

# UPDATE

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## The New Jharkhand State: Will the Dreams of the Adivasis come True?

There is euphoria and excitement in the Jharkhand region with the announcement of the creation of a new Jharkhand state. It is a time for exhilaration and prolonged celebrations rightly so. After two hundred years of protracted struggle, a separate Jharkhand state for the Adivasis of Jharkhand has become a reality. Historically speaking, the State Reorganization Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 31st and on the Rajya Sabha on 9th August 2000. All the members irrespective of political affiliation unanimously passed these. On the 1st of November, the formal announcement of creation of these states will be made. With that the process of creation of new states will begin. Being exhilarated about the creation of new states and this euphoria turning into formal and informal celebrations is legitimate. These celebrations enable us to remember the innumerable martyrs who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of struggle for self-determination and self-rule and self-actualisation of the Adivasi population. Above all the celebrations will enable us to pose and reflect on the problems and the possibilities that lie before us. From the borders of Orissa to the borders of Madhya Pradesh, the jubilation is palpable.

The celebrations also call us for much deeper reflections and deliberation. It is foolhardy to dream that with the announcement of the creation of a separate Jharkhand, the Jharkhand movement has achieved its objectives. In fact, the struggle of the Adivasis of this region for self-determination, self-actualization and self-rule is beginning now only. Today Jharkhand is a rich state with the Jharkhandis driven to poverty and penury. Till the recent past, it was the 'dikus' the non-Tribal aliens were the 'enemies' of the Adivasis. But if the movements are

not continued in the changed circumstance with changed objectives like struggle for establishing Adivasi self-rule, autonomy, traditional forms of Adivasi governance, eco-friendly economic enterprises, indigenous health care practices and life oriented education the Adivasis will become aliens in their own land. It is also a period to review the struggles that have been fought for Adivasi autonomy. Thus, this is a historical moment in the lives of the Adivasis of Jharkhand.

The Adivasi societies in India have a very ancient and alive history and heritage of their own. They have their own cultural, religious, social, economical and political structures that have been handed down to generation for centuries. The indigenous peoples myths, stories, tales and songs abound with explicitations of their social political and cultural organisations. Nature, environment and ecology play the most important role in their lives. They have developed their religious beliefs and practices around their life giving forces. But it is most inhuman that the 'so called modern and literate' society has termed their religion 'animistic'. This is once again a derogative term looking down upon the Adivasi religious way of life.

Historical data abound with this fact that the Adivasi were the original settlers of the place where most of them live today or where their ancestors had occupied centuries ago. They interacted with the natural resources and built up a symbiotic relationship with it. Their entire social, economic and religious lives revolve around these realities. They worked hard on the forest and made it humanly habitable. But once they achieved this they were further pushed to the forest and the non-working non-Adivasis grabbed those resources. Thus, the plains men through deceit, fraud and force took away years of hard labour, individual-collective toil and dispossessed the Adivasis of their livelihood, culture and religion. Thus, the history of the Adivasis has been one of exploitation, subjugation and marginalization. In spite of these oppression and exploitation the Adivasi communities did not surrender. They continued to carry on their lives and their struggles.

In the course of time, the Adivasis had developed their own forms of political participation.

This is usually known as 'Adivasi Swashashan' that is, Adivasi self-rule. This form of governance was based on the ideology, 'Hamare gaon mein hamara raj', that is, 'We rule ourselves, our culture, our economy, our religion and our society, which is both local and regional'. But this well-knit and well-integrated Adivasi society was brought under alien rule by the outside forces who entered unscrupulously into Adivasi area.

**The Adivasis of Jharkhand:** There are nearly 66 lakh Adivasi population in Jharkhand region, divided into 30 different groups. Within Jharkhand area the Adivasis are about 27.67 per cent, while in Bihar they are around 7.66 per cent. Out of the 18 districts that comprise the Jharkhand region, the Adivasis are over 70.80 per cent in Gumla, while they are just 8.42 per cent in Dhanbad district. Thus, there are variations within the Adivasi communities in Jharkhand. Further, the Santals among the Adivasis constitute the biggest ethnic group with about 35.47 per cent while the population of the Banjaras is just about 861. The dominant four Adivasis, the Santals, the Oraons, the Hos and the Mundas constitute over 77.31 per cent of the Adivasi population.

