



Tribals: The Endangered Species

Amrit Tirkey, SJ

Regional Theology Centre, Ranchi

Abstract: The existence of the Tribal people is in danger. The Indian government refuses to recognize the Tribal people and *Adivasis* of India as the Indigenous Peoples of the country. *Jal-Jangle-Jameen* is at the centre of the Tribal people's meaning system and the organizational system. Land is at root of the Tribal identity. Therefore, land alienation of any kind is a threat to their Tribal identity. There is a systematic violation of the rights of the Tribal people. They do not enjoy their rights to their lands and resources. In the name of development and common good, the Tribal land is being grabbed by the government and the corporates. The Tribal people are displaced from their habitat and are forced to migrate because of actions and policies taken by government. Thus, the Tribal people become the victims of unbalanced and lopsided development. In the pretext of Naxalism, arbitrary arrests, labelling of indigenous peoples as terrorists, torture and extrajudicial killings — continue.

Keywords: *Adivasis*, development, Land Acquisition, Migration, displacement, Exploitation, *Jal-Jangle-Jameen* (water-forest-Land), Naxalism

Introduction

The Jesuit Conference of India, meeting in March 1978 accepted the recommendation of the Inculturation Committee to start Regional Theologates. From the time the idea of regional theologies was meted, attention was focused on

Ranchi because of its own distinct Tribal culture. The North-East Jesuit Conference of India in its meeting on November 21, 1979, decided that Ranchi Regional Theologate would be for the Jesuit Units of the Tribal Belt which included Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Madhya Pradesh, Hazaribag, Dumka-Raiganj and Darjeeling. It took a quite a time to identify a suitable location to start Regional Theologate. Finally, Regional Theologatge Centre (RTC), Tarunoday is situated in Arsandey, Boreya in Kanke block. It is about 10 km away from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand State. The place was found suitable to do ‘Tribal theology’ because there were many tribal villages around Arsandey Boryea. RTC, Ranchi was formally inaugurated on the 30 June 1983. Fr. M. Amaladoss, S.J. delivered the keynote address: “Theologizing in a Tribal Context: Some Methodological Observations.” Today in 2016, when I come out of the RTC campus, I hardly see the tribal people. The context has drastically changed. Where have the tribal people gone? What happened to the tribal people who were living in the surrounding villages of RTC? Dr Hazel, the first American wife of late Dr Ram Dayal Munda¹, visited Ranchi in April 2016 after many years. On April 10, 2016, on the occasion of *Sarhul* feast, she expressed her joy to be in Ranchi. She remarked that Ranchi has developed, the skyscrapers have come up on both sides of the main road, but she said, “I do not see the tribal people on the road.”²

The ‘*Adivasis*’³ have the saga of displacement and exploitation. They are eliminated to meet the greed of corporate houses. Some of the tribes have been already extinguished and others are at the verge of being extinguished.⁴ August 9 is marked as the International Indigenous Peoples Day. On that day, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, U.N. special rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples told, “The sad situation is many indigenous peoples are not recognized in many Asian countries.” She noted that “systematic violation” of tribal peoples’ rights — arbitrary arrests, labeling of indigenous

peoples as terrorists, torture and extrajudicial killings — continue. “Many of them still do not enjoy their rights to their lands and resources. Many of them are still subjected to displacement because of actions and policies taken by government.”⁵ The paper analyses some of the reasons why the tribal people are in danger. How and why the *Adivasis* have become endangered species?⁶ It enumerates how the identity and very existence of the tribal people are at stake. The paper focuses on the tribes and the *Adivasis* of Jharkhand.

1. The Indigenous and Tribal People

The first settlers in multi-cultural societies are designated variously as natives, aborigines, tribes and indigenous. These are the people who are invariably subjected to exploitation by the later settlers. The United Nations when it decided to do something about these exploited people, chose the term ‘indigenous and tribal people’. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention of 1957, Article 1 (1) (b) No. 107 defines indigenous as “the members of tribal or semi-tribal populations in independent countries, which are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations, which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belong, at the time of conquest or colonization and which, irrespective of their legal status, live more in conformity with the social, economic and cultural institutions of that time than with the institutions of the nation to which they belong.” Similarly, Article 1 (1) (b) of the revised Convention No. 169 defines indigenous as: “Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.”

