TRIBAL IDENTITY IN JHARKHAND REGION: ISSUES OF INDUSTRIAL DISPLACEMENT AND JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

Dissertation submitted to the JNU in partial fulfillment of requirement for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SHUBHRA SHAILEE

Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
JNU
New Delhi – 110067
2000

जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI 110 067

Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences

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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled **"Tribal Identity in Jharkhand Region: issues of Industrial Displacement and Jharkhand Movement"**, submitted in partial fulfillment for the M.Phil degree of this university has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university and is my original work.

(Shubhra Shailee)

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

(Prof. Dipankar Gupta)
Supervisor

(Prof. Nandu Ram)
Chairperson

Fax : +91-11-616-5886 Gram : JAYENU Tel. Office : 6107676/6167557 Extn. 2408, Telex : 031-73167 JNU IN

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION : ISSUES OF DISPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION

INTRODUCTION : ISSUES OF DISPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION

The term 'development' as it is generally used suggests that everybody benefits from it. But in recent times social scientists have started recognizing the "victims of development". The victims of development include those who are displaced or affected due to development projects like dams, mines, industrial establishments, defence establishments, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and so on. These projects have a far reaching adverse impact on the inhabitants of the area, particularly in relation to their traditional style of living, livelihood and culture. Indigenous people are systematically and methodically dispossessed of the ownership of their means of production, of the product of their labour, and of the very means of human existence. They are dispossessed of their culture, their values and their identity. Their communities are being broken up in the name of 'progress' and 'national interest'.[1]

In post-Independence India, economic progress was visualized through planned development, which took the form of rapid industrialization and modernization. This involved the exploitation of natural and mineral resources. Development projects are generally aimed at maximizing the productivity of land, water, forests and

[1] M. Areeparampil, (1987). "The Impact of Subarnarekha Multipurpose Project on the Indigenous People of Singhbhum", in PRIA (ed.) *People and Dams (Mimeo)* New Delhi : Society for Participatory Research, p. 14.

mineral resources. Dams for irrigation and hydro-power, mines for exploitation of mineral resources, lands taken over for industrial establishments, etc. are offshoots of such a development approach. These result in important changes in the lives of people who are displaced from the land on which they depended for a living.

Earlier it was assumed that displacement of people living in the resource-rich regions, due to development projects was a temporary phenomenon and the displaced people had to pay a small price for the cause of national development. But recent studies based on the present situation of the displaced people show that they have already paid a bigger price than foreseen. As a result there has been a growing concern about the large numbers of people displaced by the projects. Contemporary scholars and activists have begun to view development – induced displacement as a human rights issue. They felt that this approach to national development meant development of a few and the under development of the powerless majority who belong to the weaker sections, primarily tribals and dalits.[2]

Though there is a growing awareness of the enormous number of people displaced by development projects, there is also a lack of reliable qualitative and quantitative data on the populations displaced. According to one estimate, more than 40 percent of those displaced

[2] M. Areeparampil, (1989), " Industries, Mines and Dispossession of Indigenous People – The Case of Chotanagpur" in Walter Fernandes and E.G. Thukral (eds.), 1989, *Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation*, New Delhi : Indian Social Institute.

between 1951 and 1990 are tribals[3], while other studies suggest that dalits and other landless persons form an equally large number of displaced people.[4] Several studies indicate that fewer than 30 percent of those displaced by various development projects have been resettled. It has also been pointed out that the compensation given to the displaced people is mostly inadequate and often inappropriate. Till a few years ago cash compensation was only considered as rehabilitation and given only to those who owned individual pattas i.e., land documents. As a result tribals who had traditionally depended on the common property resources (CPR) and dalits and other landless labourers who owned no land but arrived by rendering services to the village as a community, got no compensation, though they were deprived of their livelihood.

Besides displaced persons, the development projects also have an impact on the project-affected persons (PAPs). This category includes those persons who are not physically displaced but are deprived of the land which they till, even when their village remains in its old location, they are deprived of the forest and other CPR. They may also be deprived of their livelihood due to a breakdown of the village or community to whom they rendered services. It has been noted that those who traditionally rendered services to the village or

[3] W. Fernandes, (1991) "Power and Powerlessness : Development Project and Displacement of Tribals", *Social Action* Vol. 41 (3), pp. 243-270.
[4] L.K. Mahapatra, (1991) "Development for whom? Depriving the Dispossessed Tribals", *Social Action,* Vol. 41 (3), pp. 271-287.

community to earn their living, were predominantly dalits and other landless labourers. The tribals formed a majority of those who depended on the CPR for their livelihood.[5]

When a development project is introduced, CPR are acquired without any compensation. When the patta land is acquired, only the owner is compensated and not the other dependants. The dependants of the displaced and project-affected owners are generally ignored while planning the project and rehabilitation and resettlement programmes. The project either impoverishes them or intensifies their already marginalized state. But the impact of displacement is felt differentially by different sections of the society. On the one hand, the loss of livelihood has resulted in the impoverishment of the displaced and project–affected persons in general and tribals in particular, on the other hand some improve their standard of living and enjoy the benefits of the project at the expense of the indigenous people. Deprival of their livelihood forces the impoverished and marginalised people to destroy the resource had till then treated as renewable. This situation has raised the question of human rights and sustainable development.[6]

Before discussing the impact of industrial displacement in the Jharkand region of Bihar, I shall first discusses the situation of impoverishment due to development – induced displacement at the

[5] Fernandes, op.cit. (1991).
[6] W. Fernandes, (1998 (b)) *Development – Induced Displacement and Sustainable Development*, (Mimeo), New Delhi : Council for Social Development.

national level. In the later chapters I will focus on the situation of displacement and rehabilitation in the state of Bihar. I will also emphasize on the impact of displacement, particularly on the tribals as against the non-tribals (dikus), the tribals versus the dalits and other backward classes of the same region and the men versus the women in Jharkhand. Industrial displacement has led to a change in the identity of tribals in the Jharkhand region. So, the search for a new identity will form the crux of this work.

1.1 DISPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION : A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In India there is a lack of a reliable data on the number and type of displaced and project–affected people and the extent and nature of rehabilitation is bad. Most of the oustees are from powerless and marginalized classes. Studies have indicated that even the few official statistics that are available, are unreliable, since they tend to underestimate the number of displaced persons. For example, according to official sources, the Hirakud dam in Orissa has displaced around 110,000 people and all have been compensated. But, according to other studies more than 180,000 persons had been displaced by 1956 and only 35.5 percent of Rs. 96.6 million allotted for rehabilitation was distributed as compensation. The number of persons

to be displaced by the Subarnarekha project in Bihar ranges from 64,000 including 14,000 in Orissa to 37,000 in Bihar and 615 families in Orissa.

Despite the absence of accurate figures, scholars agree that in recent decades there has been enormous displacement due to development projects. On the basis of various analysis, it has been estimated that a total of 21.6 million people have been displaced between 1951 and 1985 by dams alone. A more recent estimate puts the lower figure of those displaced by all the dams between 1951 and 1990 at 18.5 million and the higher estimate around 30 million.[7] The data available indicate that about 21 million people have been displaced by mines, 14 million by minor dams and canals, 1.3 million by industries, thermal and atomic power stations and defence establishments, 600,000 by wildlife sanctuaries and 500,000 by government offices, railways, roads, universities and other schemes which are generally not noticed.

It has also been observed that mainly "backward regions" are chosen in preference to others either because their inhabitants are considered powerless or in order to keep the project cost down. In most cases the poor are displaced and abandoned without being resettled.

[7] Fernandes. (1991), op.cit.

Lack of people planning by the authorities also result in multiple displacement. For example, the 30,000 Rihand Dam oustees of the early 1960s have been displaced four times. In 1970s when coal was discovered in the resettlement area, they were displaced the second time. Third time they were displaced for industrial units and the fourth time again when their new resettlement area was declared a reserve forest.[8] In Mysore district, persons displaced by the Kalindi dam in the 1970s and ousted a second time for the township are being displaced a third time for a wildlife sanctuary.[9]

All these studies point to the growing marginalization of the displaced people, especially the tribals and dalits. Despite the enormity of the problem of displacement, India lacks a national policy on rehabilitation. Only Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have a law on the rehabilitation of dam-displaced persons. Several projects and companies like National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) have their own policies for every project.

The following table gives a conservative estimate of persons displaced between 1951 and 1990 at the national level.

[8] Enakshi Ganguly, Thukral,. (1989) "Dams : For whose Development" in W. Fernandes and E.G. Thukral (eds.), 1989, op.cit., pp. 39-61.
[9] Fernandes, (1991), op.cit.

Table 1.1: A Conservative Estimate of Persons Displaced 1951-1990.

No.	Project	No. Displaced	No. Resettled	Back log
1.	Mines	2,100,000	525,000	1,575,000
2.	Dams	14,000,000	3,500,000	10,500,000
3.	Industries	1,300,000	325,000	950,000
4.	Wildlife	600,000	150,500	562,500
5.	Others	500,000	125,000	375,000
	Total	18,500,000	4,625,000	13,875,000
Source: Fernandes 1991:250.				

Mines: Studies show that coal mines have been one of the biggest land acquiring agents. With the increasing demand for coal in the last two decades and the need to maximize productivity, open cast mines have gained priority. They cause more displacement than underground mines. Through extrapolation from various studies, the lower estimate of persons displaced by the 505 coal mines between 1951 and 1990 is 850,000. Along with the mines other than coal, a total of 21 million persons have been displaced by all the 1,208 mines.[10]

Dams: The official and secondary data show that small dams i.e., below 15 m. have displaced very few people or none at all. Medium dams i.e., below 30m. which numbered 734 between 1951 and 1989 or under construction in 1990 have displaced a total of 5.39 million persons. It has been estimated that about 13 million people have been displaced

[10] Ibid.

by large dams i.e., more than 30 meters in height, along with other medium dams.[11]

Industries: The number of persons displaced by industries like steel, thermo-nuclear and other plants and defence projects is difficult to estimate. Official figures are available for 136,200 persons displaced by four steel plants in 1950s and 1960s. The Singrauli Thermal Plant in Madhya Pradesh has displaced more than 50,000 persons. Korba in Bilaspur district of M.P. is estimated to have displaced around 100,000 and the three thermal plants in the Bermo block of Giridh district in Bihar have displaced a similar number of people. Hence the estimate shows a minimum of 1.3 million persons displaced by industries till 1990.[12]

Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks: There is a lack of data on the number of people displaced or affected by the wildlife sanctuaries, parks and other reserves. Data on the 16 Project Tiger schemes initiated between 1972 and 1983 show that they displaced 153 villages, involving around 8,000 families or 40,000 persons. Field studies, however reveal a higher figure. In 1989, India had 453 wildlife parks and sanctuaries which displaced about 600,000 persons.[13]

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

1.2 THE STATE OF REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT

Despite the magnitude of the problem of displacement, there is an absence of serious planning for rehabilitation in India. Rehabilitation is usually viewed as physical resettlement alone, and at times only as compensation. It is not seen as a process of all round economic, social, psychological and cultural reconstruction of the community that is being destabilized. This lack of proper rehabilitation has led to the impoverishment of the displaced persons, especially the tribals, dalits and other landless persons. Most rehabilitation schemes were meant only for those who were physically displaced by the development project and were given compensation according to the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. Many who do not have a patta i.e., ownership document, have also been displaced from the village. They are affected by these projects either directly or indirectly, partly or fully, due to the breakdown of the village community or loss of CPR. Thus, tribals, dalits and other landless people like artisans, cowherds, barbers, etc. who render services to the village community and depend on CPR are largely ignored during the introduction of development projects and rehabilitation programmes. The loss of livelihood leads to deterioration, marginalisation and impoverishment of the displaced persons belonging to the weaker sections like the tribals. This is

symbolized by their economic impoverishment, loss of social status and cultural degradation.

Two major consequences of development-induced displacement and rehabilitation in India are impoverishment and environmental degradation. The social cost of displacement is high. During the process of displacement, one section of society pays the price of development and its benefit reaches another section. This divides the society into two identifiable classes i.e., those who pay the price of development and those who benefit from it. The displaced and project–affected people undergo a change in their identity and are differentially accepted by the neighbouring host societies where they are resettled. The indigenous people who are displaced have relatively little exposure to the external world which is controlled by the formal system. Women among them feel the impact of displacement more than men do since they are less prepared to meet this system. Hence displacement which pushes these people results in greater impoverishment and marginalisation of the already weaker section of society.

It order to identify the basic processes that occur when people are forcibly displaced, Michael Cernea studied and compared the empirical findings of various studies. Besides individual situations of the oustees, he also observed several common characteristic trends.

The eight trends are as follows: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation. Together, these trends make up the major dimensions of the 'Impoverishment Risks Analysis Model'. The model provides a template for minimizing impoverishment due to displacement and establishing alternative livelihood strategies.[14]

M. Cernea has discussed in detail the above mentioned impoverishment risks. For him, they are the fundamental processes of economic and social deprivation and occur with variable intensities in different locations of development projects.

Landlessness: Land alienation disturbs the main foundation upon which people's productive systems, commercial activities and livelihood are constructed in indigenous societies. This results in decapitalization and pauperization of displaced rural people. Many urban displaced people also lose access to some land. Unless this foundation is reconstructed elsewhere, or replaced with steady income-generating employment, landlessness sets in chronically and the affected families are impoverished. The cash compensation for displacement is so low that 'land for land' became the basic demand of resettlers long ago. In recent years the 'cash compensation' resulted in landed families

[14] Hari Mohan Mathur and David Marsden (eds.) (1998) *Development Projects and Impoverishment Risks: Resettling Project-affected People in India,* New Delhi : Oxford Univ. Press, p.11.

becoming either totally landless or getting less land than their prior holding. This occurred because of various reasons like underpayment, corruption, volatile land prices, illiteracy, etc.

Joblessness: Loss of wage employment occurs in both urban and rural displacements. Those losing jobs are enterprise workers, landless labourers, employees in the service sector, artisans and others. Since the creation of new jobs is difficult and requires substantial investment, unemployment or underemployment occures in various sites of development projects. This causes painful economic and psychological effects on the displaced people. The employed landless lose their work on land owned by others. They are also deprived of the assets under CPR. Joblessness among resettlers is generally observed sometime after displacement. Immediately after displacement, the oustees receive employment in project–related jobs for a short period. So the resettlers should be given long term jobs in the rehabilitation process.

Homelessness: Loss of housing and shelter results in a fall in living standards, which is either temporary or long lasting. In the words of Theodore Downing, "in a non–physical broader cultural sense homelessness is also placelessness, loss a group's cultural space and

identity, or cultural impoverishment".[15] According to M. Cernea, when compensation for demolished houses is paid at assessed value rather than replacement value, the risk of prolonged homelessness is sharply increased. Moreover, 'emergency housing centres' or 'relocation camps', used as temporary solutions after displacement, make the issue of homelessness chronic. Good planning combined with replacement cost compensation and participation of the oustees of displacement can overcome the problem of homelessness.

Marginalisation: Marginalisation occurs when families lose their economic power and slide on a 'downward mobility' path. This means that middle–income farm households do not become landless, but become small land holders, small shopkeepers and craftsmen. They fall below poverty line. M. Cernea argued that relative marginalisation often begins long before the actual displacement, because just after the announcement of development projects, the basic infrastructural and social services are frozen in the region. When individuals cannot use their previously acquired skills at the new location, they become inactive and useless human capital which results in their marginalisation. Marginalisation also occurs due to lower productivity of the new lands, less diversified production and loss of off–farm

[15] Michael M. Cernea, (1998) "Impoverishment or Social Justice? A Model for Planning Resettlement" in H.M. Mathur and D. marsden (eds.) 1998, op. cit., p. 50

income sources. This process has a psychological effect on the resettlers as it leads to a drop in their social status, in loss of their confidence in society and self and a sense of injustice.

Increased Morbidity and Mortality: Decreases in health levels result from displacement – caused social stress, insecurity and the outbreak of relocation – related diseases. Diseases, particularly parasitic and vector – borne ones like, malaria and schistosomiases are generally observed in resettlement areas. Unsafe water supply and poor sewerage systems increases the chances of the outbreak of epidemics like diarrhoe, dysentery, etc. The weakest sections of the resettled society i.e., infants, children and the elderly are most affected. Studies show that forced displacement increases people's degree of exposure and vulnerability to illness, and to comparatively more severe illness.

Food Insecurity: Displacement increases the risk that people will fall into chronic undernourishment and food insecurity. Undernourishment has been defined as calorie – protein intake levels below the minimum necessary for normal growth and work. Hunger or undernourishment occurs because of sudden drops in foodcrops and income of the resettlers. This problem can be overcome by overcoming the primary causes of impoverishment i.e. landlessness and joblessness.

Loss of Access to Common Property and Services: Loss of access to CPR which earlier belonged to the community results in significant deterioration in income and livelihood among the displaced people, particularly the landless and assetless. This is because in most cases, the resettlement and rehabilitation schemes do not compensate for the loss of common property assets, such as forested lands, water bodies, grazing lands, burial ground, etc. These CPR are important source of income for poor households. After losing 'their' CPR, the displaced people tend to encroach on reserved forests or to exploit the common resources of the host population. This causes both social tension and environmental degradation.

Social Disarticulation: Forced displacement disturbs the social fabric and the existing patterns of social organization. M. Cernea observed that communities are fractioned, production systems are dismantled, kinship groups and family systems are often scattered, local labour markets are disrupted, and people's sense of cultural identity is undermined after displacement. There is a massive loss of social capital among the uprooted people, which is never quantified or compensated.[16] Various studies show that displaced households whose economic status has been completely shattered as a result of

[16] Ibid., p. 54

displacement' were not 'properly integrated' in the host villages many years after relocation. Social disarticulation at the kinship system level, such as the weakening of intimate bonds, growing alienation, and lower cohesion in family structures were observed after displacement. Marriages were deferred because dowry, feasts and gifts became unaffordable. Resettlers' relationships with non–displaced kinsmen were eroded and interactions between individual families were reduced. As a result, participation in group action decreased; leaders became conspicuously absent from settlements; post–harvest communal feasts and pilgrimages were discontinued; daily informal social interaction was severely curtailed; and common burial grounds became shapeless and disordered.[17]

Hence the disorganization of communities and social networks increases poverty i.e., absence of material means, loss of power as well as greater dependency. Household networks help to cope with poverty through personalized strategies like informal loans, exchange of food, clothing and durable goods, mutual help with farming, building houses, and caring for children. Thus, reconstitution of similar social structures and networks as existed earlier, among the resettlers and their hosts is a difficult task. Displacement results in a major loss of

[17] Ibid., p. 54

social capital that combines with resettlers' losses of physical capital (natural assets), manmade capital (infrastructural assets) and human capital (skills, relevant knowledge).

Apart from the eight impoverishment risks, as discussed above, Hari Mohan Mathur found another major risk that accounts for impoverishment, on the basis of a study of projects with resettlement in Rajasthan. Mathur terms the ninth risk as **'loss of access to basic public services'**, like schools, hospitals, drinking water supply, village – to – market bus service, etc. In areas where a development project is announced, people begin to experience deprivations of public services years before the actual displacement occurs. The moment the decision to locate a project is made, all plans for development in the area are immediately shelved. If not withdrawn, the existing services are then kept running only nominally.

Even in resettlement colonies government agencies find it easier to construct buildings for schools and hospitals than to post teachers and doctors to run them. Sending children to boarding schools elsewhere or rushing to towns and cities in case of a medical emergency leads to additional burden on the already impoverished people. According to Thangaraj, Cernea's Impoverishment Risks Analysis Model acts as a tool designed to minimise resettlement and

ensure that people are able to at least regain their previous standards of living after being subjected to involuntary displacement and resettlement.[18]

1.3 DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT

The impoverishment risks discussed above affect various categories of people differentially. Displaced populations are not a monolithic socio – economic group. They have non – homogenous interests, potentials and cultural characteristics. On the basis of the economic sector and other factors like time, location, etc. the resettlers at particular sites may face only some of these risks or may face additional risks. Further, vulnerable population groups are hurt differentially, not uniformly. For instance, women suffer the impact of displacement more than men. Discrimination against women in the criteria for compensation was observed in several cases. The eligibility for land compensation for unmarried individuals in Orissa was set at age 18 for men but at age 30 for women. In addition. In addition tribal populations are more vulnerable to impoverishment risks than the general population due to the nature of their economy and culture.[19]

[18] H.M. Mathur and D. Marsden. (eds.) 1998, op. cit. p. 13.
[19] M. Cernea, (1998), op.cit., p. 56.