But in the field of literacy, the Kharias are much ahead with 24.86 per cent followed by the Oraons who are 23.28 and Mundas with 22.16 per cent respectively. The literacy rate of the entire Adivasi community is only 16.99 per cent. The situation of the Baigas is deplorable with only 4.22 per cent literate among them. The Kharias, the Mundas, the Binjhas and the Birjias are mainly cultivators, that is more than 70 per cent, while a very small segment among them are agricultural labourers. The Savars and the Korwas have more than half of its population in the category of agricultural labourers. There are about 4.71 per cent among them who are employed in services, while only 2.61 per cent of the Santals are gainfully employed. Thus, irrespective of the integrating fact of being Adivasis there are some dissimilarities between these communities. Yet over the centuries, the Adivasis have continued to build on a common identity. It is this identity formation which provided adequate ground for a long drawn-out struggle against the alien forces.

**Adivasi Identify Formation:** In the past, four fundamental factors decisively contributed in the

identity formation as Adivasis or Jharkhandis. Firstly, the fact of being a Adivasi united all the various Adivasi groups. Though there are about 30 Adivasi groups and there are some differences among them yet the cultural and ethnic sentiment unified the Adivasis. Since these differences are demographic and economic in nature, they did not divide the Adivasis. Moreover, since the major Adivasis were concentrated in geographically distinct regions, they were not split up like the Bhils and the Gonds in other regions of India. In a consolidated social condition, the fact of being indigenous population or Adivasis provided greater scope for congruence than conflict. This further provided a common platform for political awakening and action. The slogans like 'Jai Jharkhand' (Victory to Jharkhand), '*Adivasi dishum*' (This is our land, Adivasi land) that erupted in course of Jharkhand struggle led to political mobilization which in turn built up political consciousness.

Secondly, the sense of being Adivasis or the original settlers of the Jharkhand region also brought in a sense of being a confederation than individual Adivasi group. The term 'Jharkhand' is derived from two different words – Jhar (a cluster of thick forests) and Khand (a tract of land). Thus, Jharkhand suggests a landmass quilted with forests. It is interesting to note that the name Jharkhand is an ancient one. The fifteenth century Vaishnavi Poet-Philosopher Srichaitanya Mahaprabhu during his journey from Budh-Gaya (now in Bihar state) to Puri (Orissa) through the forested land of Jharkhand had described it as Jharkhand. Later, the Mughal rulers also called it as Jhar-khand. Abul Fazl, the revenue minister of Akbar had also referred to it as Jharkhand in his famous book Ain-E-Akbari.

This is not just the geographical territory that has determined the identity of a Jharkhandi in the historical past and in the present, but it is the entire socio-cultural life that ascertains the identity. Hence, even the Adivasis from Jharkhand who have moved over to Assam tea gardens or to Andaman Islands continued to maintain this sense of being a Jharkhandi. The term itself goes through a historical evolution. In the beginning exclusively Adivasi organisations *Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj* (1915) and *Adivasi Mahasabha* (1938) were formed. The term Jharkhand also came to be used in 1938 giving

a much broader platform for political assertions of the Jharkhandis. With the formation of the Jharkhand Party in 1950 the identity formation reached its zenith.

Thirdly, Christianity in a latent way contributed in Adivasi identity formation by providing education. 'It also gave them a history, a myth about the 'golden age'; it accentuated the notion of private rights in land; it also emphasized the sense of separateness from the rest'. Here religious conversion also played albeit indirectly the social movement role by opening up avenues for social mobility. It was those who were educated by the Church who played the leadership role in mobilising resources for educational development of the Adivasis in the beginning which slowly caught spread to other areas.