2. The Tribal People of India

The Government of India has ratified the Convention 107 of 1957, but not the Convention 169 of 1989, thus disagreeing to recognize the Tribals and *Adivasis* of India as the Indigenous Peoples of the country. The tribal peoples, whose status as Indigenous Peoples was denied by the Indian State in front of the United Nations several times yet the Supreme Court of India recognizes them as the Indigenous Peoples of India.⁷

It is disheartening and humiliating to note that the tribal peoples of India have been called by various names by non-tribals, which are often quite demeaning and derogatory. They have often given wrong picture of tribal peoples describing them as ‘primitive’, ‘illiterate’, ‘uncultured’, ‘rough’, ‘rude’. ‘savage’, ‘wild’, ‘*jungle*’, ‘half-naked’, etc.⁸ The *Sangh Parivar* uses the term *Vanvasis* for them. The term ‘*Vanvasi*’ is synonymous with the term ‘*jungle*’ and, therefore, the term ‘*Vanvasis*’ would simply and purely mean ‘forest dwellers’ with a pejorative meaning. This already shows the attitude of non-tribals towards the tribal peoples. The Tribals of Jharkhand identify themselves with the terms ‘*Adivasi*’ and ‘*Adivasis*’. These are the terms invented and used by them for their self-identity. From Sanskrit *adi* means ‘original’ and *vasis* means ‘inhabitants’. Therefore, The *Adivasis* are the original inhabitants of India. By calling the tribals *vanvasi*, Hindus and others are trying to obliterate the identity of the *Adivasis* as ‘original inhabitants’ of India.

The official selection of criteria to define the Scheduled Tribes is seriously mistaken, for its lack of correspondence with reality and for its deep-ethnocentric bias. In his report for the year 1952, the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes listed eight common features of Scheduled Tribes: (a) dwelling condition – they live in forests and hills; (b) ethnic origins – from Negritos, Australoids or Mongoloids; (c) language – tribal language; (d) religion – ‘animists’

worshipping ghosts and spirits; (e) mode of production – primitive, hunters, good gatherers; (f) carnivorous in good habits; (g) naked or semi-naked; and (h) fond of drink and dance.⁹ Unfortunately, this official characterization of the tribals has remained the same to this day.

The term ‘tribe’ is nowhere defined in a usual way in the Constitution of India. During the British rule, as seen in the 1931 census, the nomenclature referring to tribes is either ‘aboriginal’ or ‘deprived classes’. However, these adjectives were dropped in the 1941 census and these communities were termed as ‘Scheduled Tribes’ or ‘*Adivasis*’.¹⁰ Economic impoverishment and widespread illiteracy has led to categorization of some of these communities as primitive tribal communities. Stephen Fuchs, the Anthropologist, says that they are called ‘primitive tribes or *Adivasis*’ or ‘scheduled tribe’ (selected for protection and uplift). He also adds that the term ‘scheduled tribes,’ does not include all those so-called ‘aboriginal tribes’, while practically all the scheduled tribes can safely be included in the category of ‘aboriginal tribes’.¹¹

The list of Scheduled tribes is State/Union Territory specific and a community declared as a Scheduled tribe in a State need not be so in another State. The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled tribe is an ongoing process. The essential characteristics, first laid down by the Lokur Committee, for a community to be identified as Scheduled tribes are – a) indications of primitive traits; b) distinctive culture; c) shyness of contact with the community at large; d) geographical isolation; and e) backwardness. The Government of India, in its Draft National Policy 2006, records 698 Scheduled tribes in India. As per the Census of India 2011, the number of individual groups notified as Scheduled tribes is 705. The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. The decadal

population growth of the tribals from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population.

It is really an irony that a member of a tribe remains a tribal only within the state he/she is enlisted as tribe and not in other states. For example, the members of *Oraon*, *Munda*, *Santal* are denied Scheduled status in Assam on the basis that the list in Assam does not carry the names of the tribes. This is a constitutional way of defining the identity of a person and his/her community as a tribal or indigenous people. Moreover, one has to produce a certificate from the representative of the government to prove that he/she is a tribal. The identity of the tribals is at the mercy of the Government. One should not forget that one is born a tribal and does not become or made.