Mahapatra observed that children, as a vulnerable age category, are subjected to particularly adverse consequences of displacement. Apart from health and undernourishment problems, educational loss is one of the major factors affecting the children. Relocation often interrupts schooling and some children never return to school. After displacement, as a result of a drop in the family income, many children are pulled into the labour market earlier than their appropriate age.

Upendra Baxi suggested that rehabilitation should go beyond cash compensation and land for land scheme. It should compensate this social, religious, cultural and material loss of life.[20] Some of the displaced people mainly from high caste better off sections, improve their lifestyle by getting a somewhat high compensation for their land, even if it is not very fertile. But for most tribals and dalits cash compensation proves to be counter productive. Since they are not used to the monetary economy, they fall easy prey to petty businessmen selling colorful trinkets and consumer items like watches and transistors or lose their money in gambling or on liquor. They experience a deterioration in their financial, social and cultural status.[21] But in every category, particularly among the disadvantaged sections, women are the most affected.

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[20] Upendra Baxi, (1989) "Notes on Constitutional and Legal Aspects of Rehabilitation and Displacement," in W. Fernandes and E.G. Thukral (eds.), op.cit., pp. 164-170

[21] Thukral, op.cit

The psychological consequences such as the trauma of being uprooted from familiar social, cultural and economic surroundings are forced into an alien atmosphere. These consequences are rarely considered during rehabilitating the displaced persons. They have to face a hostile host population who accept and assimilate them into their society differentially. The hostile attitude of the host society exists basically due to pressure on land and other economic activities. Moreover, the indigenous people who come from an informal, barter economy are forced into an industrial society without any psychological preparation. This results in alcoholism, indiscipline, absenteeism in work and other petty crimes among them. As women have relatively less exposure to the external world and are less prepared to meet the formal system, they are in a worse condition than men. Thus, displacement and rehabilitation leads to the dispossession of the indigenous people in economic, social, political and cultural spheres of their life.

Before displacement, there are substantial socio-economic differences between the tribals and dalits. The tribals depend entirely on natural resources for their livelihood and so are not exposed to the external world. On the other hand, the dalits had little access to land and natural resources, so they used the technology they developed and lived traditionally with the high castes. They had greater exposure to the outside world than the tribals. Walter Fernandes argued that after

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displacement, because of lack of exposure to the outer-world, the tribals are totally unprepared to cope with the changes whereas the dalits, because of their great interaction with other castes and productive technology, are able to adapt themselves as blacksmiths, barbers and other artisans. But the host society, where the displaced people are relocated, does not accept and assimilate them easily because of the economic pressure on land and the existence of service castes in this society from the beginning.

1.4 IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT IN TRIBAL AREAS

The tribals inhabit the resource rich regions of the country. Development projects concentrate on exploiting the resources rather than the development of tribals. The problem of displacement becomes serious when one realises that the majority of the displaced people are tribals, dalits and other landless. The exploitation of resources affect the traditional life support system of the tribals, more than other segments to the society. The statewise statistics on the percentage of tribals and the number and growth of dams, mines, industries and sanctuaries give us a better understanding of the impact of displacement in the tribal areas.

Before 1950, only 44 of the 206 medium dams i.e., less than 30m. (21.36 percent), 4 of those between 30.1m. and 50m. (19.05 percent) and 4 out of 16 of those above 60m. (25.00 percent) dams were in the tribal areas. Most of them displaced mainly the non-agricultural, non-tribal populations in the rice-growing regions of the South, U.P., Maharashtra, Gujarat and Western M.P. After Independence, the exhaustion of the resources began in the areas close to the plains, instead of hilly regions. Therefore, out of the 32 dams above 50m., only 9 (22.13 percent) are in the tribal areas. 22 out of 58 (44.83 percent) of those between 30.1 and 50m. are in the tribal areas. 1,760 (81.21 percent) out of 2,162 dams below 30m. are in the states of M.P., Maharashtra and Gujarat. On the basis of various data, it is estimated that the total displacement by all the dams and canals in the tribal areas would be around 70 million, including 5.3 million tribals.[22]

The tribal areas are also rich in a variety of mineral resources and produce most of the country's coal, bauxite, mica, iron and other minerals. In recent years, the corporate sector has monopolized these resources in the tribal areas. 485 out of 498 (98 percent) active coal mines in 1983 were in states with a large tribal population. A few of them like Singrauli in M.P., Dhenkanal and Sambalpur in Orissa are in

[22] Fernandes, (1991), op. cit.

a forest area and close to tribal belt. Most of the project-affected and displaced people in these areas and mines are not tribals. The mines in the tribal areas proper have displaced at least 1,415,000 persons, out of which 1.2 million or 80 percent are tribals.

A large variety of mineral resources has led to the development of industries in the tribal regions, although the industries are not always situated within the tribal regions. Out of the 135, 200 persons displaced by the major steel plants, only 21.45 percent were tribals. But the industries built within the tribal areas have a larger proportion of tribals. They constitute more than 50 percent of the displaced people of Rourkela and Bokaro Steel Plants and other thermal and aluminum Plants like NALCO in Orissa, HEC in Ranchi, etc. Thus out of 1.3 millions displaced by industries, only 20 percent or 260,000 are tribals.[23]

Tribals constitute a large majority of those displaced by wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, most of them situated in states like Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The estimates show that at least 500,000 out of 600,000 displaced by wildlife sanctuaries are tribals.

Thus the number of tribals displaced by all the development projects like dams, mines, industries, wildlife sanctuaries and other

projects, comes to 7.4 millions. This is more than 10 percent of the total tribal population in the country in 1991.[24]

The following table gives figures on tribals displaced by development projects between 1951 and 1990.

Table 1.2 Tribals Displaced by Development Projects, 1951-1990

Sl. No.	Project	DPs in tribal Region	Tribal DPs	Tribals as % of DPs of		Tribal DPs	
				Country	Tribal Region	Resettled	Back log
1.	Mines	1,415,000	1,200,000	57.14	84.81	300,000	900,00
2.	Dams	7,000,000	5,300,000	37.57	75.71	1,315,000	3,945,00
3.	Industry	300,000	260,000	20.00	86.67	65,000	195,00
4.	Wildlife	600,000	500,000	83.00	83.33	125,000	375,00
5.	Others	200,000	150,000	30.00	75.00	40.000	110,00
Total		9,515,000	7,410,000	40.05	77.81	1,850,000	5,560,00

Source : Fernandes 1991 : 256.

Although a large number of development projects are in the tribal areas, very few benefits of these projects reach them. The process of industrialization and modernisation intensify the inequalities present in the socio – economic structures of the tribal regions. The outsiders take control of the non–formal tribal economy and subjugate the people to the external economy. In the process, they disrupt their social life and their self–sufficient economy. Scholars like Vyasulu (1981) and Areeparampil (1987) have called this process as 'Indo – colonialism'.

[23] Ibid.

Thus the tribals become the victim of this process when the upper classes subjugate them and take control of their economy.

The state of Bihar has a large proportion of tribals in its population. It is also rich in natural resources like forests, minerals, water, etc. and therefore has a large number of development projects like industries, mines and dams. In the later chapters I shall discuss the displacement and its impact on the tribals, non – tribals as well as women in the Jharkhand region on the basis of two major conceptual frameworks – Cernea's Impoverishment Risks Analysis Model and the process of Indo–colonialism. Apart from this, I would also try to analyze the concept of 'diku' i.e., outsider – exploiter in the Jharkhand region and their attack on the indigenous identity of the population there. Further, I would study how the indigenous people of Jharkhand struggle to rebuild their identity and demand for autonomy through Jharkhand movement.

To summarize, this chapter dealt with the process of development, which in the name of progress and national interest, leads to displacement of the indigenous people and their dispossession in terms of culture, values and identity. I have also discussed the acquisition of land and their common property resources due to the

[24] Ibid.

development projects like dams, industries, mines, etc. at the national level. M. Cernea's Impoverishment Risks Analysis Model has been described in detail to explain the state of rehabilitation and resettlement in India. Further, the extent of displacement in tribal areas and its impact on different sections of society viz. tribals, non-tribals, women, children and so on have also been discussed in this chapter.

In chapter two, I will focus on the background of Jharkhand region of Bihar and its development with particular reference to the process of industrialization. The chapter will also deal with the process of land acquisition for mining and establishment of major industrial enterprises. The impact of industrial displacement on the tribal population and women in this region will also be discussed. The change in the demographic, socio – economic and political structures due to in – migration and out–migration in Jharkhand will also be emphasized in this chapter.

Chapter three will deal with the concept of 'diku' which means both the 'exploiter' and the 'outsider' for the tribals in Jharkhand. The process of land alienation and displacement of tribals in this region during pre-Mughal, Mughal, British and post - Independence periods will also be discussed. Impoverishment and marginalisation and an

attack on the identity of the indigenous people, due to the coming of dikus are consequences of the above processes. In this section, I will also try to discuss who benefits from the development projects and the resistance shown by the indigenous people against displacement.

In chapter four, the concept of identity at objective and subjective levels will be discussed. This will be followed by the factors which determine 'Adivasi' identity and the meaning of 'Adivasi' and 'Jharkhandi'. Alienation of Jharkhandis from their land, common property resources and culture results in their impoverishment and marginalisation and also to a loss of identity among them. Their integration into mainstream society and a search for a new identity by different processes will also be discussed.

Chapter five will deal with the process of identity formation among the Jharkhandis by resorting to agitations and struggles in the Jharkhand movement. I will try to trace the history of the movement till its present political form i.e., birth of various Jharkhand parties in search of an identity and to resist against the problem of land alienation to the present demand for an autonomous state. This chapter will be followed by a summary of the work.

The major objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To analyze the impact of industrial displacement on various sections of society, particularly tribals and women, in the Jharkhand region of Bihar.

2. To examine the extent of industrial displacement in this region on the basis of various studies.

3. To analyze the change in identity of the indigenous people of Jharkahnd due to displacement and with the coming of the 'dikus':

4. To study the kind of resistance shown by them against displacement and exploitation of dikus i.e., through the Jharkhand movement which has now taken a political form.

The study is based on secondary sources. It is a review of the available literature, books, articles, case histories, census survey, journals, newspapers, other reports and seminar papers. It is an analytical and descriptive work focussing on the impoverishment and marginalisation due to industrial displacement in the Jharkhand region and its differential impact on the indigenous people of that society.

CHAPTER – II

INDUSTRIAL DISPLACEMENT IN JHARKHAND REGION OF BIHAR

INDUSTRIAL DISPLACEMENT IN JHARKHAND REGION OF BIHAR

The state of Bihar covers an area of 174,000 sq. km. In 1981 it had a population of 70 million and a tribal population of 5 million. In 1981 it consisted of 29 districts, 13 of them to the north and 16 districts to the south of the Ganga. 13 out of the 16 southern districts account for 65 percent of the total area of the state, 45 percent of its population and 97 percent of its forests. Within these 13 districts, 7 districts of Dhanbad, Giridih, Hazaribagh, Palamu, Ranchi, Singhbum and Santhal Parganas comprise the Chotanagpur Plateau. These districts have been reorganized in 1983 and more districts have been carved out of them. So the proposed Jharkhand State consists of 18 districts of Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana in Bihar. It is spread over an area of 79,714 sq. Kms. which forms 46.9 percent of total geographical area of Bihar.

A number of tribes such as the Santhals, Mundas, Oraons, Hos, Gonds, Kharias, Bhuiyans, Bhumij and others inhabit the Chotanagpur Plateau. More than 91 percent of the tribal population of Bihar live in this area. With a total population of 17.61 million (1981) in this region, tribals constitute about a third and the dalits about 10 percent of the total population.

The Chotanagpur Plateau, one of the richest areas of Bihar and of the country as a whole, has large reserves of coal, iron ore, mica, bauxite, china clay, manganese, copper, limestone, atomic minerals, etc. According to available statistics, 48 percent of the country's coal, 48 percent of its bauxite, 45 percent of mica, 100 percent of Kynanite and 90 percent of apatite, comes from this region, Besides minerals, 79 percent of the forest area of Bihar is concentrated in this region. This has led to a concentration of development projects like industries, dams, mines, etc. in this state. However, various studies indicate that the benefits of these development projects do not reach the people displaced by them.

This section is an attempt to study the differential impact of development-induced displacement, particularly due to industries and mines on different sections of society in the Chotanagpur Plateau, which together with Santhal Parganas constitute the Jharkhand region of Bihar. In this chapter, I would discuss the development of mines and industries and its impact on the tribals, dalits, other non – tribals and women in the Jharkhand region. The negative impact of industrialization on the tribal population, especially on women, and a change in their culture and socio – economic status will also be discussed. The concepts of 'adivasi', 'diku' and 'internal colonialism' are central to the discussion in this chapter. The assimilation and integration of the displaced people into the 'mainstream' society i.e., the host society in varying degrees after their rehabilitation will also be discussed.

2.1 JHARKHAND : ITS BACKGROUND

Jharkhand, a combination of Jhar (forests) and Khand (land including hills) meaning "forest tract", is an ancient name given to the forested upland, geographically known as the Chotanagpur Plateau. Although its margin extends into Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal, the majority of it i.e., about 79,714 sq. kms., lies in Bihar. The region consists of plateau, hills, valleys and several rivers such as the Damodar, Barakar, Subarnarekha, Brahmani, Baitarani and Mahanadi. This region has a specific identity and constitutes a cultural unity in itself. "This unity and identity is gradually getting destroyed due to the splitting of the region between four states and due to its becoming a victim of political, economic and cultural colonialism. Lately, the word Jharkhand has come to signify the agonies and aspirations of the masses of people who reside here".[1] According to Nirmal Sengupta, the concept of Jharkhand is not merely a geographic region. Its real implication is 'a land of depressed people'. 'Jharkhandi' means 'a mass of destitutes' and the 'development of Jharkhand' is a question of 'development of the conditions of destitute population'.[2]

[1] M. Areeparampil,. (1989). "Industries, Mines and Dispossession of Indigenous People – The Case of Chotanagpur", in W. Fernandes and E. G. Thukral (eds.) 1989, *Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p. 13.
[2]Nirmal, Sengupta (ed.) (1982), *Fourth World Dynamics: Jharkhand*, Delhi : Authors Guild, p. 11

At present the main characteristics of the Jharkhand area is the turmoil seen in the economic, political, social, cultural and religious spheres among its indigenous people known as adivasis. The turmoil is manifested in various forms of an dolans or agitations such as the forest andolan in Singhbhum against the planting of teak and the commercialization of forests, the dhankato andolan or the forcible harvesting of paddy in Dhanbad, Giridih and Lohardaga areas for getting back the rights over land illegally taken away from the adivasis, andolan against the construction of big dams like Koel Karo, Subarnarekha and Kutku, andolan for creation of a separate Jharkhand state, etc. The basic factor behind all these struggles is the phenomenon of continued and systematic dispossession of the indigenous people of this area. This happens mainly because of the exploitation of natural resources by outsiders (known as 'dikus' by the tribals) and displacement due to development projects. Many of these agitations have resulted in violence against the indigenous people of Jharkhand.

In contrast to the rich natural resources of this region is the poverty of the indigenous population of Jharkhand. They are the worst affected by the large scale exploitation of the natural resources of the region and the commercial exploitation of its forests. A large number of them live much below the poverty line, in a state of semi – starvation most of the year. Majority of the better off population in

this region are mainly immigrants who are employed in the various development projects. The latter have gradually improved their position in this region and have reduced the indigenous population to an impoverished state.[3]

Various studies on Jharkhand suggest a close link between he extent of industrialization and mining in the district and the influx of non – tribal outsiders. Also the outmigration of tribals because of impoverishment leads to gradual marginalisation of tribals in this region. For instance, the proportion of the tribals is the lowest in Dhanbad where mining activity and influx of outsiders began in the nineteenth century and has intensified after independence. In Sighbhum, their proportion fell from 54.08 percent in 1931 to 44.08 percent in 1981. A similar fall in their percentage has been observed in other parts of the Jharkhand region.

[3] Areeparampil, op. cit.

Table 2.1

Demography of Districts of Jharkhand, Bihar (1991)

	Total Population	Total ST Population	% of ST to Gen. Population	% of ST to Total Rural Population	% of Rural ST to Total ST Population	LT* Rate General Population	LT* Rate General Population Female	LT* General Rural Female	LT*. Tribal Population	LT* Tribal Female	LT* ST Rural
1. Godda	861182	216047	25.09	25.66	99.49	34.02	18.00	16.84	20.92	9.74	9.63
2. Sahibganj	1301088	507321	38.99	41.80	99.37	27.03	16.32	13.15	16.66	8.61	8.32
3. Dumka	1495709	621484	41.55	43.88	99.19	34.02	17.91	15.31	19.97	9.59	9.37
4. Deoghar	933113	119085	12.76	14.40	97.72	37.92	19.74	13.20	20.41	7.76	4.97
5. Dhanbad	2674651	225282	8.42	13.40	77.55	55.47	37.88	20.17	24.05	4.34	6.46
6. Giridih	2225480	271924	12.22	13.68	94.64	35.96	17.65	11.83	16.74	5.82	4.44
7. Hazaribag	2843544	250586	8.81	8.83	82.08	38.00	21.24	14.49	23.07	11.09	7.56
8. Palamu	2451191	443266	18.08	18.85	98.67	31.10	16.15	13.91	21.74	11.26	10.26
9. Lohardaga	288886	162964	56.41	61.34	96.78	40.79	26.11	20.41	32.45	20.08	17.76

10. Gumla	1153976	816988	70.80	72.40	97.64	39.67	27.48	25.59	37.33	27.07	26.10
11. Ranchi	2214048	964422	43.56	54.65	84.05	51.52	36.57	20.65	34.61	22.19	17.39
12.Purbi Singhbhum	1613088	466572	28.92	51.00	83.42	59.05	45.50	21.36	32.14	16.97	12.33
13.Pashchimi Singhbhum	1787955	978069	54.70	61.24	94.27	38.92	22.44	15.68	27.91	13.62	12.18
Jharkhand	21843911	6044010	27.67	32.58	92.72	41.39	25.52	16.38	27.52	15.41	13.40
Bihar	86374465	6616914	7.66	8.20	93.00	38.48	22.89	17.95	26.55	14.75	12.78
India	838583988	67758380	8.08	9.95	92.61	52.21	39.29	30.62	29.60	18.19	16.02

Source: (i) Census of India (1991)
Note: 1. The figures for India exclude those of Jammu and Kashmir as the 1991 census was not held there.
2. Five new districts have been created after the 1991 census; Garwa (Palamu) Chatra and Koderma (Hazaribagh), Bokaro (Dhanbad) and Pakur (Sahibganj).
LT* – Literacy