And finally, the ethnic sense of 'we' Adivasis and 'they' 'Dikus' or the outsiders united the entire Adivasi population for a sustained struggle. Whether it is the Tatas, the coal mafias of north Bihar or the Marwaris they all exploited this region. The Adivasis with their traditional wish 'Johar' welcomed with open hands and hearts everyone who entered Jharkhand. But the upper caste non-Adivasis engaged in depredation and plunder. Hence, the Adivasis coined the term 'dikus' and began to resist and revolt against their exploitation. In this process, the Adivasis established dialogue with those backward caste groups, Dalits and the Momins, the downtrodden Muslims who have settled in Jharkhand region for a long period of time. With Jharkhand movement gaining ground, these non-Adivasi groups too became part of the struggle. Thus, the term Jharkhandi came to be known as 'the land of the destitutes' comprising of all these deprived section of Indian society. Hence, development of Jharkhand meant the development of the destitutes of this region. Thus, an attenuated period of identity formation finally contributed in the Jharkhand movement that has been going on unabated nearly for two centuries.

**The Jharkhand Movement:** In the Jharkhand region, the East India Company became the Revenue Collecting Agent of the Mughal Emperor from the year 1765. Though alien invasion of indigenous people has been going on in the past, it is

from this period a systematic and sinister plan was devised in the name of 'Tribal wellbeing and Tribal development' to loot, rob, rape and steal and subjugate the peace-loving and freedom-loving Adivasi population. While the Jharkhand came under the East India Company in 1771, it is the upper caste Hindus who penetrated in a major way into the Adivasi region and thus began the saga of exploitation and oppression. The non-Adivasi upper caste Hindus began to enter into every aspect of Adivasi lives and since they were 'educated' they slowly and systematically captured every available space in the Jharkhand region. Today they control business, they control educational institutions, they are the administration, and they are the court aur kachhari, (seat of judgement) and thus they control the entire lives of the indigenous people.

While the Jharkhandis were thrown out of their own land, the upper caste non-Adivasi population plundered and pillaged the Jharkhand region. To give an example, the land alienated from the Adivasis in the name of development has been massive. According to a conservative estimate out of the 74 lakh Adivasi population displaced so far only 18.45 lakh that is only about 24.90 per cent of them have been resettled. These are development-induced displacement out of which the Adivasis who loose everything do not benefit. It is also significant to note this remark made by an activist who was protesting against the proposed Field Firing Range at Netrahat in Palamu of Jharkhand. "It seems that the Adivasis have the sole responsibility of developing the country. Why all the dams, factories and firing ranges are built only in Adivasi areas. I also want to ask them : Is it the only way you have to develop the country".

Thus, inspite of all the oppressions that were unleashed on them and inspite of limited resources left at their disposal, the self-respecting Adivasis continued to fight against every forms of alien rule. From 1950 onwards, the Adivasis initiated Jharkhand struggle to defend their '*jal, jungle aur zamin*', that is, their natural and human-made resources, the political system and their entire socio-cultural systems. Though the leadership at different times betrayed the aspirations of the Jharkhand people, yet the Adivasi masses carried on their struggle unhindered. The slogan, 'Jaan dengey zamin

nahin dengey', that is 'We will part with our lives but not with our land' once again highlight the dynamism of political consciousness and mobilization. Thus, the development of the non-Tribal population resulted in the deprivation of the Adivasis which ultimately led to massive discontent.

**Jharkhandis vs the Hindutva:** Right from the beginning the extreme hindutva forces have considered and treated the Adivasis as '*jungles*', a term which ordinarily means 'forest dwellers'. But in reality it is a derogative word meaning 'an uncivilized person'. Moreover, it also means that this person can never make progress but will continue to live in 'ignorance, darkness and underdevelopment'. The ascent of the saffron wave in the Jharkhand region needs to be examined critically from this point of view. Prabhakar Tirkey one of the founding leaders of All Jharkhand Student's Union (AJSU) lays bare the evolution of Sangh Parivar in Jharkhand. 'The Jharkhand struggle found its base in the concept "Jharkhand" right from 1950, though the self-determination struggle is few centuries old. But when the Hindutva force realized that the Jharkhand struggle as well as Jharkhand itself is slipping out of its hand, it projected vananchal from 1990. The main social base of vananchal movement is the big business companies. But the saffron brigade managed to mobilize the small traders, petty businessmen (teli, sahu, bania) around the notion vananchal. It is these petty traders who are the exploiters of the Adivasis in the rural areas. The mobilizational initiatives came from the RSS'. Thus, the Sangh in the name of countering the Christian influence, laid open the floodgates of economic depletion of the Jharkhand.

