application to different groups and communities listed as tribes". Moreover, "no attempt has been made to link the administrative and political categories to the definition of tribes".

[23] Shereen Ratnagar. *The Other Indians*, (Three Essays Collective, 2004) p. 35. Ratnagar maintains that these state-defined characteristics which are assumed to be pre-requisites to get communities listed as scheduled tribes are similar to the fact that "to be included in the Schedule of Castes, a caste must have suffered untouchability and 'its resultant disabilities'".

[24] Virginius Xaxa. *State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India*, (New Delhi, Pearson Longman, 2008) p. 4

[25] Shereen Ratnagar. *The Other Indians*, (Gurgaon, Three Essays Initiative, 2004) p. 35

[26] Ibid.

[27] Virginius Xaxa. *State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India*, (New Delhi, Pearson Longman, 2008) p. 4

the communities in Jharkhand that are numerically in a minority as compared to other tribes like the *Ho*, *Munda* and the *Oraon*, owing to which they are often classified as the 'primitive tribal groups'. Thus, the policies targeted at the scheduled tribes must take into consideration the differences between the tribal communities themselves, which is usually lacking. **A uniform policy is highly unlikely to benefit all these communities.** Moreover, it was only towards the end of the 1980s, long after its formation in the 1950s that the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Tribes realised that, "geographically and culturally, the Scheduled Tribes were different from the Scheduled Castes and their problems were also different from those of the Scheduled Castes"[28]. Thereafter, the commission was bifurcated into separate commissions on Scheduled Castes and Schedules Tribes.

A similar process of identification can be seen at play in all official accounts of Jharkhand as a separate state. The official website of the Jharkhand state describes it as a "homeland of tribals"[29] indicating that it is a 'tribal' state. Looking at the statistics, however, we find that the so-called 'tribal' communities are in fact a minority in the state amounting only to 28% of the total population; and the number seems set to dwindle further with time. There is a wide range of accounts that explain the minority status of the tribes in their own 'homeland': forced migration of tribal communities to different places due to dispossession of land and livelihood, a kind of development-induced displacement where by tribal communities are increasingly robbed of their traditional means of survival, and which also leads to massive in-migration of the non-tribal population in this region etc.

In addition to these factors, one must also see how **the process of state classification and scheduling/de-scheduling of 'tribes' becomes an accomplice in aggravating and even legitimizing the situation.** As said earlier the state does not follow very

[28] *National Commission for Scheduled Tribes: a Handbook*, Government of India, New Delhi, 2007, p. ii. The Report reads further, "In recognition of this public perception, a new Ministry of Tribal Affairs was created in October, 1999 to provide a sharp focus to the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes. It was felt necessary that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs should coordinate all activities relating to the Scheduled Tribes, as it would not be administratively feasible for the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment to perform this role. It was also felt necessary that a separate National Commission for Scheduled Tribes also be set up to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Tribes more effectively by bifurcating the existing National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes is the outcome of this realization".

[29] Official state website : http://jharkhand.nic.in/, accessed on 13.06.2010

well-defined criteria to identify tribal communities and whenever existing criteria is followed, it is not applied uniformly. Further, it is also evident that these criteria do not keep pace with the changing social scene. For example, the criteria of 'primitive agricultural practices' in the state definition means slash-and-burn or *jhum* agriculture, and in this it is compared with more advanced form of settled agriculture which non-tribal communities practice. While it is true that many tribal communities are not engaged in full-fledged settled agriculture, still it cannot be seen as a marker of their 'primitivism'. There is considerable data to show that many tribal communities practice settled agriculture; furthermore, gathering forest produce also forms a mainstay of their economic life, and this is in complete harmony with the understanding of these communities on the balance between the ecological imperatives and their own economic needs. The practice of *jhum* whereby land is cultivated every 3-4 years with the jungle allowed to rejuvenate in between- therefore cannot be an indicator of the 'tribalness' of the communities, which ultimately is dubbed as their inferior evolutionary stage. In other words, even if one agrees to the highly problematic association of *jhum* with 'primitiveness' and that the tribal communities are the ones who engage in practicing 'primitive agriculture', it certainly does not mean that this criterion can be uniformly applied for all such communities[30].

Another danger inherent in such an approach is the wrong assumption that identities do not change over time, which invokes the danger of "fossilized ethnic cultures"[31]. For a variety of reasons, at the present times, the tribal communities are engaged in a diverse occupational structure which includes non-agricultural sectors as

[30] In a thought-provoking article on the narratives of Chotanagpur based on the inter weaving of indigeneity, history and landscape, Vinita Damodaran tells us how *jhum* as a traditional forest use was more than just a means of livelihood to the indigenous communities of this region. According to Damodaran, people's relation with land or the forest must be seen as embedded in "local cultural order", which becomes a "symbolic terrain for definitions of identity". So, the British increasingly argued how traditional forest use including *jhuming* continued to harm the forests. In this context the practice of *jhum* as a traditional forest practice must be seen as one of those symbolic terrains where identities were contested and refigured. This necessitates understanding this practice as a "belief"; as a "particular way of experiencing a relationship with nature". A similar argument is put forth by Ramchandra Guha in his analysis of the forestry laws in British and post-colonial India. He says that *jhum* was one of the several "cultural and religious mechanisms which enabled the forest-dwellers to reproduce their existence". He mentions about the huge reserves of "myths and legends" in which "the deep sense of identity with the forest is emphasized". See Ramchandra Guha in "Forestry in British and Post-British India: a Historical Analysis", *Economic and Political Weekly* , 18/44 , Oct. 29, 1983, p.1883. Also see Vinita Damodaran, "History, Landscape, and Indigeneity in Chotanagpur, 1850-1980", *The Indian Historical Review*, XXXIII/1, Jan., 2006, p. 77-110

[31] Shereen Ratnagar, *The Other Indians*, (Gurgaon, Three Essays Initiative, 2004) p. 35.

well. While the current process of identifying tribes does not consider the changing nature of these communities, it also in a way, overlooks the factors, including state policies, which coerce these communities into effecting changes in, and even being displaced from the way they live, their social organisation, their traditional means of livelihood etc. For example, according to PUCL(People's Union for Civil Liberties) report, 2004, "Independent estimates say that about fifteen lakh acres of adivasi land has been alienated from them during 1950–1990 for setting up industries, mines, large dams, animals sanctuaries, highways. The name of the game was *ostensibly* 'national development'"[32]. The state discourse on the Scheduled Tribes needs recognize those communities that have been uprooted from their 'traditional forest- dwellings', are now concentrated in cities as the urban poor or slum dwellers. **The two processes are not delinked: the point is to decipher the link between the changing nature of identities over time and the policies of state, i.e. how the process of policy formulation becomes responsible for inducing certain changes.** For example, the colonial governmental process attributed the identity of 'criminal' tribes to certain nomadic tribes like the *Banjaras*, so as to curtail their unhindered access to natural resources. The mainstay of these communities lay in their unlimited access to the forests, and it was precisely to check this that, armed with new laws pertaining to forestry and land, the colonial government also devised the category of 'criminal tribes'[33]. Similarly, in the present times, the state and corporate sector directed 'development' projects have been facing quite stiff resistance from movements by indigenous communities in different parts of the country. The state has come down heavily upon these movements with the 'legitimate' use of all its military strength. At the same time, we witness the re-invocation of the (colonial) image of the 'tribal' who needs to be 'developed', grounding the increasing imperativeness of development

[32] Stan Swamy "Jharkhand *Adivasi* and *Moolvasi* on a Warpath", *PUCL Bulletin*, January 2004, accessed on 13.06.2010

[33] See Meena Radhakrishna's *Dishonoured by History: 'Criminal Tribes' and British Colonial Policy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 2001) for an excellent analysis of the colonial policy of 'criminalising' the very existence of certain communities in India. The post colonial state's category of the de-notified tribes draws upon this very identity of 'criminal tribes'. Radhakrishna tells us how the colonial administration "had, in any case, been under pressure to identify the precise causes for criminality in Indian society, which made it so ungovernable from time to time. It is within this larger context that a link was sought to be established between lack of proper means of livelihood and criminality". Associated with this concept of criminality was the "secular" intention to *reform* them. Radhakrishna adds that the "urge to reform these communities seems to have coincided with two other critical compulsions faced by the British Indian government: to raise revenue from land, and the administration's commitment to private enterprise".

itself; and simultaneously, invoking the image of the same 'tribal' as someone who is anti-development, hence anti-national, thereby giving rise to the need to counter this threat with all possible means.

