Colonialism and Racism Uninterrupted: Evidence from India with Special Reference to the Hos of Jharkhand

Antony Puthumattathil

A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirement for a Ph.D. degree in political and social sciences, option Political Science

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Koen Vlassenroot
Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Anne Walraet
Contents

Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. 5
List of tables, figures, pictures and maps ............................................................................. 7
List of Abbreviations ........................................................................................................... 8
Maps .................................................................................................................................. 10
Prologue ............................................................................................................................. 15
Kolhan, the land of Hos, the nation-state and Adivasi resistance ................................. 15
1. General Introduction ....................................................................................................... 25
   Chapters and themes 32
   Jean-Paul Sartre: colonialism as a system, and its relevance ...................................... 36
   Racism ............................................................................................................................. 38
   Structural, cultural and symbolic violence: oppressive exploitation, discrimination and their often unintelligible reproductive logic .............................................. 40
   Adivasis being enmeshed within (‘mainstream’) colonial civic order ..................... 45
   ‘Indian elitism’ thrives on the popular Indian fatalism .............................................. 47
Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 49
   Fieldwork, sources and methods of data collection .................................................. 53
   Geographical area ........................................................................................................ 53
   Profiles of selected study villages ............................................................................. 54
   Fieldwork, and methods of data collection .................................................................. 59
2. Adivasis as State fleeing and challenging People: A Genealogy of Ideas and Practices underpinning the Politics and State in India ................................................. 64
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 65
   Mainstream versus margins ......................................................................................... 71
   State formation theories and the origins of the ancient Indian state ....................... 72
   Pre-British colonial Statecraft: colonialism and racism as praxis and process ...... 75
   Adivasi social formations as those who escaped ancient Indian statecraft .......... 78
   The shape of the beast ................................................................................................. 82
   Alternative imaginations: special reference to Kolarian (Munda) Adivasi groups .... 85
   History of State formation in Chotanagpur ............................................................... 87
   The beast among the Hos, in Hodism, the Ho ‘country’ ............................................ 93
   Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 95
3. State formation and Poverty: entrenched Elitism reproduces Poverty ................. 97
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 98
   Poverty-knowledge, concepts and analytical framework ........................................ 99
   The present Adivasi predicaments in a ‘booming’ India, a bird’s eye view .......... 103
   Development discourses and ‘development,’ linked to ‘will to improve’ .......... 105
   Household data (indicative of socioeconomic conditions) ................................. 107
   Villagers’ usual occupations and ability/ability to diversify sources of income .... 113
   Accessibility of poverty alleviation/‘development’ schemes ................................ 117
   The most deprived villagers ....................................................................................... 119
The most endowed village 'uppers'
Accumulation and differentiation: the role of the ‘state’
Poverty alleviation schemes (PAS): bio-politics and depoliticization
Conclusion

4. The State and Adivasi Middlemen: Perpetuating Ambivalence of Violence
Introduction
The theme of 'middlemen' or 'political fixers'
Studies on mediation in (Jharkhand) Adivasi contexts
Historical contexts of mediation, adverse incorporation, and social change
Adivasi middlemen, mediated empowerment, and symbolic violence
Symbolic violence and perpetuation of structural and cultural violence
Adivasi mediators, ambivalence of violence and AISE
A ‘public audit’ of Schemes under MNREGA 2005
Adverse incorporation of Adivasi leadership and social exclusion
Ambivalence of violence and middlemen
Conclusion

5. Adivasis and Powers of Exclusion: People being marginalized in their Ethno-regional Territories
Introduction
Political, economic, ecological marginality of Adivasi land
Powers of exclusion and Adivasis
Powers of exclusion, incidents of land grab opposition in Kolhan
Strategic media coverage and discrimination of Adivasis
'Intimate' exclusion
Intimate exclusion in Huringhatu
‘Intimate’ exclusion, colonial desire, and consequences
The cost of encountering state Institutions
Conclusion

6. The will to Educate and ‘Civilize’: Indian State's Efforts to educate its Adivasis
Introduction
How education perpetuates distorted praxis and process?
A short history of education in India
Education in Adivasi dominant regions of India
Pre-British colonial education in Chotanagpur and Kolhan
British Colonial era
Post-British colonial period
Adivasi resistance to the will to educate and improve
The State's Elementary Education for Hos (JEP in Kolhan)
Observations and insights from the field
Home-School Polarity
Ambivalence of violence arising from discrimination
Adivasis’ individual initiatives to overcome ambivalence of violence
Conclusion ...........................................................................................................215

7. **General Conclusion** 216
   - Important and immediate implications .......................................................219
     - Political Brahmanism or Indian elitism: chasing mirages 222
     - Adivasis and their sacral polity: an exercise of freedom ......................226
     - Understanding Indian politics, the ambivalence of violence .................231
   - Sartrean framework for undoing ambivalence of violence 233
     - Violence arising out of human interrelatedness 234
     - Freedom defines human beings 235
     - Relevance for Indian situation 236
     - Possible strategies for solidarity and confrontation 239

**After word: A short history of Adivasis’ Resistance in Kolhan and Jharkhand** 243
   - Pre-British colonial attempts, and the Hos’ Independence 243
   - Post-independence district administration and KGE *(munda-manki)* system 245
   - Colonial mode of exploitation, and the ‘civilizing’ missions 246
   - A historical sketch repression and Adivasis’ amazingly resilient resistance 249
   - Pre-British state formation and the churning among Kolarian Adivasis 249
   - British colonial intrusion, Subjugation, and Paternalism 251
   - Post-British colonial repression and Resistance 253

**References** 258

**Appendices** 297
Acknowledgements

Kolhan in Jharkhand is my second home. As the anthropologist Felix Padel has said, the humour, cheerfulness, dances, and the beauty of the people, the landscape and streams drew him to Odisha, I too am drawn by them to Kolhan and Jharkhand. I am grateful to all my friends in Kolhan and Jharkhand for your openness, support, and acceptance that have greatly contributed to the making of this dissertation. It is my experience of your joys, struggles and aspirations that have provided me with inspiration and energy to undertake this Ph.D. research.

This dissertation at the University of Gent (UGent) Belgium was made possible by a 34 months-long Erasmus Mundus (Eurindia) scholarship. I am grateful to this support. I also extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the support and help I have received from the coordinators of Eurindia scholarship both at UGent and at KTH Stockholm and others administering Eurindia project.

Preparing this thesis would not have been possible without the support and guidance of many other people.

First of all, my supervisor Koen Vlassenroot deserves special thanks. I wish to thank him for accepting me to be part of the Conflict and Research Group and for being my guide through every stage of this research. Thank you Koen for challenging, inspiring and guiding me through this journey. I also wish to thank my co-supervisor Anne Walraet for her constant support, encouragement and generous help.

Special thanks to my friend and guide Bert Suykens for his critical comments, understanding support and important insights and guidance. Thank you Bert.

I would like to thank the members of my PhD commission for taking the time to read through my work and to seat in my jury. My special thanks also go out to Barbara Verardo for her timely critical comments and insights.

I am indebted to all my friends and respondents in the study villages in Kolhan, especially the ward members and others who helped me to carryout field surveys. Also my special thanks go to the director and staff at the Tribal
Research and Training Centre for providing me with accommodation, valuable library facility and arranging logistics to travel in Kolhan.

Back at UGent, I wish to thank all my colleagues at the Conflict Research Group and the Department of Conflict and development Studies for their advice, feedback, critical reflections. Special thanks to Koen Vanrumste, the secretary and librarian at the department, who has always been very helpful.

Finally, I gratefully remember and thank my family, and Jesuit communities both in India and in Belgium for their constant support and encouragement to carry on with the work to its completion.

Antony Puthumattathil

Gent

2 April 2014
List of tables, figures, pictures and maps

Table 1 – Basic information about the five study villages .........................................57
Table 2 – Literacy rates at (regional) state and national levels (Census 2011) ............108
Table 3 – Percentage share of social- groups in income categories .......................109
Table 4 – Land availability, food security, and population in Huringhatu (V2) .......164
Table 5 – Lineages wise land ownership .................................................................164
Table 6 – Unreported trials of land grab and resistance in Kolhan .........................174
Table 7 – Enrollment & Attendance in Government Schools (Standards I-VIII) .......202
Table 8 – Educational Attainment of Population (age group 15-59) ......................203
Table 9 – Educational attainment among major Adivasi groups Jharkhand ..............204

Figure 1 – A systemic frame of Indian colonial civic order........................................84
Figure 2 – Male and female literacy rates ................................................................108
Figure 3 – Economic grouping of households .....................................................109
Figure 4 – Economic position of households in all five villages ............................111
Figure 5 – Economic position of households in all five villages (percentage) .........112
Figure 6 – Economic position of households (percentage weighted) ....................112
Figure 7 – Income diversification patterns: gainers and losers ............................115
Figure 8 – Percentage share of income groups accessing PA schemes ...............117
Figure 9 – Percentage of children's enrolment and daily attendance ....................203
Figure 10 – Educational Attainment of 3241 persons ..........................................204

Picture 1 – Sense from post-CRPF operations in Saranda villages ......................65
Picture 2 – Young men selling fire-wood for making a living ...............................115
Picture 3 – Villagers beat up land-grabbers .........................................................177

Map 1 – State-wise distribution of Adivasi populations ......................................10
Map 2 – Jharkhand State, district boundaries, and Kolhan division ......................11
Map 3 – Singhbhum in 1918 ..............................................................................13
Map 4 – Singhbhum district, forests & plains in Kolhan Government Estate ......12
Map 5 – Present West Singhbhum District with block boundaries ....................14
**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>Additional District Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADPO</td>
<td>Additional District Project Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDO</td>
<td>Block Development Officer (Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEP</td>
<td>Bihar Education Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party (a mainstream political party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRGEF</td>
<td>Backward Regions Grand Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTA</td>
<td>Bihar Tenancy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Community Development Block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNTA</td>
<td>Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPEP</td>
<td>District Primary Education program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>Forest Rights Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>Gram Panchayat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEP</td>
<td>Jharkhand Education Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMM</td>
<td>Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (a regional political party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHAR</td>
<td>Jharkhandi Organization for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP</td>
<td>Jharkhand Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Kolhan Superintended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Member of Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNREGA</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNREGS</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>Other Backward Castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Poverty Alleviation Schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESA</td>
<td>Panchayati Raj Extension to Scheduled Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>Panchayati Raj Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTI</td>
<td>Right to Information Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIL</td>
<td>Steel Authority of India Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Scheduled Castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>Sub-Divisional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Superintended of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPTA</td>
<td>Santal Pargana Tenancy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td><em>Sarva Siksha Abhiyan</em> (Education for all campaign)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Scheduled Tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TISCO</td>
<td>Tata Iron and Steel Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>Upper Primary School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maps

Map 1 – State-wise distribution of Adivasi populations according to Census 2001

Source the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India:
http://tribal.nic.in/Content/StatewiseTribalPopulationpercentageinIndiaScheduleTribes.aspx
(accessed 5 February 2014)
The district boundaries of Jharkhand state in the Indian Union

The present Kolhan division (which includes the Saraikela-Kharsawan, West and East Singhbhum district) was called Singhbhum district during the British period.

The Kolhan Government Estate (KGE) is identical with the present West Singhbhum district.

Map 3 – Singhbhum district, forests and plains in Kolhan Government Estate in 1910

Source: M.P Yorke (1976: 19)
Map 3 – Singhbhum in 1918
Map 4 – Present West Singhbhum district with block boundaries (2012)

Source: http://chaibasa.nic.in/Maps.html (accessed 5 February 2014)
Prologue

*Kolhan, the land of Hos, the nation-state and Adivasi resistance*

Kolhan or *Kol-sthan*, literally means the place of the Hos (Kol is a generic name for Kolarian/ Munda\(^1\) Adivasi\(^2\) groups and *sthan*, in Hindi, means a place). Hos are an off-shoot of Mundari speakers, who had cleared forests and settled in the northwestern part of Ranchi, the present capital of Jharkhand state, as early as sixth century B.C.E (Before the Common Era) (Thapar and Siddiqi 1979; Corbridge 1996; Areeparampil 2002). While in Ranchi, the Hos broke off their parental Munda group, and moved to Kolhan (also called Singhbhum) around the second century A.C.E. (After the Common Era). This branching out (of the Hos) was due to a gradual *transformation* in the organizational leadership of Mundas caused by processes of state formation, which perhaps had hurt the Hos’ sense of freedom (Dalton 1872, 1973; Roy 1970).

In Kolhan, they occupied a few existing villages of the Bhuiyas, who had already been there before their arrival, as well as cleared forests to establish

---

\(^1\) The Kolarian or Munda, Astro-Asiatic language group (includes Santals, Mundas, Hos, Birhors, Bhumijhs, Kharias and others) is considered to be the ‘first’ settlers of India. Sanathan Sundi, a Ho historian in Chaibasa, is convinced of this. He claims that the scripts and symbols, discovered at the sight of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, Indus Valley Civilization, resembles their script called *Varankshiti* discovered by Lakho Bodra, a Ho language pundit (personal conversation 4 November 2011). Also see Roy (1970), Mangobinda (1989), Corbridge (1996), Sharma (2007), and Katju (2011) for similar arguments.

\(^2\) Adivasi means ‘the first inhabitant’ or ‘sons/daughters of the soil.’ The term was first introduced in the 1920s by the ‘Adivasi Mahasabha,’ (the great Adivasi-council) inspired by Birsa Munda, (the legendary ‘rebel’ leader of the Mundas of Chotanagpur, who led the *Ulgulan*, rebellion against *dikus* (exploitative non-Adivasi trouble-makers, see appendix-1 on the concept of *diku*). As a consequence, the British introduced the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 to ‘protect’ Adivasi land, cultural traditions and customs, which in turn, gradually helped a political awakening among Adivasis, as being distinct social groups, to assert their territorial and ethnic rights (see Hardiman 1987; Munda and Mullick 2003). As per Census 2001, the total Adivasi population in India was 84.3 million or eight per cent of the total population, over 90 per cent of them living in rural areas scoring the lowest on human-development scale. North-eastern States have the highest tribal population followed by Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The use of the general term ‘Adivasis’, for ‘tribes’ in this thesis does not in any way mean Adivasis to be a homogenous sociocultural entity, but a multi-linguistic, religious, regional and multilayered category.
new villages. According to the Munda tradition, such villages are called *Khuntkhatti* villages. The original clearers of forests, who established such original villages are called *Khuntkattidars* (Hoffman and Emelen 1938; Roy 1970). Their traditional socio-economic, political and religio-cultural organization consists of *mundas*, the village headmen, *deuri*, the village priest, *manki*, the paramount headmen of a group of villages (called a *Pir* or *Ilaaka*) and *dakua*, the *mundas*’ and *manki’s* assistants, as main officials – still exists in Kolhan (see Roy 1970; Corbridge 1996; Sen 1999; Das Gupta 2011).

The word Ho stands for three realities: one, a person in this particular Adivasi group, second, the Ho language, and third, the people who constitute the entire group. Its etymological meaning is derived from the Mundari or Kolarian root ‘hor,’ or ‘horo,’ which means a human person. More than 90 per cent of the Ho population lives in *Paschimi* (West) Singhbhum district of Jharkhand state. Two neighbouring districts of Odisha and one or two districts in West Bengal also have a few Ho settlements. According to Census 2001, the Hos constituted 10.5 per cent of the total Adivasi population in Jharkhand, roughly 744142 people. The total Adivasi population of Jharkhand is 7087068. The same Census report enumerated nearly a million Ho (language) speakers. This makes them the fourth largest tribe in Jharkhand after the Santals, Oraons and Mundas.

By around the 10th century A.C.E., the Hos had established themselves as a very powerful people in Kolhan with extraordinary habits of fighting outsiders. Hence, they are also called Larka (fighting) Kols (Hos) since they had fought and defeated the chiefs of Porahat, Seraikela, Kharsawan, Mayurbhanj and even the maharaja of Chotanagpur (O’Malley 1910), who were part of the ancient pan-Indian networks of small-scale, feudatory, (warrior-caste) states-circles prior to the arrival of the British raj (see Bayley 2000).

**The Hos and the British**

Actual British contacts with the Hos began in 1820s. However, it all came about as the chief of Porahat, also called the Singhbhum raja, sought the British East India Company’s assistance to subdue the Hos who had asserted and gained their independence following a prolonged split within the raja families of Kolhan during 1720-1765 (Streumer forthcoming, 2014). Although the first Ho-British encounter took place in the 1820s, the actual
and complete subjugation of Hos happened only a few years after the Kol rebellion in Chotanagpur during 1831-32 (see the Afterword for more details). During 1836-37, the British East India Company, under the leadership of Captain Thomas Wilkinson, defeated and subjugated the Hos and their territory completely, and established the territory into a separate administrative unit known as Kolhan Government Estate (KGE). KGE covers the entire West Singhbhum district. The British (colonial) settlement and administrative records, such as Craven [1898] (1998), show details of 26 Ho Pirs of KGE, the Ho (Adivasi) ‘preserve’ (ethno territorial enclosure). This, according to the British, was meant to ‘protect’ and ‘preserve’ the Hos, and their way of life from ‘alien exploiters’ or dikus (aliens/strangers who are often troublesome and whose strangeness make/ make the Kolarrians suspicious) who mercilessly exploited the Adivasis of Chotanagpur, the present Jharkhand region (Jha 1964, Singh 1978, Sahu 1985).

**Hos’ claim to be ‘the sons/ daughters of the soil’ in Kolhan**

Although there were a few Jains and Bhuiyas already in Kolhan/Singhbhum before the Hos had arrived here, Hos make two strong claims to their being the sons and daughters of Kolhan: the first claim is made on political grounds and the second is more of an existential, religio-cultural and spiritual claim.

The political basis of their claim asserts the fact that they were an independent people until the British subjugated and turned their territory into one of the earliest non-regulatory districts that were meant to remain outside the domain of general parliamentary regulations under the Scheduled Districts Act of 1874. This same concept would later be carried on to the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and the Panchayats Extensions to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996, all meant in principle, to protect Adivasi land, culture and customs (Corbridge 1996, Sunder 2009, 2005a).

---

3 *Panchayats* are institutions of local democratic self-governance for the rural areas in India. Till 1993, this was a fit-for-all system irrespective of varying regional, cultural contexts and specificities. In 1996 an amendment was made to make it adaptable to specific Adivasi contexts to suit their traditional and customary practices, however, these amended provisions have not yet been implemented at the state and district levels. See Sunder (2005a & b; 2009), Corbridge (2005), Mosse (2005), Corbridge and Harris (2000) and Bandyopadhyay et al (2003) for useful analyses and explanations as to how and why PESA Act 1996 and other such lofty Constitutional ideals and development policies lose their ‘weight’ as they come to regional and local levels where they need to be translated into concrete actions that might benefit the historically marginalized ‘poorer’ people in India.
Besides these ‘protective’ regulations and provisions, is the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNTA) 1908 (to prevent land transfer from Adivasis to non-Adivasis) which was introduced as a consequence of Ulgulan, the Munda uprising during 1885-1900 (Singh 1966). Moreover, the mundas and mankis of Kolhan still hold on to what is known as ‘Wilkinson’s Rules,’ a codified set of Ho customs and traditional practices by which the Assistant to the Governor-General’s Agent, a British officer posted at Chaibasa had to administer the KGE. Wilkinson’s Rules clearly specifies the rights and duties of mundas and mankis, through whom the Kolhan system of administration functioned from 1837 to 1947.4

The existential and spiritual basis of Hos’ claims to be the ‘sons and daughters of the soil’ rests on the territorial legitimacy they derive from Ho-ancestors’ living presence symbolized by sasan (ancestral sacred graveyards). Their ancestors who first arrived here had cleared forests and established new villages, taking permission from the mother earth and spirits whom they have befriended to be guardians of villages, and who dwell in the desauli/jahera/sarna (sacred groves) of every Ho village. Ho ancestors are not only present at the sasan, but they also are brought into dwell at the ading (symbolic ancestral presence kept at the sanctuary of a Ho’s household, normally the interior of the kitchen where the food is cooked), customary practices, and collective belonging (Yorke 1976; Verardo 2003; Mundu 2003; Rachel 2009).

**The Present Status of munda-manki (Kolhan) System**

Presently, the KGE is nominally headed by an official whose responsibilities have mostly been denigrated. This officer is designated as Kolhan Superintendent (KS). Given the over importance the centralized, post-independence, bureaucratic Indian administrative system and its supposedly ‘unifying’ role in India, the territorial and administrative significance of KS and the Kolhan (mundu-manki) system has become negligible (personal conversation with N.D. Champa, a Ho, former MLA and speaker of united Bihar Legislative Assembly, 10 March 2011).

---

4 Most mundas and mankis have their personal copies of Wilkinson’s Rules translated into Hindi, laminated and kept safely. The manki residing at my study villages showed me theirs while asserting their sense of being ‘the sons of the soil’ in Kolhan (personal conversations during February 2011 at his residence).
During my conversations, in 2011 and 2013, with the present Kolhan Superintendent (KS), an Oraon (Adivasi) lady from Ranchi, I came to know that the office of the KS has been literally reduced to a show piece, devoid of any fund, function and functionary. The KS also admitted that she did not have any reliable information about the present position of *mundas* and *mankis*. Moreover, as she understood it, her role was to observe what the *mundas* and *mankis* were doing. However, the appointment of *mundas* and *mankis* or their removal from the office needs the approval of both the KS and DC (personal conversation 21 October 2013 at KS’s office). Interestingly, an attendant staff at KS’s office said, ‘She [the KS] takes a minimum bribe of ₹ 500 even from the poorest *munda* to put her signature on any document, which is all she does’ (personal conversation at the KS’ office on the same date). I have come across several *mundas* who too have made similar comments about the KS during my fieldwork in 2011 and 2013.

Moreover, indicating the perceived irrelevance of KGE, *munda-manki* (Kolhan) system, soon after the recent *panchayat* elections in December 2010, held after a gap of 32 years, the district collector (DC) of West Singhbhum said, ‘Now that the *panchayat* elections are over; and so, the *munda-manki* system could be abolished’ (personal conversation on 11 February 2011 at his office).

According to Jamdar Laguri, the *munda* of Lakhipai village of Jagnathpur block, the original 26 Ho *Pirs* have been sub-divided into 89 *ilaakas* (areas) with as many *mankis*, 1221 *mundas* and 1310 *dakua* (assistants of a *munda* or *manki*). Out of these, 22 *mankis*, 396 *mundas* and 402 *dakuas* are not officially appointed (this data is based on a surveys conducted by the *munda-manki* organization of Jagnathpur block during the year 2010-11).

Manki Shivcharan Paraya, the *manki* of Charai *Pir*, near Chaibasa has been taking much trouble to study the historical, cultural and legal aspects of Wilkinson’s rule and Kolhan Government Estate for more than two decades now; and has acquired considerable authority on these matters. He plans to set up, what he calls, a ‘Kolhan Board’ to regulate and revive the traditional style of administration in KGE. This, he thinks, would enable the Hos to revitalize the Kolhan (*munda-manki*) system (personal conversations on 19

---

5 See Mundu (2006) an interesting discussion about *manki* Shivcharan Paraya’s efforts/activities and their future scope.
October 2013 at his residence).

**Resistance and Disillusionment**

The Ho society in Kolhan (united-Singhbhum) has a very long history of struggle against *dikus* (oppressive and troublesome outsiders). As Adivasis’ relationship with the state has always been marked by their resistance to state oppression and exploitation, their experiences of brutal state-repression has instilled a kind of crippling fear in Adivasi psyche (Maharaj and Iyer 1982).

Although tribals were pressing for their rights, and restoration of their lands, they were subjected to severe repression resulting in several deaths. The mere sight of a jeep would force the whole village to turn into the forest hideouts. The parasites, their muscle, and venal government officials would carry away tribal belongings including chicks and goats. In many cases even the whole hamlet was set on fire (Maharaj and Iyer 1982: 176).

While the crippling fear, instilled in Adivasi psyche by both the British and post-British colonial repressive interventions continues to exist, there are more complex processes of co-optation (of more vocal and wealthy elements from among Adivasis) into ‘mainstream’ state-system. This was also characteristic of the ‘natural’ process of state formation during pre-British colonial times as powerful Adivasi chieftains adopted ‘high’ caste/ Rajput life-styles and values (Sinha 1962, 1965, 1982; Thusu 1980; Thapar1999). The post-British colonial state-system continues to co-opt Adivasi elites mainly by its affirmative action policies for the ‘creamy lair,’ and bio-politics (variously called ‘tribal development’ and ‘poverty alleviation’ programs) for marginalized Adivasis. Ghosh (2006) calls these policies as ‘inclusive and exclusive governmentality,’ of the post-British colonial state in India; Banerjee (2006) calls their effects as the ‘double bind’ of Adivasis; and Basu (2013) has shown, what she called, ‘politics of recognition’ instead of ‘redistribution’ resulting from such discriminating inclusive-exclusive governmentality. Others have also noticed and tried to understand it variously (see Sengupta 1982; Chaudhuri 1982).

---

6 *Diku* means a stranger who creates *dikkat* (trouble) for Adivasis. The negative connotation is derived more from the ‘unknown’ factor. For example, traders have usually been *dikus*, but not enemies. A *diku* would be identified on the basis of both ethnic and behavioural factors. Accordingly, some Hos might also turn *dikus* when their behaviour resembles that of a troublesome alienating outsider/ stranger. Similarly, an outsider may, by his/ her amenable/ trustworthy behaviour, be accepted as an insider as well (Verardo 2003). See Appendix-1 on the concept of *Diku*. 
This double bind of Adivasis is somewhat made clearer by Simon (1982), ‘On the one hand, it represents the pursuit of politics of a middle class aspiring to its own growth within the relatively protected confines of a state. On the other, it poses the entire question of the incapacity of the tribals to adapt to the market society and the money making ethos, with all its hypocrisy, inhumanity, and ruthlessness towards nature and people alike’ (Ibid.: 229). A more realistic picture of what actually happens to Adivasis’ resistance movements and their emerging leadership in a system of colonial mode of super-exploitation and racism (the main theme of this thesis), I reproduce one of my most recent e-mail conversations with Xavier Dias (XD), an activist and writer who has spent most of his life in Kohan and Jharkhand.

‘A Sad Day for the Real Jharkhandi People (31 October 2013)’

29 years ago (on the day Indira Gandhi was also murdered) here in the forest of Bandgaon Singhbhum Jharkhand one of our comrades Lal Singh Munda (Adivasi of the Munda tribe) was gunned down by non-Adivasi Bajrang (Hindu right wing) activists. The killers were also a group of landsharks. In the midst of Bandgaon the Munda community had their ancestral sacred graves and grove. Bajrang wanted to build a temple for Hanuman (Monkey god) there, and Lal Singh Munda being the Chieftain of the village, protested. His wife Josephine Hamsay was carrying their fourth child.

Lal Singh Munda was a Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) activist and it was during the good times of this political organisation when they were leading the ‘Zamin wapas andolan’ (we are taking our forest land back movement).

Few today remember the history behind this killing as the JMM has now become a part of the ruling class of the State and uses each anniversary to booster their political image. Josephine Hamsay is entitled to a pension and a job from the State as her martyred husband was declared a freedom fighter, but like the hundreds of wives of martyred Jharkhand Heroes she has received nothing. Her youngest son (who was in her womb when her husband was killed) was three years ago picked up by the Paramilitary and declared a ‘Maoist supporter/informer’) he suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be in an asylum for treatment.

Josephine phoned me just now and was telling me how difficult it was for her to organise these annual programmes as she does not have a job and only depends on agriculture and forest gathering. Yet tomorrow all the netas (politicians) will drive up to that mountain top in Bandgaon, in their white-starched clothes and their red beacon top SUVs, expect to be given a free lunch by Josephine. This is the pathetic situation of what happens when a strong militant mass movement gets deviated after its leaders opt for ‘Rajniti’ and abandon lokniti (ruling class power over people’s power). Johar! XD.

The above text succinctly presents the transformation of Adivasi politics and leadership. My focus in this thesis is on the complex processes involved in these transformations. The following words of Chumru, a Ho politician,
former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), and presently an active local leader of Congress party, are revealing in this context.

It is not that politicians like me do not know anything about Adivasi history, protective legislations and rights; I know quite a bit of everything. However, we, the political class, have our limitations: to conscientise the rural masses – to educate, organize and agitate as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said – is a long-term process. We do not have the time and resources for that; our resources are limited. First of all, it takes a lot of resources, efforts and time to prove oneself to be able to stand for elections and to get elected. Once elected, our main work is to keep our key supporters (clients and patrons) in good humour and to try to recover the resources we have invested during the limited period of five years since you are never sure if you get a second chance. Within such constrains, our success lays in skilfully navigating between various stakeholders: top leaders of the party, the competing industrialists who control the party decision with their money power, bureaucrats and other demanding clients. To antagonize any of them is in our least interest. Moreover, the specific and substantial grievances and demands of the Hos of Kolhan get little attention in the larger political canvas at the state and national levels (personal conversation with Mr. Chumru, 20 August 2011 at Chaibasa).

Chumru’s words clearly bring out the ‘constraints’ of not only an Adivasi politician, but also Indian politics and politicians in general, who ‘represent’ India’s marginalized social groups.

The latest anthropological reading of Adivasi resistance in Jharkhand goes as follows:

Tribal identity has become a tool of protest, and ethnic symbols such as bow and arrow are now associated with political campaigns launched by the Jharkhand parties. Subtle sighs of resistance appear when Adivasis organize demonstrations in the Ranchi streets, or when they stage conflicts in village theatres while knowing that the message is not understood by the Hindu castes. Resistance also implies “to play tribal” as when children are asked to perform dances before officials, and caricature their “tribal culture.” This everyday resistance is directed against hegemonic values of high castes that show contempt towards Adivasis, seen as “jungly.” Other forms of resistance articulate political claims and the idea that Adivasis should be part of decision-making regarding the exploitation of natural resources (Carrin 2013:117).

This text succinctly and eloquently presents the nature of contemporary adivasi resistance in Jharkhand. Adivasis, thus, have a very long legacy of state-led super-exploitation, oppression, resilient resistance and disillusionment.

Researcher’s Personal Experiences and Inspirations

My contact with the Hos began in 1991 when I attended a month long Ho
language course at Lupungutu where I felt inspired to engage more deeply with the Hos and the Hodisum (the Ho country), and so to learn their language. Since then, while doing further studies in commerce and philosophy, etc., I have kept visiting Hodisum and have stayed at Ho households in villages especially during summer vacations. Thus, this work is inspired by my several years of close association with the Hos and other marginalized social groups in Kolhan, which began more concretely in 2000 with my involvement with a yearlong, Jesuit-inspired non-formal rural education program undertaken by Tribal Research and Training Centre (TRTC) Chaibasa. TRTC then had this program in about 200 rural hamlets/villages spread out in five Community Development Blocks (CDBs) in West Singhbhum district. We regularly visited these hamlets that had non-formal literacy centres or ‘night-schools’ and interacted with the young and old villagers as part of the program, which also helped further enhance my knowledge not only of Ho language but the Hos’ village organizations, culture, traditional customs, lifestyle, festivals, everyday anxieties and struggles. However, I also have several experiences of being suspiciously perceived as a diku by Hos who did not know me personally.

In 2001, I moved to Ranchi for a four-yearlong theological studies program in Adivasi context. During this period, I had several opportunities to participate not only in celebrations of Adivasi cultural festivals such as Karam, Sarhul, Ba’, Hero, etc., but also in protest demonstrations mainly against land alienation and displacement due to large-scale ‘development’ projects such as Netrahat field-firing range (Tigga 1994) and Koel-Karo (hydroelectric) dam (Bharti 1991). My stay in Ranchi has given me opportunities to interact and engage with other dominant Adivasi groups of Jharkhand such as Santals, Mundas, Oraons and Kharias. In 2005, once again, I joined TRTC for another two years. During this period, I have had regular and close interactions with Ho villagers, as I took personal interest, besides my assigned job at TRTC, to promote Self-Help Groups among Ho men who sold fire-wood to supplement their household expenses during lean season. TRTC then had its integrated community development program, and watershed development programs of Jharkhand Tribal Development Society (JTDS), funded by both the Jharkhand Government and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

**Academic/ Research Background**
During the academic year 2007-08, I joined the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) for an integrated MPhil-PhD program. Towards the end of the academic year 2007-08, I undertook two household-level surveys, at two different rural Ho villages (Patatarob of Tonto block and Baralagia of Khuntpai block), in view of my MPhil dissertation to better understand the Hos’ livelihood strategies and related issues. However, as I completed the field survey, I was lucky enough to receive the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship by the European Commission for an advanced Masters-Program in Cultures and Development Studies (CADES) at KU Leuven Belgium during the academic year 2009-10. Based on the survey data and field-based experience, I wrote my master’s thesis for CADES: ‘Development Discourse and the Adivasis in Rural India: Special Reference to the Hos of West Singhbhum District, Jharkhand.’ As I completed the CADES program, I was awarded the same scholarship for the present PhD program in Political Science, which began on 23 September 2010, at the University of Gent (UGent).
General Introduction

_In the colonies the truth stood naked, but the citizens of the mother country preferred it with cloths on: the native had to love them, something in the way mothers are loved_


_The ‘new’ nations of Asia and Africa somewhat understandably insisted that the right to self-determination extended only to situations of ‘classic colonialism’, available to their ‘peoples’ only once in history: to determine their collective status as sovereign states within the meaning of international law. That right, once exercised, was extinguished for all times; this presumed that the ‘logic’ of colonialism, which made all sorts of different peoples, cultures, and territories vessels of imperial unity, should continue in the post-colony … Rightless and suffering peoples still remain._

(Upendra Baxi 2002: 36)

_The true ethical test is not only the readiness to save the victims, but also - even more, perhaps - the ruthless dedication to annihilating those who made them victims._

(Slavoij Žižek 2002: 60)
State-society relationships in India, according to Akhil Gupta (2012), are characterized by structural violence. He expounds a 'deformed ethics of the state in India' which has kept a large proportion of its peoples in dire and killing poverty. Hence, he argues that 'extreme poverty should be theorized as a direct and culpable form of killing made possible by state policies and practices' (Ibid.: 5). While such callous violence has been perpetrated on deprived/marginalized peoples, there exists a general indifference from the part of the establishments towards such violence. More interestingly, while the extreme suffering of people is being routinized, the very people who suffer such violence ostensibly hold the key to state-power in the world's largest democracy (Ibid.).

In Gupta's analysis bureaucratic arbitrariness, inscription and expediency constitute structural violence – 'social arrangements' – with no specific perpetrator: 'a crime without a criminal' (Ibid.: 21). For him bureaucratic procedures involve corruption, inscription and literacy. Hence, the nature of governmental practices dissipate the state's pronounced lofty goals of helping the 'poor'. 'Poor' peoples' lives are affected by corruption: their engagement with local officials and arbitrary bureaucratic practices of inclusion and exclusion inevitably result in further exclusion and suffering. Hence, Gupta concludes that the notions of bureaucratic efficiency and transparency in India would remain deficient to overcome poverty, unless 'poor' people's imagination of the state is altered via 'political literacy' and negotiations with the bureaucracy to extenuate violence.

Furthermore, at the epilogue of Gupta’s book, he states that the structural violence embodied by the idea of the state in India has been most sharply evident while the state engages itself with Adivasis, the country's 'poorest' people: ‘with tribal groups one sees the logic of primitive accumulation – which depends on the dispossession and displacement of people already living on mining lands – with sharp clarity’ (Ibid.: 290). ‘The pattern of growth after liberal “reform” will ensure that the poor continue to be killed against the backdrop of a shining India’ (Ibid.: 294).

Gupta's work is commendable to have acknowledged and, to some extent, exposed the prevalence of structural violence and suffering being inflicted on the 'poorest' people in India. However, what remains largely mystified in his analysis are the source and nature of what he termed a ‘deformed ethics’ that
enable the continued existence and reproduction of structural violence. Hence, his analysis tends to suggest that structural violence has an existence of its own devoid of any ideological instrument that forges human agency to shape specific forms of sociocultural processes and history. This thesis, hence, intends to pick up what Gupta has left undisclosed: the historical and ideological roots of racism and colonialism as praxis and process being at work in India, which might be at the root of structural violence in India. This thesis attempts to explicate a few naturalized and religiously legitimized aspects of racism and colonialism in India by historicizing the category ‘Adivasis’ or ‘tribals,’ presently one of the most marginalized social minorities in India.

It is crucial to note that the term ‘Adivasi’ as a ‘minority’ category originated in the early 1930s as a corollary of Indian nationalist movement led by a few elites from among the nationalist majority. Interestingly, however, while historicizing the category Adivasi as ‘indigenous’ people of India, beyond British and Mughal colonial periods, they emerge as the majority, although in the course of history, they have been reduced to be the most deprived minority today. This thesis attempts to explore some of the processes and praxes underlying these transformations as an essential aspect of state-

---

7 Adivasi means the descendants of the ‘original’ inhabitants in India (Xaxa 1999). Hardiman (1987) argued, people who called themselves Adivasis did not fit in the broader term ‘subalterns’ which the proponents of subaltern studies employed roughly to represent all the ‘lower’ castes as opposed to the ‘upper’ castes sovereigns. Omvedt (1988) showed, although the term ‘Adivasi,’ as Hardiman (1987) had noted, came into existence in Chotanagpur in the 1920s-30s, it holds much ‘similarity to other “Adi” movements of the 1920s and 1930s mainly among ex-untouchable groups (Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Andhras, Adi-Hindus, Adi-Dharam, etc.) all of which had a common ideological claim of being the original inhabitants who lived in a society of equality until subjugated’ by some dominant groups (p. 2001). However, terms such as ‘Adivasi,’ ‘tribe,’ ‘tribal’, and ‘Scheduled Tribes,’ are all debated for their origin, connotations, representational and analytical applications (see Rachel 2009). Ram (2012) argues that the term ‘Dalit’ encompassed all those people categorized as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and ‘Backward’ Castes, although in the current political discourse, it is mainly confined to Scheduled Castes (formerly untouchables) and covers only those who are classified as Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists while excluding Muslims and Christians. Ilaiah (2010) conceptualizes all the so-called ‘lower’ castes, including, Dalits jointly referred to as *Dolitbahujans* (meaning the oppressed majority people of India). For a more recent and succinct discussion on the politics of terms like ‘tribal’ and ‘Adivasi’ see (Rycroft and Dasgupta 2011). I use the term ‘tribes’ and ‘Adivasis’ interchangeably, in this thesis, with a consistent preference to the latter, since this is both a peoples’ self-description and a political choice/ statement by itself (see Roy Burman 2009).
formation in India. Unravelling these complex and conflict-ridden historical processes enables deeper, critical and innovative insights into the nature of what is often referred to as Indian national ‘mainstream.’ For ‘history is precisely, applying a present consciousness to the past. We view the past through the prism of the present, in the hope that this will help us understand the present through the prism of the past’ (White 2012: 212). White has also argued that ‘a margin defines a page.’ In this sense, I argue, that the Adivasi (and Dalit) margins in India define the ‘mainstream.’ ‘In many ways,’ argues White, ‘the history of the minorities is that of the nation-state: that is the history of the processes that led to certain groups to be defined as ‘minorities’’ (Ibid.: 210).

The Constitution of India has categorized Adivasis as ‘Scheduled Tribes,’ interestingly however, it has not defined the concept. Instead, it has thrown out a few ‘essential’ characteristics to identify them: ‘primitive traits, geographical isolation, distinct culture, shy of contact with community at large, and economic backwardness.’

8 'Scholars and policymakers, have never agreed on a definition of tribal person or tribe, leave alone the appropriate relationship between such communities and the Indian state' (Stuligross 1999: 2). However, one of the most recent anthropological works on Indian societies has this to say about Adivasis and mainstream:

for scholars of postcolonial studies, ‘tribes’ are much a colonial invention as ‘castes’ and they do not deal with tribal societies except as colonial subjects. The subaltern studies group did contribute to research on tribal communities as one example of ‘peasant rebellion’. However, as postcolonial studies, those who were concerned with tribal societies in connection with general theoretical and comparative issues, are rarely acknowledged in pan-Indian discussions. … The status of tribes or Adivasis remain contentious. … Theories of Hinduization or Sanskritization, that is, the question of the transformation of communities, have been out of fashion for a while. However, in our view, related questions have not been solved and the relationship between different communities – ‘Hindu’, ‘tribal’ and others – deserve more attention (Berger and Heidemann 2013: 6-7).

The Indian government recognizes Adivasis as ‘indigenous people,’ however, when it comes to providing them with the rights that indigenous peoples enjoy elsewhere, the representatives of Indian Government would tactfully say that all people in India are indigenous (Xaxa 2008; Kela 2006, 2012; Fernandes 2013; Bourne 2013). This thesis neither argues for or against

Adivasis’ indignity nor attempts to define people categorized as Scheduled Tribes. What it does instead is to historicize Adivasi social formations as people who refused to be subjugated and colonized by the ancient Indian, ideological statecraft which was based on the principles of ‘purity’ of the sovereigns and ‘impurity’ of the toiling ‘masses.’ By doing so, it explicates some of the complex and long-drawn historical processes by which Adivasi social formations have come to be India’s most impoverished minority groups today, and how some of these complex and long-drawn historical processes work themselves out even today in Adivasi dominant pockets, also called ‘Scheduled Areas.’

Hence, the main thrust of this thesis is to show the nature and shape of Indian statecraft manifesting itself while it interacts with its Adivasi social formations. Thus, the thesis shows that the state in India, while interacting with Adivasis, bears close similarity to a typical colonial system, conceptualized by Jean-Paul Sartre (2001, 2004), as praxis and process. The praxis of oppression according to Sartre: domination, violence, alienation, legitimate defence of violence by racism (justificatory violence), and eventually the colonialist and the colonized forming a couple, producing antagonistic situations by one another. This praxis keeps the masses in a molecular aggregation to increase their sub-humanity, including, a religious policy favouring the most superstitious elements; an educational policy designed not to educate the ‘colonized’ in the colonizers’ culture and simultaneously to deprive them the possibility of becoming educated in their own culture, etc. (Ibid.).

The process of exploitation, according to Sartre: the colonizer makes the colonized to work for him at starvation wages; chronic unemployment (or

---


10 The concept ‘state’ in this thesis has to be understood anthropologically: ‘the state is not a discrete, monolithic entity acting impersonally above or outside society. Rather, the Sarkar – indifferently “state and government” in the commonest Indian vernacular terms for them – appears on many levels and in many centres, and its lower echelons at least are always staffed by people with whom some kind of social relationship can or could exist; the “faceless bureaucrats” actually do have faces’ Fuller and Benei (2001: 15).
semi-unemployment), undernourishment and population pressure, and poverty create a competitive antagonism, and hampers infrastructural and industrial development. The colonized should be nothing more than a labour force, which can be bought for less and less. Poverty, disease, competitive antagonism characterize their wretched existence. High birth-rate and inertia-violence put in place by the presence-institutions, a metropolitan army, a praxis which occasions inorganic inertia amongst the colonized masses to deprive them of any possibility of reacting, even by admiring their oppressors and seeking to become like him keep then ensnared in endless struggle (Sartre 2004: 716-734).

A pitiless and violent system: ‘the impotence-revolt of the masses and the inertia-violence of the army, both deserve the name of ‘praxis and process’ (Sartre 2004: 725).

Thus, the thesis shows that the world’s largest democracy’s apparent contradictions in its processes of democratization might be better understood when it is analyzed as a ‘colonial civic order' (CCO) whose genealogy goes back to ancient times. It shows that colonialism and racism in India originated with the emergence of what is called the rise of ‘Hindu elitism’ (Saha 1986: 277) or ‘political Brahmanism’ (McClish 2009: sic). From the later Vedic phase (c. 1000-500 B.C.E.), a gradual and complex process of social transformations began to set in. Consequently, more flexibly organized social formations began to turn into hierarchically arranged social order with graded inequality; and along with it, the idea of the Indian state emerged in the alluvial plains of the subcontinent (Sharma 1958; 1959; 2007). The Hindu elitism stresses the ‘purity’ of those came to be considered as *dwija* (‘twice born’) as against the ‘impure,’ majority toiling masses who came to be

---

11 The term colonial civic order (CCO), a term employed by Thompson (2000: 1), designates ‘the broad arena in which states and citizens interact.’ This thesis uses both ‘mainstream’ and ‘colonial civic order’ interchangeably to refer the broader arena of state-society interactions in India to show the fluidity of interactions and negotiations while recognizing the blurred boundary between state and society. The term colonial civic order also signifies the continuity of colonialism from ancient times till date. It also implies that no colonizer imposes colonial structures (or system of rule) unilaterally, but it involves, as do most other political systems, constant negotiation of power relationships and identities (Ibid.). Such negotiations often came across via direct physical violence, but during ancient times, they occurred more routinely via everyday religio-cultural ideologies and practices and interactions. In ‘modern’ times, they occur across desks and tables, dominant discourses via newspapers and other mass communication media, movies, and sports, etc (Ibid.).
considered as ‘once born.’ This correlates well with Sartrean formulation of a perfect colonial system:

the colonists are human beings by divine right, and the natives are subhumans. That is the mythical interpretation of a precise fact, since the wealth of the former depends on the extreme poverty of the latter. This exploitation makes the exploiter dependent upon the exploited. And, on another level, this dependence is at the heart of racism; it is its profound contradiction and bitter misfortune. .. for the colonizer, being a man means first of all being superior to the colonized (Sartre [1964] (2005: 37, emphasis added).

‘The Brahmanic social order is structured to secure and preserve the total dominance of a small elite; for the domination of the rest of the population’ (Saha 1994: 66-7).\textsuperscript{12}

The Indian elites’ attribution of ‘purity’ to themselves and their act of distancing themselves from the rest of the toiling populations are termed in this thesis as the original forms of Indian colonial desires that would set the Indian elite on an endless cycle of ‘chasing mirage.’\textsuperscript{13} Young (1995), in the context of classical European colonialism, has shown ‘the emergence of colonial desire in history, its genealogy and its disavowal in the history of racialized thought.’ Young’s (1995) \textit{Colonial Desire} shows how humans operate in complicity with historical ways of viewing ‘the other’ (Ibid.: ix). Said (1978) has discussed the discursive performance of colonialism and challenged the traditional self-devaluation while comparing cultures and the complicity between politics and knowledge. Bhabha (1983) has elaborately discussed ambivalence as an unhealthy psychological position caused by colonial domination. He has described it as a continuous wavering between wanting one thing and its opposite. Authenticity of the colonial subject gets

\textsuperscript{12} Saha (1986 and 1994), and Sharma (1958, 1959 and 2007) ascribe the later Vedic transformation of Indigenous societies affected also by Aryan invasion theory (AIT). However, I do not subscribe to AIT since several controversies and political strings are attached to it (see Elst 1999). On applying Sartre’s existential explanation of social histories and colonialism as a system to the nature and trend of present day social transformation taking place in Adivasi dominant regions, I explicate the praxis and processes of racism and colonialism being at work in India historically.

\textsuperscript{13} See Breman (2010) for an explanation of the idea of people moving from ‘smaller’ places to ‘bigger’ places in pursuit of economic and political gains (\textit{Lakshmi}, a popular pantheon of wealth, honour and good fortunes) while the ‘once born’ or ‘impure’ ones being condemned to strive in their traditional marginal spaces experiencing relative deprivations. See Lindguist and Handelman (2013) for a discussion on how religion and politics interact in a globalized ‘modern’ world. See also Vinina (2012) for interesting discussions on the ideology and worldview or ‘mindscape’ of mediaeval Indian society and culture.
fluctuatingly modified in relation to others. Spivak (1987) too has traced the roots of cultural politics to classical colonialism.\footnote{14}

As already mentioned, this thesis historicizes Adivasis, who at this juncture of history, still hold on to their alternative imaginations of more egalitarian social relations, power, sovereignty, governance and development (some of which still survives as antidotes to an ever intruding capitalist Indian statecraft driven by political Brahmanism) to avoid the state (Shah 2007, 2010). While doing so, it shows that the state in India embodies colonialism and racism, of the most ancient types, which lay at the origin of both the Idea of the Indian state and Adivasi social formations. Undoubtedly, Adivasis’ present avoidance/ escape of the ‘modern’ all-encompassing state brings them only multiple disadvantages: displacement, dispossess, and disintegration of their sociocultural systems. Moreover, Adivasi elites’ ambivalent participation in the colonial civic order while excluding their ‘intimate’ co-villagers to subhuman status further aggravates such multiple disadvantages and degradation. Nevertheless, the thesis concludes that a better understanding of Adivasis’ and other such marginalized social groups’ alternative imaginations and sociopolitical philosophies might help redefine the prevalent constructs of civilization, modernity, freedom, development and politics, which might, perhaps, help reverse the colonial desires that keep alienating people from each other.

What follows in the rest of this introductory chapter (1) is: first, short thematic summaries of chapters, second, Sartre’s formulation of colonialism as a system and its relevance to analyze pre-classical colonial systems in so-called ‘postcolonial societies,’ third, the concept of racism, fourth, concepts of structural, cultural and symbolic violence and their reproductive logics, fifth, the unaltered Indian system of colonialism and racism, sixth, methodology, seventh, methods of fieldwork and sources of data, and finally, researcher’s assumptions.

\textbf{Chapters and Themes}

\footnote{14 It is, however, intriguing to see how and why the last two famous scholars of Indian origin, and several other Indian diaspora scholars, have refused to look at the millennia-long homegrown colonial-style super-exploitation, oppression, and their ill-effect on marginalized and exploited Indian populations. See Express News Service (2013) for an interesting report on Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen getting disturbed while the students at the University of Hyderabad forced him to speak on ‘Caste and not on Coffee.’}
Adivasis as state-fleeing and challenging people (Saha 1986, 1994; Scott 2009), and the (Indian) state a colonial system, ‘an infernal machine of the practico-inert field (Sartre 2004: 228-52). The second chapter applies Sartre’s conceptualization of colonialism as a system with racism inherent in it as an ideological instrument that mystifies its oppressive logic and outcomes to the jati/ caste-ridden Indian history. While doing so, it reconceptualizes Adivasis (in ancient India) as peoples who had deliberately chosen to escape the jati/ caste-based racist and colonial praxis and process that had been maturing in the alluvial plains of the subcontinent at various time in ancient history. Later in the course of time, several Adivasi groups established themselves into powerful distinct social groups/ kingdoms with alternative modes of production, social organizations, religio-cultural practices, and languages in largely autonomous, forested and mountainous regions (Sinha 1982; Saha 1986, 1994; Skaria 1999; Kela 2012). It further, shows how the advent of Mughal and British colonialism conjoined with pre-British Indian colonial ideology to make the trajectory of westernization/ modernization and sanskritisation, a certified model for social change in India to the gross detriment of Adivasis who chooses to reject this particular trajectory of state-formation and social change propelled by political Brahmanism.

Adivasis’ chronic poverty and destitution as the other side of the ‘detached’ affluence of Indian elites who adhere to political Brahmanism. The third chapter shows that despite nearly seven decades of ‘tribal development’ and poverty alleviation programs, chronic poverty and destitution among the most marginalized Adivasis in India have only deepened. This situation has been brought about by two main processes. First, the processes of Indian colonialism in Adivasi dominant regions like Kolhan, and Jharkhand where more than a quarter of the country’s mineral resources have been found, and extracted, which does not benefits the majority inhabitants of the place. Second, the very process of state formation that encourages individual accumulation, differentiation and co-option of the relatively ‘affluent’ Adivasis into the system. Furthermore, the chapter also shows how the huge amounts of state-resources that are being allocated for ‘development’ or ‘poverty alleviation’ (in the form of bio-politics), do not only depoliticize and

expand the bureaucratic control over the so-perceive ‘unruly’ or ‘dangerous’ deprived classes, but also aggravate inequality and create new social divisions. A situation has been set in place by the very processes of state formation whereby the affluent accumulate multiple advantages while the most marginalized and economically poor accumulate multiple disadvantages.

*Emerging Adivasi leaders, and their mediated empowerment are being caught up (in a deadlock) of ambivalence of violence which reproduces colonialism and racism.* Sartre’s analysis of colonialism also shows that the colonialists recruit and maintain kinglets who derive their power solely from the prevailing colonial ideology and govern on its behalf to the disadvantage of the majority subjugated ‘masses.’ Thus, colonialism creates masses but prevents them from becoming a conscious proletariat by mystifying them with the caricature of their own ideology’ (2001: 136). The fourth chapter’s focus is on Adivasi middlemen or power-brokers or cultural interpreters. It shows how those accumulating and differentiating affluent Adivasi individuals continue to be retained as ambivalent mediators by the very logic of the system. Emerging leadership among Adivasis via acculturation and differentiation inevitably internalizes dominant discourses, language and socio-cultural practices due to the absence of adequate tools to critique and challenge the system that devours Adivasis as a distinct people. The system enables this process by what Bourdieu (1990) termed *symbolic violence* to explain cultural production. Processes of cultural production and co-option results to ‘Adverse Incorporation and (‘intimate’) Social Exclusion’ (AISE) (Hickey and du Toit 2007). Such incorporation involves ambivalence/duality of introjection (Freire 1987; 2000). Bourdieu (1991, 1994, and 2000) argues that it involves misrecognition. AISE produces and maintains *ambivalence of violence* which is constitutive of a colonial system.

*The state embodies powers of exclusion, facilitates ‘intimate exclusion’ which invites these powers into Adivasi ethno-regional territories that are ostensibly protected by the same state.* Land has been crucial to Adivasi social formations for their sustenance as a people as their identity is tied to land, water and forests. However, alienation of Adivasi land, that are mostly mountainous, and by now denuded forests, have also been found to possess rich mineral resources. Hence, despite Adivasi dominant regions being labelled as ‘protected’ ethno-territory meant to provide exclusive access to
Adivasis, they have been reduced to typical colonies that supply raw materials for the ‘development’ of an imagined ‘Indian nation.’ The fifth chapter, thus, shows how ostensibly protected Adivasi ethno-territories have become territories of multiple exclusion (as its inhabitants are ‘disabled’ to be beneficiaries of their own land) while others take disproportionate advantage by increased extraction of mineral and forest resources. It explicates the processes of super-exploitation and pauperization of Adivasis by the four powers of exclusion: regulation, force, market and legitimation. These powers act jointly and make their way into Adivasi ethno-territories aided by those Adivasis who accumulate and differentiate themselves from their co-villagers, who share the same history, tradition and cultural values. The processes of individual accumulation and differentiation (encouraged by the processes of state formation) have been termed as ‘intimate exclusion’ or ‘exclusion from below’ (Hall et al 2011: 20-23).

Education of Adivasis clearly negates Adivasi identity, cultural values, and history to be replaced by the Indian Ideology and facilitates adverse co-option of affluent Adivasis into Indian colonial civic order. According to Sartre (2001, 2004), a colonial system necessarily ‘attempts to bar the colonized people from the road of history’; so also in India, Adivasi children are denied their language rights, the means to revive their socio-cultural, values, and systems and to know their own history (Bijoy 2003) by way of imposing a centralized education system, one of Indian state’s main apparatuses to maintain the age-old colonial system. Chapter six focuses on school education in Adivasi dominant regions. It shows how Adivasi children in schools are indoctrinated into dominant values and discourses to condemn themselves for being ‘backward’ Adivasis, how a highly centralized education system has sought to erase Adivasi history, sociocultural values, language and their distinct alternative imaginations of who they are – Adivasi subjectivities. On the one hand, such an alien education system produces resistance among deprived Adivasi children who find it hard to cope with such violent processes of ideological imperialism, on the other hand, to make things worse, Adivasi children’s resistance to this imperial education has once again been misjudged and depicted as their inherent distaste/ inability to be ‘educated’.

Towards breaking of the the systemic process of colonialism and racism that reproduces itself through structural, cultural and symbolic violence. The
final and concluding chapter-7 sums up the main arguments and insights, delineates the important implications of the main arguments, and suggests theoretical and methodological approaches to undo structural, cultural and symbolic violence emanating from a hitherto uninterrupted colonial system (caste/jati based discrimination and oppression). These have been embodied in the naïve and rhetorical garbs of ‘national unity,’ ‘development’ and ‘integration.’ The concluding section, thus, highlights the challenge, and alternative possibilities to provide useful analytical tools to foster solidarity among deprived social formations to recognize and confront the powers of exclusion being operationalized via political Brahmanism, and to promote radical democratic and revolutionary changes.

Jean-Paul Sartre: Colonialism as a System, and its Analytical Relevance

Sartre (2004) [1956] explains colonialism as a system which embodies racism, operating at different temporalities involving time-lag – from ancient-day state systems to modern-day capitalism. Although Sartre’s inspiration of such a path-breaking analysis was in the context of French colonialism in Algeria, his emphasis is on the existential and systemic basis of colonialism, which makes his analytical frame applicable/relevant beyond special and temporal specificities (Howells 1995; Sartre 2001). Moreover, he shows a remarkable understanding of the differences of perspectives and need on the question of land and agrarian problems – the appropriation of land, issues of resettlement of displaced peoples, and landlessness in general – that have been central to many postcolonial countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Catalano 1986; Sartre 2001; Jameson 2004). Colonialism, according to Sartre (2001; 2005), embodies an intentional and systemic form of oppression and exploitation that could be analyzed as such.

Sartre explicated the dialectic of négritude by his phenomenological theories of race. His relationship with Martinican intellectual and revolutionary Frantz Fanon made him an activist and a theorist of decolonization. Sartre’s theories of race, self, and society constitute a remarkable sociology of culture inspiring insightful reflections on contemporary postcolonial studies (Jules-Rosette 2007). Sartre said in 1948, ‘Négritude [is like] … living as a woman who is born to die and senses her own death even in the most rewarding moments of her life’ (Ibid.: 245). The same might be said about the status of a large section of Dalits and other such marginalized people in India who
have suffered untouchability being practiced by the so-called ‘upper’ castes in India (Teltumbde 2010; Omvedt 2011).

To understand colonialism and racism with their historical and systemic basis, Sartre (1958) provides a phenomenological explanation of human histories, aggression, violence and conflict. He begins with ‘scarcity’ as the initial structure of the human world (or being) which is negated and transcended by human needs – experiences of lack and desire, of hunger and thirst which represent human condition, as existence precedes essence (Jameson 2004: xviii). Violence and aggressivity are explained in terms of the situations of perceived scarcity, which is a negation in itself, and must be negated by human action, individual as well as organized. This is the fundamental project or praxis, involving pure reciprocity which forms a cohesive in-group. However, tension arises when, in the course of migration, members of a tribal group comes across a strange tribe. ‘They suddenly discover man as alien species, that is, as a fierce carnivorous beast who can lay ambushes and make tools’ (Sartre 2004: 107).

‘In pure reciprocity, that which is Other than me is also the same. But in reciprocity as modified by scarcity, the same appears to us as anti-human in so far as this same man appears as radical Other – that is to say, as threatening us with death’ (p. 11-12) While an affinal in-group employs generosity, cooperation and the like to negate the initial fact – the situation of perceived scarcity – the threatening ‘Other’ is kept away as evil and dangerous to be done away with. This summarizes Sartre’s conceptualization of the origin of human histories – as many histories as there are as many modes of production and social relations/structures and ways of life.

Thus, the fundamental human project or praxis – a dialectical process of initial negation of scarcity – is intertwined with a counterfinality inextricably conjoined with the finalities of human action and production, a ‘disjunctive ontological synthesis’ (Jameson 2004: xvi). This force of counterfinality produces practico-inertness, ‘objects which are not mere things and agencies which are not exactly people either’ (Jameson 2004: xxii). It is a position to which humans can be reduced due to the ‘immeasurable brutality people visit

16 This also is in line with the argument that ‘racism must be understood to be a nexus of material relations between populations presumed to be essentially different’ (Harrison 1995: 47).
on other peoples within the world of scarcity’ (Ibid.). The ‘other’, thus, reduced to objects/ or to a subhuman status, in the course of historical processes, are treated as such. ‘The domination of power turns the subject into an object, (a practico-inert) position’ (Young 2005: xv). Hence, for Sartre, colonialism accompanies racism understood at its phenomenological level rather than as an ideology. ‘Phenomenology is able to conceive of the manifold vulnerability of the subject’s embodiment as an irreducible component of human existence’ (Staudigl 2007: 238).

**Racism**

‘Racism, – the grouping of people on the basis of physical appearance for the purpose of social discrimination’ – is although a cultural artefact, the product of a particular historical and cultural context, a part of the belief systems, arises from distinct historical, social and cultural dynamics. It is a learned cultural phenomenon and an acquired characteristic, real enough to produce dire socioeconomic and political consequences (Perry 2007: 1-2). Although, race is a social construct, like class and gender, it has an independent effect on social life. ‘Once racial stratification is established, race becomes an independent criterion for vertical hierarchy in society. Thereafter, different races experience subordination and super-ordination in society and develop different interests’ (Bonilla-Silvia 1997: 475). ‘Racism indeed destroys individuals’ potential for self-determination, inasmuch as it defines them in threatening terms of non-human animality, savagery, or barbarity’ (Staudigl 2007: 250).

Racism, as an ideology, involves certain complexity, especially, in its reproduction. Its expression always interacts with the extant of economic and political relations with other ideologies, hence, an analysis of racism must account for its multidimensionality and historical specificities. It also retains a central place in the historical development and contemporary structure of capitalist societies (Miles and Brown 2003). Everyday racism, however, is a process in which: ‘(a) socialized racist notions integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (b) practices with racist implications becomes in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations’ (Essed 1991: 52).
Solomon and Back (1996) have suggested not to view racism as a specific or monolithic structure of ideas, rather as a phenomenon ‘constructed and reconstructed through time and space by social action.’ Racism involves reifying minority communities as static and unchanging cultural and political collectivities, and establishing new patterns of segregation that limit everyday interaction (with the racially defined). Minority communities not only get excluded unequally with differentiated citizen rights, but also reproduce, by imitation, the differentiating patterns of the majority. Thus, racism is ‘a flexible and constantly changing ideology’ integral to human social relations (Ibid.: 219).

Sartre’s quest, however, was to uncover how ideology works in and through the individual in society. What makes a racist a racist? What is the experience of racism for those oppressed by it? Accordingly, he established that it was the settler who had brought the native into existence and who perpetuated his existence (Young 2005: x). For Sartre, all types of colonialism involve racism. While elaborating the systemic violence of colonialism, Sartre carefully differentiated between ideology and colonialism: the former remains insidiously instrumental in maintaining the systemic violence of the latter’s oppression.

Colonialism denies human rights to people it has subjugated by violence, and whom it keeps in poverty and ignorance by force... Racism is inscribed in the events themselves, in the institutions, in the nature of the exchanges and the production. The political and social statuses reinforce one another: since the natives are subhuman, the declaration of Human Rights does not apply to them; conversely, since they have no rights, they are abandoned without protection to the inhuman forces of nature, to the ‘iron laws’ of economics (Sartre 2004: 50).