Prabhakar goes on to argue that, the vananchal proposal came as a major boon for the petty traders whose activities have been restricted due to the emergence of Jharkhand and AJSU struggles. With the weapon of vananchal these forces created division among the Adivasis in the name of non-Christian Adivasis and Christian Adivasis. In course of time the Sangh Parivar entered the area with its *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams*, *Sandeepani Ashram* and *Birsa Seva Sadans* and spread its influence. Building on the welfare work done by the saffron parivar, the BJP entered into the electoral fray without much success. But in the year

1990 by floating the concept vananchal, it aimed at splitting the Jharkhand movement and gaining political mileage out of it. It was also an attempt to divide-et-empere.

Further this was a well thought out effort to eliminate the age-long Adivasi struggle for self-determination. Whether it is the Bhumij revolt, the Chero uprising, or the prolonged resistance under Birsa, Sidhu, and Kanhu, they all reiterated the inherent Adivasi resistance and revolt. Not only well mobilized and organized struggles like these but even the most spontaneous struggles like the Koel-Karo protest, the Netrohat movement etc repeatedly affirmed the potential to revolt. In the recent past the Adivasis of Jharkhand have fought against the game plans of the right wing Hindutva force too. The much-publicized policy of 'bringing the adivasis in to the mainstream' did not cut much ice with the Adivasis.

At this juncture one needs to examine the basic issues that gave rise to Hindutva force in the Jharkhand. The saffron wave has become very perceptible in the Jharkhand region. Its phenomenal growth here can be attributed to two interrelated phenomenon, which the Sangh Parivar exploited to the maximum. On the one hand, the Sangh has managed to build on the cleavage that advanced between the Adivasi and non-Adivasi population. It projected itself as the champion of the Hindu fold in a predominantly Adivasi milieu. On the other hand, the saffron brigade exploited the division that was emerging between the *Sarna* (original Adivasi religious and social communities) and the Christian Adivasis. The difference between these communities came to be well pronounced with the advancement of educational, health and other facilities that were in general denied to the *Sarna* Adivasis but extended to the Christian Adivasis. The harsh stand taken by the Church authorities in this regard alienated the *Sarna* Adivasis and thus the void increased between these two Adivasi groups.

The Sangh Parivar carefully and consistently built on these opposing trends and roped in the non-Adivasi as well as the *Sarna* Adivasis communities as its basic constituency in the Jharkhand region. It is this social reality in the ultimate analysis provided political platform to the BJP to establish its roots in

Jharkhand. It also in a latent way offered fertile ground to the Sangh Parivar to consolidate its membership. Interestingly, it is from the drought-prone and poverty stricken Palamu district of Jharkhand region, the highest number of Dalits and Adivasis were taken to function as 'Kar Sevaks' (demolition squad) at Ayodhya. The Congress party which used the Adivasis only as its vote bank has stopped to make any sense to the Adivasi population. The socialist as well as the communist parties never made any impact on the Adivasi. It is on this backdrop that one should view the phenomenal political expansion of the BJP in the Jharkhand region.

There are 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the Jharkhand region. In the past these used to be shared between the Jharkhand parties and the Congress. But from the 1991 general elections, the BJP has registered spectacular victory and has managed to maintain its vote bank.

It is in this broader framework one need to explore the basic and fundamental differences that exist between the Jharkhand people and the Sangh Parivar, the proponents of vananchal. Jharkhand is an outcome of self-assertion and protests of the Tribals of this region. While the concept of vananchal is superimposed on the Adivasis by the Hindutva political party the BJP. Secondly, Jharkhand refers exclusively to the indigenous people who are usually called the adivasis. But vananchal includes non-Adivasis who came from outside and settled here. These outsiders in course of time have become the oppressors of the Adivasis. One of the main line parties, the Congress for the last four decades used the slogan of creating a separate Jharkhand State to capture the Adivasi vote bank. The BJP on the other hand, in the last one decade has been playing the triumph card of Vananchal Rajya to capture the Adivasi vote bank.