The identity of the *Jharkhandi* has gone through similar strains over a period of time. Several authors have talked about the "composite culture between the *adivasis* and the *sadans* (resting on) "a symbiotic relation"[34] between the two communities. The *Jharkhandi* identity accordingly constitutes this composite culture, which does not, however, get due recognition by the criteria used to define the population of this state. The minority status of tribal communities in Jharkhand is a matter of concern and needs to be analysed against the state system of classification whereby several communities have said to be been deprived of their rightful scheduled status. The state refuses to see these communities as tribal, and many a times they get categorised as scheduled castes. The caste-centric approach to studying or classifying tribes is not new, and it started when colonial governmentality slotted the tribes either as low castes[35] or as the 'other' lying outside the Hindu social system. The present system of scheduling of tribes is based on a similar logic. In contemporary times, we see the process of delimitation of constituencies in Jharkhand on a full roll. The number of reserved seats for the tribal communities in the Parliament is being reviewed in the light of the decreasing population of these communities in this region, and in year 2006, the Delimitation Commission had proposed the reduction of reserved seats for STs in the state assembly from 28 to 21. However, such an exercise cannot proceed without analysing the reasons behind the declining population of these communities; often these reasons are not self–induced. One can argue that "if constitutional

[34] D.N., "Factors in Jharkhand Movement", *Economic and Political Weekly* , 23/5, Jan. 30, 1988, p. 185

[35] The caste-based analysis of the tribes is not a new phenomenon. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, 'tribe' was identified for a long time as the lowest in the caste based stratification of society. In this, it was also assumed that the tribe is an identity in transition i.e. it slowly transforms into caste, either through assimilation or absorption. The forces of this kind of absorption in the Hindu society are taken to be many including *sanskritization* and even state formation, which leads to a new system of stratification amongst the tribal communities. In any case, tribes are taken to be inferior to the lowest caste in caste hierarchy, and who are waiting to be absorbed. G.S.Ghurye in *Scheduled Tribes of India* (1963) divides the aboriginal tribes into three classes: "the first class of tribes are those who have successfully fought the battle and are recognised as members of fairly high status within the Hindu society; Second, the large mass that has been partially Hinduised; and has come into close contact with the Hindus; and third, the hill tribes that have resisted the alien cultures". Ghurye believed that "the third class has suffered moral depression and decay because of the casual and the transitory nature of contact with Hindu religion".

encumbrances regarding scheduling and de-scheduling of the tribal groups are brought to order and a proper social mapping is carried out, they will constitute the majority community in Jharkhand"[36]. The prerogative of the state to create nomenclatures is, therefore, not without shortcomings; and it is definitely not an objective process of fact-gathering for only benign administrative purpose. As mentioned in the earlier chapters, starting with colonial administration, there has been an over-driving effort to 'study' society in neat categories- like 'caste' and 'tribe'- so as to primarily enable an efficient 'administration' and 'ordering'. **Few have actually noticed that this has often resulted in creation of categories where none exists in reality.**

Therefore, in Jharkhand, like in other places, there exist communities that are no longer 'tribal' communities as per the state list and in this they also cannot lay claims to being part of the movement, which is essentially perceived to be a 'tribal' struggle for a 'tribal' homeland. This is how the state equates the identity of the *Jharkhandi* with the bounded space of Chotanagpur region of South Bihar. Such a definition of the *Jharkhandi* is not the only one and there are several other meanings attached to it, which are also in nature of contestations to the state discourse. The present chapter looks into these different identities put forward by different actors that emerged during the course of the movement. Let us recall that the first chapter interrogated the linear history of the Jharkhand movement, trying instead to say how the identity, the demands and the different actors/variables of the movement kept shifting due to different factors, one of which is surely the state. The current chapter picks up from there to look into these different identities, how they feed into or contest the state discourse, but never in a way to be completely detached from this interaction. The exercise is also to see how these different processes of identity-creation are connected with each other. The first identity that is talked about is of Jharkhand as a territorial division which also implies a regional identity; second identity we are going to discuss

[36] Alexius Ekka, "Jharkhand Tribals: Are They Really A Minority?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 35, No. 52/53, Dec. 30, 2000 - Jan. 5, 2001, p. 4611. According to the author, the 'tribal' population has been systemically represented as a minority in the region. He gives several arguments on the basis of which these communities claim a "tribal majority". Some of these are: "According to the tribals, the main reason why they are not seen as a majority is because the Indian government does not recognise the indigenous or adivasi people as tribal communities in the country. Secondly, the 1931 Census was not adhered to in toto while scheduling the tribal groups in the Indian Constitution despite a ruling by the government. Thirdly, it is argued that the tribals practising their traditional faith are not enumerated along-side their religion but are put in the category of 'Others'. And fourthly, some tribals are inaccurately described as back-ward Hindus".

approaches Jharkhand as a political idea or division which includes the debates on the identity of 'tribal' as *adivasi* or *moolvasi*'. These two categories, by no means exhaust the different identities that have been accorded to Jharkhand or the *Jharkhandi*. Added to these are the intervening ideas of *Jharkhandi* identity as BJP's *vananchal*[37] and the idea of *Jharkhandi* identity as a nationality question which gets expressed as *lalkhand*[38]. **All these different identities have cropped up at different times in the movement's history; each being in relation to the other in more than one ways. The shifting nature of the movement brings into effect these different identities, thereby decentring the existing scholarship on the singular and linear history of the Jharkhand movement.** The next section explores the identity of *Jharkhandi* as a regional identity.

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[37]Vananchal was the name proposed by the BJP for the separate state that was proposed to be etched out of Bihar in the year 2000, which now goes by the name Jharkhand. Several authors have talked about the idea of *vananchal* as put forth by the BJP as being essentially 'anti-tribal'. It rests on a logic of very sharp socio-economic, political, religious and cultural differences between the 'tribals' and the 'non-tribals'. Alexius Ekka in "Jharkhand Movement and the Parliamentary Elections", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jan.-Feb., 2000 talks about the concept of *vananchal* as "part of Hindutva ideology to establish as a non-tribal, upper caste, socio-economic and political hegemony in the region and to keep the tribals in perpetual subservience". Similarly, Walter Fernandes in "Jharkhand or Vananchal: Where Are the Tribals?", *Economic and Political Weekly* asserts that for the Sangh Parivar, the tribes are "banwasis, forest-dwellers considered inferior and primitive. They have to be 'civilized' by the outsiders who controlled their economy". Fernandes traces the politics of the BJP as shaped by their "main base among the non-tribal contractors, money lender and industrialists" whose main agenda is to gain control over the local economy. Prakash Louis in "Marginalisation of Tribals", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Nov., 2000, agrees when he says that the "vananchal proposal came as a boon for petty traders whose activities had been restricted due to emergence of Jharkhand and AJSU strrugsles". See for similar discussion, Indu Bharati's, "Behind BJP's Vananchal Demand", *Economic and Political Weekly* 24/13, April 1, 1989, pp. 656-657

[38] *Lalkhand* was used as an expression popularised by the Left in Jharkhand. It was a vision which encaptured the image of Jharkhand as a 'land of the destitute. The leadership of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Marxist Coordination Committee (MCC), through the radicalisation of the agrarian struggles and the mobilisation of the mass of industrial workers, "hoped that Jharkhand would become the first 'lalkhand' in india". Victor Das in *Jharkhand: Castle Over the Graves* (New Delhi, 1992) tells us that, "during the initial period, the JMM projected itself as a radical Marxist party fighting against 'internal colonial exploitations'. It not only demanded a separate state, but a state free from class (not only tribals) exploitation". The agrarian struggles spearheaded by the JMM included "recovering all the expropriated land from the money-lenders", due to which, "more than hundred cases of agitations and violent clashes between the Morcha and the money-lenders were reported". *Lalkhand* was also talked about in terms of a nationality question. The common definition of a nationality sets certain essential criteria for it, like a common language, a history, a homogeneous culture, a territory and so on. As per this definition, *Jharkhandi* identity can never form a basis of a national identity. There is no link language, and the region does not command a homogeneous history and culture: different groups in this region own a different historical and social evolution. However, at a particular time in history of the movement, the demand of *Jharkhandi* nationality did come up, especially with the entry of the Left parties in the region. The basis of this nationality was coming together of the mass of workers in the industries and the rural masses in Jharkhand, terming it as "proletariat nationality". However, one needs to contextualise this demand for a proletariat nationality in proper light because such an approach also has some of the dangers inherent in a regional identity.

***'Jharkhandi' as a regional identity*:**

Jharkhand has been described as a homeland of the 'tribes'. The Indian state demarcates this homeland as constituting the region of South Bihar which includes the areas of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas. This idea of a 'homeland' in terms of a bounded territory is not new and finds its roots in the notion of Excluded and Partially Excluded area in the colonial discourse. These areas in the region of South Bihar were seen as areas with maximum concentration of the communities which the state labels as the 'tribes' and later, as the 'scheduled tribes', and this perception continues till date. There is no denying the fact that in the state of Bihar, it is the southern part which is demographically concentrated with indigenous *adivasi* communities. However, this is not the sole idea that guides the state's recognition of the area as a 'tribal homeland'. The process of labelling or naming communities as the original inhabitants of this region is a political process, and the compulsions and criteria with which the state works in this regard, have been talked about already. The state works with strict and often very ambiguous definitions of 'indigeneity' and 'tribes', and the kind of co-relation that is chalked out between the two, only remotely captures the reality of the indigenous communities existing in this region. It also, therefore, gives a very restricted meaning to the idea of a tribal homeland. It is interesting to note that the indigenous communities of the region like the *Santhals* first settled down in this region by the clearing out patches of dense forest wherever they went and establishing small villages[39]. This is the basis on which they make can be seen to make claims to indigenous occupation of land. More important than this, is the idea that these communities enjoyed unhindered access to land and forest in these areas precisely because of the fact that these communities had worked on these resources to set up their distinctive habitations. The idea of indigeneity is an indication and a confirmation of their labour and hence their rights over the natural resources. **It is not**

[39] S.C. Roy, *The Mundas and Their Country*, (Calcutta: Asia Guilds Publications, 1912) pp. 62-64. Roy says- "here, in the primeval forests of Jharkhand' or the forest country as it appears to have been once called,- here, the first Munda immigrants made clearances in the jungles and established their primitive Kol villages,...And, in this way, in the heart of the deep dense forests where hitherto the rays of the sun had hardly penetrated, smiling villages grew up, and went on steadily multiplying. Thus, by degrees the Mundas spread over the entire north-western parts of what forms the present district of Ranchi". He adds, "each family made in the virgin forests its own clearances which came to be called the *Hatu*, later on known as the Khuntkatti-hatu, or the village of the family of the original settlers".

merely a demographic reality; it must be conceived in terms of the rights of the indigenous population. This aspect is what gets displaced and discarded in both the colonial and post-colonial accounts on the *adivasi* population in the Jharkhand region. That is very evident in the way both these accounts accord recognition to the presence of *adivasi* population, which of course is not free of prejudices; missing out still completely on the rights of these communities over their 'homeland'[40]. **Similarly, the indigenous status of these communities is defined in such a way that fossilizes their identity in time. What we should try to understand is that the indigenous identity of these communities in no way indicates that these communities or their identities do not change over time.** A tribe described as a 'forest dwelling' tribe does not mean that it remains so for all times; or that, as soon as the tribe leaves its traditional habitat in the forest, it ceases to be a 'tribe', and hence, has no legitimate claim to the provisions enshrined in the constitution for the scheduled tribes. In Jharkhand, for example, the indigenous rights of the tribes concentrated in the ill-paid and low-scale jobs in the developing industrial sector, is as important as the rights of the indigenous population dependent on a food-gathering economy.