There is a plot in the action of the Government is clear from the fact, on the one hand it liberally signs the resolutions of the UN Conventions and on the other the Indian Government keeps denying that there are indigenous people in the country at all. As such it feels it is not obliged to abide by the decisions taken in the UN. It is a denial of the very existence of about 10 crores Indigenous *Adivasi* people. Instead they have been put in the conveniently created Scheduled tribes category and some bits and pieces are thrown at them most of which is eaten up on the way and do not reach them.

3. The *Adivasis* of Jharkhand

The state of Jharkhand was carved out of the state of Bihar in 2000. Ranchi is the capital of Jharkhand state. The state of Jharkhand came into being because of the fact that a large number of *Adivasis* live within its boundary. Presently 32 tribal groups live in the state. These are: *Asur*, *Baiga*, *Banjara*, *Bathudi*, *Bedia*, *Bijnhia*, *Birhor*, *Birjia*, *Chero*, *Chick-Baraik*, *Gond*, *Gorait*, *Ho*, *Karmali*, *Kharia*, *Kharwar*, *Khond*, *Kisan*, *Kora*, *Korwa*, *Lohra*, *Mahli*, *Mal-Paharia*, *Munda*, *Oraon*, *Parhaiya*, *Santal*, *Sauria-Paharia*, *Savar*, *Bhumij*, *Kol* and

Kanwar. Among these Santhal is the most populous tribe having a population of 2,410,509, constituting 34 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribes population of the State. The other major ethnic groups of *Adivasis* of Jharkhand are *Mundas*, *Oraons*, *Kharias*, and *Hos*.¹²

The Primary Census Abstract 2011, released by the directorate of census operation showed that the total population in the state as on March 1, 2011, was 3,29,88,134. In absolute number, the total population surged in 2011, as compared to 2001, was 60,42,305. In terms of proportion, scheduled tribe population constitutes **26.2%**. The proportion during Census 2001 was **26.3%**. There has been a decrease of **0.1%** during the last decade. At a time when there is 22.4% growth in the overall population in Jharkhand, that of the scheduled tribe, for whom the state was carved out of Bihar, has declined by 0.1%. How did the population of the *Adivasis* get reduced?

The periodic delimitation process after the decadal census is the process of politically reducing the political power of the *Adivasis*, reducing them to a minority. After the census 2001, the Delimitation Commission of India had proposed a reduction of Lok Sabha and State Legislature reserved seats for the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand. However, the *Adivasis* opposed this proposal and the Central Government has to stay the implementation of this proposal.

4. Land Acquisition, Displacement and Migration

For the *Adivasis*, land is very basis and foundation of their identity and existence. For them land is first of all a source of livelihood. Secondly, land is the basis of the *Adivasis*’ socio-cultural and religious identity. They get their social identity by belonging to their respective tribes in a special relationship with land and nature. The *Adivasis* have a symbiotic relationship with these beings and resources. Thirdly, land is also the basis

of the religious identity of the *Adivasis*. They encounter their God is His creation like in the *Sarna* (groves)

The post-independence period shows rapid economic development and social change in India through programmes carried out under the five year plans mostly in *Adivasi* areas. Under such plans, the *Adivasis* witnessed installation of large number of big and small mining and electric power units in their areas. Despite such developmental processes, their benefits did not really go to the *Adivasis* because the developmental projects opened up the flood gate of entry for people from outside the *Adivasi* areas. Thus the large industrial undertakings, gigantic hydel and irrigation projects, massive extraction of mineral resources have in fact brought about under-development of the *Adivasis* instead of their development. A large number of them were displaced from their land, which was the sole support of their livelihood.

The 'Land Acquisition Law' of 1894 of the colonial rule was kept intact for more than a century as result of which about 6 crore populations has been displaced for various projects such as small & large dams, mines, infrastructure, industries. Of them 40% are *Adivasis*. Only 25 % of them have been resettled. No one has been rehabilitated because that involves social and cultural dimensions. People are reaching a state of mind that enough is enough and have started to protest and resist displacement in more and more organized ways. It was this predicament which forced the UPA Government to pass a fresh 'Land Acquisition Law' of 2013 replacing the old colonial law of 1894.

The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (also Land Acquisition Act, 2013) is an Act of Indian Parliament that regulates land acquisition and lays down the procedure and rules for granting compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement to the affected persons in India. The Act has

provisions to provide fair compensation to those whose land is taken away, brings transparency to the process of acquisition of land to set up factories or buildings, infrastructural projects and assures rehabilitation of those affected. The Act establishes regulations for land acquisition as a part of India's massive industrialization drive driven by public-private partnership.