Fourthly, Jharkhand identifies itself with the culture, ethos, religion, social relationships, self-rule and above all the jal, jungle and zamin of the Adivasi communities. Vananchal on the other hand, projects only the make-belief political boundary of a limited area. Finally, Jharkhand is not a mere cognitive word. It is an ideology that represents the existence and identity of the Adivasis. It represents their life,

world-view, tradition and culture. It also denotes the jal, jungle and zamin. It also refers to the Sarna, Sasan and Akhara.

Finally it also highlights the centuries old oppression of the Adivasis as well as the Adivasi emancipation movements that have been going on unabated. Vananchal indicates the political agenda of the Sangh Parivar and BJP. It is part of a slogan to bring the region under the so-called 'national mainstream'. This would lead to Ramrajya and culminate in the Hindu Nationalism. In the name of developing the region it is a cunning device to dispossess the Adivasi of their life sustaining resources of land, forest, water and culture leading to alienation of all kinds. It is a systematic attempt to marginalize the Jharkhand movement, Jharkhand leaders and ultimately the Jharkhand people.

Interestingly, the BJP made a U turn from its earlier move of Vananchal and fell in line with the Jharkhand movement leaders to introduce a bill for a separate Jharkhand state. This is not any special favour done to Jharkhand people, but it is due to political compulsions that the Sangh Parivar agreed to do it. The centuries old struggles of Indigenous peoples of Jharkhand forced upon all the parties to speak in one voice in favour of the proposed state. Thus once again the strength of the Adivasi communities has been established with the formation of Jharkhand state.

There is a basic political issue that needs to be addressed at this juncture. The creation of Jharkhand State is the outcome of the long drawn out struggle of the Adivasis of Jharkhand for socio-economic, cultural and political emancipation and self-actualization. But this dream of the Adivasis cannot be materialised unless the Adivasi form of governance is introduced. The Fundamental Rights of the Constitution has ensured in article 29 'Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same'. The constitution also made special provision for general wellbeing and protection of the Adivasis '*Provisions as to the Administration and Control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes*' under the Fifth Schedule. The Fifth Schedule ensures the establishment of

**Tribal Advisory Committee.** According to constitutional provisions, the council should consist of twenty members of whom, as nearly as three-fourths shall be the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the State.

**The Emerging Issues on the Political Front:** With the announcement of creation of a separate Jharkhand, political parties are at its height. BJP is ent to install its own man who will be pliable to its menoverings. To keep the saffron brigade out of the scene, the Congress and the RJD are ready to support the candidature of Sibusoren. But they lack the magic number. Thus, the political game will go on unhindered.

Here the issues before the Adivasis of Jharkhand are not the ministry formation but ensuring the restoration of their basic and long-standing alternative, that is the Adivasi self-rule. This alone in the long run will not allow interference of outside forces. Running after mainline political parties for support can be only a short term objective. History bears testimony to this fact that the political parties whether the Congress, the BJP, the RJD etc. have treated the Adivasis only as vote bank. Hence, expecting the political parties to work for their well being and total development is expecting moon. Moreover, within the existing form of political system, the Adivasis will be over run by powerful forces. There are 14 Lok Sabha seat in Jharkhand and out of this only 5 are reserved for the Adivasis. This is just 35 per cent of representation, which means the other elected representatives would be non-Adivasis. Hence, the Adivasi population may not be represented fully. Thus, it becomes imperative that in the long run, a federal form of governance especially in line with Adivasi Council is the alternative. This alone can save the Adivasis from the onslaught of the external and alien political forces it we have to continue the a federal form of Government.

Secondly, with the announcement of a separate Jharkhand, these unifying factors themselves have come under duress. While the Jharkhand movement was in progress, the sense of Adivasis vs the outsiders provided enough fertile ground for identity formation among the Adivasi groups. It was the enemy outside that has to be

fought then. But now, the cleavages that existed within the various sub-nationalism will turn out to be much more focused. The external enemy is waiting to exploit the emerging scenario for the ultimate exploitation of economic resources.