This is the basic context of violence, structural, cultural and symbolic and its systemic reproductive effects.

---

17 Žižek (1989) explains the insidious instrumentality of ideology: ‘it is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its existence that is the social effectivity, the very reproduction of which implies that the individual do not know what they are doing. Ideology is not the false consciousness of a (social) being but this being itself in so far as it is supposed by false consciousness. ... An ideology is really holding us only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality – that is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the modes of our everyday experiences of reality itself’ (Ibid.: 15-16, 49). ‘The idea of the possible end of ideology is an ideological idea par-excellence’ (L. Althusser 2006 quoted in Žižek 1989: 15). For more on how ideologies influence our daily life, see Eagleton (1991).
Sartre further elaborated the dialectical relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Thus, he showed how the oppressed is brought into participate in a colonial system: ‘a pitiless reciprocity binds the colonizers to the colonized, their product and their destiny’ (Ibid.: 5). The colonizers and their victims both remain strangled within the colonial apparatus. Thus, the very logic of colonialism would lead not only to the self-destruction of the system, but to the affirmation of the colonized ‘national selfhood’ (Haddour 2004: xxi). In such a situation, ‘freedom is constituted by taking responsibility to transform oneself back into an agent’ in pure reciprocity,18 ‘ethics of individual freedom, of responsibility and authenticity within the larger processes of history’ (Young 2005: xv).

To be respectful when something singular arises, to be intransigent when power offended against the universal . . . . It is always necessary to watch out for something, a little beneath history, that breaks it, that agitates it; it is necessary to look, a little behind politics, for that which ought to limit it, unconditionally (Foucault, 1999: 134).

Here Foucault is stressing the importance of history or genealogy, as he terms it, of power and domination to understand what is going on in the present. According to him, ‘only a single drama is ever staged…. the endlessly repeated play of dominations’ (Foucault 1980: 150).

**Structural, cultural and symbolic violence: oppressive exploitation, discrimination and their often unintelligible reproductive logic**

Staudigl (2007: 249) defines violence as ‘an intended violation of the embodied claims posed by embodied subjects.’ He agrees with Sartre (2004) in showing phenomenologically that violence is an inevitable outcome of human action as humans are embodied intersubjective beings. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgis (2008) argue violence to be nonlinear, destructive, reproductive and even productive; it occurs in a chain or a continuum of mutual violations among humans. Its variations such as structural, cultural, symbolic, direct, and domestic violence are closely related as they might easily get translated into each other. Structural violence is synonymous with exploitative unequal power relations which results in poverty, hunger, social exclusion and humiliating discrimination that negatively affect individual and communal living. Hence, beyond its physicality, force, assault or pain,

---

18 Pure reciprocity in human relations is love for love, intimacy for intimacy, trust for trust as opposed to the purely ‘utilitarian’ relation of human beings to one another, and to nature (D’Mello 2012).
violence has various other dimensions. A violent assault on persons denies them dignity and self-respect, to which the social and cultural dimension of the violent action attributes further power and meaning. (Galtung 1990; Žižek 2009).

However, violence is not *sui generis*. Moreover, persons placed at various positions in society may perceive violence as ‘depraved’ or ‘glorious.’ One may admit, in the final analysis, that violence is a human condition, but it is present as a potential capability in all humans as its opposite: the ability to reject violence. Hence, ‘violence is not an essential, universal, sociological entity, a residue of our primate and prehistoric evolutionary origins as a species of hunter-killers’ (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgis 2008: 2). Humans are embodied social beings, hence, social relations, structures, cultural practices, ideas and ideologies shape human actions, including, violence in all its dimensions both in its expression and repression. Thus, ‘most violence is sadly not senseless at all;’ and yet, ‘breaking the vicious circle of violence, and counter-violence is an incredibly difficult project’ (Ibid.: 3, 27). Most of ‘both traumatic violence and other, more insidious forms of social suffering’ arise, at least, partly from their socio-culturally perceived instrumentality19 (Das 2001: 3).

**Types of Violence**

As violence is difficult to define so also are its recognition and classification.

Violence can be everything and nothing; legitimate or illegitimate; visible or invisible; necessary or useless; senseless and gratuitous or utterly rational and strategic. Revolutionary violence, community-based massacres, and state repression are often painfully graphic and transparent. The everyday violence of infant mortality, slow starvation, disease, despair and humiliation that destroys socially marginalized humans with even greater frequency are usually invisible or misrecognized (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgis 2008: 2).

The most common types of violence fall under three headings: (1) structural violence that is produced systemically; (2) physical/ subjective/ direct

---

19 One of the main limitations of this study is that it has not explicitly dealt with the issues of violence and oppression from Adivasi women’s perspective. There is no doubt that Adivasi women face multiple exclusions and burdens within several of the issues discussed in this study, and perhaps Adivasi women even hold different perspectives on them. However, there are already a few studies that have focused specifically on Adivasi women’s issues exclusively (see Kishwar 1987; Das and Das 1992; Kelkar et al 2003; Rao 2008; Talmaki 2012; Jadhav 2013).
violence, the most commonsensical form of violence produced by identifiable subjects, e.g., visible violence such as insult, and killing; and (3) symbolic violence that of language based on the master signifier: patterns of social life encoded within language, insofar as, they reify relations of domination via hegemonic discourses (Žižek 2009).

For example, symbolic violence – the sociocultural dimensions of violence which is inherent in hegemonic forms of discourses – often remains unnoticed and goes unchallenged, whilst it not only amplifies the feelings of shame and guilt in ‘victims,’ but also puts both the ‘victim’ and the perpetrator in a position of ambivalence (Schepa-Hughes and Bourgis 2008).

Ambivalence arises from the interpretation of simultaneously present opposed forces that press towards opposing courses of action both on the societal and individual levels. It has both normative and performative aspects: the ways in which opposing values are shaped by social practices and discourses and the institutional and individual strategies of dealing with it. Structural ambivalence prompts the politics of ambivalence. The politics of ambivalence is the processes by which certain social positions are structurally spared; high degrees of ambivalence allows for an integration of opposed courses of action more easily at the expense of other positions (Lorenz-Mayer 2001: 18).

Ambivalence about violence also emerges partly from an explicit or implicit dichotomy between legitimate/ illegitimate, permissible or sanctioned acts of violence. Ambivalence results and prevails, for example, when the ‘legitimate’ violence of the militarized state is differentiated from ‘unruly,’ ‘illicit’ violence of revolutionaries. Commonsense often contains conflicting and opposed themes and values: the general understanding that people should be merciful and that justice should be dealt serves a conflicting duality in a person (Billig et al 1988).

**The Current Global Context of Economic and Political Violence**

At the global level, Farmer (2004), Žižek (2009) and O’Neil Jr. (2009) discuss the existence of systemic/ structural violence of colonialism and capitalism with their political, economic, cultural, and physical dimensions. Inequality is considered as ‘one of the major forms of structural violence based on the idea of dominance – imperialism’ within and among nations and nation-states. There are economic, political, military, communication and cultural imperialisms (Galtung 1971: 80). The ‘class-oppressed,’ the socioeconomically poor, are the infrastructural expression of the process of
oppression. The other group represents the ‘super-structural’ expression of oppression; and because of this, they are mutually conditioned (Ibid.: 81).

Oppression is the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice… oppressions are systematically reproduced in the major economic, political, and cultural institutions… Factors that contribute to the maintenance of oppression are: the superior power of the dominant group; the social production of meaning in the service of legitimating oppression; the self-fulfilling prophecies arising from oppression; and the distorted relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor (Deutsch 2006: 10, 15).

Furthermore, most political theorists agree that violence is the most glaring manifestation of power; and the struggle for power underlies all politics as echoed by Max Weber’s definition of the state: ‘the rule of men over men based on the means of legitimate, that is, allegedly legitimate violence’ (Arendt 2008: 236). It makes more sense while linking it with Marx’s formulation of the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class. Furthermore, a government that is ‘not held to give account of itself, rule by Nobody is clearly the most tyrannical of all, since there is no one left who could even be asked to answer for what is being done’ (Ibid.: 1933). The violence of politics, according to Sartre, is most tyrannical and yet invisible in the colonial system of capitalism.

The Uninterrupted Indian Colonialism and Racism

Weber [1905] (2012) in his Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism explained how the Protestant ethic of the 16th and 17th centuries animated the origin of modern capitalism including the secular, urban and industrial world of today.

Weber insists that social scientists must seek to understand the activities of others contextually by reference to the world in which they live and the nature of their motives for acting. Scholars must do so especially when investigating groups living in distinct epochs and foreign lands… Moreover, if carried along by powerful social groups, many patterns of religion-oriented action formulated long ago, he contends, cast long and wide shadows. Indeed, their impact in some cases may endure into the present, even though these patterns of action may today be underpinned by entirely non-religious motives (Ibid.: xii, emphasis added).

In a similar manner, Bodley (2011) highlights the processes of prevalent ethnocide, genocide and ecocide through an anthropological critique of ‘firmly held cultural beliefs and practices about the growth and progress that threatens the well-being and continued survival of humanity in the twenty-first century. He urges, ‘an exploration of the relationship between growth, scale, and power through human history and periphery caused by the
collective social failure to restrain the natural individual drive to increase personal social power at the expense of others’ (Ibid.: xiii).

Given the opportunity, unrestrained aggrandizing individuals will use culture to transform society to benefit themselves and their direct descendants. Elites will alter people’s perceptions of reality. They will manipulate cosmologies and technologies to create the belief that elite-directed growth is natural and inevitable, even though it disproportionately concentrates social power and makes everyone else pay the costs (Ibid., emphasis added).

Keeping Weber’s [1905] (2012) and Bodley’s (2011) insights as relevant for Indian situation today, this thesis attempts to apply Sartre’s (1958) philosophical foundation of human histories to draw a genealogy of the ancient idea of politics and state in India. Sharma (1959, 2001; 2007) has discussed a gradual transformation of more flexible and egalitarian social formations and consequent emergence of a powerful group signified by a brutal cosmology found in the Rig Vedic practices and texts. Later, a religiously justified ideology of the ‘purity’ of the dwija (‘twice-born’) being advanced in brahmanical texts, while a polluting ‘impurity’ being imposed on to the ‘once-born’ to keep them permanently at a sub-human status devoid of all human rights (Kelkar 1909; Blunt 1969: sic; Klass 1980; Cob 2007; Kane 2007; Waughray 2009).

The Vedas, the sacred book of the Hindus, have been in existence since 1500 BC, which makes the caste system at least 3500 years old. It is the longest living social hierarchy in the world, the first and oldest known form of systematic discrimination on the basis of birth, which in modern times has been labelled ‘racial discrimination.’ … Discrimination on the basis of race and on the basis of caste are not the same; the religious justification and the lack of identifiable physiognomic difference between the modern caste groups being the essential difference (Kane 2007: 267-8).

Thus, the jati caste ideology of social subjugation, stratification, and oppressive exploitation of ‘impure’ toiling ‘masses,’ who were progressively being reduced to subhuman conditions (practico-inert status, Sartre 2004) within several subcolonial systems of ancient state-circles in the alluvial plains of Indian subcontinent (Saha 1986, 1994), have hitherto prevailed largely unaltered (Ambedkar 1946; Sharma 2007; Rege 2013; Anderson 2013; Thapar 2013). While British colonialism not only relied on this age-old ideology to advance itself, it also contributed to solidify a more fluid social reality into more specific categories which further reified caste-based discrimination as a system. However, in post-British colonial India, despite the practice of untouchability being made Constitutionally illegal, the dominant ruling coalitions, have deliberately undermined the crimes of
obvious discrimination and oppression have regularly been committed on the weaker sections of society on an everyday basis (Paswan and Jaideva 2002; Sadang 2008; Ilaiah 2010; Teltumbde 2010; Roy 2014).

Moreover, the ruling elites in India have continuously argued that caste discrimination was not the same as racial discrimination and that caste based discrimination was indigenous to India, although proved otherwise by the discriminatory practices of Indian diaspora elsewhere (see Pinto 2001). Recently, the UK government has passed a law against caste-discrimination in April 2013, and similarly, the European Parliament has passed a resolution on the same issue on 10 October 2013.20 Thus, structural and cultural violence have not only emerged and continue to prevail as a natural and ‘desirable’ system by the Indian elites, but have also been canonized, especially, by the privileged groups (Paswan and Jaideva 2002; Sharma 2007; Sadang 2008; Ilaiah 2004; 2010; Ayyar and Khandare 2013; Anderson 2013).

**Adivasis being enmeshed within (casteist ‘mainstream’) colonial civic order**

While structural violence remains symptomatic of a homegrown colonial system with its ideological vehicle inherent in the cultural fabric of the Indian subcontinent, the Indian elites look at it as a source of elusive unity and social order. However, most elites remain oblivious to the suffering and hardship of those who have been subjected to structural and cultural violence and how the system reproduces them.

The texts that have survived from the early period are generally those of elite groups. There are hardly any written sources from those marginalized by mainstream society – women, dalits, forest dwellers [Adivasis], and lower castes. … Resort to the more influential ‘literary turn’ as it has been called, is apparent in some of the writing of the subaltern historians, but this is restricted so far to analyses of modern times (Thapar 2013: 17-18).

Adivasi social formations, whom this thesis conceptualizes as people who escaped the ancient racist/caste-based state-systems of the plains but have been progressively acculturated and unequally incorporated in to the colonial civic order during ‘modern’ times, have so far been treated separately by academics and policy makers. Thapar (2013) argues, ‘seeing the changes as historical process involves the need to integrate the contribution of such

---

20 See Ghildiyal (2013) and Menon (2013) for reports on the UK and European Parliaments passing resolutions against caste-based discrimination respectively.
alternative social forms] and groups to the making of Indian history, a contribution still waiting for recognition’ (Ibid.: 16). In this context, the following vignette helps understand how deeply Adivasi social formations have become unequally enmeshed and acculturated into the casteist mainstream and hence, they can no longer be treated independently of the casteist ideology.

On 16 December 2011, I encountered an experience during a short (one hour) train journey from Chakradharpur to Manoharpur, along the Mumbai-Howrah main rail-route. As I got into a 'third-class' compartment of the train, Mantu, an Adivasi youth of about 26 years old, who was seated on the (same) berth beside two non-Adivasi men, suddenly got up from his seat and requested me to sit where he was sitting, i.e., on the same berth with those two non-Adivasi men. He himself then shifted to a seat at the opposite berth on which two of his own friends, who were also travelling with him, were sitting. After having sat on the seat he offered, I casually asked Mantu, 'Why did you want me to sit here, and not on that seat where your friends are sitting?' He answered, 'Sir, bare-log (great people) must sit together and chhote-log (small or less great people) together. Obviously, he took me for a 'great' person (soul) along with those two non-Adivasi men who had already been sitting on this same berth. I further asked him, 'But why do you say; or how do you make out a person’s ‘greatness’ or ‘smallness'? Do you figure it out by their physical make up or some other criteria?' 'No sir,' he replied, ‘some people are born great and others small.'

Conversing with Mantu till the train arrived Manoharpur, I learnt that he belonged to the Munda Adivasi society that had different notions of death, birth, life after death, ancestors and community (Mundu 2003; Verardo 2003; Rachel 2009). He had studied till matriculation and dropped out, since he could not pass his examination. He was travelling to Rourkela, a nearby city in Odisha on the border of Jharkhand, where the second biggest steel factory is situated. There in Rourkela city, he worked as a casual labourer (under a contractor) to earn a living. During monsoon season he also cultivated rice with his family at his home village, quite interior from suburbs such as Manoharpur which has been an important (iron-ore) mining-town.

The above episode shows how Mantu who belong to a distinct Adivasi tradition comes to internalize and participate in certain aspects of the world-
view suggested by brahmanical ideology which normalizes graded inequality of people as ‘great’ and ‘small’ based on birth/rebirth – the popular Indian fatalism (Banaji 2013). Such fatalism in India continues to remain one of the most obvious and natural explanations for ‘poorer’ people’s suffering as well as the elite's affluence amidst chronic poverty, malnutrition, disease, hunger-deaths, and other such violent and cruel deprivations. Mantu’s case makes the process of Adivasis’ acculturative and unequal assimilation into the caste-animated colonial civic order clearer.

‘Indian elitism’ thrives on popular Indian fatalism

The popular notions of fatalism to explain the given social inequalities in India as some people being born ‘great’ and others ‘small’ has a lot to do with discipline and orderliness of the toiling masses. It provides a basic but socially degrading stability whereby capitalism can thrive. It is an ‘intact symbolic trust, of individuals not only accepting their own responsibility for their fate, but also relying on the basic ‘fairness’ of the system – this ideological background has to be sustained through a strong educational, cultural apparatus’ (Žižek 2008: 2). In India this essential ‘symbolic trust’ has been set in place long ago, and it still continues intact (Chattopadhyaya 1985; Sahu 2001; Thapar 2004). The questions of power and powerlessness in such a system have been unquestionably treated as part and parcel of a (discursively) constructed ‘Indian culture’ (Devalle 1980; Ilaiah 2004; Metcalf 2010). If the Hindu society were a mere federation of mutually exclusive units, the matter would be simple enough. But caste is a parcelling of an already homogeneous unit, and the explanation of the genesis of caste is the explanation of this process of parcelling.’ (Ambedkar [1916] (2004: 133). This simultaneously parcelled ‘unity’ makes the analysis of power seemingly unnecessary and difficult, especially in marginalized/ impoverished Adivasi dominant regions (Rew and Khan 2006).

The national culture of unquestioned obedience to authority along with an acceptance of shoddiness must not be used as an excuse to overlook violations of corporate ethics. ... It is in our culture to respect authority. We are taught from childhood to listen and obey our elders. We grow up with the notion that our managers, the function heads

---

and business heads within our respective organizations, know more than anyone else. Hierarchy is revered, authority is seldom questioned. Those who dare to ask questions are renegades (Thakur 2013: 1).

In ordinary circumstances questions such as, why and how, about the ‘greatness’ or ‘smallness’ of people are seldom raised since the culturally produced submissive behaviours of the deprived ‘masses’ in India have naïvely been upheld as an inalienable aspect of India’s ‘great’ and long tradition. Such notions have been canonized and glorified by a rhetoric of India being a ‘traditional,’ ‘spiritual’ and ‘peaceful’ nation, having certain ‘unity in diversity.’ However, these rhetoric ‘level (unifying) of cultural forces are under erroneous assumptions that cultural uniformity will solve the problem of socioeconomic inequality in India’ (Devalle 1980: 29; Namboodiripad 1982, Randeria 2006; Banerjee 2006; Anderson 2013).

Mantu’s perception and unquestioned acceptance of people’s ‘greatness’ and ‘smallness’ hints at how Adivasis, who have so far been ‘othered’ and considered to be aliens to the colonial civic order, are brought to introject the values of jati caste-based (graded) inequalities.

Hence, by conceptualizing the processes of jati caste based rigid gradation, stratification and racial discrimination of the economically ‘poorer’ people, especially, Adivasis and Dalitbahujans (Ilaiah 2010), as process and praxis of colonialism and racism, this thesis shows how these marginalized groups are systemically reproduced and why the majority among them continue to exist so marginalized. The thesis also argues that the continued existence of huge numbers of marginalized and impoverished people, and their imposed practico-inert status in various parts of the country to this day testify to the continued presence of racism and colonialism as praxis and process throughout Indian history.22

While Ghurey’s famous definition of Adivasis as ‘backward Hindus’ (Ghurey 1963: 19) initiated an ongoing debate about national ‘tribal’ policy whether to

22 See Arora (2013) for an interesting discussion on the Indian elite’s caste-based discriminatory practices, Parmar (2009 a & b) for reports on discrimination of Dalits in Gujarat, Rao et al (2013) for caste-based riots in Uttar Pradesh and the state’s role in them. ‘The global Slavery Index 2013 by Australia’s Walk Free initiative caused hardly a ripple here [in India]. The index put India as the country with the largest number of modern day slaves but there was no outrage, no collective horror’ (Janu 2013: 1). Also visit the websites of ‘Round table India’: http://roundtableindia.co.in, and ‘Swaraj’ http://cgnetswara.org for numerous reports on outrageous discrimination of Dalits and Adivasis all over India.
be paternalist isolation or assimilation or integration, S.L. Doshi’s (1972) statement – ‘The force of tribal labour must be organized on a racial basis, leaving aside the political interests’ (quoted in Devalle 1980: 38) – clearly expressed deliberate strategies to exploit and pauperize Adivasis, while at the same time, depoliticizing the issue. This corresponds well with Sartre’s formulation: colonialism and racism as praxis and process (2001; 2004: 716-74).

Furthermore, the successive policy documents\(^2\) have continued to treat Adivasis as ‘backward’ if not ‘primitive’ in accordance with dominant pre-British, British and post-British colonial racial notions and discourses (Charsley 1997; Mosse 2005; AIPP 2010). While this being the general pattern of the Indian state’s approach to its Adivasis, successive Adivasi resistance movements and their leaders, demanding self-determination, autonomy and control over the resources in their own lands and territories, have either been physically eliminated or co-opted (Mullick 1993, 2004; Iqbal 2012) by the very logic of the Indian colonial system. ‘But the politics of privilege is useful in co-option and pacification of the most vocal section, and the middle class in Jharkhand has fulfilled this expectation of the ruling class at least in part’ (Ghosh and Sengupta 1982: 242). Moreover, the post-British Indian state’s responses to constructive resistance and people’s movements for social justice and human rights has been characterized by its consistent efforts to seduce, divide, coerce, repress, and most importantly to co-opt the most vocal and leading elements of such movements. ‘The leadership of most social movements have been co-opted by concessional treatments’ (Kapoor 2004: 55). This thesis attempts to show how all of these follow a pattern that is akin to a perfect colonial system as outlined by Jean-Paul Sartre.

**Methodology**

In his *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Kosambi [1957] (2009) advocated the application of Marx's *dialectical materialism* to study Indian history in order to be better able to adequately explain the continuing presence of poverty and destitution of vast numbers of the marginalized

---

\(^2\) Most policy documents on Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India can be found here: [http://ncst.nic.in/index.asp?langid=1](http://ncst.nic.in/index.asp?langid=1) (06 September 2013).
Indian populace. In this connection, he has hinted at the emergence of the most 'vigorous' and 'dominant' group in the course of India history and their gradual advancement throughout the alluvial plains, which proved to be detrimental to most indigenous groups that had already been living in India. Furthermore, Kosambi has also discussed briefly the continued presence of 'tribal remnants' all over India, who have 'stubbornly' remained food-gatherers, but were continuously intruded by dominant groups involving processes of mutual assimilation, a peculiar characteristic of Indian culture and history (Ibid.: 14-20). While taking Kosambi’s proposal seriously, I choose Sartre’s (2004) *Critique of Dialectical Reason* to re-conceptualize ancient Indian history embodying ‘racism and colonialism as praxis and process’ (bid: 716-44) and the Adivasis as people who escaped this pitiless system in the alluvial plains of India.

Concerning methodology, Sartre (2004), has combined Hegelian idealism and Marxian materialism together to form a processual understanding of knowledge. By this combination, Sartre restored a dialectical ‘spirit’ to Marxian materialism whereby the substance of knowledge is constituted by the interaction of both the real/ideal (‘spiritual’) and the empirical/material as two distinct and dynamically interlinked ontological categories. The recognition of this dynamic interaction of the two (contradictory) ontological categories, he argued, must be the starting point of knowledge. Putting the same idea in a simpler form Žižek (2008) states, ‘We shall be driven from doing to knowing and from knowing to doing in the unity of a process which will itself be dialectical’ (p. 40). ‘Social theory,’ Žižek continues, ‘is not just the conceptual grounding of practice, it simultaneously accounts for why practice is ultimately doomed to failure… At its most radical, theory is the theory of failed practices: “that is why things went wrong…”’ (Ibid.: 3).

Sartre’s definition of freedom, as the most important factor that unites humanity, would further clarify the essentially dialectical nature of possible human knowledge. For Sartre, freedom is the hallmark of being human. Human freedom is not only the unique human capacity to critically and ethically reflect upon his/her own thoughts or reasoning but also the most important factor that unites humanity. Hence, to be authentically human is to be able to reflect upon one’s desires, perceptions, cognition, thoughts and actions (the unique human characteristic of self-reflexivity) and to reform one’s relationship by engaging in authentic reciprocity (dialogue). It involves
oneself in a continuous dialectic of being and becoming. Humans are essentially dialectical beings: Being involves a continuous process of becoming, which is made possible by freedom (critical self-reflexivity).

We are the same because we emerged from the clay at the same date and through all the others; and so we are, as it were, an individual species, which has emerged at a particular moment through a sudden mutation; but our specific nature unites us in so far as it is freedom. This fraternity is not based, as is sometimes stupidly supposed, on physical resemblance expressing some deep identity of nature. If it were, why should not a pea in a can be described as the brother of another pea in the same can? We are brothers in so far as, following the creative act of the pledge, we are our own sons, our common creation (Ibid.: 437).

When human interactions are devoid of freedom and authentic reciprocity, the other becomes merely a means. Here lies the initial negation of human dignity by which the other is made into an object or being reduced to a subhuman status. Such an objectified humanity, by the praxis and process of distorted reciprocity, is continuously reduced to subhuman-ness, thus, forming an 'anti-dialectical system of super-exploitation,' a 'practico-inert structure, a passive contradictory reciprocity of conditioning' (Ibid.: 734). Thus the system, an infernal machine of practico-inert, is established with its‘accounts of schism and functionality, of the passive activity of the institutional practico-inert – hierarchy, and externalization of authority, [marked by] the emergence of the sovereign, and serial obedience – seems to conflate and to identify together… The state itself is a reified group-in-fusion which has established itself within a milieu of seriality' (Ibid.: 437).

Both, those who constitute practico-inertness: the inauthentic bourgeois we-subjects, and the alienated and reified majority group, we-objects, need to negate the negation of inauthenticity (Sartre 2004) to regain their ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human (Freire 2000). 'It must be proved that a negation of a negation can be an affirmation, that conflicts – within a person or a group – are the motive force of history...' (Sartre 2004: 15).

Adopting the Sartrian logic of dialectical reason not only enables a better understanding of the process of caste/ jati based discrimination and exploitation as a system of racism and colonialism which still continues unaltered, but also a more realistic historicizing and re-conceptualizing of Adivasi social formations as ‘distinct’ peoples who hold on to their alternative imaginations of equality and cultural and human dignity. This is
precisely because the colonial civic order continues to be animated by the
unquestionable ‘purity,’ and unlimited affluence of the dominant ‘twice born’
and the perpetual deprivation, penury and servitude of the ‘impure’ or ‘once
born’ (see Ambedkar 1946; Blunt 1969; Guru 2001; Ilaiah 2010; Teltumbde
2010; Roy 2014).

However, while the systemic colonialism keep producing scarcity, conflict,
subjugation, racism and super-exploitation of the objectified ‘masses,’ on the
one hand, certain leading elements from among the objectified ‘masses’ have
selectively been recruited to expand the scope of super-exploitation, on the
other, whereby the colonized becomes colonizers. In such an extremely
complex scenario, one must be extremely careful and attentive to be able to
explicate the processes by which unequal power relations are reproduced,
entrenched, mystified and maintained. And hence, it becomes increasingly
clearer that ‘no single or unitary frame-work of concepts or underlying theory
would fit the facts. … The divisions of caste, between Brahmans, non-
Brahmans, and Adi-Dravidas, as well as those of class, between landowners,
tenants, and agricultural labourers, were both important, that they were
mutually irreducible … the mutual irreducibility of class and status’ must be
kept in mind (Béteille 2008: 3-4).

Furthermore, ‘caste was [is] not merely a social hierarchy but was inherently
linked to issues of domination and subordination. The interlining of higher
and lower through intermediate categories in the hierarchy prevented a
confrontation between the dominant and the subordinated’ (Thapar 2013: 6).
This insight goes along well with Ambedkar’s (1916) warning about the
difficulty of analyzing and demystifying how castes emerge and reproduce
and ‘normalize’ unequal power relations since it is a parcelling of already
unified whole. This is also where the aspect of ‘intimate’ exclusion/ violence
(Hall et al 2011) and the ambivalence of violence arising from intimate
exclusion, and ‘the politics of ambivalence’ (Lorenz-Mayer 2001)
unintelligibly operational. Sartre’s (2004) insights into the praxis and process
of colonialism and racism, thus, becomes the most appropriate analytical
framework to make these processes intelligible (Brown 1979; Catalano 1986;

For Sartre, ‘the link between structures of the historical fact is much loose
than Marx wanted. That has to be the case because man is not reflection [of
his circumstances] but transcendence and innovation… Each of Sartre’s works reflects and expresses [human] situation… by surpassing it’ (Flynn 1995: 227). However, there is always an ambiguity of the necessity and contingency in relationship. ‘The possible are realized in probability. Freedom moves in sphere of the probable, between total ignorance and certitude. The unpredictability of technological advancement, the liability of our bodies to the vicissitudes of physical and biological nature and, above all, the sheer multiplicity of the other as interpreter of our actions – the manner of living the event is part of the event itself – these confers a radical contingency on the historical enterprise’ (Ibid.: 222). ‘In sum, the historical object is at one and the same time material, organic and spiritual’ (Ibid.: 223). For Sartre, human person is an autonomous individual subject always being inextricably embedded in society.

Fieldwork, Sources and Methods of Data Collection

Geographical area

The present study focuses on the Hos of Kolhan (one of the five divisions of present Jharkhand state towards the central-eastern part of India), more specifically, the West Singhbhum district which covers the entire Kolhan Government Estate (KGE) in which the Hos’ are predominant in number (see map-2). The district consists of plain, hilly and semi-hill areas. In plain areas, most Ho households, who own better quality land, live comfortably although one finds a number of landless Ho households being reduced to destitution in every hamlet even in plain areas. On the contrary, in hill and semi-hill areas, the number of chronically ‘poor’ and destitute households abound although one finds a few wealthy households living comfortably among them.

Every Community Development Block (CDB) office in the district has invariably been established near railway lines or national/ state highways for the convenience of officers/ employees most of who are still non-Hos/ non-Adivasis. Similarly, the highest concentration of non-Adivasi population in the district can be found in plains and suburbs around the district and block headquarters. Naturally, there exists a wide material and cultural distance between the Hos in hilly and semi-hill areas and the urban and suburban centers. The pattern of geographical distribution of affluent and destitute, and non-Adivasi/ Adivasi households in plain and hilly areas remains more or less similar in most Adivasi dominant regions in Jharkhand, its neighbouring
states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and other states of the country today (see Mehta et al 2010; Das et al 2010; SRRA 2010).

The five villages chosen for study from three neighbouring CDBs fall in hilly and semi-hill areas to the north-west of West Singhbhum district (see map-5). These are chosen depending on their nearness and distance from the district/block headquarters so as to bring a fair representation of all households in such areas of the district. Similarly, the three CDBs are representative of the whole district with respect to their score on the scale of socio-economic development: Tonto block has one with the least score,’ Khuntpani medium and Sadar-Chaibasa has the highest score, at least in terms of the literacy rate. While the vignettes presented in this study come from villages at various parts of the district, the quantitative survey data come mainly from the five villages selected for study two of which are fictitiously named as Huringhatu (small-village) in Sadar-Chaibasa block and Maranghatu (big-village) in Khuntpani block.

Profiles of Selected Villages Under Study

A Short Historical Overview of Ho Villages

Most Adivasi communities here lived by both jhum (slash, burn, and shifting) cultivation, and foraging minor forest produce as almost 50% of their livelihood especially during slack seasons and monsoon failure came from forests (Areeparampil 1988). The first settlers (Khunkattidars) cleared the forest to establish a hatu (a Ho village) initially delineating its boundary after entering into a contract with the village-boundary and guardian-spirits (seemana and hatu-bongako) who act as protective agents. The hatu-bongako or village spirits reside at the heart of the village in the sacred-grove (jahera/sarna). Singhbonga is the supreme God. Desauli, Nage-era and Marangbonga are spirits who dwell at the sacred-grove of the village. Desauli protects the village; Nage-era takes care of rains and water; and Maragbonga protects villagers and cattle from serious sickness. Sasan-diri or burial stones placed on the graves of the dead ancestors indicated the land that belong to a particular killi (patrilineage). The spirits of dead ancestors (ham Ho and dum Ho) are invited to the sanctuary of each household which is called the ading where strangers are not allowed to enter (Deeney 2008). Thus, a village has far deeper meaning and socio-cultural significance than a
simple collection of houses and fields (Das Gupta 2011). The village (hatu) also is a sphere of culture as opposed to the wild or uncultured forests (buru) beyond human control (Eva 2008). It is a sacred landscape where houses and graveyards play a greater role in ensuring the continuity of the community through time and space between affinity and consanguinity and life and death (Verardo 2003).

Houses in a hatu are often on top of hillocks or inter-fluvial valley heads within shouting distance. The structure of village organisation integrated spaces both private and public to the total ecological, cultural and spiritual life of the Ho society. It contained land capable of immediate cultivation with considerable areas of forest and wasteland.

The socioeconomic and political organisations of the Hos society is determined by descent, kinship and land tenure. It is embedded in a large number of killi categories (Yorke 1976). The local lineage is initially established by the original ancestor who founded the village. Clan interrelationship, on the whole, constitutes the prerequisite and basis of all social and ritual interactions. There are villages with single and multiple killis spread into various sais/ tolas (hamlets). The village and household, set within the web of local lineages or sub-clans, function as points of reference and identification of every Ho. This fundamental social unit is more important than the culturally distinct category of the ‘tribe.’ The clan or killi is constituted by all ‘descendants in the patrilineal line of a known or fictitious common ancestor’. The unity of a local lineage is expressed in terms of rights over ancestral common land. A lineage’s common ownership of land and its common ancestry are conceptually interrelated to the effect that the ancestors provide the very basis of their descendants’ existence by providing and passing on land. Thus, ancestors and land remain symbols of the unity and continuity of a lineage (Rachel 2009: 36-7).

It is the ancestors who have given the household its rice. Descent, like land, is transmitted from generation to generation. The concept of lineage as the people of one rice-pot expresses both the relationship of the lineage to its land. The rice-pot is the place in which the fruit of the ancestor’s land is prepared for human consumption and as such it is seen as the abode of the ancestors (Yorke 1976: 96).

The countryside was covered by a network of villages linked by affinal ties and by descent, as groups from one village left to start new settlements (Yorke 1976). The power positions of munda, manki, and diuri often
remained with men (not women) of the original or the prominent killi. Egalitarianism was limited within dominant lineages (Das Gupta 2011), however, ‘there is no hierarchical structure in the village; all the households have equal access to the economic and religious resources of the village’ (York 1976: 85). People who came and settled later in the village from other villages, by way of marriage alliances, are called eta haturenko (people of other villages). They had a huring (junior) position. Besides, the Hos also invited people who belonged to artisan or service caste groups, such as Gowalas (cow-herders), Tantis (weavers) Kumhars (potters) etc. who had no right to cultivable land but were paid for their services in kind (Sen 2008, Das Gupta 2011).

Property among the Hos belong to the family and not to the individual. On the death of a father his sons share equally, except that the sons of the first wife are usually entitled to a larger share than those of other wives…. Women cannot hold property, except when they have a right to maintenance. If on the death of his father, the unmarried daughters equal the sons in number, each son may take to support, but if they all live with one brother, he will get extra land for their support. If any Ho wishes to sell or mortgage his land, the members of his family have a right to the first offer. Strictly speaking, by immemorial custom, a Ho cannot dispose of his lands as he chooses. The land does not belong to him, it is hereditary and inalienable, and it must descend to his sons and son’s sons. If a Ho has no direct male issue, the land goes to his brother or nearest kin; if he has no kith or kin, to the village community represented by the munda (O’Malley 1910: 79).

However, with the establishment of Kolhan Government Estate (KGE) and land settlement operations since 1837, although the customary authority and roles of mundas and mankis were recognized and maintained, the overlordship of a British made them less relevant since the Hos could also approach the ‘modern’ overlords directly as well (Sen 2012). This obviously undermined traditional authorities of the mundas and mankis. Since India’s independence, the British overlords have been replaced by the Indian ones who head the district collectorate, departmental and other offices are not only unaware of the traditional customary system of the Hos, but also deliberately counteract and undermine it.

Furthermore, (as discussed in chapter 4) commercial exploitation of forests and agriculture both by the British and post-British colonial state has altered the fertility and productivity of the land besides the recently accelerated extraction of mineral and accompanying pollution and deforestation not only have further aggravated the agrarian problems but also caused the disintegration of traditional village organization, cultural values, moral
economy and traditional bonding among Ho kinsmen/women. Above all, the division of land among Hos themselves for generation have reduced the holding size of rice-land considerably rendering many Ho households landless like the already landless ‘service groups.’ However, the landlessness of all ‘service groups,’ who have been here for long, does not mean that all of them are economically poor since several of them have advanced themselves in non-agrarian/non-farm livelihood activities.

**Profile of Villages under Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village - codes</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
<th>V5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Chaibasa</td>
<td>3 KM</td>
<td>7 KM</td>
<td>15 KM</td>
<td>27 KM</td>
<td>47 KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1391</td>
<td>2191</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hos - Adivasis (STs)</td>
<td>65 (72 %)</td>
<td>276 (96 %)</td>
<td>204 (55.1 %)</td>
<td>71 (89 %)</td>
<td>36 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Backward Castes (OBCs)</td>
<td>25 (28 %)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120 (32.4 %)</td>
<td>9 (11 %)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Castes (SCs)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11 (4 %)</td>
<td>46 (12.4 %)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: field survey conducted by the author (July-October 2011)

Village one (V1) is three kilometres far from Chaibasa; it has 90 households with a population of 458 persons. 65 out of 90 households (72%) are Ho and 25 (28%) households belong to service caste, categorized as OBC. There is no household under SC category in V1. There are four killis (clans) here of which two are numerically dominant.

The second village (V2) (Huringhatu) is seven kilometres away from Chaibasa. The total number of household here is 287 with the total population adding up to 1391 persons. Households fall under ST and SC categories. The former constitute 276 (i.e., 96 per cent of total households) and the later households number only 11 which is four per cent of the total number of households. The Hos fall under as many as 11 killis, out of which one is most dominant with 185 households, the second dominant killi constitute 34 households and others count less than ten.

The distance to Village Three (V3) (Maranghatu) from Chaibasa is 15 kilometres. This is the biggest among all five study villages with a total population of 2191 living in 370 households. The village has a spot where a

---

24 Indian Census reports categorizes its population into four main social groups: Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Castes (OBC) and General.
weekly market is held historically, and hence, it has attracted huge number of households who are generically called as ‘service groups.’ Hence, it has three social-group (Census categories): 204 (55%) ST; 120 (32%) OBC; and 46 (12.4%) SC. Excepting that the ‘General’ category is absent here, this village might represent the demographic scenario of the entire West Singhbhum district with about 17 Adivasi killis which includes even a Santal household, besides the Hos, and 15 different service caste groups. The ‘service castes’ in this village own only small homesteads. A few of them are involved in running petty business enterprises, a few others work as contractors, middlemen and casual labourers. Some of them have made considerable advancement economically. Most of the SCs and OBCs here speak the Oriya language, and those who have made considerable advancement in socioeconomic security consider themselves better than the Hos. They restrain themselves from speaking Ho language. A few also wear the ‘sacred thread,’ a Brahmanic religious symbol to show their ‘superior’ status.

Village Four (V4) is 27 kilometres away from Chaibasa; has a total of 80 households with its total population numbering up to 357. The percentage of Ho households in this village is 89, that is 71 out of 80 and OBC household constitute only 11 per cent of the total household. There are five Ho killis and the numerically most dominant one has 35 household, the second most dominant killi has 19 and the rest are below 10. This village is closer to the reserved forest area and most villagers supplement their household income from collection of minor forest products besides agriculture.

The fifth and last study village (V5) is the furthest from Chaibasa covering a distance of 47 kilometres. The total population is 192 living in 36 households, all of them Hos who belong to three killis numerically the most dominant one with 30 households, the second with five households and the third with one.

This (V5) is a ‘forest village.’ Forest Villages (FVs) were established along with the introduction of ‘scientific forestry’ in India in 1864 with the creation of Forest Departments (FD) in various British provinces under the Indian Forest Act 1865. FVs were meant to ensure the regular supply of labourers to exploit forests commercially. There are cases of existing villages being declared as FVs, besides their establishment with people imported into forests from elsewhere. An estimated number of 200,000 families lived in 5000 FVs
all over India (Prasad 1993). These were ‘temporary labour camps living in temporary huts and crops for food, for the forest land was “reserved” and these villages were expected to be shifted’ (Ibid.: 2). Although located deep inside the forests, these workers are kept like bonded labourers, despite forced labour being ‘abolished’ in 1950 (Ibid.). With the enactment of the recent Forest Rights Act 2006, they hold a ‘right’ to own the land on which they were residing so long. However, the law is yet to be implemented in West Singhbhum district (see chapter 2).

Fieldwork, and Methods of Data Collection

The data and information presented in this study primarily come from an eight-month-long fieldwork experiences: six months stretched out over a span of a year (February-March, July-August and November-December, 2011) and two months, September-October, in 2013. The first two months were spent travelling, visiting and staying at Ho villages in almost every development block of the district. The following four months were spent on conducting surveys, engaging in casual conversations, during regular visits and stay at different study villages, especially in Maranghatu and Huringhatu. The last two months in 2013 were spent on revisiting people in villages marked for study in order to clarify certain issues that were not clear and to confirm fieldwork data for their reliability and accuracy.

Mixed method (qualitative and quantitative combine) were employed to collect data. Quantitative data were obtained by household-level surveys in all five study villages. All households in the five study villages, totalling 866 of them, were individually visited and surveyed by the newly elected ward-members of Panchayats, on monthly income, and landholding; occupation and educational attainment of the member of households. ‘Monthly income’ includes total income earned by all members of a household from all sources assessed jointly by the ward-member and the respective household-head. Similarly, assessment of landholding was done based on household’s khatian (document of holding rights) or malgajari (land-rent) payment receipts, and in some cases the number of pura (bundles of paddy) produced from the land owned by a household during a year of normal monsoon. Assessment of land possessed is normally difficult due to lack of accurate knowledge, besides a general apprehension about revealing their economic status; and hence, it could be undertaken only in Huringhatu (V2) where the surveyor had
sufficient knowledge (about all households in his village), necessary skills and willingness to undertake such a task.

Literacy data is based on answers received from household heads/members to questions such as the number of schooling years of the members of his/her household had and not if they have functional literacy skills. It is generally noticed that a few years of schooling does not guarantee a Ho basic literacy skills due to lack of practice after his/her school years. Moreover, there is no guarantee that a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to the question: if an interviewee knows how to read and write should be an accurate one due to his/her shyness and hesitation. Hence, almost all surveys, including the decadal Census, assesses literacy rates based only on questions about years of formal schooling.

Qualitative methods include mostly casual conversations, occasionally, in-depth personal interviews/conversations with villagers (elders, young and old men, women and children – both literate and nonliterate), and key informants such as, munda, manki, dakua (munda and manki’s assistant), mukhiya (the head of gram-panchayat), panchayat samiti (block level), and ward members in various villages, and state-functionaries such as, Block Development Officers (BDO), district agriculture, irrigation, education and welfare department heads, District Collector (DC), staff members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), activists, school teachers, Ho contractors and middlemen, and non-Adivasi shopkeepers at Chaibasa and other suburbs and towns. The vignettes and incidents narrated in the thesis emerge from casual conversations and in-depth interviews besides personal observations during fieldwork conducted specifically for this study. Besides fieldwork, primary sources such as newspaper reports, and other periodicals too have been extensively used. Moreover, secondary sources such as existing ethnographic works on Kolarian groups of Jharkhand and other numerous existing literature (secondary sources) on Adivasi issues have also been used extensively.

Researcher’s Assumptions

As a person who has spent considerably long time, living and working with Adivasis, I would like to make my own assumptions explicit. I consider Adivasis’ alternative imaginations of who they are, and the distinct religio-cultural, socioeconomic, and political organization they have developed, in contrast to the oppressive caste system, as very significant. Although they are
deeply, and unequally enmeshed in and encapsulated by the dominant colonial civic order, they still hold the secrets of an alternative more egalitarian social order. To my mind, this is evident in their display of a strikingly resilient spirit of resistance even at the face of unimaginable cruelty (Gupta 1992). However, their struggles / efforts to win a place of dignity and equality in the ‘modern’ world can only be earned by self-assertion’ (Sengupta 1982: 1). This, in Sartrean terms, must come from ‘a negation of negation’ of what others have made of them. It is an extremely challenging task given ‘the violently patriarchal culture of Indo-Gangetic Bihar’ (Simon 1982: 228) and ‘the petrified, frozen, hypothetical racism of Indian society… and its barbarian inhuman culture’ (Ibid.: 230). Yet, I dare to believe that the marginalized Adivasis still hold the key to some ‘revolutionary ideal and potential’ (Bhattacharya 2013: 1)\(^2\) for the transformation of Indian culture and politics; and hence, their struggle is remarkable and worth the effort.

Thus, I hope this study will contribute to a better articulation of Adivasis’ socioeconomic identity, values, dignity and human right. For it provides innovative and critical insights to emerging leaders, especially those daring and emerging ones, of hitherto (economically) marginalized, brutally repressed and discriminated Adivasi and Dalit societies, while all of us struggle to advance a more truly emancipatory and democratic politics and leadership in India.

Sartre’s Marxist humanism calls for a critical and ethically positioned scholarship, if the ‘production of knowledge and activism intends to be at the service of emancipation (Simont 1995). Such scholarship recognizes the need for continuous questioning, demystification, testimony and articulation of different ways of thinking and living in solidarity. A critically positioned and ethically committed scholarship seeks to challenge manufactured consensus, breakdown stereotypes, and engages in imaginative working out of problems that are felt to be urgent. Engaging in such an attempt on a rational, methodologically rigorous and evidently grounded manner can be far more powerful (Roy 2007). For Sartre, ‘ethical radicalism is not conditional conditioning of freedom by value or by some inert and stationary end, but in

---

the unconditional conditioning of these conditions that are obstacles to the reproduction of the end — that is, of the relations to the world in which freedom has been freely engaged’ (Simont 1995: 207). A humanist scholar’s critical task needs to hold on to a universal and single standard of basic human justice (and of seeking knowledge) despite ethnic, religious, linguistic or national affiliations. This simply means that the same standard of judgment is applied to both to oneself and the one who is considered to be ‘alien’ or ‘the other’ (Roy 2007).

Being an outsider to Adivasi social formations requires of me to speak ‘with an unconcealed voice, beyond what we, as a people, have been given and educated to see, but very much from within our own tradition’ of humanism. Being a part of the broader Indian society does not mean accepting – often uncritically – the social laws that govern it, and the self-perception of the collective ‘we.’ ‘It does mean situating oneself within a cultural value system and choosing ethical consistency over collective engagement, exposure over concealment’ (Ibid.: xxi).

Having said that I also remain aware of the problems, so far, involved in the discussions on ‘tribe’ and ‘caste’ in India that have driven researchers to be doubly emotive: most discussions in India on ‘tribal’ issues have moved scholars to 'unscholarly anger,' and have ‘produced pamphleteers’ rather than dispassionate analysis (Bailey 1960: 263). Moreover, several Indian scholars who have dared any critical analysis of caste-domination, caste-based discrimination, and ‘methodological nationalism’ in academic disciplines (Giri 2012) had to face the risk of being ostracised as ‘anti-nationals’ (Sharma 1959, 2001). Although such a self-reflexive criticism is still not without similar risks, I have tried, as far as possible, to be a dispassionate observer whilst attempting a deeper and broader analysis based on fieldwork.

Fieldwork has to be performed with critical insight, taking nothing for granted, or on faith, but without the attitude of superiority, sentimental reformism, or spurious leadership (Kosambi 2009: xi).

Analysis must, first, be broad. The world has become increasingly interconnected. Extreme suffering – especially when on a grand scale, as in genocide – is seldom divorced from the actions of the powerful. The analysis must also be historically deep (Farmer 2002: 432).

Thus, a historically deeper analysis, that could reasonably explain who are Adivasis, is undertaken. If the answer to this question has so far been that they are ‘backward Hindus,’ as Ghurey (1963) famously argued, then the
subsequent question must inevitably have been: why and how have there been ‘backward’ and ‘forward’ Adivasis, Hindus, Muslims, Christians or Buddhists? And what historical processes must have been responsible for such a constructed ‘backwardness’ of certain sections of society. Kosambi (2009) also argued that Adivasis were those who had ‘stubbornly’ refused to be assimilated into ‘Indian mainstream.’ However, a more crucial question, that still remains to be adequately answered about his argument, has been: why have Adivasis been ‘stubbornly’ resisting assimilation?

The next chapter re-conceptualizing Adivasis as ‘state-fleeing and challenging peoples’ who had escaped the ancient oppressive jati/ caste based system of colonialism and racism (that had emerged in the alluvial plains), into deep forests, mountainous regions of the subcontinent. This re-conceptualization is done by deconstructing the concept of an imagined Indian national mainstream.
Adivasis as State Fleeing and Challenging People: A Genealogy of Ideas and Practices Underpinning the Politics and State in India

In almost every instance of police firing, those who have been fired upon are immediately called militants... When victims refuse to be victims, they are called terrorists and are dealt with as such.

(Arundhati Roy 2004: 1)

The question I ask is 'why has the state almost always been the enemy of people who move around?'

(James Scott 1998b: 1)
Introduction

On August 1, 2011, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Jharkhand Police (JP) initiated a joint operation called 'Operation Anaconda' to 'liberate' Saranda forest from the Maoists insurgents (commonly called Naxalites). Consequently, two villagers were shot dead; the terrified co-villagers ran into interior forests; three sick and injured villagers were left to themselves; several houses were destroyed and granaries incinerated during the operation.

A month later, recalling the incident Binodini Devi of Talkobad village said,

The force arrived at 8 o'clock in the morning and surrounded our village. They fired a few shots up in the air and we ran into the forests. None stays here anymore, we have come to collect some of our belongings. Police destroyed our food grains and houses. We never helped any Maoist; we did not support them in any way, but the police never listens to poor people like us (quoted from an unpublished report circulated among activist-groups by a correspondent of The Hindu national daily, who visited the village on 14 September, 2011).

Earlier 65 families lived in Thalkobad village; after the operation only five people live there. The forces stayed in the area for a month so the villagers were forced to stay away from their homes (Ibid.). Sixty-four year old Judida Honhanga said,

The police asked for my son who teaches in the village-school, as I failed to say anything, they started hitting me. They took our identity and job-cards, land-papers, and ration cards The CRPF swept through our village, destroyed our houses, and forcefully entered our homes making us move away. They burnt our clothes, valuables, money and killed our cattle. My wife is very ill; she can’t move (Ibid.).

Picture 1 – A scene from post-CRPF operations in Saranda villages

26 Saranda used to be one of the biggest Sal tree forest in Asia covering 820 kilometres of thick green cover in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. However, now the strength of the forest is reduced to one-third. It has been reported that since 2000 a group of the Communist Party of India Maoist, a banned ('extremist') organization took refuge here. See EPW (2012) for details on the style and motives of various operations to cleanse 'extremism.'
27 Several CRPF men were also admitted to hospitals in Ranchi with Malaria during and after their operation in the village. More interestingly, majority of the CRPF and JP forces are Adivasis themselves (Ghosh 2006), who would be ordered to kill the most deprived of their own society, who have chosen to live in places like Saranda and other inaccessible places like these.
28 Job-cards are provided by the state functionaries as proof of eligibility to apply for work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) 2005, and ration-card is proof of eligibility for a household to access food and other essential items under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
Saranda has been home for about 36,000 Adivasis living in 56 villages. It is about 280 kilometres from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand state. These villages remain completely isolated during the rainy season when the water-level in the river, that separates the village, rises higher. There is no health care facility in any of these villages, the nearest health centre is about 41 kilometres away at Manoharpur. A few villages have school-buildings, but classes are seldom held. They have been shut down or blown up during the CRPF operations. Subsistence farming, foraging and an arbitrary supply of food grains by the Public Distribution System (PDS) constitute the villagers’ livelihoods (Ray 2012; Yadav 2013).

After the operation, a few police personnel and human rights activists, however, said that they neither found any weapon nor any Maoist in Talkobad village. The actual reason for deploying the CRPF was to ensure a smooth extraction of iron-ore (EPW 2012; Goswami 2013; Swamy 2013; Sambhav 2013), since Saranda forest has one of the best-quality iron ore deposits in Asia (Bera 2012). Moreover, since Jharkhand region became a separate state from the erstwhile Bihar on 15 November 2000, the successive governments in Jharkhand have signed several Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) with national and transnational companies for setting up large-scale extractive and manufacturing industries (Kajulia 2011; Chandra 2013). According to a published list of Electro Steel, a Chinese company, it has been allotted huge areas of land near Tholkobad to set up mining reserves.29

---

29 For more details about developments in Saranda see Ray (2012); for more on Saranda action plan, FRA (2006) and other issues see website:
A government official has reportedly said,

After consistent efforts, security forces 'liberated' the area from the clutches of the Maoists. The central government has initiated a 'Saranda Action Plan' (SAP) under which the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) will distribute solar lanterns and bicycles, help construction of pre-fabricated houses for 'below poverty line' (BPL) families under Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) [a housing scheme for the 'poor', named after a former Prime Minister of the Congress party] and bridges with the help of the Army and distribute hand-pumps for drinking water. The Centre [national government] will also help the Jharkhand government to raise one battalion (approximately 1,000 personnel) of the Indian Reserve Police Force by recruiting local tribal youth (HT 2011).

However, according to an Adivasi member of the district human rights observers’ team, who has been directly involved with the recent developments in Saranda, the Hos of Saranda have not received any substantial help, from state functionaries till November 2013, under the proposed Saranda Action Plan (SAP). Villagers’ patta (documents of land-rights) were snatched away by the CRPF men during the 'operation.' Neither these documents nor the new patta promised by the recent Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006,30 has been returned/ issued to villagers. According to him, this denial of land-right-documents might be a deliberate strategy of the state functionaries to ensure least resistance from the villagers to future mining activities in Saranda (telephonic conversation, on 5 November 2013).

Such incidents of deploying direct/ physical violence of the postcolonial ‘state’ in India on its most marginalized and vulnerable people, within their constitutionally ‘protected’ ethno territory,31 have been projected by all mainstream media as Jharkhand state’s ‘dedicated’ efforts to ‘cleanse’ the Maoists ‘infected’ inaccessible, grossly eroded, remote rural terrains (Ray 2012; Sharma 2013). Maoist insurgency since the 1990s has spread mainly in the country’s mineral rich, inaccessible and forested regions mostly inhabited by economically poorer Adivasis (Saxena 2009, 2011, Ganguly and Oetken 2013). Although such regions in India have been ‘protected’ by the Ministry


30 See Srivastav et al (2013) for an update on the status of the implementation of FRA 2006 in India.

of Environment and Forests, the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and several other protective legislations, these are also places where the state’s actions have been focused since the 1990s to fuel the country’s ‘predatory economic growth’ (Walker 2008; Sunder 2009). In other words, Adivasi dominant, ‘protected’ regions, abounding in minerals, have been turned into internal colonies/ margins that supply raw materials for the growth of urban centers. Since the 1990s the colonial mode of super-exploitation in Adivasi dominant regions has aggravated with all its accompanying ill effects (of uncontrolled pollution of air, water and agricultural land) befalling upon the local inhabitants, who benefit little from these uncontrolled extraction activities (Areepampill 1996; George 2009; Lahiri-Dutt et al 2012). Moreover, the mainstream media, which supports industrialisation in Jharkhand, would strategically present such violent operations of the repressive state apparatus as brave acts of clearing ‘extremism infected’ areas, while the flagitious violence inflicted on Adivasi villagers often go unreported. This way, ‘protective-institutions’ for the vulnerable sections in India themselves turn the violators of all such protective provisions.

More ironically, these economically poorer people, the ‘extremists,’ and members of the CRPF and JP who have been killed during ‘Maoist cleansing’ operations are Adivasis themselves, since the majority of the lowest cadres of the JP, CRPF and the Maoists have been recruited from among Adivasis (Ghosh 2006; Sunder 2006, Kumar 2009, D’Mello 2013). This situation, for sure, has systematically been brought about historically: continued commercial exploitation of timber since the mid-nineteenth century has adversely affected the environment, climatic conditions, soil fertility and social-ecology of Adivasi dominant regions in the country (Das 1992; Blaikie 1994; Damodaran 1995; Jewitt 2008; Chaudhuri 2008; Das Gupta 2009; 2012). Moreover, lack of investment in rural agrarian infrastructure and alternative livelihood options remain at the heart of Adivasis’ genuine grievances in these regions (Prakash 2007, 2011; Stuligross 2008; Saxena 2009). In such a situation Adivasi youth, who could acquire some literacy skills would be recruited by the CRPF and JP. Some of them also are recruited by both Maoists as well as anti-Maoist militia (Saxena 2011;

---

32 See appendix-8 for the data on wood-land changes in Jharkhand (Chotanagpur) region.
D’Mello 2013).

Significantly, whoever is dying is a tribal. The men in police, the boys in Salwa Judum, and the cadres among Naxals – all are tribals. A system has been devised that whosoever dies (in conflict) is a tribal. Mineral is the only big resource of this land and the tribals have no right over those (Sai 2013: 1).

Thus, the Sartrean system of colonialism, in India’s Adivasi dominant regions, has systematically been developed. ‘Colonial exploitation is methodical and rigorous: expelled from their lands, restricted to unproductive soil, obliged to work for derisory wages, the fear of unemployment discourages their revolts’ (Sartre 2005: 37).

This chapter attempts to find the historical and cultural reasons for organized (state) violence against Adivasis in India. In doing so, it traces a generally, an uninterrupted thread of a specifically Indian colonialism and racism. It shows how the types of violence – direct/ physical, cultural, and structural violence described above – have been an inevitable consequence of unresolved conflictual historical processes that are still being worked out in Adivasi dominant regions in India. Travelling far back beyond the pre-British colonial period, this chapter maps Adivasis’ conflicting relationship with an imagined pan-Indian mainstream, which according to Sharma (1959) and Saha (1986: 286), is caused by a ‘historically determined schism’ that is being worked out to the present day (Kela 2006, 2012). Thus, this chapter draws a genealogy of the idea of a putative national mainstream that has often been posited vis-à-vis Adivasi social formations.  

The postcolonial Indian state’s stated objectives of Adivasi ‘development’ policies and programs have been to bring these so-constructed ‘backward’ or ‘primitive’ ‘Scheduled Tribes’ into ‘national mainstream’ (Yadav 2003; Karlsson 2004; Srivastava 2008) although questions like, who are Adivasis, what constitutes the mainstream, why should Adivasis be brought into it, and what it means for Adivasis to be brought into mainstream, have often

---

33 A social formation is a descriptive concept which specifies the forms in which the conditions of existence are determined by its relations of production; it is a social entity organized on the basis of specific economic, political and ideological components with its unique territoriality and history. It is a dialectical expression of what is loosely referred to as ‘society’. The phrase, ‘mode of production,’ is a theoretical instrument which entails the material and ideological dimensions of social (relations) structures. While the latter constitutes the object of social science inquiry, the former functions as theoretical tool to achieve the object (of social science) of a conjoint (dialectical) social entity (Saha 1986: 304).
remained undiscussed and unanswered (Pati 2001). Thus, by drawing a
genealogy of the imaginary/dubious mainstream, starting from its origin, I
show, how the idea of the mainstream and the efforts of those who represent
it, have produced the idea of Adivasis or ‘tribals,’ their ‘primitive otherness,’
‘backwardness,’ and ‘relative isolation’ that officially distinguish them. The
argument is very simple: the very idea of the mainstream produces the tribal
‘primitive’; hence, a deconstruction of the former and an exposition of its
shape would simultaneously expose the difficulty in defining the concept of
‘tribe,’ which is actually a spin-off of a very long, and uninterrupted ‘praxis
and process of racism and colonialism’ characteristic of the producers and
representatives of the ideology of aggressive Indian nationalism.

Said (1978) emphasized the essence of Orientalism as the indelible
distinction between the superior Occidental ‘us’ and the inferiority of the
oriental ‘other.’ The same principle is applicable to the dichotomies of Indian
‘mainstream’ and its ‘margins’ (Jewitt 1995; Lau and Mendes 2011). The
exclusionary mode of ‘Othering’ minorities and the double-edged political
identity and enigma of historically marginalized cultural minorities have been
evident in India (Prasad 1996; Jodhka 2002; Bharucha 2003).

The agreements in this chapter are developed in the following sequence: first,
an enduring unequal and conflict-ridden relationship between mainstream
and its Adivasi margin is delineated. Second, a short discussion of the origin
of ancient ideas and institutions of state in India, which embodies all
necessary qualities of a racist and colonial system as Sartre (2001, 2005) has
conceptualized. Third, Adivasi social formations are historicized as people
who escaped the pre-classical (ancient) Indian (casteist) colonial system,
which has come to exist as a headless monster in the present (‘modern’)
times. Fourth, a few aspects of the alternative self-imaginations
(subjectivities), that Adivasi social formations have nurtured, are highlighted
in contrast to caste-based hierarchical societies. Fifth, the largely documented
historical processes of state formation in Chotanagpur, the ‘refuge-zones’ of
Adivasis are discussed to show how these can mirror even the most ancient
processes of social change in the Indian subcontinent. Sixth, the ubiquitous, frightening and multiple effects of the beastly colonial state system in Kolhan among the Hos is presented. And finally the conclusion recapitulates the main argument that Adivasi social formations are the by-product of a distorted ethics of long-drawn, conflict-redden and complex processes of state formation in India.

Mainstream versus margins

The idea of ‘mainstream’ corresponds to that of the state and the dominant segment of Indian society, while its 'margins' are broadly constituted by Dalitbahujans (Ilaiah 2010), and Adivasi social formations who were not even at the margins of mainstream that has been formed with concepts of chaturvarna (the four varnas/colours or castes), the four-fold scriptural division of society, the basis of jati or local endogamous groups forming the effective units of caste (Fox 1969; Gupta 1980; Smith 1994). Adivasis, as this chapter shows, were historically far out of this system. The concept of mainstream versus that of Adivasis, thus, assumes an ideological disjuncture – a 'historically determined schism which provides the basis of differentiating between the pan-Indian mainstream of caste society and its peripheral tribal societies' (Saha 1986: 286), although this disjuncture had not explicitly been articulated till the 1920s (Hardiman 1987; Rycroft and Dasgupta 2011).