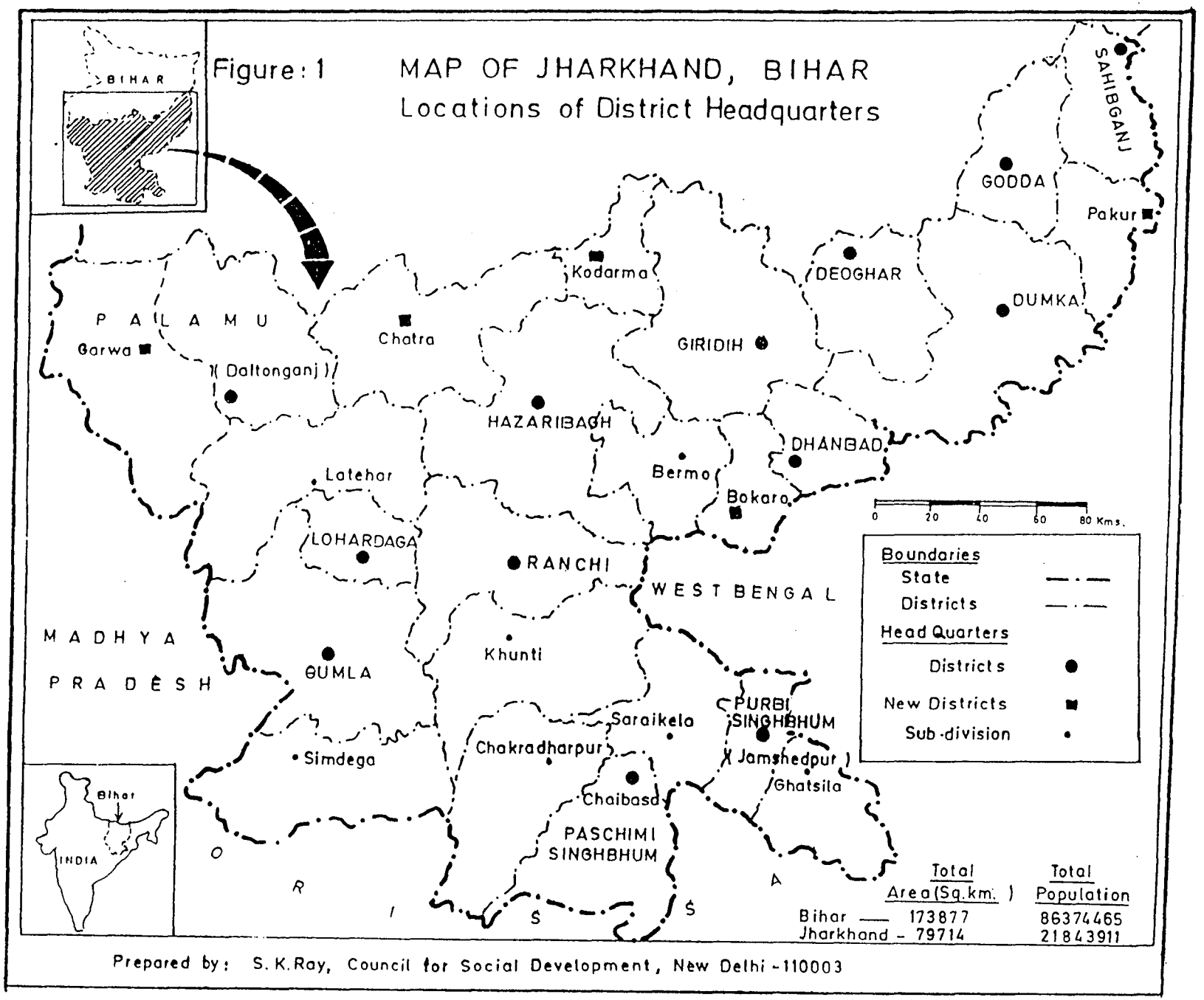
Figure: 1
MAP OF JHARKHAND, BIHAR
Locations of District Headquarters
BIHAR
SAHIBGANJ
GODDA
Pakur
DEOGHAR
DUMKA
Kodarma
GIRIDIH
Chatra
PALAMU
Garwa
(Daltonganj)
HAZARIBAGH
DHANBAD
Bermo
Bokaro
Latehar
LOHARDAGA
RANCHI
WEST BENGAL
MADHYA PRADESH
Khunti
GUMLA
Saraikela
PURBI SINGHBHUM
Jamshedpur
Ghatsila
Chakradharpur
Simdega
Chaibasa
PASCHIMI SINGHBHUM
ORISSA
0 20 40 60 80 Kms.
Boundaries
State
Districts
Head Quarters
Districts
New Districts
Sub-division
Bihar
INDIA
Total Area (Sq.km.)
Total Population
Bihar — 173877 86374465
Jharkhand - 79714 21843911
Prepared by: S.K.Ray, Council for Social Development, New Delhi -110003

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF JHARKHAND

Although the exploitation of natural resources in Jharkhand i.e., Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas together began almost 400 to 500 years ago, which I would discuss later, the phenomenon of dispossession of the indigenous people (adivasis or original settlers or autochthons) began mainly in the twentieth century. Coal mining and the establishment of other large industries is the major cause of land alienation and displacement of the tribals. Industrialization and exploitation of the mineral wealth in the Chotanagpur region of Bihar began with the establishment of the first coal mining industry in Raniganj in 1774. The richest reserves of coal are found in the Jharia coalfild, Bokaro and Karanpura coalfields began in 1856. In 1907 the Tata Iron and Steel Company was established in Jamshedpur in Singhbhum district. With this began the large scale exploitation of mineral and industrial resources in the region.

Table 2.2
Number of Mines in Bihar 1983, 1989 and 1991

No.	Mineral	District	1983	1989	1991
01.	Coal	Amarpara, Santhal Parganas, Giridih, Karanpura, Palamu South & North	196	177	171
02.	Bauxite	Palamu, Munger, Ranchi	16	25	34
03.	Copper Ore	Singhbhum	5	5	5
04.	Iron Ore	Singhbhum, Palamu	27	28	31
05.	Dolomite	Palamu	NA	3	2
06.	Graphite	Palamu	NA	4	1
07.	Fireclay	Palamu	NA	45	28
08.	Kaolin	Singhbhum, Dumka, Sahibganj	NA	23	20
09.	Kynanite	Singhbhum	NA	3	4
10.	Limestone	Hazaribagh, Palamu, Rohtas, Santhal Parganas, Singhbhum, Munger, Ranchi	NA	28	23
11.	Mica	West Nawada to Hazaribagh and Munger to Bhagalpur	NA	71	53
12.	Pyrites	Amjhore, Rohtas	NA	1	1
13.	Steatite	Singhbhum	NA	5	3
14.	Silica	Sahibganj	NA	6	3
15.	Others	Munger, Giridih, Palamu, Rohtas	3	NA	NA
16.	All Minerals		248	439	403

Source: Ministry of Mines 1992: CMII 1986 : 96.

Table 2.2 shows the number of mines in Bihar in 1983, 1989 and 1991. In 1983, Bihar had 196 coal mines or 39.36 percent of the country's total of 498, all of which are in the tribal areas. The number of mines has decreased from 196 in 1983 to 171 in 1989 and 1991 in Bihar. The Singhbhum – Orissa border is one of the richest iron belts in the world. Of the 117 iron ore mines in the tribal areas of the country, 27 or 23.08 percent are in Chotanagpur region. The number of iron ore mines has increased gradually from 27 in 1983 to 28 in 1989 and 31 in 1991.[4] Some of the other major metals mined in this region are copper, mica, bauxite, limestone, kynanite, chinaclay, etc.

Mines

The mining industry, particularly coal, is one of the major causes of land alienation and displacement in the Jharkhand region. In the past, coal mining was done by private firms. Till early 1960s, land was acquired under the coal bearing areas Act, with price being fixed arbitrarily. Large tracts of land in Damodar Valley were acquired by deceit and turned into wastelands by haphazard mining. In 1971, after the nationalization of coal industry, coal mining was left to Coal India Limited (CIL) and its subsidiary

[4] W. Fernandes, (1991). "Power and Powerlessness: Development Projects and Displacement of tribals", *Social Action*, Vol. 41 (3), pp. 243 – 270.

companies like Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL), Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL) and Central Coalfields Ltd. (CCL).

The table below gives an estimate on the number of people displaced and rehabilitated by coal mines between 1981 and 1985.

Table 2.3

Displacement and rehabilitation by Coal Mines, 1981-85

S. No.	Name of the Company	No. of persons displaced	Number of jobs provided to one member of the family and (% of displaced families)	
1.	Eastern Coal Fields Ltd.	81,100	4,195	(33.32%)
2.	Central Coal Fields Ltd.	43,600	3,984	(50.25%)
3.	Western Coal Fields Ltd.	34,300	2,250	(36.10%)
4.	Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.	21,100	752	(19.58%)
	Total	1,80,000	11,901	(36.34%)

Source: Govt. of India 1985, Quoted in Fernandes. W., and Thukral E. G (ed.) (1989): *Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation,* New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

These coal companies have acquired large tracts of land in Jharkhand region, thus displacing a large member of families. According to Government of India estimate, between 1981 and 1985, these coal mines have displaced more than 32,750 families or

around 180,000 persons. Table 2.3 also shows that only 36.34 percent of the displaced families were given one job per family. Studies also suggest that overwhelmingly large majority of the displaced persons by development projects in Jharkhand are tribals, ranging from 72 percent to 90 percent. It has been estimated that upto 1994 – 95 the total land requirement for coal projects in Jharkhand area was 62,642 hectares, of which 22,843 hectares i.e., 37 percent was forest land. Out of this 11,909 hectares of forest land and upto 26,576 hectares of non-forest land was taken up by coal projects in the Karanpura valley alone.[5] According to official reports, the Piparwar Coal Project, located in the North Karanpura valley, displaced 460 families from two villages. However, according to unofficial reports at least 15,000 people from 14 villages and hamlets were severely affected by the mines, the washery and other auxiliaries of the project.

Since Piparawar project is highly mechanized, very few of the oustees got jobs in the project. The project also caused severe damage to the environment. 289 hectares of reserved forests was felled for the construction of the mine and other facilities. Moreover, Damodar river also gets choked with the mining debris dumped on its bank. Areeparampil observed that North Karanpura valley contains some of the best rice fields and forests in Hazaribagh

[5] Ibid.

district. Due to mining activities in the region, these fields and forests too are being destroyed.[6]

After Damodar Valley, Singhbhum district is the worst hit by mines. In 1974, around 300 mines with more than 151,000 acres of land leased out to private agencies were operating in this district. Such haphazard and indiscriminate mining has laid waste vast areas of agricultural land belonging to the indigenous people. Besides land being directly affected by mines, it is also acquired for constructing roads, townships for miners, infrastructure for administrative purposes, stockyard for processing operations, etc. Disposal of mining debris also causes a lot of air, land and water pollution. It makes agricultural fields infertile which forces the people to abandon or alienate their land and migrate to other areas. The indigenous people are thrown out of their jobs and helped by outsiders. All this leads to a gradual decline in the status of the indigenous people and erosion of their cultural values and traditional arts.

The following study on Uranium mining and processing in Singhbhum district, conducted by M. Areeparampil, shows how various activities related to the production and uses of uranium, such as production of nuclear fuel and production of atomic power,

[6] Areeparampil, op. cit.

have threatened the lives and existence of the indigenous people. The Uranium Corporation of India Ltd. (UCIL) has taken over five villages from the indigenous people for setting up the mines, the processing plant and the township at Jaduguda. According to the 1961 census, the total population of these villages was 2,047, of whom 47.1 percent were tribals, mainly Santhals. Many indigenous families were displaced from their ancestral lands for the construction of mines. They have not yet been properly resettled, nor have they received adequate compensation for their lands. Many of them are still living on vacant lands along the railway lines and roadsides in nearby towns.

The tribals living in Jaduguda and nearby villages have become the immediate victims of the hazards of radioactivity, that is, mining and processing of uranium. They are facing a slow and agonizing death due to the contamination of their environment, caused by poisonous, radioactive wastes. Known and unknown diseases have spread into the villages. Air, water, animals, fishes, plants, etc. have all been affected.

It has been observed that no official information is given out regarding the extent of radio-activity in the area. People are kept in the dark regarding the havoc created by uranium mining on them. Medical and environmental data are being suppressed and

manipulated and health regulations are flouted by company authorities.

Apart from displacement, health hazard is the most important consequence of uranium mining in Singhbhum. Radioactivity affects not only the tribals but also others who live in nearby villages. After the extraction of the mineral from the ore, UCIL dumps the uranium tailings in a pond of about 8 to 10 kms. in circumference which is constructed near the company. The slag is carried through pipes to the tailing pond which is only partially submerged under water. Uranium dust from the rest of the dried pond contaminates the nearby villages. The people of the area constantly breathe this poisonous dust. The crops grown in the area and the animals grazing on the pond are affected by radio-activity. It has been noted that the company officials do not buy any vegetables produced in the area. They get it from Jamshedpur which is about 45 kms. away from Jaduguda. Poisonous water and slag from the tailing pond flow to the river Gara and Subarnarekha through a big drain which passes through colonies. So millions of people living along the banks of these rivers are forced to drink the contaminated water and are affected by life threatening diseases.

The indigenous people are the most affected ones in the process. There is a well planned conspiracy behind dumping the

wastes in the tribal dominated areas. Moreover tribals living in nearby villages are employed to work in the tailing ponds to unload the drums containing radio-active wastes. They are not given adequate protection to handle these material. High incidence of respiratory diseases, cancer, fever, neural disorders, miscarriage and deformations in children are found among the local inhabitants of Jadugora and surrounding villages. According to a local woman who works as midwife in the area, about 17 percent of the children born in the area are either deformed or were born dead. The tribals of this area consider all these calamities as the doings of the bongas or evil spirits.[7]

Industries

I shall now consider the extent of displacement caused by major industrial concerns in Chotanagpur area. Due to the availability of mineral resources, a number of large industries such as the Heavy Engineering Corporation at Hatia, Ranchi; Bokaro Steel Plant and Tata Iron and Steel Company, Jamshedpur are based in the Chotanagpur region. Singhbhum district alone has around 40 big and medium industries that employ more than 40,000 persons. Small scale industries are around 200. Most of the non-metallic mineral industries are based in the Damodar valley in

[7] Areeparampil. (1995). *Tribals of Jharkhand: Victims of Development*, New Delhi : Indian Social Institute, p. 24

and around Dhanbad. Some of the important ones are the cement factories at Japla (Palamu), Jhinkpani (Singhbhum), etc., fertilizer factories at Sindri, refractory works at Dhanbad and Ramgarh, glass factories at Kandra (Singhbhum), coke oven plants in Hazaribagh and Dhanbad districts. Besides, the forest and agriculture–based industries, small engineering, manufacturing and chemical units are centered around Chaibasa, Daltonganj, Gumla, Chandil, Ghatshila, etc.[8]

The Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), established in 1907 at Sakchi, now Jamshedpur, was the first major industrial complex in this region. Initially, it acquired 3,564 acreas of land by displacing people of four villages of Sakchi, Nutandi, Susnidih and the northern part of Jugsalai at the cost of Rs. 46,332. The indigenous in-habitants of this area have virtually disappeared now. In April 1955, TISCO had 31,568 permanent employees and 6,783 weekly paid employees. 36 percent of permanent or monthly paid employees were from Bihar, while the rest came from outside the state. 53 percent of weekly paid employees were-in habitants of Bihar. In April 1981, there were 36,554 permanent employees in TISCO. Of the total, more than 58 percent were from Bihar and they were mainly engaged in semi–killed and unskilled jobs. Out of them

[8] L.P. Vidyarthi, and M. Jha (eds.), (1979) *Growth and Development of Anthropology in Bihar*, New Delhi: Classical Publication

8.11 percent were scheduled castes and 33.7 percent were scheduled tribes. There were around 2000 permanent women employees in TISCO.

There were also 4,699 temporary employees in April 1981, out of which 9.8 percent were tribals and 1.5 percent were dalits. A majority of these employees were from Bihar.

Among the permanent tribal employees including Biharis and non–Biharis 5,568 (71.14 percent) belonged to the unskilled category. 1,080 (13.80%) to the semi–skilled, 869 (11.10%) to the skilled, 140 to the managerial, supervisory and ministerial categories and 170 to others. Among the permanent dalit employees including the Biharis and non-Biharis, 1,881 (78.43%) belonged to the unskilled category, 245 (10.28%) to the semi–skilled, 213 (8.94%) to the skilled, 36 (1.91%) to the supervisory and ministerial categories and 8 (0.43%) to others. There were a number of contract labourers linked to TISCO indirectly through private contractors.[9]

The Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) was established in 1958 at Hatia, near Ranchi. It acquired 9,200 acreas of land to lay out railways, township, dam, factories, etc. The land was acquired from 25 villages, thereby displacing 2,198 families or a total population of 12,990. Out of them, the tribals, especially Oraons

[9] Sachchidananda and B.B. Mandal. (1985). *Industrialization and Social Disorganization – A Study of Tribals in Bihar*, New Delhi: Concept pub. Co., p. 12.

and Mundas, constituted the single largest group i.e., 78% in these villages. Most of them depended on agriculture for their livelihood. But due to the industrial activities they had to leave their native villages and settle elsewhere. Only some of these families were rehabilitated, a significant part migrated to the districts of Hazaribagh, Singhbhum and Daltonganj. The displacement of these families brought about a drastic change in their social and economic relationship. Their sculptural patterns of life were also greatly disturbed[10].

There was a lot of immigration from the surrounding areas and the immigrants constituted about 61 percent of the population in 1981. In November 1981. There were 21,511 permanent employees in HEC. Among them only 5.3 percent were females, most of whom belonged to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. However, it was found that of the total employees about 4 percent belonged to scheduled castes, 21 percent to scheduled tribes and the rest 75 percent belonged to other communities. 38% of the total employees were in semi-skilled, unskilled and ministerial works, while the rest were in managerial, supervisory and skilled jobs. It was also found that unemployment in the families of displaced persons who became industrial workers in Hatia was 24 percent.[11]

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[10] L.P.Vidyarthi, (1970). *Socio – Cultural Implication of Industrialization in India*, New Delhi : Planning Commission, Govt. of India.

[11] Sachchidananda and B.B. Mandal, op. cit.

Various other studies conducted in this region also show how various factors combined to cause the disintegration and marginalisation of the traditional tribal communities.

The construction of the largest public sector steel plant, Bokaro Steel Limited (BSL) started in 1967. 30,984.22 acres of land from 46 villages were acquired for the construction of Bokaro Steel Plant, the cargo, reservoir, railway yard, small industries, market complex and colonies for housing officers and other employees, mostly non-locals. In the process, it displaced 12,487 families or 63,000 persons, out of which 2,707 were tribal families. It has been found that BSL has given employment to 14,000 displaced persons which includes 2,776 tribals.[12] According to S.B. Mahto, Bokaro Steel Plant acquired more land than what was actually required for the project. So the excess land was leased out to friends and relatives of officials and politicians to set up cooperative farms, petrol pumps, small industries, shopping centres, cinema halls, etc. This led to the marginalisation and dispossession of the indigenous people who were displaced and forced to go to the brick kilns, stone quarries and tea gardens of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Assam as well as to other places in search of a livelihood and survival.

[12] Areeparampil, (1989), op. cit.

Before the construction of the plant complex, the majority of the indigenous community of the area i.e., the Bauris, had their own house sites and cultivable land. But by 1978, land transfer became very frequent and the Bauris were completely dispossessed and turned into destitutes. Earlier, agriculture was the main source of their livelihood. But now, fewer than 5 percent of them are engaged in agriculture. Also because of the increase in the value of the land in the surrounding areas, almost every household in the rural areas had sold part of its cultivable land.[13]

In the words of Sachchidananda "the big industrial complexes in the tribal and backward areas are only peaks of excellence for the nation but that for many local communities they have spelled disaster".[14]

Besides the three major industrial complexes in Jharkhand area, another important industry is that of cement. The Associated Cement Company (ACC) established at Jhinkpani, Singhbhum district, during the Second World War, started production in 1947. The Hos constituted the majority of the population in this area. Land from seven villages were acquired for the establishment of the factory and town ship. Land acquired was mainly agricultural. The study conducted in this region shows that the tribals labourers

[13] N. Sengupta, (1979). *Destitute and Development : A Study of Bauri Community in Bokaro Region*, New Delhi : Concept Pub. Co.
[14] Ibid., foreword

working in the factory maintain close links with their village. They use the income from the factory for expansion of their agricultural holdings. But this has negative consequences, particularly for women, higher rate of polygamy is noticed among the Ho workers living in the industrial township, as they want to maintain both agricultural and industrial occupations as well as families at both places. The establishment of the ACC factory has also led to the ongoing process of displacement of the indigenous people due to illegal acquisition of land for mining purposes. Besides, air and water pollution in the surrounding areas has forced many tribals to move out of their land.

The establishment of thermal power plants at Bokaro, Chandrapura and Tenughat have also forced many of the inhabitants to give up farming and adopt non–agricultural occupations like wage– labour.[15]

Various studies conducted in Jharkhand region reveals that the development of industrial complexes in Bihar has led to large and small scale migration to and from these regions. After Independence the rapid growth in industries, mines, etc. has given rise to the growth and spread of urban areas. The urban population had grown from less than 2 percent at the beginning of the century

[15] L.P. Vidyarthi and M. Jha, op. cit.

to 11.5 percent in 1961 and around 25 percent in 1991. The impact of industrialization and urbanization is changing and marginalising the tribal way of life. This has been the major cause of land alienation and displacement, particularly of the tribals. It has also resulted in a considerable fall in their proportion. Outmigration of the tribals as bonded labourers has also been a result of the development projects – induced displacement in Jharkhand region.[16]

The following table shows the magnitude of displacement by major development projects in Jharkhand region.

[16] W. Fernandes, op. cit.

Table2.4

Magnitude of displacement by developmental projects

Name of the Project		Magnitude of Displacement
1.	TISCO (1907)	3,564 acres of tribal land
2.	Rourkela Steel Plant (1956)	32 villages and 2,465 families
3.	Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi (1958)	9200 acres, 25 villages and 12,990 tribal
4.	Bokaro Steel Plant	46 villages and 12,487 tribals
5.	Coal Mining (1981-85)	32,709 tribal families
6.	CCL-ICL (1981-85)	1,50,300 acres
7.	Icha Dam	21,000 acres in Bihar 10,500 acres in Orissa 5,600 families
8.	Chandil Dam	43,495 acres 6,773 families
9.	Koel Karo	16,350 families (70% of tribal)
10.	Jambir/Baura dams and expansion of Haldia	5,980 acres submerged, 50 villages, 3,450 families
11.	Netarhat Firing Range	2,24,900 (78% tribals)

- Recent projects 1990a

Source: Adivasi Yuva Sangh (1994) Update from Delhi: Issue No. 74, (April 1994), New Delhi, Update Collective; Quoted in *Social Change* (1994)Vol. 24 (1&2), P.9.