Hardly a year passed after the above said enactment, the new Central NDA Government has bought in 'Land Acquisition Ordinance 2014 – 2015' which has diluted the provisions of the Act, 2013. On August 31, 2015, because of the strong protest by the people, the government has withdrawn the ordinance. This is very clear sign that government is in hurry to grab the *Adivasi* land.

Jharkhand state was clearly oriented from the start towards mineral extraction. It was formed in 2000, and is known for Containing huge mineral deposits and a large *Adivasi* population with 26.2%. Interestingly, Jharkhand was not formed through the people's movements for achieving statehood - although it had a long history of resistance for this in previous decades – but at a time when the market was ready to exploit the natural resource.

The Tata Iron and Steel Company established its first steel factory at Kalimati in Singbhum district in 1907, presently known as the 'Tata Steel Ltd' Jamshedpur, and acquired the land of 24 *Adivasi* villages around the vicinity the same year. Reportedly, the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act was delayed until 1908 to allow this major forced land acquisition to go through for Tata's biggest steel plant, leaving a large *Adivasi* population and their descendents bereft. Many other industrial concerns followed suit over the years, until the intensive exploitation of minerals resources had led to a rapid industrialization of the district.¹³ Obviously this intensive exploitation of minerals has impacted negatively on the lives of countless *Adivasis* as well as wildlife.

Let us have a quick look at the situation of actual and proposed displacement and land alienation in Jharkhand during 1950-1995:¹⁴

1. TISCO: 7000 families; 35,000 persons were displaced; 3,564 acres acquired in Jamshedpur and 34,432 in Adityapur.
2. HEC (Ranchi): 12,990 families, and 64,950 persons were displaced; 9,200 acres of land was acquired.
3. Bokaro Steel Plant: 12,487 families were affected, 62,435 persons displaced and 34,224 acres of land was acquired

PEOPLE DISPLACED BY DAMS AND OTHER PROJECTS¹⁵			
Dam/irrigation projects	National Parks	PSU & Industry	Defence Projects
Maithon Dam 28030	Betla: 44480	BSL: 29615	Netarhaat: 49947
Tilaya Dam: 16120	Hazaribag: 47493	HEC: 15450	Dipatoli: 500
Panchet Dam 41467	Palamu: 192511	IEL: 1265	Hazaribag: 473
Konar Dam: 5747		BACL: 900	BSF: 479
Mayurakshi Dam 16500	Dalma: 88301	FCI Sindri: 4885	
Chandil Dam: 33865	Topchanchi: 7813	HZL: 283	
Icha Dam: 28000	Lawalong: 52785	HGL: 6000	
Koyal Dam: 53695	Koderma: 45224	Usha Martin: 169	
Auranga Dam:3745	Parasnath: 5916	Bihar Steel: 193	

Sundar Dam: 730		ACC Khalari: 128	
Torai Dam: 1730		Bokaro	
Ajay Dam: 1200		CTPS: 829	
Ghaghra Dam: 1500		Tenughat: 2279	
Bhaiba Dam: 370		BCCL: 134275	
Balsi Dam: 70		Glass Factory: 520	
Ramrekha Dam: 205		CCL: 28335	
Punasi Dam: 5000		Rajmahal Project: 7285	
		Maithon Thermal: 10000	
Total Displace: 2,37,974	Total Displaced: 496667	Total Displaced: 259551	Total Displaced: 51399

Land is at the centre of the tribal people's meaning system and the organizational system. Thus it is land, which is understood in a holistic sense, is at the root of the tribal identity. The tribal land alienation of any kind is a threat to their identity. Displacement on account of development projects has affected 15,703,017 persons in Jharkhand of which 41.0 percent are tribals.¹⁶ Similarly, tribal land alienation has occurred in Jharkhand by force and through fraudulence means by circumventing the land protecting laws like the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act 1949. Over and above, proper compensation and rehabilita-

tion was denied to the displaced *Adivasis*. Since they were ill equipped to face the new market forces, they were swept off their feet and thrown into the market for working as unskilled labourers inside and outside their own states. This has been the most tragic and painful experience of the *Adivasis* in the country as victims of unbalanced and lopsided development.