Consequently, more fundamental historical questions, such as, how the Adivasi margins have come about; why and how these ‘margins’ have continued to remain so, and what has been at stake in the interactions between mainstream and Adivasi margins, have largely remained obscure due to the hegemonic and benevolent rhetoric of national ‘integration,’ ‘unity,’ and ‘development’ (Devalle 1980, 1992; Ilaiah 2004). Moreover, since independence, the agents of mainstream have adopted several tactics to

---

34 Dalitbahujan actually includes (ex-untouchables or Scheduled Castes), Backward Castes and Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), Muslims, women, urban poor (Ram 2012), who constitute more than 74 per cent of the total population of India (Sunder 2010). While Dalits and Backward Castes are at the bottom of Indian caste hierarchy, but within the imaginary boundary of mainstream, Adivasis have always been considered to be outside it. For example, any official document on 'tribal' development policy in India would invariably state that the program aims to bring the Adivasis back into the Indian national mainstream: see for example, the national tribal development policy (draft) http://mohfw.nic.in/WriteReadData/i8925/TDP-10782508.pdf (accessed 17 June 2013).
pacify/ depoliticize these articulations and assertions of Adivasi identity and territorial autonomy. One of the most important post-independence pacification tactics has been the post-British colonial state’s affirmative action policies by which ‘mainstream’ progressively co-opts the leading or most vocal elements of Adivasi social formations (Sengupta 1982), while simultaneously maintaining and reproducing existing unequal power relations (Kumar 1992; Shneiderman and Shah 2013).

In this context, Debnath (1999) has pointed out that Adivasis had 'remained separate but gradually became intertwined in a complex web of unequal economic linkages' (Ibid.: 3112, emphasis added). Moreover, several other related studies have shown that Adivasi social formations differ from mainstream only in terms of social systems, cultural values and structures (Ambedkar [1979] (2004); Bailey 1960; Xaxa 1999; Verardo 2003; Rachel 2009, Chaudhuri 2012). However, most 'tribal' studies in India have not probed deep enough to explain why Adivasis have come to adopt such distinctive social structures, values, and have kept holding on to them. More importantly, existing ‘tribal’ studies have paid insufficient attention to the ‘complex web of unequal economic linkages’ that have developed within and outside Adivasi social formations in relation to the pan-Indian mainstream that encapsulates Adivasis (Saha 1986; Devalle 1992; Debnath 1999; Kela 2006; 2012). Hence, this chapter seeks to locate and highlight these aspects by tracing the genealogy of the idea of the Indian state, which represents the idea of a putative national mainstream. This genealogy goes right back to the very origins of the idea of the state and rajniti (the strategy or power politics of the ruling-class) in India.

**State Formation Theories and the Origins of the Ancient Indian State**

Most theories on the origin of ‘state’ begin with a speculation on the state of nature where groups of people moved about freely, while depending entirely and directly on nature for food and shelter. Thence, they gradually moved onto a more conflicts-ridden existence until certain groups began to settle down and make exclusive claims on common resources (mine and thine), which eventually led to situations of frequent wars. Thus the universal fear of the war of all against all had served the emergence of sovereign powers to which all surrendered their liberty of thought and actions (Hobbes 2011). Such sovereign powers have been conceptualized as the 'collective will' with
its indivisible sovereignty. Anyone who refused to obey such a ‘general will’ would be forced to do so by the ‘collective will’ (Rousseau 2006). Thus, a genealogy of state power goes from the state of nature, to a state of fear (of wars and chaos) to the idea of a sovereign state.

A similar line of argument about the origin of ‘state’ and the emergence of rajniti in India was advanced by R.S. Sharma (1959, 1996; 2001). He began from the idea of the ‘tree-of-life’ (kalpavriksha) – the state of nature – to ‘tribal’ social formations characterized by more flexible social relations/structures, such as, vidatha (signifying distribution, disposition and ordinance with the underlying principle of sacrifice), ganas (groups), sabha (assembly) and parishad (council) which formed and dissolved routinely with a capacity to restructure itself. For example, these early Vedic social formations had no public officials, no tax system, no class, and no army; notably, women too played very important roles. However, Sharma (1959) further showed how, along with the emergence of settled agriculture towards the later Vedic period, there emerged rigid structures with fixed territories, class-divided patriarchies, and bureaucracies with permanent tax systems and varna caste-based coercive ideological apparatus (Ibid.: 102). Clearly, this has been the result of a long-drawn, gradual and conflictual transformation of more flexible ‘tribal’ social formations into more rigidly stratified and graded ones.

Such transformations of certain segments of the early Vedic, more flexible, social formations were animated by a certain cosmology found in the Vedas.36 ‘What we find in Veda is the brutal cosmology based on killing and eating: higher things kill and eat lower ones, stronger eat weaker, i.e., life is a zero-sum game where one’s victory is another’s defeat’ (Žižek 2012: 1, also see Omvedt 1994, 2008; Ilaiah 2004). Kāuṭilya, in his Arthaśāstra,

35 Ghurey (1961) proposed the beginning of Vedic period, in ancient India, to be at about 6000 B.C.E.
36 Kosambi (2009) and Saha (1986: 281), among several others, have quoted the Rig-Veda and Aitareya Brahmana to show the origin of caste based stratifications which have been the basis of Indian elitism which also marked the early origins of the idea of state in India. Also see Omvedt (1994, 2008); Fox (1969) and Puniani (2013) for discussions on the scriptural basis of caste and caste based socio-economic exclusion of peoples. According to Ghurey (1961), caste/jati based structures had entered a thorough going development by 10 and 11 century B.C.E., the developed caste structures remained in operation with considerable consistence for about a thousand years. See also Ketkar (1909) and Mandelbaum (1970) for more details.
presupposed the ancient South Asian concept of matsyanyāya (Berker 1997) (law of the fishes), according to which larger fish prey upon smaller ones (Corbridge and Harris 2000). The king's role was established by a pact made with the people to mitigate this law by providing protection for all (Berker 1997; McClish 2009). The Law of Manu shines: its basic ideological operation is to unite the hierarchy of castes and the ascetic world-renunciation by way of making purity itself the criterion of one's place in the caste hierarchy' (Žižek 2012: 1).

The opposition of the pure and the impure underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies the separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate, and underlies the division of labour because pure and impure occupations must likewise be kept separate. The whole is found on the necessary and hierarchical coexistence of the two opposites … The persisting and ubiquitous idea of purity indicates a shared value system (Dumont [1966] 2004: 43, back cover page).

Thus, Manu's law or ideology can clearly be seen as a codified form of the prevalent discriminatory practices based on the principles of ritual purity and pollution being imposed onto persons and social structures (Houcart 1950; Bouglé 1968; Deliege 2011). Such practices had been at the foundation of the ancient Indian statecraft and socio-religious and political philosophy (variously called, political Brahmanism) in South Asia (see Ketkar 1909; Ilaiah 1988; Sharma 1990; McClish 2009).

While this sophisticated and religiously sanctified (Mahapatra 2011) political philosophy or political Brahmanism has been responsible for both a ‘parcelling of an already homogenous unit’ (Ambedkar [1916] 2004: 113). This is a process whereby homogenous, holistic social formations, over a period of time, get formed into rigidly graded caste-based hierarchies. However, simultaneously, these parcelled and graded units, as a whole, provide an elusive unity, as Dumont has argued. It is to this elusive unity, embodies a religiously valorised graded inequality that the traditionally

37 Scholars have suggested that the concepts of 'purity' and 'pollution,' might have a 'tribal' origin, which was a part of certain hygienic practices. The Hos, for example, declare the new born baby, its mother and father as 'impure' for the first eight days in order to keep others away from touching them so that the new-born is kept away from possible infections. Such practices might have been borrowed to legitimize an elevated position of those who had declared themselves to be 'purer' or 'twice born' to distance themselves ritually and socioeconomically from the toiling 'impure' 'masses' (Pfeffer 1997; Pati 2001; Rachel 2009). See also Guru (2006) and Sarukkai (2009) for discussion on the practice and politics of untouchability in India.
privileged and dominant elites of India have, from time to time, referred to as the unifying essence of an imagined idea of India (see Devalle 1980; Anderson 1983; Thapar 1978, 2004; Ilaiah 2004, 2010). Hence, a proper historicisation and scrutiny of this simultaneously parcelling and homogenizing Indian ideology and its consequences on various sections of Indian society might provide some useful innovative insights as to how it influences people’s everyday lives. As Breekenridge and Van der Veer (1993) have sought to undo the dangers of postcolonial scholarship on orientalism and colonialism being carried out as if these have no successor, I argue that scholarship on orientalism, colonialism and postcolonial predicaments have ended up in serious limitations/ dangers since most of it has conveniently assumed that these had no ideological predecessor prior to European classical colonialism in so-called ‘postcolonies.’

**Pre-British Colonial Statecraft: Colonialism and Racism as Praxis and Process**

The later Vedic transformation of more flexible ‘tribal’ social formations into *jati* caste-based, rigidly stratified ones with the majority toiling ‘masses’ being dominated by the proponents of Vedic cosmology and political Brahmanism might well be conceptualized as a long-drawn, conflict-ridden and extremely complex process of social transformation (Sharma 1959; Fox 1971; Thapar 1999; Pati 2001) affected by the emergence of a distorted or modified dialectic of ‘super-exploitation’ (Sartre 1958, 2004: 734). According to Sartre, such transformations result from a modified, as opposed to, pure reciprocity in a situation of scarcity. 'In pure reciprocity, that which is Other than me is also the same. But in reciprocity as modified by scarcity, the same appears to us as anti-human in so far as this same man appears as radically Other – that is to say, as threatening us with death' (2004: 131-2). This is a situation where, ‘at a phenomenological level, the individual experiences the ‘Other’ as an object. Soon, the looker finds himself looked at, in turn, and becomes conscious of himself as an object, or rather of seeing himself seen as an object: “I am no longer master of the situation” (Sartre 1958: 263). Thus, the threatening other is subjugated and reduced to a subhuman status by the dominant one.

'Super-exploitation as a practico-inert process is nothing but oppression as a historical *praxis* realizing itself, determining itself and controlling itself in the
milieu of passive activity’ (Sartre 2004: 745-8). Practico-inert is a position into which people are reduced to be neither objects nor things. ‘It is the immeasurable brutality people visit on other people within the world of scarcity’ (Jameson 2004: xxii.

It is the [dominant] settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence... All colonialism is supported by racism – life is not simply a series of existential choices against circumstances: that the domination of power turns the subject into an object: in this situation, freedom is constituted by taking responsibility to transform oneself back into an agent. A refusal to accept that freedom, which alone defines man, reduces the individual to a state of inauthenticity. The choice of freedom and assuming the responsibility of authenticity requires considerable courage. Where the individual is defined as subhuman on account of racism, one understandable reaction is to aspire to the group from which he or she is excluded (Sartre 2005: xi).

Thus, racism and colonialism as praxis and process reduces the ‘other’ being perceived as dangerous or evil in situations of scarcity. This ‘dangerous other’ must either be reduced to a subhuman position or done away with.\textsuperscript{38} Such a situation is a colonial system with its structures of practico-inert fields, which works on an inauthentic/distorted reciprocity. Thus, colonialism and racism as praxis and process forms a system whereby uncontrolled violence is gradually transformed into controlled (economic) violence, which comes to assert for itself the legitimacy of rule (Sartre 2005).

Such a conceptualization of colonialism and racism as praxis and process might very well agree with the emergence of the idea of ancient state in India whereby the surplus produced by a huge toiling majority (defined as ‘impure’ or ‘once born’) has been extracted by those claimed to be ‘pure,’ or ‘twice born, self-declared sovereign gods’\textsuperscript{39} (see Ketkar 1909; Blunt 1969; Saha

\textsuperscript{38} In the ‘West’ originally, war criminals were executed, later they were allowed to live, (a concession given by the sovereigns), as slaves/bonded men and women (Žižek 2008). In South Asia, conquest and state expansion took place mostly via assimilative conversion/transformation animated by political Brahmanism (see Saha 1986, 1994, Pati 2001).

\textsuperscript{39} One sees a similar subhuman/practico-inert position being imposed upon large sections of society within the imaginary mainstream India even today. ‘We still receive reports of barber shops refusing to shave Dalits. Homeowners unwilling to rent their houses to Dalits. Children segregated and discriminated in schools, women not allowed to draw water from wells, families pushed out of temples. Segregated mosques, churches, even crematoriums. Pervasive violence aimed at those who challenge caste discrimination. Social and economic boycotts for those who dare to transgress caste boundaries. Newly-weds chased and killed because they chose to marry outside their own caste. Rapes. Acid attacks. The list goes on shamelessly (Stalin 2013: 1). These videos about caste discrimination in present day India
According to Galtung (1990), this constitutes cultural domination that leads to structural and direct violence. For colonialism entitles 'any sort of domination or assertion of control by one human group over another, often achieved by trickery and usually involving illegitimate means' (Page and Sonnenburge 2003: xx).

Following Sartre’s formulation of colonialism as a system of super-exploitation to pre-British colonial Indian state-circles, it is possible to conceptualize the ancient mainstream state-circles to be infernal machines of practico-inert that constituted the systemic praxis and process of racism and colonialism. The *sudras* and 'out-castes' were outcomes of perpetual slavery, and were constantly advised to look up to their masters to imitate them, since their freedom and reciprocity were modified by the brutal Vedic cosmology and Manu’s ideology of societal ordering and statecraft/ political Brahmanism (see Ketkar 1909; Saha 1986, 1994, Sharma 1990; Omvedt 1994; Ambedkar 2004; McClish 2009; Rage 2013).

Economically completely dependent on the superior classes and much exploited by them, socially degraded and treated with contempt, deliberately deprived of the higher religious and cultural values of Hindu society, they all suffer from a varying degree of ritual impurity, close contact with them is polluting, they are ‘untouchables’ (Fuchs 1981: 3).

If such a severe situation exists in today’s India even after the official abolition of untouchability in 1950, it must have been even more rigid and rampant during pre-medieval and medieval periods. In such a situation of being threatened to be reduced to subhuman status, it is possible that some who willed to live their radical imaginations of pure reciprocity, authenticity, and freedom, might have deliberately escaped or fled from these oppressive colonial, state-circles, infernal machines of the practico-inert fields, away

---

40 Kaviraj (2010) has stated that the precolonial state consisted of several asymmetric social hierarchies: ‘disaggregated into several different criteria of ranking individuals and groups – say, between control over economic assets, political power, and ritual status’ (Kaviraj 2010: 11). The central state was constituted by several mutually relating small-scale state-circles each surviving on the surplus produced by those who had been reduced to subhuman status at the lowest strata (Alavi 1980; Sharma 1997, 2001, 2006; Ilaiah 2004, 2010). Srinivas (1957) had also alluded to small-state stratified societies in pre-British India with ‘clear territorial cleavages ... of one chieftain or raja from the territories of others’ (p. 529). Also see appendix-2 on the institutions and mechanisms of brahmanical social control.
from the ‘twice-born’ sovereigns who sought to subjugate and enslave them with an all-pervasive oppressive system and its ideology in the alluvial plains of the subcontinent.

The permanent settlement of population is a state project in Southeast Asia that spans pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial regimes. ... In India it might help us understand the relationship between the 'Mogul rulers', and later the colonial regime on the one hand, and hill peoples, or nomads, on the other (Scott 1998b: 1).

**Adivasi Social Formations as those who escaped ancient Indian (casteist colonial) statecraft**

Hence, Adivasi social formations that were/ are generally found in inaccessible, mountainous and forested habitations, with alternative sociopolitical, economic and religio-cultural imaginations and social structures, might more realistically be conceptualized as those radicals (Mangobinda 1989; Chaudhuri 2009, 2010) who rejected and escaped the ancient infernal machines in alluvial plains that sought to reduce them to subhuman status at various junctures during ancient Indian history. This explains why and how most Adivasi social formations in India were/ are found in inaccessible, thickly forested and hilly regions, and had developed their contrasting alternative social structures and organizations.

In the case of the so-called ‘adivasis,’ a description of who they were and where they came from ought not to begin by plucking them as specimens from the [British] colonial era, but by examining their resistance to colonialism, and the previous history of the rise and fall of tribal kingdoms in a period when they were much more largely masters of their own fate (Bates 1995: 31). Tribal social organization pre-dates stratified class society. Tribes are characterized not by this or that race, habitat or religious practice, but (in my understanding) by the bonding fabric of kinship and joint ownership of the natural resources from which they make their living (Ratnagar 2003: 17). The history of Adivasi societies – their absorption into and their distance from a caste based agrarian order at different times in the past – forms a crucial element of South Asian History (Kela 2006: 502).

One of the most intriguing aspects of Adivasi social formations has been their obscurity throughout pre-British colonial and (ancient) Indian historiography, which calls for a more creative, fresh and imaginative approaches to Adivasi history based on their life-styles, values and alternative structural and cultural orientations. Saha (1986, 1994) conceptualized Adivasi social formations as those who rejected ‘the unequal processes of Hindu incorporation… both autochthonous and successive waves of immigrants fleeing Hinduised areas and totally indigenized in mountains and jungle fastness by the time state
control in northern India passed into the hands of Muslims, evolved over centuries, languages and forms of social organization which are of a totally different order than those which emerged in the rest of India under Hindu influence' (Saha 1986: 274). ‘One wonders whether the rakshasa [mythical demons in Hindu scriptures] were figures of fantasy as was thought earlier, or whether some at least represent a demonizing of the culturally alien as is being thought now’ (Thapar 2013: 16). Kosambi (2009) referred to Adivasis as those who had stubbornly resisted to be part of the stratified Hindu society, and Ghurey (1963), had termed them as 'backward' Hindus, who are 'imperfectly integrated' (Ibid.: 19).

Although the former had hinted at the reason for Adivasis’ resistance to be unequally incorporated into a caste ridden mainstream, the later was stitching the garb of a Hindu nationalism to cover up the millennia old beastly colonial system which had just changed its head in 1947, when the British left India. Since then, all political parties and politicians have been overstretching this nationalist garb unmindful of its incapacity to cover up the violence, immorality and guilt of the ongoing unaltered colonial and racist practices while the historically colonized, discriminated and pauperized peoples, including Adivasis, have been urged to embrace such practices with the garb of nationalism on, ‘in the same way mothers are loved’ (Sartre [1961] 2008: 299). ‘Under the garb of larger national and regional interests, the state has invariably pursued the interests of the dominant sections of society over the interests of the tribal communities’ (Xaxa 2010: 1). Not surprisingly, almost all specialists of Adivasi history in India have shown a consistent reluctance to look beyond the British colonial period (Devalle 1980; Singh 1985). 'The treatment of history or prehistory in tribal monographs remained, by and large, an exercise in speculation … Historians have compiled accounts of Indian tribes both ancient and modern [but] … it is often stated that the database for the historical study of such non-literate societies is limited' (Singh 1985: 12).

… For the occasional allusions to some of these tribes in the long literary history of the country, they were well-nigh lost... For whatever the reasons, many of them got as far removed from the mainstream of the country as their inhospitable, sleepy and inaccessible habitat. And they were virtually lost into oblivion when enterprising British administrators, adventure-loving travelers, profit-making traders, and humanist missionaries rediscovered them … (Sarat 1982:15).

For ‘history, at least until recently, was written only by the ruling elites of
states’ (Keyes et al 2010: 241). ‘The texts that have survived from the early period are generally that of elite groups. There are hardly any written sources from those marginalized by mainstream society’ (Thapar 2013: 17). Consequently, almost all ‘tribal’ study specialists have held the British colonizers solely responsible for all the anomalies of Indian society (Mandelbaum 1970; Ludden 2001). Whereas British colonialism along with exploitation of economic resources, introduced a few superior ‘technologies of governance’ to the pre-British colonial infernal machines that had already existed without altering their ideological structures, but further solidified them (see Bayley 2000; Mjor 2012; Lockwood 2012). ‘Colonialism did not destroy but relied upon the different forms of pre-capitalist relations of production to facilitate its processes of exploitation’ (Ghosh and Sengupta 1982: 233).

Singh (1985), however, has suggested the need to combine anthropology and history to overcome the deficiency in 'tribal' studies. Scott’s (2009) conceptualization of hills people is one of the most interesting and creative work that has combined anthropology, history and other sub-disciplines, such as agrarian history, to understand who the ‘hills people’ are. He has convincingly shown that hills people are those who deliberately avoided the ancient states that existed by extracting taxes and manpower for projects – military, architectural, religious, cultural – that benefited the rulers and associated elites’ (Ibid.: 238). Scott’s conceptualization of hills people allows for a more reasonable visualization of Adivasis as those who kept fleeing/avoiding the ancient oppressive (Indian) statecraft to take refuge in various forested and hilly terrains of the subcontinent. For Scott (1998), the ‘hills’ people who are mobile, practicing slash-and-burn/ shifting cultivation, nomads, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, gypsies, vagrants, itinerants, runaway slaves, and serfs are those who sought to deliberately avoid the earliest and perennial state-projects of tax and sedentarisation (Ibid..: 1).

Tribalism can be viewed as a reaction to the formation of a complex political structure rather than a necessary preliminary stage in evolution (Morton Fried 1968, quoted in Sinha 1982: 9). In Southeast Asia, the categories of ‘tribal’ and ‘civilized’ each implies and defines the other. … ‘Tribe’ exist only in the context of state system of social relations which includes them; state exist by coming in terms with tribes (as social types) (Sinha 1982: 9).

Shifting cultivation practices and other such flexible coping practices, according to Scott (2009), were not shaped by geographical/ ecological
adaptations, but were results of deliberate choices by peoples who roamed about state-based oppressive civilizations. Areeparampil (2002) has provided succinct descriptions of the Kolarians’ oral traditions which talk about their long wanderings much before they came to settle in regions where they are presently located. Similarly Sunder (2007) has described the shifting cultivation practices and constant movements of Dhurwa (Gond) Adivasis of South Bastar. Skaria (1999), Kela (2012) talk about powerful and more flexibly organized ‘wild’ Adivasi kingdoms of the Bhils, Gonds and Dangis. Skaria (1999) has shown that the site of ‘wilderness’ was ‘jangal’ which meant not only forest and mountain, but any regions beyond the locus of state control, which gradually established alliance by demanding taxes and paying ‘salaries’ to ‘jangal’ chiefs. These descriptions of the ‘wild’ and the ‘settled spheres’ resonate rather well with Scott’s (2009) conceptualizations of hills people and state based plain’s civilizations.

Scott (2009) has broadly charted out four eras in the history of such state-avoiding / fleeing peoples:

1. a stateless era;
2. an era of small-scale states encircled by vast and easily reached stateless peripheries;
3. a period in which such peripheries are shrunken and beleaguered by the expansion of state power; and
4. an era in which virtually the entire globe is ‘administered space’ and the periphery is not much more than folkloric remnant (p. 324).

Ultimately these state-evading peoples would be engulfed and eventually absorbed into respective nation-states, Scott (2009) concludes, ‘This is the history of deliberate and reactive statelessness, this is a history of those who got away, and state-making cannot be understood apart from it’ (Ibid.: x).

On applying Scott’s schemata to the history of Adivasi social formations, the second era might roughly be compared to Pre-Mughal colonial period. The Mughal colonial period might well be considered as the third era whereby the peculiar Indian statecraft, the powers of the plains had begun to expand by defeating, attracting and co-opting the powerful but alternatively organized Adivasi chieftains and social formations (see Wills 1919; Fox 1971; Thapar 1999; 2004; 2013) and the British-led colonial expansion of state-power could be considered as the beginning of the third era whereby strong and autonomous Adivasi kingdoms and the people who constituted them were
subjugated and eventually incorporated into surplus producing serfs in their own lands as exotic or criminal ‘tribes,’ ‘aboriginals’ or ‘primitives.’

The Shape of the Beast

Before discussing the contrasting alternative social philosophy/ imagination/ subjectivities of Adivasi social formations and their present predicaments as hill peoples who had deliberately and reactively avoid state-projects, it is important to make the shape of the state in India and the mode its operation clearer as it has presently come to assume a hybrid combination of ‘modern’/‘western,’ capitalism and political Brahmanism. Jointly, as Rudolph and Rudolph (1978a) termed, the pursuit of Lakshmi (a popular Indian pantheon of wealth, power and good fortunes) that animates the infernal state-machine, into which the hills people of Chotanagpur would once again be brutally brought in by the Mughal, British and post-British colonial state in India. The sub-section below shows the various constituents of the ‘modern’ Indian state which has largely been incapable of reforming itself of its ancient beastly and distorted reciprocity (dialectic). For it has continuously refused to attend to the genuine and long-standing grievances of its own marginalized peoples due, once again, to its adherence to the ancient elitist ideology on which it has been founded (see Ambedkar 1944; Ambedkar - n.d.; Saha 1986; Ilaiah 2004, 2010).

According to Saha (1986), the overarching Indian ideological statecraft (political Brahmanism) had already become the mainstream doxa (unquestioned orthodoxy) throughout pan-Indian alluvial plains during the long period from fourth century B.C.E. to 12 century A.C.E. According to Rudolphs (1987a), it was this socio-religious philosophy (political Brahmanism), an attractive and handy tool for effective statecraft that had facilitated the Mughal invasion, conquest and consolidation in India.

---

41 Western refers to the hegemonic values, colonial desires, dominant discourses, beliefs, and policies which undergird global neoliberal capitalism. Although it developed first in Europe and the United States, they have pervaded the elite castes/ classes and power structures everywhere (Chomsky 2010).

42 A description of the socioeconomic situation of Mughal India goes like this: ‘the common people lived in mud-hovels, half-naked, half-starved, and from whom every drop of sap had been wrung out by their predatory masters, Muslim as well as Hindu ... At the height of Mughal splendor under Sha Jahan, over a quarter of the gross national product of the empire was appropriated by just 655 individuals, while the bulk of the 120 odd million people of
idea of the Indian state was a 'symbolic cultural order which emphasized the overarching significance of rulership... the pervasive Hindu idea of the universal emperor (Chakravartin), who turned the wheel (chakra) and was the hub of its spokes, and the circle' (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987a: 86, 1987b).

The ‘mainstream’ doxa during Mughal period, according to Rudolphs (1987a), was the ‘pursuit of Lakshmi’ (a popular pantheon of wealth, power and good fortunes), which also upheld the idea that social order requires the state's force; and hence, a high stateness (Ibid.). The phrase 'the pursuit of Lakshmi' embodies colonial desires to pursue one’s good fortunes, wealth, power and honour and accompanying discourses of legitimation including racism. The ideologies of neocolonialism and neoliberal global capitalism driven by the logic of the market, whereby humans and the natural world are used without constraint and then discarded to maximize profit, ‘some abstract, alien and perhaps a self-defeating notion of progress’ (Padel 2009: xvii), are not different from these (Young 1995, Hedges and Sacco 2012). These pursuers of Lakshmi do not hesitate to use economically marginalized people and the environment merely as a means (see Das and Padel 2010, Roy 2009b, 2011). Moreover, the proposed model for social change in postcolonial India and national integration has been sankritisation and westernisation, whereby the 'lower' castes and Adivasis have been encouraged and even forced to emulate the values and lifestyles of the 'upper' caste elites. Although admittedly, those who are labelled as ‘lower’ and ‘backward’ in no way benefit from such a model, since the very logic of these highly competitive and antagonistic processes necessarily reduces many to be ‘backward’ while allowing only a few to make it to the ranks of the already powerful (Srinivas 1962; Devalle 1980; Ilaiah 2004).

A diagrammatic representation (figure-1 below) of the post-British colonial state, which represents the putative mainstream, makes the shape of the infernal machine or the structures of super-exploitation that continuously reduces economically poorer people to subhuman status, clearer.

India lived on a dead level of poverty' (Eraly 2007: 381). The strikingly paradoxical coexistence of 'Indian elitism' (Saha 1986: 77), and the extremely enslaving deprivations of majority ‘masses’ have their deep roots in the sociocultural constitution of the 'Indian-mainstream,' which has, so far, managed to escape sustained critical scrutiny for various reasons.
Empirical studies show that ‘the law in action fully contradicts the law in books.’ The dialectic of Indian-style developmentalism is *vikas* (development) for the ‘haves,’ and *vinash* (destruction) for the ‘have-nots’ by ‘myriad unconstitutional practices of expropriation governed by force of fraud, often beyond constitutional redress. More than sixty-five years of Indian development choices have created ‘endless cycles of human and social suffering’ for its ‘poorest’ people, and have left those displaced by ‘development’ to ‘their own miserable fate’ (Somayaji and Talwar 2011: xv).

It is against this doxa of the mainstream with its distorted reciprocity, and the pursuit of Lakshmi that Adivasi social formations with pure reciprocity and ‘the pursuit of freedom’ the processes of state formation in the hilly and forested Chotanagpur plateau, must be examined for a proper/ better
understanding of the present socioeconomic and political processes and
dynamics in the region today. What has been missing in most historical
accounts of state penetration in Chotanagpur, so far, has been a proper
juxtaposition of Adivasi subjectivities, their sustained attachment to specific
socio-cultural values which aids the most marginalized Adivasis to keep
withdrawing/retreating themselves while being hurt by cultural and structural
violence embodied in and advanced by mainstream doxa (political
Brahmanism) which animates the idea of the Indian state. Hence, before
moving to discuss the process of state expansion within Adivasi social
formations in Chotanagpur plateau, it would be appropriate to take a brief
look at Adivasis’ alternative (imaginations/philosophies) and subjectivities,
although most of which have, by now, become weakened and blurred with
mainstream doxa.

Alternative Imaginations (Subjectivities): Special Reference to Kolarian
(Munda) Adivasi Groups

Adivasi law, justice and the process of political decision-making were based
on principles of consensus, democracy, and egalitarianism taking the holistic
welfare of a concerned Adivasi group or ‘tribe’: a person, a household in a
specific hatu (formerly a single lineage village) and many villages of
different lineages forming a single ‘tribe’ (Yorke 1976; Archer 1984; Mundu
2003). Such a locally self-governing and decision-making body constituted
an Adivasi ‘sacral polity’ (Shah 2007; 2010) – for example, the munda-manki
and the parha systems of the Hos and Mundas respectively. Verardo (2003)
has highlighted ‘some distinctive Munda features, which stress equality by
suggesting a cyclical notion of generation and by overcoming differences
based on seniority, sex, and line of descent. Equality appears also to be the
driving force of Mundas’ marital practices’ (Ibid.: 4).

The sacral polity, at the village level, is headed by a munda, the headman and
diuri, the spiritual head. A confederation of 10 to 15 villages, called a pir/
parha, is headed by a manki, the one used to be chosen from among many
equal headmen (primus inter pares) of these villages (Roy 1970). Archer

43 References cited in this section pertains only to the Kolarian (Hos, Mundas, and Santals)
groups in Kolhan and Jharkhand, although there are literature available on other Adivasi
groups and on several other distinct aspects of their communal life, only a few aspects of
Adivasi sacred polity are considered here due to lack of space.
(1984) showed that the traditional 'annual hunt' (a gathering of the entire Santal Adivasi group) constituted the sovereign authority of Santals. This description of Adivasis’ understanding of authority being conferred on an entire (inclusive) ‘tribe’ is similar to that of what Sharma (1959) had pointed out as existed during ancient times: a periodically dissolvable public authority being constituted by an entire/ single an Adivasi group. This means that a 'tribe,' as a becoming-people, cares to nurture their alternative imaginations of (a more flexible, inclusive, and routinely reformable) notions of sovereignty and authority, despite being continuously enveloped, confronted and intruded by those in pursuit of Lakshmi for centuries.

Yorke (1976), Verardo (2003), Deeny (2008) and Rachel (2009) have discussed the ancestral and spirit world of the Hos in some detail. Every Ho household has a sanctuary called adding where ancestral spirits dwell and a ‘Ho village remains home to ancestors within its boundaries… The relation between the living and the dead reveals that ancestors are integrally involved in Ho social and ritual life’ (Rachel: 68, 80), which is also integral to Adivasi sacral polity. Hos imagine themselves as living within ‘a religiously defined boundary that is realized through a contact with the village guardian spirit’ or hatubonga who resides in every sarana (sacred grove, also called desauli of a Ho/ Munda village). There are other burubongako (spirits residing in wild forests and hills) of whom Hos feel threatened (Yorke 1976: 55).

More recent studies among the Mundas, Shah (2010) for example, provides some very interesting details about the Mundas’ radical, alternative visions, radical democratic values and practices embodied in 'a cosmology in which the sacred and the secular are intimately connected, even identical. This cosmology is based on a holistic or non-compartmental view of the different aspects of life such as social, material or economic, political and spiritual (Shah 2014). This sacral polity embodies a moral politics endorsed by the spirits that is neither self-interested nor divisive, and that is underpinned by the values of egalitarianism, consensus in decision making, and mutual aid’ (Ibid.: 190). Shah shows that the parha (the sacral polity of the Mundas) has

---

44 See Mann (1981) and Deeny (2008) for a discussion on tribal religions in India as one essentially revolving around a spirit-nature-man complex. See the appendix–5 for an elaborate list of contrasting sociocultural, economic and political values held by Adivasi and non-Adivasi social formations. Also see Elwin (1943) and Guha (2001).
been 'imagined as an alternative, authentic, Adivasi political vision,' (Ibid.: 56) which has the ‘potential for a radical politics that can better serve the poorest people' (Ibid.: 190). A corollary of this sacral polity is the promotion of egalitarianism, consensus in decision making, and mutual reciprocity and aid' (Shah 2010: 33).

Das Gupta (2011) and Streumer (forthcoming 2014) explain how the mankis and mundas of Kolhan had been coercively negotiated by the agents of precolonial (mainstream) supra-state (‘Rajput’ chieftains/ rajas) while exerting their hegemony over Kolhan and the Hos, which the Hos had refused prior to the advent of the British raj. Since British subjugation of the Hos, the villagers gradually lost their ability to make their mundas and mankis accountable to the community due to colonial policies of co-option and paternalism. Verardo (2003) has shown how the Hos’ struggle to cope with forces of sanskritisation/Hinduization, on the one hand, and the increased pace of deforestation advanced by the post-British colonial state-bureaucrat-industrialist-contractor nexus in the region, on the other. And how these processes have been degenerating the Ho’s subsistence base, way of life and sociocultural integrity. She also shows how the proponents of the ‘mainstream’ intruded the Hos’ refuge zones with all their accompanying adverse influences on the latter’s traditional religio-cultural practices, values and livelihood systems which have been entwined with a spirit-man-nature complex, on which the Hos’ life-cycle and agronomic activities depend/ed.

The processes of state formation in Chotanagpur, thus, are processes that reduce these more radical, freedom loving Adivasis, their leaders and their alternative imaginations of an integrated, holistic community into practico-inert status with values of graded inequality, during later Mughal and British raj, accompanied by callous and brutal repression, despite stiff resistance (see Corbridge 1996; Mullick 2004; Iqbal 2012).

**History of State Formation in Chotanagpur: Conflict, Defeat, Compromise, Retreat and Resistance**

The Mundari speaking Kolarians are said to be the original inhabitants of

---

45 However, Shah (2010) has also noted that the radical elements which hold the potential for a more radical politics have been missed and misunderstood by 'educated' young Adivasis, Jharkhand activists and non-Adivasis alike.
Jharkhand region; they developed dry jhum (slash and burn) cultivation techniques with rice fields and iron tools to be the first settler-cultivators of the place. (Thapar and Siddiqi 1979; Areeparampil 2002; Hill 2008). Villages were established with recognizable boundaries, guarded by deities dwelling in sarnas (sacred groves). Leading men, who first cleared forests, became both the temporal and spiritual heads of a village community who mostly belonged to the same marang killi (leading lineage). Other outsiders were affinal relatives, and craftsmen (service castes) such as blacksmiths, weavers, cowherds who were later accommodated into these original villages. In course of time, the 'heads of patrilineal clans with their office becoming hereditary, grew powerful; gifts, inevitably, became regulated as dues. All of this contributed to the encouragement of an hierarchal arrangement of power based on access to land and its produce, which ran counter to the original lineage system with its stress on egalitarianism' (Hill 2008: 74). (These processes of state-formation hold close similarities to the later-Vedic transformations already discussed in this chapter).

While this explains the initial processes of settled agriculture and accompanying state formation, what facilitated the transformations of Adivasi sacral polity into a hierarchically graded one was political Brahmanism brought in by the ‘men of pen, fortunes and prowess’ (Bayley 2000: sic). They had already established their networks here with powerful Adivasi chieftains who were attracted probably by the prestige and glory that come from the pursuit of Lakshmi. Dalton (1872, 1973) and Roy (1970) narrated a Hindu myth that explained the processes by which the son of a Munda chieftain in Chutia Nagpur, near Ranchi, was gradually converted and co-opted into a Nagavansi (of the genealogy of a serpent god) maharaja of Chotanagpur. Saha (1986) provides a succinct description of how the long transformational processes of a more indigenous/ egalitarian minded Durjan Sal, the maharaja of Chotanagpur took place and the consequences thereby on Adivasis (see appendix-1, 2, 3 and the afterword for more details).

Jha (1964) and Singh (1966) has discussed the socioeconomic and political transformations, and the consequent Adivasi unrest in Chotanagpur. Sinha (1962) has explained how Rajput kings were produced out of tribal chieftains in central eastern India. Similarly, Wills (1919), Blunt (1969), Fox (1971), Kulke (1976, 1978), Singh (1971), Mahapatra (1976), Banerjee (1989) and Thapar (1999) have also has discussed similar models of state formation.
theories in north and central eastern India. These are clear evidences to show
the influence of political Brahmanism that accelerated the processes of state
formation in more fertile/plain regions of early Chotanagpur, however, some
fractions of Kolarians such as Hos, Mundas, Santals, Birhors and a few others
have consistently resisted or escaped the influence of political Brahmanism
while the Bhumijs who were also Kolarians seemed to have embraced it
(Sinha 1962, 1965).

These transformations of Adivasi social formations, facilitated by political
Brahmanism, are similar to that of sanskritisation: the chiefly families
aspired to become Kshatriyas’ [warrior castes] while such transformations
happen over a long period of time, the ordinary people would be relegated to
the status of sudras [toiling serfs] who would provide labour (Thapar 2013:
15). Thus, when the power-structures of more flexibly organized Adivasi
social formations began to undergo tangible changes, the Hos who were more
freedom-loving (Singh 1978) seemed to have split off the Mundas of Ranchi
and moved to more hilly and dense forests of Kolhan (Roy 1970). There
again, the Ho chieftains would later be contacted by the raja families which
further put the Hos with continued interaction with mainstream (brahmanical)
statecraft (see appendix-2 & 3 for more details).

More interestingly, while the British invaded the inaccessible terrains of
Chotanagpur, what the British colonial administrators and ethnologists
witnessed was a continuum of plains-based civilizations, enthused by the
pursuit of Lakshmi, on the one hand, and the hills-based more radically
freedom-seeking fractions among Adivasi social-formations who sought to
keep themselves away by retreating themselves from the subjugating
influence of political Brahmanism. Analyzing both sanskritisation and de-
sanskritisation processes among the Ho-Mundas, Verardo (2003) has shown
that while the wealthier Mundas emulated some of the so-called ‘higher’
caste behaviours resulting in the formation of new ‘castes’ in the course of
Hindu reformist movements, there was ‘simultaneous revival of Adivasi
culture and adherence to ancestral teachings and practices. ‘By reviving the
ancestral notions of wilderness and mastery over forests, those who refuse to
‘sanskritise’ remain faithful to the primordial link between land, spirit and
people as criteria for social status. To them it is territorial precedence and the
mediation with local spirits, rather than Brahmanical criteria of purity and
pollution that legitimize claims to higher social ranking’ (Ibid.: 3).
Although Adivasis, who radically adhered to their own alternative imaginations (see Chaudhuri 2009; Pati 2011, 2013), posed stiff resistance against the compelling influence of political Brahmanism, on being defeated and subjugated by superior powers; they keep withdrawing/retreating into farther interior/inaccessible terrains even at the cost of leaving their fertile lands and homes.\textsuperscript{46} Such resistance, defeat, and retreat/escape have brought and still bring them cumulative material and ideological deprivations (see Mullick 1993, 2004). Perhaps, this has been one of the most complex, long-drawn, but rarely researched aspects of state formation in Adivasi dominant hilly and forested regions\textsuperscript{47} such as Chotanagpur plateau.

Certainly, the British had faced serious difficulties to make sense of what was actually going on with their colonial subjects as it is difficult even today to make legible explanations.

The distinction between 'tribal' and Hindu India was never simple or static. But throughout north and central India and the Western Ghats [hills] were people only lightly touched by the major cultures and religions who lived in part by the skills of the pastoralists, the slash-and-burn farmer or the hunter and gatherer. Some of these people had chieftains who were designated rajas by outside potentates, though often the individual nomadic camp or hunting family was the key political unit and the state hardly existed as an entity (Bayly 1995: 25).

Bayly’s account is based on British colonial records of late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the following account by Stuligross is based on fieldwork during more recent times.

These kingdoms were complete with Brahmin priests, constructed genealogies, and, frequently, conversion to Hinduism by kings and higher-ranking subjects. This conversion, however, was more political than religious, in an important sense. Jharkhandi varieties of Hinduism, consistent with Hindu practice elsewhere, developed in consonance with local myths, traditions and rituals. Hence, it is perfectly consistent for much of the Jharkhand ‘Hindu’ community to profess that they practice ‘tribal culture’ (Stuligross 2008: 94).

\textsuperscript{46} For the most recent testimony of the Adivasis’ determined rejection of caste-based discrimination and oppression; see (Mahawar’s (2012) testimony, ‘Tribals don’t believe in chatur-varna [the fourfold caste system] that is the basis of Hindu society. They lived with their native tradition, and for over five thousand years refused to get dominated by Hindus. Hence, they are not Hindus’ (p.1) He has made this statement after having observed Adivasi life and culture for the last fifty years in Bastar Chhattisgarh.

\textsuperscript{47} See Pati (2001) for an interesting discussion on state formation/conversion animated by political Brahmanism in Orissa for a period from 1700 to 2000; these are not so easily noticed long-drawn, complex, conflict-ridden and materially impoverishing experiences for the marginalized sections of Indian society.
Several British ethnologists and administrator anthropologists, Dalton (1872), Hunter (1886), Lyall (1907) and Russell (1969), for instance, have indeed described these complex and bewildering socio-cultural processes of continuous coercion, conflict, imitation, acculturation and assimilation that had been taking place in a continuum during 1600-1900 in Chotanagpur and beyond. These are complex socio-economic and political processes of a natural, imitative acculturation or ‘detribalization.’ An interesting analogy the British ethnologists had employed to describe such a phenomenal situation, was that of a ‘melting pot’ in which the ‘aboriginal tribes’ were progressively and gradually being assimilated or incorporated into caste-based societies (Lyall 1907: 27).

The British hegemons, in their efforts to understand their colonial subjects, further enumerated and categorized these fluid and continuously interacting/ assimilating/ acculturating social formations into ‘castes’ and ‘tribes,’ which artificially differentiated and consolidated more complex and changing socio-cultural and political formations (see Mandani 2012). However, this intervention of the British raj also gave some legal basis for Adivasis’ consciousness and claims of their separate identity and rights (see below).

The ‘sudra mode of incorporation’ of the economically poorer sections of Adivasis (Saha 1986: 279, 1994) or ‘discriminatory integration’ (Sahu 1986: 11-12, 16-17; Pati 2001) or ‘secondary primitivization’ (Sinha 1982: 6) clearly involve cultural, symbolic and structural violence although it rendered itself normalized and self-reproductive by the Indian ideological statecraft (political Brahmanism, both the predecessor and successor of British raj). These very complex, conflicting and long-drawn processes continue to remain the main kernel of state-formation in Chotanagpur region even today.

Secondary primitivization, withdrawal, oscillation, and regional universalization and participation in the caste/peasant base of Indian civilization through the intervention of state formation. ... the pressure of the encroaching civilization not only pulls the hitherto isolated tribal groups towards integration with the caste/peasant system, they also generate processes of keeping some groups at a level of isolation from the mainstream of peasant society (Sinha 1982: 8).

British-led invasion into these interior, inaccessible ‘refuge zones’ of Adivasi social formations (Mangobinda 1989; Chaudhuri 2009) not only aggravated the pre-British colonial system but also brought in additional direct/physical violence – branding Adivasis as ‘criminal tribes,’ accusing some of them to be engaging in ‘human sacrifice’ which itself was a survival strategy for
Adivasis against a set of conditions that marginalized their world and sought to terrorize them to submit to the British (Padel 1995, 2009). Such direct violence and repression also triggered numerous insurrections, and rebellions from the beginning of 1700 to the end of 1800.48

It became clear that from two sides their traditional society was being undermined: custom was being undermined by contract, a barter economy by a money economy; they had to yet learn to handle, divisions of land determined by traditional custom were replaced by a landlord-tenant relationship and tribal solidarity was being destroyed from within by Hinduisation of chiefs, and from without by the pressure of the British raj (Jha 1964: 240).

As a consequence of these rebellions, the British colonists were forced to introduce the provisions of ethno-territorial enclosures – Scheduled district Act 1874, the CNTA 1909 and the Santal Pargana Tenancy Act 1949 – which alone provided some space for Adivasis to assert their separate identity in Chotanagpur during the 1920s, and arguably, whatever little lands and forests that have been left with Adivasis today in their ethno-territories in Jharkhand, is the result of these provisions that are also reflected in the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (see Rao 2008; Sunder 2009). Thus, although British colonialism initially had a terrorizing effect on Adivasis, once they were subjugated, has had some positive impact in relation to Adivasi land rights and identity. However, despite such provisions of Adivasi enclosures, the praxis and process and praxes of Indian colonialism and racism as a system has continued, even aggravated in Adivasi dominant regions during the post-British colonial period. This has been well documented and conceptualized as internal colonialism (Sinha 1973; Singh 1982; Das 1992, Devalle 1992; Mundu 2003; Padel 2011; Kujur 2011; Toppo 2012; Dungdung 2013). ‘The dismantling of British colonial rule in India did not, then, simply translate into freedom from political-economic and psycho-cultural oppression and caste-race discrimination for the Adivasi’ (Kapoor 2007: 11).

British colonial invasion was, most probably, made possible by the enthusiastic cooperation of the ‘men of pen, fortunes and prowess,’ the primary agents of the ‘mainstream,’ who not only conjointly formed the steel frame of the British raj (Bayley 2000; Patterson 2009) but also perpetuate the

---

48 Most significant of them being the Kol insurrection of 1831-32, in which the Hos of Kolhan had played a leading role, and the last being the Ulguian, the Munda uprising under the leadership of legendary Adivasi rebel leader Birsa Munda during 1885-1900 in Chotanagpur (see Jha 1964; Singh 1966; Singh 1978; Sahu 1985).
iron frame of post-British Indian colonial civic order. Caste hierarchy might have served as the main pillar of British colonial paternalism, where ‘high’ caste elites bargained to maintain hierarchies of privilege in colonial society. For the mediating elites get rewards from their cooperation with the privilege of power over citizens, peasants, workers, family members and neighbours. No colonizer can unilaterally impose a colonial system or rule – a political system – it involves negotiations or power relations and identities in myriad ways at various levels (Thompson 2000).

Thus, the so-called ‘mainstream’ always perceives Adivasis (whom it has ‘othered’ and systematically marginalized) in derogatory terms as ‘barbarians’ (Thapar 1971), mlecha (ritually impure), dasyu (bandits) (Saha 1986: 277) chuar and dakait (thieves and robbers), jungli (wild) (Rycroft and Dasgupta 2011: 4).

The question of tribal separatism is increasingly coming to the fore. Sometimes it is raised with a profound sense of alarm as if there were a revolt, and the army ought to be marched in to crush it; at other times, it is raised with voyeuristic amusement at the tribals' quaint customs. Both these attitudes are humiliating to the tribals (Sinha 1987: 2051).

The mainstream, especially, the urban upper/ middle class/ caste Indians, have more or less kept up these racist and derogatory/ stereotypes of Adivasi, and other marginalized working/ farming classes, intact (see Mosse 2005, chapter 3). This might also partially explain why the economically marginalized sections of Adivasis keep retreating themselves into further inaccessible terrains and why the state in India treats its Adivasis in the way it does as shown in the narration of the CRPF and JP combined ‘operation Anaconda’ at the start of this chapter.

**The Beast among the Hos, in Hodisum, the Ho ‘country’**

Today, as Scott (2009) has rightly argued, on the one hand, the multiple powers, technologies, and agents of the state are more sophisticated and ubiquitous, appearing in multiple forms and shapes. On the other hand, Ho villagers’ reactive statelessness brings them cumulative impoverishment while the spirit of resistance, mostly in forms of ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott 1985: sic) still exists along with sporadic thunderous protests. The resisting core of Adivasi subjectivity might continue to remain supported by their own alternative imaginations as a people with self-respect, and cultural dignity
(Scott 2013), despite increasing deprivations, penury and hopelessness. The present situation of marginalized Hos, and their dormant sociocultural organizations caged in by the beastly presence and interference mainstream state institutions/ agents are succinctly represented by Mahasweta Devi (1981), an activist writer.

Today the tribal existence in Singhbhum is symbolized in this simple song about a cowherd boy lost in the jungle: he can't go the eastern way, a tiger is there. A big black bear waits on the south. The wolves are on the prowl in the west. The big snake blocks the northern way. So the little boy waits and waits. To be eaten up by the tiger. To be crushed to death by the bear. To be torn to shreds by the wolves. To be swallowed by the snake. What are the tribals to do? Old mother Kolhan [weakened Adivasi subjectivity/ imagination] never answers. Her children did not beat the nagara [a big traditional musical drum with one side elliptically shaped, symbolizing their customary, cultural practices and cultural values] when the outsiders entered Kolhan. How can she tell them what to do? What is done, cannot be undone (p. 1597).

Today, there are several forces/ actors that constitute the mainstream: a corrupt bureaucratic administration, the inert institutional presence of CRPF and JP, meant to instil fear in marginalized and mostly disillusioned Adivasis so as to turn them and their social organizations into practico-inert status, the capitalist industrialists whose eyes are fixed on the rich mineral resources beneath Adivasi land and forests, the civilizing missionaries of both the 'syndicate Hinduism’ (Thapar 2010) and the Christian churches, several NGOs, and most importantly the ambivalent elite Adivasis themselves who have already been under misrecognition of political Brahmanism (the pursuit of Lakshmi) and have progressively been incorporated into mainstream via ‘education’ and affirmative action policies: reservations in state-sector jobs, higher education and political representation, which make them overly patriotic. These elites compete among themselves to ostensibly represent Adivasis (Raichaudhuri 1992). Further, the Maoist ‘extremists,’ split into several fractions, have opened their ‘markets of protection (Shah 2006). While a few Adivasi and non-Adivasi leaders/ activists, who assert Adivasi rights, but refuse to succumb to the forces of political Brahmanism, are silenced or physically eliminated (Mullick 2004; Sunder 2009: conclusion, Iqbal 2012). The situation remain evermore complex.

Mahasweta Devi, after her visit to Kolhan and Serengsi ghati, an inaccessible terrain where the Ho chieftains had defeated the mighty British during the early 19 century, wrote,

Many more factories and a slow death of the countryside. It is easier in Singhbhum. It is
so easy to kill and terrorize and stop people with the law on your side. The ACC [a cement factory at Jhinkpani] is too powerful to abide by the laid down laws. … The tribal king's war cry could be heard from a place which was named Rajenka to commemorate the event. A flat stone under mowa tree marked the line of advance by the tribals. The atmosphere was charged with the past of a people who still recorded everything in the mind, not on paper. Nor do they believe in commemorating our way. … From Serengsi we had come to Jhinkpani. The gray countryside is still, a nightmarish memory. Who can save a countryside from slow and inevitable death? What is going to happen to the hapless villagers so wrongly and cruelly deprived of their land? Only the people of Singhbhum can work out a solution with continuous and consistent movement more potent than a sporadic and thunderous one. Under which leadership? I do not know (Devi 1983: 330, emphasis added).

This description vividly explains the process of subjugation and super-exploitation of the Hos of Kolhan that has continued ever since British colonial subjugation and has been aggravated during the post-independence period, especially, since the 1990s (Karen 1957; Kishwar 1987; Corbridge 1982; 1996; Areeparampil 2002; George 2009; Das Gupta 2011; Damodaran 2013). The colonial mode of mineral extraction, destruction of forests and degradation of environment have almost reached their limit while the slightly better-off slots among the Hos are being recruited to CRPF and JP, and brought back to be deployed to shoot and kill those more deprived, state-avoiding and still resisting, but largely disillusioned ones who try to survive on their own as one finds them in Saranda and other such interior, hilly and remote inaccessible terrains.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the description of a recent terrorizing intervention by the repressive apparatus of the central and regional states among the most marginalized Ho villagers in Saranda forest. In order to understand the underlying logic of such violence, it moved on to discuss the ideologically conflicting orientations of the imaginary Indian mainstream vis-à-vis Adivasi social formations. By historicizing and deconstructing the idea of mainstream, it has shown that these two categories (Adivasi and mainstream) are mutually constitutive: the emergence of political Brahmanism, its long-drawn and extremely complex suffusion, as the most dominant and attractive model of statecraft had its simultaneous spinoffs – the Adivasi ‘Other’ – those who chose to escape the ancient statecraft which viewed Adivasis as aliens, ‘uncivilized,’ and ‘barbarians’ probably for the very reason that they had chosen to be different by escaping the oppressive and exploitative
statecraft, the infernal machine of practico-inert fields.

While, political Brahmanism, the Indian statecraft, the infernal machine, flourished in the alluvial plains, Adivasis in roughed and forested regions (‘refuge zones’) formed and nurtured their own alternative socioeconomic systems. In course of time, however, the leading elements of Adivasi social formations, even in their refuge zones, were progressively penetrated and be transformed into political Brahmanism that had emerged as the single most dominant ideology in the subcontinent. British colonial invasion into these refuge zones further aggravated this ongoing transformations accompanied by direct/physical violence. Its superior technology, further, sought to count, categorize, and crystallize the differences between various categories (castes and ‘tribes’), which however, also provided a legal basis for the assertion of Adivasi identities. However, these processes of conflicting transformation continues to work out on the ground even today with its accompanying complexities, since the nature (shape) of the state in India continues to be the same. Thus, there exists a clear continuity to the praxis and process of colonialism and racism in India from the ancient to the so-called ‘modern’ times, despite several well pronounced and lofty ideals in India’s Constitutional text.

On experiencing the exploitative effects of the state in India, the infernal machine, more marginalized Adivasis, who feel transgressed by its discriminatory inclusion and exclusion, and are unable to cope with it, keep retreating further into deep inaccessible terrains. However, there is little space left ungoverned by the ‘modern’ state today. Hence, the reactive statelessness of Adivasis and alternative imaginations, will no longer be feasible as almost all the wealthier and more vocal elements among them have progressively been acculturated/ co-opted/ assimilated by an all-pervasive mainstream ideology – the pursuit of Lakshmi – which drives the processes of state formation in India.

The next chapter shows how the very processes of state formation in India produce poverty among Adivasis by facilitating accumulation of advantages for the elite and disadvantages for the marginalized.
State Formation and Poverty: Entrenched (Indian) Elitism
Reproduces Poverty

The causes of rural poverty [in India] have to be sought in semi-feudal bondage, a system. The poor peasantry is exploited under this system. Moreover, because of this system the rural rich, in fact, have a stake in perpetuating the waste and inefficiency that is characteristic of precapitalist modes of production.

(Pradhan H. Prasad 1976: 1269)

In 1991, when economic reform started, India was at 123rd place in the human development Index (which takes cares of a wider range of components than mere calories intake). It slipped to the 134th place in 2011 (Jha 2013: 4). Despite a fast-growing economy and the largest anti-malnutrition programme, India has the world’s worst level of child malnutrition.

(J. Singh and N. Pandey 2013)
Introduction

The last chapter has drawn a genealogy of the idea of politics and the state in India as to how they historically emerged as infernal machines that created serfdom and oppression for its toiling ‘masses,’ the by-product of Indian colonialism and racism as a system. It argued, Adivasis who had escaped these infernal machines of the plains, during ancient times, had formed themselves, in course of time, into alternative, autonomous, (Adivasi) ‘jungle’ kingdoms. However, several of their chieftaincies have gradually been transformed into the structures of political Brahmanism towards the end of the pre-British colonial period. While these processes are still being worked out, most radical elements among the Adivasis still keep escaping the ‘state-effect.’ The British and post-British colonial periods witnessed/ witness violent invasions of inaccessible terrains where more radical Adivasi social formations continue to resist their unequal incorporation into the so-called ‘mainstream’ that still pauperizes Adivasis.

This chapter shows the nature and magnitude of poverty and destitution among the present day Adivasis, as the outcome of a long-drawn out process of simultaneous pauperization and polarization of Adivasi social formations in a manner similar to that of the plains-based colonial system: chronic poverty, destitution, on the one hand, and individual accumulation, differentiation and stratification, on the other. On the whole there is ‘growth,’ but the ‘poor’ get ‘poorer’ (Boyce 1983: 388). Consequently, the gap between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ has widened even within Adivasi social formations hitherto represented as less stratified and more egalitarian. This trajectory has primarily been driven by processes that grossly deprive Adivasis of their traditional livelihood resources in the name of ‘national development,’ whilst the fruits of the same has been distributed disproportionately. The two main trajectories of redistribution – affirmative action policies and poverty alleviation schemes – not only fail to meet their intended objectives but also encourage, normalize and deepen unequal accumulation, differentiation and stratification (Shneiderman and Shah 2013). Poverty alleviation schemes not only aid an ubiquitous spread and entrenchment of bureaucratic control over Adivasi social formations, but also depoliticize and demystify these very political issues (Corbridge et al 2005).

Thus, while showing the crippling presence and magnitude of poverty and
destitution in study villages, this chapter also attempts to understand better how the process of state formation, mainly by administering ‘development,’ drives inequality and new divisions / disintegration among Adivasi social formations. In other words, this chapter attempts to understand how ‘state’ and ‘development,’ do not bring development/ wellbeing to rural Adivasi villagers, but deepen stratification and underdevelopment.

This chapter first discusses how knowledge about poverty is conceptualised and analysed. Second, it takes a brief look at the present Adivasi predicaments in an economically ‘booming’ India; and shows how the Indian state’s ‘will to improve’ Adivasis have not only failed but also produce and deepen endemic poverty. Third, it presents empirical data on Ho households to show the trend of deepening poverty in five study villages. Data on literacy rate, income diversification and accessibility of poverty alleviation schemes are presented and discussed in some length. Fourth, it elaborates on processes of accumulation of advantages by the not so ‘poor,’ and that of disadvantages by the most deprived among these households. Fifth, the chapter delineates the role of state formation in driving the deprived villagers into destitution while encouraging the affluent households to advance their fortunes in these villages. Sixth, it shows how poverty alleviation schemes strategically function as both bio-politics and depoliticizing machines. And finally, it recapitulates the main findings and arguments.

**Poverty-Knowledge, Concepts and Analytical Frameworks**

Recent debates on poverty have emphasised its multidimensionality and the difficulty involved in defining it. Although 'poverty' represents deprivations, there is little consensus on 'deprivations of what and how much;' and hence there is no one 'objective' way of defining and measuring poverty. (Stewart et al 2007: 217). Moreover, the multidimensionality of poverty cannot be understood by any single method, concept or approach. The most widely used approach to identify and measure poverty has been the monetary/income/expenditure-based approach (MA). Besides MA, are capability approach (CA), social exclusion (SE), and participatory approach (PA). Each of these has its own strengths and weaknesses; and they often overlap on certain aspects of poverty with regard to specific social groups and contexts.
A more fundamental question about measuring poverty has been: can monetary income (or utility) adequately measure people's well-being? MA generally misses the in/ adequacy in 'socially provided goods' (Stewart et al 2007: 218). While numerical approaches to poverty may serve the purpose of identifying incidences of poverty, they do not measure its duration and multidimensionality; moreover they often miss most factors and forces that produce, and allow poverty to persist. Furthermore, policies based on income poverty measurements also often miss the dynamics of poverty: people with varying levels of capabilities and constraints fall into, stay in and escape poverty traps during the course of a year, and even seasonally (Krishna 2010).

Chronic poverty is characterised by extended duration in absolute poverty, when households are unable to meet the requirements of a basic minimum standard of living indicated by a poverty line. People, who are forced to live continuously below a poverty line, are chronically poor; while transitorily 'poor' occasionally fall into or escape poverty (Hickey 2008). Hence, the concept of poverty must include notions of insecurity, vulnerability, destitution, incapacity, powerlessness, and ill-being since all these constrain a person's ability to act to fulfil his/ her aims or goals (Currie 2000).

Harris-White (2005) defines destitution as the most extreme form of poverty which results from both institutionalised and non-institutionalized processes of political economy, law and state practices. The destitute not only become 'nonpeople' in the sight of the state, the market and civil society institutions, but also are 'actively expelled' from such institutional realms. They are invisible to the political elite, devoid of citizenship rights, and are left to their own highly constrained agencies. Factors that lead to destitution are 'extreme deprivation' of essential commodities by way of failures of allocation, subsistence support systems, and collective rights. Extreme destitution leads to 'individuation' and utter powerlessness. For there exists processes and dynamics in the political economy and existing relationships in society that deprive persons of their control over assets, labour, savings, insurance and income. 'Most anti-poverty policies are irrelevant for destitute people and the financial resources directed towards reducing destitution are entirely inadequate' (Ibid.: 881). Thus, extreme poverty is not a sui generis factor or a consequence of global scarcity, but a system that makes marginalised people powerless (Loppe et al 1998).
Situations of poverty and prolonged deprivations are symptomatic of exploitative unequal relationships and structures (structural violence) that create and perpetuate poverty (Galtung 1990; Farmer 2004). These structures and relationships are often not obvious; hence, poverty analysis must be relational and that persistent poverty is the consequence of historically entrenched unequal economic and political relations (Mosse 2010). Citing the examples of Adivasis (‘tribals’) and Dalits (‘ex-untouchables’) being subordinated to the dominant classes/ castes, he claims that growing deprivations of these social groups result also from social categorisation and stereotyping. Similarly, de Haan (2007, 2011) argues, while recent poverty debates in India have highlighted both severe group inequalities, and identity issues, such debates have paid insufficient attention to the nature and extent of historically rooted deprivations of Dalits and Adivasis. He also points out that the below poverty line (BPL) listing, and categorisation of historically marginalised groups for 'targeted' programmes not only downplay various manifestations of discrimination, but also risk these social groups to be stigmatised, which further entrenches cultural and structural violence.

Harris (2007) argues that although mainstream poverty analysts provide sophisticated calculations and detailed descriptions of peoples, regions and countries, they have generally failed to address the underlying relational, structural and historical factors that produce and maintain poverty. According to him, any useful poverty analysis, intending to reduce poverty, must raise questions like, why do the prevailing patterns of resource distribution work the way they do? Ignoring such crucial questions, while analysing poverty, might contribute to depoliticise what are in essence political problems.