2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF DISPLACEMENT ON WOMEN

Displacement affects tribals as well as Dalit women more than men, because of their greater dependence on the informal economy. Impoverishment and ecological degradation after land acquisition for development projects led to greater deterioration of tribal women in Jharkhand.

Tribal women's economy, culture, social system and political structures depended on natural resources in the past. They had some control over them as long as they were community assets. Dalit women sustained themselves through the technology specific to their region and caste. But after displacement, low paid unskilled jobs are the only option open to women. Earlier they were considered as economic assets as they contributed to the family system. Women no more play a significant economic role and hence there is a deterioration in their social status. Alienation from their land and natural resources results in economic impoverishment, deprival of community support and downward social mobility of the women.

Land is a symbol of social power. With no rights over land, the women lose their economic independence and also stops being a decision maker in the family. Land and decision making power is transferred from man to his son. Women also get very little compensation after displacement. Walter Fernandes and Geeta

Menon have observed that with deforestation, the distance between the forest and the village had increased in many tribal areas. It increased from an average of one km. in the 1960s to 5 to 7 kms in the 1980s. As women have to travel longer distance to collect food and fuelwood it means more hours of work.[17] Land and forest acquisition for development projects worsen their situation and they are forced to move out of these areas. Moreover, because of their low literacy and much lower exposure to the external world, women get only unskilled jobs. In some cases, they migrate to city slums and take up low status jobs like domestic workers, sweepers, prostitutes, rejas or coolies in construction sites and so on. To sum up, the status of tribal women in Jharkhand, which was better off than their counterparts of caste society before displacement, has become worse after the introduction of development projects.

In traditional tribal societies characterized by hunting and gathering, hunting is the job of men while collection of fruits, edible roots and tubers is the work of women. In some cases they are also involved in supplementary occupations like making of ropes, baskets, horticulture etc. The women cook the meals, look after children and generally manage the affairs of the household. In tribal societies characterized by agriculture, the women exclusively look after transplanting and harvesting; while ploughing, leveling,

[17] W. Fernandes, and Geeta Menon (1987). *Tribal Women and Forest Economy : Deforestation Exploitation and Status Change,* New Delhi : Indian Social Institute.

irrigation, etc. are the work of men. Women fetch water from distant springs and wells, collect firewood for fuel, clean the house, cook the meals and look after the children. Ploughing the field and thatching the roof are taboo for them.

But with the opening up of mines and the growth of industries in tribal areas, large numbers of women have been drawn into unknown occupations. Sachchidananda observed that in the Jharkhand region, women are not employed inside the mines but only outside the mines. They constitute the labour force in the iron – ore mines of Singhbhum district in large numbers. Two persons, usually the husband and wife, or brother and sister form a work – unit. The men are usually engaged in earth cutting, ore-dressing, loading and unloading of the truck during transports, filling the baskets for carrying, etc., while the women do the job of carrying the ore in baskets. These new jobs are mainly a result of their displacement from their homeland and improper resettlement.

In those areas from which a large number of males have migrated to the cities in search of jobs in industries, agriculture is largely left to the women. In these cases, the tribals do not give up agriculture but leave it to the care of their womenfolk. Most of the men commute to the factory from their own village or new resettlement site. This has led to a high rate of absenteeism of tribal workers in factories and mines. In cases where tribal males migrate

to the town, the family units break up. The husband and the school – going children go to the town while the wife, minor children and grown up daughters stay behind and look after agriculture. In several cases, the husband marries again in the town and thus maintains a wife each in village and town to meet with the dual needs to agriculture and industry.[18]

It has been observed that the displaced tribal women are lifted on trucks by the contractors to the industrial areas where a lot of construction activities take place. They are taken back to their homes in the evening after the day's work. Women are attracted to such employment, particularly of coolies and rejas, as it gives them ready cash to buy new dress, cheap ornaments, trinkets and in some cases, feed their families. In many industrial centres, such employment of women have led to abuses. They are given lesser wages than men and are also sexually exploited. This results in the break up of family ties and weakening of the sanctions of the traditional tribal societies.

Hence the major impact of deforestation and displacement due to development projects have been felt by tribal women in Jharkhand region. They are exploited both financially and physically as they always feel economically, legally and physically vulnerable.

[18] Sachchidananda (1978), "Social Structure, Status and Mobility Patterns: The Case of Tribal Women", *Man in India*, Vol. 58 (1), pp. 8-9.

They have to walk longer distances in search of firewood. They also walk with heavy loads. As they are involved in a destructive practice of cutting woods, so they accept a low price of Rs. 5 to Rs. 8 for a 20 kg bundle of wood which takes a whole day to gather and bring to the market.[19] Since they do not have any alternative, so they continue to indulge in such activities in order to repay the loans and survive at present. This happens mainly because of the break down of the self-sufficient, informal tribal economy and displacement of the tribals due to the intrusion by corporate sectors and establishment of large industries. These gives rise to wage labour and headloading as alternate means of survival. Although both men and women suffer the consequences, but this has a greater ill effect on women than on men.

2.4 IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT ON SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LIFE IN JHARKHAND

The dispossession of the indigenous people of Jharkhand due to various development projects is taking place not only in the economic but also in the social, political and cultural spheres. The rapid changes in the economic conditions has resulted in a breakdown of the social structure of the indigenous societies. The family life of the tribals are getting disrupted and they are losing

[19] W. Fernandes, Geeta Menon and Philip Viegas, (1998). *Forests, Environment and Tribal Economy: Deforestation, Impoverishment and Marginalisation in Orissa*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, pp. 192 – 194.

their traditional social controls. As a result of displacement, they are becoming more and more vulnerable to diseases and emotional disorders. Cases of alcoholism, crime, suicide, prostitution, delinquency and so on have been on the rise in the Jharkhand area recently. Further, the indigenous people experience a loss of their sense of personal worth and a devaluation of their social identity. This feeling is further aggravated by the negative attitude and approach of the dominant society towards their culture.[20]

In the political sphere, the traditional political institutions of the tribals of Jharkhand have been destroyed following their displacement. They are being integrated into the national polity. As a result they have become politically powerless and are marginalised and exploited by the dominant society. These factors have resulted in the dispossession of their cultural autonomy and a loss of their identity. Their language, marriage customs, religion and so on have been attacked in the process of displacement. Their religious ethos which is linked to their socio-agrarian system has collapsed as a result of their displacement from their homeland. Thus, the process of dispossession in social, political, economic and cultural spheres have together led to the impoverishment of the tribals of Jharkhand and a loss of their indigenous identity.

[20] Areeparampil, (1995), op. cit., pp. 38 – 39.

CHAPTER – III

THE CONCEPT OF 'DIKU' AND LAND – ALIENATION IN JHARKHAND

THE CONCEPT OF 'DIKU' AND LAND – ALIENATION IN JHARKHAND

This chapter discusses the evolution of the concept of 'diku' which means both the 'exploiter' and the 'outsider' for the tribals i.e., the original settlers; and the search for their lost identity with the coming of the dikus in the Jharkhand region.

About 400-500 years ago Jharkhand was basically a tribal area. Tribals, the masters of land in Jharkhand region of Bihar, basically depended upon agricultural and forest products. Mining of copper ore and diamond was the ' her occupation which linked them with the outside world. In recer years the tribals have lost a major portion of their land through var us methods. This has been identified as the major cause of tribal un st and their marginalization in Jharkhand.

Land has been th principal asset and the primary source of livelihood of tribal comn nities. So its deprivation by way of transfer sale, mortgage, etc. and lso by acquisition by the government for development purpose has aused great resentment among them. It has also raised the question ' indigenous identity in Jharkhand, which will be discussed in the n t chapter.

Although there are laws to protect tribal land, tribal alienation has not stopped in the region. Presently more than fifty percent of the tribal land in Jharkhand is in the hands of non-tribals who migrated to this region from outside. Land alienation is the root cause of discontent among tribals of this region. This led to several 'tribal' revolts like the Kol Rebellion, the Santhal Rebellion or the Birsa Movement, which were specifically directed against the 'outsiders'. According to Nirmal Sengupta, the correspondence between the exploiters and the outsiders in this area was so evident that the tribal word 'diku' came to mean both the 'exploiter' and the 'outsider'.

3.1 PROCESS AND PATTERN OF LAND ALIENTATION

Before discussing the concept of 'diku', I will discuss the process and pattern of land alienation in the Jharkhand region of Bihar. Jharkhand covers the whole of Chotanagpur Division and the districts of Santhal Pargana Division. The tribals of this region consider them selves autochthons (aborigines), as their forefathers cleared the virgin land for use by their hunt. Therefore, a struggle for existence and asserting their traditional rights on the land is continuing in this region.

In the early days as land was easily available and the pressure of population on land was low, tribals did not give much importance to individual ownership rights on land. They were mostly shifting cultivators and had only community ownership of land. The idea of private property developed first among the Mundas. Their idea of ownership of land rested within a lineage. Families of the lineage cleared parts of the virgin forests for themselves which came to be called as the Khuntkatti land. Non-tribal service men like potters, weavers, blacksmiths, etc. were employed to fulfil the needs of the villagers and in return were renumerated with plots of land in the village. They had no right to the village land although they enjoyed the produce of that land. The khuntkattidars had the right of such lands. Bhuinhari villages arose out of broken khuntkatti villages.

It may be mentioned that tribals referred to here mean the thirty groups of Scheduled Tribes under the Presidential Order 1952, who get protection under the Protective Tenancy laws. Hence tribal land alienation means the evacuation or displacement of the Scheduled Tribes from their tenancy. It excludes groups who lived in this area for centuries but were recognized as groups other than tribals i.e., the Sadans or non-tribal sons of the soil. According to K.L. Sharma, those who have received education for one or two years, or whose parents

have served in the state could be considered as "sons of the soil". But those who are born and have lived for generations do not become "sons of the soil" in the technical sense as they neither have the privilege of going to school or college nor their parents have been in employment of the government. Hence, they remain deprived of the privileged jobs and positions which in fact go to 40 percent of those people who have settled in the Jharkhand region i.e., North Biharis[1]

Land alienation in the Jharkhand region is very old and has caused resentment among tribals from the very early days. A number of agitations and tribal revolts have occurred in Jharkhand history in the 18th and 19th centuries. Revolt of Tilka Manjhi (1780), The Munda Uprising Bundu (1797), Munda Uprising Tamar (1807), The Kol Revolt (1831), The Santhal Hul (1855), Rai Movement (1856), Sardari Movement, Birsa Revolt (Ulgulan) (1900) were some of the well known revolts. The origin of all these agitations was in the interference of tribal land rights. Even in the British period, the tribals rose in revolt at many places because of the break up of their traditional land system. The present movement of the tribals for a separate Jharkhand

[1] K.L. Sharma, (1990), "Jharkhand Movement : The Question of Identity and Sub-Nationality", *Social Action,* Vol. 40 (4), p. 380.

state is a continuation of their struggle against the British imperialism to the colonial rule of the Bihar Government.[2]

The process of erosion of the tribals ways of life, the break up of their land system, land alienation and displacement and the imposition of the values and dominance of outsiders in collaboration with the government of Bihar have led to a series of revolts in the Jharkhand region. The present Jharkhand movement is basically a tribal movement in protest against the intrusion and dominance of non-tribals at all levels of life of the tribals. With the advent of industrialization, significant demographic changes have taken place in Jharkhand. In-migration of non-tribals and out-migration of tribals, have led to the marginalisation of tribals in their homeland. The tribals of this region are more aggressive and opposed to the non-tribals from North Bihar, who dominate the region because of their political connections. Confrontation between the Sadans (non-tribal sons of the soil) and the tribals (sons of the soil) are generally not observed in this region. Rather, their common socio-cultural traditions bring them together against the outsiders. Present Jharkhand

[2] P.C. Deogharia (1994). "Land-alienation in Jharkhand". *Social Change*, Vol. 24 (1&2), pp. 213-220.

movement for a separate state is a combined revolt of Adivasis and Sadans against the internal colonialism of the government of Bihar.[3]

On the basis of census report, migration tables and other relevant data, Nirmal Sengupta, gave an approximate idea about the composition of population in the Jharkhand region.

a) Immigrants from outside the Jharkhand region account for around 10 to 15 percent of total population in the area in 1971. The proportion of immigrants has increased gradually in recent years.

b) As per 1971 Census, the Scheduled Tribe and Caste population accounted for 42 percent of the total population in Jharkhand.

c) The rest 42 to 48 percent population are those who are neither included in Scheduled Castes nor in Scheduled Tribes. They are called Sadani, Nagpuria, etc. from the various dialects spoken by them as their mother tongue. They are generally referred to as Sadanis in the Jharkhand region. In actual sense, 'Sadani' indicates only a particular group among all the Jharkhandi communities after excluding the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.[4]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] N. Sengupta, (1982). *Fourth World Dynamics : Jharkhand,* New Delhi : Authors guild, p. 15.

Land alienation in Jharkhand had started from the days of the creation of kingship. It passed through different phases till the present day of urbanization and industrialization. Different phases of land alienation and displacement can be classified into :

a) Pre – Mughal period,

b) Mughal period,

c) British period, and

d) Post – Independence period.

Pre-Mughal Period

The first phase of land alienation started with the creation of the institution of kingship in Chotanagpur. Initially the Maharaja was a protector of the Mundas and he was also a Munda. But as his needs increased he took some villages as his special domain (khas bhandar) and granted some other villages to his brothers and other relatives for their maintenance (Khorposh). The Khorposhdars or grantees by the Maharaja got many villages in return of the services. As land was easily available and the pressure of population was low, the first phase of land alienation did not face any resistence from the tribals.

Mughal Period

The second phase of land alienation started with the grant of villages to the foreigners as jagirs in the Mughal period. Being alien to the region, the jagirdars had little concern for the well being of the Mundas and other original settlers. They did not remain content with the allotted jagirs. So to fulfil their desire to grow rich, they disintegrated the traditional land system of the tribals. This broke up the khuntkatti system. The jagidars forcibly possessed some lands in each village, thereby reducing the Mundas to a landless lot in the region.

During this period, other groups such as Baraiks, Sahus, Routias, Ohdars and some Brahmins also entered this region. Some of these people came as merchants and others just as tourists and settled down there. The Oraons, who are also considered as the original settlers came from Rohtas during this period. This heavy influx of outsiders forced the Mundas to migrate to the north and eastern parts of Ranchi district, in the interior hills and forests where they still kept alive their Mundari khuntkatti tradition.[5]

[5] S.C. Roy, (1921). *Mundas and their Country,* Calcutta : Asian Pub. House.

British Period

The third phase of land alienation in the British period started in 1973 when permanent settlements began in this area . The traditional land system was changed with the superimposition of the feudal structure. Introduction of land rent caused resentment among the people as there was no tradition of paying any rent to the zamindars. During this period the exploitation of tribals by the zamindars reached its peak. They alienated a large number of tribals from their land and also broke up the village communes of the Mundas. The tribals revolted against this system in 1857, 1895 and 1899. But these revolts did not stop land alienation in Jharkhand. After the introduction of the Bengal code in Chotanagpur in 1908, a large number of outsiders came to this region. People like the merchants, police–darogas, court-clerks, etc. were more clever than the simple aboriginals. So they defrauded them of their money and land and made them discontinent in the Jharkhand region.

Post-Independence period

Land alienation in pre-Independence period occurred basically due to the existence of the zamindari system. Exploitation of the tribals in relation to their land rights was the main cause of land alienation

and displacement of the tribals in Jharkhand. Various revolts against the encroachment on their land rights show how tribals were attached to their land. The major cause of land alienation in post-Independence period is the introduction of development projects in Jharkhand region.[6]

I will focus on the issue of land alienation and displacement due to development projects in Jharkhand in the next section of this chapter.

3.2 LAND – ALIENATION DUE TO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN JHARKHAND

The process of land alienation continued even after Independence. But the cause changed from the zamindari system to the development projects. In post–Independence India, economic progress was visualized through a strategy of planned development. Rapid industrialization and urbanization marked such development. This involved the exploitation of natural and mineral resources and acquisition of land from the tribals. As Jharkhand is rich in mineral and natural resources, big industrial projects were introduced in this region after Independence. Development projects like industries, mines

[6] Ibid. ; Victor Das (1992), *Jharkhand : Castle Over the Graves*, New Delhi : Inter – India Pub.; P.C. Deogharia, op. cit.

and irrigation projects were established in remote rural areas with tribal and underdeveloped population. Land acquisition by the government for these projects displaced the above population from their homeland.

Late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru laid down five principles as PANCHSHEEL for the development of the Adivasis. These are :

(1) People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every-way their own traditional arts and culture.

(2) Tribal rights in land and forest shall be respected.

(3) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Technical personnel from outside, will no doubt, be needed, in the beginning but we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

(4) We should not over-administer their areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather

work through and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions.

(5) We should judge the results and not by statistics or the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is evolved.[7]

But the content of the Panchsheel basic principles are not at all observed and in the process of economic development, the Adivasis have become "the objects of welfare" and "victims of progress". This has affected their economic, social, cultural and political life, thereby threatening their existence. In the working group meeting on the indigenous populations of the United Nations at Geneva on 3 - 7 August 1987, the representatives of the indigenous tribal people of India presented the following memorandum :

The land rights and ownership introduced by the British colonial power and adopted and implemented by the National Government after Independence, the forest laws, making land and forests as commodities for sale and purchase under the money economy and marketing system have enabled outsiders, money-lenders and the government to grab Adivasi (Original Inhabitants) land by fair or foul means.

[7] A.K. Kisku and Nirmal Minz (1987), "Presentation by the Indigenous Tribal People of India to United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations", *Social change* Vol. 18 (2), 1988, pp. 77-80.

Establishments of heavy industries like steel factory at Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Bokaro and Hatia and mining operations at the very heart of Adivasi area in central India and rapid urbanization have accentuated the process of land alienation. Heavy dam constructions for irrigation and hydro-electric projects have displaced millions of Adivasis and many of them have become landless labourers. Debarred from access to forests and displaced from their land, masses of Adivasis have been driven to abject poverty and many of them have taken to begging which was completely unknown to our people 25-30 years ago. Even the inalienable lands – the Khuntkatti and Bhuinhari leads of the Adivasis of Jharkhand, lands within tribal belts and blocks of the Plains of Assam and in other areas as well are grabbed and snatched away by the Government under the plea of "overriding national interest".[8]

Hence, the process of land alienation and displacement of the Adivasis from the very beginning i.e., from pre-Mughal period to post–Independence suggests the coming of different types of outsiders or enemies (dikus) to the Jharkhand region. The various revolts in this region are also directed against them. This brings us to the discussion of the concept of 'Diku' among the tribes of Chotanagpur and also its evolution as a concept.

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[8] Ibid.

3.3 THE CONCEPT OF 'DIKU'

The term Diku (dikku or Deko) is widely prevalent among the different tribal communities of Chotanagpur and its adjacent areas. It refers to the non-tribal out-groups. It is a territorial and ethnic concept applicable to the categories of land-grabbers and money-lenders belonging to both Hindu and Muslim communities, who came from outside the identifiable cultural area. It is used in contrast to the term 'Ho', 'Hor' or 'Horo' meaning 'man' used to designate one's own tribal group. The term Diku does not include all the Hindu castes of the region but only those who are considered to be 'exploiters'. It is associated with the tribal rebellions in this region, such as Santhal Rebellion (1855), Birsa Movement among he Mundas (1895-1900) and the recent Jharkhand Movement.

Rev. J. Hoffman, in his Encyclopaedia Mundarica, gives the following meanings for the term diku ... '(1) a Hindu, (2) a Hindu landlord, (3) Hindu or Sadani'. For him, diku means 'to become the landlord of a village'. P.O. Bodding in his Santhal Dictionary defined Deko as : 'a Hindu or Bengali' (of the better class, not low caste Hindus, e.g. Doms, Bauaris, Hadis. Mohemmedans are not called deko.

Any Indian in good clothing, seen at a distance, so that class or rece is not recognized are called deko).[9]

The term Diku is a dynamic concept. It has further been explained as 'foreigners such as goalas', and 'foreigners or non-Santhal immigrants who flocked in to carry on trades and money lending among the Santhals'. D.N. Majumdar has used it as a synonym of foreigner.