5. The *Adivasis* and Jungle (Forest)

Forests are the natural habitats of *Adivasis* as well as abode of spirits that they venerate- *Jaher and sarnas* (sacred grove). Forests also provide them their daily food in the form of roots, fruits, vegetables, meat and herbs and drug plants as cures for specific ailments and prevention of many more diseases. Forests are not simply a source of timber and fire-wood, but the very basis of their biological, cultural and spiritual sustenance as a people of certain identity, as a distinct people.

In so many ways, then, forests play a vital role in the life of *Adivasis*. Reciprocally *Adivasis* play a vital role in the protection and conservation of forests. *Adivasis* do not merely see the forest as a source of livelihood, but also treat it as their life support system. The forest defines their identity, autonomy and social security. *Adivasis* maintain a unique relationship with the forest, which involves worship of specially designated sacred groves. They have a symbiotic relationship with the forest. A renowned intellectual and leader of the 'Save the Forest Movement in Jharkhand', Dr Sanjay Bosu Mullick describes it saying, "There is a symbiotic relationship between the *Adivasis* and the forest, which is officially recognized by the Forest Policy 1988. Without forest, *Adivasis* are similar like a fish without water."¹⁷ The symbiotic relationship between *Adivasis* and their forest is being torn apart. There has been ruthless exploitation of forest resources carried out by contractors and other vested interests. Traditional rights of *Adivasi* villages over forests have been taken over by the Gov-

ernment. The government is set to throw open the management of up to 40% of the country's forests to the private sector to revive degraded forests that will further destroy complex ecosystems and deprive local communities of a livelihood.¹⁸ *Adivasis* who live in or around the forest and depend on it for their survival, are not allowed to enter or roam in it and villagers are unnecessarily harassed.

6. The *Adivasis* and Religion

The *Adivasis* have a religion of their own which they call *Adi-dharam* meaning the basis, the roots, the beginnings (*adi*) of the religious beliefs of the *Adivasis*. Such beliefs have been variously known. The Jharkhandi *Oraon Adivasis* call their religion *sarna dharam*. Despite there being similarities with the established world religions – Hinduism, Islam, Christianity – regarding the main concerns, such as, God, creation, the earth, human beings and their mutual relationships, the *Adivasis* have a distinctive and positive religious identity.¹⁹ Yet the census conducted every ten years, give to the *Adivasis* the choice of registering their religious identity under the category of “other.” Consequently, the *Adivasis* who do not identify themselves as Christians, Muslims or Buddhists are compelled to register themselves as Hindus. Consequently, the number of the *Adivasis* is declining. The census does not give the actual figures of the *Adivasis* as they are clubbed with the Hindus.

It is interesting to note the official Line on Identity in the census. 1872: The first census: Hindu, Muslim, Zews, Christian, Persian only. 1891 census commissioner JA Bens introduced a separate subhead tribal (nature worshipper); 1901: mentioned as tribal community, not as separate religion; 1911: Nature worshipper; 1921, 1931, 1941: Mentioned again as tribal community; 1951: Counted as “other religious group”; 1961: 1971, 1981: Other religious group; 2001: About 36 lakh *Adivasis* filled up *Sarna Dharam* in religious column.²⁰

The religious leaders of *Sarna Adivasis* claim that there are 42,35,786 followers of *Sarna Dharam*.²¹ Recently, *Praphat Khabar*, the local daily Newspaper published the Religion based census 2011.²²

Religion	Total Number	Total No. %
Hindu	22,376,051	67.85
Muslim	4,793,994	14.53
Christian	1,418,608	4.30
Sikh	71,422	0.22
Buddhism	8,956	0.03
Jain	14,974	0.02
Others	4,235,789	12.84
No Religion	68,343	0.21

Thus, the number of *Sarna Adivasis* is more than the Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains but still they are not given separate column in the census chart. Therefore, they are justly demanding for a separate *Sarna Religious Column*. The Indian tribals have intensified their demand for recognition of *Sarna* tribes as a separate faith by handing over a petition to the Prime Minister and Union home minister on October 6, 2015 in Delhi.²³

Sarna religion/Sarna Dharam is religion of tribals of India. They have their own worship place called “*Sarna Asthal/Ja-her*.” Some of the *Adivasis* have embraced other religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, etc. Change of religion may or may not give the tribal people their indigenous identity. According to the Supreme Court ruling, the *Adivasis* adhering to Christianity retain their tribal status²⁴, whereas those who follow other religion forfeit it²⁵. Similarly, the children borne out of the wedlock of a tribal man and a non-tribal woman have the tribal status after the wife is duly received by her husband’s community. But the children born of the wedlock of a tribal woman and a non-tribal man do not enjoy this privi-

lege as per the customary laws of the tribal people, unless the woman's tribal community has reasons to decide the matter in her favour.