A set of recent publications by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) provides some useful analytical tools by which the multidimensionality, durability and structural/ relational aspects of chronic poverty and their causes at local and global levels can effectively be analysed. These tools are based on notions of adverse incorporation and social exclusion (AISE). AISE perspective helps to see processes that produce and maintain poverty. It seeks to explore unequal power relations not only within a particular society, but also its relations and patterns of interaction with encapsulating societies. Such an approach might also be able to challenge the most common victim-blaming theories of the metropolitan-based Indian middle class: ‘Adivasis are
lazy, often drunk and do not work hard; that is why they continue to live in such poverty' (Rao 2008: 29)

AISe's main assumption is 'that chronic poverty does not exist outside of underlying processes of development, but is constituted by them with wealth and poverty as opposite sides of the same coin,' that 'deeper roots of impoverishment need to be seen in historical terms' – how a region and its inhabitants have been 'incorporated into dominant political rule and economic systems that have prevailed at various periods' of history: precolonial, colonial and postcolonial (Hickey and du Toit 2007: 1). As is shown in the previous chapter, this relates to the production and maintenance of Adivasi marginality as a by-product of Indian national mainstream and its ideology, 'the pursuit of Lakshmi,' and its linkages to the recent predatory growth policies and processes also fuelled by neoliberal global capitalism. Hence, for a better understanding of how and why the majority of Indian population continue to remain 'poor,' despite the country’s spectacular economic growth in recent years, one must analyse and see how and why a few elites in India have managed to join the club of dollar billionaires, making their number the fifth-biggest in the world.49

A relentless, competitive and unconstrained pursuit of Lakshmi by a few, who have been traditional power-holders, necessitates a colonial relationship with the historically marginalized vast majority in manners similar to ‘primitive accumulation and dispossession’ (Harvey 2004). Such pursuits adversely impact upon the livelihood resources of Dalitbahujans and Adivasis, especially, in the countryside while the metropolitan elites press for more predatory growth (Walker 2008). The persistent marginality of Adivasi regions and social formations might therefore be seen as a by-product of entrenched Indian elitism, built on a colonial exploitative relationship with its marginalised peoples and regions (Saha 1986: 301, Mosse 2010; Corbridge and Shah 2013; Damodaran 2013).

The following section presents (household-level) quantitative data, on literacy rates, monthly income, households’ in/ability to access poverty

49 The Economic Times 20 March 2013. With as many as 120 new entrants this year, India can now boast a total of 7,850 Ultra High Net Worth (UHNW) individuals, according to the latest World Wealth Report 2013. The collective net worth of this Richie Rich club amounts to a phenomenal $935 billion - nearly half of India's Gross Domestic Product (Mail Today 2013).
alleviation schemes, and to engage in various income diversification activities, in study villages. The figures and tables aid a better understanding of the present trend and magnitude of deprivations.

Adivasi Predicaments in a ‘booming’ India, a Bird’s Eye View

Economic development and underdevelopment are the opposite faces of the same coin (Philips 1977: 7).

Talk of India being, or shortly becoming, a major economic power, just as much as the focus on flashy dollar billionaires who are rising in India at the rate of 17 per year, blithely disregards the fact that more than 800 million Indians continue to survive on less than $2 a day, or that just eight Indian states have more poor people than 26 of Africa’s poorest countries put together. … Close to 450 million Indians are forced to subsist on less than $1.25 a day. … The National Commission for Employment in the Unorganized Sector shows that almost three-quarters of the population has a daily purchasing power of less than ₹ 20 (or 40 cents) a day. (Corbridge and Shah 2013: 335).

The paradox of spectacular economic growth in terms of real gross domestic product GDP and the deepening inequality and deprivations of large numbers of people in India has recently stimulated interesting questions and discussions. An increased growth rate has not reflected in a corresponding increase in the living standards of South Asia’s nearly half a billion deprived people (Ghani 2010). While various pro-growth policies have substantially increased the growth rate since the 1980s, paradoxically, the number of people living on less than 1.25 USD a day has also risen. This means a disproportionate flow of growth-induced benefits exclusively to a very small portion of the population, although such pro-growth policies are qualified as 'inclusive' (Corbridge 2010; Sunder 2010).

Several recent studies have highlighted the appropriation of economically vulnerable peoples’ livelihoods by a corporate controlled capitalist state in India. They have also shown these processes to be similar to that of primitive accumulation and dispossession furled by recent pro-growth policies in India (Walker 2008; Sunder 2010; Ganguly and Oetken 2013; Fernandes 2013). Moreover, while dispossessed people are left with hardly any reliable alternative livelihood options, their protest against such predatory policies along with demands for their fundamental/ Constitutional rights are perceived

50 The number has increased from 420 million in 1981 to 455 in 2005 in India (Ghani 2010). India’s Global Hunger Index (GHI) improved slightly during 1996-2001, however, despite the gross national income (GNI) per capita being doubled during 2001-2012, GHI has stagnated and remains at the same level as it was in 1996 (IFPRI 2012).
to be ‘dangerous’ by the ruling elite. Consequently, the ruling elites devise poverty alleviation/ ‘development’ schemes not only to contain the 'dangerous' effects of predatory growth but also to win votes from these ‘dangerous classes’ (Chatterjee 2008).

Thus, there exists not only a clear historical trajectory of elites who constitute the iron triangle (see the figure-1, chapter-1) traditionally in a hereditary manner, but also their manipulation of almost all major so-called 'reform' policies to their exclusive benefits (Subramanian 2014). They have effectively thwarted the implementation of land reform initiatives, disproportionately benefited from the ‘green revolution,’ thence diversified their investments into manufacturing industries favoured by the abolition of 'licence raj,' and have now become transnational capitalists who manipulate the entire regulatory system of the state (Breman 2004; Jodha 2008; Gupta and Sivaramakrishnan 2011), which now wants to increase the predatory economic growth at the cost of the country’s most vulnerable (Adivasi) people and their traditional livelihood resources (Walker 2008; Gupta 2012; Damodaran 2013; Fernandes 2013).

Of the many tribal problems the greatest is poverty. There were once tribals and zamindars controlling vast estates; there are still powerful chieftains on the north-eastern hills; but the majority of these people are among the poorest peasants in the world. Some have no land at all and are little better than serfs, some have no rights over the fields they cultivate; many have been robbed of their land; the rest struggle with primitive tools to scratch a living from an unfriendly soil (Singh 1990: 11).

In a colonial infernal machine, political and economic predominance go hand in hand. First of all, it overcomes resistance, smashes the framework, subdues and terrorises. Only then the economic system will be put in place. ... The structure of old tribal society was broken without putting anything in its place. ... Assimilation taken to the extreme meant, quite simple, the end of colonialism; but how could one expect to get that from colonialism itself? (Sartre [1964] 2005: 11-12)

What one sees here clearly is the ‘will to improve.’ Li (2008) has shown that the ‘will to improve’ has long and troubled history. She has explored the tools specialists have employed to bring ‘reforms,’ including, the shaping of ordinary people’s desires to match the experts colonial desires. She has shown how such interventions have entangles with one another to produce results ranging from wealth to famine, compliance to political mobilisations, and solidarities to oppositional identities and enduring violence.
Development Discourses and De-Development, Linked to the ‘Will to Improve’

The Indian state's efforts to 'develop' Adivasis have failed due not only to the policymakers’ ignorance of Adivasi needs, but also to their irredeemably top-heavy nature with 80 to 90 per cent of the funds going towards maintaining an administrative structure which supervises the distribution of the remaining meagre allocations (Bhowmik 1988; Brass 1996; Padel 2012). 'The interests of Adivasis are largely ignored in the development paradigm. The well-being of these weak and voiceless communities gets trampled over the process... In the development paradigms of our time, there are those who do not find a place. Their interests are not merely ignored, but they are deeply wounded' (Shah 2005: 4895).

In fact, Adivasi interests have not been ignored, but ‘development’ programs have been implemented strategically to advance state-bureaucratic legitimacy while depoliticizing the real political issues. According to Ferguson (1996), development interventions are organized according to the structure of development knowledge (discourse). While these interventions themselves fail, on their own terms, to deliver what they intend to, they in turn have regular effects of expanding and entrenching bureaucratic state power. ‘Development apparatus’ is an ‘anti politics machine’ depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power’ (Ibid.: xv).

Adivasi ‘development’ emerges as an 'issue' primarily due to the very aspiration of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to bring them into 'national mainstream.' This has ostensibly been done through several sets of high-sounding ‘multi-pronged approaches’ meant for their ‘all-round development,’ however, with little result (Karlsson 2004). Several studies, however, show that the outcome of such multi-pronged approaches for Adivasis, as distinct social formations, to be fatal.

In Orissa and Jharkhand, aggregate tribal population during post-independence period has strikingly declined reflecting their relative vulnerability, deprivation and movements, particularly over the recent decades. … on health and education, STs are the most deprived (even than the SCs aggregate) … growing relative vulnerability and deprivation and contemporary reversal of traditional gender equities… manifesting trend among tribes as they enter the mainstream (Hindu) sociocultural field,
acculturation process and its anti-female implications for tribal gender relations have been drawn the attention of researchers earlier (Maharatna 2005: 260-265).

Moreover, the legal framework of the 'modern' state continues to reinforce a process of orientalism towards Adivasis rooted in colonial, evolutionary economic and legal discourses (Marinoa 2012; Jewitt 1995). Such stereotyping of people is essential for the maintenance of existing social and symbolic order that allows the powerful to control and influence others for desired outcomes (Hall 1997: 35). Ilaiah (1990, 1994) showed that the state system in India has been built up on the exploitation of Dalits and Adivasis in a colonial style as these social formations had almost permanently been enslaved to produce surplus for the so-called ‘upper’ castes/ classes. Presently, Adivasis and Dalits often face exclusion from almost every field of opportunity for social mobility that have been available to them via reservations (Thorat and Newman 2007; Harris-White and Vidyarthee 2010; Deshpande and Sharma 2013).

Consequently, poverty and destitution among Dalits and Adivasis is much higher compared to other social groups in India (Gang et al 2008). Large numbers of Adivasi women and men from the central eastern states (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha) are forced to migrate to big cities due to lack of livelihood opportunities back home caused by degradation of rural agrarian and forest based livelihood resources (SRRA 2010). Considering the country as a whole, 53.8 per cent of Scheduled Caste households and 61.3 per cent Adivasi households live below the poverty line (BPL) which has been set at a deplorably inadequate level51 (Haque 2011). This has been the overall outcome of nearly seven decades of development discourse and interventions in India, despite the huge sums of money spent ostensibly to alleviate ‘poverty’ (Ray 2010).

The National Family Health Survey shows that 57 per cent of all children in rural Jharkhand are malnourished ad 70 per cent women are anaemic (Tigga 2013). The Situation of rural Adivasi children is worse: about 80 per cent children and 85 per cent women are anaemic. Dr. Vinayak Sen, a noted

---

51 The Welfare profiles in India are measured using household consumption expenditure. The average poverty line for 2004-05, according to the Planning Commission (PC) of India, was rupees 356 per person per month in rural areas and rupees 548 in urban areas. There have been several controversies about the validity and adequacy of such a cut-off line for categorizing people into groups below and above the poverty line (see Dreze 2010).
paediatrician and human rights activist has shown how Adivasis in rural villages these days live in a state of chronic famine according to the WHO norms (Sen 2012). Since between 2000 and 2011 more than a hundred people have died due to acute hunger, of which 40 per cent belong to Adivasi social formations. Besides this there are issues of displacement from land, ‘extremist’ violence and counter violence by the state forces which has seen marginalized people killed in violent encounters and several incidents of gross human rights violation by the state. However, these accounts of Adivasi deprivations do not mention that, at least in Jharkhand since 2000, Adivasis share 35.8 per cent of the total seats in the state legislative assembly (Robin 2009). These are Adivasis elites, elected from their respective, reserved constituencies to represent the needs and aspirations of Adivasi social formations, yet the majority Adivasis households in these constituencies continue to be increasingly impoverished.

Household Data (indicative of socioeconomic conditions) from Five Villages under Study

**Literacy Rates**

Educational attainment has been considered to be one of the main indicators of human development. Figures-2 show the male and female literacy rates respectively in five rural villages under study. They are indicated by codes (V1, V2...); and their respective distance from Chaibasa is given along with village codes on the y-axis. The figure shows that both male and female literacy rates in these villages are very low compared to the regional and national literacy rates (see table-2). Further, there exists a significant difference/ gap in both male-female, and rural-urban literacy rates (figure-3), especially in V1 which is very near Chaibasa; female literacy rates in V1, V4 and V5 are negligible.

---

52 Alam (2012) ‘Jharkhand, twelve years later: Mahtab Alam.’ I refer to these sources since government report do not provides social group-wise disaggregated findings on poverty, and most of such reports are often inaccurate. See Appendix- 6 & 7 for disaggregated data on the social-group-wise socioeconomic profile of Jharkhand and the percentage numbers of below poverty households in different districts of Jharkhand.
A very important fact to note about literacy in these villages is that persons with a few years of schooling are counted as 'literate' in the census and survey reports. However, most of them so recorded might have forgotten how to speak, read and write in Hindi, the state and national language, which is very different from their mother tongue, the Ho language. For the Hos seldom use Hindi at their home villages.
Economic Grouping of Households

Figure 3 – Economic Grouping of Households: Percentage of Households in Each Group

Source: survey conducted by the author (July-October 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage share of social-groups in income categories</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destitute (₹ 100-400)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always poor (₹ 500-800)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally poor (₹ 800-1500)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable (₹ 2000-3000)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affluent (₹ 5000 &amp; above)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total

Table 3 – Percentage share of social-groups in income categories

Source: survey conducted by the author (July-October 2011)

Households are grouped, based on aggregate monthly income, tentatively under five different economic categories: destitute, always-poor, occasionally-poor, comfortable and affluent. Affluent households often belong to the dominant killi (patrilineage), with the best quality land which can yield sufficient food grain for the entire year with a normal monsoon.

---

53 Aggravate monthly income of a household includes total income earned from all economic activities by all members of a household, including agrarian and non-agrarian activities.
Similarly, comfortable households have comparatively better quality landholding; they can produce sufficient food grains for 5-7 months with a good monsoon. Occasionally-poor households own some amount of land which might yield food grains for subsistence approximately for 3-5 months, provided the yearly monsoon arrive on time in sufficient measure. During the last few decades, however, the monsoon failed almost every alternative year driving many of these households into chronic poverty with absolute absence of any irrigation facility for paddy-cultivation. Depending on the availability of rain or lack of it, they may fall into or get out of poverty. Besides a highly irregular monsoon, any illness, or accidents may also drive them to chronic poverty. Thus, a permanent lack of basic economic security plagues their ability to engage in activities that might bring them long-term upward mobility (see below).

Always-poor households own lesser quantity, and mostly eroded lands; they permanently remain below the poverty line (BPL) with absolute poverty which further reduces their ability to make decisions that affect their lives. Destitute households, mostly hold only small homesteads; they continuously struggle to keep themselves alive left to their own constrained agency. However, all landless households are not always-poor or destitute (as landholding alone does not determine their economic status). As shown in table-3, several landless OBC and SC households in these villages also fall into higher income categories, although they do not own any cultivable land.

Village one (V1) in figure-2 above, the one nearest to Chaibasa, has a total of 90 households. None is ‘destitute’ here. Nine per cent households are ‘always-poor;’ 53 per cent are occasionally-poor, 33 per cent are comfortable and four per cent are affluent. The village’s proximity to Chaibasa town enables the landless (especially, the 25 OBC) households to find regular employment and earn relatively better wages. However, as already shown in figure-2, female literacy rate here remains almost negligible, which contradicts the generally held notion that accessing education is the most important way to alleviate poverty.

The second village (V2 - Hasuringhatu) in figure-2 above, although not very far from Chaibasa, has a large majority (75 per cent) households living in chronic poverty, 12 per cent are occasionally-poor, nine per cent destitute, just two per cent each are comfortable, and affluent. A very striking
economic differentiation is clear with a very small group of non-poor, and a very large number of chronically poor households. Village three (V3 - Maranghatu), in figure-2 above, is special in certain respects. Unlike V5, V4, and V2, that have a negligible presence of non-Adivasi households, V3 has more of them. Most SC and OBC households own only small homesteads, as they have been the descendants of the so-called 'service castes', whose ancestors were later accommodated into Adivasi villages by the Khuntkattidars (the original clearer/founders of Ho villages). Another very interesting thing in V3 is the presence of a huge number of destitute households (41 per cent), despite having a comparatively higher literacy rate to suggest, once again, that literacy alone does not necessarily lead to poverty alleviation.

The fourth village (V4) has its households only in the first three categories with a higher percentage constituting always poor and destitute. The fifth village (V5) has a total of 36 households out of which 19 per cent live in destitution. The rest, 81 per cent households, fall under category 'always-poor.' Ironically, though in this village, there is relatively less economic differentiation but more destitution.

**Economic Position of Households (in all five villages)**

![Economic position of households in all five villages](image)

Out of 863 households in five study villages 189 are destitute, 455 chronically poor, 126 occasionally poor, 59 comfortable and 34 affluent.

---

54 Adivasi (ST) 55 %, Dalit (SC) 12 %, & Other Backward Caste (OBC) 32%.
About 22 per cent households are destitute, 53 per cent always poor, 15 per cent occasionally poor, seven per cent comfortable and 4 per cent affluent.

‘Always poor’ households and ‘destitute’ households jointly constitute 73 per cent i.e. about three-fourth of the total number of households, while the 16 per cent ‘occasionally poor’ households might fall to either side depending on circumstances. Only the eight per cent of households that are comfortable and the three per cent affluent households are economically ‘non-poor’ in these villages. Adivasi social formations have often been constructed as homogeneous and bounded social categories by researchers and policy makers in India (Rao 2008). However, the table and figures presented above
show a strikingly different picture with sharp socioeconomic differentiation among households. The most important findings are: (1) nearly three quarters of all households remain in chronic poverty and destitution; (2) very few households (about 11 per cent) with a comparatively higher income, display sharper socioeconomic differentiation; and (3) chronic poverty and destitution in villages correlate with their distance from urban centers, which points to degradation of rural agrologic systems.

The following section discusses households' in/ability to engage in various safe/ precarious occupations, which in turn, reveals the nature of socioeconomic im/mobility and the extent of social exclusion.

**Villagers' Usual Occupations and Ability/ Inability to Diversify Sources of Income**

1. **Self-employed agriculture** (subsistence farming on one’s own land) besides collection and sale of minor forest produce constitute the main livelihoods activity in Adivasi villages. Agriculture in Adivasi dominant regions has always been subsistence-based and rain-fed devoid of irrigation facilities (Shah et al 1998).

2. **Agricultural labourers** are people who work in other's fields either for wages or on the basis of reciprocation (mutual cooperation). Wages for a whole day’s work in these villages, during 2011, were ₹ 40 for women and ₹ 50 for men. Only a few affluent households within these villages can afford to employ paid labourers even at this wage. Hence, there exists a communal system of labour exchange among Adivasis known as *madaiti*, (known among the Hos as *denga-depenga*) where households exchange their labour for free (see Shah 2010; 2013). Moreover, agricultural works are seasonal – only during monsoon – ploughing, transplanting paddy, weeding, harvesting and storing (during July-January). Most Adivasi households own some cultivable land, and engage in agricultural activities during monsoon season, hence, there is acute shortage of agricultural labour when farming activities are at their peak. After these seasonal agricultural works, (during the rest of the year), there is hardly any demand for paid labour in these villages. Hence mounting unemployment and denuded forests force more and more people out of their villages in search of casual labour in urban areas.
3. **Casual labour**: any manual work outside the village, mostly in urban or suburban centers with a slightly higher wage, but it involves long hours of travel, often on foot, to reach the work-site; it involves other related expenses as well. Very few persons from these villages opt for casual labour except those from V1 which is nearer to Chaibasa town, due to lack of any public transportation.

4. **Migration**: men and women or couples leaving their villages to urban centers for a longer period – six months to one year or more in search of work. V2 & V3 had several (more than 50) persons each who migrate for work outside the region in 2011. Corbridge *et al* (2003) consider migration as an 'exit' from poverty and other traditional restrictions. However, to be able to migrate, one needs some basic minimum capabilities to find information, contacts and expenses for travel and familiarity with the world outside, hence, many cannot do it. Moreover, as men mostly migrate, women who stay back home get overburdened with additional responsibilities, works, and other related troubles.

5. **Petty-business**: running small shops in one’s own village, including, taking up the dealership of public distribution system (PDS), petty contractorship, and trading in minor forest produce. All of these need some initial capital (financial and symbolic), such as basic functional literacy, hence, not everyone can do this.

6. **Government-jobs**: persons employed at any government office such as army, bank, railway, schools, police, and as ex-army men with a monthly pension. This is one of the most economically secure occupations for Adivasis, however, accessible only to a few (see figure-7 below).

7. **Private-jobs**: persons with contract-based jobs at private institutions, such as NGOs engaged in ‘development’ activities, or in private shops in towns. This too requires additional skills such as functional literacy and knowledge of the Hindi language which most Ho villagers do not have.

8. **Sale of wood**: this is one of the most precarious occupations, but many are forced to do it. It involves cutting wood from far away forests (40-45 kilometres), making it into pieces, drying, making bundles and transporting them on bicycle to be sold at a nearby town. This involves hard labour, risks of being fined by the police or forest guards, and social stigma of being economically very poor, besides being blamed for
contributing to increasing deforestation, all of which adversely affect one’s local status and self-esteem.

Picture 2 – Young men engaged in selling fire-wood for making a living in rural Ho villages

Figure 7 – Income diversification patterns: gainers and losers
A careful reading of figure-7 gives an idea as to what percentage of each income-group engages in what type of usual occupation. It reveals that the affluent and comfortable households engage in the most rewarding and less precarious occupations, while the destitute, always and occasionally poor ones engage in the most precarious and less rewarding occupations. This pattern of income diversification agrees with Ellis (2000) that households with better economic security are able to further diversify their income in more beneficial ways, while those with little or no economic security are not; they are often forced to engage in activities that might further worsen their ability for upward social mobility. For example, the affluent own the best quality agricultural land, engage in self-employed agriculture by employing
cheap village-labour, at the same time, most of them access government or permanent jobs in larger percentages. In short, households accumulate socioeconomic advantages and disadvantages depending on which economic group they belong to: ironically, while the affluent and comfortable ones accumulate advantages the ‘poorer’ households accumulate disadvantages.

**Accessibility of Poverty Alleviation/‘Development’ Schemes**

Among numerous poverty alleviation schemes (PASs), this study has taken into account the following schemes only (see figure-8 below). Figure-8 shows the in/ability of households/individuals from each economic category to access poverty alleviation schemes.

| Percentage share of income groups accessing poverty alleviation schemes (PASs) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| MNREGS (open to all)            | 6.3              | 13.0             | 23.5             | 33.9             | 48.4             |
| BPL Cardholders                 | 17.0             | 33.9             | 30.7             | 27.0             | 53.3             |
| A.A.Y. (only for BPL)           | 8.0              | 17.4             | 30.7             | 27.0             | 46.4             |
| IAY (only for BPL)              | 8.5              | 18.0             | 22.0             | 33.3             | 46.4             |
| Other Benefits (only for BPL)   | 7.0              | 14.0             | 18.0             | 27.0             | 53.3             |

Figure 8 – Percentage share of income groups accessing PA schemes

1. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005** claims to ensure one hundred days’ employment a year to any person from any household who makes a demand for jobs. Table-8 shows all households with any adult who has worked in any

---

55 See Corbridge (2005) for a list of almost all poverty alleviation schemes. Also see the website of District rural development agency Chaibasa: http://chaibasa.nic.in/Dev_Section.html (accessed 10/05/2013).
MNREG-(Scheme) even for a day during the financial year 2010-11. It clearly shows that the chronically poor and destitute households have hardly benefited from this scheme.

2. **Below Poverty Line (BPL) card** officially labels a household as ‘poor’ and thus makes it eligible to receive special benefits from the state, such as, subsidized food grains. Figure-8 shows a considerable share of comfortable and occasionally poor households as BPL card holders while it is meant only for the ‘poorest’.

3. **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AY)**, a food security scheme meant to ‘uplift’ the ‘poorest’ of the ‘poor’ households that would be provided with a yellow-card which makes them eligible for subsidized food grains under special food security schemes. In this case, as well, the occasionally poor households excel in accessing it, however, the comfortable and the affluent avail this facility more than the always poor.

4. **Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)** or Indira Housing Scheme – figure-8 shows each economic group’s percentage share in accessing these schemes during the last five years. During the financial year 2010-11, amount distributed under IAY to a BPL household was ₹ 45,000. Figure-8 shows always poor and occasionally poor households as leading in accessing it, although others too have a considerable share in accessing it.

5. **Other Security Schemes** refer to any other financial assistance received by any member of a household during the last one year towards repairing a damaged house, a monthly stipend for senior citizens (of age 60 and above), widows, and handicapped or victims of accidents. The affluent and comfortable households seem to take the lead in accessing these provisions more than the others.

The percentage share of households and individuals from chronically poor and destitute households have limited access to poverty alleviation schemes compared to other groups although these are meant exclusively for them. On the contrary, a number of comfortable, affluent and occasionally poor households access PASs meant for BPL households. This shows serious problems of ‘targeting’ (Veron et al 2006) and the state functionaries' inability to identify and reach out to destitute and chronically poor households in these villages. Moreover, to access ‘development’ schemes, one needs to have the social clout which often comes with a higher
socioeconomic position, which creates a ‘creamy layer’\textsuperscript{56} that siphons off most of the development funds and schemes. This also partially explains how and why the chronically poor and destitute households get further socially excluded and marginalized, while a ‘creamy layer’ is being simultaneously encouraged to accumulate and cooperate with the state bureaucracy.

**The Most Deprived Villagers**

The size of an average destitute and chronically-poor household is four to six members. How do they manage to live with the extremely limited income they earn? Besides fruits, roots, leaves, fire-wood, vegetables and other food items they collect from the jungle, which have become increasingly scarce, the deprived majority in Ho villages rely on *diyang* (rice-beer), a semi-alcoholic drink brewed out of fermented rice using some herbs. The production of *diyang* (for sale) is done mostly by households categorised, in this survey, as ‘occasionally poor’ or ‘comfortable’. Brewing rice-beer has become a type of income-diversification activity for these households especially during years of drought and scarcity. A large majority of ‘always-poor’ and ‘destitute’ remain consumers of *diyang*\textsuperscript{57}. It is one of the easily available and most affordable necessities for these households. There are a number of household-heads in Huringhatu (V2) and Maranghatu (V3), for example, who live entirely on *diyang* for days together. *Diyang* serves a twin purpose: (1) it enables them to meet their minimum nutritional needs; and as they get drunk, and (2) it offers them temporary relief from their pressing anxieties about future and mounting frustrations. As one of them from Huringhatu said, ‘I take *diyang* daily till I get drunk so that I can get rid of my worries, but when I am not drunk, I feel all the more miserable.’ Some of his main worries are: how to feed his family, educate his children and secure their future (personal conversation with a few ‘destitute’ householders on 10 August 2011 at his residence). For the state-run schools serve only the midday meal (yet another poverty alleviation scheme) and no education (see

\textsuperscript{56} ‘Certain socially advanced persons or sections’: http://www.ncbc.nic.in/Creamylayer.html (27 November 2013).

\textsuperscript{57} Wood (2003: 445) explains 'Faustian bargain': poorer people's strategic preparation for future involves continuous postponement of personal investment and securing rights backed up by correlative duties. Their condition is marked by 'destructive uncertainty' with limited control over relationships and events around them, obliged to live more in the present to discount the future.
Baldev and his wife have five children. His household, in Huringhatu, is in the ‘always poor’ economic category in our survey during 2011. His household has been categorized in census reports as Scheduled Caste (SC). He used to engage in casual labour and wood selling to earn a living. He owns a small homestead near Chumru’s, an Adivasi (Scheduled Tribe – ST) household. This household (according to our survey) fell in the ‘occasionally poor’ category in 2011. He and his wife Shuru Mai have no children; constituting one of the smallest households. During my visit to Huringhatu in October 2013, Baldev’s family was starving, since Baldev was unable to work for almost a week due to a boil on his right thigh. He has neither a BPL nor an Aamnapurna (yellow) card. He said that he had approached both the munda and the newly elected panchayat mukhiya (the head of a panchayat) to get a ration card several times, but he did not get one. Whenever Baldev enquires about it, they say, ‘It hasn’t come yet.’ This is a typical response one gets from most bara-babus (head-clerks) at government offices in Jharkhand.

Baldev returns silently, but frustrated since he sees the better-of co-villagers, with more political clout, enjoying these facilities.

While talking to Baldev about his ill health and consequent hardships of his family (in his courtyard in the evening at about 6.00 o’clock on 21 October 2013), Shuru Mai, Chumru’s wife came closer and began talking, ‘These children have been starving for almost a week now, we give them some food,’ showing some measurement with her hands she said, ‘When we cook.’ Baldev’s leg with the boil was getting cured and he said in another two-three days’ time he would be able to do some work. On enquiring about the yearly monsoon, and yield in Shur’s and Chumru’s paddy fields, she said, ‘This year the monsoon was okay, but we could not cultivate our fields since my husband had fallen and broken his left hand some months ago; he can’t work. The damaged bone of his hand hasn’t properly been set. The doctor said that he might need an operation on his hand to set the bone aright, but we don’t have money even to go for a photo [x-ray] of the broken bone.’ On asking

---

58 The Diyang-godam (the place where rice-beer is kept and sold) is also a platform where the economically poor and destitute householders make fun/ jokes about the village-elites who always remain subservient to diku-sarkar (the alien state) although whilst discussing ‘corruption,’ these village ‘uppers’ put all the blame on diku-sarkar (see Yorke 1976). This is an instance of the deployment of ‘the weapon of the week’ (Scott 1985).
further, why they did not ask any financial help from anyone. She says, ‘We do not ask anyone for money.’

Some of the most important factors that draw one’s attention in this episode would perhaps be the sense of generosity, and mutual help and support in times of need, and dignity that Chumru’s and Baldev’s families uphold: they do not ask for money or food from anyone, but work hard to earn a living in dignity, as it is generally hard to find an Adivasi begging for money or food anywhere for that matter. As Yorke (1976), Verardo (2003), Mundu (2003) and Rachel (2009) have shown, social status for Hos does not rest entirely on acquiring more wealth or income, but on the legitimacy that comes from territorial precedence and observances of customary practices, collective belonging and authentic reciprocity.

At this point, it might be interesting to relate Shah’s (2012) findings on farmers’ suicides among the caste-based societies in India as to how ‘suicides and the wider feelings of rural alienation relate to the fear of pauperization, a fear related to the bounded imagination of the self and others, glued by a long history of deeply ingrained ideologies of hierarchy…’ She argues, ‘if farmers’ suicides point to any crisis, it is the crisis of lack of alternative political and cultural imagination emerging from a rounded critique of all forms of injustice and violence’ (Ibid.: 1159).

However, in contrast, and most ironically, the news about starvation deaths, not suicide, of many Adivasi villagers in various parts of the country do not create any hue and cry within the ‘Indian mainstream’ as so much they do with a few farmers who commit suicide for suffering while facing an unexpected financial loss in their pursuit of Lakshmi and the related fear of pauperization. ‘The deaths of 35 Birhors – a "Primitive Tribal Group" – in Jharkhand in October and November 2008 have been ignored by the national media. Official apathy contributes to the vulnerability of such marginalized tribal communities’ (Khera 2009: 11).

**The Most Endowed Village ‘uppers’**

Most affluent and comfortable or ‘upper’ households possess more of the most fertile lands, cultivation of which supplies them with necessary food-grain for year-round consumption. This enables them to access better ‘education’, secure ‘non-farm’ occupations aided by affirmative action policies – permanent jobs, in army, private and government undertakings
Several of them are ex-army men, a very few also engage in more entrepreneurial activities, such as PDS dealership, work as petty contractors and middlemen. Thus, they get ample opportunities to earn and learn new things, which facilitate their upward social mobility faster and further. Most of them have a moderate level of education and some experience of being out of their district or state either on short-term migration trips for exposure, as army men or on various training programs organized by numerous state and non-state ‘development’ actors.

This ‘creamy layer’ or village 'uppers' also dominate most decision-making arenas in their villages, since it is they who can read, write, understand and speak Hindi confidently, besides their improved mobility to commute to local government offices with their motorbikes, in places like these where hardly any public transportation exists. Village ‘uppers’ also hold memberships in *gram-sabhas* (village councils), village education, forest protection and other such committees, and self-help groups for women and men, etc., all constituted ostensibly for development. They would also be elected as *panchayat* and ward heads. Undoubtedly, a thin ‘creamy layer’ emerge as ‘men/ women of prowess, pen and good fortunes’ as it has been in India from time immemorial in the pattern of *sanskritisation* and westernisation – entrenched elitism – as Thapar (1999) has explicated, these processes as ‘state effects’ during the early medieval periods: ‘the state controls succession to high offices and provides avenue for upward mobility to a few. In its ideological function, it justifies the social divisions, supports powerful religious systems when they are of use to the state, maintains the coherence of heterogeneity, for instance, by insisting on a common official language or by trying to inculcate a common cultural idiom’ (Ibid.: 13).

**Accumulation and Differentiation: the role of the ‘state’**

Figure-8 (above) shows the pattern of diversification: the affluent and comfortable households engaging in multiple and safer occupations that are more rewarding, while the chronically poor and destitute households being forced to engage in more precarious, and less rewarding occupations with limited diversification options and access to PASs that are ostensibly meant for their ‘uplift.’ This section briefly shows how the historical processes of state formation are still being worked out among Adivasi social formations in much the same fashion as they have been throughout Indian history.
Extension of cultivation by reclamation of land by peasantry from plains, social stratification, Sanskritisation and Christianisation of Chiefs/ zamindars on top, the well-to-do headmen in the middle and the general mass at the bottom, a class of insider dikus [alien exploiters and trouble makers] and money lenders also grew. Tribes came closer to caste system. The civilising mission of Christian missionaries, British rule, protectionism and preservation resulted in the creation of an elite within tribal society (Singh 1978: 2225). This text eloquently sums up the role of the state in accelerating accumulation and incorporation of a few who have already been better endowed with the best quality land and their transformation via the instrumentality of political Brahmanism and religio-cultural idioms along the line of both sanskritisation and westernisation. However, these processes also produce equal and opposite reactions of de-sanskritisation (Pati 2001; Verardo 2003) often resulting from deprivations and discrimination of the many who were less endowed and whose alternative religio-cultural idioms and ideologies would not allow them to behave like the discriminating brahmanical elites. These long-drawn, complex, conflict-ridden, and contradictory sociocultural processes – ‘Sudra mode of incorporation’ (Saha 1986: 279), ‘discriminatory integration’ (Sahu 1985: 190, 1986; Pati 2001) – amount to adverse incorporation and social exclusion (AISE) (Hickey and du Toit 2007). Any analysis of poverty in Adivasi dominant regions without considering these complex historical processes that are still being worked out here, might risk missing these (unequal) relational aspects and processes that produce and perpetuate poverty (see Mosse 2010).

The hills people had political dominance of many western Indian hills and forested regions well into the 19th century, economic redistribution rather than systems of taxation characterized ‘Bhil raj’ or autonomous ‘forest polity,’ a power centralized or dispersed through the jati (caste/ tribe) by the ties of alliances of chiefly kin-groups who struggled for prominence, drew together bands of bowmen for defense or for raiding the neighboring plains. Plains rulers jostled for the support of powerful Bhil chiefs who held rights to collect dues from villages, rights that were periodically renegotiated through raids (dhad) which expressed Bhil claims to sovereignty – a discourse of ‘wilderness,’ a mode of kingship and dominance as distinct as those of Kshatriya (warrior kingship) or Brahman (priesthood). … British colonialism transformed the dominance of ‘wilderness’ from a discourse of power into a discourse of marginality and the relationship between the plains and hills – structured interdependence (in which raiding was a political act) to one of antagonism (in which

---

50 Bhils – here a loose category of hill and forest dwellers rather than a racially, linguistically or ethnically distinct Tribe (Mosse 2005: 50). This suits a broader definition of ‘Adivasi,’ provided it is kept in mind why they had come/ and still come to dwell in forests and hills, in the first place.
raiding was a criminal practice contained by punitive expeditions) – familiar attempts by a government to incorporate its ‘non-state fringes,’ the social and ecological antithesis to the revenue paying agricultural plains (citing Skaria 1999 and Scott 1989, Mosse 2005: 50-51).

These were complex and violent socioeconomic and cultural processes that not only altered or forced Adivasis to redefine their identity, but also reduced them to economic marginalization. Adjacent to these were loss of control over forest-based abundant livelihood resources due to commercialization of the same, and more entrenched alliances with the plains powers which further sought to ‘civilize’ them by keeping both Adivasis and forests apart. ‘Unruly mosaic forests were disciplined into ordered high-value timber-producing teak, protected from Bhils and their hunting, gathering and shifting cultivation. ‘Bhils lost the forest by stealth, as colonial knowledge created (“scientific forestry”) Bhil ignorance’ (Mosse 2005: 51). Adivasis’ restricted access to forests increased timber contractor’s access to it. Commercial felling escalated. Erosion of livelihoods due to forest demarcation led to Adivasi uprisings and sociocultural revival movements (see Areeparampil 1993). Forced sedentarisation, land settlement operations shifted the ownership of land from the community to individuals, agricultural expansion and introduction of monetary economy brought in trader-moneylenders (sahukars) as early as 15th century (Mosse 2005).

‘Transformation of “wilderness” from a discourse of territorial legitimacy and power to one of exclusion, the historical substitution of forest livelihoods for sahukar-funded cultivation and the move from independence to debt and dependence, from a complex history of forest livelihoods to rules and resistance and a history of unequal relationship with dominant groups in society’ (Mosse 2005: 52). Consequent socio-religious and cultural revival movements (Areeparampil 1993) of ‘integration, and contestation of brahmanical domination’ remained mostly unsuccessful (Pati 2013: 56; Shah 2014).

Further, Shah (2013) has shown how state formation among Adivasi social formations have been instrumental in driving class differentiation, accumulation and stratification.

It was the state that brought in the outsiders in the early part of the nineteenth century, who then introduced a market economy and petty commodity production. It was the state that, in recent years, promoted education amongst the local population and created a few government-sector jobs reserved for Adivasis. It was the state that was creating
wage work in the local economy. It was the state that was promoting petty contractorships and the related black economy around development schemes. The state was playing a driving role in sowing the seeds of class differentiation in these forests and hills in Jharkhand (Shah 2013: 445).

In pre-British colonial Kolhan too it was the rajas who negotiated with the mundas and mankis, whose authority had previously rested solely in ensuring the integrity, wellbeing and security of the entire village community. The rajas coerced them to pay tributes/taxes which the Hos had refused (Singh 1978) and had taken almost complete independence forcing the raja to invite the British to subjugate them (Streumer forthcoming 2014). Land and forests had previously remained the property of the entire village community; they never paid taxes for their lands, with the advent of the British, its ownership shifted from community to individual households. The authority and legitimacy of the sacral polity that had been based solely on the wellbeing, security and safety of the entire hatu (Ho village) and its guardian and ancestral spirits, shifted mostly to the dis/approval of subsequent overlords (Das Gupta 2010). The dominant households turned tax-collectors for the British; they began to officiate the sacral polity hereditarily. All of these altered a former system that had assured a minimum subsistence (‘moral economy of the peasant’ – Scott 1977) to all members of the village, to gradual disintegration and erosion.

As already mentioned, the post-British colonial state has not only relegated the sacral polity of the Hos as an obstacle to the advancement of ‘national mainstream’ but also has actively been trying to abolish it along with accelerated and unrestricted exploitation of forest and mineral resources (Damodaran 2013) ‘making a mockery of the Fifth Schedule of Constitution of India’ (D.N. Champia, a Ho and a former MLA and speaker of Legislative Assembly of united Bihar, personal conversations, 17 August 2011 at his residence). Furthermore, as access to education (that actively negates Adivasi identity, see chapter-6) attracted the Ho elites, the postcolonial state’s affirmative action policies or ‘inclusive governmentality’ (Ghosh 2006) began to provide reserved state-sector jobs and political representation to Adivasi elites, which triggered a ‘rational response’ from these elites who drive on further individual accumulation and differentiation among them (Corbridge 2000).

All of these have paved the way to ‘accumulation of economic advantages
and disadvantages: the tendency of a few elite households to develop further economically because of their already privileged positions, and the ‘poorer’ households to decline economically due to their already disadvantageous position resulting in intergenerational poverty (Boyce 1983: 387). That is, those with a minimum levels of economic security (an assured supply of food-grain for year-round consumption) only can access ‘modern’ education, more secure state or private-sector jobs, which facilitate further accumulation/affluence and investment in urban centres (Shah 2013). Thus, new economic opportunities remain open mostly to the ‘uppers’ only, often bypassing the disadvantaged entirely. A consistent tendency of the differentiating Adivasi elites to ‘sanskritise,’ in this context, might well be seen as part of the need to legitimize their ‘fortunes’ in the sight of their disadvantaged co-villagers. Modern/westernization and sanskritisation tendencies of the differentiating elites becomes obvious when they distance themselves pointing to the economically poorer and destitute householders to say, ‘they do not come for village/gram-sabha (village council) meetings; they do not want to improve, they are only interested in drinking and enjoying, hence, they continue to remain as they are; we cannot do anything about it’ (personal conversation with village ‘uppers’ in Huringhatu and Marnaghatu during fieldwork in 2011).

Poverty Alleviation Schemes (PAS): Bio-Politics and Depoliticization

... The rise of tribal movements of an agrarian nature from the mid-1960s questioned the assumptions underlying tribal development, also those of community development. The harsh realities of the economic exploitation of tribals overtook the romanticism of the early years (Singh 1990: 14). Sartre [1964] (2005) pointed out, what he called, ‘neocolonialist mystification:’ the colonizer identifies and defines the problems of ‘underdevelopment’ of colonized natives – economic, social and psychological – for which the former would suggest provisions of food, judicious reforms, increased availability of schools, hospitals and psychologists to deal with the latter’s ‘inferiority complex’ regarding their masters. The colonizer discovers and defines the ‘natives’ character: maltreated, malnourished, illiterate, and having an inferiority complex. It is by alleviating these problems, the colonizer would argue, that the natives will be reassured: if they eat enough to satisfy their hunger, if they can read and write and have works, they will no longer suffer the shame of being
subhuman, however, the colonizer never allows the colonized to engage in
critical discussions of unequal power relations – politics (Ibid.: 9). This is
what the post-British colonial Indian ‘state’ does when it insists that Adivasis
must be brought into the ‘Indian national mainstream,’ via development
schemes while at the same time, it makes sure that local governance
(including the power to rightfully benefit from the exploitation of natural and
mineral resources, and the power to decide how to spend state-development-
resources) in Adivasi dominant regions continue to remain with the dominant
group that constitute the state’s iron triangle (chapter-2), although, of late,
there are a few Adivasi elites also being recruited to make up this iron
triangle.

In a similar line of argument, Scott (1998) and Ferguson (1990) have shown
how ‘development schemes’ become anti-political machines: they advance
the domination of the state over its (potentially rebellious) subjects while
simultaneously render its own political consequences unnoticed. Thus,
Adivasi villagers seldom notice how a petty contactor becomes a *panchayat*
‘representative’ ‘to see why and how they are seized upon, understood,
reworked and possibly contested by differently placed people within the
population of the poor’ (Corbridge *et al* 2005: 4).

Development institutions generate their own form of discourse, and this discourse
simultaneously construct [the beneficiaries] as a particular kind of object of knowledge,
and creates a structure of knowledge around that object. Interventions are then
organized on the basis of this structure of knowledge, which, while ‘failing’ on their
own terms, nonetheless have regular effects, which include the expansion and
entrenchment of bureaucratic state power, side by side with the projection of a
representation of economic and social life, which denies ‘politics’ and, to the extent that
it is successful, suspends its effects. Development is an “anti-politics machine” –
depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight,
all the while performing, almost unnoticed its own pre-eminently political operation of
expanding bureaucratic state power (Ferguson 1990: xiv-v).

The numerous poverty alleviation schemes for the ‘welfare’ and ‘uplift’ of
Adivasis make the expanding bureaucratic rule ubiquitous, while at the same
time, these schemes hardly enable the chronically poor and destitute
households even to socially reproduce. This is bio-politics (bio-power): the
sovereign’s ostensible ‘care’ for the life of the ‘poor.’

---

60 A few schemes introduced by the Jharkhand government since 2000 are telling:
distribution of buses for unemployed youth-cooperatives, distribution of bicycles to high-
school girls, *Kanyadan Yojana* (donation of brides, a typical parental role in Hindu a family)
characterizes ‘modernity’ where the goal of power is no longer prohibitive legal rule, but the productive regulation of life’ (Žižek 2008: 425). Side-by-side are problems of ‘elite capture’ (of development benefits), and the misuse of public funds by poorly trained and poorly paid government servants creating and maintaining a ‘shadow state’ (Corbridge et al 2005: 4). ‘The developmental projects are filtered through the class structure that keeps the poorest firmly outside the material benefits of such development’ (Shah 2010: 82).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that chronic poverty and destitution in Adivasi dominant regions are already severe. This is despite the country’s recent spectacular economic growth in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) thereby showing that the affluence of a few elite necessarily brings deprivations for the many in a ‘colonial civic order, the broader arena in which states and citizens interact’ (Thompson 2000: 1) that has been based on an age-old self-perpetuating colonial system in India.

The quantitative data on literacy rate, aggregate monthly income of households and the pattern of income diversification, presented in this chapter, help understand the scale and magnitude of marginalization comparatively, and increasing disadvantages of those initially less endowed,61 and above all, the state’s role in aggravating this disparity, rather than minimizing it. The chapter has also shown how the very process of state formation happens via individual accumulation and differentiation, which allows upward social mobility for a fairly limited slice of the population, which also facilitates bureaucratic control over marginalized ‘masses’ while simultaneously mystifying all these crucial political processes.

which provides a nominal financial help to BPL households to get their daughter married, and provision of cheap mid-day meal for the urban destitute.

61 These findings are also supported by other similar studies in other Adivasi dominant regions: a Delhi based NGO - Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS) in its study of the performance of welfare schemes in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha in 2011 found that 77 per cent of the most deprived households could not access a single day of MGNREGS employment, 34.2 per cent of most deprived Adivasi households did not have any food-provisions. Out of 3250 sample households only four households had Annapurna cards (Lahangir 2012). Also see Corbridge and Srivastava (2013) for the most recent analysis on MNREGA provisions.
The chapter has also shown that the processes of state formation in Adivasi dominant regions have been driving Adivasis to be typical colonial subjects as Sartre has described: ‘colonial exploitation is methodical and rigorous: expelled from their lands, restricted to unproductive soil, obliged to work for derisory wages, the fear of unemployment discourages their revolts’ Sartre (2005: 37). ‘But let us be clear about it: the exhausted and underpaid proletariat suffered much more from exploitation than from racist discrimination which is the consequence of it (Ibid.: 91).

The next chapter discusses the production of middlemen or cultural mediators and their mediated empowerment. It explicates more of an ambivalent (psychological) position of emerging village ‘uppers’ as new leaders who represent Adivasis.
The State and Adivasi Middlemen: Perpetuating the Ambivalence of Violence

Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic.

(B.R. Ambedkar quoted in Guha 2007: 103)

The tribal people’s struggle is a part of the democratic struggle against the capitalist path of development... the democratic movement in the country has to recognize in the tribal people’s struggle a powerful ally – an ally with tremendous revolutionary potentialities for the realization of national democracy and socialism

(A.B. Bardhan 1973: 57)
Introduction

Chapter three has shown how state-led ‘development’ outcomes facilitate disproportionate accumulation, differentiation and polarisation leading to the affluence of a few while producing chronic poverty and destitution for the majority. These processes might well be seen as a crucial aspect of the very praxis and process of colonialism and racism which necessitates the production of a few elites who would both benefit from the system, and hence, be encouraged to advance it. Moreover, these elites have been already endowed with the best resources both in quantity and quality. Hence, it is easier for this creamy-layer to be assimilated into the colonial civic order than for those impoverished by it (Frère 2000), however, there exists a certain duality and ambiguity, since the creamy-layer would like to be ascribed as ‘Adivasis’ partly to enjoy the benefits of affirmative action policies to advance their own fortunes while they hardly care about the less fortunate co-villagers due to certain systemic deadlocks. ‘Co-option has been institutionalized through the policy of quotas and reservations for different social groups [affirmative action policies], which largely benefit only the elites among them, but own the trust of the entire community’ (Mukherjee 2011: 34).

This chapter focuses on the assimilative co-option processes of the emergent affluent Adivasi elite leaders to better understand their mediatory roles or behaviours and the limits of their mediated empowerment. It explores how mediators are produced; who they are and what consequences the prevalent mediatory processes bear for Adivasi social formations. Deviating from the traditional understanding of mediators or middlemen, this chapter shows how the emerging elites who have progressively been co-opted into the colonial system, which embodies ‘intimate’ violence and immorality, largely remain ambivalent. It explicates the ambivalence of middlemen as ‘cultural interpreters’ and this ambivalence as an essential ingredient of colonial system which contributes to its smooth maintenance.

… But the politics of privilege is useful in co-option and pacification of the most vocal section, and the middleclass in Jharkhand has fulfilled this expectation of the ruling class at least in parts. … In earlier stages the Adivasis have tried to emulate the culture of the dikus, be it either along the sanskritisation path or the rank path. But none of these efforts have been able to raise the image of the Adivasis. Nor have the welfare efforts of the government any more successful to raise this image in the way of ‘modernization’ (Ghosh and Sengupta 1982: 242, 252).
The chapter begins with a vignette which helps to understand processes of training, identification, negotiation and recruitment of Adivasi mediators by lower level bureaucrats, how they would gradually be co-opted to be a part of the broader colonial civic order, abiding by the same rules of the system. Then it reviews the broader theme of middlemen, the historical contexts of mediatory behaviour, Adivasi middlemen, and their mediated empowerment and ambivalence. The chapter then moves to explicate how symbolic violence reproduces and perpetuates intergenerational ambivalence of violence and Adivasi leaders’ co-option into the colonial civic order. It provides concrete example to show how these processes of adverse or unequal incorporation of Adivasis into the system actually work out on the ground. The concluding section shows how ambivalence of violence remain the facilitator of the entire process of producing and incorporating Adivasi middlemen into the Indian colonial civic order.

Saluka is a 30 year old Ho from a village in Tonto, a community development block that scores the lowest on common development indicators in West Singhbhum. His village is about 18 kilometres from the block development office at Jhinkpani and about 37 kilometres from the district headquarters Chaibasa. The total population of the village is 383, of whom six males and five females have permanent jobs; and they stay in Chaibasa and Jhinkpani (an industrial suburb) where they access education for their children and other ‘modern’ facilities. There are only eight men and seven women who have basic literacy skills (up to secondary school level) but none of them goes to the Block Development Office, except Saluka, mostly because they find it had to speak diku kaji, (the language of the alien exploiter that is Hindi, the national language) properly and hence do not feel confident to face the staff at the block office.

Saluka and his younger brother make a small household. Their parents died when they were still young. They own about 40 acres of land – not so fertile devoid of any irrigation facility. This small household of Saluka and his brother can be placed among the few ‘comfortable’ ones in his village. Saluka studied till Ninth Class at a mission school, and then left the school.

---

62 This entire story was narrated to me by Saluka himself at during several rounds of our meetings at the weekly market of Marnghatu on Thursdays.
Later, he went to Punjab for a few years with a group of friends from the neighbouring villages in search of employment. While in Punjab, he found an opportunity to appear for Matriculation Examination via the National Open School System; and he passed the examination. A few years after his return from Punjab, his co-villagers suggested his name to a local Non-Government Organisation (NGO) that was looking for a capable person from this village to introduce its community ‘development’ project in this village in 2008. As a village level-animator with the NGO, Saluka’s work was to strengthen and promote the functions of gram-sabha (village-council). He also had to impart basic literacy and numeracy skills to interested co-villagers, (mostly non-school going children and youth). These were different components of the NGO's project. As a village-level-animator, Saluka received a fixed monthly payment, and several types of training for capacity building from the NGO. In the course of time, he also became the area-leader of a youth organisation that has also been affiliated to the same NGO. Gradually, he became more active, confident and assertive.

One day, the Village Level Worker (VLW) from the Block Development Office visited Saluka's village. The VLW met a physically challenged woman at the village who complained to him that she had not received the whole year's stipend from *sarkar*, the state and she wanted him to get it for her. The VLW told her that he would do so provided she gave him a cockbird (that he found standing at the courtyard of her house) for this service. She did give him the cockbird. He took it home. However, the woman did not receive her stipend even after waiting for several weeks in addition to losing the cockbird. She was distressed and helpless. Finally, she reported this incident to Saluka requesting his intervention.

Saluka went to the block office and reported this incident to the Block Development Officer (BDO) but the officer dismissed Saluka's complaint saying that it was not true; that his staff would never do such a thing. Saluka kept visiting and challenging the BDO whenever he made trips to the town.

---

63 The Government of India has introduced several pension of (stipend) schemes for the physically challenged persons, widows, and senior citizens (those above 60 years), who belong to below poverty line (BPL) households.

64 Most rural Adivasis see ‘the state’ being embodied in its functionaries (such as VLW, BDO, etc.) or in the premises of government offices such as buildings of block development office, see Corbridge *et al* (2005).
He told the BDO that he could prove the VLW’s misdeed, and if the BDO did not take immediate disciplinary action against the VLW, he would complain to the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) at Chaibasa. After several and repeated complaints, one day, the BDO called Saluka, made him sit comfortably in his office-chamber, and asked him to tell what had actually happened. After listening to Saluka’s narration about the VLW’s misdeed, the BDO was convinced that the story was true, that Saluka was determined to fight his case until he got justice. The BDO then called the VLW; scolded him thoroughly and ordered him to pay the woman’s stipend-arrears immediately. He also asked him to pay a sum of rupees 400 as compensation for the cockbird he had usuriously collected. Eventually, she was paid Rs. 1200 (stipend for six months) and was compensated for her ‘stolen’ cockbird.

Hereafter, Saluka not only became more confident in dealing with the staff at the Block Development Office, but also was given due recognition by the BDO. Later, in 2010, he was also asked to undertake to implement a few schemes such as construction of mud-roads, tanks and wells, in his village under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005. Saluka has now become a 'mediator,' 'broker,' 'middleman,' between the state functionary and his ‘poorer’ co-villagers. He recently bought a motorcycle which is a new symbol of wealth and influence, although a necessity to make frequent trips to the block and other offices, since there is no public transportation. Saluka's new ‘occupation’ may be considered as one of the most elementary forms of 'mediation' or 'power brokerage' in rural villages of Jharkhand necessitated by both an ill-equipped state machinery to provide basic services to vast sections of its marginalised and impoverished rural populace (Rao 2003) who are unable to access state's largesse doled out ostensibly for their ‘development.’

This chapter deals with Adivasi middlemen or ‘cultural interpreters’ and

---

65 An instance of structural violence, par excellence as Gupta (2012) explains but with identifiable culprits, often goes unchallenged.
66 No schemes under MNREGA had been implemented in Saluka’s and several other neighbouring villages till 2010, although Singhbhum district has been one of the first 200 districts in which the Act has officially been in force since February 2, 2006.
67 A motorcycle is ‘a fitting symbol of being a successful broker since it not only reflects wealth but facilitates physical mobility’ (Witsoe 2012: 49). The rest of the villagers have to either go on foot or use their bicycles to go to the town, since there is no public transportation.
explicates how these mediators continue to remain ambivalent between the unequal power structures of rigid hierarchy, on the one side, and nonliterate, and impoverished mass of jungli Adivasis, on the other, who need to be ‘civilized.’ It explicates how Adivasi mediators have merely been used by the colonial civic order as a means to advance colonialism and racism by complex processes of adverse incorporation involving symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is a Bourdieun concept which is employed here to explicate the process of adverse incorporation and social exclusion (AISE) whereby emerging Adivasi leaders have systemically been brought into perpetual ambivalence within the unaltered, uninterrupted and pervasive system of racism and colonialism. The following section examines the theme of middlemen in existing literature. Then diverging from existing conceptualisations of mediation, the chapter proceeds to reconceptualise it as a process involving symbolic violence to analyse and explain the complex processes of cultural reproduction through misrecognition or introjection by which emerging Adivasi elites or leaders have adversely been incorporated into the dominant colonial civic order which embodies cultural and structural violence.

The theme of 'middlemen' or 'political fixers'

Middlemen’s role in filling a vacuum created between the ostensibly modern, rational, impersonal or impartial, postcolonial bureaucratic state institutions, peopled mostly by ‘upper’ castes or classes and the inability of impoverished villagers to relate to the local bureaucracy, in India, have been discussed by several scholars. Bailey (1960) referred to mediators as 'brokers' who constituted a new class of persons with skills and knowledge required to assist villagers to relate to the postcolonial state. Haragopal and Reddy (1985) used terms such as 'fixers,' 'brokers,' and pyraveekar to refer to those who thrived in spaces that needed manoeuvring precisely because of the nature of a peculiar type of state-society relationship i.e., structural violence (cf. Gupta 2012). For Mitra (1991) local-elite who deal with developmental bureaucracy are gaon ka neta (village leader), who operate in realms of local politics, bureaucracy and collective protests. Manor (2000) calls them 'small-time political fixers' who thrive due to the failure/decay of political party organisations in reaching out to rural villagers.

The above mentioned studies also provide some interesting descriptions of
middlemen which fit well with characters such as Saluka: they have a modest educational achievement, but need to master the art of approaching state functionaries to make the wheel of administration move in support of favours. As they gain more experience, mediation becomes their profession, an important source of livelihood and influence (symbolic capital). Krishna (2003) provides an interesting description of the various stages and roles involved in the making of a mediator. According to him, *naye neta* (new leaders) initially face neglect, humiliation and failure, but eventually learn to deal with the *babus* (Indian bureaucratic staff) while they also simultaneously remain at the service of villagers for legitimacy and acceptance.

In addition to being functionally literate, a new leader also needs to have personal qualities, including perseverance and humility and a willingness to work hard on behalf of villagers. To scurry around from office to office, to fill out forms and lobby government officials, to work on officials' behalf supervising construction labor, to fill out forms and keep accounts, to arrange elaborate site visits when officials or politicians come to the village to do all of these things and also to attend to villagers' everyday concerns: to take a sick person to the hospital (often in the middle of the night) and to keep up one's contacts among doctors, to have someone's government pension approved and paid out in time, to know the associated rules and the people in charge in the Tahsil and Block offices, to secure for someone a loan sanctioned from a bank (to badger, pester, entreat, threaten, cajole, and bribe, if necessary) ...

(Krishna 2003: 1189).

Eventually, such mediatory functions develop into enduring patron-client relationships to the disadvantage of marginalised groups (Jeffery 2002). Mediation also feeds into corruption involving complex 'informal political networks' of 'shadow states' which includes bureaucrats, politicians, 'criminals' or the 'legitimate' claimants (Pellissery 2007: 132). Functionally, such informal political networks fill the institutional vacuum at local level and provide some kind of order to the everyday political practices of postcolonial world (Brass 2006). Referring to the emergence and importance of a new generation 'political activists' among Dalits (ex-untouchables), Jeffrey *et al* (2008) have shown that 'these young men have not been able to effect a *broad structural transformation* at the local level' (Ibid.: 1365, emphasis added). They have rightly raised important questions about 'South Asian political change that links party political transformation to questions of local level social practice and subaltern consciousness' (Ibid.).

Chatterjee (2004) has attempted to explain such postcolonial situations by framing the concept of 'political society' to deal with the 'issues' of subaltern agency. However, what has been missing in his conceptualisation is, perhaps,
a discourse on socioeconomic justice, due to which the emergent elite in postcolonial societies have failed to establish hegemony among the ‘masses’ (see Godavarthy 2012; Chhibber 2013). On the one hand, Chatterjee acknowledges that people who constitute ‘political society’ are displaced, dispossessed and marginalised by rapid processes of capitalist exploitation – primitive accumulation in an ostensibly democratic state thereby the dispossessed ‘masses’ inevitably form a ‘potentially rebellious class,’ who need to be appeased (Chatterjee 2008: 53). On the other hand, he not only denies agency to subalterns, but also avoids a much needed discussion on the issue of socioeconomic injustice (Mukherjee 2011).

The idea of justice, in a serious and substantive sense, is not only absent in our public discourse, even this English word has no clear equivalent in most Indo-Aryan languages. Though the Urdu word insaaf exists, it is hardly used, save in Hindi films ...

Though, in India, injustice is the order of the day, it has either ushered in disorder or revolution. There are two major reasons for this strange phenomenon, first, the elite’s ability to establish its political hegemony through [a hollow shell (see Bonner at el 1994: sic)] democracy; and second, the absence of any serious discourse on justice, particularly by academics, but also by activists (Ibid.: 32, emphasis and […] added).

Gudavarthy’s (2012: Introduction) provides an interesting reinterpretation of Indian situation, although most of it still remains largely fuzzy and puzzling.68

---

68 Some of the interesting puzzles are: neoliberal economic reforms in India are marked by ‘uncivil development’; it does not account for the ‘social cost of production. Subaltern politics as a critic of Indian development model; neo-institutional reform In India is minimalistic yet the state is increasingly interventionist and governmentalising; the state merely manages the increasing structural inequities and even reproduces them; poorer people struggle for survival; their inability to move beyond mere survival strategies and the need of a meaningful idea of democratisation, dominance without hegemony – the absence of non-coercive and persuasive political conditions for capitalist transformations; the subtlety of (capitalist) power in the neocapitalist form of production without a clear target to be mobilised against – also beyond a level of distress, the underprivileged are in no position to sustain and nurture resistance; the presence of a huge ‘urban underclass’, a vast number in the informal sector with formidable problem of conceptualisation, relatively uncommon records of organized collective action; desperate armed insurgency due to the increasing difficulty in organising agitational politics; ‘elite revolt’ – Rajputs, and Jats, demanding OBC and Gujjars ST statuses; organised protest is only for the ‘civil society’; the poor are forced to move to ‘contextual negotiations’ via political societies; a missing engagement of the elite academics with the complex mosaic of protest-politics and its changing dynamics; and a ‘discursive empowerment’ of the subalterns; India’s move from a contractual to a contractor-state with feudal relations still in place; the presence of a huge non-productive class due to fund-leakages and their control over the state; the poorest without network and agency often...
Studies on Mediation in (Jharkhand) Adivasi Contexts

Several studies in Jharkhand and Adivasi contexts deal with 'corruption' in political and bureaucratic practices touch upon mediation arising due to rural villagers being largely unsure about the ways and procedures of an alien (diku) state with a weak legitimacy to govern, trust-deficit, failure of development interventions, (mis)representation by the members of the legislative assembly, the parliamentary constituencies, and Panchayat Raj representatives, and the consequent emergence and functioning of 'shadow states,' (Corbridge and Kumar 2002; Srivastava et al 2002; Corbridge et al 2003; Corbridge et al 2005; Ve'ron and Williams 2006). However, most of these studies tend to be more state-centric, and descriptive than analytic (Nilsen 2013). A few others mention certain activities of middlemen who aid the state-sponsored mining-mafia in Kolhan and Jharkhand who enforces mining on ‘protected’ Adivasi lands, despite stiff resistance from local Adivasis (see George 2009; Lahiri-Dutt 2012).