It is in this context that we see how in Jharkhand, the idea of an indigenous population tied to a piece of land is a very inadequate description of the 'homeland' of the tribes. Thus the effort of the state to develop the region with the aim of developing its people is very often a misplaced one because these two aspects- region and people- are not exactly coterminous. As has been said earlier, the idea of a regional identity of Jharkhand is traceable to the colonial policy of the

[40] The idea of homeland that has been invoked here is in a very special sense. The idea of a homeland is generally rooted in the claims to a bounded territory, which then gives rise to a set of rights which flow out by the virtue of being *original* occupants of that territory. However, in the context of the indigenous communities of Jharkhand, I use the term 'homeland' to describe a socio-cultural organisation, the existence of which depended on the functioning of certain institutions like communal ownership of property, and *Khuntkatti* rights. S.C.Roy in *The Mundas and Their Country* (1912) tells us how the boundaries of the *khuntkatti-hatu* as laid down by the family of the original settlers were regarded as sacred and inviolable", and "within the limits of the village thus demarcated, all the land, cultivable as well waste, all the hills, jungles, and streams,- everything above ground and underground, became the common property of the village family". Another outcome of the communal ownership of village property was that "every member of the Khuntkatti group ha(d) the right to cut and take wood for domestic and agriculture purposes according to his necessities" from the village jungles. So the next time whenever some part of the dense forest area was cleared to make settlement, these were the institutions that transformed this settlement into a *homeland.* The rights of the indigenous communities of Jharkhand cannot be invoked by negating these very institutions that define the space of their 'homeland'.

Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas, which has been consolidated as the Fifth and Sixth Schedule in the Constitution of India. The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution that corresponds with the colonial scheme of Excluded Area, refers to the tribal areas in the present day North-East including the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura; and the Fifth Schedule, which is an extension of the idea of Partially Excluded Area includes the provisions for and administration of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in the country. The main idea behind this colonial classification was- lest we forget- the concern for the special needs of the 'tribal' population of the country. It was believed that the Chotanagpur region was inhabited by 'tribes' and they were different from the rest of population owing to the former's distinct socio-political and economic setting[41]. It was considered a duty of the government to *protect* the cultural distinctness of these communities as they were vulnerable to encroachments from 'outside' influences. The fragile socio-cultural set up of these communities necessitated that a special set of laws be formulated for them and also that such areas be put under direct state supervision. Thus, a policy of gradual exclusion[42] was adopted whereby these areas were exempted from the body of regular laws and regulations that administered rest of the country. These were some of the main ideas behind the two-fold classification that marked the colonial state's policy towards the 'tribal' areas. Thus, it was by **the Government of India Act of 1935** that

[41]One does not need a repetition to understand how the colonial acknowledgement of the *distinct* socio-cultural setting of the 'tribes' was rooted in a racist attitude, made explicit in the ways the colonial rulers sought to define these distinct institutions only as a marker of a *lack* in these communities. This distinction was always accepted in a denial; only to prove what was keeping these communities from developing or integrating with their 'civilized' counterparts. In her analysis of *criminal* tribes in India, Meena Radhakrishna tells us how the "developing disciplines of anthropometry and anthropology also contributed to notions of hereditary criminality. These disciplines in India addressed themselves to the study of particular sections of the Indian population, mostly indigenous 'tribal' communities and itinerant groups, and contributed in a very substantial way to the conceptual outline of a criminal in the popular mind. By focussing on bizarre or exotic ritual aspects of the social lives of such communities, and at the same time also on their differential anthropometric measures, these disciplines created categories of the civilized and the barbaric individual. In the popular ethnographic literature of the period, a sketch was drawn of a criminal who possessed not just bizarre social customs, but a strange body and psyche as well, 'which had criminality written all over'". Similarly Shereen Ratnagar in *The Other Indians*, maintain how the depiction of certain tribes as "wild and primitive" made way for more and more bureaucratic control to deal with the "law and order problem" which these communities posded. See Meena Radhakrishna's *Dishonoured by History: 'Criminal Tribes' and British Colonial Policy*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 2001) p. 4. See also Shereen Ratnagar. *The Other Indians*, (Three Essays initiative, 2004) p.

[42] According to B.D. Sharma, gradual exclusion meant that "the degree of exclusion depended on the way the local people reacted to the presence of the exotic elements and their assertion of authority bestowed on them by the new regime". This implied more vigilance over those areas which put up the fiercest amounts of resistance to the presence of imperial power". See Sharma, *The Fifth Schedule*, Vol. 1 (Sahyog Pustak Kuteer Trust, 2001) p. 26

the idea of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas was concretised. It was by the power of this Act that extensive and discretionary powers were given to the Governor, who was placed directly in charge of these areas. It will be wrong to overlook other factors that 'compelled' the colonial rulers to go ahead with such a classification. The indigenous communities of Chotanagpur region were the ones who put up fierce resistance to the colonial designs[43] in this region. The colonial government faced a huge challenge in establishing its hold in this region, and therefore for a long time, it was unsuccessful in 'integrating' these communities to its larger political economy of rule. Seen against this context, the ploy of the colonial state to classify these areas as 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' was only one of the attempts to bring these areas into some kind of legal frame, which was, in the final analysis, drawn up by the colonial government itself. This classification can be seen as an "insidious invasion by the colonial masters in these tribal areas"[44]. In such a system, an ex-bureaucrat has observed "there was a slow process of acculturation through which the imperial authority got super-imposed...**this frame of non-regulation was deemed as a special form of subjugation and annexation of these territories**"[45]. Along with this, the colonial state employed academics, including anthropologists and administrators who studied these tribal societies very closely to prove the genetic basis of their 'isolated', and hence 'primitive' existence; and these studies in many ways, provided legitimacy to the colonial government's scheme of legal exclusion so that these areas could be developed and controlled under their direct supervision.

It is the same protectionist concerns including the ever-growing realisation that the tribes must be 'encouraged and induced to move out of their time-tested traditional way of life",[46] that backed the policies of the post-colonial state in India. It cannot be denied that the ideas of the framers of the Indian Constitution were different to that of

[43] By colonial designs, I refer to the different ways through which the British tried to meet their growing imperial interests in this part of the country. These designs ranged from administrative reshuffling of communities and people to a complete restructuring of the social system, effected through a new land revenue pattern based on a *zamindari* system, introduction of money as the only mode of economic transactions, institution of a new administrative –legal system to *define* rights of different communities over land and other resources, patronage to the classes like that of the money-lenders, *mahajans* and the *zamindars* who formed the main agents of the colonial regime of extraction and extortion.

[44] B.D. Sharma. *The Fifth Schedule*, Vol. 1, (Sahyog Pustak Kuteer Trust, 2001) p. 27

[45] Ibid.

[46] Nehru's *Panchsheel* for Tribal Development

the colonial rulers when it came to the administration of the 'tribal' areas. This is very evident when we look at Nehru's *Panchsheel*[47] which talks about the development of tribal people "along the lines of their own genius (to) train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development"[48]. It was in this spirit that the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution was framed, the provisions of which were then placed under the sole jurisdiction of the Governor of the state and the President at the centre. The provisions of the Fifth Schedule is enshrined in the articles 164 (1), 224, 275, 338 and 339 of the Constitution, and they are the guiding principles for the executive powers of the state in the Scheduled Tribe Areas. The Governor in charge of the Scheduled Area has been given overriding powers concerning adaptations of law therein, and it is the office of the Governor that decides which centre or state government laws can or cannot apply to the Scheduled Areas and with what modifications. Similarly, it is the President who can give directions to the state to formulate and implement welfare schemes, etc. with regard to the Scheduled Areas. Scholars maintain that the Fifth Schedule is in fact a "constitution within the Constitution...with the governor to play...the most vital, central and unusual role...in the scheme of the Fifth Schedule"[49]. Paragraph 4 of the Fifth Schedule provides for the creation of Tribal Advisory Councils as autonomous bodies to assist the Governor in the legislation and administration of the Scheduled Areas.