S.C. Sinha, Jyoti Sen and Sudhir Panchbhai carried out a field enquiry in February – May 1967 to understand the meaning of the term Diku and study the social and cultural context of the evolution of the term. The educated and uneducated Adivasis ('the indigenous people' or 'original inhabitants', namely Munda, Oraon and Ho) have a somewhat different notion of the term Diku. According to the educated Adivasis :

(1) The term diku is derived from Sadani 'dik dik karna' i.e., to trouble or to vex. It means non-Adivasis in general and zamindars and their servants in particular

(2) Dikus are non-Adivasis e.g., Biharis, Marwaris, Muslims, etc.

[9] S.C. Sinha, Jyoti Sen and S.C Panchbhai (1969), "The concept of Diku among the Tribes of Chotanagpur", *Man in India* Vol. 49 (2), p. 122.

(3) Diku means a foreigner and it includes Europeans and Mohemmedans in its general meaning. It was used specifically for landlords, rajas and their servants who were outsiders.

(4) Diku means 'dik dik karne–wale' (those who trouble). It usually means outsiders, capitalists and money-lenders.

(5) This term is used to refer to the non-Adivasis in general and includes zamindars, Rautias, Brahmins, etc. Hindi – speakers, the Biharis.

(6) During the British rule when the zamindars were powerful they were called Dikus ; but after the abolition of the zamindari system they have lost their hold and now the other influential persons in the village, whether tribal or non-tribal, are designated as Dikus. But the Munda, Pahan or Mahto i.e., the traditional leaders are never considered as Diku.[10]

According to uneducated tribals:

(1) Diku means zamindars and their Hindu servants.

(2) It means outsiders and refers to those who are from North Bihar in particular.

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[10] Ibid., pp. 123-124.

(3) Outsiders (Bihar ke log) who are not Adivasis e.g. Baniyas, Biharis, Bengalis.

(4) People like you are Dikus ; those who have come from outside.

(5) People from the bazaar; Biharis and Baniyas who are not Adivasis.

(6) All Adivasis who speak languages other than Adivasi dialects and so on.[11]

According to some local leaders in Jharkhand, those who earn and send their earnings outside their homes are Dikus. The criterion of domicile is emphasized in this arrangement. So the old inhabitants of Chotanagpur, irrespective of language, religion or race are not Dikus. The study revealed that though the term Diku include the Hindus in general, but it excludes caste as Lohar (blacksmiths) Dom (basket makers and drummers), Swansi (weavers), Chamar (leather – workers), Teli (dealers in oil), Tanti (weavers), Kumhar (potters) and other artisan castes who are in the lower range of the Hindu hierarchy. These castes have lived together with the tribals in the same village for generations and have become a part and parcel of the broader tribal society. So they are not categorized as dikus by the tribals. Apart from Pahan and

[11] Ibid., p. 124.

Mahto, other village officials in an Oraon village are the Ahir, Lohra, Gorait, and Kumhar. For educated tribals, these people are also Dikus as they are non–Adivasis, but actually they are not looked upon as Dikus. To some of them, they are "detribalized Adivasis' and to others, they are 'tribalized Hindus'. In general, they are considered as non-Dikus i.e., the low caste Hindus who are inter dependent with the Adivasis. For uneducated tribals, they are not Dikus, but just other castes.[12]

In some areas like Iamar, castes such as Hajam and Dhobi who are economically well off and form numerically and politically a dominant group are looked upon as Dikus by uneducated tribals. But the same caste groups in another area i.e., Khunti are not regarded as Dikus, since their socio-economic status is comparatively lower.

On the basis of the field – study in Chotanagpur, Sinha, Sen and Panchbhai concluded that the degree of 'diku–ness' is closely associated with economic prosperity and socio-political status of the group. Thus, some are more Dikus, such as the Bihari, Marwari, etc. some are less Dikus such as Dhobi, Hajam etc. while some groups are non-Dikus e.g. Lohar, Dom , Ghasi, etc. To summarize, those who are economically higher than the tribals ,are looked upon as Dikus. The

[12] Ibid., pp. 123-125.

degree of 'diku–ness' increases with the rise in the socio-economic status. Those who are in par with the tribals or below them in status are considered 'less Diku' or 'non-Diku'.

It has been observed that although Hindu upper castes are regarded as Dikus, the tribals call the Muslims as Turks and the Europeans as Pundi Horo i.e. white men. They feel less threatened by Muslim and European immigrants as they are numerically small and economically not so dominant. The Adivasis do not regard Christian converts as Dikus. The converts belong to the same group, but differ only in religion.

In general, Dikus are thought to be looter, trouble-makers, deceivers, exploiters, cheats, unreliable, and those who have a sense of superiority and inspire fear. The dread of the diku has even penetrated the ritual world of the tribals. It was observed that in a Ho area, during Oteili (a ceremony connected with the land) the Ho priest chants, "we will kill the witches, the snakes and the Dikus'.[13]

In the view of Nirmal Sengupta, the connotation of the term 'Diku' which has functionally meant 'a group of outsider exploiter' has changed from time to time. Broadly the term used to mean the

[13] ibid., p. 127.

zamindars or their employees who were of the upper class. At present it means 'the people of North Bihar', ' those who come from the other side of the Ganga', 'those who earn their living here and send their earnings out to their own homes in Bihar'. Hence the category of diku comprises the non-tribal upper class bourgeoisie in the form of zamindars money–lenders, top–level government officials, industrialists and businessmen. In particular, they are the people of North Bihar who have monopolized most of the lucrative and prestigious jobs and positions in the government and public sectors. Over the past hundred years, in a situation of exploitation, where the oppressor is characterized as an 'outsider' and the oppressed as a 'local' , an identity of the exploited or oppressed has emerged. Sengupta calls this as a juxtaposed identity with respect to the concept of diku.[14]

The search for a 'self-identity' become a difficult task in the situation of exploitation and oppression of the people. The tribal movements emphasized on the need for a regional or sub-national self–identity. Organizations like Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj formed in 1915 and Adivasi Mahasabha formed in 1938 started working towards the search for this regional self-identity. The name 'Jharkhand' was used in this context for the first time in 1938, more than a hundred years

[14] N. Sengupta, op.cit, pp. 4-5.

after the emergence of the concept of diku.[15] Even now 'Jharkhand' is an extremely amorphous concept whose meaning ranges from such absolutely non-class definition as "the adivasis of Chotanagpur – Santhal Parganas" to such absolutely non-xenophobic definitions as "a producer, irrespective of caste, tribe or nation, residing in the Jharkhand region".[16]

3.4 JHARKHANDIS IN JHARKHAND

Efforts have been made in recent years not only to bring together the adivasis and the sadans, the two numerically preponderant segments of the Jharkhand region, but also to make them conscious of their similar conditions of existence as opposed to the dikus i.e., north Biharis, Punjabis and Marwaris. Thus, the two tenets which explain the current Jharkhand movement are : first, that it is a movement by the tribal as well as non-tribal people for a land of their own. Second, the demand for an antonomous state is not the only significant content of the movement. Rather, the process of cultural assertion by the development of regional languages and the search for an indigenous identity and cultural homogeneity by the original

[15] K.L. Sharma, (1976), "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar", Economy and Political Weekly, Vol. 11 (1 & 2), pp. 37-43.

[16] M. Weiner (1978) , *Sons of the Soil and Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India,* Princeton University Press., p. 145, Quoted in N.Sengupta (1980), "Class and Tribe uin Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 15, pp. 664-672.

inhabitants form the crux of the Jharkhand movement. The search for a single culture and distinct nationality through this movement will be discussed in detail later.

In the book *Fourth World Dynamics : Jharkhand,* Nirmal Sengupta has discussed the condition of the Jharkhandis in Jharkhand. Jharkhand is sparsely populated with only 25 per cent of the total population of Bihar. Nearly half of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population resides in this region. Apart from them many backward castes who are more or less destitutes also reside here. For instance, the Mahatos are as poor as the Santhals. The Momins among the Muslims were once the unslaved artisans and even today are as poor and as depressed as the scheduled castes. Scheduled caste and tribes constitute 42 percent of the population of Jharkhand. Therefore, in the words of Sengupta, the Jharkhand is not merely a geographic concept; it is 'a land of depressed people', 'Jharkhandi' means 'a mass of destitutes' ; and 'the development of the conditions of destitute population'.[17]

With the establishment of railways in 1894, Jharkhand saw a spectacular growth of industrial and mining activities. The steel plant at Jamshedpur, Damodar Valley Corporation, the fertilizer plant at

[17] Sengupta, (1982), op.cit, p. 11.

Sindri, the Heavy Engineering Corporation at Ranchi and Steel Plant at Bokaro marked the development of this region. The number of town in the Chotanagpur – Santhal Parganas region has increased from 13 in 1901 to 34 in 1951 and to 96 in 1971. But the Jharkhandis in this region have not been able to benefit from this development. The major share of the development benefits are taken away by the immigrant outsiders. Between 1951 and 1961, the number of Punjabis in this region increased from 30,000 to 57,000, that of the Marwaris from 8,000 to 22,000, that of Gujaratis from 8,000 to 36, 000, that of the Andhras from 18,000 to 36,000 and of Tamilians from 6,000 to 15,000. Apart from these there has been a considerable change in the number of Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Oriya speakers. Immigrants from North Bihar, particularly Bhojpuri and Maithili speakers came in large number to this region in search of jobs and other business opportunities.

Statistics suggest that in 1961 nearly 9 percent of the population enumerated in Jharkhand were born outside this region; though they were less than 5.5 percent in 1951. In 1961, 25 percent of the people in Dhanbad and 13 percent of those in Singhbhum alone were born outside Jharkhand. Out of all those born outside Jharkhand but enumerated within Jharkhand, 40 percent were born in other districts

of Bihar and the rest 60 percent belonged to other states. The figures of Biharis in Jharkhand explain why 'dikus' now mean those who come from the other side of the Ganga'. After 1961 better conditions of work in mines and industries led to a tremendous increase in the rate of immigration of outsiders.[18]

In a study conducted on Bauri community in Bokaro region, Nirmal Sengupta observed that following the nationalization of coal mines in 1971, nearly 50,000 Jharkhandis lost their jobs in a single week. They were replaced by people mainly from Bhojpur region, as about 30 thousand telegrams were sent to people at Aarrah – Balia – Chhapra region, informing the availability of jobs. He also noted that thousands of adivasis or Harijans were also retrenched during Emergency. Hence the outsiders basically benefited from the development projects introduced in the Jharkhand region, while the local inhabitants became landless, impoverished and marginalised in the process.[19] It has also been observed that the conditions of Sadanis are worse than the scheduled castes and tribes in Jharkhand. The scheduled categories at least get some benefit of job reservations, but the Sadanis have to compete with the immigrants for the jobs in the

[18] Ibid.

[19] N. Sengupta, (1979). *The Destitutes and Development : A Study of the Bauri Community in the Bokaro region*, New Delhi : Concept Pub. Co.

industries and mines. Statistics show that approximately 10 percent immigrants in Jharkhand appropriate more than 50 percent of the industrial jobs.

Though the Jharkhandis in Jharkhand are deprived of development, some of them have also benefited from the development projects. Many unemployed and uneducated youths manage to get some jobs in the urban areas. Those who are displaced without being properly rehabilitated move to the slums in urban areas and benefit from the urban development. They take up new kinds of jobs like those of coolies, rejas, small shop-keepers and so on for their livelihood. Earlier they were totally dependant on hunting, gathering and agriculture.

Inspite of benefiting in the above ways and changing their style of living in urban areas, the Jharkhandis are generally the deprived ones. Nirmal Sengupta has pointed out a few contrasts between the immigrant urban folk and the displaced Jharkhandis in urban areas. Among the urban population, the migrants are prosperous urban folk, while the Jharkhandis are predominantly slum-dwellers. In industrial employment the unskilled workers are the Jharkhandis, the well-paid workers are outsiders. The officers come from North Bihar, their orderlies may be Jharkhandis. The contractors are outsiders, while the

labourers are recruited locally. The small pan-shop owner is a Jharkhandi, the big traders and merchants are Punjabis, Gujaratis or Marwaris. The professionals are outsiders, while the maid-servants' job is that of the Jharkhandis. As long as mining was a low-paid unregulated job, the Jharkhandis shared in these jobs, but after nationalization, when the wages were almost doubled, they ceased to be the beneficiaries.[20]

The Jharkhandis receive insignificant share of the developmental benefits. For instance, though the per capita consumption of electricity in Jharkhand region is the highest in the country, the Jharkhandis do not benefit from it as majority is consumed by the industries and urban people alone. The proportion of the electrified villages in this region is the lowest in the society.

Even to receive some amount of compensation due to displacement from the land, hundreds of Jharkhandis had to wage militant struggles for several years. Apart from this, inadequate credit facilities have led to the exploitation of tribals by money-lenders (dikus). They gave loans to them in cash and kind at very high rates of interest. Being illiterate, the tribals could not keep track of their repayment, and at times had to give away a major portion of their

[20] Sengupta, (1982), op.cit, p. 18.

produce as interest on the loan. Sometimes, instead of interest, the money-lenders used to cultivate their land and claimed its produce. These widespread exploitation by the money-lenders led to resentment among the tribals who rebelled against them in the Santhal Insurrection in 1955.

It was also observed that some regional communities like 'Bhojpuri' assumed exploitative character in Jharkhand and became synonymous with 'goonda element' i.e., a class of money-lenders identifiable by their peculiar mode of operation. Although the goondas are predominantly Bhojpuris, but the converse is not true. Except a few goonda elements, the majority of the Bhojpuri immigrants are workers and often form a major part of the trade unions of workers in this region. So the majority of the 'dikus' sell their labour power in the industries and mines in Jharkhand.[21] In the matter of employment, the tribals have not benefited from industrialization. Because of a lack of education and industrial training, they were mainly absorbed as unskilled laboures in the industries and mines, while the outsiders (dikus) appropriated the lucrative jobs. Although they had to give up their homes and means of subsistence for the industries, an alternative

[21] Sengupta, (1980), op.cit.

employment and adequate rehabilitation package was not given to them. This led to strong feelings of resentment among them.

The above conditions gave rise to a peculiar situation in Jharkhand. Besides the real exploiters and oppressors the tribals also directed the Jharkhand struggle against another oppressed class – the working class. Nirmal Sengupta in his article "Class and Tribe in Jharkhand" has categorized the immigrant workers in Jharkhand into three groups:

(1) ***Destitute workers*** : In the Central Indian Coalfields in 1971, immigrant 'Gorakhpuri labourers' were forced to live in barbed wire camps under the most inhuman conditions. Their counter parts in Jharkhand known as 'Allahabadi' 'Chhatisgarhi' or 'Sambalpuri' labourers also lived in very poor conditions. Many of them were also retrenched in unjust ways at the time of nationalization of coal mines and during Emergency, also with the Bauris and Santhals of Jharkhand. Immigrant workers from Gaya and Monghyr districts of Bihar and Purulia and Bankura districts of West Bengal were also ill-paid and lived in poor working conditions. The poor Jharkhandis did not consider these destitute workers as their enemies.

(2) ***Oppressors and exploiters*** : This category comprises of the goondas, the money-lenders, usurers, profiteers and corrupt officials who are clearly identified as 'dikus' or enemies by the Jharkhandis. Most of the class struggles and movements are targeted against them.

(3) ***Better – off workers*** : The large numbers of immigrants i.e., the workers in the organized industries, the petty traders and service holders, who are neither clearly identified as allies or as enemies of the oppressed Jharkhandis constitute this category of workers. There is a confusion about their role in the Jharkhand movement as they neither join their caste brothers (enemies) against the tribals in the name of ethnic solidarity nor oppose them in the name of class solidarity with the down trodden and oppressed Jharkhandis. The better-off workers are interested only in improving their living conditions and so remain almost non-entities in the political process in Jharkhand.[22]

To conclude: In this chapter I discussed how the adivasis are exploited by the outsider 'dikus' in different ways and show their resentment against them. These Jharkhandis, on being displaced from their land go to the industrial and mining sites in the search of jobs.

[22] Ibid.

Even there they are exploited by the outsiders and do not get the benefits of the development projects. They become a mass of destitutes in Jharkhand. Their agitations against this situation will be discussed in a later chapter. It has also been observed that on some occasions the immigrants workers join the demand of the local inhabitants against the exploiters. So the leaders declared that Jharkhandi meant a producer, irrespective of caste, tribe or nation, residing in Jharkhand and that 'the dream of Jharkhand is to create a Lalkhand'.[23]

[23] Ibid.

CHAPTER – IV

THE QUESTION OF INDIGENOUS JHARKHAND IDENTITY

THE QUESTION OF INDIGENOUS IDENTITY IN JHARKHAND

The phenomenon of identity is a complex one and has not get received much attention from the anthropologists. In order to understand the socio-cultural and political aspects of the Jharkhand movement, it is necessary to discusses the question of 'tribal ethnic identity' in the region.

In the words of Roger Sanders, "In India hardly any of the tribes exist as a separate society and that they have all been absorbed, in varying degrees, into the wider society of India. The ongoing process of absorption is not recent but dates back to the most ancient times".[1] This suggests that since the development of Indian civilization and culture, there has been a coexistence of the tribals and non-tribals in India. Ethnographers and anthropologists have used the term 'tribe' for certain communities having a common ancestry and specific genetic characteristics. The Sanskrit term 'janah' which is equivalent to 'tribe' denotes an agglomeration of individuals with a particular territorial, kinship and cultural pattern. Before the advent of colonialism in India, these communities were generally referred to as 'peoples', 'kingdoms', 'dwellers of certain regions', etc. But the colonial administrators called

[1] Rogers Sanders, (1993). "Indigenous Peoples on the International Stage", *Social Action*, Vol. 43, p. 5.

them as 'tribes' and subjected them to political, cultural and economic domination. Prior to their subjugation the 'tribes' were either unconscious of their ethno-tribal identities or merely called themselves a 'people' vis-à-vis others.[2]

Fredrick Barth in his book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, has described the concept of ethnicity as the boundary maintaining mechanisms of a distinct socio-cultural group. Further an ethnic group has been defined as a self-perceived group of people who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by the others with whom they are in contact. Such traditions typically include 'folk' religious beliefs and practices, language, a sense of historical continuity, and common ancestry or place of origin.[3] The concept of ethnicity has been used by the leaders of the ethnic group for group mobilization for socio-cultural and politico–economic purpose.

In recent times the tribal search for identity has been spurred by the threat to their existence due to an attack on the natural and mineral resources in the tribal region, around which they had built their cultural, economic, socio-religious and political structure. Whether these identity movements take the form of a demand for an

[2] A.N. Das, (1992), *The Republic of Bihar,* New Delhi : Penguin Books Ltd., p. 85.
[3] Fredrick Barth, (1969), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries : The Social Organisation of Culture Difference,* Boston: Litttle Brown and Company pp. 9-38.

autonomous state as in Jharkhand and Bodoland, or anti-land alienation as in the south, or protest against displacement, as in Narmada, Subarnarekha, Koel–Karo and so on, the common feature in all these movements is the search for autonomy and self-identity.

During the UN year of the Indigenous peoples, this search for an identity has taken the form of a demand that the Indian tribals be recognized as the indigenous peoples of the country. But the Government of India has refused to accept this demand on the ground that India has long been a "melting pot" i.e., the tribals and non tribals have been living together in the entire course of Indian history.[4]

4.1 CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

The quest for Jharkhandi identity has always been an important issue for the people of Jharkhand. At present, this quest continues in the form of a separate Jharkhand state at the political level and the desire to establish their ethnic identity at the social and cultural levels. Before discussing the question of indigenous identity in Jharkhand, I would first discuss the concept of identity.

[4] Walter Fernandes (1993), "Indian Tribals and Search for an Indigenous Identity", *Social Change*, Vol. 23 (2 & 3), p. 23.

The question of identity can be analyzed at two levels – objective and subjective. The objective level comprises characteristics special to a group which sets apart one community of persons from other communities. The subjective level is the one by which the group becomes aware of its distinctness and uniqueness.[5] In the view of Stan Lourduswamy, the objective features constitute a basis for an ethnic group, but the boundary of the group is delimited by its changing subjective consciousness.

To quote Jagannath Pathy, "An ethnic group, then, is a historical identity whose members in large part conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of certain common stable features located in language, culture, stereotypes, territory, ancestry - real or fictious, specific nomenclature and endogamy and are so regarded by the members of other ethnic groups". [6] According to him, the subjective consciousness of distinctness of the tribal communities is not a static concept. It is something that evolves with them as they go through the hazard of daily life and confront the events and situations as part of their history. The state and the dominant classes play an active part in the process of defining this distinctness.