Of late lot of uproar at national level is being created by what the Hindutva forces call '*ghar wapsi*' (home coming) and the reason given is that the tribal religion is part of Hinduism. This is not right and the much trumpeted *ghar wapsi* programme of the *Sangh Parivar* is a senseless and illogical exercise that tries to make the world believe that the *Adivasis* were Hindus which they never have been. This way the *ghar wapsi* campaign is a 'forced conversion' of the *Adivasis* into Hinduism and that is illegal in the prevailing law of the country. On April 8, 2016, on the occasion of *Sarhul* feast of the *Adivasis*, the Chief Minister of Jharkhand said that '*Sarna* and *Sanatana dharma* are one'.²⁶ The statement of the chief minister could be misleading to the gullible *Adivasis*. In the parliament too the ruling party is pushing towards passing an 'anti-conversion' in the States and Centre. On the other hand, the Indian Constitution in Article 25(1) clearly states "subject to public order, morality and health...all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion."

7. The *Adivasis* and Naxalism²⁷

The 'Naxal Movement' has emerged as the biggest armed struggle in India over the last four decades. According to estimation in 2007, the Naxals²⁸ were active across 170 districts of nine states. It originated in a small village called Naxalbari, in Darjeeling district of West Bengal, and quickly had a massive direct impact in many regions of Jharkhand. The Indian government launched 'Operation Green Hunt' in Jharkhand on 10 March 2011, with the objective of cleansing the CPI-Maoist from the state. Nearly 10,000 security forces, Special Task Force and other groups, were deployed in the forests, schools

were converted into security camps, forests were sealed, and combing operations were started in the forests. And very often, the security forces were targeting innocent villagers. The anti-Naxal operation created uncertainty, brought threat to life and subdued the freedom of thousands of *Adivasi* villagers in different parts of the state.²⁹

Lots of atrocities are committed on the *Adivasis* in the name of fight against Naxalism. It is a well known fact that very many young men & women are held in prison on the suspicion of being “helpers of naxalites.” The 6000 and more *Adivasis* under-trial prisoners in Jharkhand alone are condemned to languish in jail for years to come. After arresting those other penal clauses are added on. It is an easy label that can be put on any one whom the police want to catch. It does not require any proof or witness. Let us keep in mind that they are not even members of any naxalite outfit. Supreme Court says even membership in a banned organization does not make a person a criminal. It is important to remember that of those who have been arrested under UPPA and CL-17 as part of *Operation Green Hunt* (the anti-naxal operation), there has not been even a single conviction.³⁰

8. Conclusion

There is an onslaught attack on *Adivasi* existence and identity. The *Adivasis* are being targeted from each and every corner – by the Maoists, corporate houses and the State. The irony of the development process in India is that the inhabitants of the areas, where industries, mines, dams and wild-life sanctuaries are undertaken, have never been consulted about them, nor are the benefits of these projects shared with them. Even if some compensation were made, it was not always land for land. In the name of development, which benefits only a few, the poor *Adivasis* in their large number have been forced to pay a heavy cost. Every week, they are being killed, raped,

tortured, falsely implicated as Naxals and thrown behind bars.³¹ Again the *Adivasis* are deceived when Jharkhand State defines the locals as those ‘People who have been residing in the state for purposes like business, job and other reasons for the past 30 years since issuance of this notification and have acquired immovable property, their spouse and children’.³² It will be bounden duty of us all to recognize where truth and humanity lay and fearlessly stand in solidarity with the *Adivasi* people struggling for justice.