Fissures have already appeared among the Adivasi groups in focusing and highlighting their candidates to the post of chief minister. In this way some of leaders are playing into the hands of the fundamental forces who are waiting in the wings to take over the reigns of the new state and continue their hegemony. The Vananchal scheme of the Sangh Parivar is not out of the agenda of the saffron brigade. They are buying time to weaken the Adivasi leadership, exploit the division that will emerge among the Adivasi groups and finally impose their Vananchal agenda on the Jharkhand. It is this game plan of the Hindutva force that will be one of the issues that would determine Adivasi polity and society.

Today the Adivasis have become a minority in Jharkhand. According to the 1991 census the Adivasis constitute only 28 per cent of the population of Jharkhand. But during 1961 census, the Adivasis were almost 60 per cent in many parts of Jharkhand. On one hand it is and outside influx into Jharkhand state, on the other hand it is also the way census has been conducted. Prof. Dr Ram Dayal Munda in his book "*ADIDHARM*" gives an account of how the religious identity in the census has not been given proper mention. There is also a vested interest of a brahmanical ideology as an alien force which have tried its level best to deny this very religious identity of the Jharkhandi people. In the 1991 census, for example the failure to list **Sarna**, the religion of the Adivasis. Out of the 66 lakhs Adivasis in the 18 district Jharkhand only about 15 lakh are given some religious identity i.e. Christian, Hindu, Islam etc., and a solid 51 lakhs Adivasi are listed as with "no religion", who eventually would be *Sarnas*.

Hence, the primary duty of the new state is to ensure proper enumeration of the Jharkhand region so that the Adivasis become the legitimate citizens of the Jharkhand. It should not be forgotten that more than two hundred years of struggle of Adivasis against exploitation and alienation from

their natural environment is where their traditional institutions of self government have been their strength to sustain their movement.

In the present parliamentary form of government with its history of 53 years of India's independence from the British, the special provision of Scheduled Area did not mean anything to the Adivasis. In the present time, Sahibganj, Dumka, Deogarh, Lohardaga, Gumla, Ranchi, East Singhbhum and West Singhbhum Districts were the Scheduled areas, while Godda, Dhanbad, Giridih, Hazaribag and Palamu were not under the Scheduled Area. Thus, only 8 out of 13 districts were considered as scheduled. This leaves out a vast majority of the Adivasi population in these districts. If these areas are also not brought under the schedule, then the Adivasi population in these districts will be subordinated to the rule of the non-Adivasis. While in the schedule area Adivasi self-rule will be in practice, in the non-scheduled area, the non-Adivasi Panchayati Raj system will be dominant. Thus, the Adivasis in these districts will be subjected to exploitation and dehumanization.

It is imperative to look at an alternative for the entire polity of the Jharkhand region. The traditional self rule system under the traditional leadership is what has kept the Adivasis alive inspite of the oppression, and the exploitation heaped upon them. The various forms of Adivasi councils at the different levels have continued to uphold Adivasi society, culture, economy and polity, while the political leadership has failed the Adivasis. Thus, starting from village level to Jharkhand State the traditional forms of self-rule should be maintained and strengthened. At the State level a federal form of Adivasi Council which is also supreme to the state administration has to be evolved so that the culture, economy, polity, social living and the very existence of the Adivasis be protected. As stated above, the struggle for Jharkhand in reality has begun now only. It is the search for alternative forms of governance than the Indian state is used to till now that needs to be looked into seriously by the Adivasis of Jharkhand.

No sooner the creation of a separate state was announced the Chotanagpur Chamber of Commerce held a meeting at Ranchi and announced

its future plans for the 'economic development of Jharkhand'. Till now, the Chamber had to abide by the dictates of the rulers in Delhi and Patna. But now they have to just appease the Adivasi leaders and carry on their exploitation of the natural resources of the region. They in connivance with the neo-economic forces will render the plunder of this region complete. Once again the Adivasis will have to migrate to tea gardens of Assam, take to construction works in towns, and domestic workers in mega-cities. Economic alienation will complete the picture of cultural and social alienation.