Raichoudhuri (1991) has pointed out a class of emerging local Ho elites who ostensibly represented marginalized Adivasis of Kolhan while themselves being indifferent to the pressing concerns/ grievances of rural Adivasis. Devi (1981b) discussed the failure of ‘modern’ developmental state in fulfilling its basic responsibilities to Adivasi citizens, and thus, forcing Adivasi women, due to bondage of poverty and hunger, into brokerage in rural villages of Kolhan, which trafficked young women and men to brick-kilns in Bihar and West Bengal during 1970s and 80s.

Laru Jonko, a remarkable Ho woman, president of the Mahila Samiti of Chiriburu came to Chaibasa after unearthing the whereabouts of many adivasi girls who were missing from the interior villages of Singhbhum. These girls were working in brick-kilns around Calcutta.

The story was revealing. The brick-kiln owners of West Bengal are mostly from North Bihar. This practice of recruitment of adivasi labour must be quite old. Adivasi women, victimised by the activities of political society; the limited capacity of Adivasis and Dalits for political efficacy; poorer people gifted with citing of corrupt state officials and not the new state that has been mutated by New Delhi; while the activities of the political society being depicted as illegal, the so called 'civil society' and the state actually transgress legality in order to maintain their dominance without hegemony; the rule of law justifies their lootings to the paradoxical point of being themselves illegal; the structural fallout of the larger pilferage that seems to be endemic and integral to the growth of new classes; and, the role of the middlemen and community in framing the issue of subaltern agency (Gudavarthy 2012: extracts from Introduction, emphasis mine).
once concubines of the kiln owners, are sent to remote villages. The link railway stations are Chaibasa, Sonua, Pendrasali and Chakradharpur. These recruiting women are called ‘sardars’. The sardars go to the village hats [weekly market] and lure young girls with tales of good jobs awaiting them near the magic city of Calcutta (Devi 1981b: 1010).

Shah (2009) has highlighted the importance of noticing the multifarious notions of state and moral political economy in varying contexts while looking at corruption and social action in rural Jharkhand. She has shown that ‘a majority of the rural poor, primarily Adivasis want nothing to do with the state, do not accept the idea of the state as acting for the public good, and do not get involved in knowing about the practices of the state, and resurrect an alternative sovereignty, a parha social-polity’ (Ibid.: 310). She argues that ideas of morality here are historically constituted, managed and reproduced (Ibid., Shah 2007). In the context of Jharkhand, two possible trajectories of Adivasi-state relations exists: ‘a continued rejection’ of the corrupt and oppressive state while holding on to the idea of the ‘sacral polity of the parha,’ which brings further material deprivations, and a transformation of Adivasi moral and political economy that is happening with the emergence of a ‘new class of Adivasi youth aspiring to join the non-Adivasi rural elites’ (Shah 2009: 310-11) who perpetuate the class/ caste structure ‘that keep the poorest firmly outside the material benefits of such development’ (Shah 2010: 72).

While these studies reveal a lot about the prevalence of mediation and processes that necessitate and produce mediators; this chapter attempts to explain how these processes of mediation and Adivasi mediators’ role as subservient ‘cultural interpreters’ have historically been employed by the dominant ruling class/castes to reproduce emergent leaders’ ambivalence that perpetuates cultural and structural violence embodied in the colonial civic order. According to Sartre [1964] (2005) a colonial system indoctrinates,

Individualistic and liberal codes in order to ruin the frameworks and the development of the colonized community, but maintains kinglets who drive their power solely from the system and who govern on its behalf. In a word, it fabricates ‘natives’ by a double movement which separates them from their archaic community by giving them or maintaining in them, the solitude of liberal individualism, a mentality whose archaism can only be perpetuated in relation to the archaism of the society. It creates masses but prevents them from becoming a conscious proletariat by mystifying them with the caricature of their own ideology (Ibid.: 16, emphasis original).

**Historical Contexts of Mediation, Adverse Incorporation, and Social Change**
One of the important characteristics of state-society relationships in colonial and postcolonial societies have been the problem of mutual understanding between the political elite and the vast numbers of people who belong to 'peasant societies' necessitating 'clientele politics' (Powell 1970, sic). Geertz (1960) has argued that such an incongruity has basically been rooted in the heterogeneity of ethnicity, multicultural contexts and contradictory visions arising out of them: the metropolitan-based elite ‘intelligentsia’ and the white collar nationalists aim to build a modern nation-state along the western parliamentary lines, amidst numerous religious, ethnic, cultural, regional and linguistic groups that cling to their own intimately familiar local community organizations, practices, beliefs and values. In such a heterogeneous, and complex situation the socio-cultural integration of local communities with brittle ties with the ‘modern’ state, are forced into an imagined modern nation-state. The result would obviously be maladjustment, separatism, contestations and resistance to centrally formulated policies and programs, especially when they are at the behest of the dominant class/castes. … Moreover, ‘the emancipatory aspects of nationalism were undermined by countless elevation of secret deals, manipulation, and the cynical pursuit of private interests’ (Chatterjee 1993: 3).

Multicultural contexts such as these have also been studied employing concepts such as 'multiple modernities' (Eisenstadt 2000), 'twilight institutions,' (Lund 2006), ‘semi-autonomous social fields’ (Moore 1973), and 'hybridity' or 'fragility' contexts (Boege et al 2011). In Indian context, several village-studies during the 1950s and 1960s have discussed sociocultural transformations from the perspective of 'national integration.' Bailey's concepts of 'caste climb,' 'multiplex mediators' versus 'specialist political players,' and 'para political institutions' constitute a system whereby the powerful acquire material wealth and gradually convert it into political credit to become the main players of the game while the commoners remain mere spectators of the same game (Bailey, 1963, 1968). Srinivas' westernisation, and sankritisation theses: emulation of ‘higher’ caste or class

---
69 Bailey's famous explanation of 'para political institutions' goes: they are partly regulated by, and partly independent of, larger encapsulating political structures; and which, so to speak, fight battles with these larger structures in a way which seldom end in victory, rarely in dramatic defeat, but usually in a long drawn stalemate and defeat by attrition' (Bailey 1968: 281).
values by the ‘lower,’ along the line of movement of ‘lesser’ souls imitating
the ‘greater’ ones in a continuum (Srinivas 1956, 1962) are a few examples of
the kind of village studies that were pursued in the 1950s and 1960s.

Other similar concepts are ‘rajputisation’ (‘lower’ castes and ‘tribes’
emulating the values and lifestyles of Rajput (warrior) jati caste (Sinha
1962), and ‘kshatriyaisation’ (Kulke 1976, 1978); all of these have
contributed to naturalise a peculiar type of feudatory state formation in India
(see Sharma 1965, 1989, 2001, 2006) by imitating the values of ‘higher’
castes or classes in the pursuit of Lakshmi (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987a) as a
convenient model of social change and national integration. The Rudolphs
also tried to explain these puzzling and complex processes of state formation
using concepts like 'modernity of tradition' (1965), 'shared and negotiated
sovereignty' (2010), and a continuum formed by the imitation of the ‘higher
gods’ by the ‘lower’ in South Asian ‘societies where the gods have not yet
died' (1878b: 742).

These studies, thus, have taken several centuries-long, caste-dominated
assimilation and acculturation uncritically so that the material and cultural
dispossession, displacement and misrecognition involved in these processes
have largely remained mired. Moreover, in India, due to what is called, a
prevalent ‘buffalo nationalism’ (Ilaiah 2004) or ‘methodological nationalism’
(Giri 2012), any discussion on 'castes' and 'tribe' have continued to remain
doubly emotive: 'the tribal problem' have moved Indian scholars to
unscholarly anger,' and have 'produced pamphleteers rather than
dispassionate observers' (Bailey 1960: 263, Rachel 2009), while Indian
scholars, who have dared any critical analysis of caste domination, had to
take the risk of being ostracised as anti-nationals (Sharma 1959, 2001).

and Harris-White (1997), among others, have undertaken a more nuanced
analysis of the processes of socio-political transformations in so-called
‘postcolonial’ ‘democracies’ calling attention to the symbolic practices
involved in informal political networks at the local, district and sub-district
levels in India. Jeffery (2002) has pointed out the contradictions of political
democratisation by scrutinising local political mediators/ middlemen.
Similarly, Witsoe (2011a) has demonstrated the existence of divergent ways
of imagining the postcolonial state that represent alternative forms of political
subjectivities. He argues that democracy in India has to be examined within the context of *historical processes* that have shaped the larger political economy within which democratic practices unfold. Witsoe (2011b) argues that it is inadequate to reduce postcolonial democracy as an arena of mere 'operations of governmentality' or to 'a politics of the governed' as Chatterjee (2004) has done. The apparent tension between 'a disruptive politics' anchored on 'principles of popular sovereignty' and a 'politics of the governed' points towards far deeper issues in 'postcolonial’ Indian state-society relationships in India (Witsoe 2011b: 622, 2013).

While Indian democracy in many ways is one of the marvels of our time; it is also clear that the democratic institutions in India are not functioning optimally, and their record in promoting social justice has only been partially successful. There is a gap between the rulers and the ruled, with little sign of that divide being bridged. The two – the rulers and the ruled – may live in the same country but often they traverse different universe (Razvi 2007: 673-4).  

Berenschot (2011) has skilfully employed ethnographic methods to examine the local level mediators to explicate the link between socioeconomic transformations, political responses to such transformations, and how both have jointly led to the terrifying communal violence in Gujarat in 2002. Similarly Witsoe’s (2012) historical and ethnographic exploration of brokers in Bihar partly explains the nature of Indian state and the complex causes and notions of corruption in public life. He exposes the peculiar trajectory of power transition from the so-called 'upper' to the 'middle' castes in Bihar in a similar line of *sanskritisation*. He calls such arenas of political empowerment as 'mediated empowerment' (Wistoe 2012: 53, 2013).

**Adivasi Middlemen, Mediated Empowerment, and Symbolic Violence**

Regarding the relationship between Adivasi social formations and postcolonial Indian state, Ambedkar (1944), Jones (1978) and Saha (1986) had warned that while the dominant political and economic structures of the encapsulating society i.e. the colonial civic order remained unaltered, it was almost impossible to empower the already impoverished and marginalised Adivasi, Dalit and other minorities despite volumes of laws and administrative provisions drawn up ostensibly to protect and develop them. Both Ambedkar (see Roy 2014) and Saha (1986) ventured into deconstructing the nature of the dominant Indian society, the imaginary
mainstream which has been animated by what they termed ‘the Indian-elitism’ or brahmanical ideology\textsuperscript{71} enthused by the pursuit of Lakshmi (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987a). Although Adivasis who kept fleeing such a crippling ideology of state-craft into deep forested and hilly regions of the subcontinent had devised their own distinctive, more flexible and radically democratic sacral polities, there have always been lines of contacts: trade relations, contestations, subjugation, syncretic/ symbiotic coercion, and co-option/ appropriation (Sharma 1959; Saha 1986; Skaria 1999, Mosse 2005; Sunder 2007; Milanetti 2012, Kela 2012) much before the Mughal and British colonisers arrived (Sekher 2003). It is only by taking into account such conflicting, long-drawn and complex historical processes, – adverse incorporation and social exclusion (AISE) – and their cultural, symbolic, and socio-psychological consequences, which is still being worked out, that the puzzles and paradoxes of socioeconomic, cultural and democratic transformations in India can meaningfully be explored and understood.

**Symbolic Violence and Perpetuation of Structural, Cultural and Direct Violence**

Men make their own history, but not under conditions of their own choosing (Marx 1852); ‘Praxis can logically be an experience both of necessity, and of freedom’ (Sartre 2004: 79). Communication in competing styles takes on a social value and a symbolic efficacy (Bourdieu 1991). ‘Human agency works on exteriority by making itself exterior, and works on passivity by making itself passive. ... The group-in-fusion incarnates active human praxis in a uniquely heightened fashion – a kind of praxis all the more distinctive in that it constitutes the production, not of things, but of other people and the self, of a new kind of sociality’ (Jameson 2004: xxii).

Bourdieu (1986; 2000; 2005) provide a number of conceptual tools that aid a finer analysis of the link between various forms of power, domination and social positioning within different social fields: demarcated social spaces containing interconnected sets of rules, values and protocols that shape individuals’ access to resources, and how these are negotiated by social actors and mediated through acts of symbolic control (Tomlinson \textit{et al} 2013). Bourdieu's approach tries to comprehend how social systems are reproduced through forms of domination, and the mobilisation of \textit{unequally-held}

\textsuperscript{71} For more on Brahmanical ideology, see Sahu (2001) ‘... The depth and reach of an overarching, unifying Brahmanical ideology can be seen in the \textit{caste-land-power pyramid} through much of the country, which systematically deprived the untouchables from proprietary rights in land and, curiously, \textit{despite situations of land abundance, reduced them to a permanent stock of agrestic labour}’ (Ibid.: 3, emphasis added).
relational resources, or what Bourdieu termed capitals: accumulated economic, cultural, social assets or access to resources that shape individuals’ capacity to move within the field in which they are positioned (Bourdieu 1986).

Social capital, i.e., the actual or potential social resources accumulated through wider sets of social relations, obligations, recognition and network linkages (Bourdieu 2000), would be converted into 'political credit' (cf. Bailey 1968: 284). Such linkages enable easy access to knowledge, information, structures and other social resources. The concept of capital relates to habitus: the embodied dispositions, ways of thinking and perceiving that constitute the scope of an individual's actions (Bourdieu 1986). Habitus, in turn, relates closely to doxa: spontaneous beliefs or prevalent opinions, notions, propositions that actually sustain structures and systems of power. Doxa, thus, legitimates and reproduces itself in perpetuity via habitus. Bourdieu provides an example of doxa: people’s generally held belief that success in life depends on naturally endowed intellectual capabilities (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1991). This holds close similarity with the underlying ideas of fatalism in India (Banaji 2013): some people are born ‘great’ and others ‘small,’ which normalizes various and myriad forms of symbolic domination.

Symbolic control or domination imposes meanings, legitimates them by discursive tools of 'victim-blaming theories of human suffering, poverty and untimely deaths' (Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes in Farmer 2004: 317). Symbolic domination permeates everyday life through symbolic violence. Symbolic violence includes processes and praxis whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are, but in ‘a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder’ (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 4). Symbolic violence, thus, becomes a means of domination involving normative categorizing, which influence and control the cognitive structuring of general perceptions that get established, reproduced and perpetuated ‘naturally’ (Tomlinson et al 2013). Symbolic violence facilitates symbolic domination in myriads of incomprehensible ways (Enderson 1998). Thus, a continuous reproduction of mainstream doxa is more powerfully established which conceals power differences as the basis of their force (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Thus, emerging Adivasi leaders or middlemen in misrecognition ultimately help advance the endeavours of dominant groups
via their complicity, since they, as ‘cultural interpreters,’ remain ambivalent and most subjected to acts of symbolic violence that conceals the inherent power dynamics of the dominant coalition (Tomlinson 2013).

Paulo Freire (2000) in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, also discusses the processes of oppression/dehumanisation bearing close similarity to symbolic violence:

Any situation in which “A” objectively exploits “B” or hinders his/her pursuit of self-determination as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual’s ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. … Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognize others as persons, not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognised. The oppressed consciousness and the oppressor consciousness – take into consideration their behaviour, view of the world, their ethics. The duality of the oppressed: they are contradictory, divided being shaped by and exist in a concrete situation of oppression and violence. … An act is oppressive when it prevents people from being more fully human. Accordingly, these necessary restraints do not in themselves signify that yesterday’s oppressed have become today’s oppressors. … The peasant feels inferior to the boss because the boss seems to be the only one who knows things and is able to run things. … Analysis of existential situation of oppression reveals that their inception lays in an act of violence – initiated by those with power. … As beneficiaries of a situation of oppression, the oppressors do not perceive their monopoly on having more as a privilege which dehumanises others and themselves … (Ibid.: 54-60, emphasis added).

Combining Sartre (2004), Bourdieu and Freire, I term symbolic violence, misrecognition, and the contradictory duality of the oppressed as ambivalence of violence which fixes the emerging leadership among the oppressed groups in a situation of perpetual state of ambivalence resulting in self-doubt – a general distrust in oneself, one’s tradition, cultural values and principles, that might limit one’s ability to commit to greater common good and a politics of emancipation.

To overcome ambivalence of violence (symbolic violence) is difficult and time-taking, argues Bourdieu, because 'it is something you absorb like air, something you do not feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult'. Conversely, internalizing, and legitimising the dominant authoritative power itself is a matter, which requires capacity, agency and intelligence. The legitimation of a dominant power by the

---

72 I am indebted to Cyril Desbruslais of Jnanadeepa Vidyapeeth, Pune for coining the term ‘ambivalence of violence’ and, indicating its possible prevalence in Dalit and Adivasi contexts in India, while discussing Jean-Paul Sartre and Polo Freire in 1997 during a short course on ‘philosophy of liberation.’
dominated is never a passive affair – a matter of taking into and displacing/negating oneself (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1991: 115). Thus, ‘people who are manipulated (here the middlemen) know a lot: more than any intellectual or more than any sociologist. But in a sense they also do not know it: they lack the instrument to grasp it, to speak about it’ and to critique and counter it. This kind of manipulation of people is a form of symbolic domination/violence made possible by ambivalence of violence for which nobody has clear and full responsibility – so it is generally said ‘they are corrupted by the system.’ However, it produces a lot of internalized tension, a lot of bodily suffering – indefinite social status – those who occupy places that are subject to powerful contradictions. Although, it helps people to adjust, but it causes ‘internalized contradictions’ (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1991: 117-121; Farmer 2004).

Adivasi Mediators, Ambivalence of Violence and AISE Evidence from Kolhan and Jharkhand

Coming back to Saluka, the new leader or middleman, it is now possible to understand the psychological and socio-cultural trajectories of the production of Adivasi middlemen in the context of the broader encapsulating colonial civic order. Saluka and his brother have been comparatively better placed than most of their co-villagers because they belong to a marang killi (the dominant lineage) of the village; since they make a household of only two, and own a bigger piece of land, which provides them with an annual supply of food-gains well in excess of their subsistence needs. Hence, Saluka could also access education from a private school, and go to Punjab with his friends. These are favourable circumstances that helped him to enhance his (personal) symbolic capitals to be able to interact with dominant social fields. Hence, he was chosen to work with an NGO where he could further enhance his status, skills and self-confidence.

While Saluka is well aware of Adivasi doxa and subjectivities, his continued interactions with the agents of mainstream, and engagement with the block development officer get him to misinterpret the corrupt or violent bureaucratic codes as ‘right’ procedure, the BDO as the boss who knows ‘everything’ about the sarkar (state), for it is he who makes the immediate manifestation of sarkar, the Block Development Office functions as it does. Further, the impoverishment of Adivasi villagers, their constructed
‘ignorance,’ cumulative deprivations and powerlessness, ‘excessive drinking habits’ and ‘hand-to-mouth existence’ render truth value to victim-blaming theories advanced by *diku* officials, shopkeepers, and development actors (Mosse 2005, chapter-3). Furthermore, by his repeated adherence to the instructions of bureaucratic codes (inscription, corruption and arbitrariness) (see Gupta 2012), he also develops *habitus* akin to these codes. Thus ambivalence of violence gets operationalized and simultaneously normalized for Saluka as he takes lessons at his new found ‘career’ as a middleman, which alone allows him a faster and apparently feasible upward social mobility given the context of a dying countryside, largely impoverished co-villagers and the mostly dormant, degraded and a rapidly disintegrating position of Adivasi ‘sacral polity.’

A look at the implementation of MGNREGS in a few village might help further strengthen this argument. MGNREGS is meant to provide 100 days employment to any household who makes a demand for work under the MGNREG Act 2005 to create rural agrarian infrastructure. The official minimum wage for a day’s work under this Act is rupees 125 per day per person. In principle, the local administration, i.e., the block development officer and his staff, bear the responsibility of providing employment to interested villagers. However, hardly any Ho villager go to the Block Development Office, on their own, or demand employment under the Act. The block development officer is put under pressure to spend the funds allotted for the implementation of MGNREGS for job creation and produce reports as to how the money is utilised. Hence, he promotes middleman such as Saluka who would implement ‘job creation’ schemes. Hence, Saluka also was asked to undertake a few schemes of approach-road and mud-tank construction works in his own village.

However, it is not the villagers who choose schemes, although in principle it should be so, but the schemes are distributed depending on the convenience of bureaucrats: the BDO decides on what scheme, how many (of them), to which village, and how much money to be spent on a specific scheme – mostly individual wells, mud-tanks and approach roads – since these are easy to monitor to avoid ‘corruption,’ according to the DC (personal conversation with the DC on 10 August 2011 at his office, Chaibasa), while the gross corruption that exists at all levels of the administration has been a ‘normal’ practice for the DC.
While this being the mode of implementation of MGNREGS, the role of *gram-sabha* (or *panchayat*) is merely to decide who gets the proposed well/tank or in which hamlet of the village the approach road would be constructed, and who would supervise the work and pay wages to workers. Once a scheme is approved by the BDO, most often a non-Ho, s/he would release the allotted sum of money in instalments, as the progress of the work would be certified and approved by a Junior Engineer (JE), in most cases a *diku*. However, the BDO ‘cuts’ five per cent of the total allotment depending on his/her ‘commission’ and the JE normally does not certify or approve the work until this ‘fixed commission’ is paid either by the work-supervisor or the *panchayat-mukhiya* into whose account the amount would be sent for the purpose of paying wages. The ‘percentage cuts’ practiced by the BDO and JE has been an unquestioned and normalised practice, not ‘corruption’ (Gupta 2005). Corruption, according to the BDO, is what the work-supervisor, *mukhiya* or *munda* might do, not *sarkari karamcharis* (the government staff) (personal conversation with a BDO at Khuntpani block office, 4th August 2011); *sarkari-karamcharis* cannot go wrong, since they know everything and the Adivasis do not know anything (personal conversations with middlemen-contractors at Maranghatu village 15 August 2001). This has been the most prevalent mainstream perceptions about Adivasis in Kolhan and Jharkhand as it was made clear during my conversation with Ranjan, an elderly staff at the district record room, who is originally from north Bihar, but has been in Jharkhand for long:

> People like us who work here [at the government office] have a desire to learn about the system so that we can work well, but these Adivasis have no such desire except to ask or look for money. How will they develop? They cannot understand how things are being done and what to do and how to learn anything. Taking the names of three main mining industrialists in Chaibasa, he says, they are not looting, but they are doing a lot to develop the place (personal conversation on 22 October 2013).

This continues to remain one of the least altered mainstream prejudices or stereotypes about Adivasis.

**A ‘Social-Audit’ of Schemes under MNREGA 2005**

More interesting was an episode, I witnessed in 2009, of a public-audit of the implementation of MGNREGS, which was organized by the district administration itself in accordance with the guidelines of MGNREGA 2005. Many NGOs were also asked to help out in making the public-audit ‘successful’ by the District Collector. During the public-audit of a few
MGNREG schemes, a staff of one of the NGOs, that runs a project to ensure a more effective implementation of MGNREGA 2005, had instructed its staff to check with villagers, who have worked in MNREG Schemes, to see if the minimum wage was paid to them in accordance with the specifications of the Act. On enquiring one NGO-staff, who belongs to a ‘service caste’ from a nearby village, found that many workers of a Ho hamlet in Khuntpani block were not paid the minimum wage of Rs.125 per day. A few Ho villagers who had worked for 15 days were paid only two day’s wages, but the register of the supervisor and job cards of workers showed 15 or more work-days. This discrepancy in job card, a clear case of manipulation by the work supervisor, a Ho himself and the VLW a non-Ho, was brought to the notice of the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) who was presiding over the audit session. The SDO immediately directed the NGO-staff to write a formal complaint-note on behalf of the villagers who worked for the scheme. Accordingly, he wrote a complaint and submitted it to the SDO. This became a serious issue for the work supervisor and the VLW, who could now be legally held responsible for this discrepancy.

On the same evening, soon after the audit session, the work supervisor and the VLW made a counter-complaint and got their left thumb impression (legally-accepted substitute as signature for those who are illiterate) from some of their gang-supporters on behalf of those villagers on whose consent the NGO-staff had registered the original complaint with the SDO. The counter-complaint stated that the workers had filed the complaint-note under pressure from the NGO-staff; the allegations in it are incorrect; and hence, the villagers would like to withdraw the former petition about the discrepancies in wage payment. MGNREGS supervisor and the VLW, thus, got the original complaint cancelled by their counter complaint.

73 For more on issues of nonpayment of minimum wages to workers in Adivasi areas see Devi (1984). ‘While the financial allotment for schemes … are determined according to the work norms adopted for the National Rural Employment Programme, the workers are being actually paid on the basis of more onerous norms and are thus being deprived of a part of their legitimate wages. Complaints right up to the highest levels of government have brought no succour to the poor workers’ (Devi 1987: 185).

74 Narrated by the NGO-staff, during an evaluation meeting of the NGO’s staff members on 4 February 2011. I attended the meeting. On 22 September 2013, I discussed this incident with the villagers (both men and women) in question at their hamlet/ village in Khuntpani block. They have not yet been paid their pending wages.
After the staff meeting, I requested the NGO-staff if he could come with me to this hamlet to talk either to the said work supervisor (also called ‘mate’) or to those who signed the counter-complaint. He refused my request saying that he was scared of the work supervisor who is a ‘big-man’ of the area. I met this ‘big man’ in September 2013 at his residence. While discussing the issue with him, he agreed that the incident was true, but he says, ‘What else can I do? I have to work with the VLW and BDO on sarkari projects.’ For this local ‘big man,’ what matters most is his gain that comes from being part of the system. This was much easier for him than to stand up for the rights of his co-villagers, which needs extraordinary courage, extra resources and time. Moreover, since such a process is time-taking and the final outcome would remain uncertain.

Things are more complex than they appear to be: the doxa and habitus of ‘Adivasi fields’ differ historically from that of ‘mainstream.’ Most works in these villages were/ are carried out mostly by communal system of labour exchange known as denga-depenga, where households exchanged their labour for free with neighbours and kinsmen and kinswomen (see Shah 2013b). However, this communal system of labour exchange has, by now, been transformed into perpetual submissiveness and dependence (of marginalised villagers) on those few who disproportionately accumulate wealth and differentiate themselves from their co-villagers. Moreover, an annual wage rate is fixed by gram-sabha (most of whose officeholders are village-elites) at a rate much less than the minimum wage rate specified by the MNREGA 2005 guidelines. Furthermore, this annually fixed wage rate is often not paid in cash, but in kind, for example, reciprocation of similar work or a meal and drink together with all those who work; moreover, wage is seldom calculated and demanded as a right by those who supply the labour (personal conversation with S. Sundi and M. Tubid, Ho youth leaders and activists who work with rural villagers, 16 October 2013).

Hence, when MGNREGS are being implemented in villages it is up to the work supervisor to manage the wage-payment at the village; he or she might do it in accordance with Ho villagers’ customary practices. The middleman or woman, being well aware of villagers’ position, adopts himself or herself to it to advance his/her interest that also serves the agenda of the dominant powers (here the block office staff). This episode explicates one of the subtle, but complex ways by which Adivasi cultural values are manipulated and
eventually undermined, and how ambivalence of violence actually works on the ground via ambivalent Adivasi middlemen who takes sides with state functionaries to advance his or her personal interests as well as that of the dominant powers with which he or she gets inevitably enmeshed, a framework of co-operation with differences on unequal terms.

This not only reproduces and perpetuates the rigid hierarchical structure of power, but also actively deny Adivasis’ alternative imaginations and subjectivities. At the unconscious level, it leads to the naturalizing of constructed values (e.g. civilization, modernity, development, etc.) which, conversely, established ‘savage,’ ‘wilderness,’ ‘primitiveness’ and ‘backwardness’ ‘as their antithesis and as objects of a reforming zeal of conscious affiliation proceeding under the guise of filiation’ (Said 1984, cited in Ashcroft et al 1989: 3), that is, a mimicking of diku proceeding from a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed in to the colonial civic order, the accumulating and differentiating Adivasi elite’s efforts from their Adivasi periphery to immerse themselves in the encapsulating dominant culture, denying their origin in an attempt to become more ‘civilized’ than the civilizing dikus.75

Power was a dialectical phenomenon, that torturer and tortured, racist and victim, colonizer and colonized, the empowered and disempowered, were locked in a symbiotic relation in which the first could not escape the consequences of his relations with the second. … Colonizer and colonized are ‘similarly strangled by the colonial apparatus, that heavy machine,’ transformed into an oppressor or torturer, the colonizing subject also finds himself in a condition of ontological ambivalence: ‘both the organizer and the victim’, as Fanon put it, ‘of a system that has choked him and reduced him to silence’ (Sartre 1976a; Fanon 1980 quoted in Haddour et al 2005: xii).

Any attempt to counter such structural violence and corrupt practices, being normalised, has been thwarted in ways that are sometimes unimaginable. Adivasi villagers, who still hold on to their alternative imaginations, certainly experience a diku effect with their kinsman and kinswoman who advance individual accumulation and differentiation (contradictory symbolic capitals) at the expense of demoralizing their co-villagers in their own hamlets. Although the marginalized Hos might understand how such transformations happen, fear looms foremost in villagers’ mind while thinking of confronting

75 Young (1994) explains the emergence of (colonial) desire in history, its genealogy and disavowal in the history of racialized thought involving simultaneous attraction and repulsion.
such phenomenon. Ironically, some deprived Ho villagers even take pride in pointing to an accumulating and differentiating Adivasi as their own kinsman, who belong to the same killi, to prove to dikus in general that all Adivasis are not fools or ‘primitives’ as the general mainstream perception has them to be. No wonder, these local mediators (‘big-men’) would be elected as panchayat mukhiya, MLAs and MPs. Thus, the process of state formation from below (adverse or unequal incorporation) continues via the prevalent ambivalence of violence, but what might be the nature of such a state?

**Adverse Incorporation of Adivasi Leadership and Social Exclusion**

The prevalent ambivalence of Adivasi leadership has a long history as long as the history of Adivasis' unequal interaction with dominant mainstream which branded them as 'barbarians' and simultaneously kept co-opting (incorporating) their leadership adversely as mere token heads for the sake of legitimacy (see Thapar 1971, 2004; Fox 1971; Saha 1986). Among the Hos, the authority of the mundas and tankis, which had previously rested on the approval of the entire village community had gradually been shifted to the approval of paternalist British officers, who always knew better what was ‘best’ for the Hos (see Das Gupta 2011). Thus the mundas and tankis were reduced to ambivalent and subservient middlemen whose final decision on any issue would depend on the ‘discretion’ of a 'sympathetic' colonial officer whose main interest was to advance the interests of the empire (Corbridge 1996). Similarly, the post-British colonial state-society relationship has also been built up along the same trajectory: ambivalence of violence – the Hos continue to remain subservient to the ‘expert’ diku officer who always knows everything ‘better.’

Adivasi politics in Jharkhand and the processes by which Adivasi leadership has unequally been co-opted by various dominant mainstream powers such as political parties, industrial capitalists, and bureaucrats at various levels can be explained by employing the concept of ambivalence of violence, which clearly emerges from the recent experience of a candidate who contested

---

76 Personal conversation with villagers who have still not received their wages for work done under MNREGS. While asking them why they do not challenge the VLW and BDO to pay their wages due to them, the women say, ‘We are ready to do it, but our men lack courage. There is fear in their hearts.’ (Dopai village Khuntpani block, 15 October 2013).
elections in 2009 to the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly.

Sonu was the director of an NGO that fought against human right violations, land alienation and forced displacement in Kolhan since the late 1970s. In 2007, Rahul Gandhi, the then General Secretary of Youth Congress, visited Jharkhand in view of revitalising ‘his’ Congress party organisation at the grass roots. He wanted a young, energetic and capable leader to fight elections, from one of the reserved Adivasi constituencies of West Singhbhum, on behalf of his party. On considering Sonu's works in the district, the Congress party offered him a ticket to contest election. When election campaigns were over, a few days before the final voting day, Sonu was summoned by one of the leading local industrialists to his office in Chaibasa. After making him sit comfortably, the industrialist asked him if he wished to win this election. He said, 'Yes, I do'. Then Sonu was told, 'If you sign an agreement with me promising that you will not oppose any land leases for mining in this Kolhan, you will certainly win this election. If not, you will lose it for sure, irrespective of the party that offered you the ticket.' Sonu declined signing such an agreement with this local diku capitalist and consequently lost the election.

During our conversations in July 2011, Sonu told me, 'May be, I made a mistake, I should have signed that agreement with him to see what would have happened after.' Further, about the issue of industrialisation and displacement of Adivasis in Kolhan in general, he said, 'I realise that it is almost impossible to resist mining in Kolhan but, may be, we should try to press the industrial capitalists to limit their greed of wanting to acquire thousands of acres of land at a stretch. Why cannot they take smaller pieces of land and do their business?' His perception about Adivasi land rights and

---

77 It is crucial to note how local industrialists predetermine election-results prior to actual voting and counting of votes. In most Adivasi villages, villagers seek the opinions of significant village elites as to whom to vote, such as munda, and other significant middlemen who help/patronize them. Hence, it is very easy for industrialists to distribute some money to these locally significant men to fix election outcomes. That is why villagers’ decision as to whom to vote might change overnight depending on who controls their collective opinion and decision (personal conversation with R. Pingua, a Ho who headed the Jharkhand Tribal Development Society in West Singhbhum district during 2006-2009, and now resides in Ranchi, on 5 February 2011).
forced displacement had changed a lot by this time. This way, in front of the prevalent, dominant discourses of ‘development,’ Adivasi land-rights, the significance of their protection, the dehumanizing consequences of forced displacement, etc. become differently legitimized, and de-development for Adivasis get operationalized through an ambivalent leadership.

Sonu's case is a clear example of how ambivalence of violence plagues Adivasi leadership and how and why emerging leadership gets adversely (unequally) incorporated. Adverse incorporation and social exclusion (AISE) is a complex and slow process, happens over a period of time, almost impossible to fight unless the already entrenched ambivalence of violence is recognized for what it is, in the first place, and then to be reversed or negated. 'We only become what we are by radically negating deep down what others have done to us.' (Sartre 1961: ii, emphasis added). Such a negation might be possible by elite Adivasis, provided they recognize the misrecognition (ambivalence) they are already being caught into, in the first place. However, such a negation not only needs material resources but cultural and intellectual too along with the renewed trust and total support of the deprived members of all societies, beginning with Adivasis themselves from whom the elites are now far removed. With both material and cultural and ideological resources and tools of emancipation it is possible to engage in meaningful negotiations and dialogue on equal terms.

**Ambivalence of Violence and Middlemen**

Ambivalence of violence neutralises corruption, unequal co-option resulting from an enduring nexus between bureaucrats, politicians and industrial capitalists, which forms the ‘shadow state’ and ‘black economy’ (Harris-White 2003: 77, 98). West Singhbhum district, being one of the most mineral-rich regions in India while also ‘protected’ under several legislations and Constitutional provisions, which theoretically prevent transfer of Adivasi land to non-Adivasis, has always remained one of the most attractive places for the most corrupt bureaucrats. Industrial capitalists need to buy the District

---

78 I have been in touch with Sonu via phone-calls and friendly visits to his house during my field-visits since the end of 2009 when he had shared with me the copies of his correspondence with the Ministry of Rural Development at Jharkhand and national levels about corruption cases at the district level related to the misuse of funds allotted under MNREGA 2005 as a follow-up of his Right to Information (RTI) enquiry on a few incomplete check-dams in Manoharpur block.
Collector's (DC) discretionary power\textsuperscript{79} to get land-lease-contracts advanced in these Scheduled Areas. When the DC's discretionary power here is in such a high demand, he also need to secure and prolong his tenure as DC at Chaibasa.

According to Sikendar, one of the two leading middlemen of Marngahatu village, the District Collector of West Singhbhum sent three million rupees in a suitcase as a bribe to the chairperson of the samunvaya samiti (coordinating committee) of the then Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) led coalition government in Jharkhand at the beginning of the year 2012, so that the DC at Chaibasa might be allowed to continue in his office for another financial year\textsuperscript{80} (personal conversation over phone on 15 February 2012).

More interestingly, this sum of money was sent through the ‘kindness’ of the local MLA, a Ho himself, a member of Jharkhand Mukt Morch (JMM). The said amount of bribe was received by the 'supreme' leader of JMM who then headed the coordination committee. While this episode was being narrated by Sikender, an aspiring or emerging Ho politician himself, I asked him if this was the case, then what might be the future of Ho disum and Ho honko (the Ho country and the Ho children)? His reply to this question was, 'I cannot say anything about it, since after winning elections, nobody can tell what would happen to a politician or how he or she might behave. Even if it were me, who got elected as MLA, I would have done the same thing'. While Sikender, who is fully aware of the prevalent, dominant trajectory of moral and political economy in Jharkhand, feels that he has no tools to fight it, but to be part of the system and succumb to its ‘rules.’

The JMM, it its initial days, was one of the most powerful or important regional parties, in Jharkhand. It had managed to forge the support of

\textsuperscript{79} A.K. Patnaik who led a Bench of Supreme Court judges has said, ‘Naxalism is a result of an oversight of Constitutional provisions relating to Scheduled Areas and Tribes. Urbanites, mostly oblivious of the fifth and sixth schedules of the Constitution, are ruling the nation.’ (Anand 2012).

\textsuperscript{80} ‘The potential for manipulation of bureaucratic positions and appointments arise due to politicians' control over movements of officials. These appointments and transfers are not policy based but on political connections and influences. A market of job-postings emerges where bureaucrats are motivated to pay for transfers. Politicians can then demand from them more illicit funds. Whereas bureaucrats transfer only a share of their bribe-income to politicians either for preferred transfers or to satisfy their political boss' demand' (Brussell 2012: 79).
Adivasis and other such marginalised groups in Jharkhand region by its appeal to Jharkhandi subjectivities and sentiments that are tied to land, water, forest, cultural identity, and self-determination (Das 1975; Lourduswamy 1997; Munda and Mullick 2003). However, once it began to follow the rules of the game, the already entrenched colonial system, it finds fewer other choices, since it has to continue to survive in the system, its leadership has often been in ambivalence, failing to negotiate on equal terms. Even Jaipal Singh Munda, the most powerful Adivasi leader after Birsa Munda, and the first Adivasi MP in the history of India, in the late 1960s also eventually had to succumb ambivalently to the systemic pressures in the face of dominant discourses of ‘national development’ and ‘unity.’

Conclusion

This chapter has taken the theme of ‘power brokers’ or ‘political fixers’ to a deeper level of analysis to explicate how and why there have been middlemen and women operating in Adivasi landscape in India and what has been the consequences of their ‘mediated empowerment’ for Adivasi social formations. It has argued that the prevalence of political mediation in societies is a symptom that points towards deeper socio-economic, political, cultural and symbolic issues that are unresolved constitutive of the historical processes of state formation that embody colonialism and racism.

Thus, this chapter has shown that the post-British colonial Indian state invariably operates through ambivalent middlemen in Adivasi and other marginalized social formations advancing cultural, and structural violence by employing various legitimising discourses that negates Adivasi subjectivities in complex, coercive and insidious ways. This entire process has been operationalized via ambivalence of violence through which most of these processes keep repeating and being reproduced, and reutilized in many

---

81 Jaipal Singh Munda, the founder and most charismatic leader of Jharkhand Party could not help being ambivalent (‘divided loyalty’) while being confronted with mainstream powers and discourses of ‘national development’ (Sen 2009). Similarly Sibu Soren, the so-called ‘JMM-supremo,’ has allegedly accepted huge sums of money to render political support to ruling coalitions of national political parties in the 1990s (Sinha 1987). Sen (2014) shows how Scheduled Caste Politics that demands representation, education, and agrarian reform get compromised as a consequence of caste Hindu misrecognition (Ibid.: 77). Most interestingly, although horse-riding, bribing and shifting loyalties are ‘normal’ practices in Indian politics for most ‘upper’ caste politicians (Pandey 2013), often accused and punished in these games are those who belong to the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes see Samuel (2012).
apparently natural or acceptable ways.

Such complex processes are deeply rooted in long historical and sociocultural processes, institutions and sociocultural values that have been responsible for prevalent unequal power relations by control of resources and gross deprivations of India ‘masses.’ ‘hybridity,’ ‘fragility,’ ‘weak state’ and accompanying conflicts are mere symptoms of such deeper and unreconciled or unresolved political, and economic issues: unjust appropriation and control of resource by dominant groups and their efforts to keep the deprived populations in perpetual servitude, ignorance, and unfreedom (practico-inert status) typifying a perfect colonial system of super-exploitation which simultaneously produces kinglets or middlemen or cultural interpreters to run the system smoothly.

The next chapter discusses the processes and actors of land alienation as powers of exclusion within Adivasi ethno-territorial enclosures.
Adivasis and Powers of Exclusion: People being Marginalized in their Ethno-Regional Territories

“In our fields,
In our lands,
There is a world of richness.”
“We have nothing to eat.
Day by day we starve to death, and we are torn to pieces.
The dirty madhouses, the poverty and disease make us moan…”

(Extracts from Santal songs quoted in S. Devalle 1980: 5)

... And what are the sacrifices the state makes to the colonialist, the darling gods and exporters? The answer is simple: it sacrifices the property of the natives to him. ... The natural produce of the colonized country grows on the land and this land belongs to the ‘indigenous’ population. In certain thinly populated regions, with large uncultivated areas, the theft of land is less apparent: what you see is military occupation, and forced labour. ...

Introduction

The Department of Mining and Geology of Jharkhand government has traced gold in our village-land. It scares me when I think about it', said Savan, a Ho who has been a lecturer at a local college. His village is near Chaibasa. Savan’s fear is about an impending forced eviction of villagers when some industrial capitalists would, one day, start mining the gold underneath their village. 'I am sure', he said, 'We will be thrown out from our land, sooner or later.' There is already a limestone mine (in the same village). One of the local industrialists has been extracting limestone from it for the last nine years (from 2001 to 2010). The mine is dug wide and deep into the ground; a large volume of water was being pumped out of the large open mining-pit to enable extraction. The villagers say that the mine causes depletion of water-level in their wells, and there has been severe water scarcity during summer since the mining operations began. However, although villagers felt that the mine was harmful to the entire village, they could not stop its operation until December 2010, when the newly elected mukhiya, the chairperson of their panchayat stood her ground and told the mine-owner, a local non-Adivasi industrialist, to stop the mining operation. Consequently, it was stopped, but the industrialist kept sending his brokers to the mukhiya’s house to persuade her for a compromise, but they found her to be too 'stubborn' or 'adamant' in her decision. Finally, the industrialist has reportedly said, 'She is mukhiya for just five years; we will see who will become mukhiya next.'

The present mukhiya's family has a reasonable level of economic security (an affluent Ho household) with some rice land, besides her husband's regular income as a bank-employee in at a local bank. Hence, the family does not need to depend on some easy extra income that might come in by cooperating with the industrialist to advance his interests to the detriment of their village community by depriving them of common property resources such as land and water.

This piece of land, on which the mining-pit lies, had been leased out to the local industrialist, years ago, by the District Collector (DC) without whose 'discretion' any lease agreement in Kolhan and Jharkhand is almost
impossible. Despite strong opposition from most villagers, the then munda and a few household-heads, who possess this piece of land, had agreed to lease it out for limestone extraction. However, mining was interrupted soon, in a similar fashion as it is being interrupted now, by the decision of a former panchayat mukhiya during the late 1970s. Later in 2001, (limestone) extraction resumed with a further expansion of the mine, supported once again, by the present munda and a few of his supporters, which continued till the end of 2010, up to the arrival of the newly elected mukhiya.

This chapter discusses issues related to land and its governance in mineral-rich Adivasi regions. It reviews discourses about ‘development’ induced land alienation and dispossession of Adivasis; analyses land-conflicts between accumulating households and co-villagers, local resistance against forced eviction, and resultant dilemmas. In fact, most Adivasi movements in the mineral-rich central eastern states – Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh – have been centred on their struggle to protect jal, jungle, zamin, (water, forests and land) (Singh 1973; Areeparampil 1993, 1996; Singh 2002; Chattopadhyay 2012; Dungdung 2013). These studies, among several others, have highlighted the number of people displaced without adequate provisions of compensation, resettlement, and rehabilitation; they also provide useful statistics on land alienation due to large-scale 'development' projects such as big dams, mining and industrial establishments, national parks and other so-called projects of ‘public’ interest in India.

Most studies about alienation of Adivasi land have highlighted the difference between Adivasis' and non-Adivasis’ understanding of land: for Adivasis and other such marginalized people, a piece of land of their own provides them not only food, but also a sense of security, personhood, belonging, identity, public visibility, bargaining power, enhanced status, political voice and much more. Whereas for non-Adivasi industrialists, land is a commercial object to

---

82 Adivasi land, in principle, belongs to the village ‘community,’ and cannot be alienated. There exist a number of 'protective' legislations, such as the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNTA) 1908, the provisions in the Fifth Schedule of article 244 of the Indian Constitutions, the Panchayati Raj Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) 1996, and the Samata Judgment 1995, all meant to protect Adivasi land from being alienated by non-Adivasis. All these legislations bestow special powers upon the ‘community’ to own and control its local resources – land, water, forest, and minerals. Further, most Hos are by now aware of these provisions by their repeated participation in protest movements and demonstrations against land alienation, organized by a few local activists and NGOs since long (Sunder 2005b, 2009).
be better utilized (Fernandes 1991; Fernandes and Barbora 2008; Rao 2008, 2009; Verma 2011; Dungdung 2013; Chandra 2013). Furthermore, a central concern of Adivasi-land-right activists has been that rural Adivasis, mostly nonliterate, and unskilled to take up non-agrarian sector jobs, while being uprooted from their land with very little monetary compensation, would be left with little alternative (livelihood) options. In this sense, the argument made by Soma Munda, the legendary leader of Koel-Karo Dam-Resistance Movement, 'Land is what they know to live on. Money is not for them' (quoted in Ghosh 2006: 509), lies at the heart of most local Adivasi resistance movements.

The case of the Sarda Mine in Chaibasa is typical. The villagers were not willing to part with their lands, which comprised their sarna [sacred grove], agricultural lands and house sites. In order to obtain the lease, compensation and agreement papers had to be signed and produced before the mining department. These signatures were obtained by making some tenants drunk and dragging and beating others. Those who still did not yield had a taste of police lathis [nightsticks] and jail life before their thumb impression on blank paper could be bought for a nominal sum... Practically, every mining lease in Singhbhum is purchased in a similar way (excerpted from a petition filed by the Singhbhum Labor Union Chaibasa during the early 1980s, quoted in Stuligross 2008: 96).

A few studies have also highlighted the inherent contradictions in overemphasizing the dichotomous Adivasi, non-Adivasi binary, and the role of 'Jharkhandi activism' in furthering the process of Adivasis' essentialized 'otherness' and consequent exclusion (Ghosh 2006; Chatterjee 2006). Sunder (2009) and Kapoor (2009, 2011, 2012) have highlighted the paradoxes inherent in the Constitutional provisions that 'protect' Adivasis land whilst the state’s actions get more and more focused around the mineral wealth in Adivasi land. This contradiction is complex and enduring: on the one hand, Adivasis cling to the provisions of the 'protective' laws and Constitutional provisions, that have a British colonial origin, to fight land alienation, while on the other hand, the post-British colonial state's disregard, and successive amendments of these laws, and the manipulation of Constitutional provisions in favour of market forces, render these laws and provisions almost irrelevant (Sunder 2009; Damodaran 2013).

More interestingly, Adivasi movements, against displacement from land, based on 'protective' laws, in turn, have to make supplications and appeals to

---

83 The IT and service sector whose GDP contribution is higher than the agricultural sector do not hold any opportunities for illiterate rural people; see Walker (2009).
the institutions of the same exploitative post-British colonial state to enforce
the already diluted provisions of 'protective' laws. The situation becomes
more complex when, there is disagreement among Adivasi politicians
themselves about the relevance of, what they call, ‘outdated colonial’ laws.\textsuperscript{84}
However, despite such obvious contradictions and paradoxes, Sunder (2009)
and Nilsen (2013) have argued, Adivasis’ engagement with the state, rather
than keeping it away (Shah 2007), and more strategic demand for their
Constitutional rights, might help them to realize the meaning of democracy
and citizenship. In a similar fashion, Kapoor (2007; 2011) has shown that
Adivasi social movements against land alienation provide them with
alternative learning platforms to develop political consciousness, a sense of
identity, dignity, and human rights. These arguments are well grounded and
optimistic. However, very few studies have highlighted the erosion of social
ecology in Adivasi dominant regions due to strategic non-investment to
convert these regions and its people into conflict-ridden colonies that might
fuel the country’s economic growth.

This chapter, thus, seeks to better understand such processes by which
Adivasis have been systematically denied access to land (access here means
people’s ability to benefit from land) within their own ostensibly ethno-
territorial enclosures. It shows Adivasis’ diminishing access to their own land
as an inevitable outcome of centuries-long colonial transformations of social
ecology in Adivasi dominant regions: deepening inequality, economic,
ecological and political marginality through strategic non-investment that
degrades not only agrarian infrastructure, but also Adivasi social formations
themselves and turn both of them into conflict-ridden internal colonies. It
also highlights the inadequacy and contradictions inherent in both traditional
and modern systems of land governance in Adivasi regions. In order to
highlight these processes with their accompanying nuances, the chapter re-
conceptualizes various powers and forces that alienate Adivasi land in the
border context of ‘exclusion of people's access to land.\textsuperscript{85} This exclusion or
denial of access has systemically been brought about by strategic non-

\textsuperscript{84} The Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) president, and former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi,
a Santal (Adivasi), has already stated that the ‘old-protective’ laws are irrelevant. While Nitya
Rao, who has conducted several years of field research among villagers in the Santal
Parganas, has found that it is only because of SPTA 1949 that most Adivasi households in the
region are left with at least some land of their own (Rao 2008).

\textsuperscript{85} Access is defined broadly as ‘the ability to derive benefit from things’ (Ribot 2003: 1).
investment in Adivasi regions, while encouraging ‘intimate’ exclusion by which the ‘powers of exclusion’ (Hall et al 2011) finds their way into Adivasi ethno-regional territories, and advance accumulation by dispossession, despite strong local resistance by villagers (Levien 2012, 2013; Patnaik 2013).

The following section of this chapter shows the context of systemic marginality imposed on Adivasi regions and people from the perspective of 'regional political ecology' (Blaikie and Brookfield 1994). The findings of a household-level survey on landholding and farm-based food-grain production by 287 households in Huringhatu demonstrate the region’s marginality and people’s reduced ability to benefit from their land. Then the powers that created such marginality are delineated and termed as ‘powers of exclusion.’ This is followed by a short review of the broader context of land wars, and discussions of a few instances of the same in Kolhan between the local state officials in support of industrialists, and Ho villagers. Further, the chapter also shows how the powers of exclusion find their way into Adivasi social formations via ‘intimate’ exclusion or ‘exclusion from below;’ then, an instance of land dispute among social ‘intimates’ in Huringhatu is discussed to explicate this process. This is followed by a short discussion on the types of changes that exclusion by intimates (co-vilagers who share same history and trations) or violence among intimates yield in Ho villages, and the cost they need to incur while accessing state-regulatory services, and finally the chapter’s concluding section recapitulates the main arguments.

Political, economic, ecological marginality of Adivasi land

This section highlights the context of politico-economic and ecological marginality (Blaikie and Brookfield 1994) of Adivasi dominant regions and their diminishing ability to utilize and derive benefits from land ostensibly ‘protected’ for them. Such perennial marginality of a region resembles that of a virtual colony where governance and the delivery of basic public facilities, one of the main kernels of state-legitimacy, have nearly been absent whilst super-exploitation of mineral and forest resources have been at its peak for the rapid development of some focal points of growth – urban centres. In this way, 'the supply areas excoriate to an increasing stagnation and underdevelopment.' The people here continue to remain a 'marginal population' disorganised, and uninformed, who make demands only 'in the
traditional forms of supplications, petitions and complaints' (Blaikie and Brookfield 1994: 19-22).

Table-4, below, provides some facts about land-based livelihood resources of households in Huringhatu (V2). The data serve not only to make the regional (geographical) marginality of Hos and their land in terms of its killing degradation and scarcity but also to highlight, once again, the extent of economic differentiation within Ho society.

Table 4 – Land availability, land-based food security, and the people in Huringhatu village (V2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivable rice fields</th>
<th>Land-based food production</th>
<th>Number of households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Sub-totals %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No cultivable paddy fields</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 months</td>
<td>302 persons</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One acre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 months</td>
<td>980 persons</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>21.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 months</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 months</td>
<td>112 persons</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rice fields 492 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population 1394 N = 287</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: survey conducted by the author July-November, 2011)

Huringhatu (V2) has 287 households with a total population of 1394 persons settled in five different hamlets. However, its total cultivable rice-fields constitute only 492 acres which will soon be further divided among 621 male members structured on the basis of patrilineal kinship in relation to land. Only six per cent households (table-4) has comparatively better quality and larger pieces of land.

Table 5 – Lineages wise land ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lineage</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sundi</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purti</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayam</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deogam</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banra</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lineage</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samad</td>
<td>33 + 1 SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradhun</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nag</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukru</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandait</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: survey conducted by the author July-November, 2011)
This is a multi-lineage village with 11 killis (patrilineages) of which six killis are ‘latecomers’ who do not own cultivable paddy fields. They constitute a total of 58 households, of which 34 belong to a single ‘Samad’ killi of the Mundas. One killi (Bukru) with 10 households and a single household from the Samad killi are categorized as SCs in census records.

Undoubtedly, shortage of cultivable land, declining land productivity, and chronic food insecurity are the most pressing problems in this village. As shown in table-4, about 20 per cent of the total households do not own any rice field; they possess only small homesteads and depend mostly on a nominal wage labour, sale of firewood, and other foraging activities to earn a living throughout the year. For about 74 per cent household’s food-grain suffices for self-consumption less than half a year (1-6 months); their situation is no different from that of the landless households for the rest of the months. Only 13 households produce food grains sufficient for seven to eight months and just four of them nine to eleven months; these two together form only six per cent of the total households. This being the case only when the yearly monsoon is normal, with absolutely no irrigation facility for rice cultivation, a failure of monsoon (which often happens) brings severe food-scarcity and malnutrition.

Besides rice-fields, some households own small plots of upper-land which is predominantly hilly, stony and unproductive red-soil, devoid of any provision to prevent soil erosion. A few households cultivate sorghum, millets, pulses and staple maize occasionally on upper-lands during rainy season.

Apart from rice-land, the less fertile stony upper lands and homesteads, there is something classified as 'wastelands' which comprises of uncultivated grass and woods; much of it has been officially termed as 'forests' although frost-cover has mostly been denuded. Hos used to reclaim these 'wastelands' with the munda’s permission. However, this practice has become unaffordable for

---

86 Cultivation of upper-lands with no provision against soil-erosion has been one of the main reasons for cumulative ecological marginality due to large-scale soil erosion (Blakie and Brookfield 1994) which is a politico-economic issue that forms a vicious circle of marginality, and underdevelopment: soil erosion of one household becomes the development of another whose land is better positioned at the valley bottom (Blakie 1994). Interestingly, such huge loss of topsoil is not even seen as soil-erosion; and no remedial measure has been taken to prevent this serious problem by development actors either (Mosse 2005: chapter-3), including those from the state agriculture department, NGOs, and the emerging local leaders in the Adivasi regions.
most households without substantial financial support from the state (Yorke 1976), which has not happened so far even after the enactment of the much talked about Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005, which has provisions for land-reclamation. Moreover, almost all of these so-called 'wastelands' have officially been recorded as 'owned by the state' since the last settlement operations in 1963-65 (Upadhya 2009), although state functionaries have not yet been able to access these 'wastelands' extensively due to local resistance by Ho villagers, except a few instances where it has been accessed by the local industrialists for extractive mining with the help of the village munda, and a few elites as described at the beginning of this chapter.

Since the 1990s (the liberal economic reform period), mining and industrialisation have accelerated on forest lands causing further damage to environment and surrounding agricultural lands (Areeparampil 1996; George 2009; Munshi 2012; Bera 2012; Lahiri-Dutt et al 2012). Moreover, rural agrarian infrastructure has been neglected almost entirely, despite substantial fund allotments made ostensibly to improve rural agriculture and irrigation facilities. With the state’s clear option for ‘development’ by industrialisation (Rao 2003), the use of huge sums of funds simultaneously being allotted to rural development, agriculture and irrigation departments remains to be investigated.

87 The MGNREGA has provisions for land reclamation, protecting, maintaining and improving cultivable land, constructing check-dams, and sustainable small-scale irrigation facilities to improve the rural agrarian infrastructure. Its main purpose is to create employment for the rural poor whilst creating durable rural agricultural infrastructure (Haque 2011). See Mahapatra et al (2011) and Corbridge and Srivastava (2013) on the failure of MNREGA 2005. In West Singhbhum district, several check-dams are made on bureaucratic records only by executive engineers at the district welfare, public works and irrigation departments while drawing money in the name of ‘development’ schemes, including MGNREGS. An inquiry under the Right to Information Act (RTI) 2005 by a local Congress party leader, in 2010 revealed that more than a hundred million rupees, estimated cost for six check-dams, were withdrawn from the district exchequer by a few executive engineers. It took almost two years, after repeated complaints to the central and state ministries of rural development department, to force the DC to investigate the mismanagement of funds, in which the DC himself was allegedly involved. Only one of the six accused engineers is arrested by the end of 2011 (personal conversations with the local leader, who did the RTI enquiry, at his house in Manoharpur during on 11 August 2010).

88 According to Sikender (a Ho) and Anand (of a weaver-caste group), the two leading middlemen-contractors from Maranghatu, “huge sums of money have been allotted to
Land revenue collected from Chotanagpur was 40 pise for cess for health, 40 pise as cess for roads, education etc.... Chotanagpur had 2% land under irrigation in 1981 and 5% under electrification. Lift irrigation is for show and publicity (Devi 1981:1012).

The total irrigated land in Kolhan has remained about three per cent of the net sown area, for several years. There is hardly any reliable data on irrigation in West Singhbhum at the concerned department (personal conversations with the department heads on 12 November 2011, and information acquired through Right to Information Act 2005 application filed by the author in 2011). Moreover, almost all Adivasi regions in the country have been bypassed by the ‘green revolution’ (Shah et al 1998). Jharkhand state’s agricultural sector has specifically suffered from consistent non-investment in rural agrarian infrastructure (Prakash 2001, 2011). This gross neglect gets clearly reflected in the diminishing contribution of the agricultural sector to the state GDP: while the manufacturing sector contributed about 27 per cent of SGDP, it employs only 10 per cent of the total population; whereas the agriculture sector, which engages 60 per cent of the total population, contributed only 22 per cent of the state GDP in 2001. It has further declined to 14.5 per cent in 201089. Such an abysmally poor performance of the agriculture sector, which employs more than 90 per cent of Adivasis and other marginalized social groups, speaks eloquently about the predicament of rural Adivasi villagers.

‘improve’ agriculture practices, irrigation facilities, and rural infrastructure every year, however, the villagers’ have little knowledge of it. Bureaucrats at the concerned departments from the state, district to block levels are entrusted to ‘spend’ these resources. The contractors, mostly clients of politicians, take bids to construct bridges, culvers, check-dams, roads, and community halls, etc. About 40% of the total allotted funds goes back, in the form of ‘fixed’ percentage cuts (bribe), to bureaucrats, and executive engineers, who would share it with their political bosses, at ‘fixed’ percentage rates. The contractors make sure that they get at least 10 % of the total estimated sum for their time, efforts and resources spent while making frequent trips to government offices and fulfilling other tiresome and often humiliating ‘official’ formalities. The remaining 50 % of the funds might be used to build something on the ground for visibility sake. Moreover, the workers of various political parties, in turn, approach the bureaucrats for their (pre-fixed or negotiated) contributions towards party-funds. Thus, 50 % of the state development resources get wasted every year in the name of infrastructure ‘development,’ while the other 50 % gets circulated and absorbed among bureaucrats, contractors and politicians (personal conversations during the first week of August 2011 with Sinkendar and Dayanand at their respective residences).

89 Calculated using 2011 data from the Central Statistical Organization (CSO).
In a context of diversified rural livelihoods, the contribution of agricultural production to household subsistence has been declining. This trend has been reinforced by a decline in public investment, stagnant growth and fluctuating prices for agricultural products (Rao 2006: 1).

It might well be argued that the socio-political, economic and economic marginality of Adivasi social formations have systematically been produced in order to exploit natural and human resources that have been locked in here: land, water, minerals, forest, and cheap labour (Sinha 1978; Devi 1981; Sengupta 1982; Areeparampil 1996) to advance the rapid ‘development’ urban centres (see Karan 1957; Kishwar 1987; Das 1992; Corbridge 1996; Saxena 2009, 2011; Damodaran 2013).

A quarter of mining activity in India is carried out in Singhbhum [Kolhan]. Formerly mostly forested land, today has been brought under cultivation or reduced to rocky waste by increasing deforestation... Most of the land remains with the Hos due to lack of irrigation, electricity, and low productivity in agriculture. ... Besides large-scale land alienation due to mining, industrialization and big dams, external political structures, owing their allegiance to an exploitative, hierarchical government machinery, the Hos are forced to practice a non-viable subsistence agriculture, with soil fertility destroyed, no irrigation and other technological inputs. ... Most families supplement farm income with other sources – working other people's land, collection and sale of forest produce, and seasonal migration as casual labour in mines, construction industries, brick kilns and other work-sites. Children perform about 90 per cent of the total labour in villages. ... Most lucrative jobs in the industries have gone to non-tribals. ... All the families grow one major rice crop a year which they sow during the monsoon. However, when rains fail or are delayed, there is not even one crop a year. Even one year's monsoon failure causes scarcity. Often, the crops fail for several years in succession. As a result, food scarcity is a chronic problem for most families (Kishwar 1987: 95-6).