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[5] S. Lourduswamy (1997), *Jharkhandi's Claim for Self – Rule: "Its Historical Foundations and Present Legitimacy*, New Delhi : Indian Social Institute, p. 3

[6] Ibid, p. 3.

The Indian state and the Indian ruling class have tried to assimilate tribal societies into the so-called " mainstream" population under the name of "integration". "Integration must be distinguished from assimilation, which means complete loss of cultural identity for the weaker groups. Integration is a dynamic process which necessarily involves mutual give and take by various sections of the community".[7] In his book *Tribal Identity and Minority Status*, Rudolf Heredia has discussed the issues of integration and assimilation of tribal communities. According to him, integration of tribals depend on what kind of societies they are integrated into. Is it the caste hierarchy of our traditional culture, class stratification developed as a result of our political economy or the pluralist – secular, democratic – socialist society as mentioned in our constitution.

Integration of tribals into the caste hierarchy means a loss of their tribal identity. In a class society, they are left only as a minority group. So the pluralist – secular, democratic – socialist society is the only one which can integrate the tribal communities without they being threatened by a loss of their identity and dignity. To study the integration of the displaced people, particularly the tribals into the host

[7] Rudolf . C Heredia and R. Srivastava (1994), *Tribal Identity and Minority Status : The Kathkari Nomads in Transition,* New Delhi : Concept Pub. Co., p. 138.

society, we will have to look into both caste and class factors as they are very important aspects of our society.

At present the concept of tribal development is directed towards bringing the tribals into the mainstream. This 'mainstream' has been defined by the dominant capitalist class, and is therefore characterized by the capitalist and socialist value systems of the urban, educated, middle and upper classes of society. They want to exploit natural resources to the maximum in order to make the greatest profits at the quickest possible time. In the present context, 'development' means making additional income to meet the increasing needs created by the modern society. These are not just the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, health, education, transport, etc. but also the specialized needs born out of consumerism.

The tribal world-view in regard to the natural resources is 'live and let live'. This means that one should take from nature only what one needs and how much of it one needs at the moment. It does not encourage depletion of nature just because man has now developed greater capacity to exploit nature though modern science and technology. Because of this view, the tribals deal with nature in a more humane fashion and thus contribute towards sustainable development. In the name of national development and on the pretext

of maximizing the productivity of the resources that are abundant in the tribal regions, the tribals have been alienated from their life support system and have been marginalised. They have been displaced by development projects like dams, industries, mines, townships, not just once but several times. As their identity is closely linked to the natural resources and the environment in which they live, so displacement from their homeland severely affect the identity of the indigenous people.

The Jharkhandi tribal people are being integrated into the mainstream though their social, political and cultural 'assimilation'. Socially, they are considered as 'scheduled' categories which means they can survive only by being dependant on the mercy of the mainstream population in the form of reservations, job – quotas and scholarships. Politically, the Jharkhandis are pitted against each other though different Jharkhand Parties. So, their combined struggle for an antonomous Jharkhand state is dissipated all the time. Culturally, the age-old culture of the tribals and their human values towards nature are being looked upon as something which is not relevant to the modern society. This has resulted in the exploitation and depletion of nature and its resources which form the basis of their life and

livelihood. This has triggered their demand for autonomy in the Jharkhand struggle.[8]

4.2 FACTORS DETERMINING 'ADIVASI' IDENTITY

After discussing the concept of identity at the objective and subjective levels and the situation which has raised the question of identity, I would now discuss the meaning of 'adivasi' identity at the perceptional level. In the words of David Hardiman, the term Adivasi should be defined as "groups which have shared a common fate in the past century and from this have evolved a collective identity of being Adivasi".[9] G.C. Rath in his article "Ethnicity and Adivasi identity formation in the Orams of Rourkela, has discussed the tribals' own perception of the term 'Adivasi'. The tribals in the Jharkhand region assert their Adivasi identity based on four factors i.e. heredity, occupation, religious activities (dharma) and Constitutional provision.[10]

Under the hereditary factor of the Adivasi identity assertion, the community lays stress on their original inhabitation in India with a distinct culture. The term Adivasi is interpreted as a combination of 'Adi' meaning 'beginning' or ' of earliest times', and 'Vasi' meaning

[8] Lourduswamy, op.cit, pp. 5-7.
[9] G.C. Rath, (1994), "Ethnicity and Adivasi Identity Formation in the Orams of Rourkela", *Social Change,* Vol. 24 (1 & 2), p 110.
[10] Ibid, p. 111.

'resident of'. The ascriptive or hereditary factor partly influence the occupational and religious factors in their assertion of identity.

In the case of occupation, cultivation has remained the basic source of livelihood of the tribals for a long time. Other caste groups have also adopted cultivation as the basic source of their livelihood. But they are differentiated from Adivasi identity on the basis of the following reasons. Firstly, caste groups living in proximity with the tribals mostly adopt artisanship and cultivation as the source of their livelihood. For example, there are two types of Lohars in Sundergarh. One belongs to the Munda tribal group and the other is affiliated to the caste group. The blacksmith (Lohar) and the potter (Kumbhar), till the land along with their involvement in artisan work.

These service castes are not accepted as cultivators by custom or heredity. Besides, the annual cycle of festivals like Sarhul, Karamadi, etc., tribal communities have certain rituals which are related to agricultural activities. On these occasions the Adivasis pray to the Earth Goddess for a good crop and to Nature God for their blessings against calamity and disaster. Their folk tales and songs are full of such wishes and prayers which signify the importance of cultivation in tribal life.

Secondly, as the tribals earlier depended on forest resources, they were called 'Junglee' or 'Vanabasi' (forest–dwellers). The use of these terms by the dominant people is considered derogatory by the tribals. They reject this identification on the ground that they are no more forest–based, rather they live on forest products. Moreover, the Adivasis argue that unlike some caste groups such as Marwaris, Punjabis, etc. they would never leave cultivation and migrate to any other place with the motive of earning money. Rather they would leave their land and region only under extreme circumstances.

The religious factor plays an important role in the ethnic assertion of tribals. The religious or ritual aspects of tribal life are determinant of social distance. The groups which can share with them their religion or ritual life as equals are their own people i.e., those belonging to their ethnic group. Non-tribals are not allowed to participate in their rituals. A certain degree of distance is always maintained with them. To give an illustration, S.C. Sinha and Jyoti Sen observed that during Maghey and Sarhul festivals, the local Hindu castes performed the rituals, but in a 'socially sanctioned segregated' manner. In the festive part they came together in drinking, dancing and merry – making and shared the festive mood. But the question of

social distance arose during mixed dancing. The boys from Hindu castes were not allowed to dance with the tribal women.[11]

To assert the religious base of their identity, the tribals propagate the concept of the Adi Dharam i.e., traditional religion. In 1987, Devi Charan Bhagat played an important role in formulating the structure of the Adi Dharma. As the term 'Adi' means original, so he argued that other important religions of the world like Hindu, Parsee, and Jewish must have evolved after the Adi Dharam. The tribals do not believe in the spiritual contents of Hinduism like swarga (heaven) and nark (hell), paap (vice) and punya (virtue) and the existence of the 'other world'. Rather, they believe that the person faces the consequences of his actions, vices or virtues, during his life span. Devi Charan Bhagat has also discussed the essence of Adi Dharm. For him, the formulation of Adi Dharma has become attractive with the rise in the feeling of alienation, due to displacement and pauperization, in the community's mind. In other words, it is the expression of group grievances against domination.[12] Members of tribal communities insist on indigenous culture and language, and stress on giving up the exogenous elements. Rajni Kothari calls this trend as the negative formation of ethnic

[11] S. C. Sinha, Jyoti Sen and S. Panchbhai (1969), "The Concept of Diku Among the Tribes of Chotanagpur", *Man in India*, Vol. 49, No.2, pp. 128-129.
[12] Rath, op.cit., pp. 111-112.

identity. In his words, the negative aspects in ethnic formation are "based on an exclusive identity that denies respect for other identities and think of unity as something to be achieved not organically but by subjugating the others".[13]

Finally, we come to the last factor of asserting Adivasi identity i.e., through Constitutional provision. The indigenous people who were known as 'Janajati' during the pre-British era, were classified as "backward tribes" following the Government of India Act of 1935. They were renamed as Scheduled Tribes in 1950. Since independence the Government of India has provided specific concessions for the Schedules Tribes in the form of various reservations and scholarships. But nowhere in the Constitution, the term Adivasi is used as a substitute for the term Scheduled Tribe. But the tribes at the grass-root level are hardly familiar with the constitutional term i.e., Scheduled Tribe. Rather they believed that before the formation of the Indian Constitution, the term Adivasi with its distinct implication was in use.[14]

The origin of the term Adivasi may be traced to the formation of the Adivasi Unnati Samaj in 1915 which was concerned with the

[13] Rajni Kothari, (1990). *Rethinking Development : In Search of Humane Alternatives*, New Delhi : Ajanta Pub, p. 197.
[14] Lourduswamy, op.cit.

development of the local tribes. The same organisation turned into the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1939 which became the Jharkhand Party in 1948. The notion of Adivasi was popularized in the 1940s by the Gandhian social worker, A.D. Thakkar.

4.3 ADIVASI Vs JHARKHANDI IDENTITY

Adivasi versus Jharkhandi is an important aspect of studying the question of identity in Jharkhand region. The term Jharkhandi, the inhabitants of the Jharkhand area, refers to a particular group of people who agitate under the banner of the Jharkhand Party for a separate tribal state comprising 31 districts of Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Outsiders may equate the meaning of 'Jharkhandi' with that of Adivasi as the tribals have largely participated in the Jharkhand movement. But the tribals of Jharkhand find these two terms distinctly different because of two main reasons.

Firstly, the Jharkhand movement is supported not only by the tribals but non-tribals as well. Secondly, the proposal of forming a separate tribal state, Jharkhand, would comprise parts of Eastern India only. If the term Jharkhandi is used as a substitute for the term Adivasi, the tribals living in Western and Northern parts of India may not be identified as Adivasi. Moreover, if Jharkhand state is created,

the tribals will hesitate to call the non-tribal inhabitants of the state as Adivasi. They would rather call them as Jharkhandis i.e., members of the Jharkhand state.[15]

The real identity of the tribal people of Jharkhand is made up of the social and cultural value system which Stan Lourduswamy called the humanizing aspects of the Adivasi society. These are first, the attitude to nature – living with and enjoying the fruits of nature without exploiting it. For example, fruits and flowers are for people and as well as birds and animals. The tribals do not empty the pond of all fish while fishing, but leave some fish so that they can regenerate. Even the dog that accompanies them in hunting has a right to a share in what has been hunted. Cow or goat milk is not consumed by them because that would be depriving the calf of its right to its mother's milk. Egg is not eaten by them because there is life in it.

Second, social life is characterized by a sense of equality. When this equality is hampered, a feeling of resentment arises among them. The sense of accumulating things that one does not need now is not in their culture, because of a basic trust in nature that she will provide for their needs now and in the future. So if nature is the provider, then one must not violate or multilate her, but preserve and protect her.

[15] Rath. op.cit., p. 113.

Third, culturally, dancing and singing are expressions of equality, mutual sharing and cooperation among tribals. Fourth, religious life which is characterized by the 'bongas' also express their closeness to nature. Bongas are representatives of the different forces of nature like river, forest, field, rain, etc. The religious rituals are performed to keep the spirits happy and maintain friendly relations with nature.

Fifth, gender relations among men and women in tribal societies in Jharkhand are more egalitarian in economic and social sense than among the non-tribal caste society.[16]

4.4 ALIENATION OF TRIBALS FROM THEIR LAND, NATURAL RESOURCES AND CULTURE

The tribals of Jharkhand keep insisting that their identity is closely linked to the natural resources around which they had developed their cultural traditions, economy, social control mechanisms, religious myths and techniques of production. Their cultural systems ensured that the resources continued to be their source of livelihood for several generation. They did this by using them judiciously to live on, while at the same time ensuring their

[16] Lourduswamy, op.cit, pp. 55-57.

renewability. This enabled them to establish a close link between indigenous identity, natural resources and their self-determination.

Earlier in Australia and New Zealand, colonization of indigenous land was based on the assumption that they were 'terra nullius' i.e., they belonged to no one. Hence the so-called 'civilized population' had a right to occupy them. The principle of 'terra nullius ' referred to as "eminent domain", is applied in some form or the other also in India. It enables the dominant classes to take control of the natural resources.[17]

In some cases, the principle of eminent domain is used to take over land that was once under the control of the tribals. In other cases, it is used to displace people who have lived in a region for centuries though they might not have got the type of patta or land document, which makes them the legal holders of the land. The same principle is also used to take control over the forests from which tribals had traditionally got more than fifty percent of their food and other needs. In the view of Walter Fernandes, "the efforts of the dominant section to control the natural resources, and the use they make of the principle of 'eminent domain' have become basic to the life of the tribals also in India".[18]

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[17] Fernandes, op. cit, p. 35.
[18] Ibid, p. 36.

The Common Property Resources has traditionally been the basis of tribal economy. This resource belonged to the community and had to be treated as renewable. Individuals could use it only for their need and preserve it for the future generations. The concept of individual property was unknown among the tribals. Even if it existed, it was linked in some form or the other to the larger community. For example, among the tribals, the descendants of those who founded the village had special rights known as Khuntkatti and the rest had to depend on this clan.[19] Since much of the land the tribals have been living on, are considered common property over which they have no right, according to the present legal system, so the principle of "eminent domain" has been used to acquire these land.

The agitations in Jharkhand region against various development projects have brought these issues to the fore. Marginalisation and impoverishment of the already marginalised communities like tribals is not limited to displacement alone. The exploitation of other resources, forests and land in particular, also results in the dispossession of the tribals and an attack on their identity. Because of these processes, the tribals are being marginalised and impoverished. They are often reduced to the status of bonded labourers and headloaders. Since they

[19] M. Areeparampil, (1995) *Tribals of Jharkhand : Victims of Development - A Study of Industries, Mines and Dispossession of Indigenous People,* New Delhi : Indian Social Institute.

are delinked from their resources, they slowly lose their culture of treating them as renewable and begin to destroy them.[20]

Madhav Gadgil observed that with massive cutting of forests in areas close to villages, due to industrialization, the tribals are being deprived of their food and substance. They have to walk longer distances to collect the little forest produce that is available and in search of drinking waters. This results in their impoverishment. So, they fall in the clutches of the money-lenders and industrial agents very easily. As a consequence, indebtedness, land alienation and bondage are on the rise in tribal areas. Deprived of their livelihood, sometimes the tribals fall back on the same resources in a destructive manner. They start cutting trees either for sale as fuelwood or as they work as wage or bonded labourers under timber contractors and smugglers.

New methods of alienating the tribals from their land have been observed recently. Common among them are indebtedness though which debtors are captured and their lands are seized. Encroachment on tribal lands are also observed, since the tribals are considered powerless. The nexus between non-tribal money lenders or

[20] W. Fernandes, Geeta Menon and Philip Viegas (1998). *Forests, Environment and Tribal Economy : Deforestation, Impoverishment and Marginalisation in Orissa*, New Delhi, Indian Social Institute, pp. 161-168.

encroachers, merchants etc. and government officials are seen. This leads to manipulation of records by the government officials.

According to the Government of India report of 1956, the life support system of tribals is attacked in the name of national development. They and other marginalised groups have become the victims of development. In the process of development, resources are transferred to the small minority that can then become like the western type of consumer society. This is done in the same of productivity since the resource use of the tribal was not considered "productive". Areeparampil argued that as the symbiotic relationship between the tribals or indigenous people and their environment is weakened, the process of dehumanization begins. The dominant classes treat them as uncivilized and consider their traditional culture as primitive. They call them as vanavasi or forest dwellers and want to integrate them in the mainstream society as a low caste.[21]

In the words of Walter Fernandes, this process is similar to the colonial ideology of "civilizing education" that legitimized the occupation and economic exploitation of foreign lands. The strategy of denigrating their culture further weakens the close link between natural resources and the tribal and other indigenous populations.

[21] Areeparampil, op. cit.

Often the tribals themselves begin to internalize the dominant value system in order to "get civilized". Hence the question of recognizing the tribals as indigenous and of acknowledging their right to self-determination i.e., control over their resources and their socio-political structures which are essential for their survival, becomes central to their identity.[22]

The attack on the culture and identity of the indigenous people show that only economic poverty alleviation programmes and cash compensation following displacement cannot solve the problem of complete rehabilitation. The close link between the tribal communities and the natural resources has to be reestablished in some form, since their identity is closely linked to these resources. The indigenous people have either lost their identity or are in the process of losing it. This is because of the loss of control over natural resources and their destruction by the mainstream population. The tribal culture in which the resources were under the control of the community is not recognized by the formal system that depends on the written records and the individual ownership of land.

[22] Fernandes, op.cit.

4.5 SEARCH FOR A NEW IDENTITY

Adivasis are the first settlers of India and their tradition is different from that of any other socio-cultural group. There is a change in their identity, when they come in contact with a multi-ethnic society. For example, in case of market economy, after the advent of industrialization or their resettlement following, displacement.. A new Adivasi identity is formed at two levels: defensive and accommodative. G.C. Rath has discussed these two levels of identity formation in Jharkhand region.

It has been observed that the schooling experiences of tribal children makes them conscious of the implications of the term 'Adivasi'. To quote an experience of a tribal student : "The non–Adivasi boys and girls never like to sit close to us and hardly talk to us as friends. If any of them talks with any of our Adivasi girls, his other colleagues tease him saying 'you see, he is in love with a dark coloured Adivasi girl'. These non-Adivasi classmates often consider the Adivasis as criminals and thieves, who eat pork and wear torn and dirty clothes, drive rickshaws and thellas etc". The tribals who are employed in the Steel Plants, mines and other working sectors in Jharkhand, also have the experience of being discriminated against by the authorities. Some

of the tribal employees said that they were scolded, called drunkard, useless and abused in case of any mistake during working hours. But no such vulgar term was used for their non-tribal counterparts for similar mistakes. In other cases, the owners of grocery-shops or tea-stalls often discriminated between the Adivasis and non-Adivasis. The tribals were often treated as untouchables. They were charged higher than the actual cost and asked to clean the glass after consuming tea.[23]

B.P. Kesari, a prominent leader of the Jharkhand movement, feels that the traditional culture of the tribals had been put in danger due to the indifferent attitude of both the common people and the government. According to him, the government were forcing the tribals to the domain of exploitative 'mainstream', without caring for their identity.[24] Identity crisis among the Adivasis in Jharkhand resulted in the defensive formation of identity. The trend of the dominating group to undermine the Adivasi made them conscious of their self-identity, the need to restore and preserve the indigenous symbols of their identity.

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[23] Rath, op.cit, p. 115.

[24] B.P. Kesari, (1986) "Cultural Crisis in Chotanagpur" in *Tribal Culture and Identity in Chotanagpur: Challenges before Higher Education*, New Delhi.

The accommodative formation of Adivasi identity emanated because of the implementation of the Constitutional provisions for tribal development. In the accommodative form of Adivasi identity formation, there is a provision for giving financial assistance to tribal students after their primary education is over. The government also give them reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. To avail of this reservation and financial aid, the tribals have to submit a certificate issued by the local Tehsil office stating their affiliation to the category of Scheduled Tribes. According to a number of tribals in Jharkhand, they came to know about their identity only when they had to submit this certificate. Gradually, through this process of identity formation, the tribals internalized the meaning of Adivasi.

Due to the accommodative formation of identity, a new urban middle class among the tribals is born. These literate and politically conscious tribals have participated in the Jharkhand movement in large numbers. They have taken up the issues concerning land and forestry and also reservation of jobs, employment, exploitation, etc. Generally the sense of Adivasi identity is transmitted from parents to their off-springs, through the process of socialization. Now-a-days, the parents feel it essential to make their children aware of acquiring

concessions given to them by the government as a backward group. So, while the defensive formation of identity was a consequence of the negative aspects of socio-cultural adjustment, the accommodative formation was the outcome of a positive one. Some studies also suggest that after displacement, the educated tribals move to urban areas or to sites where development projects are introduced. They also benefit from the job opportunities available there. While these Adivasis gain from displacement because of their new identity formation, a considerable number of them gain a minority status due to the accommodative formation of identity. They also have to face adjustment problems in the host society.