Notes

1. A Tribal scholar and regional music exponent. He was awarded the padma Shri of the year 2010 for his contribution to the field of art. He was a Vice-chancellor of Ranchi University and a member of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament. In 2007, he received the *Sangeet Natak Akademi* Award. He died in Ranchi on 30 September 2011.
2. *Prabhat Khabar*, Ranchi, April 10, 2016.
3. Tribal people of Jharkhand like to call themselves ‘*Adivasis*’; because it rightly describes them as ‘the original settlers’ of this area.. In this paper I will use the terms ‘*Adivasis*’, Tribal People’, or ‘Scheduled tribe’ as synonymous according to the context and convenience.
4. According to the census 1991, Banjara are 432, Asur- 9122, Birjia- 4529, Birhor- 8038. See Prakash Chandra. Oraon, *Land and People of Jharkhand* (Ranchi: Jharkhand Tribal Welfare Research Institute, 2003), 6.
5. Ucanews.com, August 11, 2015.
6. I am not at ease with the term ‘species’ used for the tribals.
7. The Supreme Court’s judgment on the SLP (Cr) No. 10367 of 2010 Kailas & Others Vs State of Maharashtra.
8. Fidelis de Sa, *Crisis in Chota Nagpur* (Bangalore: A Redemptorist Publication, 1975), 2.
9. Agapit Tirkey, “Pluralism and Tribals in India,” *Sevartham* 40 (2015), 14.

10. Ramanath Nayak, *Tribal Planning Process: Peoples Participation in Tribal Sub-Plan* (Delhi: Gagan Deep Publications, 2004), 37.
11. Stephen Fuchs, *The Aboriginal Tribes of India* (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1992), 11 & 13.
12. Prakash Chandra Oraon, *Land and People of Jharkhand* (Ranchi: Jharkhand Tribal Welfare Research Institute, 2003), 6-7.
13. *Forest Resource Survey, Chaibasa South*, 2006, published by the government of Jharkhand.
14. I am indebted to Stan Swamy for the statistical picture of Jharkhand.
15. Source: Figures from Jharkhand Economic Survey, Jharkhand Vikas Morcha and other sources (*Hindustantimes*, 15 August, 2015, 2)
16. Alex Ekka and M. Asif, *Development-Induced Displacement and Rehabilitation in Jharkhand, 1951-1995: A Database on Its Extent and Nature* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 2000), 95.
17. Cited in Gladson Dungdung, *Mission Saranda: A War for Natural Resources in India* (Ranchi: Deshaj Prakashan, 2015), 43. The author comes from the *Kharia Adivasi* community of the state of Jharkhand. He and his family had become the victim of violence. He is a Human Rights Activist, Speaker and Motivator.
18. *Hindustantimes*, Saturday, September 12, 2015.
19. Ram Dayal Munda, *Adi-Dharam: Religious beliefs of Indian Adivasis* (Ranchi: Jharkhand Publications, 2000), 5, 40-41.
20. *Hindustantimes*, Ranchi, October 05, 2015.
21. *Prabhat Khabar*, Ranchi, Thursday 27 August 2015.
22. *Prabhat Khabar*, Ranchi, Wednesday 26 August 2015.
23. “Sarnas to Knock Delhi door for separate Identity” *Hindustantimes*, Ranchi, October 05, 2015.

24. In *Kartick Oraon Vs David Munzni* (AIR 1964 Pat 201-206, the court held that the Scheduled Tribe status is not lost due to conversion to Christianity in the matter of inheritance.
25. According to Hindu succession Act, 1956, by the passage of time if a tribal becomes *Hinduized* he shall be governed by Hindu law. This principle has been upheld in various court cases, and Section 76 of the CNTA also provides that if a tribal is Hinduized she/he would come under the Hindu Succession Act.
26. *Prabhat Khabar*, Ranchi, Saturday 9 April 2016.
27. For this section I am heavily depend on Gladson Dungdung, *Mission Saranda: A War for Natural Resources in India*, Ranchi: Deshaj Pradashan, 1915.
28. A Naxal is a member of any of the Communist guerrilla groups in India, mostly associated with the CPI-Maoist. The term Naxal derives from the name of the village Naxalbari in West Bengal, where the movement had its origin.
29. Gladson Dungdung, *Mission Saranda*, 19.
30. Stan Swamy, "Laws in Favour of Adivasis Remain Show-pieces," *Sevartham* 40 (2015), 93.
31. Gladson Dungdung, *Mission Saranda: A War for Natural Resources in India* (Ranchi: Deshaj Prakashan, 2015), 3.
32. *The Times of India*, Friday, April 8, 2016.

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