While investment in rural agrarian infrastructure diminished, the number of small-scale extraction-industries multiplied which only brings further degradation to rural agrarian environment and disintegration of Adivasi social formations. Besides this, the united Bihar government encouraged migration of ‘middle’ and ‘lower’ caste groups from north Bihar to Jharkhand region who have increasingly been grabbing most employment opportunities and displacing Adivasis from their lands in Adivasi dominant regions (Devi 1981, 1983; Stuligross 2008).

Chotanagara [a Ho village] had no Sahus [a middle caste/ jati] till 1962, now there are four Sahus who act as money lenders, land usurpers and police agents... Malaria ridden poor villages, no doctors and staff in health centres, death or disease, epidemics cause a witch-hunt.... Till now rupees 30,000 million have been spent for tribal development. The Sixth [Five Year Plan] has allotted rupees 8,000 million but even after the five year plans nothing has reached the area (Devi 1981b: 1012).

These were some of the complex processes by which Adivasi regions in
India have been made into what they have come to be today— a typical colony of chronically malnourished people.

Sheer physical fatigue will stupefy them, starved and ill, if they have any spirit left; fear will finish the job; guns are levelled at the peasant; civilians come to take over his land and force him by dint of flogging to till the land for them. if he fight, the soldiers fire and he’s a dead man; if he gives in, he degrades himself and he is no longer a man at all; shame and fear will split his character and make his inmost self fall to pieces (Sartre [1961] 2004: 230-31).

To aid a better understanding of all these processes historically, the main actors involved here are conceptualized as four powers of exclusion.

**Powers of Exclusion and Adivasis**

Our land vanished like dust before storm, our fields, our homes, all disappeared. The ones who came were not human beings. … The forest disappears, they make the four corners unclean. Oh, we had our ancestors’ graves (a Mundari song recorded by Mahasweta Devi 1995, quoted in Ashokan and Rangarajan 2011).

The four powers of exclusion, according to Hall *et al.* (2011), are: *regulation, force, market* and *legitimation*. *Regulation* refers to authorities and institutions, both state and customary, for governing land use and land-transfers: the set of rules regarding access to land and conditions of use. *Force* is violence or the threat of violence, which is brought to bear by both the state and non-state actors to forcefully evict people from their land. *Market* denies access to land by setting prices, boosting more individualized claims to land for more commercialized uses such as, mineral extraction industries of production and export. *Legitimation* tries to establish various moral grounds for exclusive claims to land. In Adivasi contexts it can be both by Adivasis claiming exclusive access to land in their ethno-territory and the agents of the state and industry by advancing discourses of ‘national development,’ while dispossessing Adivasi villagers of their land (Ibid.).

These powers interact constantly to deny people's access to land. The state, thus, violates its own Constitutional provisions by advancing the logic of market forces. Legitimation further entrenches *regulation* by presenting/constructing the *market* and *force* as being politically and socially acceptable for exclusion. An examination of these four powers of exclusion provides significant insights into land struggles by people as to who loses and who gains and how (Ibid.).

Whilst it is useful to separate these four powers of exclusion for analytical purposes, in practice they are interwoven and work in strikingly complex ways. For example, when
land is being acquired people with market-power are in a better position to have access to the powers of regulation and coercion. This fusion of the economic and the political has profound implications for the functioning of land markets and for the dynamics of exclusion. At the cutting edge of their interaction, the powers with modern, globalized processes such as industrialization, and urbanization often end up looking more violent, lawless and barbarous than the 'lawlessness,' 'remoteness,' 'backwardness' associated with poor people whose lands are acquired (Hall et al: 140-1, emphasis added).

All these powers have been active in Kolhan, Jharkhand and other neighbouring mineral-rich states since long. Regulation of access to land has been of two types: customary and state-administered. Customary practices came into conflict with exogenously imposed regulations (land-taxes) in Kolhan since around the thirteenth century as the ‘raja’ families demanded land-tax from the Hos. When the Hos had regained their independence during 1720-1765 (Streumer forthcoming 2014), the ‘raja’ took the help of the East India Company which deployed direct violence on them in 1820-21 and 1831-32 (Singh 1978; Sahu 1985; Das Gupta 2011; Streumer forthcoming 2014). Once the British raj was entrenched, restrictions on traditional forest-based agro-ecological practices, forced sedentarization, shift from communal to individual land-ownership, and agrarian expansion had led to the entry of monetary economy and usurping moneylenders. Consequent debt-traps, famines and insurrections eventuated in large-scale expatriation of Adivasis followed (Damodaran 1995; Chaudhuri 2008; Das Gupta 2009, 2011). In addition, two mutually contradictory legislations – ethno-territorial isolation/enclosure, along with land acquisition further confused the scenario and aggravated the dispossession of Adivasis: while the Scheduled District Act 1874 sought to protect Adivasis, the Land Acquisition Act 1894 encouraged mineral extraction and land alienation within the same ethno-territory (Corbridge 1996).

Famine relief was the only development work and policy, defused and fragmentary; the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885, the Central provinces act 1898 and 1920, the CNTA 1908, and the Central Provinces Land alienation act 1918 covered a few segments of the Indian tribes (Singh 1972: 393-4).

Since the discovery of coal, iron and other minerals in Jharkhand and Kolhan towards the end of the nineteenth century, the powers of state (regulation) and market have endlessly sought to acquire land, commercialize forests and extract minerals (Karan 1957; Kishwar 1987; Mundu 2003; Sunder 2009; Padel 2011). Coal extraction, iron and steel industries and their allied service centres got established. Coal processing centres, iron ore mines, stone
crushers, steel factories and dams for water and hydro-electric power for industry gained prominence (EPW 1981; Baduri 1991; Areeparampil 1996; George 2009). Vast areas of agricultural and forest lands were acquired at various times with the help of military and police forces to advance the market powers of exclusion while grossly neglecting investment to enhance predominately land-based local peoples’ livelihood activities (Dias 1989; Devi 1981, 1983a, 1983b; Das 1991, 1992; Chandha 1993; Prakash 2001; Stuligross 2008; Dungdung 2013). Meanwhile, increasing numbers of immigrants from north Bihar, who had acquired Adivasi land by pushing them to further interior hills and denuded infertile lands gained economic and political power in these regions. Immigration of non-Adivasis into and emigration of Adivasis from Jharkhand region in search of livelihood options in other states and big cities reduced the ‘sons of the soil’ to an impoverished ‘minority’ in their own land (Singh 1978; Weiner 1987; Stuligross 2008; Das Gupta 2012).

Legitimation appeared as discourses of ‘national development’ by classical and neoclassical economists,90 ‘development’ specialists and political actors alike advocate to faster industrialization which brings only displacement and dispossession for Adivasis (Carrin 2013). Jharkhand activists and aspiring Adivasi politicians91 retort them with legitimation discourses of ‘Adivasi culture’, ‘identity’, ‘existence’, demanding stricter enforcement of the provisions of ethno-territorial enclosures and preservation. During the post-reform or liberalization period, however, the pace of industrialization, urbanization and alienation of Adivasi land have accelerated unimaginably (Areeparampil 1996; Walker 2008; Kujur 2011; Walter 2013; Damodaran 2013). Despite widespread, localized protest against displacement,

---

90 According to David Harvey, neoliberalism is a project on behalf of the capitalist classes that advance by ‘accumulation by dispossession’ – the tendency of the elite to turn over public resources into private hands to enhance profit accumulation, while condemning the ‘poor’ for their economic poverty (Harvey 2004).

91 Almost all Adivasi politicians use the rhetoric of ‘Adivasi culture and identity being tied to water, forest and land (jal, jungle and zamin) to invoke rural Adivasi’s sentiments to mobilize and keep them as ‘vote-banks.’ Soon after elections, they would have little option except to make an alliance with the powers of exclusion (conversations with Chumru, an ex-Bhartiya Janata Party – BJP – MLA who now is an active supporter of the Congress Party, 25 September 2011 at Chaibasa).
environmental pollution and increasing incidents of health hazards, the number of small-scale mineral extractive industries has multiplied.

An important point to note at this point is that the ‘granting’ of a separate statehood to Jharkhand took place only in 2000, only when these powers of exclusion acquired sufficient economic and political clout in an otherwise Adivasi dominant Jharkhand region, to be confident enough to advance their interests through the (diku) colonial state system. About ten years after liberalization in the 1990s, these powers, that stress on industrialization, had acquired sufficient political clout and confidence here by processes that have already been explained: strategic non-investment, accelerated extraction, and increased immigration of caste-groups and emigration of Adivasis (see Weiner 1978; Stuligross 2008). Thus, Jharkhand now is a separate ‘Adivasi state’ whose resources are controlled by powers that have created Adivasi ‘primitiveness’ and continue to reinforce Adivasis’ practico-inert status or ‘backwardness’ to be ‘civilized’ and ‘developed’ by these very powers. The surest way to the ‘development’ of Jharkhand, for these powers, is by aggravating extraction and industrialization (Rao 2003, 2008; Verma 2011, Carrin 2013). Consequently, more than 400 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with domestic and transnational companies to set up large and small-scale industries have already been signed by all successive governments in 13 years (Kajulia 2011, Chandra 2013).

However, these exploitative powers who are eager to form a government, with little legitimacy on the ground to rule (Shah 2006), have been unable to actually acquire larger plots of land due to strong, but localized Adivasi resistance movements (Swami 2012). This has created a continuous situation of ‘land wars’ in Jharkhand, especially since 1990s. This might also partially explain the enduring optical instability and uncertainty in Jharkhand since it gained a separate statehood. The following section contextualizes land ‘wards’ or struggles in the broader political economy of ‘access to land’

92 Reports of workers deaths due to pollution related sicknesses and accidents are common in Jharkhand see Ojha (2012) 'Rising silicosis cases in state worry National Human Rights Commission', The Times of India, a national daily, 27 June. See also George (2009) and Lahiri-Dutt et al (2012) discussion on the tactics the Industrialists and politicians employ to manufacture people’s consensus to acquire land.

93 Following Karl Polanyi, Hall et al (2011: 9) observe, ‘Land is not an ordinary commodity but the basis of life, and hence exclusion from access to land is continuously subject to what he calls counter-movements recalling land’s social function.'
to show why poorer people such as Adivasis need to cling to their so-called 'traditional' livelihood resources in a colonial civic order characterized by cultural, structural, and direct violence, whose latest and predominant manifestations, during the postreform era, have been extremely predatory (Walker 2008; Hall et al 2011, Levien 2012, 2013, Damodaran 2013).

The Broader Context: 'de-agrarianisation', and 'land wars'

Most land-based conflicts and struggles of 'traditional' land-based societies in developing countries have an apparently contradictory character: on the one hand, increasing 'de-agrarianisation,' whereby the marginalized people want to escape from 'unprofitable' agriculture; whilst on the other hand, they refuse to give up whatever little 'unproductive' land they possess (Rigg 2006). In other words, marginalized people resist large-scale industrialization and land-grab, since their aspirations and desires for a better life are frustrated. Irony lies in the fact that 'poorer' people have to routinely fear displacement and dispossession by the very processes that enable other people to enjoy a better life (cf. Levin 2012, 2013). Li (2009, 2011) has shown that rural people's collective mobilizations against eviction, or for reoccupation of disputed land, or clutter to hold on to their tiny 'inefficient' plots, are not solely inspired by their desire to conserve an ancient way of life, but their mobilization and resistance movements reject the unequal terms of their inclusion in new economies: 'terms that increase the gap between the rich and the poor and make the poor more vulnerable' (Li 2009: 643. Hence, marginalized people's engagement in land-wars must be seen as their demand for equality and cultural dignity (Scott 2013).

The following section discusses a few recent unreported instances of ‘land wars’ by Ho villagers in Kolhan.

Powers of Exclusion, Incidents of Land Grab and Grass-Roots Resistance in Kolhan

Sud (2012) explicates the role of state functionaries as brokers who provide land to private capital while violating the state’s pronounced environment laws to industrialists’ interests in India. ‘The state plays a central role in both

---

94 Sharma (2013) shows how the mainstream-media tactfully avoids reporting incidents of grassroots protests by villagers to land acquisition advanced by the powers of exclusion while they highlight even the smallest incidents of so-called ‘extremist’ violence in India.
economic liberalization and Hindu nationalism, whose proponents actively access and employ state resources, power and network to attain their mission to perpetuate their dominance’ (Ibid.: 113). This is a succinct and precise description of the powers of exclusion in India acting in coalition. Similar, but more sober attempts have been made in Kolhan and Jharkhand by the ‘state’ to acquire and to initiate extraction on already ‘officially’ leased out pieces of land. Table-5 gives a few such failed attempts owing to protests by Ho villagers.

Table 6 – Unreported trials of land grab and resistance in Kolhan95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Villages</th>
<th>CD Bs</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jeteya</td>
<td>Jagnathpur</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Mineral exploration</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aaburu</td>
<td>Khuntpani</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Quartz</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bara Kuntia</td>
<td>Khuntpani</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>SR Steel plant</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ulijari</td>
<td>Sadar-Chaibasa</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DSR Steel plant</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kotsona</td>
<td>Khuntpani</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CRPF (camp) complex</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Surjaba</td>
<td>Jhinkpani</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Limestone mine</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bara Guira</td>
<td>Sadar-Chaibasa</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Limestone mine</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pusalota</td>
<td>Chakradharpur</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Solar Power Plant*</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kundruhatu</td>
<td>Chakradharpur</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>CRPF (camp) complex</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nakahasa</td>
<td>Tonto</td>
<td>1993 &amp; 2012</td>
<td>Limestone</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Manki, a grassroots organizer of youva-jumur a youth organization Chaibasa (November 2013).

(*) The actual purpose of land acquisition here was to establish a permanent CRPF camp but the villagers were told that it was for a solar power plant.

The Incident at Village-1: Jeteya

On July 8 2011, Mr. Hemant Soren96, the then deputy and present Chief Minister of Jharkhand state made an appeal to the people of Kolhan via local dailies that some sarkari karamcharis (government-staff) would visit certain villages to conduct mineral exploration activities. On the following day, the people of Jeteya village in Jagnathpur block noticed a few strangers drilling on their land. Villagers moved closer and asked the strangers what they were

95 These instances of ‘land-wars’ are from seven neighbouring development blocks only; similar incidents routinely happen in other blocks, especially in Noamundi and Manoharpur in West Singhbhum, where one of the best quality iron-ore deposits of Asia have been located.

96 Mr. Soren is a Santal Adivasi himself, was then Deputy Chief-Minister of the BJP led coalition government which fell by the end of 2012, and since early 2013 the Chief-Minister of the JMM led Congress supported government.
doing. They replied arrogantly, 'You do not have to know what we are doing. We are from the sarkar.' Soon, more villagers, mostly women, gathered around them from nearby households; they caught hold of those sarkari karamcharis and gave them a thorough beating and sent them back saying, 'This is our land and you should not enter our village hereafter without our permission.'

After two days, the Sub-Divisional Officers (SDO) of Jagnathpur and Chaibasa, and an officer of the mines and mineral department tried to organize an aam-sabha (public meeting) of protesting villagers. Meanwhile, the villagers sought some assistance from the Jharkhandi Organisation for Human Rights (JOHAR), an NGO at Chaibasa, as to how best they could deal with the sarkar in this matter. During the public meeting, the officials tried to pacify the villagers arguing that the sarkar was only exploring mineral deposits; it had no intention to do anything with the land. One of the JOHAR staff, a lawyer, challenged this argument saying that such an action of the sarkar resembled that of a thief putting his / her hand into someone's pocket to see if there was some money in it, which obviously was an offensive act. That was why the villagers gave a fitting response to the sarkar's provocative action. The meeting ended there without any desired outcome.

Later, the officials invited a few representatives of the villagers to attend a meeting at the SDO's office at Jagnathpur. The villagers refused to attend the meeting. Again, on 24th July the SDO and Block Development Officer (BDO) of Jagnathpur planned to arrange a public meeting to have a dialogue with the protesting villagers at a middle-school building in the locality. People gathered there and, as a sign of their presence under protest, had their mouths covered with strips of black cloth (black ribbons) carrying placards stating, 'We do not want to talk, BDO and SDO go back.'

Thus, this meeting, once again, ended with the failure of the sarkar to convince the

---

97 Originally, some of the people, as usual, suggested that they would come to the meeting with battle-axes, bows and arrows that have been considered to be their 'traditional weapons'. However, one of the members of the JOHAR team, a former Member and chairman of the (united Bihar) Legislative Assembly (MLA) advised villagers not to carry their so-called 'traditional weapons' to register their protest, but to do it in a more democratic manner; he proposed the idea of cloth of black ribbons to cover their mouth and carrying placards with printed messages.
resisting villagers.

Meanwhile the people decided to organize a protest rally in front of the Jagnathpur Block Office on 5th August. More than 3,000 people had gathered there. They came on foot from far and nearby villages, despite heavy rains. They carried banners with slogans of protest. Village headmen, and the newly elected representatives of the Gram-Panchayats (GPs) also joined the demonstration. The protesters had also prepared a memorandum addressing the Governor of Jharkhand state against illegal land acquisition. Interestingly, as soon as the officers at the Block and SDO Office noticed such a big procession proceeding towards the office-premises, they got out of the offices and ran away for fear of being attacked (as narrated by D.N. Champa, a former Member of Legislative Assembly, presently a part time social worker or activist, August 21, 2011).

**The Incident at Village-10: Nakahasa**

Here land was being acquired to extract limestone by an industrialist. He had already leased the land by bribing a few village ‘uppers’ and the *munda* secretly. However, the actual extraction of limestone was not possible without the villagers’ consent. A few village ‘uppers’ and the *munda* were already paid by the agents of a mining industrialist on the condition that they would manage the protesting villagers to ensure least resistance to measuring the land to demarcate the mining area. However, as the villagers came to know about this, they opposed and filed several complaints with the district collector (DC), SDO, additional district collector (ADC) and Superintended of Police (SP), the main officials at the district administration requesting them not to allow mining in their village. They did not get any positive response from the administration. On 18 March 2013 some women of the village got the news that the industrialist’s men would arrive the village to measure the land. By about one o’clock in the afternoon a few men arrived in a Bolero van. Soon the villagers gathered, stopped them and gave them a thorough beating, put them in the van and sent them back.
Strategic media coverage and discrimination of Adivasis

These incidents of grassroots level resistance by Adivasi villagers to the powers of exclusion often go unreported by both the local and national media like newspapers and television. West Singhbhum witnessed an increased number of such incidents during 2009-13, during the term of a particular person who took charge as DC (District Collector), who is said to be ‘corrupt to the core,’ and notorious in ‘seeking bribes’ (Of course, this DC does have an identifiable face, name and address). These incidents of land-grabbing and consequent conflicts have also brought in several groups of young men who

---

98 Personal conversation with Sonu, who unearthed the DC’s involvement with the MNREGS scam in Manoharpur block in 2010, 10 August 2013 at his residence.
claim to be Maoists, who find acceptance in several rural villages on their offer to help ‘protect’ the Hos’ land from diku Sarkar.\textsuperscript{99} However, incidents of so-called ‘extremist’ violence get immediate attention of the mass media as the state’s deployment of repressive force might also get legitimized by such selective reportage (see Sharma 2013).

In this context, interestingly, a Bench of the Supreme Court of India led by Justice A K Patnaik reportedly has said, ‘Nobody looks at Schedules V and VI of the Constitution and the result is Naxalism. Urbanites are ruling the nation. Even several union of India counsel are oblivious of these provisions under the Constitution’ (Anand 2012, emphasis added). However, making such intelligent statements, while ignoring bureaucratic corruption\textsuperscript{100} is one thing, and to be able to make sure that such violations of Constitutional provisions by oblivious urbanites do not get repeated is another. While the ‘expert’ urbanites, with the primary motive to make more money for themselves, disregarding Constitutional provisions, arrive to rule Adivasi regions characterized by complex cultural and historical specificities, these situations might turn more worse and complex.

While such oblivious ‘expert’ urbanites remain one of the primary reasons for aggravating the predicaments of already impoverished and conflict-ridden Adivasi dominant regions, the remedy offered by the Planning Commission of India is to allot more funds in terms of what they call Backward Regions Grand Fund (BRGF) since 2006-07 and Integrated Action Plan (IAP) since 2010-11 for ‘development’ of ‘extremist’ affected areas.\textsuperscript{101} However, once again the same urbanite ‘experts,’ DC and SP are entrusted with the sole authority and responsibility to decide how these huge financial resources are to be spent. And this has been done despite the presence of a newly and locally elected Panchayat system at the district, block and village levels since

\textsuperscript{99} See Shah (2006 & 2010) for interesting discussions on how Maoists or Naxalites work in collaboration with state bureaucrats, including the police, contractors and politicians in Jharkhand.

\textsuperscript{100} ‘As incidents from the more backward tribal dominated regions of Orissa reveal, the bureaucrat-contractor-politician nexus continues to ensure that the tribals are denied even those rights that assure a meaningful existence, such as a right to identity and to livelihood’ (Das 2003: 4429).

the end of 2010. However, Adivasis, as Lutz and Munda (1980) have argued, were ‘never considered advanced enough to be able to handle anything with full responsibility’ (Lutz and Munda 1980: 102), a typical colonial mindset reinforced by racism. Consequently, what one ultimately has is a perfect colonial system, in place, reproducing itself with its accompanying immorality, and violence being aggravated by the same systemic processes and praxes.

To complete the systemic colonial processes, there have been CRPF and the police forces raiding villages and households at night hunting for Maoist ‘extremists.’ A Ho youth each has been picked up and put in jail from Pasubera (in 2011) and Baipi (in 2013) villages respectively labelling them as Maoists. During the CRPF hunting operations in 20013 for Maoists, four women in Itchahatu, two in Baipi and one in Munduedal villages were allegedly abused by them (personal conversations with M. Tubid, 21 October 2013 at Chaibasa). A battalion of CRPF arrived Chaibasa in 2004, in addition to the increased number of police stations in KGE where there has not been one during the British raj. The CRPF has been trying to get a piece of land to set up its inert-institution to instil and maintain fear in already scared villagers necessary for the forced ‘civilizing’ activities of successive Bihar and Jharkhand governments since Independence (Maharaj and Iyer 1982, Saxena 2011). ‘Conquest was achieved by violence; over-exploitation and oppression demand the maintenance of violence, which entails the presence of the army’ (Sartre 2005: 21).

These processes are also closely linked to the larger processes of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ Harvey (2004) whereby the state and market forces jointly act to facilitate the accumulation of capital by a few while dispossessing a vast majority of their basic livelihood resources. ‘The inability to accumulate through expanded reproduction on a sustained basis has been paralleled by a rise in attempts to accumulate by dispossession’ (Ibid.: 63). ‘In the case of India’s development model, displacement caused by large projects has actually resulted in a transfer of resources from the weaker sections of society to more privileged ones. Mega dams, in particular, create victims of development – mainly tribals who never share the gains of development’ (Mohanti 2005: 1318).

Harvey has argued that the analysis of the dynamics of capitalism as a mode
of production in Marxian analysis has been contradicted by the ‘pinhead formulations of neoclassical economics’ to produce a differentiated and urbanised space-economy. The typical neoclassical analysis places its emphasis on land, labour and capital, the neoclassical trinity, instead of landlords, labourers and capitalists. In doing so the neo-classicists remain ‘happier’ and advance more ‘efficient’ dealings with things than with people. The Marxian emphasis on social relations and social change have, thus, been jeopardised (Gregory 2006: 8).

The logic of a colonial system makes the colonizer sacrifice the needs of the ‘native’ population. The increasing rigor of the colonial system is very evident: first it occupies the country, then it takes away the land and exploits the former owners at starvation rates. ‘Then, with mechanization, this cheap labor is still too expensive; you finish up taking from the natives their very right to work. All that is left for the natives to do, in their own land, at a time of great prosperity, is to die of starvation’ (Sartre 2001b: 14 emphasis original).

The following section explicates how the powers of exclusion or dispossession actually make their way into Ho villages via what Hall et al (2011) terms as ‘intimate’ exclusion or ‘exclusion from below.’

'Intimate' Exclusion

Powers of exclusion at local, regional, national and transnational levels interact and interpenetrate societies and institutions contributing to 'intimate' exclusion among social intimates. Neighbours and kin, exclude each other from access to land and resources. 'Intimate' exclusion occurs among kin and co-villagers who share the same tradition, history, and access to common and collectively inherited land by a rapid process of differentiation, also accelerated by uneven distribution of development benefits, promoting further exclusion among ‘intimates’ (Hall et al 2011: 145).

'The tension produced by exclusion's double edge is intense at an intimate scale, as each villager's assertion of a right to exclude runs up against another villager's claim for access (Ibid.: 146). While notions such as 'shared poverty,' 'moral economy,' and obligations to apply a 'subsistence guarantee' are either negated or exaggerated. The opposing notions that market calculus and market-based powers of exclusion operate in a social vacuum is also incorrect; for market is mediated by social calibrations of many kinds (Ibid.: 147). It takes human agency – socially situated practices – to create and sustain the conditions necessary for market to operate, and to insinuate 'the market' into intimate relations to the point that it overrides other
considerations (Ibid.).

The following episode from Huringhatu explicates the process of 'intimate' exclusion or 'exclusion from below.'

**Intimate Exclusion in Huringhatu**

Mangal, a 47 year old Ho from Huringhatu has been in conflict with the munda, the village headman over a piece of 15 acres of land for quite some time. This piece of property did not belong to anyone after one of the munda's cousins died issueless several years ago. The Munda became the custodian of this piece of land when he began to pay malgujari (land-tax) for it. A few years later the munda's two nephews, who live with him at the same joint family, began to cultivate the rice-fields of this property for themselves. However, according to the Hos' customary practices, such pieces of un-owned property must be divided among all the nearest agnates of the same killi (patrilineage). According to Mangal, this piece of land must be divided into three, as his diseased uncle had three brothers; and one of them was Mangal's father. Thus, Mangal and his brothers asked the munda to divide this piece of land into three. However, the munda's nephews refused to accept this proposal. They challenged Mangal asking him to produce kursinama (the record of landownership via inheritance) which would prove his entitlement to a share of this property.

On asking Mangal, if the issue could be settled by the gram-sabha, the village council, whose head is the munda, he said,

> No, the munda's nephews are too selfish, strong and dangerous to deal with; they do not listen to anyone else's opinion; and do not hesitate to inflict any harm. Moreover, the munda, without having any offspring of his own, aged and physically weak himself, has to depend on his nephews. Hence, they manipulate all his decisions even that of the gram-sabha. However, since his nephews (one of them, an ex-military man) are so dangerous, no villager would dare to confront the munda for fear of violence (personal conversations on 19 Dec, 2011 at Mangal’s residence).

Hence, Mangal decided to access kursinama from the district record-room at Chaibasa. Most rural Adivasis do not access the record-room themselves; only lawyers and their broker-agents normally do it. Huge and arbitrary amounts of money are taken from poorer villagers for accessing land-records, which provides a source of livelihood for several brokers, and an additional income for lawyers, and record-room staff.
village, and struck a deal with him to get a copy of kursinama. The broker agreed to deliver it to him for Rs. 20,000. Mangal and his cousins jointly collected the amount, and paid the broker first; and the kursinama was delivered to Mangal. However, on receiving a copy of it, he found that the most crucial information on it was missing. It was marked as 'broken'; and hence, it did not serve any purpose. Mangal had to spend Rs. 20,000 uselessly as he approached a state-regulatory institution (via a broker) for a small service from a state-institution, to which he is actually entitled. Perhaps, accessing the land records, at the record-room, himself might have worked better for Mangal than going through the broker.

Finally, Mangal says that he now has two options left: first, to go for a violent confrontation with his ‘intimately’ excluding cousins. He said, he would not hesitate to go to any extent to make sure that he and his cousins get their due share of the property in question as they do not want the munda's nephews to enjoy it all by themselves. More interestingly, his second option, he said, was to request the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) to distribute the disputed property among the landless households in the same village; however, he added, he was unsure about the possible outcomes of either options; making obvious the intensity of dread and ambiguity involved in land conflicts among intimates. A third option could have been to change the right to headman-ship of the present munda family as it is possible to do so according to the Ho customary practices, however, given the fragmented and disintegrated state of the village ‘community,’ perhaps, for Mangal it did not appear to be as a feasible third option.

Moreover, this instance of ‘intimate’ exclusion via unjust land accumulation and dispute in Huringhatu points mainly to two aspects: one, the type of social change it induces in Adivasi social formations; and two, the cost that Adivasis incur while approaching the post-British colonial state institutions for services actually entitled to any citizen of the world’s largest democracy.

‘Intimate’ Exclusion, Colonial Desire, and Consequences

This incident of land dispute and conflict reveals several processes at work in Ho society today. 'Intimate' exclusion produces jealousy, contestations, conflict, and fear among social intimates. One of the root causes of intimate exclusion has already been traced to historical processes of state-formation in Adivasi regions which drives on individual accumulation and social
differentiation for those already well endowed, on the one hand, and poverty and social exclusion for the less-endowed majority on the other (chapter-3). The founding families (of the dominant patrilineage) traditionally possessed the best land, established themselves as village officials, offered protection, and later became tax-collectors for the colonists. Thus, the office of the headman, which once used to be the custodian of Ho customary practices, and cultural values, has now become mostly devoid of legitimacy with those accumulating and differentiating elites. Over the years it has also become patriarchal and hereditary (Roy 1970; Areeparampil 1988; Sunder 2005b; Kela 2012).

The affluent or elite among the Hos have always opted to escape the 'wilderness' constructed by the nationalist scholars, and everyday struggles of the already marginalized rural villagers. In course of time, the weakest among the affluent families, who were unable or uninterested to pursue this particular trend of upward mobility, inherited the village offices and stuck to the somewhat 'frozen' customary practices (Sunder 2007), relied on the British colonial paternal tilts, such as the Wilkinson's rule, the *manda-manki* (Kolhan) system, and the CNTA 1908 to assert their, largely ambivalent, authority, although still largely relevant for the rest of the *nonliterate* villagers who look up to their sacral polity to be always true and authentic.

While traditional authority remains still relevant for more deprived villagers in their everyday life, those intimately excluding or differentiating village 'uppers,' who get stronger, and confident enough to face up to the non-Ho world, hardly care about the Kolhan system except when they want to use it to mobilize the marginalized villagers’ votes to advance their own ‘political career.’ Thus, the few village 'uppers,' especially, the many ex-military and emerging contractor-middlemen, do tactfully use the Kolhan system to advance their own interests and that of the colonial civic order. Thus, individual accumulation, socioeconomic differentiation and uneven access to ‘development’ resources, induced by the post-British colonial state and market powers, result in 'intimate' exclusion among villagers producing verities of 'exclusion from below' effecting the gradual, long-term disintegration of traditional authority. Simultaneously, the notions of ‘shared history,’ ‘shared poverty,’ and ‘moral economy’ fade away or become increasingly dormant, leaving Adivasi social ecologies to be conflict-ridden typical colonies with their emerging ambivalent colonial kinglets acting to
advance the colonial logic of super-exploitation.

**The Cost of Encountering State Institutions**

Another important aspect that such land dispute among ‘intimates’ reveals is the cost of accessing state-regulatory institutions – the record-room, for instance, by Ho villagers. The bureaucracy and the regulatory arrangements of land tenure, among other administrative arrangements in Kolhan, and Jharkhand, create an elaborate informal network of lawyers, bureaucrats, middlemen, politicians and their agents. Most Adivasi villagers, like Mangal of Huringhatu, have to pay heavy costs to access any service to which they are actually entitled. Even after incurring such heavy costs, the end result often remains arbitrary as Gupta (2012) has shown that bureaucratic practices render structural violence. Sharan (2009) and Rao (2009) have highlighted the costs, arbitrariness and uncertainty involved while dealing with regulatory arrangements ostensibly to restore alienated Adivasi lands. There are various ‘protective’ legislations in Jharkhand, however, they hardly help economically poorer Adivasis to prevent land alienation in practice. About land related dispute settlements among Adivasis of Santal Pargana region, in Jharkhand; Rao (2009) says,

> The first attempt is always to resolve disputes locally, but if violence erupts … Then there is no option but to use the state regulatory process. Yet there is much to be desired from the functioning of the courts ... in 95 per cent of the cases, the parties stop attending after some time. Apart from the difficulties in court procedures, there is also no way of ensuring that the order given finally is implemented at the village level. The party with power, both economic and social, tends to get the better deal in practice. This includes the locally dominant individuals, but also institutions of the state (Ibid.: 79-81).

Moreover, state-institutions, which regulate land-tenure, have always been interacting jointly with the powers of market via the pursuers of Lakshmi, mostly ‘upper’ castes immigrants from neighbouring states, who have been the commanders in chief or heads of military and police forces, bureaucracy, and powers of legitimation (academics, development policy makers and ‘professionals’ of mass media and even human rights activists) in Kolhan, and Jharkhand. Such joint interactions of these powers of exclusion – regulation, market, force and legitimation – frequently invoke fears of

---

103 Some of these are CNTA 1908, Santal Pargana Tenancy Act (SPTA) 1949, Land Acquisition Act (LAA) 1894, Coal Bearing Act 1957, and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989.
violent, involuntary eviction of Adivasi villagers. Consequently, the villagers protest and ‘disrupt’ the state’s ‘development’ projects such as medium and large-scale dams, proposed large-scale industrial establishments, extractive industries, and Central Reserve Force (CRPF) camps or centre in West Singhbhum, and at other places in Jharkhand.

Projects such as these, which hardly benefit marginalized Adivasis, have always come to predominantly Adivasi regions or margins accompanied by violent forces that evict them without any prior information, consent or adequate compensation (see Dias 1983; Devi 1981a; EPW 1980; Chadha 1993; Pati 2006; EPW 2012; Dungdung 2013). When protests and disruption by local villagers occur, the reaction of state functionaries have always been a strategic abandonment of these initiatives, till the grassroots protests and demonstrations, often qualified as being ‘anti-development,’ disperse and weaken to reinitiate the same temporarily abandoned projects so that the state functionaries invariably draw benefit from such repeated initiatives while ‘development’ projects as such face continuous dilemma and inertia (see Sunder 2009).

Conclusion

The chapter began with episodes of Adivasi villagers living in fear of anytime eviction since their land contains rich mineral wealth which would be exploited by powers that unjustly dispossess them. While Adivasi villagers oppose such super-exploitative powers embedded in the colonial civic order, they are not only branded as being antidevelopment, but also their lands and agrarian infrastructure has strategically been kept away from

---

104 In West Singhbhum district alone, there are about 11 medium and large-scale dam projects, that had begun in the 1970s, still 'under construction,' and left in dilemma due to local protests mainly caused by bureaucratic arrogance, that does not even have the willingness to undertake a proper survey of households that would be displaced. On employing the right to information Act 2005, I received some details of a few proposed dams under construction, displacement, and compensation from the department of irrigation. The documents do not provide any details of households that would be displaced due to these projects; they only have a few names of those households who have come to take compensation. During my interactions with villages around a half-finished irrigation dam at Ponsoa in Sonua block of West Singhbhum, the villagers said that those who got compensation were people who were already better-off; others have not gone to the department office for any compensation, but have cleared some forest tracts further deep into inaccessible mountainous regions (personal conversations 7-8 July 2011).
any meaningful investments that might improve sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities for villagers who depend heavily on the agricultural sector. Consequently, Adivasi regions have been increasingly turned into marginal places typifying colonies that supply raw materials and cheap labour to feed urban centres of ‘development’.

Employing concepts such as ‘political, economic and ecological marginality,’ ‘powers of exclusion,’ ‘access’ as people’s ability to benefit from resources, ‘dispossession by accumulation,’ and ‘intimate exclusion’ this chapter has analyzed processes of land alienation, local resistance movements confronting powers of exclusion and their consequences for Adivasis. It has shown, in some detail, how various complex socioeconomic and political processes of systematic exclusion of people from accessing resources take place, which in turn, creates land-wars, increased deprivations, and a spiral of social exclusion, counter movements, violent conflicts, and repressive state interventions. All of these further advance deprivations and social exclusion that complete a typical colonial and racist system, which reproduces itself while reducing Adivasi social formations into disintegrated, and fragmented groups of impoverished individuals.

The next chapter explicates the role of education in shaping the ideological instrument to advance processes of pauperization and self-alienation of Adivasis more systematically and strategically.
The will to Educate and ‘Civilize’: Indian State's Efforts to educate its Adivasis

Alienation and murder drive the institutions of civilization.

(Layla AbdelRahim 2009: 1)

The business is conducted with flying colors and by experts; the ‘psychological services’ weren’t established yesterday; nor was brainwashing. And yet, in spite of all these efforts, their ends are nowhere achieved.

Introduction

The Additional District Programme Officer (ADPO) of the Jharkhand Siksha Pariyojana (Jharkhand Education Project – JEP) said, ‘There is no school teacher in the district who would like to send his or her children to a government school for education, but all of them would prefer to work at government schools.’ This statement summarises the situation of state-managed schools in Kolhan, Jharkhand and other central eastern states of India: huge sums of money have been spent in terms of constructing school buildings, recruiting teachers and paying a handsome monthly salary to appointed teachers, besides other related expenses, but still the quality of education remains abysmally low so that no one wants to send their children to government schools, however, everyone likes a handsome monthly income without doing any serious work.

The continuing failure of the Indian state to invest in universal primary education could reasonably be described as an act of violence, both against the government’s own stated intentions and against those girls and boys who are refused the funds and institutions needed to improve their life-chances of choices. (Corbridge and Harris 2000: 167).

This argument, no doubt, reflects a serious concern for the well-being of millions of 'illiterate' and out of school children in India, especially those children of economically poorer households, who cannot access education due to social exclusion, poverty, discrimination and the abysmally poor quality of and irrelevant education provided to them by the state in India. The statement also goes well with the idea of promoting human rights, quicker achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and poverty reduction, since it has often been argued that education increases people's 'substantive freedoms' in terms of gainful employment, and political liberties which enable people to combat historical disadvantages. (Dréze and Sen 1995, 2002).

Education, no doubt, is the key to enhance life-chances and choices, however, the content of education and the method of its implementation largely determine its outcomes. If the educational curriculum and pedagogy produce and reproduce unjust structures rather than expose and critique them, then they might produce negative results for the historically marginalized or disadvantaged social groups (Bourdieu and Jean-Claude 1977). In this sense, education, notwithstanding all good intentions and efforts, might produce unintended or contradictory outcomes. ‘After Foucault, it is difficult to state
undauntedly that education is concerned solely with doing good to people and promoting social progress. It is not unusual to listen to undergraduates or teachers speaking about the relationship between schools and the production of disciplined bodies, or to refer to histories of education in terms of genealogies.’ (Dusel 2010: 27).

In this chapter, I intend to show how the Indian state's efforts to educate Adivasi children in Kolhan and Jharkhand, like other well intentioned poverty alleviation schemes to 'improve' Adivasis, yield contradictory outcomes not only by systematically denying Adivasis self-respect and cultural dignity, but also by reducing the economically deprived and marginalised children and parents to a more degraded existence, making Adivasi children’s school-life one of everyday humiliation and exercises in self-denial. I argue that this unheeded aspect of Indian education itself can be one of the main reasons for Adivasis' ‘option’ to be non-literate and their constructed 'backwardness.'

In two most recent articles, Higham and Shah (2013a, 2013b) have shown that education and affirmative action in Jharkhand jointly acts as a 'contradictory resource' for Adivasis in two ways: (1) job reservations provide Adivasis access to relatively badly paid and less secure jobs as para-teachers compared to non-Adivasi traditional elites who move out and diversify their income several times more than the former do; and (2) educated young Adivasis 'emulate the norms, values and ways of life of the local elite', which introduces and entrenches new divisions and inequalities within Adivasi social formations (2013a: 1). This process, according to Higham and Shah, is partly explained by 'market-led gains within the private education sector for more advantaged sections of society that outweigh the predominately state-led improvements for Adivasis'. Thus, the state's affirmative action remains limited in improving the relative positions of 'socioeconomically marginalized groups' (2013b: 80).

Higham and Shah's admittedly partial explanation for education and affirmative action to be a 'contradictory resource,' this chapter argues, is due to two reasons: first, they have paid little attention to the content and nature of education in terms of what 'education' does to Adivasi subjectivities; and second, they have assumed the idea of ‘the state’ to be a neutral and given entity with some 'universal features.' Thus, this chapter exposes a double
problem with education: first: government schools do not offer schooling, despite investments made, with the more affluent sending their children to English medium private or Missionary schools. And second, the educational curriculum and pedagogy enforce cultural and symbolic violence on Adivasis as they tend to negate their cultural values, and subjectivities while indoctrinating Adivasis into the colonial civic order.

This chapter, thus, attempts to add a few more aspects to Higham and Shah’s findings about education of Adivasi children to bring a more holistic understanding of the educational scenario in Adivasi dominant regions, regarding its outcome, and how and why education produces contradictory outcomes. Taking Freire’s fundamental thesis: there is no neutral education; and education is either for domestication or for freedom (1977), and by citing the example of the Ho Adivasi society in Jharkhand, the chapter shows how and why the noble vision of 'education for all' in India turns out to be contradictory and counterproductive. By doing so, it shows that the content of education for Adivasis, and the method of its delivery have systematically been programmed to enslave or domesticate them, rather than liberate them; and hence, while maintaining a curriculum and pedagogy that domesticate Adivasis, the noble intentions of enhancing people’s 'substantive freedom' is untenable.

The following three vignettes – one and three from Huringhatu (V2), and two from a village in Jagnathpur block in West Singhbhum district – and an observation from Huringhatu provide the background and context to the argument I advance in the course of this chapter. This is followed by a short discussion on how education can perpetuate distorted praxis and processes. A short history of Indian Education System and policies would explicate how entrenched unequal power relations have been normalized in India. Further the chapter shows how new educational inequalities produce humiliation to poorer Adivasi households, which in turn produces resistance in forms of weapons of the weak. Such latent forms of resistance render the state’s educational interventions, such as ‘education for all,’ a continuous failure in Adivasi dominant regions. This argument is explicated by field based data on school enrolment, daily attendance and educational outcomes in study villages. Furthermore, observations about home-school polarities, ambivalence of violence caused by discrimination, denial of history, language and cultural values and dignity to Adivasi children by imposing an alien
education system run mostly by no-Hos who cannot understand or speak the young Ho children’s language are delineated. Then, the chapter provides a few individual experiences of ‘educated’ Adivasis who recognize and rework their experience of the ambivalence of violence in their lives by taking individual initiatives not only to help themselves but also to reach out to their co-villagers. And the final section of this chapter recapitulates the main findings and arguments.

Vignette-I  Kishore is the village headman’s (munda) elder brother who has received his formal education from a government aided mission school and has now retired from his 40 years-long service at Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) Jamshedpur, an industrial city about 67 kilometres from his home village, Huringhatu which is seven kilometres from Chaibasa town. He has been staying and working at Jamshedpur all these years, although he, along with his family, kept visiting the village, since he still holds a share of his ancestral rice-land at the village. After his retirement from the job at TISCO, he has built a house at Huringhatu for himself, for he feels more comfortable to stay at the village than in Jamshedpur city. He has two children; both of them hold postgraduate degrees and are working – one at Chaibasa and the other in Jamshedpur.

I happened to visit his house during my field work, in December 2011, as the munda directed me to talk with him saying, 'Kishore can tell you more about school education at the village.’ While chatting with Kishore about the education of Adivasi children, he said,

These people keep drinking diyang (rice-beer) and remain drunk day and night, and in that same state of being drunk, their women conceive and give birth to children. So the children also remain ‘drunk’ and grow up in a semi-conscious state of mind from the moment of conception. How can one expect such a child to study and make his/ her life for any better? That is why these people would continue to be like this, no matter, whatever you do to make them better their situation (personal conversation 11 November 2011).

This is a striking example of how ‘educated’ affluent Adivasis justifying their ‘fortunes,’ whose very pursuits have marginalized and produced the practico-

---

105 There are three different categories of schools: 1. government schools; 2. private/ minority owned, but government aided schools; and 3. private/ mission unaided schools. Most English-medium schools in India fall under the third category, however, they need to be approved by the state’s regulatory body to be able to issue valid certificates to students under a board of education or university.
inertness of their co-villagers. I spoke to yet another affluent ‘educated’ Ho, who has just retired from a high level government job, about social changes among Hos as a result of education. He gave many examples of educational changes in Ho society; I present two most interesting ones here. First, he said ‘earlier times, Adivasi women in rural villagers did not use cloths to cover the upper part of their body, but now almost all of them use. This is a major change.’ Second, referring to his two ‘well-educated’ daughters, he said, ‘on being educated, Adivasi girls become far more versatile and outspoken than boys; hence, it is difficult to get competent male partners for educated Ho women’ (personal conversations on 23 March 2011, at his residence in Chaibasa).

These conversations reflect a certain ambivalent and contradictory positioning of affluent Adivasis whose ‘education’ has denied them their proud history, alternative imaginations, and cultural dignity. Being far removed from the everyday struggles of their deprived co-villagers, they neither understand the deprived co-villagers’ present predicaments, nor do they get fully absorbed into a caste-divided colonial civic order whose paternalistic provisions of affirmative policies keep them pacified and ambivalent. Further discussion on such contradictory positioning of ‘educated’ affluent Hos will be taken up towards the later part of this chapter. For now, the second vignette follows.

Vignette-2 Devan, a Ho from a rural village, lives in a small rented-room with seven children (his nieces, nephews and grandchildren) at Jaganathpur suburb, about 22 kilometres away from their home village. Devan has been a clerk at the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a public sector mining company. While talking about his own education, the sacrifices his parents had to make to educate him, and so on, he said:

I have realized the value of education in my life. Hence, after my retirement from the job at SAIL, I have come here to Jagnathpur with these children (pointing to the children) to make it possible for me to avail the best possible education, I can afford, for these children. Although there is a school building in every village/hamlet in Kolhan now, no education is being provided to children who attend these sarkari (government) schools. I am using my own pension-money, time and energy to educate, them at this nearby English-medium school (run by a private agency), because these children are our future.

Hence, I remain with them; cook food for them; and try to help them in their studies. They go to their home villages only for a few days during school-holidays. They need to be here to study, back home they have no facilities such as proper light at night to
study, no functioning schools, no teacher to give them tuitions, and so on. They need to concentrate on their studies and do their daily homework to survive in a highly competitive English school environment (personal conversation 2 August 2011).

**Vignette-3** Back at Huringhatu is Vijay Ho who passed out from a local government high school and holds a bachelor’s degree from a local government college at Chaibasa. After trying hard to qualify himself for a job unsuccessfully, he remained at home cultivating his smallholding. His family now consists of seven members (parents, three boys, and a girl). He regrets that he could not send any of his children to a 'good' school (meaning, a few mission schools in and around Chaibasa, which are more expensive than government schools). His eldest son of 15 years has been attending the government-middle-school (primary and upper-primary combined) at the village, but left attending school after the eighth class. During my last visit to his house Vijay said:

I feel so frustrated about not being able to send at least my little daughter (his youngest child) to a 'good' school. Instead, she goes to the *sarkari*-school at the village; what will she learn there? Nothing. Children get only food and no education these days in *sarkari* schools (personal conversation 19 February 2011).

**An Observation**

In the same village, one finds the members of economically poorer and destitute households, who constitute the majority, stubbornly refusing to speak *diku-kaji* (a term they use to refer to Hindi, the national language, meaning, the language of the alien exploiter and troublemaker). They struggle day and night to survive, fighting chronic hunger and destitution, keep consuming *diyang* (rice-beer) which serves them both some nutritional needs, and gives a short escape from the mounting frustration and hopelessness that have become part of their everyday lives over several years of exploitation and discrimination (as the forgoing chapters have already shown).

Indeed, their life-style, often seen from a distance, provides ‘empirical evidence’ to victim-blaming theories generally proposed by a few Adivasi elites like Kishore in Vignette-1, and most non-Adivasis at Chaibasa and other urban areas to explain the 'failure of education' and ‘development’ in Kolhan, Jharkhand and other Adivasi dominant pockets in the central eastern states of India. Such deep seated and unchallenged prejudices, which drive most ‘educational,’ ‘developmental’ and ‘welfare’ policies, have a long history – a dialectic of praxis and process akin to colonialism and racism.
How Education Perpetuates Colonialism and Racism as Praxis and Process?

Wills (1977) showed how caged resentments that always run short of outright confrontation would lead to supplanted individual identity despite formal education and how social reproduction is sustained at individual level, which accounts for the subordinate’s agreement with the conditions. Biddle (2001) has discussed how educational policy and practice affect different classes and ethnic groups variously in multicultural contexts. Steiner (2003) has explicated the politics of imparting education, ‘Teaching could be considered an exercise, open or hidden, of power relations. The Teacher has psychological, social, and physical powers. S/he can reward and punish, exclude and rise’ (quoted in Dusel 2010: 29). Furthermore, Bourdieu and Passeron [1977] (1990) have explicated several complex and unintelligible ways of cultural and societal reproduction via symbolic violence involved in educational (reproductive) processes that imposes dominant values and practices on younger generations without critical reflection about their future consequences for those being subordinated.

Ball (2005) has pointed out education’s capacity to affect social inequality, reproduce and maintain it. He emphasises the need to develop an ‘effective policy analysis,’ an analysis of policy events, the rational of changes underpinning them, and ‘the application of such an analysis to education policy and specifically to the “privatisation” of public education and its effects on social justice, and what it means to be educated.’ He emphasises the need for ‘continuing attempts to understand the particular role of social class in all this – and the different educational ontology of upper, middle and working class families’ (Ibid.: 277). A short history of the educational visions and policies in India brings to light the logic of their choices and how these policies have been operationalized to maintain and reproduce the colonial civic order intact.

A Short History of Education in India

Education in ancient India was much advanced and classical, but it was meant only for the dwija (the ‘twice born’), a few elite. According to Dhillon (2010) the two main ancient formal education systems in India were Brahmical and Buddhist, and were accessible only to a few elites. The so-
called 'lower' castes were not only denied their right to education and knowledge, but the treasures of their experiential knowledge, embedded in folklores, were also being appropriated by the so-called 'upper' castes (Ilaiah 2010). Of course, Adivasis have been invisible in ancient India as they kept escaping the domineering powers and ideologies manifested in violent and oppressive structures of exploitation – taxes, rents, forced free labour, and humiliations (see Saha 1986 along with Scott 2009). However, these state-fleeing people (Adivasis) had developed their own alternative systems to socialize the young among them (see below).

The present system of so-called 'universal' education in India is a continuation of colonial education introduced to advance pre-British, British and post-British colonizers' interests. Its continuity has been well preserved since it suited the post-British (ruling) elite's broader nationalist rhetoric of 'national unity' (Guha 1997; Chatterjee 1993) devoid of socioeconomic justice and equal opportunity (Ilaiah 2004, 2010). The aim of British-colonial education in India is emboldened in T.B. Macauly's famous Minutes of 1835: the creation of a class of anglicised Indians who would serve as cultural intermediaries between the colonizer and their Indian subjects. Macauly said,

> We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect... (Macauly 1835 quoted in: Sharp 1965: 116).

This system got a ready acceptance among the so-called 'upper' castes/classes of India, who had extended their cooperation to the British (Bayley 2000; Patterson 2009: chapter 2). The postcolonial elites made a minimum possible modifications to the British-colonial system of education in India, which suited the interests of dominant castes/classes, and established it as the only authorized means to socialise the Indian 'masses' (see Acharya 1978; Desai 1992; Guha 1997; Benei 2008; Ilaiah 2010).

The question of power was reduced to an elite contest with no room left in it for the South Asian people except as an inert mass deployed by the dominant elements to serve their own ends according to strategies of their own intervention. ... An authorized alternative to colonialist discourse pitted against the authorized nationalist historiography from its inception; it would have no place for a long time yet in classrooms and curricula. Far from being promoted as an aid to the education of the young, it was destined to be classified as forbidden for all – young and old (Guha 1997: x, 211).
Moreover, the elite in India always resisted any meaningful reform in the education system for it served to maintain their status quo. For example, during his address to a conference on education in 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, had remarked:

> Whenever conferences were called to form a plan for education in India, the tendency, as a rule, was to maintain the existing system with slight modification. This must not happen now. Great changes have taken place in the country and the educational system must also be in keeping with them. The entire basis of education must be revolutionized (quoted in Ghosh, 2000: 178).

While this revolution is yet to take place, on the contrary, there have been more conservative efforts to rewrite history to serve vested interests.\(^{106}\)

The spread of education has brought about little fundamental change in the pattern of inequality in Indian society to meet the ends of both justice and efficiency. It is well known that one pays very little for education in best universities in India, but a great deal for education in even a moderately good school. ... The less fortunate cannot send their children to good schools, and those who go to poor schools have poor chances in the competition for places in the universities. No doubt, the expansion of university education creates new opportunities, but it does not create new opportunities equally for all sections of society (Béteille 1983: 15).

Consequently, education in India confers social advantages and opens up new avenues of social mobility for a few (Kothari 1964; Ilaiah 1994; Joshi 2013), while introducing new and powerful forms of social inequality and separation. This bars the mobility and emancipation of the underprivileged majority\(^{107}\) (Viswanathan and Nair 2001; Tilak 2010; Mooij and Majumdar 2011; Froerer 2011, 2012). In addition to endemic poverty and related learning disadvantages, economically poorer students also face the hegemonic and crippling caste/varna ideology, and different forms of social exclusions based on caste and socio-economic status. Caste/jati based discriminatory treatment (cultural and structural violence) of school children in India still persists as it has been considered normal (Vilaskar 2010; Ray and Majumder 2010; Desai and Dube 2012; Borooah 2012; Neelakandan and Patil 2012).

Even under the guise of Constitutional obligations the state of India has abdicated its responsibility to educate all. Education has turned out to be a boon for a privileged few. Further, in their pursuit of economic accumulation the government of the country has iniquitously exploited and perpetuated mass illiteracy (Desai 1992: 2).

---

107 For reports on discrimination of Dalit professors, students and employees at institutions of higher education in India, see Jha (2013), Kumar (2011) and The Hindu (2013).
Educating Adivasis

Most studies on Adivasi education do not discuss the nature and content of formal education, which has been meant to reproduce and perpetuate inequality (Sunder 2002, 2010a, b, & c). A seminar volume on 'Tribal' Education in India (1967) noted the sheer difficulty against which 'tribal' education was being carried out. The seminar report admitted the existence of a huge educational disparity among and within Adivasi communities; it also mentioned a range of Adivasi responses to modern education: an avid thirst for education, indifference, and even hostility. The seminar volume also recognized the challenges of making education worthwhile and attractive to Adivasis (Haines 1968). The context of this challenge needs to be understood, once again, from its historicalness.

Pre-British Colonial Education in Chotanagpur and Kolhan

Prior to British colonial invasion into Adivasi dominant regions, Adivasi social formations had their own indigenous systems of socialization and governance, integral to their sacral polities. Toppo (1979) and Ambash (1995) have discussed the educational roles of the youth dormitory systems of the Mundas (giti-ora) and the Oraons (dumkuria) where the youth (boys and girls) separately gathered regularly to learn about social conduct and family life under the constant guidance of specially appointed elders. However, later these ancient institutions disintegrated with increasing external interferences (Roy 1935). By the end of the 19th Century, most indigenous institutions and knowledge systems had become grossly eroded or dormant (Furer-Haimendorf 1950; Hasnain 1990; Mahanti 1995). Furthermore, there remains a dearth of proper information on Adivasis, and indigenous knowledge or education systems precisely because of orality and non-literary which characterize Adivasi traditions besides their constructed ‘barbarity’ and ‘backwardness.

British Colonial Era

'Modern' education among Adivasis of Kolhan and Chotanagpur was initiated by the British by the mid-nineteenth century. In 1839 the British officers in Chotanagpur entrusted Christian missionaries with the mission of 'civilizing'
the 'barbarians.' The missionaries' main preoccupation was to advance their mission-paradigm of the 19th Century, which was not Adivasi friendly. Hence, missionary education benefited only a few who valorised it without either integrating the indigenous systems of knowledge with missionary education or enabling Adivasi social formations to revive their own indigenous systems and practices (Bara 2010). The disjunction between the 'educated' and nonliterate Adivasi has some of its roots here, which has not yet been bridged.

Although some British officials wanted to empower Adivasis by providing them with relevant education which would enable them to protect their lands from alien exploiters, the means to achieve this goal was limited due to unavailability of teachers other than caste Hindus who exploited Adivasis. Moreover, the 'upper' caste Hindus were against British officers' efforts to educate Adivasis and other 'lower' castes (Bara 2005). Bara has quoted from a colonial report, 'The gurus [teachers] are for the most part prejudiced Lalas and regard the tribes as mlechcha [unclean]; and the landowning classes are hostile to the education of the classes below them. It will be a long time before the children of the Hindus, Kols or Sonthals really read [study] together in one school' (Ibid.: 631). Moreover, Adivasis with their general animosity to outsiders, and initial lukewarm attitude to 'modern' education, largely stayed away from these new institutions. In this context, 'the social and cultural conditions of the Hos deteriorated' faster under British raj' (Ibid.: 634).

Formal education for the Hos of Kolhan (Singhbhum) began in 1841 as a part of the ‘civilizing’ mission of the British, carried out via Christian missionaries, which the mundas and mankis, the traditional Ho aristocracy, initially hesitantly approached as the missionaries were against the 'hundred and one bongas' (spirits) that ruled the Ho social, religious and cultural systems. However, in 1890, there were 281 primary, seven middle (of this

---

108 European understandings of the power of literacy encouraged Spaniards in the New World to discount the value of indigenous graphic systems and to disparage Mesoamerican languages as untruthful, unreliable, and products of the devil. The dark side of the new knowledge-orders born out of the Renaissance was a new interweaving of literacy, knowledge, and colonization in a new cultural order which Mignolo dubs 'coloniality' (Ballantyne 2011: 232).

109 More interestingly, the most pronounced aim of education for Hos was to end witch-craft and sokhaism seen by the British officials as one of the most awful social evils. However, in
two were missionary) schools and one high school in united Singhbhum (which included the present Singhbhum East and West, and Saraikela-Kharsawan districts) (Choudhury 1958: 164). According to census report 1901, the total literacy rate in Singhbhum was 2.5 per cent (4.8 % male and 0.3 % female). Exactly a century later census 2001 reported the total literacy rate of Adivasis in Kolhan as 27.9 per cent (42.2 % male and 13.62 % female).

Post-British Colonial Period

The education system in united Bihar (of which Jharkhand was a part till 2000) is said to have collapsed completely since the late 1960s and early 1970s during the period of 

*Sampurna Kranti*, the ‘total revolution’ movement initiated and led by J.P. Narayan, a Gandhian Socialist, who had encouraged both high school and college students, in big numbers all over Bihar, to take part in this movement. This led to criminalisation of student groups, and disinterestedness of teachers who lost their ‘control’ over students.\textsuperscript{110} Mahasweta Devi described the situation of school education in Kolhan in the 1980s, a decade before the UNICEF funded Bihar Education Project (BEP)\textsuperscript{111} began in the 1990s,

---

\textsuperscript{110} Personal conversation with Dr. C.K. Pati, a historian, at his residence at Chaibasa, about the situation of education in Kolhan and Jharkhand (21 August 2011).

\textsuperscript{111} With the UN declaration of 1990 as the International Literacy Year, the idea of universalising primary education found its place in Bihar, the most ‘backward’ and ‘illiterate’ state, initially funded by the UNICEF to provide education for all children between the age of 6-14 (*Sarva Shiksha Abiyan* – SSA – ‘education for all movement’). This project was known as Bihar Education Project (BEP) which also initiated the District Primary Education Program (DPEP). Since 2001, SSA has been funded by the World Bank; and in Jharkhand the project is called Jharkhand Education Project (JEP). See DRCWC (2011) for more details on SSA in
There is a primary school for every hundred homesteads. The teachers have their own business or shops to look after. Teachers from North Bihar posted here involved in money lending, buying land and taking land on contacts. Stipend money for children comes in lump-sum, a cut is taken by them ... A Mundari song runs like this, ‘Rando, Rando, come to the school! Mata, Mata, where are you? Rando and Mata and the other boys graze the cow, tend the goat. The \textit{Masterji} [teacher] sits in his shop’ (Devi 1981a: 1012).

By this time, there were five Hindi medium mission schools in and around Chaibasa, and from the 1990s onwards, the number of English-medium schools began multiplying due to the elites’ demand for better education for their children while the government educational institutions became increasingly corrupt and dysfunctional,\footnote{Huge sums of teachers’ salary began to be arrears, for the last 15-20 years no promotion and or appointment of new teachers; despite increased numbers of students about 50 times more, there has been no revision of the procedures in recruiting teachers for the last 50 years (\textit{Prabhat Khabar}, a local daily, 11 November 2011); from primary to higher secondary schools, there have been 57,596 regular teachers’ and 80,500 para-teachers’ posts lying vacant (\textit{Hindustan}, a local daily, 28 November 2011); although no now teacher was appointed during the last 11 years, the appointment policy has been altered seven times (\textit{Prabhat Khabar} 12 December 2011).} although the number of school-buildings have multiplied since the JEP began in 2001. Today, while the deprived and historically marginalised Adivasi children are provided food (mid-day-meal) at government schools with a view to increase the number of enrolments as a proof for the success of World Bank funded JEP, while an expanding private or English-medium education markets cater to the elites’ needs to educate their children (Garg and Mandal 2013). While Adivasi children from elite households manage to cope with the dominant values and life-styles imparted by a highly centralised education or syllabus system or curriculum, children from deprived Adivasi households fail to do so. Thus, while the elite, and upper middle classes or castes opt for more expensive private education, the government schools try to attract children from the most deprived households who are blamed for their ‘poverty’ and ‘backwardness.’ Hence, there emerge victim-blaming theories that explain the ‘failure’ of ‘tribal-education,’ on the one hand, and resistance (along the line of weapons of the weak) from poorer Adivasi children and their parents, on the other.
Adivasi Resistance to the Will to Educate and Improve

The promise of formal education comes at the cost of Adivasi cultural identity and local knowledge. Even while recognizing that in all cases, educational processes are fundamentally cultural processes... Adivasis in general, and not just their children, are seen as people for whom compulsion must be exercised in their own best interest' (Sunder 2010b: 123). 'Formal education may both destroy and create ‘indigenous’ identities and claim to possess indigenous knowledge' (Sunder 2010a: 21). According to Xaxa (2001) Adivasis have made comparatively less progress in education since their central concern has been to secure control over land and natural resources in their territories, rather than upward mobility within the caste-ridden mainstream; Adivasi children face language problems in schools; they resist individualistic values intrinsic to the prevalent educational systems based on ranking and competition; and moreover they lack role models in educational and emancipatory leadership like, at least, the one the Dalits have in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Although, Adivasis want to educate their children the hegemonic formal schooling practices in India, desiring to create rational citizen-subjects out of diverse population legitimizes prevailing dominant constructions of Adivasi population as 'backward' (Balagopalan 2003).