To summarize, industrialization-cum-modernization process in India has facilitated the tribals coming in contact with the multi-ethnic society. The introduction of development projects in Jharkhand region has resulted in the displacement of local inhabitants of the area and their marginalisation and impoverishment. This is an attack on the identity of the indigenous people who are not readily accepted in the host society where they are resettled. The feeling of marginalization among them is composed of two trends i.e., "we have lost something" and "we have to achieve something". In most cases, the feeling of losing something contributes to the sense to achieve something. After being

exploited for a long time, the tribals of Jharkhand realized that their glorious past was degenerated by the outsiders' direct onslaught on their economy and politics. They also felt that their identity was in danger as they were alienated from their land due to various reasons discussed earlier. This led them to form a social set-up the achieve something. So they began a search for a new identity.[25]

The formal system which is based on written records, imposes itself on tribal communities. It also destroys their identity in the process of taking control over their resources. Therefore, tribal leaders and the supporters of the Jharkhand movement insist that the land and forests that have been taken over from them, belong to their communities and should be restored to them. This would enable them to regain the identity that they are losing. Hence, the first feature of a new tribal identity is the community character. Secondly, rebuilding the community character goes hand in hand with the re-establishment of the link between their community's control over the natural resources and their identity, since tribal deprivation is linked with environmental degradation.

The third feature of tribal identity which has been discussed by anthropologists and development theorists is that sustainable

[25] Rath, op.cit., p. 117.

development is possible in tribal areas, but it cannot be achieved if the sons of the soil are marginalised. As owners of the natural resources of the region, they have to be equal partners, if not majority shareholders in the development projects and enterprises. To preserve the resources, develop the people and ensure economic growth, the participation of those affected by development projects is necessary.

Walter Fernandes and Geeta Menon have discussed the role of women in tribal societies before and after the exploitation of their resources by the outsiders. This constitutes the fourth feature of tribal identity. Most studies on the tribals and other indigenous people suggest that while the whole community suffers the negative consequences of the external control of their resources, women are the worst victims. They have to face the changes that have come into their lives as a result of displacement and loss of other resources to the outsiders. This is accompanied by an imposition of an alien culture on them. In traditional tribal societies, women had greater economic value and a higher social status, than their counterparts in caste societies. As tribal communities came in contact with non-tribals, they tend to internalize the upper caste values of paternalism, in which women's subordination is crucial. This has resulted in the further marginalization of women. In searching for a new identity, it is

necessary the tribals recognise the role of women and take precautions in not rebuilding a community dominated by men alone.

Lastly, even with all the above features, one cannot recreate any tribal culture in its pure and original form. The tribal communities have to adapt to the changed circumstances. To sustain themselves in the changing circumstances, the basic principles of the informal tribal societies should be taken into consideration. This helps them to deal with the formal sectors as equals. Fernandes observed that today the tribal communities have been absorbed into the mainstream as subordinate and are therefore losing their identity. So, in order to cope with it, they often end up rejecting their own culture and internalizing dominant caste values. He suggested that this should be overcome by beginning with tribal culture and their indigenous identity and updating it, instead of either attempting to recreate or replace it.[26]

Such an approach also needs the support of the outsiders. Most tribal communities have relatively little exposure to the market economy. The merchants and money-lenders use this lack of exposure to exploit the tribals. So the indigenous people need some training to be able to deal with the marketing system which is the major source of exploitation today. For this, the technologies, social and political

[26] Fernandes, op.cit.

systems, etc. of these communities have to be updated to be able to deal with the outside economy and polity. This requires the support of the government, non-government organizations and others from the so-called mainstream population. The concept of self-determination dominates the discussion on the search for a new identity by the indigenous people. This means recognizing the fact that these people are the first occupants of this land. So, they have to be actively involved in all the decisions concerning the use of their community resources.

Thus accepting the indigenous status of the tribal communities would involve the principles of equity, community participation, gender justice and ecological balance. These characteristics are basic to tribal identity and culture.

CHAPTER – V

THE FORMATION OF JHARKHANDI IDENTITY – THE JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

THE FORMATION OF JHARKHANDI IDENTITY – THE JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

In India, questions involving tribal identity, integration and development have been important topics for discussion. Over the past few decades, there are differences of opinion over the term 'Jharkhandi' and their identity in the Jharkhand region. This has been accompanied by political unrest over a considerable period. Political problems are set within the cultural and economic situation of the region. In the case of Jharkhand movement, a new identity emerged as the tribes of the Chotanagpur plateau and Santhal Parganas in Bihar began to regard themselves as 'Jharkhandis'. They extended this term to the indigenous people of three other states also. This new label was used to distinguish the original inhabitants from the later settlers and immigrants. This chapter will focus on the formation of Jharkhandi identity through a political movement i.e., the Jharkhand Movement.

As discussed in the last chapter, the cultural, economic, socio-religious and political structures of tribal societies in the Jharkhand region are built around their land and natural resources. Land alienation has been the major source of crisis in Jharkhand since pre-Mughal period. It has been noticed that tribals have always reacted strongly whenever they have been subjected to

exploitation. Several revolts during the British rule shows their resentment against land alienation. Major among them are : the Santhal Insurrection of 1855, the Sardar Movement of 1859-65 and the Birsa Movement of 1895-1900. Everytime, the government gave certain concessions to the tribals in Jharkhand which pacified them for a certain period of time.

In post-Independence period, commercial and industrial exploitation of land and forests, became the major source of displacement of tribals in Jharkhand. This threatened the identity of the tribals and non-tribals (sadans) in Jharkhand. Resentment of the tribals was not directed against the sadans. Rather the dikus i.e., outsider – exploiter became the targets of tribal resentment, when they were organized under the 'Jharkhand Party'. Since Independence, the tribals of Jharkhand have shown their resistance against displacement due to industrial developments and mines, through the Jharkhand Movement. Jharkhand Party which led the movement in 1950s has changed its form several times since its formation. Also the character of the Jharkhand movement has changed. It began as a movement based on social issues like displacement, unemployment, cultural crisis, underdevelopment and so on. At present, the Jharkhand movement has totally become a political movement. The tribal character of the movement has also given way to a regional one.

Inspite of deviating from the main issues, Jharkhand movement is the only movement in recent times which addresses the problems of displacement and unemployment in the Jharkhand region. It also lays the basis for the formation of identity among the tribals of Jharkhand. So, in this chapter I will discuss the history and present character of the Jharkhand Movement.

According to K.L. Sharma, three factors were crucial in the Jharkhand movement : first, the administrative unity of the region; second, exploitation of the people and the natural resources of the region by 'outsiders', mainly north Biharis; and third, ethnic differences between the people of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas and the people of north Bihar. Since the condition of non-tribals (sadans) of Jharkhand was worse than tribals of the region, so the movement was directed only towards the non-tribal migrants (dikus). Sharma also observed that various movements in south Bihar and Santhal Parganas were not 'political' before 1940s. They only aimed at tribal awakening and social and economic uplift. But later on the leaders of the movements realized that they can serve their people and benefit from their natural and mineral resources only by ejecting out the north Biharis and other outsiders called 'dikus' from their region. Thus the underlying economic and ethnic

forces gave rise to a new 'political' movement called the Jharkhand movement.[1]

5.1 BASES OF IDENTITY

Before discussing the formation of 'Jharkhandi' identity, I will first discuss in short the basis of identity in the Jharkhand region. In the recent past, the tribal people of Chotanagpur have become aware of their distinctiveness as a group. This consciousness was born out of threats to their traditional way of life. The perception of threat strengthened and fostered the 'we feeling' of the indigenous tribals of Jharkhand. This situation forced them to reassert their identity and demand for autonomy.[2] This demand was later supported by the non-tribal Jharkhandis as well. The development projects introduced in the Jharkhand region further led to a crisis among the tribals regarding the basis of their tribal identity.

Over a few centuries, tribes in the region have developed their own identity in terms of language, institutions, beliefs and customs, which distinguishes them from other groups of people in the neighbouring society. But they are progressively becoming dispossessed of their identity and livelihood due to internal colonialism. Identity as a term refers to the individuality of a group.

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[1] K.L. Sharma, (1976). "Jharkhand Movement in Bihar", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 11 (1&2), p. 37.

[2] S. Raichaudhuri , (1992), "The Jharkhandis : Vision and Reality. A Micro-Study of Singhbhum", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37 (40), p. 2251.

It can be dealt at two levels: first, at the level of the self-image of the tribals. Second, at the level of what the non-tribal anthropologists and researchers conceptualize about tribal identity.[3] Srabani Raichaudhuri has discussed the bases of Jharkhandi identity as comprehended by Ram Dayal Munda. Munda formulated eight determinants of identity, their corresponding central values and causes of crisis among he Jharkhandis. This can be arranged in the form of a table:[4]

Bases of Identity	**Central Value**	**Causes of Crisis**
Geography	Harmony	Disharmony
Society	Equality	Stratification
Economics	Collectivism	Individualism
History	Accommodation	Exploitation
Politics	Democracy	Paternalism
Religion	Naturalism	Ritualism
Philosophy	Ethical Living	Corruption
Literature	Folkism	Urbanism
Art and Music	Group Participation	Observation

Source: AIACHE*, 1986: 35

* All India Association for Christian Higher Education

[3] Ibid., p. 2552
[4] Ibid.

Raichaudhuri argued that crisis has developed in all the bases of identity because of various modernizing forces. Important among them are industrialization, education, commercialism, mass media, etc. Only when the outsiders or the indigenous people feel a threat to their identity, it becomes a cause of concern. In some of the districts of Jharkhand region, the original population has been reduced to a minority because of a large scale immigration of non-tribals and emigration of tribals in the region.

Land alienation under development projects has resulted in massive displacement of the tribals in the Jharkhand region, thereby attacking the bases of their identity. This has resulted in the mixing of the community life of Jharkhandis with the modern culture of industrial establishments and mining projects. Hence the leaders organized a movement for the cultural renewal of the Jharkhandis. Any collective effort to transform some established social relations constitute a social movement. According to Wilkinson, a movement requires a minimal degree of organisation and a commitment to change, in order to gather strength.[5] Before the formation of the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1938, the name 'Jharkhand' was not associated with movements which occurred in the Chotanagpur region. But the programmes and strategies adopted by the organizers of this movement reflected their conscious

[5] Quoted in K.L. Sharma, op.cit., p. 37.

effort to bring about a structural transformation of their society in general and of the tribals in particular.

Social movements in Jharkhand region became politically oriented and turned against the oppressors and exploiters of the tribal people, only in the later phases. The gradual politicization of the Jharkhand movement brought about a demand to share power in the state of Bihar.

5.2 HISTORY OF JHARKHANDI STRUGGLE FOR SELF – RULE

The Jharkhandi history of the last 150 years or so has been characterized by a series of struggles and revolts. They were directed first against the colonial British rulers and later the Indian government, contractors, etc. The aim of these revolts was to reassert their self-identity as a group having rights to their ancestral land and natural resource. From the Siddhu – Kanhu revolt in 1855 to the 'ulgulan' uprising led by Birsa Munda between 1895-1900, to the struggle led by Gangaram Kalundi for which he was killed in police custody in 1984, all conveyed the same message. However, in this chapter, I will focus on the contemporary phase of the Jharkhand movement for a separate Jharkhand state.

Ram Dayal Munda discussed four basic issues behind the Jharkhand movement. These are : land and forest alienation,

training and job deprivation due to an influx of the external population, cultural submergence, and balanced development with a gradual change of focus from the pre-Independence to post-Independence period.[6]

Land and forest alienation **:** It has been an issue of concern in Jharkhand for a long time. Before Independence, most of the fertile land belonging to the tribals were transferred to non–tribals, particularly due to non-payment of revenue. But the process slowed down a bit with the introduction of the Chotanagpur Tenancy (Amendment) Act of 1903 and the Santhal Parganas Settlement (Amendment) Regulation of 1908. Land alienation began again with the opening of mining and industrial activities and the setting up of Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) at Jameshdpur. With the introduction of the Five Year Plans in the 1950s, industrialization and urban expansion took place in and around HEC and Bokaro Steel Plant. This was followed by the construction of Damodar Valley Corporation and other Thermal Power Projects. These projects together engulfed thousands of acres of land, both tribal and non-tribal. A sizeable amount of forest land was also taken away in the name of housing colonies. At present, about 50-60 percent of tribal land in Jharkhand is in non-tribal hands.

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[6] Ram Dayal Munda, (1988), "The Jharkhand Movement : Retrospect and prospect", *Social Change*, Vol. 18 (2), p. 42.

Training and Job deprivation : The new industries and power projects required, personnel as well as skilled and unskilled workers. So people from outside were recruited in large numbers to fill these openings. Unskilled jobs were generally given to the tribals and some non-tribals of the region. The local non-tribals (Sadans and Kurmis) were the biggest sufferers as they had to compete with the outsider non-tribals for the same jobs. Inspite of 80 percent reservation for tribals and non-tribals in training and jobs, nearly 19 percent of these positions are filled by people from outside. Often the tribals are deprived of jobs and reservation policy, due to manipulation by the authorities. In 1951, the tribals constituted 60 percent of the population in Jharkhand. Due to an influx of outside population, the ratio changed drastically in 30 years. In 1981, tribals were 40 percent, while the non-tribals constituted 60 percent of the population.[7] This demographic change affected job opportunities of tribals and non-tribals of Jharkhand.

Cultural Submergence : Ram Dayal Munda observed cultural submergence and degradation with the coming of modern culture in the Jharkhand region. According to his rather romantic vision, in the past the culture of Chotanagpur was marked by a balance between nature and culture, economic and social egalitarianism, by a democratic political thinking and a people-oriented art and

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[7] Ibid., p.33

literature.[8] But in present times, this culture is facing an identity crisis. Large scale devastation of nature due to deforestation and unscientific mining, and hierarchical notions of caste and class are creeping in to replace egalitarianism. This has aggravated exploitation of the indigenous people by the dikus in the region. Also business and industry have taken precedence over agriculture and literary and artistic pursuits have lost importance. Munda considered these to be signs of cultural degradation.

Unbalanced Development : Unbalanced development has been observed between the two regions of Bihar – Chotanagpur and the northern plains. Meagre funds have been allotted for the development of Jharkhand region over the past few decades. Even from this, less than 30 percent reaches the real beneficiaries. 70 percent of the fund is pocketed by the authority and their subordinates who constitute 15-20 percent of the population.[9] So, inspite of the launch of major development projects in the region, the quality of life of the Jharkhandis, both tribals and non-tribals is poor. They are increasingly sliding down below the poverty line. Even in urban areas, they are being marginalised and pushed into the nearby slums. Some of them have moved out to far away places like Punjab and Assam in search of better living conditions and jobs opportunities.

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[8] Ibid., p. 34
[9] Ibid., p. 35

So the Jharkhand movement addresses these issues and gives a voice to the demand of the Jharkhandis for a new identity. But due to large scale in-migration of non-tribals, the character of the movement has changed in recent times. It has passed through several stages of development. The more significant among them are the formation of Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj in 1928, Kisan Sabha during 1935-36, and the Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha during the same period. These organizations emerged for the upliftment of the socio-economic condition of the tribals.

During 1935-40, Ignes Beck represented the tribals in the parliament, as a member of the Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha. He was given the task of contacting and convincing the leaders of other organizations for an alliance, in order to fight against the so-called 'diku raj' (rule by the outsiders). So, an alliance called 'Chotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha' was formed in 1938 to assert the identity of the original inhabitants of Chotanagpur. At the annual conference in 1938, the difference in culture, tradition, and language between tribals and non-tribals were discussed. It was also decided that the Chotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha would serve as the only party to highlight the plight of the tribals.[10]

[10] Victor Das, (1990), "Jharkhand Movement from Realism to Mystification", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 25 (30), p. 1624.

It was observed that although the tribals of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas constituted the majority, the proportion of welfare work for them was negligible when compared to the revenue from mineral wealth and forest produce of the region. Primary education and training was also imparted through Hindi, which was an alien language to the tribals. Moreover, Bengalis formed a sizeable professional and landowning community and the Muslims, Punjabis, Marwaris, etc. formed a significant trading community in this region. So, the Bengali-Bihari controversy over employment in the late 1930's as well as Muslim League politics affected the development of the tribal separatist movement. Under these conditions, Jaipal Singh, an Oxford educated Christian, led the Jharkhand movement in 1939. He was elected as the Chairman of the Chotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha.[11]

The Adivasi Mahsabha had two main objectives. First, the demand for a separate Jharkhand state comprising Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas. Second, protection of the adivasis against the exploitative tactics of the dikus. To avoid the clash between the adivasis and non-adivasis of Jharkhand, Jaipal Singh made efforts to unite the tribals and non-tribals of the region. He did this by extending the membership of the Sabha to non-tribals and universalizing the cause of Jharkhand statehood. Soon after

[11] A.N. Das (1992), *The Republic of Bihar*, New Delhi : Penguin Books Ltd., pp. 89-90.

Independence, in 1951, the Chotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha adopted the name 'Jharkhand Party' under the leadership of Jaipal Singh. It was organized as a full-fledged political party to bring together Christians, non-Christians, urban and rural people under its common banner. But when development projects were launched in this region, there was a sudden influx of a large number of non-tribal people. The number of outsiders increased drastically because of the establishment of government offices and many large, medium and small industries. This caused frustration among the tribal population of Jharkhand, for they had to compete with outsiders at every step.

To begin with, tribals were alienated from land because of the construction of industries. Unemployment arose among them due to competition with outsiders. Finally, the improper implementation of government's benefit programmes gave the Jharkhand movement its agenda. These issues helped the Jharkhand leaders in creating an internal solidarity among the tribals and a strong antipathy towards the dikus. It was noted that during the 1952 general elections, the main slogan of the Jharkhand Party was 'Jharkhand abua daku diku senoa' i.e., Jharkhand is ours, the dacoit outsiders must go.[12]

Soon, the Jharkhand Party became so popular that it won all the 32 seats of tribal constituencies in Bihar. When the States'

[12] V. Das., op.cit.

Reorganization Commission was set up in 1955, the party submitted a memorandum regarding a separate Jharkhand state. The economic, political and cultural distinctiveness of the adivasi became the basis of the memorandum. It also pointed out that there was a certain geographical contiguity and administrative separateness which justified the claim for a distinct state. But their demand was turned down as the tribals of Jharkhand did not have a common language.[13] This was a big shock for the tribals, and the Jharkhand Party and Jaipal Singh started losing popularity.

Later some leaders led by Jaipal Singh thought that their main objective of a separate Jharkhand state would only materialize if they joined hands with the ruling Congress Party. So, in 1963, the Jharkhand Party merged with the Congress Party and Jaipal Singh was offered a portfolio in the Bihar ministry. This was seen as a betrayal and consequently the Jharkhand Party started disintegrating.

Even though the Party ceased to exist officially after the merger in 1963, the movement did not die out. The elder generation of leaders like Harihar Nath Sahdeo, S.K. Bage, Joyel Lakra, Paul Dayal and N.E. Horo tried to revive it at the socio-cultural level and unite the Jharkhandis under a new banner 'Sim Sandi' (the

[13] A.P. Sharma (1988), "The Jharkhand Movement: A Critique", *Social Change* Vol. 18 (2), p. 63; Appendix A, p. 73.

cockbird). They wanted to keep membership confined to the tribals only. But the younger generation of leaders wanted to have a full-fledged party uniting different splinter groups of the Jharkhand Party. They wanted to extend the membership to non-tribals also who were not 'dikus' and had settled in Chotanagpur for generations.

Kumar Suresh Singh observed that the infiltration of the Naxalite movement by extremist leaders of tribal organizations and the entry of the leftist parties, influenced the policies of the Jharkhand region in a big way. In this phase of the Jharkhand movement there was a rise of the urban pressure groups led by the educated tribals, mostly Christians. It also centered at industrial complexes to demand jobs for tribal youths in administration and industrial undertakings. The process of the formation and development of the pressure groups led to the emergence of the Birsa Seva Dal as one of the most important urban groups.[14]

The Birsa Seva Dal, organized in 1967, initially used to advocate the cause of the adivasi students and workers wherever there was injustice. They dealt with cases of scholarship, admission, employment, promotion and so on. Soon, the veteran leaders of the Jharkhand Party started reorganizing the broken party as

[14] Kumar Suresh Singh, (1982), "Transformation of Tribal Society : Integration Vs Assimilation", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 17 (34), p.1379.

"Jharkhand Prant Dal" to work in the rural areas. A.P. Sharma called this phase of the Jharkhand movement as an 'era of confusion' when several organizations like Birsa Seva Dal, Veer Birsa Dal, Krantikari Mukti Morcha, Chotanagpur Plateau Praja Parishad, Adivasi Chhatra Parishad and other splinter groups calling themselves the real Jharkhand party gained importance. They were largely supported by Christian organizations and worked generally for the welfare of Christian tribals.[15]

5.3 THE MOVEMENT TODAY

The most important development in contemporary Jharkhand movement was the formation of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in 1973. The main objectives of JMM were forming a separate Jharkhand state; ending exploitation of the tribals by non-tribals; and securing preferential treatment for the sons of the soil in the matter of employment.