There is much both in terms of similarities and dissimilarities between the two-fold classification that came into being in the colonial times and that which found a place in the constitution of India post-independence, though under different names. In independent India, the main thrust behind these provisions was to accommodate the traditions and customs of the so-called tribal communities of the country in developing the democratic ethos of the nation, so as to enable these communities to

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid. Nehru's *Panchsheel* was intended towards ensuring such conditions for the tribal or indigenous communities so that they could function in an autonomous fashion, retaining their right to self-determination. However, we must contextualise these principles against a time when the effort was towards assimilation of these communities into the 'mainstream' as a pre-requisite to national development and integration. We have discussed in this chapter how the terms of such a process of assimilation were not conducive to the very existence if these communities. The Constituent Assembly debates on the scheduled tribes, which have been discussed in the previous chapter, echoed the same sentiments, when the interests of the tribes were taken to be always in consonance with those of the nation. So we have to understand how the meaning of the term self-determination, of these communities, was itself revised when pitted against "national interests".

[49] B.D. Sharma. *The Fifth Schedule*, Vol. 1, (Sahyog Pustak Kuteer Trust, 2001) p. 29

make themselves a part of the grand project of nation-building. Thus, while we can say that the intentions that informed both sets of regulation were not similar, yet the premises, on which both were based, resembled each other ultimately to a great extent. In both cases, the term 'tribe' and 'tribal areas' were described in a very constricted way based on certain assumptions which were indicative of the narrow biases that ruled these assumptions. **It was not clear how distinct tribal tracts were etched out of different provinces and what were the criteria that guided such demarcation. The erratic manner in which territories were demarcated as 'tribal' areas also shows how the colonial government refused to acknowledge the interaction between the different communities- 'tribal' and 'non-tribal'- thereby according credence to its official policy that 'tribes' led isolated existence and that was an indicator of their primitiveness.** In post-independent India, the provisions of the Fifth Schedule are based on similar assumptions and these provisions did not manage to keep pace with changing times. **Thus, who constitutes a 'tribe' and what ultimately comes to be identified as the customary rights of 'tribal' communities- both now and then, is entirely dependent on the state definition and patronage.** The basic flaw with all these policies is that all of them are based on the process of identification or scheduling of communities as tribes mainly through census operation, which does not rule out the possibility of certain groups being left out due to ignorance or deliberate political consideration. This aspect has been discussed at some length in the second chapter. With the colonial state, as well as in the present times, we see a preoccupation to protect the socio-cultural distinctness of the 'tribal' communities, through a range of policies. Yet, at the same time the state has also been instrumental in the process of forcible land grabbing in tribal areas, without the realization that land and other natural resources is not just the mainstay of the economic identity of these communities, but also a marker of their distinct socio-cultural ethos and collective existence. For example, the present efforts of the corporate-state nexus to evacuate *adivasi* communities like the *Gonds* from the Niyamgiri hills in Orissa or the Bailadila hill range in Chhattisgarh for bauxite, is not just an assault on their economic subsistence but also an attack on the cultural lives of these communities, as these hill ranges are perceived as gods by them. In spite of the exclusion policy adopted by state with respect to these areas, both sets of governments

have continued to assume the role of a 'guardian', thereby continuously intervening and with more vigour and authority in the name of protectionist policies.

One also needs to reflect on the terms on which the tribal areas are sought to be integrated with the mainstream society. One of the main purposes behind the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule is to ensure the integration of the 'tribal' communities with the larger society, however in a way that these communities continue to enjoy the autonomy that characterise their socio-political distinctiveness. This meant that the "main question was of enabling the community to negotiate the transition imminent after independence"[50]. Though "self-governance at the village level was accepted as an axiom for the tribal areas"[51], there was a failure to recognise the conditions which could ensure this self-governance, many of which were already present in the social organisation of these communities itself. It is futile to talk about a self- governing tribal area especially in the context of a centralised system which was directly inherited from the British in post-colonial India and which chose to 'administer' the Scheduled Areas through direct supervision. Much have been talked about the elements of self-governance and democracy as being not new to indigenous societies; but the way in which these elements are sought to be institutionalised by the nation-state through different provisions, leads only to their partial fulfilment, and even to their undermining in some cases. Therefore the biggest repercussion of the process of "codifying 'custom'" is witnessed in its transformation[52]. In the first chapter, we discussed how British intervention in the Chotanagpur society proceeded to completely transform the latter through systemic de-institutionalisation. This has continued in the post-independence era too, when "alien institutions"[53] continue to

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[50] Ibid, p. 32

[51] Ibid, p. 34

[52] Nandini Sundar, "'Custom' and 'Democracy' in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 8, 2005, pp. 4430-4434. Sundar tells us how this process of codification of customary rights is not even uniform across Jharkhand. She cites the example of how the traditional heads of the some communities like the *mankis* amongst the *Hos* and the *parganaits* among the *Santhals* are given some recognition, which is unlike the *parha* system of the *Mundas* and the *Oraons*, who have not got any "formal recognition".

[53] Ibid p. 4433. As an example, Sundar tells us how the codification process of the Indian state has, especially after independence, accelerated the process of eroding the economic and political powers of the 'traditional' institutions of these communities: "the revenue powers of the munda-mankis and their right to settle wastes and collect rent, have been largely taken over by the circle officers and 'karamcharis', while their powers to manage forests (both protected and reserved) have been appropriated by the forest guards". She goes on to tell us how these 'traditional' authorities and institutions now require the 'stamp' from the higher authorities of the state to exercise power. For

invade the lives of these communities. These *alien* institutions function in two ways: either they completely undermine the customary institutions of these communities, or they circumvent it by transforming their nature completely. For example, in the case of the traditional headman of the village, "while in most cases, the colonial (and post-colonial) administration may have simply confirmed existing leaders, the language of recognition was 'appointment', which suggested that their presence was dependent on the administration. Whereas earlier the headmen had led resistance against colonial rule, in the colonial period they were co-opted into the administrative structure, and reduced to being stipendiary agents of the government. In the post-colonial period, there political and administrative role has been further marginalised till they have become, at least in the eyes of the government, ceremonial figureheads"[54]. The modern nation state in India post-1947 rested on a formal representative democracy at its core and it was through these channels, that self-governance was sought to be strengthened in these areas. This formal system based as it is on the notion of elections, a primacy accorded to the principle of vote and correspondingly to numbers- is what must have been *alien* to the tribal societies, and this is what rendered the provisions for ensuring self-governance useless to a great extent for such societies. Similar is the case with Panchayati Raj institution in Scheduled Areas. The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) PESA[55] Act was passed in 1996, which envisaged the

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example, a regular police system was slowly being introduced in the Santhal Pargana region since the colonial times, which gradually replaced the powers of the *parganaits* "who had the power of an officer-in-charge of a police station or a sub- inspector of police". Now these *paganaits* are required to "report cases to the sub-inspector of the police stations". In a similar kind of analysis, Amita Baviskar talks about the institution of '*nevad*' among the Bhil and Bhilala *adivasis* of Madhya Pradesh. According to her, *nevad* in *adivasi* discourse refers to "the decade of land ownership rights of the adivasi communities over land, which now require legitimacy by the state". So this kind of regularisation by the state has resulted in the transformation and codification of the institution of *nevad* as "encroachment on forest land by adivasis". See Amita Baviskar, "Fate of the Forest: Conservation and Tribal Rights", 29/38, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sep. 17, 1994, pp. 2493- 2501

[54] Ibid, p. 4431. Similarly Nitya Rao tells us about Santhal Parganas, where the process of "liberalizing" the Santhal Parganas Tenancy (SPTA) to acquire land for industrial development and to facilitate further land transfer is sought. For example, section 23 of the SPTA has guidelines for the transfer of *raiyati* land between "two *jamabandi raiyats* i.e. those cultivators who are enlisted in the record of rights. According to Rao, "this section has been misused regularly to secure land titles by the non-*jamabandi raiyats*, especially in semi-urban, and peri-urban areas. It is through '*danpatras*' (gift deeds) that land is transferred, in favor of the transferee to circumvent the provisions of the Act. These third parties pose as friends of relatives of the poor people, who hard-pressed with need for money, are "pressurized to write *dan-patras* or gift deeds". See Nitya Rao, "Life and Livelihood in Santal Parganas: Does the Right to a Livelihood Really Exist?", 38/39, *Economic and Political Weekly*,Sep. 27- Oct. 3, 2003, p. 4082

[55] PESA or the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) was formalised in the year 1996 out of the recommendations of the Bhuria Commission report, giving several powers to gram sabhas in the scheduled areas, so as to enable the adivasis to "hold their own in the face of exploitation and

gram sabha as the basic building block of the tribal societies; it was sought to be utilized to "formalise and reconstruct traditional village structures"[56]. The indigenous institutions of the village headman and their corresponding functions were now envisaged within the form of a *formal* gram sabha. The effort was now to ensure free and fair elections of Panchayats in tribal areas too. We simply cannot, of course, deny the importance of a gram sabha and its existence as the first step towards decentralisation of power and self-governance. But we need to contextualise the PESA as an effort to codify a traditional village institution making its *legitimate* functioning contingent upon its *formal* recognition through elections. This is paradoxically, also the point where the authority of the gram sabha is easily curtailed. As a fact we know that it is only in very few scheduled areas, that successful elections for establishing gram sabha have taken place. In Jharkhand, and also in other Scheduled Areas, what is witnessed instead is that a political polarisation is developing between different communities on this issue. The formal processes of election proceed by setting criteria as to who can elect and who can vote, thereby reinforcing the flawed dichotomy between different communities, say the 'tribals' and the non-tribals'. The incidence of a possible rift between different communities owing to the process of state categorisation is not something entirely new, and it has been discussed before. This is one of the primary reasons that has prevented successful gram sabha elections in scheduled areas in Jharkhand; and has been stated before, without elections, these village institutions have no real power. The PESA accords a range of powers to the gram sabha in scheduled areas; most of them to the effect of preventing land alienation and restoration amongst the scheduled tribe. However, the power to exercise authority and take autonomous decisions is made contingent upon their *elected* status; which is made difficult by the existing nature of provisions for the same. If you remember in the first chapter, we talked about the incapacitating nature of the colonial law, which formalised the structure of exploitation of the *adivasi* communities; we are effectively making the same point here: "the role of law in

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displacement". (Sundar, 2005) These recommendations envisaged a four-tier structure consisting of the gram sabha with traditional village councils or nominated heads, village panchayats, intermediate panchayats and district council.