'Educational homogenisation' is state formation by force. It imposes national education standards to turn people into similar individuals. The educational system aims to level people, make them disciplined, passive and obedient (Chomsky 2010). From Adivasis’ point of view, Chomsky's argument proves to be true about the state's will to educate them. As dominant discourses have always viewed Adivasi subjectivities and cultural practices derogatory, and hence, to be eliminated. The efforts of the state in India to ‘reform’ Adivasi societies and to mould them into the image of the dominant society embodies violence. Such an alien and violent ‘will to improve’ inevitably produces resistance (Li 2008). The state, as a mechanism, uses the ‘hegemony of the dominant ideology’ to pacify cultural and ideological differences. Its repressive apparatus suppresses any dissent; and its ideological apparatus socialises the state's subjects into dominant ideology. Both apparatuses involve force and violence in many different ways; and there is no sharp distinction between these two (Althusser 1971: 73; Bourdieu 1974). Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this
resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Foucault 1990: 95). These forms of resistance seldom emerge as violent protests.

Based on these explanations, I show that imposition of projects like JEP on deprived and marginalized Adivasis might cause more harm than good, and whatever outcome has been cited in JEP reports as ‘achievements’ might not add up even to nullify the gross negativities it might be producing in the lives of economically poorer Adivasis.

The State’s Elementary Education for Hos (JEP in Kolhan)

The annual working plan and budget (AWP & B 2011) of JEP provides much details such as the numbers of habitations with and without school buildings in West Singhbhum, enrolled and dropped out children, and teachers and so forth. According to JEP guidelines, there should be a primary school (PS) building for every child within a distance of one kilometre and an upper primary school (UPS) building in every three kilometres; a teacher for every 35 students in PS, and one for every 40 students in UPS. There were 2,238 ‘functioning’ PSs with a requirement of 6,125 teachers; and 708 functioning UPSs that require 2,487 teachers to cater to the educational needs of 312,091 children in 8,803 habitations in West Singhbhum district. About half of the required number of teachers’ posts remain vacant (AWP & B 2011). However, despite these existing arrangements, the outcomes JEP has produced, so far, among the Hos is deplorable. Based on a survey of primary and middle schools in study villages, I show how JEP works on the ground.

Table 7 – Total number of children (age 6-14), Enrolment & Attendance in Government Schools (Standards I-VIII)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Total population (age 6-14)</th>
<th>Enrolment at schools</th>
<th>Daily attendance</th>
<th>Children at private schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12 (3.8 %)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>20 (4.6%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total   | 1012                        | 500                  | 242             | 48.4                      |

*Source: survey by the author (November 2011)

(*%) Percentage of total population in V2 & V3 (age 6 – 14)
Table-7 shows the extremely poor response, in terms of enrolment and daily attendance, of Ho children to JEP managed government schools in five villages. Out of 1012 children of age group 6-14, more than half are out of school (not enrolled), and out of the total enrolled 500 children, less than half of them attend these schools on a daily basis. Such an abysmally low figure of attendance by enrolled children, despite the free mid-day-meal (MDM) being served, speaks a lot about the relevance and quality of education in these schools. All children who attend these schools are from economically poorer households. A few children from better-of households in V2 and V3 attend an unaided mission school in the locality.

Table 8 – Educational Attainment of Population (age group 15-59) in Five Villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Villages</th>
<th>Total Population (age 15-59)</th>
<th>Middle school (UPS)</th>
<th>Secondary school (HS)</th>
<th>Matriculate</th>
<th>Higher Secondary</th>
<th>Bachelors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19.78</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>11.84</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>1344</td>
<td>12.72</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3241</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>6.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: survey conducted by the author (July - November 2011)

(*): Percentage of total village population (age 15 - 59)
At the primary level the daily attendance of enrolled children is about 50% (table-7), however, Table-8 shows that only 11 per cent (average of 9.94 & 10.83) of the children attend upper primary (UPS) and secondary or high schools. This means that as children advance to higher classes, they stop attending school (drop out increases as they go higher). Only seven per cent of them clear Matriculation; those who make it to Higher Secondary constitute only 3.27 per cent and the segment that manages to complete a Bachelor’s Degree is merely 1.48 per cent of the total population. Most among those who have made it to matriculation, higher secondary and bachelors have been students of either a few mission schools or a few better functioning government schools right in the heart of Chaibasa town.

Table 9 – **Levels of educational attainment among major Adivasi groups Jharkhand**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adivasis</th>
<th>Literate without formal education</th>
<th>below Primary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Matric &amp; HSE</th>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santals</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oraons</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundas</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hos</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharias</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharwars</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohras</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhumij</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Kumar (2008: 3114) based on Census of India 2001*
The census data on Adivasis’ educational attainment at the state level also show a similar pattern of dropouts as they move from lower to higher classes. Hence, one might conclude that the government schools hardly provide any education to Ho children in these villages except that, these days, they feed a few children with the Mid Day Meal (MDM). Most students, who attend rural government schools, run by JEP, drop out of school before they enter a secondary school, and most of those who manage to enter one fail to clear the matriculate examination. Clearly there might be other reasons than poor school infrastructure, and quality of teaching which contribute to this situation of the failure of Adivasi education in India. The following section elucidates a few of them.

**Observations and Insights from the Field**

Although, MDM feeds a few children in schools, several parents expressed a feeling of shame and ignominy that they are forced to send their children to school just for food and not for education. This is also because, none of the village-uppers’ children attend JEP schools, but instead they seek ‘better’ education in private schools. Hence, sending children to JEP schools, which provide food instead of education, inevitably reflects one’s economic insecurity or vulnerability or ‘backwardness’. Thus, government schools in Adivasi dominant areas, while they fail to deliver relevant and quality education, reproduce social inequality, divisions, humiliation and negativity.

The only 'beneficiaries' of the JEP among the Hos of these five villages are a very few local para-teachers, appointed on contract basis, who receive a monthly salary much less than that received by regular teachers who are mostly non-local, and non-Hos. However, the JEP has its statistics neat and tidy with the number of school buildings, teachers appointed or vacant posts, number of enrolled students, and those dropped out ever ready for reporting and ‘evaluation.’ The process goes on as it reflects the nation's 'commitment' and 'will' to educate its 'backward,' 'uncivilized,' and 'illiterate,' population called the 'scheduled tribes.'

'Tribals share a major part of the population and no program of their uplift can meet success unless carefully controlled studies break the deep-rooted dogma about their inborn backwardness’ (Sinha 1976: back cover page).

---

113 Higher percentage of matric and higher secondary and bachelors in aggregate census data might be due to the ‘creamy layer’ who stay at urban centres.
While talking to teachers about Ho children’s poor attendance, their explanations would invariably begin with children's inability to learn due to 'backwardness:' Hos' lack of awareness about the usefulness of education, economic poverty, parents’ need to keep children at home due to economic constraints, and the like. If one points out the school-home polarity, language barrier, cultural and language differences of teachers and students, the teacher would immediately shift the blame on to the *Sarkar* (government) for not taking these issues into consideration. Parents, on the other hand, would complain about teacher absenteeism, school activities being reduced merely to forging food-materials, cooking and serving the mid-day-meal (MDM), and thus, relegating learning and education to the last in the teachers’ priority list.

While talking to teachers about their absenteeism and low quality education in these schools, they would say,

> You know, there is no clerk or peon at the school, we teachers have to look after everything: the responsibility of constructing or repairing school buildings, provisioning for MDM, keeping track of all kinds of expenditures (accounts), producing monthly reports for JEP office, all these besides teaching. Moreover, there are children of different age-groups from class I–V, mostly one teacher would be managing these five different age-groups simultaneously in just two class-rooms, and one of us would always be out with election duties, census works or some other kind of surveys the government always wants us to do (personal conversations with teachers in November 2011 at various government schools at study villages).

The teachers’ list of responsibilities goes on and on.

Kripa, a local para-teacher, who has worked with a Women’s NGO for several years prior to her present job said the following about a non-Adivasi JEP supervisor who occasionally comes to ‘inspect’ the function of school where she teaches,

> As soon as he comes for inspection, the first thing he wants is money (as bribe) along with regular ready-made reports and accounts. If you refuse to pay the regular bribe, then he would threaten you with finding faults with everything you do; if you pay, you have no tension; and he would soon disappear quietly.

One day, Kripa confronted a supervisor, asking him, 'Why do you ask for a bribe from us without even doing your work?’ After this, the supervisor went to a class room to test the students. The students got scared; and did not give any answer to his questions. After the supervisor left, the regular teacher, an Oraon (Adivasi) woman, who often succumbs to the pressures from
supervisors, told Kripa, 'Being a para-teacher, you talk a bit too much' (personal conversation, 21 November 2011, at the school).

Thus, the state’s externally imposed educational projects such as the JEP on the one hand, needs legitimation evidenced by Adivasi ‘backwardness’ and Ho children’s’ distaste for learning and the nation’s commitment to provide education for all on the other. However, the very fact of forced educational homogenisation, violence, and humiliation it brings on the poorer Ho children and their parents make it a failure. Corruption inevitably breeds in such situations where project resources are utilized to disempower the beneficiary.

Home-School Polarity

On spending some time in a village school premises, one observes many more things regarding differences in language and cultural values: Ho children in villages understand and speak only the Ho language. Hindi, the National language in which primary education has been imparted, has very little in common with Ho in terms of sentence structure, vocabulary, expressions, and even pronunciation. One of the minor, but significant cultural differences, for example, is about the common greetings (salutation): Hos normally greet each other by touching the tips of of the fingers of the other with theirs while saying ‘Juaar’ [Johar] to express gratitude, respect, familiarity and a mark of an egalitarian acceptance of the other irrespective of one's socio economic status and other such differences. However, at schools, Ho children are strictly instructed by non-Adivasi teachers to say, ‘pranaam,’ with both hands joined, to teachers and visitors. This creates a marked distance and hierarchical difference deliberately avoiding touch and physical proximity.

Further, one who has stayed or spent time with Ho households may also observe that a Ho child is seldom scolded or punished by his or her parents, however, at schools, children get a lot of scolding and are forced to undergo several other disciplinary regulations, all of which, constitute both physical and symbolic violence, as Freire and Shor (1987: 123) have explained. Education for Ho children imparted here at these schools ‘impose silence’ on children by the very order of the things in school environment, especially in this case, where there is a considerable home-school polarity regarding
linguistic and cultural differences. All this amounts to cultural imperialism involving the ‘universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture and establishing it as the norm’ (Young 2011: 59).

Ambivalence of Violence Arising from Discrimination, Denial of History, Language, and Cultural Dignity

Several recent studies have shown that Adivasi and Dalit children face widespread verbal abuse from 'upper' jati/caste teachers who are in majority, typifying their hegemonic narrative towards traditionally marginalised groups regarding commensal relations and the menial works the 'lower' castes or classes have been forced to perform. This critically disables first generation Adivasi and Dalit learners. (Balagopalan and Subrahmanian 2003; Mooij and Majumdar 2011; Malikapurath and Patil 2012). While jati/caste based discrimination of Adivasi children in class rooms, which clearly establishes the prevalence of cultural and structural violence continue to be inflicted on them, debates about making their mother tongue as the medium of instruction at least at primary schools have not yet been concluded, despite clear Constitutional provisions supporting this important cause (see Nambisan 1994; Shotton 1998).

An alien medium of instruction at initial schooling causes several crucial problems to Adivasi children: they do not understand text books and curricula; non-Adivasi teachers look upon them as inferior to other children by an unfair evaluation of their cognitive abilities, which neglect the variations in Adivasi social ecology, despite Adivasi children actually being culturally and cognitively more competent than children of other groups (Gautam 2003). Adivasi children's skills and abilities are highly developed and extremely sophisticated. However, a programme of schooling, which stresses only on literacy and numeracy, while neglecting the distinct socio-ecological, cultural and psychological characteristics of Adivasi children, is highly unlikely to make any significant impact (Ibid.). Moreover, the educational practices of the dominant population has little value in an Adivasi cultural milieu precisely because they do not match the Adivasi lifestyle (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 2009; Mohanti et al 2009; Pahru 2010).

According to Magga et al (2013), the practice of providing school education to indigenous children through dominant national or regional languages contradicts all solid theories and research results; it violates the parents’ right
to intergenerational transmission of cultural values, including language. Such an enforced language regime results in subtractive education. It reduces a children’s linguistic repertoire, and creates pedagogical and psychological barriers; it hinders the development of children's capabilities besides children being effectively transferred, both linguistically and culturally, to the dominant group, while contributing to the disappearance of the world's linguistic diversity. It eventually deprives the dominated or oppressed social groups by denying them of the cultural instruments necessary to assert their identity and human rights (Ibid.).

A tribal child’s first steps into school are steps into an alien world – a world he or she barely understands because, somewhere as he or she walks into her first classroom, the ties are snapped. His or her resources, languages, means of communication, knowledge of her world and her culture are set aside in a system that proudly calls itself human resource development (Ibid.: 6).

Citing some of the important problems faced by Adivasi children during the initial stages of their schooling due to fundamental differences in indigenous sociocultural values and pedagogies, and that of formal hegemonic educational standards Philipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) and Kapoor (2009) have explained how hegemonic formal education erases the history of oppression by depoliticising a dissenting minority community of their transgressed subjectivities. A strategically homogenizing education system planned and implemented by the dominant powers makes the oppressed to internalize ‘myths’ and ‘lies’ since these have purposefully been imposed upon the people, while actively negating their subjectivities. Consequently, the oppressed people feel ignorant and become dependent on the culture of the oppressors, the ‘experts’, specialists in society (Goulet 1980; Philipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 2009: 30).

Freire (1985) has explained how people become ambivalent as a result of personal and societal interactions of unequal power relations that influence perspectives and positionings.

The relationships between the dominator and the dominated reflect the greater social context, even when formally personal. Such relationships imply the introjection by the dominated of the cultural myths of the dominator. Similarly, the dependent society introjects the values and life-style of the metropolitan society, since the structure of the latter shapes that of the former. This results in the duality of the dependent society, its ambiguity, its being and not being itself, and the ambivalence characteristic of its long experience of dependency, both attracted by and rejecting the metropolitan society (Ibid.: 73, emphasis added).
When the dominant society continuously subjugates, indoctrinates and domesticates the minorities, the result is 'naturalisation' of oppression, structural and cultural violence, and their reproduction via ambivalence of violence. This explains the case of Kishor, the affluent Ho in Vignette-1 in Huringhatu, who has introjected the ‘myths,’ ‘lies,’ styles and life-worlds of the dominant society via formal education. Yet he remains in his home-village after retirement from the job since he feels more at home here. However, his ambivalence towards his co-villagers is evident from the fact that he neither understands the predicaments of the destitute, nonliterate, impoverished, yet resisting co-villagers, nor is he able to do anything to change their situation. Hence, people like him naturally employ the usual 'victim-blaming theories' of laziness, ignorance and drunkenness of those economically poorer Hos in Vignette-4 to justify their own uncomfortable ambivalent position. This also explains why and how an 'educated' Adivasis comes to emulate some of the styles and values of ‘traditional oppressive elites’ (Shah 2009; Higham Shah 2013a).

Thus, formal education systematically denies Adivasi cultural ethos, values and subjectivities to Adivasi children by erasing their history, culture and language (Trouillot, M-R. 1995; Benei 2008) while simultaneously indoctrinating them into dominant values of graded inequality and domination. Such an education makes elite Adivasis, who were deprived of their own history and cultural values, to define one’s impoverished neighbours and co-villagers as 'backward,' 'uncivilized,' and seemingly subconscious, hopelessly incorrigible drunkards. Here, the less privileged co-villagers are, thus, being reduced to a practico-inert status by the ‘educated’ privileged (Galtung 1970, 1990; Sartre 2005). Thus, a few ‘educated’ privileged Adivasis in a predominantly poor village might turn it into a small colony with racism being an essential part of the processes and praxis.

Vignette-2, at the beginning of this chapter, presents the troubles Devan, a householder, whose economic position might be termed as ‘comfortable,’ takes to ‘catch up’ with those of the dominant society via education that invariably negates the cultural ethos and values of Adivasi social formations. He spends all his time and resources to get the best possible education for his nieces and nephews leaving the village and staying in a suburb away from their home village. Thus, these children are kept away from the everyday realities of their less-privileged co-villagers, but at home with the life-world
of the dominant – state school systems organized to discipline, pacify, and level, reducing education to test-taking and market-driven competencies (Chomsky 2010) – which also teaches children to look derogatorily on what constitutes Adivasis, while actively made to imitate or introject the dominant values and styles.

Vijay in Vignette-3, who belongs to an occasionally poor household in Huringhatu tries his best to formally educate his children with available or possible facilities (the government school at his village), but the eldest one, who managed to reach eighth class, has already dropped out as he decides not to go to school anymore. Thus, Vijay feels frustrated about not being able to send at least his little daughter to the nearby mission school while facing financial constraints about paying a fixed monthly fee at the unaided mission school, which charges a nominal fee from every child to pay the teachers’ salary.

The economically poorer Hos in Huringhatu have literally being reduced to a ‘culture of silence’ by dispossession and impoverishment of both economic and cultural resources. Yet, again they are being blamed for the situation they find themselves in and on which they have little control. They experience ignominy, humiliation and frustration. Little children are ill-treated, discriminated and scolded for their ‘inability’ to learn in an alien language that they hear for the first time in life. If the children run away from school out of fear, as it often happens, the diku teachers would say, ‘Look at these Adivasi children; they do not want to study.’ This is one of the obvious and ‘normal’ explanations for the ‘failure’ of education in Adivasi dominant regions advanced by dikus.

If those among the SCs and STs who ascend the ladder of social and economic progress do not spare a glance at those left behind, it is because the mainstream has tended to undermine and undervalue their culture (Thekekara 1991: 26).

**Adivasis’ Individual Initiatives to Overcome Ambivalence of Violence: Evidences from the Field**

What Freire (1985) calls introjection involves 'misrecognition' or 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu 1998; Žižek 2009), similar to Marx’s 'false consciousness' (Eyerman 1981) whereby people internalise dominant discourses and emulate dominant practices as the most appropriate ones. Dominant discourses might also make people perceive even most intolerable
conditions of existence as acceptable and natural (Smith and Osborn 2007). Such naturalisation of unequal power relations and resultant sufferings are routinely carried out in education by processes of de-historicisation and universalisation – ‘always and everywhere has it been this way’ – ‘whereby arbitrary workings of power are enabled to continue’ (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008: 47-8). Symbolic violence often leads people also to (unjustly) blame themselves for their own suffering whilst the role of society remains hidden (Bourdieu 1998, 1999). Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence stored in doxa and habitus (ambivalence of violence, conflicts hidden under the surface of common sense notions which rule social reality) helps understand how people come to accept their own domination while they, in turn, dominate those weaker than themselves. However, such naturalised, arbitrary workings of power always accompany self-doubt and suffering (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, 2001).

However, by recognizing and getting in touch with such self-doubt and disturbing ambivalence people look for various ways to overcome these difficulties to find their way to greater personal freedom. In order to make this argument clear, I cite below the personal experiences of three 'educated' Adivasis who have managed to recognize their suffering of self-doubt and ambivalence caused by symbolic violence (ambivalence of violence) involved in prevalent formal education system, and have consciously sought to undo or overcome it.

Ramesh is a Ho from Manjhari block of Kolhan who had his Higher Secondary Education from a school in Chaibasa. He works now as a railway employee in Lukhnow, Uttar Pradesh (UP). We had a long conversation in his home where I stayed a night in March 2011. He had come to his home village for Mage-Parab, the biggest annual feast of the Hos of Kolhan. During our conversations, he talked about some of his experiences of being a (third class) railway employee in UP.

The first thing people in UP ask you is your jati caste. When you tell them that you are an Adivasi, they begin to look down upon you as they do it with Dalits [ex-untouchables]. I had serious problems dealing with such a situation initially; I began to consume alcohol; there was no peace at home; and my first child could not enjoy a peaceful atmosphere at home. After a few years, I got several chances to attend a few conferences and conventions organised by the BAMCEF (All India Backward and Minority Employees’ Federation), during which I came to know about the reality of caste-based discrimination and the troubles it creates for economically poorer people of the 'lower' castes or classes. I also started reading the works of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.
Gradually, I began to analyse and understand our own history, identity and rights, I can now accept myself as I am. Now, I enjoy a lot of peace within and at home. My younger children are doing well in studies and they are confident about themselves (personal conversation, 24 March 2011).

Ruby Hembrom from the Santal Society, after eight years of her work in the field of law, service-industry, social development, learning, research and development, has rediscovered herself and has recently set up a documentation and publishing enterprise – adivaani. She tells her story,

My education, training, skills and career define only part of who I am; my identity as a tribal, a Santal, is fundamental to my being, and that completes who I am. But is that enough? Life for me is about fulfilling one’s potential. In the many ways I’ve redefined who I am; the adivaani dream has made me come alive all over again…

It all started at a tender age. “During my days at La Martiniere for Girls, one of my friends used to tell me that I must polish my face every morning like I polish my shoes. It was humiliating. My friends refused to sit with me in the classroom,” Hembrom said, pointing out that such incidents urged her to do her bit for the progress of tribals.114

Joy Raj Eric Tudu, a co-founder of adivani shares some of his experiences:

I never took life seriously, until my engagement with real Adivasi lives and real Adivasi issues brought me face to face with their plight. … I recognized and witnessed how people were cheated and exploited for generations in my own neighbourhood. While all this was happening around me, I was living a completely different life, where focusing on securing my future by all possible means was the goal… From being far removed from the real Adivasi situation and the Adivasi movement … the purpose of my life has changed completely. Now, I take pride in being a part of making history available to the present day people and to the generations to come and adivani is an extension of that desire (adivaani website: 2013).

There are several factors that contribute to the ambivalent and contradictory positioning of 'educated' Adivasis. Most 'educated' privileged Adivasis, who have been in urban centres for education, often continue to remain far removed from the everyday struggles of their co-villagers as most of them would be staying at boarding schools in towns and cities to avail better schools and other facilities that are not available in rural villages. Once they complete schooling successfully, they proceed further to bigger cities for higher education, and then once on a job, they rarely come back to their home villages. Furthermore, their already better-off parents would say, ‘Oh, we had to struggle a lot to get education, and now we do not want our children to

114 Source: http://adivaani.org/category/inside-out/ (29 January 2013),
struggle as we did; hence, we want to provide them the best possible education.' The Vignette 2 presented at the beginning of this chapter would typify this situation. This is a situation where the 'educated' parents have already internalized the discursive 'mainstream' stereotype of Adivasis as *jungli* and incapable of learning, thus the desire to escape the 'wilderness' by 'colonial desire' (Young 1995). However, these ‘educated’ ones continue to remain ‘Adivasis’ by inscription mostly to access the benefits of affirmative action policies, a ‘rational response’ of Adivasi elites to the ‘development’ rationale of the post-British colonial state (Corbridge 1987: 252).

Friere (1985) showed that only children from financially better-of households of subjugated social formations are able to cope with the violence of stereotyping while learning with the children of dominant society. Moreover, the 'mainstream' education system, as already shown, has continuously sought to deny Adivasis their history, language, cultural values that mark identity by processes of dehistoricisation and universalisation so that 'educated' Adivasis, in turn, have systematically been assimilated into the colonial civic order which blames the less privileged Adivasis for their poverty and suffering. This ambivalence of violence has thus been produced and reproduced via formal education in India which not only denies Adivasis their language, history, and cultural values, but also actively indoctrinates them into the colonial civic order that has violently silenced and pushed Adivasis into wretchedness due to the very process of cultural and structural violence it embodies.

The above three instances clearly make visible not only the reproduction of Adivasis’ ambivalence, self-doubt and suffering via formal education, but also their search for self-rediscovery (overcoming misrecognition) via alternative learning platforms that re-embraces their identity by undoing the ambivalence of violence. Thus, to come to terms with one’s real self and be at peace one needs to negate the negation of oneself by those who dominate (Sartre 2004). This needs reinstating the erased Adivasi history, challenging the on-going universalization and naturalisation of existing unequal power relations via dominant discourses, effectively challenging stereotypical constructions of Adivasis, and sustained critical reflections on Adivasi status as products of a ruptured history scarred by millennia long cultural domination and oppression.
Conclusion

This chapter has shown how and why school education in Adivasi dominant regions have been a failure, and produces contradictory outcomes. School education for Adivasis does not serve the purpose it intends to due to its irrelevant content, and its abysmally deplorable quality which creates merely an occasion for wastage of funds by corruption and mismanagement besides producing negative instances of humiliation and consequent resistance among economically poorer Adivasi children and their parents. However, ironically, Adivasis, who have been victims of such cultural and symbolic violence are once again blamed for this grave and continued failure of an imperial regime, a colonial system that reproduces itself.

Furthermore, formal education in general in India naturalizes unequal power relations; and thus, it reproduces and maintains ambivalence of violence. In order to undo this, ‘educated’ Adivasis themselves need to find alternative platforms and take special personal efforts, which might not be available to all of them. Hence, most ‘educated’ Adivasis become victims turned oppressors, who not only emulate the values and life-styles of the dominant castes or classes but also keep blaming their own less-privileged co-villagers who are victims of the prevalent systemic violence and the ambivalence it produces. Thus, the content and nature (curriculum and pedagogy) of education matters very much in determining the direction of social change.

The next chapter recapitulates the main argument of the thesis, delineates its most important and immediate implications and provides methodological outlines towards processes that might help undoing structural, cultural and symbolic violence to foster radical social democracy and emancipatory politics of Adivasis and other marginalized social formations in India and beyond.
General Conclusion

*Identities are neither timeless and unchanging, nor homogenous.*

(Romila Thapar 2013: 7)

*The challenges posed to social sciences and humanities research in forecasting South Asia’s future trends of development is huge due to cognitive biases.*

Lawrence Saez 2013: 1)

*Truth is partial, accessible only when one takes sides, and is no less universal for this reason.*

(Slavoj Žižek 2009: 6)
Introduction

This thesis began by endorsing Gupta's (2012) argument that structural violence characterizes state-society relationships in India, and it is most pictorial when the state interacts with its marginalized Adivasi groups, the 'poorest' people. Then, the thesis proceeded to demystify structural violence to show that the state system in India functions on its historically, homegrown or pre-classical colonialism and racism as praxis and process based on a distorted logic of reciprocity. In order to make visible the historical sources of structural violence it historicized the Adivasi category (which broadly represents India’s most marginalized classes of peoples) beyond the ‘modern’ Indian history. While doing so it has exposed the origin, spread and deeply entrenched ancient varna caste-based discrimination, conceptualized in this thesis, as colonialism and racism. Thus, the thesis has argued that the emergence of such a colonial state-system and its gradual growth into a full-fledged infernal machine of practico-inert fields in the alluvial plains has had its corollary effects resulting in the formation of more flexibly and democratically organized groups – Adivasis – who had escaped or fled into the mountainous forests.

While Adivasis who, thus, kept escaping the ancient colonial infernal state-systems were termed as ‘barbarians’ on forested and mountainous tracts, the sudras (the ‘lowest’ toiling castes) and ‘outcastes’ or ‘untouchables’ (‘impure’) castes were already reduced to practico-inert or subhuman positions as the infrastructure of the infernal state machines in the alluvial plains. These were caught in bondage or shackled by fear and were forced to remain at the outskirts of state-based plains settlements of the subcontinents. The thesis has also argued that the continued subhuman existence of a large percentage of Dalitbahujans (the majority oppressed social groups) within Indian ‘mainstream,’ and that of Adivasi social formation in environmentally degraded, inaccessible, mountainous and mineral rich regions of India today testifies the unaltered continuation of ancient (pre-classic) colonial and racist praxis and process embodied in the Indian colonial civic order or ‘mainstream’ represented by ‘the state’ in India.

Thus, it is not difficult to understand why it is today’s most marginalized Adivasis who keep resisting and challenging their unequal incorporation into such a colonial civic order. Their resistance to the unrestricted advancement
of the colonial desires (of all those consciously and unconsciously adhere to political Brahmanism) veiled under the garb of official nationalism, necessitates the deployment of armed forces by the very colonial logic of the state-system. Thus, the Indian state and its Adivasis are the two diametrically opposite poles of a single phenomenon – the Indian colonial civic order – throughout India’s long history. Naturally, the pictorial evidence of structural violence being most evident in Adivasi dominant regions, that Gupta (2012) mentions at the epilogue of his book, stands correct.

While these remain the mains thematic arguments, the supporting arguments and field materials are presented in subsequent chapters. Chapter Two on state formation has explicated the historical processes of co-opting or subjugating Adivasi chieftains and resisting retreat of unequally coerced Adivasis by holding on to their subjectivities (alternative imaginations of who they are) of their ‘sacral polities.’ Chapter Three has shown how the distorted (colonial) logic of state formation still works out among Adivasi social formations producing poverty and destitution for the many weaker ones, and fortunes for a few already well-endowed. Chapter Four has explicated how these already well-endowed have continuously been recruited to the system only on condition that they follow the same rules and logic of the system while being Adivasis by ascription. This is where ambivalence of violence, the vehicle that reproduces the system, is located. Chapter Five (The fifth chapter) has shown how the powers of exclusion deprive and reduces Adivasis in their ethno-territories, their social ecology eroded, solidarity destroyed via antagonistic competition and atomization by means of state-facilitated accumulation and differentiation practices of social ‘intimates.’ Chapter Six (on education) has, to some extent, made explicit how the Indian education system prepares Adivasi elites to be fitting colonial kinglets to serve the colonial state-system while the colonial citizens so produced in turn reduce their co-villagers to subhuman (practico-inert) status.

On the one hand, the ongoing praxis and process of colonialism and racism is fuelled by colonial desires advocated by political Brahmanism, whose origin in India might be traced back to the constructed ‘purity’ (divinity) of the dominant elite, which has been justified by a superstitiously projected and fixated ‘impurity’ of those doomed to be servants. In the course of time, the original brahmanical desire kept adopting newer forms, such as rational liberalism, neoliberal capitalism and their legitimation by dominant
discourses of ‘national development’ and ‘economic growth.’ Thus, they move on endlessly, caught up in an endless exercise of chasing a mirage, which produces endless and unintelligible distortions and contradictions. On the other hand, Adivasis’ original imaginations, of more egalitarian, democratic, redistributing and securely bound societies whose power-relations (embodied in sacral polities were more flexible and even dissoluble by themselves) have been driving them to the opposite direction, nonetheless with inevitable deprivations and contradictions in changing times. In between these two main trajectories are numerous contradictions arising out of the ambivalence of ‘intimate’ exclusion or violence, and the contemporary puzzles of Indian politics thereof.

However, before discussing these trajectories, it is important to delineate the immediate and crucial implications of the main arguments of this thesis.

**Important and Immediate Implications**

Re-conceptualizing Adivasis as state avoiding and challenging people contradicts the prevalent conceptions of ‘Adivasi’ or ‘Scheduled Tribe’ category as ‘remnants’ of historical evolution as the evolution and race theorists have them. It also challenges some of the taken for granted notions that Adivasis are ‘primitive,’ ‘backward,’ ‘uneconomic,’ ‘isolated’ and ‘victims of development,’ notwithstanding the increased deprivations imposed upon them by others. Instead, while presenting Adivasis as state avoiding and challenging people, the thesis has clearly disclosed certain praxes and processes that have driven Adivasis to their present predicaments. Their extremely impoverished marginality today ultimately exposes the unimaginable cruelty that the Indian colonial civic order – the formal state apparatus, its official agents and colonial citizens – as a whole embodies. Citing a single instance suffices to make this point strike home: the south Indian state of Kerala has been highly acclaimed worldwide for its achievements of a higher level life expectancy and nearly hundred per cent literacy rates. However, the same state’s Adivasi children die of malnutrition and hunger almost every day, which does not create any sense of injustice among its ‘civilized’ citizens and those in power. ‘The continuing deaths of infants and children due to malnutrition in Attappady, the only tribal block in Kerala, reflects the state government’s apathy towards addressing issues germane to the tribals residing in the region’ (Manikandan 2014: 1).
This thesis strongly challenges the axiomatic notion that Adivasis’ deprivations, starvation, and deaths are entirely caused due to issues that are ‘germane to them.’ On the contrary, the thesis has shown that the issue is primarily with the so-called ‘mainstream.’ It has pointed out that the proposed model or pattern of social change in India has been *sanskritisation* and *westernization*, a process animated by what Rudolph and Rudolph (1978a) termed as ‘the pursuit of Lakshmi,’ the unrestrained strive to hoard wealth, honour, power and fortunes; and to pass it onto a rigidly restricted privileged posterity, defined by *jati* caste. While this being the case, the pursuers of Lakshmi remain blissfully unmindful of the deprivations and violence it imposes on people who have been historically alienated. Moreover, the mantra of political Brahmanism – pursuit of Lakshmi – also goes well with logic of neoliberal global capitalism’s maxim: let the marketplace rule unconstrained, while human beings and the natural world be used and then discarded to maximize profit (Hedges and Sacco 2012).

Moreover, the thesis has also pointed out that the economically more deprived Adivasis, with subsistence-based, more sustainable life-style, and distinct cultural values (ethos), despite being pauperized to the maximum, still pose a sharp ideological contrast and challenge to the pursuit of Lakshmi even today. Hence, Adivasis and their imaginations of a ‘sacral polity’ has not only been the antithesis of political Brahmanism, but also a serious threat to the *Hindutva* [Hindu-ness] of capitalist development' (Desai 2011: sic; Kapoor 2009; Gatade 2011; Mander 2012; EPW 2012). Hence, in the eyes of political Brahmanism, Adivasis must be done away with, since they not only challenge it, but also their resisting presence announces the former’s deceptiveness although Adivasis have so far been constructed otherwise.

Thus, this reconceptualization of Adivasi category has highlighted their agency, alternative imaginations of a more democratic and egalitarian society, and cultural dignity, despite the continued impoverishment and pauperization imposed up on them. Moreover, Adivasis reject and challenge the dominant values of graded inequality and the classical colonial exercise of chasing a mirage (colonial desires) advanced in India by political Brahmanism. This also shows how they derive meaning, values and a sense of integrity from their alternative cosmologies, subjectivities of territorial precedence and collective belongingness, authentic reciprocity, mutual aid, and a holistic understanding of life and its symbiotic interrelatedness with
nature (Padel et al 2013). They keep pursuing a subsistence mode of production based on foraging and self-employed agriculture which facilitate more flexible social organizations with more egalitarian, communitarian and radical democratic principles of their sacral polity (Roy 1970; Fortier 2009; Shah 2007, 2010).

Having said this at this point, nevertheless, the thesis also raises serious challenges and questions about the Adivasi-ness of accumulating and differentiating Adivasi elites, since their new-found ‘fortunes’ and colonial desires have distanced themselves far from their co-villagers. Most of them remain largely ambivalent, oblivious, often far removed from the daily struggles and longings (subjectivities) of their fellow Adivasi-life-worlds. Moreover, they, consciously or unconsciously, contribute to the ongoing pauperization of their less-fortunate and impoverished co-villagers as a consequence of the ambivalence of violence embodied in the colonial civic order and its state-system, besides several other factors. However, Adivasis who are already in positions of power might now be able to muster courage to rightfully assert theirs and their less-fortunate co-villagers’ Constitutional and Fundamental Rights. This would be a real challenge to Adivasi elites to create trust and credibility among their own marginalized co-villagers rather than blaming them for their constructed ‘backwardness.’ Only by doing this will the affluent Adivasi be able to challenge the distorted ethics of political Brahmanism and its adherents, the trend setters, whose super-exploitation not only of marginalized people, but also the ecology constitute the Indian colonial system.  

115 The Tribal Affairs Minister Kishore Chandra Deo has spoken out at different public fora against the ongoing abuse of Adivasis’ rights by the state assisted agents of the corporate powers. He has also written to Chief Ministers of different state governments to implement legislations that provide special Constitutional rights to Adivasis in Scheduled Areas (see Goswami 2012; Tehelka 2012). This might be seen a positive (productive) consequence of the recently publicized Naxalite violence (Sharma 2013) in Adivasi-dominant regions of the country, as it has also gained some space in the mainstream media to discuss pressing Adivasi ‘issues.’ It is also important to note, in this context, the case of Soni Sori, an Adivasi woman teacher from Chhattisgarh who showed extraordinary courage to stand by her convictions at the face of state-police-terror and unimaginably inhuman physical torture under police custody. The outrageous deceptiveness and schizophrenic fear of the ruling elites, who make up the present Chhattisgarh government, is evident in its recent attempts ‘implicate noted Sociologist Prof. Nandini Sundar, Head of Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics and others associated with her, for alleged links with banned Maoists in Chhattisgarh… This is yet another attempt by the Chhattisgarh government to threaten,
social groups will do well to realize that their dignity lies in actively challenging and rejecting political Brahmanism and not in imitating or introjecting it.

The rest of this chapter charts out the two opposite trajectories: one, the Indian elites’ endless chase of mirages facilitated by political Brahmanism; and the other, Adivasis alternative imaginations (subjectivities) centred on ‘sacral polity’ and endless retreat. Then, it discusses the politics of ambivalence in India. Further, it presents Sartre’s philosophy of histories or philosophical anthropology to suggest a way out for bringing the two opposite trajectories together to engage in meaningful confrontation, dialogue, mutual appreciation and better understanding to move towards a more meaningful and relevant concept of development as enhancement of freedom, solidarity, equality, human dignity and sustainability.

**The Two Contradictory Trajectories:**

1. **Political Brahmanism or Indian Elitism: Chasing Mirages**

The first and second chapters of this thesis has located the self-attributed ‘purity’ (divinity) of the dominant castes to be at the origin of an Indian colonial desire. This self-attributed divinity occurs in the context of scarcity; it is scarcity interiorized or simply unrestrained greed and pride. This has gradually developed into pursuit of Lakshmi, an unrestricted, competitive and antagonistic strife for wealth, power, honour and good fortunes at the cost of the greater common good, freedom of being and becoming more human. Thus, political Brahmanism fits well with the ideologies of classical (European) colonialism and contemporary neoliberal global capitalism that also survives mainly by chasing similar mirages variously projected as ‘economic growth,’ ‘modernity,’ ‘development’ and so on.

Currently, these alliances of colonial desires are ‘exploding into a whole way of life, encompassing everything from private banking conditions to invitation-only health clinics … Those with money, increasingly lock their entire lives behind closed doors. Rather than attend media-heavy events, they arrange private concerts, fashion shows and art exhibitions in their own homes. They shop after-hours, and have their neighbours (and potential intimidates and silences anyone raising issues of accountability by state police and government to Constitutional requirements and human rights laws...’ (Sinha 2014: 1).
friends) vetted for class cash’ (Emily Flynn 2007, quoted in Žižek 2009: 4).

Thus, a new global class has emerged ‘with, say, an Indian passport, a castle in Scotland, a *pied-à-terre* in Manhattan and a private Caribbean island – the paradox is that the members of this global class dine privately, shop and view art privately, everything is private, private, private.’ While they create their enclaves or ‘private empires,’ their contact with the outside world comes in two forms: business and humanitarianism (protecting the environment, fighting against diseases, supporting the arts, etc.). ‘They live mostly in a pristine nature – whether trekking in Patagonia or swimming in the translucent waters of their private islands.’ However, these gated superrich fear external social life. ‘They insulate themselves from the dangers of mingling with ordinary people. …’ While ordinary people swarm through the dangers of streets down below, they float around on a higher level, up in the air.’ And their primary concerns are how to minimize security risks – disease, exposure to threats of violent crime, and so forth. ‘Are not these “global citizens” living in secluded areas the true counter-pole to those living in slums and other “white spots” of the public sphere? They are, indeed, two sides of the same coin, the two extremes of the new class division’ (Žižek 2009: 4-5).

What these pursuers of Lakshmi qualify as ‘successful’ models have proved to be more barbaric, brutal, and harsh in India (see Das and Padel 2010, Roy 2010, 2011). These models drive people into homogenous nation states to serve the political and economic interests of imperial and colonizing powers spread around the world. ‘The process of nation-state formation is millennia old, involving suppression, homogenization and control, the leading themes of state policy. Today “western” ideology permeates the farthest reaches of the global north, south, east and west.’ Indigenous communitarian, non-western values coexist and resist the ‘western’ domination inside the boundaries of virtually all nation-states. ’western,’ refers to the hegemonic values, beliefs, and policies which undergird global neoliberal capitalism,' although, first developed in Europe and the United States, ‘they now pervade elite classes/ castes and power structures worldwide’ (Chomsky 2010: 9-11; also see Galtung 1990).

These transnational elite classes, who chase the mirage of their private
empires, also propagate the idea of one nation, and one people. Such processes of forced nation-state formation simultaneously advances neoliberal global economic policies which suppress cultural and linguistic diversity via educational standardization, atomization of communal bindings (Ibid.). For they apparently legitimize more advanced colonial desires in the eyes of pauperized masses (Reich 1975).

In India’s case, ‘The Brahmanical law-books repeatedly stressed that the king should be guided by the laws laid down in the Dharmasastras [Manu’s law book which stresses the social positions, duties and rights of jalis/ castes] and by the customs prevalent in India’ (Sharma 2007: 179). Sharma’s (1959) comments on the advice being given to ancient ruling elites of India by Kautilya, the author of Artha Sastra (the science of material wealth), are interesting: ‘strikingly enough, Kautilya makes the deliberate use of superstitions in hoodwinking the masses and thus securing their loyalty to the state’ (Ibid.: 236). This bears close similarities to an anecdote that shows how power is always in excess, and hence corrupt.

Where does a wise man hide a leaf? In the forest! But what does he do if there is no forest? He grows a forest to hide it in, said the priest in an obscure voice. A fearful sin! … And if a man had to hide a dead body, he would make a field of dead bodies to hide it in. (Žižek 2008: 95).

Power distorts truth or presents untruth as truth to legitimize, secure and persist while rendering other forms of knowledge as ignorance. Such is the insidious dynamics of power and domination, 'culturally schizophrenic: being present and yet not visible, being visible and yet not present' (Macado 2000: 11). The pre-British Indian colonial polity rested on political Brahmanism to forge oppressive hegemony (see Peabody 2003). The state in united Bihar has almost been identical with the ‘upper’ caste elites (Sushmita 2014) while the emerging leadership of the ‘Backward Castes or Classes’ inevitably come to adhere to political Brahmanism (see Witsoe 2012, 2013), perhaps, due to want of alternative models or it takes extraordinary courage to fight the prevalent system. Thus, the ruling elites, in India in general, conveniently adhere to political Brahmanism not only to make the toiling masses act as it chooses, but also to defend the elites’ privileges and fortunes. The resiliency of caste-based inequalities in India must therefore be traced to the efforts of the adherents of political Brahmanism to manipulate and deceive the millions

---

116 The reference here is to ethnic nationalism in India (Aloysius 1997).
of India’s non-literate ‘masses,’ so kept, to their advantage.

This manipulative, and of late, desperate deceptiveness, evident in the Indian education system, does not promote critical discussion and thinking. The Indian elites’ deliberate efforts to manipulate history is a clear symptom of deep rooted fear of being challenged of their colonial desires and privileges (Sharma 2007, Ilaiah 2004). Hence, it is very evident that the Indian elites would keep defending and falsely justifying their colonial desires, but are afraid of any move towards equitable social change and meaningful democratization.¹¹⁷ For example, a recent sociological ‘experiment’ on jati/caste-based beliefs, and practices in Karnataka, India shows that,

1. There has been continued disconnect between academic writing on caste and society and popular narratives about caste;
2. There has really been no serious discussion or intellectual reflection on the dynamics of caste;
3. Caste is not discussed in public domain, instead of discussions there are only judgments;
4. Quite many public intellectuals are reluctant to write about caste and most often discussions on caste are reduced to that of reservations [affirmative action policies];
5. Caste practices have been sustained by various truths and beliefs; and that
6. Bringing sociological insights into public domain – disseminating academic insights on caste through (vernacular) mass media is important (Guru and Sarukai 2014: 28-29).

In short, the dominant castes in India have time and again refused to publicly discuss and deconstruct the taken-for-granted truths, beliefs, and practices that facilitate, produce and reproduce caste-based domination, discrimination and oppression in India. Understandably because they have been the main beneficiaries of this system, and hence, the real deadlock would be both the fear of losing their privileges, on the one hand, and being blamed, as a group that deliberately perpetuates the system, on the other. Thus, a section of the evidently embarrassed Indian elites¹¹⁸ have recently begun either to deny the existence of caste-based discrimination altogether or

¹¹⁷ A study undertaken by the Asian Centre for Human Rights shows that the Government of India funds only to NGOs that perform service delivery and not to NGOs that engage in activities related to enforcing the rule of law and democracy. Moreover, NGOs allegedly had to pay about 15% to 30% of the grants to have their projects approved – ‘bribe to processes the applications.’ (Chakma 2013).

to blame it entirely on European (British) colonialism and orientalism. One of the best examples of a desperate effort to deny not only the existence of caste system but also Hinduism as a religion, while being oblivious of the grassroots Indian realities, could be found in a recent book *Reconceptualising India Studies* by Rao (2012). Thus political Brahmanism might well be tagged with self-attributed divinity the basic (Indian) colonial desire, interiorized scarcity, schizophrenic fear, violence and deceptiveness while it ardently tries to adhere to newer colonial desires of neoliberal global capitalism.

It is apt now, in contrast to Indian elitism, to take a look at Adivasi social formations to see how they exercise self-restraint especially in relation to the use of resources, in sharp contrast to the so-called ‘mainstream’ society.

2. **Adivasis and Their Sacral Polity: an Exercise of Freedom**

On examining Adivasis’ relationship with the natural environment historically, one finds that they had developed what could be termed as the ‘socialism of abundance,’ where no one goes hungry, in sharp contrast to the caste-divided plains societies which were traditionally considered ‘civilized.’ For example, O’Malley (1910) caught this important aspect of the Hos of Kolhan in his *District Gazetteer of Singhbhum, Seraikela and Kharsawan.* ‘There has not been a famine here since 1866, chiefly because the majority of the population are aboriginals and a considerable part of their food supply consists of edible forest products’ (Ibid.: 120).

Adivasis’ socially devised restraint displayed in their management of forests in turn reflects the nature of these social formations (Corbridge 1996). Sarat Chandra Roy had caught the Mundas’ traditional way of using forest resources.

It is in the months of *Chait* or *Baisik* (March to May) before the rains set in, that in many villages the Munda and Pahan, on a day appointed beforehand, lead the villagers into the village-jungles and the necessary fuel and timber for the year is cut down by the villagers from a specified part of the jungle, leaving the other part or parts to be similarly dealt with by rotation in successive years. And the wood thus cut down is then taken home by the villagers according to their respective needs. By this prudent use procedure, the village jungles can never be devastated (Roy 1970: 63).
Most recently, anthropologist Felix Padel tells his experience of the Dongaria Kondhs who have so far resisted bauxite mining by Vedanta, a multinational company, in Niyamgiri hills in Odisha in Eastern India.

The Dongaria observe ‘niyam,’ which are the traditional rules of restraint about what is taken from nature. Tribal religion is based on respect for the natural world. The Dongaria taboo on cutting forests on mountain summits, and in particular felling trees on the mountain top under dispute, Niyam Dongar, is a brilliant example of this. ... They understand, perhaps better than most scientists, that the forests on top of the mountain holds deposits of water, which ensure that the flow of the perennial streams that are such a striking feature of the Niyamgiri range. The bauxite deposit at the top of Niyam Dongar acts as a sponge that soaks up the monsoon rain, holding it and releasing it slowly throughout hot summer months.¹¹⁹

It needs to be understood that tribal societies such as Dongaria are extremely developed in certain areas where mainstream society is itself backward or underdeveloped. ... in maintaining restrain towards nature, which is the basis of real or long-term sustainability; in the tradition of dance and song through which tribal people actively entertain themselves, instead of becoming passive consumers of media promoted ‘stars’; and in a value system which emphasizes sharing instead of competition. ... If you attend a tribal council you will find these are models of real democracy – people speak their minds fearlessly, and the aim is consensus. ... The Adivasi system allows contestants to speak their mind freely before fining both sides (usually), and using these fines to pay for a fest of reconciliation. ... ‘Adivasi Economics’ emphasizes on restraint towards the environment. It may be that the Dongarias’ grassroots democracy will even inspire a large-scale shift throughout India towards an economic system that is based on ecological principles (Ibid.).

Furthermore, Mahasweta Devi, who has known Adivasis well enough to publish extensively on Adivasi lives and struggles in India, has recently termed Adivasis as “the most civilized people” to whom Indian forests, rivers and mountains owe their survival.”¹²⁰ Furthermore, Shah (2010) describes, in some detail, how the Mundas of Jharkhand practice certain faith-based (spirit-animated) procedures to elect officials to their ‘sacral polity’ which is non-sectarian and radically democratic.

These citations are in no way meant to ‘romanticize’ Adivasi social formations. However, it is important to reiterate that Adivasis have developed and lived their sociocultural systems that might have contrasted sharply with that of the rigidly hierarchically graded ones of the plains, when they had more control of their own lives. This thesis has, to some extent, traced the


processes of gradual parcelling of such holistically integrated Adivasi social formations, in Chotanagpur plateau during the course of India’s long history. It has also shown that the most marginalized sections of these social formations still cherish and live these alternative imaginations of an integrated and holistic view of a more radically democratic and egalitarian society in their everyday lives (Shah 2010; 2014).

However, as Žižek (2008) has argued, ‘the secular-progressive culture has swept away traditional beliefs.’ The specialists of ‘progress,’ ‘modernity’ and ‘development,’ while debating about traditionalism versus secular, liberal relativism, have thrown the baby out with the bath water which looked murky precisely because the baby was inside it. (Ibid.: 41, 276). This relates to the Sartrean view of ‘progress,’ as ‘a ruling class mystification designated to stave off social change (in conjunction with his acknowledgment of the usefulness of scientific and technological progress).’ For Sartre, ‘progress’ can be negative due to the alienation resulting in practico-inert. However, he also referred to ‘progress’ as positive practico-inert embodied, for example, in civil rights legislation or other forms of democratization (Howell 1995: 7).

The violence and ambivalence of ‘modernity’ is evident while it invents ‘some mode of being together, and simultaneously deprives of any support in traditional ways of life, in inherited religions or ethnic life-forms’ (Žižek: 425).

The Context of Ambivalence in India: Conversion of Sacral Polities into Political Brahmanism

Sharma (1959) has tried to show how ‘tribal’ social formations had managed to control their chieftains in power by various ritual practices that were integral to their being together as more egalitarian communities, at least, in their own (numerous and independent) in-groups during ancient times.

The savage Timmes of Sierraleone, who elect their king, reserved to themselves the right of beating him on the eve of his coronation; and they availed themselves of this constitutional privilege with such hearty goodwill that sometimes the unhappy monarchs does not long survive his elevation to the throne. It seems that the practice was meant to test the endurance of the king – a rite of initiation or a test to find out the power of endurance in the tribal chief (Ibid.: 123).

According to him, when social transformations in ancient Indian history began to take place during the later Vedic period when the brahmanas (ancient Indian priests) ‘laid hold of such indigenous ritual practices to assert
their power over the king, and later it came to be interpreted as the king’s exemption from the operation of law’ (Ibid.).

Chapter Two of this thesis has shown that most theories of state-formation in north India agree that a long-drawn and conflict-ridden conversion of the principles of Adivasi sacral polities into that of political Brahmanism lies at the heart of the process. This involved a gradual assimilation or conversion of powerful Adivasi chieftains into raja-status while relegating the lower strata to the status of ‘impure’ serfs and consequent resistance in forms of the weapons of the weak. Such conflicting, long-drawn and complex processes mark one of the main characteristics of India’s unrecorded ‘history from below.’ Hence, it is crucial to account for the phenomenon of a classic ‘victim mentality’ of those who suffered repeatedly, from generation to generation, the traumatic effects and oppressive outcomes of Indian racism and colonialism that political Brahmanism entails: historical or generational trauma associated with the parcelling of more holistic and egalitarian social units (Heart 2003; Evans-Campbell 2008; Braun 2014). This is an important theme for further research: the intergenerational trauma or accumulated ambivalence of ‘intimate’ exclusion facilitated by political Brahmanism which embodies the peculiar Indian racism and colonialism.

Accordingly, one also sees Adivasi elites’ tactics of attributing higher status or qualities to themselves and inferior qualities to their deprived co-villagers to justify their fortunes that come by activities of unequal accumulation and differentiation. Sinha (1986) has referred to such processes of state formation in Chotanagpur as ‘secondary primitivisation.’ These processes obviously involved consequent conflicts, co-option, distortion of holistic communities, and sociocultural revival movements to reconfigure identities from below, compromise (cf. Pati 2001) and resultant ambivalence. This neglected aspect of the processes of state-formation in India needs further probing as to how it produces self-doubt and ambivalence among emerging leadership. Chapter Three, Four and Five of this thesis have highlighted how the pursuit of Lakshmi, adopted or introjected by Adivasi elites, and consequent differentiation produce ‘intimate’ exclusion/ violence and ambivalence among co-villagers. Chapter Six of this thesis (on education) has, to some extent, highlighted how dehistoricisation has been operationalized by deliberately denying Adivasi history and cultural values to Adivasi children.
while indoctrinating them with the dominant myths.

Gramsci has argued, hegemony for rule is produced by the elite providing ‘a moral, intellectual and cultural leadership’ (Krut 1996: 103). Following Gramsci’s formulation of hegemony, certain ‘subaltern historians’ in India have argued that what they find in India is ‘domination without hegemony.’ However, this thesis has shown that co-option and deception, in general, have been the general pattern of state formation in Adivasi dominant regions throughout Indian history. Hence, the production of hegemony in India cannot be based on any moral or intellectual ground, but on a colonial and racially segregated and sectarian style, by invoking divisive, ethnic, and communal sentiments among ordinary people. Such manipulation of India’s vast sections of non-literate people’s accumulated fear, and ambivalence arising from intergenerational trauma of Indian colonialism and racism produce (a kind of life-negating) hegemony (see Ilaiah 2004, 2010). A more spectacular display of this ambivalence of violence might be seen in the ‘elite revolt’ (Corbridge and Harris 2000) under the banner of a peculiar brand of cultural or religious nationalism advanced by the missionaries of ‘syndicate Hinduism’ (Thapar 2010; Narayan 2008; Desai 2011).

Thus, the Indian democracy might well be described as a colonial civic order that embodies most characteristics of a standard colonial system. Hence, it is understandable that instead of civil society, what one finds in India are ‘uncivil or political societies’ constituted by both its colonial citizens and subjects. The fluidity of their statuses range from ‘colonial subjects,’ who have no rights, to ‘subaltern’ citizens, whose rights are limited by privileged elites, to ‘full’ citizens who enjoy a maximum of rights under the constitutions, subsequent legislations, and state policies (Thompson 2000: 2). This colonial civic order is thus founded on a dehumanizing colonial violence and deceptiveness of political Brahmanism whose outcome on its sufferers is termed in this thesis as ambivalence of violence.

---

121 My reference here is to Ranajit Guha (1989) and his Subaltern Studies Group (SSG). Also see Ludden (2001); Singh (2002), Kamat (2004), Metcalf (2010) and Chibber (2013) for critiques of SS.

122 See Reghunath (2014) for discussions on a Hindu believer’s radical services to the Sangh Parivar, the family of Hindu-fundamentalist organizations.
Understanding Indian Politics Operationalized by the Ambivalence of Violence

What it is and how it has been operationalized in India

Ambivalence of violence is constitutive of structural and cultural violence, whose roots were traced, by the chapters of this thesis, to the emergence of a pitiless colonial infernal machine, the ancient Indian state animated by the brahmanical ideology of ‘purity’ and ‘pollution.’ Such unrestraint pursuit of Lakshmi creates a situation of scarcity and violence of alienation or ‘intimate’ exclusion. The ambivalence that results from such exclusionary violence might be seen as one of the main constitutive aspects of Indian society, culture and politics. Thus, the concept, of ambivalence of violence, might help better understand several apparent paradoxes and puzzles in state-society relationships in India.

Ambivalence of violence is the paradox in human psyche that permits the co-existence of guilt and evil; it has a natural inclination to suppress evil while being simultaneously ambivalent about the same (Baumeister 1997). Ambivalence of the oppressed emerges from the fact that their life-world is shaped, in multiple ways, by the subordination they repeatedly experience throughout long historical stereotyping, humiliation and repression. Even their repertoires of contention are shaped by the powers of the dominant social groups (Bates 1975). Such ambivalence of violence enables violence to flourish (Baumeister 1997). It is a state of mind arising also from a combination of routinized and internalized forms of both moralities and cruelties. The sectarian politics of communal violence in Indian colonial civic order has been triggered often by invoking such ambivalence prevalent among both the colonial subjects and citizens alike. That is why, most ironically, often the victims of such violence would themselves later be made perpetrators, as the floating ambivalence would easily be manipulated by those in power to retain power (see Bhaviskar 2005; Narayan 2009; Chaturvedi 2011; Berenschot 2011; Bhaviskar and Raka 2011).

All these clashes took place between high caste Hindus and Adivasis or Harijans [Dalits]. Yet, it is evident that they were not sparked off by caste issues, but by economic and political issues. The landless laborers demand higher wages and land, and they have begun to organize themselves to fight for these interests. The dominant rural class, however, uses its political, economic and cultural power, including direct violence, to keep the rural proletariat ‘in palace,’ as they say… The ruling class very
skillfully uses caste discrimination, caste feelings and the feudal dependence of the untouchable laborers on the land-lord as weapons (Maria Mies 1976, quoted in Devalle 1980: 11).

This text clearly brings out how skillfully the dominant groups perpetuate and manipulate the ambivalence of already subordinated groups to their own advantage. Ambivalence of violence both contributes and constitutes systemic or structural violence. It justifies, solidifies and sustains unequal power relations and structures by prolonged and unchallenged jati/caste-based racism and colonialism. Colonialism as a system continues to exist by what Sartre (2005: 9) calls, ‘neocolonialist mystifications.’

An enduring ambivalence of political leadership in India is evident in the ongoing discursive justification of repeatedly committed crimes of large-scale corruption, planned and systematically executed genocidal communal polarization, riots and killing (Engineer 1991; Tambiah 1996; Wilichowski 2012). Moreover the dominant style of public reasoning advanced almost daily on Indian mass media is something like this: ‘others have done it therefore we too do it’ or ‘all others are doing it therefore we can also do it.’ Thus, one sees political leadership in India competing for tragedy amidst mounting crisis of political (party) coalitions to forge legitimacy to stay in power.

...The focus on the innocence or culpability of certain politicians has politicized the public debate on communal violence... The current debate stimulates people to condone communal violence for the sake of defending one's political preferences and, worse still, enables political leaders to construe any criticism of the handling of the Gujarat violence as 'anti-Hindu'. For instance, as long as debates on communal violence have the character of being about Congress versus BJP, voters as well as politicians will be stimulated to defend and legitimize the occurrence of violence (Berenschot 2011: ix).

This is underlined by a single idea: forget violence, forget the complicity of the state in its systematic aiding and abetting of violence, forget a few thousand dead and move forward. To be fair to Modi, this is not unique to him but part and parcel of a body of 'ethics' that a lot of us transcending political affiliations have consciously and unconsciously absorbed for centuries. ... War, killing and violence, therefore, ought never to be matters of shame and remorse. ... Philosophical and metaphysical arguments of a higher order will always be summoned to justify violence and legitimize killing in the name of abstractions such as 'nation', 'people' and 'patriotism' (Sharma 2014; 1).123

These are clear symptoms of societal decadence perhaps mainly due to an

123 See Sharma (2014) "Where will a condoning of acquisitiveness and fratricidal violence lead us?"
education system that refuses to promote critical thinking about prevalent crippling sociocultural praxes while simultaneously indoctrinating its younger generations with deceptive and skillfully manipulated historiographies (see Sharma 2007: preface and introduction). Manipulated historiographies and dehistoricisation nurture symbolic violence (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). Hence, it is crucial to understand how the long-mystified caste-based discrimination and oppression reproduces itself in various forms via ambivalence of violence. This thesis has, to some extent, attempted to show how it operates in India’s Adivasi dominant regions. Added to this complexity is the ambivalence of the emerging elites, from within all historically marginalized groups, who in turn alienate their own less-fortunate group-members or co-villagers and reproduce practico-inert. This is a peculiar outcome of sanskritisation and westernization model as it necessarily functions on the logic: accumulation by a few and poverty, ‘intimate’ exclusion and suffering for many.

The following section explicates Sartre’s philosophical anthropology and history to better understand the dialectical relationship of social conditioning of violence and both individual and social projects to overcome it. For ‘a lucid view of the darkest situation is already, in itself, an act of optimism’ (Sartre, quoted in Rhiannon 1995:143).

Sartrean Framework for Undoing Ambivalence of Violence by Understanding its Mechanisms

One of the central aims of Sartre’s criticism of colonialism and imperialism was to expose the violence they embody, and their complex interrelations and reproductive mechanisms. He has not only made these unintelligible processes intelligible, but also charted out a powerful vision of a socialist society being centred on human persons and freedom. His existential philosophical maxim is: ‘I am condemned to be free’ (Gelblum 1970: 76). Sartre emphasizes the aspects of self-knowledge and self-determination, and thence how humans can make the kind of people they want be. He rejects any doctrine of predeterminism, which rules out the possibility for humans to rework and integrate the ‘already existing dispositions, character traits, and emotional patterns’ (Howell 1995: 4). Sartre’s (2004) posthumously published Critique of Dialectical Reason (CDR) offers the possibility of a
new ontology and epistemology of liberation, intellectually committed to social and political transformation on a global scale.

Violence Arising Out of Human Interrelatedness

A phenomenological understanding of human and societal realities – the dialectic of individuals’ embodied interrelatedness, for Sartre, is crucial in understanding and reworking the constraints they come to impose. His philosophy of histories points towards the centrality of struggle and the impossibility of reconciliation: the unavoidable notions of fraternity and violence. Historically, the existentialist dialectic of humans’ embodied interrelatedness generates otherness and restores synthesis – it goes from inertia to spontaneity to inertia, and this dialectic being the agent, marks history as a continuous violent interchange. Sartre (2004) in his CDR says, ‘Man lives in a universe where the future is a thing, where the idea is an object and where the violence of matter is the mid-wife of history [social change]’ (Ibid.: 181). The objectified ideas and the violence of matter constitutes practico-inert which ‘denotes the realm of sedimented praxis of passivity and of counter-finality. It extends and defines the nothing of otherness and recalcitrance’ (Flynn 1995: 241, emphasis added).