Prof. Dr. Munda sounds a caution about the impending danger facing the Adivasis. He argues that the Adivasis have contributed to the building up of the Great Indian Traditions. But at present the majority of the Adivasis are like a person sinking in a swamp and struggling hard with his/her hand and feet to get out, but his/her mind is not working out of nervousness and desperation. Hence, there is an enormous need for awareness raising among the Adivasis of Jharkhand both in terms of the dream coming in the form of a separate Jharkhand and the struggle that is unfolding in building a casteless-classless Jharkhand. Another domain, where the Adivasis can escape the dominance of the alien influence is in promoting and expanding the indigenous medicine. Significantly, as early as 1925 documentation on Santal Medicine was published in the Asiatic Society Journal Bengal. Recently, another book of the same nature was published by the Catholic Relief Society Calcutta was published. A small Adivasi groups like the Paharias, which is facing extinction due to killer diseases like cerebral malaria, would need the immediate attention of the rulers of the separate Jharkhand State. The entire student wing the All Jharkhand Students' Union could be engaged in constructive works like this in the changed conditions. If not, most of them would end up in the army of the lumpen elements.

To counter the various forces that are ready to devour this dream of the Adivasis, Prof. Dr. Munda calls for a co-ordinated effort to bring together the awakened Adivasis. These co-ordination efforts will have to be accomplished at all levels, that is, ethnic, social, linguistic, religious, political, economic and gender. Unless this is systematically undertaken, the Jharkhand movement

itself would wither away. Thus, with the arrival of Jharkhand state if the Adivasi movement for self-determination, preservation of their *jal, jungle* and *zamin*, socio-cultural assertion and Adivasi self-rule whither away, then the Jharkhandis would be annihilated once and for all from the Jharkhand. Hence, the slogan Jai Jharkhand has to continue unabated. In the search for alternative forms of nation and society building in Jharkhand various options that are open before the Adivasi need to be paid attention too.

Even as we look forward to this emergence of the peoples agenda we feel it is important that we point out the shape and focus of the very formation of the Jharkhand state.

This realisation is being spelt out by a number of peoples movements and organisations in Jharkhand region in the form of a peoples agenda. This agenda intends to cover policies with regard to industrialisation, agriculture, irrigation, mining, forest and land, at the economic level and health and education at the social and cultural level.

It should contain the following aspiration of the Jharkhandi People:

- The Jharkhand state government should be formed by secular and non-communal party(s).
- The Chief Minister of Jharkhand should be an Adivasi and the Deputy Chief Minister should be a Sadan.
- All the Government officials and staff who have direct dealing with the common public should be from the local Adivasi and Sadan communities.
- In all the cities and towns of Jharkhand where ever there non-advasis have occupied the Adivasi land should be returned to Adivasis.
- Lease given to non-advasis for mining purpose should be cancelled with immediate effect, and it should be handed over to the local Adivasi communities.
- Strict measures should be taken against corruption, minimum wage should be ensured

and enforced, projects which are not anti-people should be revived for employment generation to put an end to migration for jobs.

- Jharkhandi activists, intellectuals, peoples movements, youth, women, wage labourers and government representatives should form a combined committee, and under the direction of this committee policies should be formulated for the government's development and welfare programmes, and be implemented by respective agencies.
- Displacement should not take place in any circumstance in Jharkhand, specially the big dams should never be built in the Jharkhand state.

It is being stressed by the peoples movements to share this peoples agenda with their leaders, supporters, sympathisers and concerned authorities in due course of time.

To conclude, the song sung by Lorence Silas Hembrom in a film on the Adivasi life powerfully brings out this fact that the Adivasi alone are the power and potent force that could counter the spread of saffron wave, could end the exploitation or resources, could withstand the onslaught on the Adivasi forms of governance and uphold Jharkhand region and Jharkhandi identity.

“In my dreams today, On the Dumbari Hills”, asked Brother Birsa, “How can your country survive? You do something for that”.

Birsa's answer was, “Go to your village. Mobilise the people. And save your country.”

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