[56]Nandini Sundar, "'Custom' and 'Democracy' in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 8, 2005, p. 4433

creating a framework of rights and disabilities"[57]. **The important point is to recognize the particular modes through which these communities maintain a collective management of resources and other functions that are expected of gram sabhas; modes that are indigenous to these communities and it is by strengthening such indigenous system that self governance can perhaps be ensured in the scheduled areas.**

Jharkhand and the 'Development' of Scheduled Areas

The provisions of the Fifth Schedule on the administration of Scheduled Areas rest on administrative territorial boundaries. Jharkhand as a Scheduled Area therefore is identified as bounded territory inhabited by the Scheduled Tribes. One of the key clauses of the Fifth Schedule reads "peace and good government" in Scheduled Area, which is further envisaged as a transformation "sought mainly through economic development and infrastructure building". This is one critical area where the provisions of the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule differ from their colonial legacies in Excluded and Partially Excluded Area. While the latter followed a completely exclusionary model, the present system aims also at "guided change and planned development"[58]. It is not coincidental that the Chotanagpur region became an experiment ground for the Nehruvian model of development, with the maximum number of public sector units being inaugurated in this area. All these concerns with regards to *planned* development and assimilation of the tribes into the mainstream society, match the fact of course that this region abounds in mineral and non-mineral deposits[59]. This is proved by the fact that Jharkhand produces 48% of the country's coal, 45% of its mica, 48% of its bauxite, 90% of its apatite and all of its kyanite.

[57] Nandini Sundar, "Laws, Policies and Practice in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 8, 2005, pp. 4459. Sundar says that we must see how the "radical thrust of laws like the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) 1996, is limited by the dominance enjoyed by colonial-era laws, like the forest act or the penal code, and the entrenched power of the forest and police departments".
[58] B.D. Sharma. *The Fifth Schedule*, Vol. 1, 2001 p. 36
[59] Matthew Areeparampil, "Displacement due to Mining in Jharkhand", 31/24, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jun. 15, 1996, pp. 1524- 1528

Besides, the entire region is covered with thick forests, which make up for almost 85% of Bihar's forest area, and in it, Singhbhum containing Asia's largest and the richest *sal* forests[60]. With the overriding concerns to develop the area, recourse was naturally taken in heavy industrialisation. Besides the coal-mining sector which was opened up in the late nineteenth century, there is the iron ore sector which is the next biggest industry in this region contributing to about 40% of the iron produced in the country. The uranium processing plant at Jaduguda in East Singhbhum is another major venture in this region[61]. The region also became the site for the setting up of several public sector units like Steel Plant in Bokaro, Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) in Ranchi and the Tata Iron and Steel Company in Jamshedpur in 1907. Likewise this region became a site for the establishment of construction industry; with the huge Hindustan Steel Works Construction Limited (HSCL) set up in Bokaro and it was assumed that the problem of middlemen and contractors could be checked with this. Besides the industrial sector, several power projects were also initiated in this region, the biggest of which is the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) that was set up twin purposes of providing irrigation as well as producing thermal power. Several huge dams were built across the region, the mentionable ones being the Subarnarekha Project and the Koel-Karo Project in Ichagarh.

With so much *development* at hand, one cannot help but get hit by the contrast presented by the stark reality of complete dispossession and destitution of the people in the region. It is not hard to imagine then that the assumed link between development of the region and that of the people inhabiting this region remains highly elusive: "the socio-economic development of the tribal people has taken an ironic

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[60] Ibid. Areeparampil tells us that Jharkhand is one of the richest areas in the whole country, "with huge reserves of coal, iron ore, mica, bauxite, and limestone and considerable reserves of copper, chromite, asbestos, kyanite, china clay, fire clay, steatite, uranium manganese, dolomite, tungsten, gold etc". Besides, "Singhbhum is a veritable museum of non-fuel minerals with huge deposits of iron ore...with Kolhan series of iron ore in Singhbhum (being) one of the richest iron belts in the world".

[61] Ibid. To give an idea of the extent of the "gigantic industrialisation" that the region has witnessed, Areeparampil tells us about the different large-scale, medium and small-scale industries that have cropped in the region: "the large scale industries of these centres are based mostly on the vast metallic and non-metallic minerals resources available in the area...the non metallic mineral industries are situated in the Damodar basin centred around Dhanbad and Ramgarh" and include cement factories, fertiliser factories, refractory works, mica industries, coal washeries, and coke oven plants. "Besides, a large number of medium and small industrial hubs of forest and agriculture based industries, small engineering and manufacturing industries, chemical industries etc have developed at other centres of the region".

twist in the sense that the predominantly tribal regions are still about as rich in natural and economic resources as any other yet the local adivasi populations are not deriving any benefits of this wealth"[62]. One should also be attentive to the fact that this link may be structured in a way so that the inherent gap between these two aspects is deliberate and consequential. Following from this, one will have to see how displacement of this section of the population may be *intrinsic* to the idea and model of development that had been planned for this region. As we know, there are special constitutional provisions that regulate the setting up of industrial units, mining etc., in scheduled areas, most of which become conspicuous by their poor implementation or open breach of the expected norms. This leads to an indiscriminate manner in which these breaches take place. As a scholar described,

> The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908(CNTA), the Santal Pargana Tenancy Act 1949 (SPTA), the Land Acquisition Act 1894 (LAA), the Scheduled Area Regulation Act 1969 (SAR), the Coal Bearings Area Act 1957 and the SC and ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989, are some of the laws which govern land rights, regulate acquisition for public purposes and give adivasis an executive protection from individual resource alienation. These laws, albeit to a limited extent, also guarantee the customary rights of the community, define various categories of the 'raiyats' and recognize special categories of tenure ('mundari khuntkatti' and bhuinhari)[63].

In the previous section, we have discussed how the various provisions of these laws, especially the CNTA or the SPTA, which in some way, "provided legal protection to customary law and practice"[64], are circumvented and transformed very systematically.

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[62] Srabani Raichaudhari, "The Jharkhandis: Vision and Reality: A Micro-Study of Singhbhum", 27/47, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Nov. 21, 1992, p. 2551

[63] Ramesh Saran, "Alienation and Restoration of Tribal Land in Jharkhand: Current Issues and Possible Strategies", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 8, 2005, p 4443. Also see Carol Upadhya. "Community Rights in Land in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Oct. 8, 2005, pp. 4435-4438.

[64] Sudha Vasan, "In the Name of Law: Legality, Illegality and Practice in Jharkhand Forests", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 8, 2005, p. 4448. Vasan tells us how "legal guarantees have little value in a context where the state willfully and systematically destroys them through contravening laws and political process". With reference to the Forest Laws in Jharkhand, she explains how we must analyze the "legality" of such laws from the "perspective of disempowered people". It is a "perspective shaped by actual practice rather than written word of law. Clearly in Jharkhand, it is not only the written law that effects forest access. Lack or denial of information and confusion about legal rights,

The gram sabhas which are vested with full authority over common land not only by the central PESA Act, but also Scheduled Areas Regulations Act, are also sidelined in this process because "panchayat elections have not taken place in Jharkhand (and) the government feels free to ignore the claims of local communities over these lands, even where gram sabhas are functioning"[65]. There are accounts that say that "mining has been the single largest cause for land alienation in Jharkhand in the past"[66]. Ambiguities and loopholes in various provisions of some of these laws also make way for corruption and manipulation: "Sections 46 and 47 of the CNTA clearly restricts the transfer of land in the Chottanagpur region, only to a member of the same caste/tribe as the original "raiyat", who should also be a resident of the same police station area. But, section 49 makes overriding allowances to the state to acquire land for specified purposes, including mining"[67]. These are a few instances to show how *development* projects make their way into these areas. The laws to regulate this phenomenon of development in scheduled areas are openly flouted, and new laws are constantly made in the process of renewing old ones, which however, continue to undermine the customary rights of the population even more. One needs to see that these development initiatives displace communities from their *land*, dispossessing them of their livelihoods. There are communities that are forced to migrate to other places due to loss of land in indiscriminate mining, or a massive growth in urbanisation when land is occupied to be "converted into roads, townships for miners, infrastructure for administrative purposes and other preliminary purposes"[68]. How do we start conceptualising the rights of these communities who no longer fit the requirements of the legal and political system to be able to claim their rights[69]?

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willful and unthinking interpretation of law, and its blatant violation lead to alienation of adivasis from forests".

[65] Carol Upadhya, "Community Rights in Land in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Oct. 8, 2005, p. 4437

[66] Ajitha Susan George, "Laws Related to Mining in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 8, 2005, p. 4456

[67] Ibid.