Practico-inert does exert a kind of negative, deforming influence on individuals and collective projects – a free inertial, objective, negative exigencies made possible by the colonialist or the capitalist ‘system’ on their practico-inertness in the ‘logic’ of a series of human decisions that entail unintended, contradictory consequences … on the ‘serial rationality.’ … In effect, practico-inertness serves to connect a class of automatic and impersonal forces with underlying praxis while retaining a certain rationality of its own: ‘there is a rationality of the theoretical and practical behavior of an agent as a member of a series [a social whole mediated by the practico-inert]’. It is the ‘logic’ of otherness, of exteriority, of passivity, of alienation, of social impotence, and ‘flight.’ ‘Serial reason’ as ‘a special case of dialectical Reason’ (Ibid.: 241, emphasis added).

Thus, alienation occurs in the course of human interactions since humans are embodied individuals who need to employ symbols to create and interpret meaning. Abstraction occurs as objective spirit or culture gets shaped as practico-inert such as, prison communes, or bourgeois practice of respectability – aesthetic and religious norms, etc. (Flynn 1995: 242). The latter could also be termed as colonial desires (Young 1995). Violence or exclusion (of the ‘other’), thus, originates and accumulates, as explained at the introductory chapter-1, in the context of material scarcity produced by specific types of colonial desires and competition between the haves and
have-nots. It ultimately results in ‘practico-inert mediation’ which forms violence: ‘the sentence of things upon persons – modified by the brute fact of material scarcity’. However, Sartre admits that within in-groups, that have been formed into extremes, passivity (practico-inert) might disappear when collectivities entirely reabsorb their alienated members or subgroups (Flynn 1995: 242). This is in-group solidarity in extreme circumstances.

While this being the human existential reality that necessarily produces violence, in the context of perceived scarcity and the threatening otherness of the other, the only way out is the conscious development and application of critical self-reflexivity, which for Sartre, is human freedom.

**Freedom Defines Human Beings**

Sartre resolves a necessarily distorted historical dialectics that produce alienation and practico-inert by combining individual freedom, of responsibility, and of authenticity within the larger processes of history. Freedom is the unique human capacity for critical self-reflexivity.

Sartre points out a ceaseless opposition between humans’ freedom of choice and the objectified burden of their past choices: ‘each configuration of dialectical reality is conditioned by the previous one, while preserving and superseding it at the same time.’ Yet, ‘while preconfiguration may preserve another, it can never simply be reduced to its predecessor’. Thus, ‘not only does the past constrain what is possible in the present, the present, in a fundamental way, also determines the past’ (Brown 1979: 4). Sartre’s emphasis on the historical subject in society marks the main difference in the dialectic he proposes and that of the so-called ‘Marxists.’ The historical social subject’s freedom, subjectivity and creativity are stressed while he or she transcends the constraints imposed on him or her. Hence, Sartre’s philosophical anthropology underlines the maxim: ‘you can always make something out of what had been made of you’ (Flynn 1995: 254).

Jopling (1995) summarizes Sartre’s moral psychology: integrity, justice, prudence, courage, magnanimity sincerity, authenticity are not inherent innate human dispositions, but are acquired by training, practice or reflection. They, to some extent, reveal what humans have made of themselves. They express a society’s moral outlook that has been developed by its members, and not as they just happen to have. Similarly, self-determination, agency,
responsibility, the unity of a life, moral reasoning and self-knowledge, all of these need to be cultivated by conscious efforts. One sees people, who by reasoning, choice, or moral reflection arrive at their moral outlook and view of the good life; who have achieved a level of personal and interpersonal integrity, by assuming a stance of self-criticism and self-questioning toward their desire, beliefs, volition, actions, and habits; and who know with some acuity what they are doing with their lives, and what their true goals are. Obviously, not everyone attains this level of moral autonomy and self-knowledge, but we hold it as an ideal to which all must aspire, and we evaluate ourselves and others in light of it. .. Its absence is manifested in self-deception or self-ignorance – a moral shortcoming (Jopling 1995: 104).

Thus, Sartre would agree with Engels that ‘active social forces work exactly like natural forces, blindly forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand and reckon with them. But when once we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only up on ourselves to subject them more and more to our own will and by means of them to reach our own ends…’ (Engels 1954, quoted in Jopling 1995: 134). Without entering into a discussion on the ‘ends’ of human endeavours, it suffice to say that humans need to exercise critical self-awareness and self-restraint to reduce structural, cultural and direct violence, especially, in a multi ethnic, linguistic and multi-cultural society. These so-called human qualities are not natural but needs conscious cultivation via proper socialization, critical reflections and practice, namely, by historically grounded critical education and organic praxes.

Relevance for Indian Situation

Interestingly, the six Indian philosophical systems, – Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta – developed clearly with the influence of Buddhism towards the beginning of the first century A.C.E, discuss the ‘ends’ of human life and salvation (Sharma 2007). In fact, Gelblum (1970) and Larson (1998) have shown that the classical Samkhya philosophy is compatible with Sartre’s philosophical anthropology being discussed here.

However, ironically, the Indian elites have neither practised these philosophical insights themselves (see Sharma 2013 a & b) nor have they

---

Sharma (2013 a, b) discusses as to how and why Indian elites broke with the mystical and theological dimensions of Indian religious and philosophical schools of thought that had been renewed by Chaitaniya and Ramakrishna.
let the historically marginalized peoples to develop their own by the forceful imposition of a centralized and deceptive education system, originally intended and introduced by the British-colonists, that comfortably suits the advancement of the newer colonial desires of the trend-setters (Ilaiah 1996). It is interesting to note Kancha Ilaiah’s (the author of Why I am not a Hindu) comments about some of the responses he had received on one of his books from his Indian friends: ‘predictably, orthodox Brahmins were angry, but so too were some “socialist” Brahmins. Actually, that did not surprise me at all, because they read Marx’s Capital just as they read the Vedas – reciting it – not a critical reading.’ However, he also received a few responses from a few Tamil Brahmans saying that ‘they discovered what was wrong with their religion and culture and how they must change if they are to survive.’

The Indian elites, who attribute divinity to themselves, must realize that ‘the maturity of democratic consciousness can be measured by how we treat, not their own descendants and dependents, but members of the classes or castes other than one’s own, because they constitute the ‘other’ side of our society.’ All alienated histories of the ‘other’ must become truly ‘ours’ not just ‘theirs.’ This needs conscious efforts to promote ‘a nuanced quasi-objectivity in common subjectivity,’ positive values of mutuality and ‘free’ (or non-alienating) ‘alterity’ among groups and their members (Flynn 1995: 230). For ‘life develops in spirals: it always passes through the same point, but at different levels of integration and complexity’ (Rhiannon 1995: 71).

‘To experience oneself, to take risks, to discover oneself by discovering things, to change while changing the world. This is to live, what better is there? I would refuse to be a God if it were offered to me. Down to the simple fact of being permanently in danger, there is nothing that cannot be a source of enjoyment’ (Simont 1995: 208). Such realizations might, hopefully, bring some changes in Indian elites’ futile exercises of chasing mirage. For ‘the way we perceive both ourselves and others reflects a profound ambivalence in our reaction to requirements of civilization. Human condition is balanced on the edge of an existential paradox – our consciousness and imagination rise above physical world of nature, yet they are inextricably linked to the natural processes’ (Charme 1991: 251). Hence, every colonial

---

125 Sikond (2007) ‘Interview with Kancha Ilaiah, the author of Why I am not a Hindu.’
desire must be critically scrutinized in a given historical and sociocultural context as to what consequences they bear for society at large.

Ilaiah (2004, 2010) has convincingly shown that India’s future hopes for a more civilized society rests in Dalitbahujans and Adivasis. These two terms, according to him, broadly encompasses almost all working class populations in India irrespective of their religious or cultural affiliations. They already have, to some extent, lived experiences of ideals such as egalitarianism, freedom, authentic reciprocity and radical democracy. Hence, there is an urgent need to rediscover erased histories, sociocultural values and revolutionary ideals of India’s marginalized social formations to build a renewed Indian (social) democracy (Ibid..). Notwithstanding, however, the prevalent politics of ambivalence by which the emerging leadership among the working class populations of India have progressively been co-opted and assimilated into the colonial civic order.

The complexity of the Indian situation must be understood in this simultaneous processes: on the one hand, colonial desires of self-attributed ‘purity,’ and pursuit of Lakshmi keep parcelling homogenous and holistically integrated social groups into estranged collectivities of atomized (individual) members (Ambedkar 1916). While simultaneously, on the other hand, there are also ambivalent, imperial, and aggressive religious nationalist and capitalist efforts to homogenize – processes that bear close similarity to fascism – aggregated by the pressures of neoliberal global capitalism (Engineer 1994; Gregor 2006; Pun any 2004; Ilaiah 2004; Lobo 2009). The paradox of Indian colonial desires and related activity of chasing mirages of an imaginary ‘India’ (see Aloysius 1997) to be ‘shining’ and emerging as a ‘super economic power,’ have alienated a large section of the Indian elites (colonial citizens) to such an extent that they remain largely oblivious to what constitutes the everyday life-worlds of India’s marginalized majority peoples – Adivasis and Dalitbahujans (broadly and fluidly, ‘colonial subjects’ as opposed to ‘colonial citizens’).

Adivasi resistance, assertion of identity and self-determination run against the grain of such homogenizing rhetoric, and aggressive nationalism in India

---

127 Also see Gatade (2013) for discussion as to how sections of Dalits being co-opted to spread communal violence and Banaji (2011) for explorations of ‘cultures of resistance’ in India ‘that are hostile to democracy.’
driven also by global neoliberal capitalist powers of exclusion (Das and Padel 2010; Roy 2011; Padel et al 2013). They (Adivasi assertions) also provide hope for the preservation and viability of communal ways of life and Indigenous cultural values. Their alternative imaginations point also to viable options for 'successful defiance,' independent efforts of independent action (Chomsky 2010: 9-11). These might seem threatening to the advocates of neoliberal global capitalism in India, which is neocolonialism par-excellence. This Indian colonialism has always been accompanied by direct physical violence of military coups, cultural violence of educational homogenization, structural violence of chronic poverty and destitution, unequal access to development resources, deprivation of emancipatory education, disrespect for and denial of indigenous identity, denial of historical memory to the oppressed groups by manipulated historiographies (chapters in this thesis), and abuse of democratic procedures wherein ‘both crime and money play an important role in winning elections (Sastry 2014: 43).

Possible Strategies for Solidarity and Confrontation

Hence, perhaps, it is possible for Adivasis and Dalitbahujans to learn from their traditions the principles of radical (social) democracy to ensure accountability, transparency and egalitarian socialism, for the recognition and affirmation of their ‘legality and dignity’ (George 2010: 1) from their own elected representatives at various levels, to begin with. This would be the beginning of an ongoing exercise of re-inventing the old universal in every new historical situation (Žižek 2008). For an alternative conception of socialism must embrace a relentless ‘struggle to democratize power across all the centres of social activity – in private as well as in compulsory obligations, in the family and the neighbourhood and the nursery and the shopping centre as well as in the public office or at the point of production’ (Hall 1984: 29).

Although this might sound too utopian an idea, there are people who have proved that it is possible. The extraordinary story of Marinaleda, a Spanish communist model village, has proved it in practice. The revolutionary leader of this village is determined to change the system into one that is not capitalistic, where people are considered merchandise: while they are

128 Chomsky (2013) says, indigenous people all over the world are leading the fight against neoliberal capitalism.
profitable, they are used, and when they are no longer profitable, they are discarded. They have determined to change these cruel and inhuman values replacing it with unions, parties and organizations that promote a different system, with human beings at the core (Hancox 2013).

It might be possible for affluent Adivasis to do this if they rediscover and re-embrace the ideals in their own sacral polities that are still cherished by their deprived co-villagers instead of introjecting/ emulating political Brahmanism which does not in any way bring them cultural dignity. The challenge is to make this practico-inert fields of historically marginalized societies and their alternative imaginations dynamically adaptable, compatible and workable for the present times. For this there must be an ongoing transformation, both at personal and at the broader communal levels. To chart out these necessary but difficult processes of transformation or rather a re-embrace with total and non-judgemental solidarity in detail, goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Hence a story that embodies the basic principles of this necessary reformation might do better.

The story is told of a Zulu girl who lived in a village where all the marriageable young women wore necklaces. Hers, however, was different and more beautiful than those worn by any of the others. As a result the girls became jealous of her. One day as she was walking alone along the river, she met a group of other girls, who told her that they all have thrown their necklaces into the river as an offering to the river god. They urged her to make the same sacrifice. So the girl took off her beautiful necklace and cast it into the river. Then all the girls laughed as they pulled out their necklaces from their pockets and ran off gleefully. Deeply saddened, the girl continued to walk slowly along the river; but then she heard a voice within say, ‘Jump in!’ So she jumped into the river at that very spot. As she reached the bottom of the river she swam into a cave where she met an old woman who had been much hurt by life. The woman said to her, ‘Kiss my scars and sores.’ The girl said, ‘I will do so gladly.’ When the girl had done so, suddenly the woman was completely healed and she looked young and beautiful again. The woman said to the girl, ‘Since you have done this for me, I will make you invisible to the demons so that they cannot harm you.’ At that very moment the girl heard a voice of a demon saying, ‘I smell flesh; I smell flesh.’ The demon, however, could not see her and went away. Then the
woman gave her a new necklace, even more beautiful than the one she had lost (Beesing et al. 1984: 215).

The challenge for today’s Adivasi elites is to cast aside the vanity, false pride and dignity that their colonial desires and pursuit of Lakshmi have bestowed on them, which marks their in-authenticity at the face of their deprived co-villagers. It is only when they are ready to risk becoming like the Zulu girl who not only threw her cherished necklace but also readily and willingly embraced and kissed the old, deformed and hurt woman to bring her life back anew. This old woman represents the falsely constructed practico-inertness of marginalized Adivasis today, which needs a re-embrace with the abundance of Adivasis’ radical socialism. This might be the path to solidarity and real empowerment.

Thus, Adivasi people’s journey to real empowerment might begin only when the affluent elites among them and their sympathizers begin to understand and appreciate their rich history, cultural heritage, values of freedom, authentic reciprocity, consensus, egalitarianism and the possibility of the abundance of radical socialism, and above all, how their uncritical adherence of brahmanical tactics and colonial desires have brought them to the present predicaments. For, as Sartre says, a lucid understanding of the historical processes and praxes, that have created the present predicaments, is itself a cause for optimism, since one now has some clarity as to how to rework the present predicament into a true emancipatory politics for a better future for all.

The same story holds great lessons for the alienated Indian elites who busy themselves chasing mirages of building ‘private empires’ while projecting an evasive idea of India to further legitimize their colonial desires. They also need to realize their indulgence, in-authenticity and unsustainability of unrestrained colonial pursuits. For they now miss the beauty, struggle, risk and meaning life offers when one is willing to restore the estranged other’s egality and cultural dignity in authentic reciprocity. Unless they risk a re-embrace of the practico-inert that have been created in Indian society, the main deadlock to the processes of meaningful democratization, they will continue to suffer from schizophrenic insecurity.

Democracy is not a formal matter of electoral politics or constitutionalism. Instead, it is the real passage of power to the powerless, though electoral
politics and constitutionalism can enable it to happen. People have to democratize formal democracies for themselves (Hall 1984: 29, emphasis added). This needs education that promotes critical self-reflexivity and knowledge to analyze and understand how an increasingly complex society functions. Certainly, democratization does not happen all at once, through one centre – by simply ‘smashing the state,’ ‘as the sort of socialist thinking which is fixated on the state would have it. It has to happen across a multiplicity of sites in social life, on many different fronts, including, of course, the state itself, whose tendency to concentrate power is precisely what constitutes it as a barrier to socialism.’ It is crucial for people to realize this and formulate viable strategies (Ibid.). Arundhati Roy, a brilliant and committed writer has proposed a viable strategy.

Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it, to deprive it of oxygen; to shame it, to mock it with our art, our music, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we were being brainwashed to believe.

The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling – their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, and their notion of inevitability (Roy 2003: 5).

Such strategies are necessary to make the private empire-builders to realize that their colonial desires might collapse if the working classes, who have so far been pauperized and atomized, undermine some of the falsely propagated colonial desires. Grounded on patiently and carefully throughout alternative ideological, critical and creative works might be able to make these powers of exclusion to suddenly realize that their powers are afflicted by unnaturally high-pitch voices (Žižek 2009).
Afterword: A Short History of Adivasis’ Resistance to ‘the state’ in Kolhan and Jharkhand

Ethnicity and nationalism are not ‘given’ but are social political constructions. They are modern phenomena inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state (Brass 1991: front cover).

It is obvious that these attacks on the oppressed masses are integral to the repeated attempts of the ruling class to exterminate political questions with military might... The state’s decisions regarding repression over the struggling masses were taken under the complete guidance of the feudal forces... In Bihar, landlords are not just a ruling class, getting the state machinery to do their bidding, but are themselves part of or extensions of the state. (Sushmita 2014: 42, 43).

Pre-British Colonial Attempts, the Hos’ Independence and ‘protected’ KGE or Hodisum (the Ho country) under British Colonialism

British intrusion into Kolhan, as in other places, took place via the ‘men of fortunes and prowess,’ whose networks had constituted part of the ancient Indian feudal state-system. A few agents of this network of landlords – the Singh raja family of Porahat that claimed the right to rule and to collect tax in Singhbhum – had entered Kolhan around the beginning of the 13th Century A.C.E. According to Streumer (forthcoming 2014), during 1720-1765 the Singh family was split and weakened due to disputes among its members, and the Hos regained their independence. ‘The power shift was clear. The Mundari speakers in present-day Kolhan rendered irrelevant the military function of most of the Singh forts, and they, with some marginal exceptions, stopped paying taxes to the Singh’s’ (Ibid.).

The powerless Jagannath Singh, the then Singhbhum raja, made alliances with neighbouring rajas to gain control over the Hos. However, the Hos defeated all their attempts to subjugate them. Eventually, in 1767, while Jagannath Singh, the raja of Singhbhum was kept in confinement by his...

---

129 Bayly (2000) refers to a groups of ‘men of pen, fortunes and prowess’ – Rajputs/ Kshatriya [warrior castes] and their attendant Brahmins [priestly/ scribal castes] (also see Stokes 1973). Brahmins were occasional visitors to Singhbhum (Sen 2008) at the service of local Adivasi chieftains who wished to ‘upgrade’ their status to Rajputs/ Kshatriyas (see Sinha 1962, 1965). Thus, a pan-Indian, supra-state network had already been established much before the British had arrived; it was this network that the British administrators had initially taken into confidence to advance their colonial interests, which these ‘men of fortunes and prowess’ enthusiastically agreed to advance (Bayly 2000: sic).

130 Personal conversations with the youngest surviving member of the ‘raja’ family at Manoharpur (18 February 2011).
cousin Subnath Singh. Eventually, Pitambar, Jagannath’s uncle asked for the British East India Company’s (BEIC) assistance to bring the Hos under control, in return to which the raja was ‘desirous of putting his territories under the Company’s protection, and paying them an annual revenue’ (Streumer forthcoming 2014). A part of Pitambar’s account to BEIC’s Midinapur resident sounded, ‘Singhbhum formerly contained near 14,000 villages but only about 500 are at present in the raja's possession; of the others some are gone to ruin and the rest are in the hands of the Kols, a tribe of plundering banditti’ (quoted in Streumer forthcoming 2014). Leaving the 500 villages aside, the entire Kolhan was in the hands of Hos for several decades; and no traveller passed through it without fear of the Larka (fighting) Hos (O’Malley 1910).

In 1820 the Singhbhum raja became a feudatory of British agency. In 1821 the British employed a large force to reduce/subjugate the Hos. While surrendering partially to the British, the Hos had earnestly requested the British to be taken under their direct rule (Ibid.). However, the British agents forced the Ho chieftains into an agreement: the Hos must pay a fixed land-rent to the raja’s men and to be obedient to the raja. The Hos, however, did not honour this agreement. Moreover, Kolhan was in regular turmoil which eventually culminated in the Kol insurrection (1831-32) in which the Hos played a major role (Choudhury 1958; Jha 1964). Hence, in 1836 the British decided to thoroughly subjugate the Hos. This was done with much bloodshed, loss of life and property, violence and terror imposed rigorously upon the Hos of refractory Pirs (see Jha 1964; Singh 1978; Sahu 1985).

After such terrorizing and violent processes of subjugation, the British placed the Hos under the direct management of a sympathetic British officer who would administer them according to their customary (munda-manki) system, codified by Sir Thomas Wilkinson; and hence, known as Wilkinson’s rules. Thus, the KGE was formed; land settlement in 622 villages was made in 1837 with the imposition of an annual rent of eight anna per plough. The mundas and mankis had considerable powers and autonomy to decide the internal affairs of their villages. They also were entrusted with the duties of rent collection, powers to settle waste land with the Ho villages, and to administer police and civil justice duties according to their customary practices without recourse to civil courts (Jha 1964; Singh 1978; Sahu 1985; Streumer forthcoming 2014). By now, Kolhan region had entered into the
category of non-regulatory districts under the south West Frontier Agency specially introduced, in 1833, by the British to administer more ‘troublesome’ Adivasi dominant regions (Jha 1964).

The KGE was a Ho ‘preserve’ (ethno territorial enclosure) established by the British in 1836-37 after the great Kol insurrection during 1831-32 against dikus (alien exploiters/ strangers who are often troublesome and whose strangeness made/ make the Kolarians suspicious) who mercilessly exploited the Adivasis of Chotanagpur (Jha 1964, Singh 1978, Sahu 1985).

The Kol insurrection of 1831-32 was born out of frustration and anger – frustration with the new system of government and law, and anger at the people [Hindu and Muslim merchants, money lenders, the alien thikadars (contractors), jagirdar (land-gift holders) or nilamdar (auction purchasers), petty officials and police] who either enforced them or took undue advantage of them… The real tragedy of the tribal people of this area was that their chiefs, alienated them by their conversion to Hinduism, and the English administrators, born and bred in the tradition of agricultural landlordism, had no sympathy with the tradition of tribal [communal] ownership of land or the idea of peasant proprietorship (Jha 1964: 240).

Thus, West Singhbhum district, the KGE proper with several British and post-British colonial ‘protective’ provisions, besides Wilkinson’s Rules; and the Hos’ numerical majority, gives the Hos a sense of being ‘the sons and daughters of the soil,’ although they too have technically been immigrants here. Hos normally assert their sense of territorial belonging to West Singhbhum (KGE) while being threatened to be displaced from their land. ‘A close study of the nature and growth of the Jharkhand movement\textsuperscript{131} brings to light four basic issues which have been instrumental in mobilising the otherwise peace-loving tribal people of the region to raise their voice of protest against subordination and injustice – land and forest alienation, immigration, cultural identity and underdevelopment’ (Ghosh 1991: 1173, emphasis added).

\textbf{Post-Independence District Administration and KGE (mundu-manki) System}

The Hos were British colonial ‘subjects’ in the KGE which formed a part of the British isolationist, paternalistic, and protective policy-outcome from 1837 to 1947. While the Kolhan system of administration continues to be in

\textsuperscript{131} The longest ethno-regional movement of the Adivasis of Jharkhand for autonomy and self-determination (Munda and Mullick 2003).
force, the independent Indian state enthused by its nationalist aspirations introduced a uniform rural self-governance system for the entire country. Accordingly, in 1948 the united Bihar state, to which Jharkhand was a part, introduced the Panchayat system. In Kolhan, Panchayat system was superimposed initially without holding elections, which not only sidelined the Kolhan (munda-manki) system of local self-governance, but also brought in much confusion and chaos of a dual or mixed systems of local governance whose roles, and boundaries overlapped (see SE 1978). ‘Bihar was the first state in the country to introduce panchayati Raj in 1948. However, elections to gram panchayats have not been held in the state since 1978. A number of other factors and developments have also been responsible for reducing panchayati raj in Bihar to a completely defunct state’ (Bharti 1989: 18).

Moreover, the office of Kolhan Superintendent (KS) that had functioned in close coordination with munda-manki (Kolhan) system became an instrument of surveillance over the ‘uncivilized’ Ho ‘tribe.’ The Kolhan system has also been undermined by the pan-Indian district (hierarchic, bureaucratic) administrative machinery: offices of the district collector (DC), police superintendent (SP), various line-departments, district judiciary; Sub-Divisional Offices (SDOs), Anchals (revenue circles), Community Development Blocks (CDBs) and block-level line-departments since 1957-58 (Choudhury 1958). However, the Ho villagers of Kolhan continue to view these superimposed structures and their personnel forming a diku sarkar of Dilli-Patna (alien governments of Delhi and Patna, referring to the national and state governments respectively) (Yorke 1976). Hence, most villagers do not go to any government office except being accompanied by a few ‘educated’ contractor-middlemen (personal conversations with villagers during fieldwork in 2011).

Colonial Mode of Exploitation, and the ‘Civilizing’ Mission of the British and Post-British Colonial (diku) States-Systems

Interestingly and ironically however, despite several regulatory or protective provisions in place favouring Kolhan and its inhabitants, mining, industrialization, deforestation, and displacement had begun here since as
early as 1865,\textsuperscript{132} and have accelerated ever since (Karen 1957; Corbridge 1996; George 2009).

Mining has been at the heart of the development debate since official and middle-class spokesmen assessed that the surest way to development was to intensify mining. Mining in Jharkhand starting in 1774; Adivasi labor in the coal fields has a long history, but the situation of the workers has greatly deteriorated both in terms of stability of employment and conditions of safety (Carrin 2013: 108).

… Increasing destitution, accidents in mines, bondage in rural areas, and prostitution in industrial centres. These are the contributions of the development processes for the people [in Jharkhand] (Sengupta 1982: xix).

The numbers of open mines and industries have increased ever since encouraging the immigration of ever increasing numbers of dikus into Adivasi regions, accelerating processes of dikuisation (the process of Adivasi elites turning dikus) and massive distress-outmigration of impoverished Adivasis. These processes have dispossessed or alienated large numbers of economically poorer Hos (Corbridge 1982, 1996; Kishwar 1987).

The most significant fact about Jharkhand is, therefore, that it is simultaneously the homeland of a large Adivasi population and the cradle of heavy industry in India… while the process of evicting Adivasis from their land began as early as the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, it became an avalanche with the onset of heavy industry, giant pants, townships, extensive mining, hydro-electric power generation etc. Along with this also came the rapid disintegration of the traditional communities, the commercial exploitation of forests and the heavy influx of outsiders… The gigantic industrialization process in Chotanagpur has operated in a vicious circle for the Adivasis: on the one hand, it has rendered ever-increasing number of them destitute through eviction, destruction of sources of livelihood, etc. and on the other hand, it has utilized their destitution to employ them on a very special role in this industrialization – the functions of coolies, which is wage slavery (Simon 1982: 213-17).

In terms of employment, the local men and women were disproportionately directed towards temporary, under privileged and unskilled jobs. While 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 ensure educational and apprenticeship provisions for the tribes, and definite company interest in maintaining the village laborers as a segregated, cheap and unorganized workforce. … Almost without exception, the tribal elements of the workforce failed to receive anything like the level of remuneration that their contribution to the general wealth warranted. The same can be said about the region as a whole (Corbridge 1982: 61-61).

Kolhan and other predominantly Adivasi regions of India have been characterized by a coincidental concentration of hills, forests, rivers (water), and minerals. In this sense, Jharkhand is known as ‘the Ruhr’ of India with 37 percent of the total mineral resources of the entire country (George 2009),

\textsuperscript{132} See appendix-8 for wood-land changes during British colonial period.
and Kolhan is known for its best quality iron ore and limestone deposits (Areeparampil 1988, 1992; 1996). However, ‘the spurt to industrialization and mining activities led to large-scale deforestation and consequent contraction of income building asset-base of Adivasi economy. Such large-scale economic exploitation also coincided with social and cultural exploitation’ (Maharaj and Iyer 1982: 167).

Drinking was no longer an occasion for conviviality. It denigrated into drunkenness which not only merely filled the state and liquor contractor’s coffers but also offered a convenient tool to the moneylenders and others of their ilk. It also increased the incidents of horizontal violence, thus weakening the family and communal ties. The rapacity of exploiters also infected village functionaries who fared no better than watchdogs to protect the interests of the enemies of tribals… the oppressive deterioration in economic conditions of tribals, the disintegration of their social institutions, the corruption of their morals, and the failure of tribal political organizations and leadership to respond to challenges of the time only exasperated tribal patience… (Ibid. 172-4).

It has been a characteristic feature of all preceding tribal movements that they started with a bang only to end with a whimper… The tribals have, today as in the past, shown immense capacity to bear the exploitative productivity of the Diku. Only when they had been pushed to the walls subjected to all forms of exploitation they did rise in rebellion (Ibid.: 197).

Moreover, state-bureaucratic expansion in Kolhan has always meant a display of the ‘will to improve and civilize’ (Li 2008: sic) a ‘defiant’ ‘tribal’ population which engenders racial discrimination along with internal colonialism (see Sengupta 1982; Mehta 1982; Devalle 1992; Das 1992). Dispossession and pauperization of Adivasis along with discriminatory treatment by oppressive powers encourage the mostly nonliterate, unemployed Adivasi youth also to join the Naxalite (armed insurgency) as foot-soldiers, which might enable them at least to vent their anger in the hope of demanding their rights by violent means (see Saxena 2009; 2011).

Half the nations’ minerals are supplied by Jharkhand which enriches the corporate setting in Mumbai and Delhi. While 21 districts of the state are affected by left-wing extremism and most of the funds of the state government goes to pay for expenses of police and paramilitary forces (Nishikant Dube, a member of Loksabha – the people’s assembly – on 27 August 2013, reported by the Times of India news service on 28 August 2013).

Furthermore, an enduring and unresolved ideological difference in Adivasis’ and dikus’ approach to material (water, forest, land and minerals) and human resources in the region, and the largely ungoverned (ad hoc) exploitation of these resources have caused gross disadvantage to Adivasis and other
deprived populations in the region. ‘… The priorities of the state and of the Adivasi communities are diverging, since for the latter, land remain a key element of their social identity. Given the incapacity of different legislative measures to protect Adivasi rights, Adivasis have few options for survival’ (Carrin 2013: 117). Clearly, this schismatic difference has been at the heart of continued conflict which define Adivasis’ relationship to the idea of both the ancient and 'modern' state in India (Béteille 1986, 1998; Saha 1986; Mullick 1993, 2004; Mundu 2003, 2008).

**A Short Historical Sketch of Repression and Adivasis’ Amazingly Resilient Resistance**

The Hos’ responses to colonial mode of exploitation, oppression, and ‘development’ induced displacement and dispossession needs to be understood in their specific historical contexts. Accordingly, the following section presents: (1) historical experiences of pre-British colonial negotiated subjugation, exploitation and racial oppression; (2) violent and repressive British colonial subjugation, paternalism, exploitation and resistance; (3) post-British colonial exploitation, and systemic discrimination, and (4) Adivasis’ growing destitution and disillusionment with their own leaders.

**Pre-British State Formation and the Churning Among Kolarian Adivasi Groups in Chota Nagpur**

The vast hilly and jungle areas of Chotanagpur plateau, comprising several districts of Central India – Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and West Bengal – had remained a refuge zone for several Adivasi groups such as the Gonds, Santals, Oraons, Mundas, Khonds, Hos, Kharias, Bhumijs, Juangs, etc., who have had a history of continuous displacement, alienation, and escape away from the oppressive state-based, more powerful social formations. (Roy 1970; Saha 1986; Areeparampil 2002). Chotanagpur plateau of central eastern India is a rugged and thickly forested tract. According to Mangobinda (1989), Chotanagpur, during pre-British times, had 44 spoken languages and 96 castes/tribes, who were the ‘radical elements’ of Indian civilization (Ibid.: 52). The Kolarians or Kols, have a longer historical tradition of migration prior to their arrival and settlement in Chota Nagpur (Areeparampil 2002: 30-40).
This region and its people, who ‘share some common basic traits (related languages, culture, and aspects of social organization) as well as historical experiences, and a long history of migrations into the area’ (Devalle, 1992: 14), had remained relatively insulated from the Hinduised pan-Indian, plain-based mainstream (Roy 1970 and Saha 1986). However, after several decades of semi-settled agriculture, ‘the gradual brahmanizing of the aboriginal non-Aryan or casteless tribes’ had begun even among the ‘casteless Adivasis of Chotanagpur’ (Mamgobinda 1989: 102).

The tribals were bound by community customs, traditions, and consensus. They would take decisions not in camera but in the open. All adult males and females, assembled on the occasion, had their right to be heard. Custom had overriding sanction and community decisions were easily enforced. They had not produced any Manu or Moses to codify laws. Nobody enjoyed any prerogative and no claim could be enforced against the community’s decision (Maharaj and Iyer 1982: 167).

In the early middle ages there was no raja ruling over the country which was divided into Parhasi Pirs of 15 to 20 or even 25 villages, each under its manki and local mundas. These local leaders probably received no rents but only assistance in war and a salami at festivals. Then at some time between the 6th and 10th century A.C.E., the manki of Sutiambe, Pani Mukut Roy, was chosen as chief of mankis or raja by all the mankis and mundas. It was said that between that installation and the year 1839, some 62 rajas of the family had sat upon the Chotanagpur thrown (Jha 1964: 24).

In 1616, raja Durjan Sal [a descendant of Pani Mukut Roy] was seized by Mughal rulers and was for some time held prisoner in Gwalior fort. On his return from captivity after 12 years, he took the title ‘Maharaja’ [the great king] of Chotanagpur. ‘At much the same time the raja and his court were converted to Hinduism. For the Maharaja the Brahmans produced a hitherto unsuspected ancestral link with Pundarika, the mythical king of the Nagas or snakes. By the 18th century, the “Kshatriya” ruler was looking down upon the unconverted tribesmen, of whom Hamilton wrote, “The Dhanggar are still impure unconverted mlechas or barbarians”’ (Jha 1964: 30). Thus, Adivasis were forced to ‘live among a people who look down up on them as a degraded race, and one of whose favourite theories is, the Kols were created to serve them. This, no doubt, must be as demoralizing as it is aggravating’ (Dalton 1960: 206).

By the middle of the 18th century the communitarian Adivasi society was already encompassed in a large social system. Its isolation had been broken and the seeds of dissolution set in. First it was Hinduisation which exploited the disintegration by incorporating the Adivasis into its social division of labour represented by caste system (Sengupta 1982: 243-4).

Hinduisation was well under way by the 16th century. The Hinduised Adivasi chieftains
erected a number of temples in Palamau. The Cheros adopted Hindu names, borrowed Brahmanical gotras [lineages] in support of their claims to Rajput status, and by the close of the 19th century, the Palamau Cheros were wearing the sacred thread. Anthropologists Dalton, Resley, Henry and Elliot agree in believing them to be the Kinsmen of the Mundas and Oraons (Jha 1987: 9).

The Maharaja, made further elaborate arrangements to extract revenue not only to meet the demands of his paramount power but also to create a grand life-style befitting that of Hindu kings of the plains. He needed huge amounts of revenue to build temples; thus, he introduced feudal relations of landed property; and created a new class of feudal landlords who were brought into the region from the plains where feudal relations had already existed. The Maharaja also created around him a circle of Brahman priests, Rajput and pseudo-Rajput courtiers, officials and place-hunters belonging to various Hindu castes/jatis mostly from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh (Saha 1986).

The large numbers of caste Hindu groups introduced in Chotanagpur with large areas of landed estates were again partly or wholly rented out to other adventurers for fixed rent. It, thus, created several layers of external property interests in Adivasi land. Adivasis, who never paid any rent for their land, had to be forced to accept this new system of alien landlords demanding rents. Hence, the king and other jagirdars (estate grantees) created private armies of rajputs and pseudo-rajput mercenaries with further land grants for their services. The brahmanas were also given free land-gifts for their priestly or scribeal (expert) services. Further, several subsidiary kingships were erected in remote parts of the region. These subsidiary kings again employed a similar strategy of estate-creation, forced labour and revenue extraction from Adivasi producers (Saha 1986; 1994).

Such extraction and the grant of so much tribal land to oppressive foreigners led to conflict between the Kols of Chotanagpur and their Maharaja. In that, the people were often aided by their more warlike brethren, the Larka Kols [Hos] of Singhbhum. ... In the 18th century, the Maharaja therefore, attacked the Larka-Kol country [Kolhan], but was defeated by the Kols (Jha 1964:38).

The history of the East India Company’s connection with Singhbhum before 1831 shows, how far from being subordinated or pacified the Larka Kols were, even though they had executed an agreement of promised quiet. As the infiltration of non-tribal outsiders increased, and their own chiefs turned against them, the chances of contrived quiet in Singhbhum steadily diminished (Jha 1987: 184-5).

**British Colonial Intrusion, Subjugation, and Paternalism**

Tribal society was already feeling the unhappy effects of Hinduisation and alienation of
the tribal rajas and zamindars of the area, when the British penetration began. Both impacts were therefore felt at once, and both introduced foreign notions and foreign people into the area, in an influx which led eventually to the economic ruin of the people. The tribal unrest of 1831-1832 was a crude form of protest against these changes and these outside influences. It was a gesture of despair (Jha 1964: 1).

The process of British subjugation of the Hos or Larka Kols was, no doubt, violent and terrorising (Singh 1976; Sahu 1989), however, during the post-subjugation period (from the establishment of KGE in 1837 to India’s independence in 1947), almost all successive British officials had much appreciation for the Hos’ way of life, cultural values, and manners in comparison to the caste Hindus of the plains. This change in British officers’ perception came about as they took special interest in improving their understanding of the Ho world-view with a sympathetic approach, which perhaps the so-called ‘high’ caste Hindus rarely able to possess (see Chaudhuri 2012).

Colonel Tickell, the first Principal Assistant to the Governor General’s Agent in charge of the administration of Singhbhum district and the KGE, wrote in 1840:

Three years constant intercourse with them [the Hos], in which their love for truth, their honesty, their obliging willingness, and their happy ingenious disposition, forming so striking a contrast to the mass of the people in Hindustan, may perhaps have induced me to pass lightly over faults to which they are but too liable; but this error (a pleasing one), is, I imagine, shared with me by all the European residents who were of Chyebasa (quoted in O’Malley 1910: 68).

However, the paternalism and protectionism broached by the British to keep the dikus away were not all that successful, although as Singh (1972, and 1990) has acknowledged that these were the first ever sympathetic and more humane approach to Adivasi issues in India. Moreover, besides their isolationist, paternal protectionism,133 the British also advanced their colonial interests: they reserved forest and restricted Adivasis’ access to it for commercial exploitation, forced sedentarisation and agrarian expansion, introduced monetary economy, changed communal ownership of land to individual for taxation, and acquired land for industrialization. All of these not only contradicted British paternalism but also necessitated the assistance of non-Adivasis and encouraged their influx further (Singh 1978; Corbridge

---

133 British protectionism, reflected in ‘the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885, Central Provinces Tenancy Act 1898 & 1920, the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908, the Central Provinces Land Alienation Act 1918, covered only a few segment of Indian Tribals’ (Singh 1972: 393-4).
1996; Chaudhuri 2008; Das Gupta 2011). Moreover, the only ‘development’ policy and works undertaken during British raj was famine relief, that too in a defused and fragmentary fashion (Singh 1972).

Consequently, Adivasi resistance movements, in various parts of Chotanagpur, began with the Paharias uprising of 1756-73, subsided only with the Birsa Ulgulan during 1895-1900. These were against both the ‘inroads of colonialism [both Indian and British or sanskritisation and westernization] as well as the consolidation of the process of differentiation alongside the integration and contestation of the brahmanical domination… (see Areeparampil 1993; Pati 2001). Nevertheless, Adivasi resistance movements were largely unsuccessful, since they were tainted by brahmanical Hinduism especially its method of “othering” the ‘low’ or ‘outcastes’ (Pati 2013: 56).

The transformation of the Mundari agrarian system into commercial, feudal, zamindari or individual tenures was the key to agrarian disorder that climaxed in the religious political movement of Birsa Munda. The foundation of agrarian discontent had been laid long before the era of the British domination (Singh 1966: 2).

Birsa was neither a ‘pious Vishnav’ nor a hypocrite or a trickster. He was a rebel, like his people, violently reacting to a piquant situation, sensitive, proud and self-willed (Ibid.: 205).

Post-British Colonial Repression and Resistance

Unlike the individual sympathy and understanding that characterised the British officers, who tried to have direct contact and close knowledge of Adivasis issues/ grievances, the post-British ‘high’ cast-Hindu officials (Sushma 2014) have consistently and rigorously kept up their ‘civilizing’ mission. ‘When the white sahabs (overlords) left India, in 1947, the rule was handed over to the brown sahabs who consisted of the ‘high’ caste and ‘upper’ class combine’ (Areeparampil 2002: 241). There are scholars who admit that although, notwithstanding the pitfalls of colonialism, it was the British approach to Adivasi issues that has given them a sense of dignity, identity as being different from the caste Hindus, as rights bearing citizens belonging to their territory as Adivasis, which lies at the root of Adivasi assertion embodied in the Jharkhand Movement, and resistance to exploitation and oppression in Chotanagpur (see Sengupta 1982; Hardiman 1987; Rao 2008; Sunder 2009; Damodaran 2013).
Jharkhand region does not only account for the largest tribal population in India, but also the regional autonomy movement in Jharkhand has the longest tradition; pan-tribal movement in the country was initiated from the region. The movement here has not been successful, but in course of the protracted and widespread struggle, the people of this region have been the most successful among all tribes in developing their own strategy for survival in the modern world (Sengupta 1982: xviii).

While analysing the origin and cause of Jharkhand movement, Maharaj and Iyer (1982) described the depth of post-British colonial repression of Adivasis and the fear that have accumulated in their psyche.

Although tribals were pressing for the restoration of their land rights, they were subjected to severe repression resulting in several deaths. The mere sight of a jeep would force the whole village to turn into the forest hideouts. The parasites, their muscle, and venal government officials would carry away tribal belongings including chicks and goats. In many cases even the whole hamlet was set on fire. The so-called elites among tribals were threatened with dire consequences in case they made common causes with their community (Ibid.: 176-7).

The Adivasis of Kolhan have witnessed and continue to witness several such incidents of bloody repression of their peaceful resistance or protest movements by post-British colonial state functionaries. The most striking evidence to support this claim was an instance of Jharkhand Mukti (liberation) Morcha (front) (JMM) getting overwhelming support from the Adivasis of rural Kolhan soon after the inhuman repression by the Bihar police on the forest andolan and dam-resistance (movement) in Singhbhum during 1970s and 1980s. The police indiscriminately opened fire on the Hos, who had gathered to protest state-atrocities on them, at weekly market places, and at other places of peaceful gathering. The police fired at innocent Hos, killing several of them even at a government hospital in Gua a small mining town in West Singhbhum (Swamy et al 1979; Raja 1980; EPW 1980; Areeparampil 1992). On April 1978, eight Adivasis, among those who protested the Subarnarekha Multi-Purpose (SMP) hydro-electric dam project in Chandil, were shot dead and several others were injured (SE 1978).

Similarly, the public assault and killing of Gangaram Kalundia, the leader of people’s opposition to Subarnarekha Multipurpose Project (SMP) at Kuju dam near Chaibasa on 4 November 1982 is particularly outrageous. One of the most recent instances of state-violence on Ho Adivasis was the ‘bloodbath’ at Kalinga Nagar, Odisha in 2006\(^\text{134}\) (Chadha 1993; Iqbal 2012).

All these are telling instances of the ‘civilizing’ mission by terror adopted by the ruling elite of Bihar regime in Kolhan.\textsuperscript{135}

The Hos’ response to these incidents of the 1970s and 1980s also resulted in the emergence of Kolhan Raksha Sangh (KRS) (the Kolhan Protection Organization). Taking recourse to the Kolhan system of administration, according to Wilkinson’s Rules that had existed in the KGE during British period (1837-1947), they declared Kolhan as an independent country of the Hos as it was ‘never part of the British India ruled by the Viceroy from Delhi.’ That is, ‘the Indian parliament had no power to pass laws for Kolhan and that Kolhan was a sovereign state.’ On 30 March 1981, the leaders of the KRS decided to represent the matter to the United Nations, and on 7 August 1981, two representatives of the KRS made an expedition to the British Commonwealth Secretariat and the UN headquarter to lobby for Kohan’s independence. However, on their return to India, they were arrested and put in jail (Areeparampil 2002: 256-8).

The ideas proposed by KRS, and the movement propelled by it not only continues to exist in the imaginations of impoverished Hos but also there have been certain leaders who still benefit by exploiting these sentiments of Kolhan being a sovereign territory of the Hos (personal conversation, via Skype, with Xavier Dias, activist and writer, 25 November 2012). More recently since the post-liberalisation period in India, i.e. since the 1990s, when incidents of land grab by (mineral) extraction industries began to multiply all over Kolhan, which simultaneously increased the impoverishment of Hos’ living in countryside, there have been recent ‘separatist’ claims similar to that of KRS. Moreover, the so-called ‘left-wing extremism also might attract a few defiant village youth,\textsuperscript{136} while the police pick up any village youth suspecting him or her to be an ‘extremist,’ thus, making things the worst (Ibid.).

\textsuperscript{135}There are several other such instances in other part of Jharkhand as well, even soon after the separation of Jharkhand from united Bihar in 2000, the police opened fire at Adivasis at Koel-Karo Hydro-Electric Project site on 2 February 2001. See Iqbal (2012) and Mullick (2004) for more on indiscriminate killing of Adivasis and others who support and try to take Adivasis’ communitarian interests forward.

\textsuperscript{136}The ‘extremists’ offer strong ‘help’ to protect their land from the \textit{diku sarkar} while ‘they actually are already in tendon with the shadow or mirror of a violent and illegitimate state’ (Shah 2006, 2010).
For more than 100 years, the tribals of Bihar [now Jharkhand], as of other parts of India, have been ruthlessly exploited, oppressed and deceived by traders and moneylenders from the plains. Their lands have been alienated, their children have been herded off to slavery in tea plantations and those who remained have been reduced to semi-slave status, bonded to moneylenders. The immense natural wealth of their homelands has been plundered without any of the benefits trickling down to them. Time and again, the tribals have risen in protest - only to be crushed, because of their own weaknesses and the superior forces of their opponents. In the meanwhile the propertied classes and the government have raised the bogey of Naxalites. The Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force and the Bihar Military Police have gone into the area to defend the moneylenders and the landlords against the united front of workers and tribal peasants (Das 1975: 284).

Most recently, in November 2012 a young Ho leader, while protesting the state government’s outright abuse of Adivasis’ Constitutional Rights, including *Panchayats* Extension to Scheduled Area (PESA) Act 1996 and Forest Rights Act 2006, has proposed the idea of demanding a separate ‘Union Territory Status’ for Kolhan division. "Our experience over the last six decades have shown that the nexus between the state government, bureaucrats and corporate houses has only led to large-scale exploitation of both the minerals and marginalized people under the garb of growth and development," (Budhram Laguri, reported by Sridhar 2012). Besides such ‘separatist’ statements voiced by young Ho leaders, who seek media attention, there have been several instances of more localized, unreported instances of grass-root mass protests, movements, and demonstrations against District Administration, Governor and Chief Minister of Jharkhand state, who advance land-leases to exploitative, highly-polluting extraction industries (personal conversations with human rights activists in defence of Adivasi land rights in Kolhan during July-August 2011 and September-October 2013; also see George 2009: 171-72; Sunder 2009: conclusion; Lahir-Dutt 2012; Dungdung 2013; Damodaran 2013).

However, these issues have much deeper roots than they appear to be. For instance, some suggest that ‘only an alternative path to development that lays stress on dignity and participation of all sections can be an answer to the ravages of predatory growth’ (Baduri 2008: 10, emphasis added). However, here Baduri seeks an ‘alternative path’ when the present concept of ‘development’ itself makes humans to pursue individual goals at the expense of fellow-beings and the environment. This means that the concept of development itself is problematic in the first place. Hence, it is high time to redefine the concepts of development, modernity, and freedom so that once
the goal is redefined better, choosing an alternative path to achieve it could be done with much ease. In other words, ‘There is nothing more practical than a good theory’ (Lewin 1952: 169).
References

Primary (non-‘academic’) Sources


Janu, L. (2013) ‘We need our slaves’ *Down to Earth* 31 October.


Mahawar, N. (2012), ‘I have a problem with the makeover of tribal culture’ *The Hindu*, 24 October.


Parmar, V. (2009b) ‘Vibrant Gujarat? 98% Dalits have to drink tea in separate cups’ *The Times of India*, 8 December.


**Books and Journal Articles (academic sources)**


Ambedkar, B.R. (1946) *Who were the Shudras?: How they came to be the fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan society*, Bombay: Thacker & Company.


Breman, J. (2007a) *Labor Bondage in West India: From Past to Present*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press,


Furer-Haimendorf, Christoph (1950) Youth-Dormitories and Community Houses in India: A Resttement and a Review, Anthropos, Bd. 45(1/3): 119-144.


Guha, R. (2001) 'The Prehistory of Community Forestry in India', *Environmental History* 6(2) Special Issue: Forest History in Asia: 213-238.


Kumar, H. (2009) ‘Who Is the Problem, the CPI (Maoist) or the Indian State?’, Economic and Political Weekly 44(47): 8-12.


Mangobinda, B. (1989) *An Historical Outline of Pre-British Chotanagpur (From earliest ties to 1765)*, Ranchi: Educational Publications.


McClish, M. R. (2009), Political Brahmanism and the State: A Compositional History of the Arthasastra, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas


Philips, A. (1977) The concept of development, African Political Economy 8(Jan-Apr.): 7-20


Toppo, S. (1979) *Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India*, New Delhi, Classical Publication.


Appendices

Appendix-1

On the Concept of Diku


Thus, the Dhangar Kols of Sonnepur who were the first to rise in that region in 1832, were promptly of this fraternal act the Larkas were led on this occasion by some of their most outstanding chieftains such as Bindrai Manki and Sui Munda. As the insurrection progressed further the Kols were joined by most of the other tribal peasantry of Chota Nagpur and Palamau – the Bhogta and the Chasi of Tori; the Ho, the Munda and the Oraon of various parts of Chotanagpur, the Chero, the Kharwar and the Poliar of Palamau (P. 174).

The term *diku* used generally in the local tribal languages to describe anyone belonging to ‘non-tribal out-group’, came to acquire a meaning which indicated at the same time both the ethnic and the class aspects of the explanation of the peasantry of these regions. The semantic range assigned to this lexeme in Hoffmann’s *Encyclopedia Mundarica* and Boding’s *Santal Dictionary* clearly brings this out. Diku in these works stands for ‘a Hindu’, ‘a Hindu landlord’, ‘Hindi or Sadani’, ‘a Hindu or Bengali of the better class’, etc., and diku-n – ‘to become the landlord of a village’. It has been noticed that in at least one language of the Mundari group di means ‘that’ and the plural diku – ‘those’, a telling deixis which leaves little room for doubt about the speaker’s insistence on his own separate identity. … The term had not only retained its dual function of signifying the non-autochthones (such as Hindus, Musalmans, Europeans, Marwaris, Biharis, Bengalis, etc.) and class enemies (such as rural capitalists, *baniyas*, moneylenders, rajas, *zamindars* and landlorders’ servants), but had acquired for itself a new and expressive moral connotation. Diku, said many of the Munda, Oraon and Ho informants, deriving, ironically enough, from an alien etymology, meant for them ‘trouble makers’ (*dik dik karnewale*). The stereotype which was thus established was backed by a host of other words, phrases, imageries and adages to emphasize the malevolence, avarice, meanness and generally the negative qualities of the outsider. Looter, deceiver, and exploiter – such were the epithets predicated on them. He was unreliable and fearsome. His eyes (*dik-med*) were like those of a dog, for he fawned on his master for small favours and snarled at all others to keep them away. He was unfriendly: he would not recognize his own neighbour. A *diku* friend, a thorn tree; they prick’: so ran a Santal proverb. When a Munda oppressed another, he was said to be *dikuing*. And if he set himself up as a *zamindar* and lived of rents extracted from other Munda, he was regarded as *dikuized* (Ibid.: 281-2).

Bindrai the Kol leader, spoke for all tribal insurgents of the nineteenth century when he explained why his people had taken to arms in 1832: “The Pathan had taken our honour and the Sing our sisters and the Koour, Harnath Sha had forcibly deprived us of our Lives were considered of no Value, and being of one Caste and Brethren, it was agreed upon that we should commence to cut, plunder, murder and eat….. It is with this resolution that we have
been murdering and plundering those who have deprived us of both honour and homes....” (Ibid.: 282-3).

Adivasis identify the outsider/colonizer – the state, mahajan (middlemen moneylender), the school teacher, the police and, today, the mining companies – with the word diku, defining the relationship. Diku is and onomatopoeic word. It evokes the sound of the heart as it beats faster and faster, dik dik dik, in fear, intimidation or terror. This identity is exclusively reserved for the outsider [Xavier Dias (2006) ‘Laboring Newborn Consciousness: The adivasis of Jharkhand’, Labor File: A bimonthly journal of labor and economic affairs, 4(4): 1-6].

Appendix 2

**Brahmanical Institutions of Social Control**

Brahmanic Social Order is structured to secure and preserve the total dominance of a small elite. Much of its religious doctrine serves to evolve, codify, rationalize, and create the social and psychological conditions needed for mass acceptance of the institutions the elite requires to exercise control across the entire political economic spectrum. The central institutions of social control are the following, which operates together as an interlocking device:

1. The varna system of social hierarchy strictly determined by birth and lineage, the order of which later further splintered into a large number of occupation-related jatis.
2. The dharma, or the code of religious duties requiring that everyone adhere to the occupation associated with his caste (varna and jati) and that the people of the lower castes continuously discharge their obligation of service, ritual payments, and ritual obedience to the higher castes.
3. The twin doctrines of metempsychosis and karma, which stipulates that a person’s soul transmigrates from birth to birth, that suffering in this life is attributable to lapses in the performance of dharma duties in an earlier life, and, conversely, that rigorous performance of those duties in this life would lead to happiness and possible salvation in the next (birth) life.
4. The doctrine that state power draws its legitimacy from its ability and will to protect rights and superior legal and ritual status of the Brahmans, and, to a lesser extent, of the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, and to enforce strictly the performance of dharma duties by all classes.
5. A regime of strict control of women, particularly on their sexuality, to secure that wealth and property remain and accumulate within the elite classes and do not spread through intergenerational transfer to the non-elite classes.

Appendix-3

The Kol Insurrection 1831-32 and the Establishment of the Kolhan Government Estate (KGE)

“Maharaja of Chotanagpur, now reduced to the status of a zamindar with some maintenance grants by the East India company (EIC), gave twelve villages that belonged to Singrai Manki (headmen of a cluster of Ho villages) in Sonpur province in Singhbhum to certain Muhammadans and Sikhs. The Sikhs dispossessed the Manki and seduced or ravished two of his sisters. A Munda (village headman) of Bandhgaon was abducted and his wife was dishonoured. Some other Mankis were also equally dissatisfied with such dispossession and dishonour. These Mundas and Mankis called all the Kols (Mundas and Hos) to assemble at a village in Tamrah. While addressing the assemblage the leaders said, 'The Pathans and the Singh (Sikhs) have dishonoured us; the Kunwar Harnath Singh has forcibly deprived us of our villages, which he has given to the Sings. Our lives are no longer of value. We are all brethren, let us act together – commence to burn, plunder, and murder and eat'” (Singrai Manki’s testimony as quoted in Dalton [1872] 1960).

“The Kols attacked the places of these Muhammadans and Sikhs where they had their residences with huge wealth of cattle and other possessions; several of the dikus (alien-exploiters and troublemakers) were being murdered and their cattle and wealth plundered during December 11-25, 1831. The court-accountant of Sherghati (another place in the same province) made an announcement that if they had maintained peace in the country, their lands would be restored. The Kols replied, they would not listen to anyone except to the Maharaja of Chotanagpur.137 Meanwhile a secret preparation for a war against all dikus in their territory was being made by the circulation of arrows (a practice of summoning their brethren to arm) among villages. From mid-January the Adivasis – Hos, Mundas and Oraons jointly entered into the zeal of the great Kol insurrection; they chased all the foreign exploiters from their territory and murdered everyone who fell into their hands.”

“This rebellion followed a thorough military operation by the EIC to subjugate the troublesome larka (fighting) Kols who constituted the leading figures of the Kol insurrection in Singhbhum and Chotanagpur. After several military operations, by 1837, the Hos were thoroughly subjugated and the Kolhan Government Estate (KGE) was established as a 'reserve' for the Hos by maintaining Munda-Manki (Kolhan) system being co-opted by the colonizers for peaceful administration of the Hos. The Mundas and Mankies were given special police powers and the land tax was collected by them. The British did not interfere in most traditional customary practices.138 The KGE was disrupted during the rebellion in 1855-57 but later resumed more or less undisturbed till 1937 or so till the Indian national

137 Probably, the Kols had no idea that the Maharaja himself had been getting foreigners into their country, had himself made alliances with the EIC and was now reduced to be a zamindar.

138 Although the British followed the policy of non-interference, Ho villagers who preferred to seek justice from the British legal system, at Chaibasa civil court, could always do so (Sen 2012).

“The Kol are compelled to cultivate the ground for the *thikadar* and to pay all kinds of illegal cesses. And these *thikadars* allow them only so much as will enable them to work on for their benefit. When the oppressor wants a horse, the Kol must pay; when he desires a *palki*, the Kol have to pay, and afterwards to bear him therein. They must pay for his musicians, for his milch-cows, for his pan. Does someone die in his house? He taxes them; is a child born? Again a tax; is there a marriage or *puja* [worship ceremony], a tax. Is the *thikadar* [contractor] found guilty at court and sentenced to be punished? The Kol must pay the fine. Or does a death occur in the house of a Kol? The poor man must pay a fine. Is a son or daughter married? The poor Kol is still taxed. And this plundering, punishing, robbing system goes on till the Kolins run away” [J. Thomson, Deputy Secretary to government at the time of the Kol insurrection quoted in Roy, 1970: 127].

**Appendix-4**

**Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on Indian Society**

Dr. Ambedkar in one of the meetings of the Indian Constitutional Assembly pointed out one of the most striking and enduring contradictions in ‘Indian Society’ when he said, “We must begin by acknowledging first that there is complete absence of two things in Indian society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on privilege of graded inequality which means elevation of some and degradation for others. On the economic plane we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against the many who are living in abject poverty. On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man and one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? … We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment. Or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this assembly has so laboriously built up” [B.R. Ambedkar, quoted by Justice Krishna Iyer, in the judgement of J. Krishna Iyer on the State of Kerala versus N.M. Thomas and Others, 1976, *All India Report, Supreme Court of India*: 490].
## Fundamental differences between the Adivasi and ‘modern’ civilizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Adivasi central values</th>
<th>Modernity influential values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. nature (jal, jungle and zameen) | • interrelationship with all living beings  
• Balance with the environment  
• Land and community (for past, present and future generations) and ownership not transferable | • exploitative relationship  
• tries to dominate the nature  
• all being in nature is to serve humans |
| 2. economic system        | • Communitarian  
• Common good  
• Communitarian ownership  
• Cooperation  
• To meet the present needs  
• Barter system of transaction  
• Decentralized  
• Re-creative  
• protective | • individualism  
• individual benefits  
• individual wealth  
• competition –  
• savings/profit oriented  
• consumerist  
• money based transactions  
• centralized  
• Non-re-creative?  
• Destructive  
• Food based |
| 3. social systems         | • Egalitarian  
• Equality in male female relationships  
• Manual labour is esteemed  
• Communitarian (community gets supremacy)  
• Individual is a member of the society  
• Cooperation  
• Hospitality | • Inequality, stratified  
• Patriarchal  
• Some works are looked down upon  
• Individualistic (individual and household gets more importance)  
• competition |
| 4. politics               | • self-rule, village self-governance  
• Participatory democracy  
• Consensus decision making  
• People’s claims | • Representative democracy  
• Influenced by power and money  
• Power claiming and bureaucracy |
| 5. culture                | • Human culture is indivisible from nature  
• Culture is the celebration of nature i.e. live in harmony with nature  
• Complementarities nature? | • Culture is above nature, it is human made  
• Tendency to control everything by man |
| 6. Literature, arts and music | • Folklore  
• Communal expression, village dancing ground is the centre participation | • urbanization  
• Pretention? and exhibition  
• commercialization of art |
7. religion
- global
- naturalism
- stress on integration among nature and community
- stress on practices that are appreciated by community
- human centered
- stress on individual salvation
- industrious

8. philosophy
- importance on joyfulness
- life is not only of work, but for relaxation and celebration of joy
- over work is bad because it persecutes other beings
- work as much as necessary to earn a living
- life is for celebration
- Importance on hard work
- Without hard work nothing can be gained
- Life is a serious affair. Each person is given importance according to his/her tangible achievements


Appendix-6

Socioeconomic profile of Jharkhand state – Social Group Wise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social categories</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>OBC</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational level (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Literate</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Literate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher secondary/Diploma</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate and Above</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land in hectares (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landless</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.001-0.004</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.005-0.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.41-1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.01-2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.01 to 4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.01 and above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: extracted and computed from NSSO, socio-economic survey 61st round: July 2004-June 2005 by the author
### Appendix-7

#### Spatial Distribution of below Poverty Line Households in Jharkhand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BPL households (Percentage)</th>
<th>Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80 per cent and above</td>
<td>Gumla, Simdega, West Singhbhum, Latehar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Districts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80 per cent</td>
<td>Lohardaga, Saraikela Kharsawan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-70 per cent</td>
<td>Ranchi, Dumka, Jamtara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60 per cent</td>
<td>Deoghar, Pakur, Sahebganj, Garhwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50 per cent</td>
<td>Giridih, Koderma, Godda, Hazaribagh,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 40 per cent</td>
<td>Bokaro (36.22%), Dhanbad (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report 2004-05, Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Commerce, Government of Jharkhand, p. 50

### Appendix-8

#### Forest and Woodland Changes in Chotanagpur 1870-1890 (Hectares)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas in Chotanagpur plateau</th>
<th>Year 1870</th>
<th>Year 1890</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhanbad</td>
<td>10382</td>
<td>9794</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazaribagh</td>
<td>316408</td>
<td>306495</td>
<td>9913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palamau</td>
<td>555413</td>
<td>530025</td>
<td>25388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchi</td>
<td>344317</td>
<td>338749</td>
<td>5568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santhal Parganas</td>
<td>308138</td>
<td>177577</td>
<td>130561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singhbhum</td>
<td>274258</td>
<td>244826</td>
<td>29732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1808916</strong></td>
<td><strong>1607466</strong></td>
<td><strong>201450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>