K. Suresh Singh summarized the situation in late 1960s in Jharkhand in terms of overall radicalization of the polity. "It expressed itself in the form of political 'extremism', agrarian radicalism and cultural revivalism of the subaltern groups, rise of urban and industrial pressure groups occasioned by economic recession, nationalization of coal mines, etc. and growth of the militant trade union movement in response of the

[15] A.P. Sharma, op.cit, p. 65.

institutionalization of the mafia".[16] This situation gave rise to a new leadership in Jharkhand. It included Mundas, Santhals, Kurmi, Mahatos and even non-tribals who empathized with the cause of the indigenous people. The movement took up concerns like the rights of workers and peasants, fighting diku money-lenders, land-grabbers and mafia hoodlums and also brought about social reform and cultural resurgence among the tribals.

Beginning with the rally of the displaced adivasi in Ranchi on January 9, 1962 in demand of proper compensation from the Heavy Engineering Corporation, there has occurred several such demonstrations, resistance to land acquisitions and even struggles to oppose nationalization, which constitutes important part of Jharkhand movement today.[17]

From 1972 onwards the Jharkhand movement began to take a new turn. Both the industrial workers and the peasants came together to fight against the exploitation they were undergoing . On February 4th 1973 at Dhanbad the Sonat Santhal Samaj of Shibu Soren and the Shivaji Samaj led by Binod Bihari Mahato merged together and formed the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. Trade union leader A.K. Roy and Binod Bihari Mahato of the Marxist Coordination committee became the ideological force behind the

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[16] A.N. Das, op.cit., p. 91.
[17] Nirmal Sengupta, (ed.) (1982), *Fourth World Dynamics : Jharkhand*, Delhi : Authors Guild, p. 35.

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. Their combined efforts led to a drive against the outsiders in the Dhanbad belt of the Jharkhand region. Outsiders mainly from Arrah, Balia, Chhapra and Darbhanga (ABCD) were targeted during this period.[18]

The JMM combined in its operations elements of agrarian radicalism and cultural revivalism. It launched an operation to recover lands from money-lenders and big peasants. After its formation, it organized forcible harvesting of crops on lands illegally taken from adivasis, Kurmis, Harijans and poor Muslims by money-lenders. It also took up cooperative farming and literacy programmes for the development of the tribals. Under the leadership of the JMM, the tribal peasants, landless laboures and industrial workers started a popular movement against exploitation.[19]

During the Janata rule in the state, Shibu Soren emerged as a popular public leader in Dhanbad and Santhal Parganas. Between 1978 and 1980, he organized violent rallies and mass movements and was feared by money-lenders, big land-holders and mafia leaders. He became a mass leader with the cooperation of A.K. Roy and Binod Bihari Mahato. But the Jharkhand movement needed a broader base, which was lacking. So, Shibu Soren aligned with the Congress Party and contested elections for the Lok Sabha in 1980.

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[18] A.P. Sharma, op.cit., p.66.
[19] K. Suresh Singh, op.cit., p. 1379.

Thus, started the beginning of the end of the JMM as a radical movement.

Now a new phase of the Jharkhand movement has begun. It is not only pan-tribal but includes non-tribal workers and peasants too. It has a distinct ideology and is led by students and youths in urban and industrial area. At present, the educated unemployed youths constitute the majority of the participants in the Jharkhand movement. In the view of A.N. Das, the movement has shifted from the issues of ethnicity to regionalism to class in the broadest sense of the term.

All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) was formed in 1986 by the Jharkhandi youths. It put forward two proposals: first, boycott of elections until Jharkhand is obtained; and second, a time-bound plan of action to obtain Jharkhand. As a result different Jharkhand groups were coordinated under one forum to achieve a separate Jharkhand state. This is how the Jharkhand Coordination Committee (JCC) was born in 1987. In JCC intended to set up a common front for all political, social, cultural and literary organisation supporting the Jharkhand movement. But the JCC disintegrated within a year.

Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) took advantage of the disintegration of the Jharkhandi groups and put forward a demand

for a separate "Vananchal State" consisting of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas. In the words of Lourduswamy, "the reason for BJP's interest in this matter is not that it has any concern abut the marginalisation of the tribal masses; rather, the adherents of the 'Hindutva Parivar' are the main exploiters of the tribal people economically and destroyers of the adivasi social and cultural value systems. BJP's interest in solely for political, and more precisely for electrorial gains".[20] Finally, the JMM split in 1992, and the demand for a separate Jharkhand state became a distant dream. The goal of autonomy and statehood has clearly been manipulated by mainstream political parties.

The despair and hopelessness among tribals can be seen as the struggle for a tribal identity in Jharkhand has been coopted by the BJP. As Daniel Ekka puts it, "Vananchal, now being called Jharkhand, was a new developmental approach based on a small-scale concept. Now, it is a political tool crafted by the BJP".[21] Even though the Bihar state assembly has almost unanimously passed and sent the Bihar Reorganization Bill 2000 to the Union government, the sense of euphoria is missing. This is because, according to a few Jharkhand leaders, Jharkhand would remain a fourth-world in the third world. The debate about the new state has

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[20] S. Lourduswammy, (1997), *Jharkhandi's Claim for Self-Rule : Its Historical Foundations and Present Legitimacy*, New Delhi : Indian social Institute, p. 11.
[21] A.K. Jha, (2000), "A Fourth World in the Third World", *Times of India*, New Delhi, 21-5-2000.

nothing to do with the aspiration of the tribal people. It is basically a clash of two interests: one political and the other economic, i.e., in the interest of the exploitation of the wealth of the area.

5.4 ROLE OF THE RULING CLASS IN THE JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

The Jharkhand movement, since its inception has been manipulated by the non-tribal people in several ways. The non-tribals are interested only in gaining political and economic power in the Jharkhand region of Bihar. Lourduswamy has described the role of the ruling class, mainly non-tribals, in neutralizing the Jharkhand movement.

Ethnicity was the starting point of the Jharkhand movement. So the uprisings in Jharkhand always aimed at restoration of ethnic identity and protest against outsider-exploiter and land alienation among the tribals. They also aimed at the protection of the honour of their women and demanded the restoration of self-rule through a separate Jharkhand state. these revolts and uprisings were suppressed by the dominant ruling class, mainly non-tribals by projecting its class-structure, culture and ideology as superior to tribal culture, and therefore more desirable. So they diverted the

attention of the struggling tribals from ethnicity to the issue of developmentalism.[22]

The government came out with "development of tribals" as the alternative to ethnicity. It allocated large sums of money in the name of "Tribal Development Sub-Plan" in 1975, "Jharkhand Area Development council" in 1991, etc. in order to dilute the Jharkhandi struggle. As a result of this development process, non-tribal merchants, contractors and government bureaucrats became the biggest beneficiaries. Only a small number of tribals, after losing their tribal roots, and through education and unemployment in urban and semi-urban surroundings, were absorbed in the mainstream. The development process has also led to out-migration of tribals and in-migration of outsiders who exploit the tribals. It is estimated that the tribals in Jharkhand who were 60 per cent of the population in the beginning of the century have been reduced to 27 percent, and about 45 lakhs outsider non-tribals have moved into Jharkhand. Moreover, the government led by Congress and Janata Dal in different phases have also projected different images of Jharkhand to different groups of people. To the poor, it means restoration of their rights over land and forest. To the educated unemployed, it offers the hope that locals will have better employment possibilities if they have a state of their own. And

[22] S. Lourduswamy, op.cit., p. 13.

finally, to the minority groups such as Muslims and Christians, Jharkhand state is seen as an alternative to the increasing Hindu dominance which is seen as a threat to their existence.[23]

In the process of development, the search for ethnic identity has become a lost cause. Moreover, the issue has shifted from developmentalism to regionalism. It is assumed that all those residing in Jharkhand region are denied their nationality regardless of caste, language, etc. and that the working class, especially the industrial workers, will join the struggle for greater autonomy. So, "it is only within a separate Jharkhand state that the question of Jharkhandi nationality can be solved for the benefit of the exploited and working classes. The Jharkhand, must therefore turn into a Lalkhand, that is, the movement of political separatism and struggle of the working classes should go together".[24]

The class and community base of the Jharkhand movement has shifted at the political level. The Jharkhandi groups and parties like the JCC and AJSU have substituted the rural, traditional forces of the movement by the urban ones. They are also supported by a new educated middle class. These parties have divided and sub-divided several times. Instead of opposing displacement due to industrial projects they have concentrated more on the

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[23] Ibid, pp. 13-14.
[24] K. Suresh Singh,op.cit.,p.1379

rehabilitation of the displaced and other issues like job opportunities and reservation policy.

Thus, the principal demand of the Jharkhand movement was a separate Jharkhand state. But the government finally agreed to the constitution of the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council (JAAC) on 9th August 1994. This body does not have any real legislative, financial or administrative power.[25] Thus by giving JAAC to the Jharkhandi people, the motive of the Central and Bihar government to divide the Jharkhandi people and Jharkhandi parties has been achieved. With the creation of JAAC, Jharkhand has achieved some legitimacy and identity. It has significantly got school education, public health and rural development for the Jharkhandis. The leaders of the movement feel that the failure of JAAC will give a greater strength to the Jharkhand movement for a separate state. BJP has gained in this process and is now making inroads into the rural tribal areas with its money-power. It is thus becoming an increasing threat to the culture of the tribal society.[26]

To conclude, the major factors which generated the Jharkhand movement are : (1) the growing discontent among the tribal people of Chotanagpur on account of land alienation, exploitation by money-lenders, etc. (2) a strong antipathy towards

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[25] A.K. Singh , Ramesh Sharan, Meera Jayaswal, Shriti Chaudhary (1999). "Status of Tribals in Jharkhand", *Social Change,* Vol. 29(3&4), p. 61

[26] S. Lourduswamy, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

Dikus or non-tribals; and (3) political development in the wider setting of the country. In return, the Jharkhand movement aimed at removing the discontent among tribals and the formation of a new identity among Jharkhandis. Several remedies have been suggested to remove the discontent of tribals. Whenever tribals have been dispossessed of their land, they should be given land as compensation and some assistance and guidance for proper rehabilitation. Debt Settlement Boards, consisting of tribal leaders and non-tribals who are concerned about tribal issues, should be set up in Chotanagpur for writing off debts which are outstanding for more than ten years. Voluntary organisation led mainly by tribal leaders, should be involved in social welfare activities in rural areas and in creating consciousness among the Jharkhandis about their new identity.

A group indigenous tribal people felt that the formation of Jharkhandi identity is possible only through the creation of a separate Jharkhand state. So they presented a memorandum to the United Nations in 1987. To quote :

> "Today, the Adivasis i.e., Indigenous Tribal people of India are reduced to a colonial situation and are completely dominated by a system of values and institutions maintained by the dominant ruling group. Therefore it is a question of survival of the Adivasis

under the present conditions with our brothers and sisters all over the world, we demand protection, restoration of land and forest rights to our people. We also demand the collective right of self-determination for economic, social cultural and political identity of Indigenous Tribal people. These demands of right of self-determination by the Indigenous tribal People of India have taken a concrete and positive shape in the form of demand for creation of Udyachal State to be carved out of Assam and Jharkhand State consisting of predominant Adivasi areas in South Bihar, Northern Orissa , Western West Bengal and Eastern Madhya Pradesh which are contiguous and compact geographical area but are distributed to these four states and weakened the Adivasi Indigenous Tribal solidarity".[27]

[27] A.K. Kisku, and N.Minz, (1987), "Presentation by the Indigenous Tribal People of India to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations", Geneva, 3-7 August, 1987., *Social Change*, Vol. 18 (2), Appendix D, pp. 79-80.

CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Jharkhand region is simultaneously the homeland of a large adivasi population, who live in harmonious relationship with their environment, and the cradle of heavy industry in India. In this work, we have seen that in the name of 'national interest', this area has been subjected to massive industrialization and development process. These aim at the exploitation of its natural and human resources. Although the process of evicting adivasis from their land began in the early nineteenth century, but it intensified with the outset of heavy industry, giant plants, townships, extensive mining, hydro-electric power generation, etc. This capitalist form of development has led to a large scale degradation of tribals in the Jharkhand area various spheres of life economic, social, political and cultural. Along with this also came the rapid disintegration of the traditional communities, the commercial exploitation of the forests and the heavy influx of 'outsiders'. As a result they have been reduced to a situation of extreme poverty and powerlessness.

A new kind of internal colonialism has occurred in Jharkhand with the exploitation of the resources and destruction of the traditional means of livelihood by the non-tribals. In order to integrate the indigenous people into the national mainstream, the

culture and values of the tribals, which form the bases of their identity, have been destroyed.

In order to understand the process of impoverishment of the displaced people in general and tribals in particular in the Jharkhand region, we need to look at the changes caused by displacement in tribal societies. Firstly, the traditional tribal society belonged to the informal sector in which the socio-economic system was community based, as against the individual based formal society after resettlement. Secondly, their social and political systems was legitimized by the community. Land, forests and other resources were community property resources and could be used by tribals according to their needs. In contrast to this, the formal system to which the tribals were forced after displacement, depends on an economy based individual property rights and written documents. The tribals were totally unfamiliar with this formal system and thus were subjected to exploitation and marginalisation by the non-tribals and other outsiders.[1]

To the tribals, land is not merely a source of livelihood, such as among agriculturalists. It holds an important symbolic and emotional meaning. So, being deprived of it, due to displacement,

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[1] W. Fernandes, Shoma Chaudhary, Manisha Rao, Nita Mishra, (1993). "Impoverishment of the Tribals by Development – Induced Displacement" in Report of a study sponsored by the ILO- *Deforestation, Displacement and Impoverishment of Tribals: Are Tribal Sub-Plans The Solution?*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p. 73.

caused both material impoverishment and psychological trauma to the indigenous people of Jharkhand. Neither material loss nor psychological trauma has been dealt with by the form of resettlement and compensation, which has been provided to them after displacement. Besides, compensation is decided according to the formal system. So the tribals, either get no compensation, since they do not have land documents or get very little since theirs are considered to be backward areas.[2] After the traumatic experience of being forced out of their habitat, the tribals are deprived of the little they used to earn, with no alternative source of income.

Because of the loss of land and forests, after displacement they even have to buy food which they earlier got from the forests or from agriculture or from exchange through barter. It has been observed that since the tribals lack a sense of value of each item, the middlemen and merchants who come to the area for trading and making money, cheat the local inhabitants. The exploitation of the displaced people by the middlemen and other outsiders i.e., dikus, adds to their problems of impoverishment and marginalisation.

In the informal tribal economy, women have a relatively high status. Their condition is better off than their non-tribal counterparts. They work for the basic requirements like food, water

[2] Ibid, p. 74.

and fuel and also contribute significantly to the family income. But the process of displacement has worsened their situation. The economic and social status of tribal women in Jharkhand has deteriorated. Since they have lost land and forests, they either have to work more in order to collect food and fuel and sustain them selves and their family or they take up new kinds of jobs like that of rejas and coolies in the project sites. In recent years with big development projects, the tribal women in Jharkhand have been victims of economic and sexual exploitation by the contractors, forest and government officials. Their educational and health status is also very low.[3]

The major problems which have cropped up due to development-induced displacement have been analyzed in this work. These are problem of displacement and rehabilitation, problem of social disorganization, and problem of unemployment. Tribal communities have been displaced from areas where major development projects have been located. Industrial establishments like Tata Iron and Steel Company, Heavy Engineering Corporation, Bokaro Steel Plant and several mines are examples of the development projects that have caused substantial displacement of the tribal population in the Jharkhand region of Bihar.

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[3] Amar K. Singh, R. Sharan, M. Jayaswal, Shriti Chaudhary, (1999). "Status of Tribals in Jharkhand", *Social Change*, Vol. 29, (3 & 4), p. 96.

The situation has been accepted by the indigenous people with silence as no effort was made by the project authorities to consult the evicted tribal communities before the planning of the project. They faced the problem of social disorganization. This occurred because the land that they got in compensation, was often away from their original habitation and in unfamiliar surroundings. Besides, all the families that constituted a single tribal community earlier did not get land in a single compact area. This resulted in the dispersal of families and a breakdown of their community life.

Displacement due to development projects gave rise to a new kind of problem regarding unemployment. The older people stayed back in the interiors of the Jharkhand area to pursue their traditional occupations, with or without the assistance that they got in compensation. While the younger tribals moved to the project sites in the hope of getting employment there. They were employed as unskilled labour in the construction phase of the development projects. But when the construction was over, the demand turned to more skilled and semi-skilled labour, who were recruited from outside the Jharkhand region. Thus the young tribals of this region became unemployed. They were not inclined to go back to their traditional occupations, nor were they qualified to take up semi-skilled jobs in the new industry. These conditions created discontent

among the tribal people of the Jharkhand area, and they developed a strong antipathy towards the dikus or outsiders.

Thus it can be said that the gain for local tribal population from the industrial and economic development in Jharkhand was insignificant. According to Corbridge, "In terms of employment the local men and women were disproportionately directed towards temporary, unprivileged and unskilled jobs. Whilst this clearly had something to do with the lack of relevant skills on their part, and perhaps a preference for seasonal employment, nevertheless it reflected just as much a failure to secure educational and apprenticeship provisions for the tribes, and a definite company interest in maintaining the village labourers as segregated, cheap and unorganized workforce".[4]

In post independence period, the large influx of outsiders, mainly from north and central Bihar, not only deprived the local people of the job opportunities but also practically forced them to leave their own homeland in search of jobs in far distant place like tea gardens of Assam. The tribals were absorbed in Assam tea gardens as cheap labour and were also ruthlessly exploited by non-tribal landlords.

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[4] Madhumita Bandopadhyag, (1999). "Demographic Consequences of Non-tribal Incursions in Chotanagpur Region during Colonial period (1850-1950)", *Social Change), V*vol. 29 (3&4), p. 41.

The attack on the identity of the indigenous people of Jharkhand and the growing discontent among them gave rise to several revolts and uprisings in this region. Initially these protests were spontaneous and were based on economic issues. But during later phase the tribal movements were more organized and continued for longer with greater intensity. At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a tremenous urge for preservation of cultural and ethnic identity and a sense of sub-regionalism emerged among the tribals of Jharkhand. In the mid-thirties, there were a few militant protests under Adivasi Mahasabha. Soon a more organized and articulate movement for tribal autonomy in Chotanagpur began in the region. The movement took the shape of an important protest movement against the exploitation of tribes by non-tribals (dikus). The tribals began a new search for their identity and autonomy through the collective organization and struggle in the name of Jharkhand Movement.

The main causes of discontent which became the central issues of Jharkhand movement can be summarized as follows. First, alienation of land due to several large and small-scale industries and private sectors like TISCO, HEC, Bokaro Steel Plant, etc. These have displaced large number of tribals and the government has still not provided adequate compensation. Debt-repayment is another cause of land alienation in this region.

Second, after Independence, a rapid spread of education among the tribals and the demand for services has gone up. But they do not get employment as promised by the project authorities i.e., one job per family. Even when there are tribal candidates with requisite qualification, they are rejected in preference to outside candidates. Third, the compensation money does not reach the tribal people in full amount. Because of lack of experience and knowledge, the little money they get are also wasted on liquor or other investments. Thus the demand for job, rather than money was the important issue in the movement.

The Jharkhand movement did not remain merely a protest movement in the later phase. Along with the economic issues, the demand for the creation of a separate state 'Jharkhand' became the crux of the movement. Because of demographic changes in the region i.e., in-migration of non-tribals and out-migration of tribals, the tribals are no longer in majority. Their participation in regional political affairs and search for an identity has also been influenced by non-tribal leadership. Although the problem of land alienation, indebtedness and displacement of tribes are still continuing unabatedly, but the demand for a separate Jharkhand state for the tribals has gained importance. This demand has a root in under-development and impoverishment of tribes resulting from the erroneous development projects. It is also assumed that tribal

identity can be rebuilt in the Jharkhand region only in an autonomous state.

It can be argued that even if the demands of the indigenous people are met, and they are given autonomy i.e., a separate Jharkhand state is created, lack of material resources, infrastructure and adequate training will still be a barrier in their development. They will not be able to use their natural and mineral resources to their maximum benefit. Also to rebuild their identity in the changing scenario, they need to be integrated with the mainstream society. Hence, proper planning for their rehabilitation is a must and an effort should be made to bridge the gap between the tribals and non-tribals of the Jharkhand region.

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