[68] Matthew Areeparampil, "Displacement due to Mining in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly,* 31/24, Jun. 15, 1996, pp. 1524- 1528

[69] This means that by relegating the concept of customary rights to the sphere of special rights for a distinct and *unique* section of people like the scheduled tribes, the state is able to frame considerable restrictions on who can press claims for these rights and in what circumstances. This aspect also highlights the politics of making the political-cultural identity of the scheduled tribe in Jharkhand contingent upon an inevitable link with the territory of Jharkhand. This aspect has been discussed later in the chapter.

The development projects that have been initiated in Jharkhand over the years, no doubt aim at the development of the region and its inhabitants. However, according to many these projects are also responsible for curtailing most of the rights of the indigenous communities of the region. The constitutional provisions in the nature of safeguards for these communities, along with the provisions of the Fifth Schedule call for a separate set of regulations for Scheduled Areas in keeping with the specific demands of the communities living in this region. On the contrary, we find that the approach adopted by the state with regards to the development of the region does not tally with these specific demands of the indigenous population. There is a huge mismatch between what is referred to as the 'development of the region', and the 'development of the people' belonging to this region. This point relates to the next section of the chapter which is on the identity of Jharkhand as a land of the '*adivasi*' or '*moolvasi*'.

'Jharkhandi' as an *adivasi/moolvasi*

One may have noticed that the previous sections have used the term 'indigenous' in several places against the state-induced classification of the 'tribe' or 'scheduled tribe'. The term indigenous is implied to be similar in meaning to terms like the *adivasi* or *moolvasi*. These three terms literally translate into 'original' inhabitants of a land. The question which arises then is how the identity of a *Jharkhandi* can said to be constituted by that of an *adivasi /moolvasi*, without invoking any notion of a territory or region. In order to answer this question, the foremost thing is to understand that

claim to an indigenous status is not made in terms of a *territorial* notion of land. We need to rethink the link that is forged between the idea of land and a territory, especially in the context of the processes that accord such *recognition* and regulate this *transformation*. So, the idea of land in the *adivasi* discourse or consciousness has to be perceived in terms of the *right* that gets displaced due to a process of territorialisation. Earlier in the chapter, this concept of *right* has been talked about in terms of ownership claims that flow out of a process of attaching labour to *create* a 'homeland'. In this sense of the term, one cannot say that the *territory* of Jharkhand is a 'homeland' to the tribes inhabiting the region, because the idea of such territorial bounded space is deployed to regulate and curtail certain rights in the first place. We know of instances how many of the 'forest-dwelling' communities are subjected to new laws and provisions which *regulate* their access to forests and its produce. In the first chapter I discussed how the fact of tribal autonomy was sought to be *legalised* and *ordered* through massive centralisation and de-institutionalisation facilitated by a restructured territorial administration. So if the idea of a *territorial* space for the scheduled tribes is what is thought to constitute the idea behind Jharkhand, we have to understand the ways in which it relates, or not, with the *adivasi* perception of his or her land. The concept of indigeneity, in my opinion, challenges the narrow confines of the term 'tribe' and 'scheduled tribe' and especially their genesis in the anthropology. One knows from the second chapter how the discipline of anthropology was pressed into the service of colonial taxonomic exercises. The *indigenous* status of certain communities like the tribe, therefore, has been proved and established by anthropological findings. Thus, we find that indigeneity gets transformed into a *cultural* trait of certain communities, which is considered more or less fixed in time. Such an understanding has several implications, the foremost being that the rights that are invoked and claimed in the name of indigeneity, get transformed into 'special' rights for a 'distinct' section of population, as had been established by anthropological findings. The politics of defining the distinctiveness of certain groups as 'special' groups is already clear to us. It does not take much to recall how the identity of the 'tribe' or 'scheduled tribe' has always emerged alongside the imaginations of the 'primitive'. Following this, the established way of dealing with the grievances of such a population is through a 'special' set of provisions, which end up reinforcing the same stereotypical images that induced such provisions in the first place. Going by

this, the right to self-determination of certain tribes is considered to be limited to just being a *cultural* right. However we know, and we cannot agree more that it also translates into a right to determine themselves *politically*, and we should try our best to comprehend these rights in a context when they are increasingly being denied to these communities through intervention of global capital and its ally in the nationalist hegemonic discourse[70]. In one of the previous chapters we discussed how the identity of a tribe for a long time had been seen as a transient identity. This transience is indicative of not only what the community *lacks* as being a tribe when compared to their (Hindu) counterparts i.e. the lowest position in the caste evolutionary scale; it is also deployed as a means to establish their *distinction* from the other 'mainstream' communities. Therefore all the provisions aimed at these communities are contingent upon how well this distinction is sustained in the sphere of the law. This *essentialism* therefore, gives a particular shape to the demands claimed by these indigenous communities. The prerogative of the state to designate any territory as a Scheduled Area and any community as a Scheduled Tribe has had several serious repercussions in Jharkhand, as in other tribal areas. The worst impact has been that several indigenous communities have been deprived of their right to access the set of constitutional provisions that go by the name of the 'rights of Scheduled Tribes'. This is precisely because as per the criteria set by the state, these communities do not find a place in the Scheduled Tribes list. **The Fifth Schedule must be reviewed in light of such changing times so that it can accommodate and respond to the new challenges that are posed before the indigenous communities in this region**. The logic behind the administrative territorial division of Scheduled Areas rarely matches the concerns of the indigenous communities which are not always bound to any territory. For example, the decade of 1970s has seen massive displacement of tribal communities from their traditional settings, whereby these communities have been forced to migrate to outlying regions as plantation labour, or as 'coolie' labour.

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[70] Prathama Banerjee, "Culture/Politics: the Irresoluble Double-bind of the Indian Adivasis", *The Indian Historical Review*, vol.33, 2006, p.109. Banerjee underlines the element of "culturisation" that marks "our political- historical discourses of the 'tribe'. She argues that "our historical and political discourses explain the so-called 'primitive's' political alterity through what can be called a 'culturisation' of the 'tribe'...politics thus is explained as culture. The implication of this is clear- if labeling something as political is to impute to it a deliberate and conscious agency, a kind of voluntarism, so to speak, to immediately gloss it over as cultural also immediately erases this aspect of self-consciousness. Culture, after all, is a matter of habit, tradition and a social given, which does not necessarily assume the kind of purposive and self-reflexive positioning that a political act presumes".

Similarly, the wave of trade union struggles amidst the workers of the mining areas and the industrial sectors have to be seen with the struggles of the ethnic communities for their land and forests. Given this context, how is it logically possible that the formation of a separate territory of Jharkhand as a 'homeland' of the 'tribal' communities can be the lasting solution to engage with this wide range of grievances? One can probe a little further to find out how, many of these problems have been aggravated with the formalisation of the territorial demarcation of a piece of land as Jharkhand, and a structure of governance that works with its own sets of categorisation and a corresponding understanding of rights and citizenship.

It is in this context that it becomes necessary to see the Jharkhand movement as constituting and representing much more than the demand for a separate territory. The Jharkhand movement is not a single movement: it is an amalgamation of several different movements, each one corresponding to a specific grievance of the indigenous population of the region. The decade of 1970 saw an intensification of militant struggles addressing social and economic issues, especially under the leadership of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Marxist Co-ordination Committee (MCC). The demand for separation was also made but not with the intensity of the mass struggles for economic emancipation or liberation from the 'exploiters' i.e. the landlords, the money lenders and the police. Different authors have talked about a wide range of the struggles that were taking place in the Chotanagpur region starting in 1970s[71]. Thus for example, there was a huge agitation in the Singhbhum region against the afforestation policy of the government. The government sought to replace the existing *sal* trees by planting teak trees[72]. The importance of the

[71] Arun Sinha, "Resurgent Adivasis", *Economic and Political Weekly* 13/36, Sep.9, 1978, pp. 1544-1546

[72] Ramchandra Guha in his discussion on the continuities between the forest laws in the colonial and the post-colonial state in India tells us that both phases were marked by an emphasis on "production" forestry. Post-independence, this trend has accelerated, especially in the decade of the sixties. According to Guha, it meant that there was a trend "towards replacing existing forests, poorly stocked over large areas, with those of fast-growing commercial species". The thrust of this production-oriented forestry was towards an "export drive in wood and wood products". Guha quotes from a United States Agency for International Development report to the Indian government in the 1970 which recommended that "the country should make better use of "unique" tree species like teak and rosewood, and of the "valuable asset" of the wood craftsmen "working for one of the lowest wages in the world", to generate foreign exchange through the export of high quality furniture, and in addition, of paper". See Ramchandra Guha, "Forestry in British and Post-British India: a Historical Analysis", *Economic and Political Weekly* 18/44, Oct. 29, 1983, pp.1882-1896

sal trees for the indigenous communities is immense: it is the main source of food for many communities in the non-cultivation months. The nationalisation of forests and the policy of forest conservation had curtailed the rights of these communities to forest and its produce. Similarly, the region of Santhal Parganas saw a huge movement to reclaim the land belonging to the tribal communities that had been illegally taken away by the moneylenders. Under the leadership of the JMM, there was a campaign for 'forcible harvesting' whereby the different communities of adivasis, dalits and backward castes forcibly cut crops from the land that had been acquired by the moneylenders[73]. Then, there was an agitation against the forest product purchase policy in the Ranchi area, where *adivasi* communities opposed the government taking over trade in oil seeds like *kusum* and *mahua.* Many areas currently in Jharkhand are seen as hotbeds of organised movements against the massive displacement that has been caused by the development projects initiated by the state. These movements include the struggle for a decent rehabilitation policy, as well as questioning the nature of development sought by the government itself in the name of the people of this region. In all, we see that all these struggles are encompassed by the identity of the *adivasi* or a *moolvasi* who does not owe this identity to any territory. The territorial division that lies at the core of governance in present times does not even give cognizance to the range of concerns that are important to the identity of an *adivasi.*

Conclusion

These are the main debates that centre on the identity of a *Jharkhandi.* We saw how the narrow confines of the state-induced categories like the 'tribe' and the 'scheduled' tribes are inadequate to define the indigenous communities of Jharkhand. This kind of categorisation has implications for the self-identity of these communities, because the

[73] Nitya Rao, "Life and Livelihood in Santal Parganas: Does the Right to a Livelihood Really Exist?", *Economic and Political Weekly* 38/39, Sep. 27- Oct. 3, 2003, p. 4082. Rao tells us how "in 1966, a movement evocatively titled the hul Jharkhand (Jharkhand rebellion) was launched in the Dumka district. It aimed to release land and secure debt relief. Apart from 'dhan katai' (forcible harvesting), other direct action strategies included the non-repayment of loans, thefts of grain from mahajans' fields and court cases. Mass meetings were held, the word spread through the district and so did the resistance".

officially sponsored categories often rob these communities of important aspects through which they identify themselves. Like the identity of a scheduled tribe which rests on a baggage of legal provisions, so does the identity of a *Jharkhandi*. However, we must see how these provisions and laws subject the identity of an indigenous community of Jharkhand to an intricate reframing before it translates into a *Jharkhandi*.

—CONCLUSION—

In the preceding chapters, I tried to look at the different meanings that the term Jharkhand invokes in terms of an identity. The main question that thematically binds the three chapters is concerning the nature of the *jharkhandi* identity. When we say *jharkhandi*, does it invoke the same meaning as that of a *bihari* or an *oriya*? One might agree that *jharkhandi* is to do with Jharkhand as a *bihari* is to do with Bihar or an *oriya* with Orissa. However, some might also contest the reductionism that has been employed here to define the *bihari* and the *oriya*. Region is one factor that casts an identity on the inhabitant, but it is not the only factor. We also need to contextualize the formation of the region itself against a proper history[1]. Similar reasoning has been used in deciphering the meaning behind the identity of the *jharkhandi*. *Jharkhandi* identity cannot be ascribed a regional aspect- and this has been argued in the previous chapter- more so in comparison to rest of the identities like that of, say a *bihari*, apart from other reasons, because in the Indian constitution, it is one of the Scheduled Areas, different from rest of the country in several ways. It was codified as a Partially Excluded Area in colonial India due to specific reasons which have been discussed during the course of the chapters[2]. The colonial and post-colonial histories of the region called Jharkhand converge on the grounds that the specific nature of the region is owing to the distinct population that inhabits it. As we saw in the preceding chapters, the population has been variously defined as the 'tribe', the 'scheduled tribes', the 'aboriginals', the 'primitive tribes', 'backward tribes' etc. The primary reason behind scheduling of the areas has been the *protection* and

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[1] K.L. Sharma, "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar", vol.11, no.1/2, *Economic and Political Review*, 1976. The author tell show Jharkhand was not even administratively a part of Bihar: "in 1912, Bihar was separated from Bengal, and at that time, Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa were yoked together to form a separate state of Bihar. in 1930, Orissa was separated from Bihar, and Chotanagpur alone remained the Bihar; though it could as well have remained with Bengal and Orissa. Geographically, it is close to Orissa or Bengal as it is with Bihar".

[2] The second chapter in this dissertation discusses the link between the constitutional provisions of Fifth and Sixth Schedule, and the colonial demarcation of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas. The continuity between the two sets of provisions has been analyzed to see how the colonial and the independent state in India were similar in their treatment to the section of population each classified as the 'tribes'. This process of classification is key to understanding the policies that were framed for these 'tribes' in both the periods.

development of this lot of population in Jharkhand, because it had been identified by the state as being the most backward and underdeveloped. The preceding chapters in a way tried analyzing this identity of the scheduled tribe and how it informs the identity of the *jharkhandi*.

In this process, we also talked about the different factors that contribute in giving any identity its particular shape. I tried to argue in the preceding chapters how the idea of Jharkhand was born out of the interaction between the state structure and the corresponding processes of governance on one hand and the element of self-identity and the different demands that the movement threw up at different moments in time, on the other. The purpose of identifying the shifting nature of the variables that define the Jharkhand movement, is to question its assumed *invariability* in time. Thus, only if we see the identity of Jharkhand and that of a *jharkhandi* as based on a shifting history, that we shall be able to grasp the changes that the movement has gone through in its entirety. In this way, *I intended to challenge the meta-narrative that is established in the name of the Jharkhand movement, trying to show showing how the political demand for a separate Jharkhand was a product of a specific time in history owing to distinct factors*. The history of the Jharkhand movement cannot be assumed to be singular history, and what has constituted the demands of the Jharkhand movement cannot be reduced only to the demand for a separate state of Jharkhand. For example, the second chapter talked about how the demand for a separate Jharkhand was rather like an *imitation* of the nationalist history which owed its genesis in the anti-colonial struggle[3]. The series of revolts in the Chotanagpur region since the beginning of the nineteenth century- which have been appropriated only to be construed as the linear history of Jharkhand- were also dubbed at one point of time as the first episodes of anti-colonial struggle. Now, these are not independent *incidents*; they have to brought into a conjuncture to see how the political idea of Jharkhand, especially pertaining to the issues concerning its 'tribal' population, could be addressed only as a *separate state* within the confines of a nationalist discourse that negated any different kind of identity-formation. We have seen how the era of representative politics in colonial and post-colonial India, made it imperative that every demand was reframed to fit the categories of the state. Like its colonial

[3] Amit Prakash. *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, 2001

predecessor, the independent state in India had its own logic to make sense of the 'problems', like, say for example, that of the tribes. Thus, the question of tribal autonomy- as was discussed in the **first** chapter- so fiercely guarded by the revolts of the nineteenth century was translated into the demand for a separate state of Jharkhand as the movement crossed over into the twentieth century. However, the terms and conditions of this kind of transformation was never deliberated upon, and this is reflected in the fact that the present state of Jharkhand represents all that was considered to be *going wrong* in the nineteenth century *adivasi* society of Chotanagpur. Thus, we know how the process of state categorization, managed to transform not only the nature of the demands but also the identities that were mobilized in the process. One result of this phenomenon we see in how the demand for the separate Jharkhand grew out of the process of institutionalization of the fact of tribal autonomy. This process was preceded by defining who the tribal or a tribe was and what was assumed in its demand for autonomy. We know that the state category of a scheduled tribe drew considerably upon the colonial construction of the 'tribe' as a distinct ethnic group, easily identifiable with the obvious *anthropological* features and an ensuing set of characteristics, of which the element of *primordiality* being very explicit. The interplay of the *anthropological*[4] fact of ethnicity and the corresponding state of 'primitiveness' made it possible to fix the historical identity of the scheduled tribe as a *cultural* minority, who needed constant protection and *guidance.* In this context, the demand for a separate Jharkhand by the same category of people was indeed a challenge to the paternalistic attitude of the nationalist leadership, who of course eyed it as narrow parochialism. Likewise, it was also a challenge to the institutionalized fact of lack of any political consciousness among the people defined as the scheduled tribe. However, we also see how this kind of mobilization failed to generate a discourse of its own, and instead harped on the same terms as had been generated by the state at the national level with their roots in the colonial ideology. The political elite in Jharkhand internalized those very dichotomies which had been employed by their nationalist counterpart in defining a 'tribal' identity and space. We are well aware of the fact that this kind of state-driven categorization carries elements of implicit racism and a paternal bias. The **third** chapter went on to discuss how the

[4] By 'anthropological' I mean to refer to the way in which different ethnicities were measured by anthropologists on the basis of different biological and physical features.

identity of the *jharkhandi* was therefore born out of a *dilemma*: the need for a separate Jharkhand was firmly linked with the *special* demands of its *special* population, and simultaneously, there was also a need to overcome the element of *primordiality* inherent in this *special* identity through 'modern' channels of fast-paced development and national integration. Of course, these two sets of aspirations were not disconnected: the need to *develop* the region found its justification in the identity of the population which was perceived in *need* of development. It is this link which I sought to explore through the identity of the *adivasi/moolvasi* in the final chapter. Through this I have also sought to question the narrow premises of representative politics that informed the formation of Jharkhand, the terms of which however were not sufficiently discussed: the failure to go beyond the demand for a separate state was reflected in the "lack of any serious debate on how the political power is to be shared and what control the local people will exercise over the economy...one does not find a political or an economic ideology beyond the single demand"[5].

These are some of the key questions I have looked at in the dissertation. The identity of the scheduled tribe invokes certain rights in the constitutional discourse. The identity of the *jharkhandi* in my opinion draws upon this discourse to a considerable extent but only in context of a tenuous relationship. In order to understand this complex relationship, we have to begin by understanding the process of state categorization which creates the identity of the scheduled tribe. The various assumptions that feed into such a process of identification have been already discussed. The important thing that comes out of it is that *the identity of the scheduled tribe gets fixed in time and across space.* It is one thing to say that this identity of the scheduled tribe has developed over time as an important category to mobilize communities, who seek *empowerment* through an inclusion the scheduled tribe list. However, we must also review the state's role as an arbiter of identities in so far as it wields the *unwieldy* power to accede different identities their share in the public sphere. So the politics behind drawing up the scheduled tribe list must be contextualized against attempts of the state to negotiate the public space between different identities, of which the state itself is- owing to its particular caste class orientation- one of the strongest contenders. In the context of Jharkhand therefore, the

[5] Walter Fernandes in Jharkhand or Vananchal: Where Are the Tribals? *Economic and Political Weekly* (2001)

communities that have been *categorized* as falling out of its scheduled population, might very well be at the same levels of marginalization as the scheduled tribes. However, these communities cannot press for their rights, say in terms of a land that has been alienated, or access to forest produce that has been *demarcated* as out of their reach according to the new forest laws, because they do not fit into the *required* category of the state. Thus, the approach of the state to look at different issues only through the lens of some category or the other is limited in nature, because often such categorization is itself at the *roots* of gross violation of rights of the people. Having said this, I do not mean to imply in any way that the prerogative of the state to create and negotiate identities is a stand- alone process. It is here that one can invoke the identity of the *jharkhandi* as posing a challenge to the logic behind the state classificatory system. In many ways the tribes of Jharkhand refuse to fit in the state sponsored category of the scheduled tribe. As has been discussed in the chapters, many communities that have been identified as scheduled tribe do not lead the kind of *primitive* existence that is envisaged by the state. Due to a diversification in the occupational structure, tribes are now engaged in a variety of jobs which also includes migration to "work in the brick kilns and the stone quarries of north Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and other places as contract and bonded labor"[6]. We know as a fact that the majority of women migrating to big cities to work as household labor belong to the scheduled tribe population of Jharkhand or West Bengal. Similarly the unprecedented scale of developmental projects in different parts of Jharkhand have unleashed a process of massive urbanization, which have forced the tribes of Jharkhand, or in parts of the country for that matter, to come out of their 'forest-based dwellings' only to get stuffed or concentrated in city-slums as the urban poor. The motive behind pointing out the lacuna in the state definition of scheduled tribe is not to essentialize the image of a tribe caught up in the whirlwind of modern-day processes of the state and society. It is to show how the fixation of the state with the image of a *tribal* which materializes in the identity of the scheduled tribe, is inadequate to accommodate these changes and it also reflects upon the incapacity of the state to respond to a new set of grievances that such changes induce. More than

[6] Matthew Areeparampil. Displacement due to Mining in Jharkhand, 31/24, *Economic and Political Weekly* (Jun. 15, 1996), pp 1524- 1528

anything else, by refusing to see these problems at all, the state covers up its own *complicity* in fuelling and aggravating these problems in the first place.

This also makes us rethink the importance of the structure of laws and provisions resurrected to address grievances such as these, based as they are on the same classificatory logic of the state. The laws of the state, ever since the colonial times, have relied upon a systemic logic of fragmenting societal identities into numerous units so as to render them 'manageable'. This fragmentation of the identities also assists the state in conveniently bypassing the holistic nature of any problem, while at the same time creating loopholes to invite more corruption and manipulation. Thus, the problems faced by a 'tribal' may not be different in many cases from those faced by a 'peasant'. Similarly the interaction between a tribe and caste cannot just be seen as a process of acculturation, or *sanskritization* based on the belief of a transitory, inferior nature of the tribal identity waiting to be absorbed into the *civilized* Hindu fold; it has to be seen also in terms of *forced conversion* born out of the 'market forces and the force of economic interdependence"[7]. The ambiguity in the definition of the tribe or a scheduled tribe is one primary reason which casts similar short-sightedness upon the provisions and laws of the state. This entails that "clarity is required about the institutional structures and mechanisms through which rights will be recognized and exercised"[8].

In this way the identity of a *jharkhandi* poses a bigger challenge to the system of state categorization because it highlights how laws become a potent weapon for the state to *order* society. If we look around us, we find that several pockets in the country are witnessing massive movements against forcible land-acquisition and against systemic dispossession from the means to livelihood and subsistence. It is not a coincidence that the majority of these areas fall under the Fifth or Sixth Schedule, and the majority of the struggling people constitute the scheduled tribes. One recourse of the law in order to *handle* such a situation is to come down heavily upon these movements in the terms of deployment of the army and the military in all these regions. Allied to this, is the framing and invocation of anti-terror laws such as the Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act 2002 (POTA), or the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 2008 (UAPA)

[7] Virginius Xaxa. *State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India*, 2008 p
[8] Nandini Sundar. Scheduled Tribes Bill 2005, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40/43 (Oct.28, 2005)

etc which serve as a means to criminalize and delegitimize all these resistance movements , perceived as they are to be issues of 'law and order' and 'internal security threat'. The other way through which the legal system tries to manage the situation is by resurrecting a framework of rights which have a *delimiting* effect on the ability of the people to even articulate their grievances and claim their rightful due. It is here that *one needs to contextualize the almost arbitrary identification and demarcation of territories and communities as requiring special treatment like the Scheduled Areas and the Scheduled Tribes respectively.* The element of objectivity and neutrality that is assumed in the Rule of Law makes it appear like these *special* areas and the people inhabiting them were fated to suffer an intrinsic backwardness and a consequential marginality. This imagery is always deployed by the state discourse to overwhelm the fact of some communities *becoming* marginalized over a course of time. It has also been thrust upon the general consciousness to *legitimize* constant state intervention in these areas in the name of *development*, *uplift* and *welfare* of the scheduled tribes. As we know from the chapters, the development model that is currently placed in Jharkhand is at the roots of destitution and displacement of majority of the 'scheduled tribes'[9].

A brief reference was made earlier to the structure of rights that is framed by the modern nation-state to concretize the identity of a citizen. The rights and provisions accorded to the scheduled tribes are further *concessions* to this identity of a citizen owing to the special identity of the former. As I have said before, these rights of the scheduled tribe in a way *reshape* the identity of the indigenous rights of these communities. Of course the discourse of rights emerges only in the context of a state structure which guarantees different sets of rights by identifying different categories of people. This problematic of state identification process and its relation to the framework of laws and rights has been discussed before. I use the term indigenous rights in terms of the self-determining capacity of communities whose histories pre-date the formation of the modern nation state, to organize themselves politically, economically and socially. This capacity was gradually affected and modified through exchanges with other communities and the different nature of stratification that

[9] This aspect of development-induced displacement in Jharkhand has been discussed in the third chapter where we discuss how the development model implemented in the Jharkhand region is at the root cause of displacing its *adivasi* population.

developed in these societies, of which the 'modern' nation state is but one factor. The fact that the modern nation state was the only kind of community formation that was rendered possible in changed circumstances meant that these indigenous rights were gradually eroded. What replaced it instead was the discourse of rights of the constitutional state and these rights, not to mention, were hugely incapacitated when it came to establish the right to self –determination of these communities. We have also discussed how this aspect of self-determination has been overwhelmingly sealed as a *cultural* right. This kind of politics we can see since the colonial times, when the colonial rulers sought to read the identity of certain indigenous communities in terms of *ethnic* characteristics like animal worship, or nature worship, *sarna dharm*, a ritual-based life etc. While this is a very selective reading of the indigenous communities, conveniently overlooking all those aspects which were indicators of a degree of political consciousness in these communities, it also led to the *culturisation* of the identity of the tribes for all times to come. **What must be understood is how this *cultural* identity of the scheduled tribes has a stake in the political economy of the Indian state**. Of course the formation of the separate Jharkhand is seen as a step towards ensuring the right of the scheduled tribes to represent themselves politically, but to what extent this transfer of power or even power sharing for that matter has been materialized in terms of self determination, is yet to be seen. Therefore, we have to contextualize the history of the evolution of the legal provisions for the scheduled tribe against a history of how many other *rights* were deprived in the process, and in this way we can also challenge the *naturalization* of the fact that it was only with the emergence of the nation state that civilization, knowledge, rationality and order was cast on these 'primitive' communities.

The two channels through which the state, therefore, along with its legal system asserts the prerogative of its *being* are through the processes of classification and identity creation, and through the *legitimate* use of force. Of course, these two processes are intricately embedded in each other. This is evident in numerous instances when the state has proceeded to violate its own constitutional provisions that safeguard the interests of the scheduled communities, and this has been made feasible through the use of force privileged to the state. The most prominent example of the present times is seen in the form of Operation Green Hunt when the Indian State has

unleashed genocide in parts of Central India, in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh with an intention to 'clean' these states to make them fit for *development* and for foreign direct investments. One cannot decide which legal system or even the constitution to appeal to in a context when the Indian state chooses to air raid its own citizens, and deploy all its military might against them.

How do we then look at these processes of the state to bring order to the otherwise chaotic social scene? This question is important for the state of Jharkhand because in this case also the formation of a separate state has been put forth as the solution to practically all exploitation faced by its inhabitants, especially the scheduled tribes. In my opinion the state of Jharkhand is a response to the 'issue' of the 'tribes' only within a very narrow framework, where the dynamics of the issue has been transformed itself. The formation of the state of Jharkhand in the year 2000 saw the rule of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for three successive elections where of course the marginalized sections including the tribes had some sort of seat-sharing arrangement. What we need to ponder is whether this is what was visualized as Jharkhand, especially in a context when *the state in all its capacities chooses to define and concretize the identity of a certain section of the population as the 'primitive'.*

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