

## **CHOTANAGPUR PLATEAU – ITS ETHNO-HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS PRISTINE ECO-ENVIRONMENTAL PLATHORA**

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Chotanagpur is undoubtedly the land of mysteries so far as its close-set blending of variegated socio-cultural and psycho-philosophical features are concerned. The land mass of this wander land is characterized by wild majesty and rugged glory. The wooded and rocky tableland of chotanagpur is a specific feature in geological and geographical domains. To the students of history Chotanagpur showed a lot of historical along with archaeological series of occurrences are highly seen to be flourished depicting the multifarious eventualities in the human past. Not only so, these past records of human life and activities traversed through the remotest days i.e. prehistoric times. Chotanagpur with its pristine beauty is also highly attractive to the naturalist, botanists, the artists and also is similarly attractive to the lovers of natural beauties who are exclusively interested to unfold the hidden mysteries of diversified components of nature working internally in the configuration the elements constituting beauty. It is to be noted with great concern that Chotanagpur not only bestows the important functioning principle of creation of the supreme role for the anthropologists but also it proves itself as the paradise for these workers and thinkers of human life and activities. It is here in Chotanagpur in the midst of hills and dales anthropology as the study of humanity took its birth in India and what is more important to the human scientists is that the land, people, plethora of natural appeal unitedly instigate Sarat Chandra Roy, a prospective lawyer of chotanagpur Sub-Judicial Court to transform into a full-fledged anthropologist who in due course became the doyen of Indian Anthropology in the midst of that land of pristine majesty- in-Chotanagpur. It is really very difficult to present systematically the interactions of land, man and animal forms which have been integrated as a complex whole from the distant past. It needs, no doubt, a very good understanding of methodological principle to explore systematically the blending of man- nature reciprocal functioning complex. However the present work tries its level best with the sincere and serious efforts for illuminating the different facets of this splendorous land putting all sorts of importance to its multi-dimensional development perspective coalescing into an integrated whole.

### **CHAPTER – I**

#### **Introduction**

Apart from the tribals the ethno-historic, identity of Jharkhand land account diverse development of its indigenous societies and further the process of transmission from lineage and community based societies to a class based one. The geo-ecological and regional differentiation of the then state of Bihar gives three distinct regions, North Bihar to the north of the Gangas, the South Ganga plain of South Bihar, and the south Bihar plateau comprising of Chotanagpur and Santal Paragana. During

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Mughal rule the Raja of Chotanagpur was made a tributary. In 1765, the East India Company acquired the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Current shape and size of Jharkhand land area comprises almost half of the Bihar state territory extending to the district of Palaman, Hazaribagh, Santal Paraganas, Dhanbad, Ranchi and Singhbhem together with the adjacent districts of the state of west Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Claim for a separate state of Jharkhand was first raised in the year 1928 and was placed to the Simon Commission. In the year 1954 the issue was raised to the Bihar's Reorganization Commission and in the year 1973 the Jharkhand party demanded a state comprising over 71,619 Sq. miles with a population of 30,598,991 covering three districts of West Bengal (Purulia, Bankura, Midnapore), six districts from Bihar (Ranchi, Singhbhum, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Palamau, Santal Paragana), four from Orissa (Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur) and two from Madhya Pradesh (Raigarh and Sarguja). A proposal of greater Jharkhand land have been claimed to extend further to the hilly and jungle areas. Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh were included, on the basis of their pattern of uneven development and ethno-cultural composition.

The peaceful demonstrations and claim for the autonomy of Jharkhand land composed of all castes communities and Tribals of Chotanagpur irroded its value through time and the once patriotic slogans of Jaipal Singh. For autonomy became an efficient tool for the claver politicians with a motive to creat stable vote bank for unending exploitation as it did by the foruners. Therefore, the identity of Jharkhand could not have been isolated and protected from the Pan Indian character of political gimics and frail equations of National development. Perhaps this is how the honest and linear life style of a tribal region or state gradually lost into complex life and thought ways of urbanization process invited endless problems in every sphere of life.

## SECTION ONE

### **Bihar, A Brief Historical Perspective**

The area covered by the state of Bihar including Chotanagpur had several kingdoms like the Karusha, Magadha, Anga and Vaishali, in the ancient period. The name 'Bihar' was given by the Muslim invaders. They found large number of monasteries (Viharas), especially in the vicinity of Odantipuri, the modern Biharsharif and henceforth the land has been named as Bihar. In the early Vedic period, several kingdoms like the Karusha, Magadha, Anga, vaishali existed in this part of the country. It is evident from Vedic literature that in eastern India the Aryans may have first entered 'Videha' or northern Bihar. This name 'Videha' appears first in the 'Brahmana' and 'Upanisadic' literature. The name Anga and Magadha however, appeared in early Vedic literature.

The capital of Videha was Mithila, usually identified with Janakpur in the Tarai region of Nepal. In due course southern Videha developed a new kingdom with its capital at Vaishali, about twenty-five kilometers from Muzaffarpur.

In Pauranic texts we come across the existence of Karusha and Pundra as states of south Bihar latter included with Shahbad Singhbhum and Manbhum districts which are not mentioned either in Vedic or pauranic literature. In Buddhist literature the name Mahavans (forest) has been mentioned. The area falls to the north of Vaishali as stretching right upto the Himalayas in C. 500 BC.

The Karusha country almost corresponded to Sahabad. It is said that 'Rama' entered the area after crossing the Ganga near Chhapra in order to kill Tatika or Taroka the 'she-demon'. The western boundry of this kingdom was probably demarked by the river Karmanasa which joins Ganga near Buxer.

Magadha was situated to the east of Karusha and its capital was Rajgriha, the modern Rajgir. The kingdom of Angs lay to the east of Magadha and Champa on the outskirts of Bhagalpur was its ancient capital.

The sixteen Janapadas (regions) as mentioned in Buddhist literature include a number of republican states such as the Sakyas, Kaliyas, Bhaggas, Bulis, Mallas, Moriyas and soon, but most these were in eastern Uttar Pradesh. In South Bihar, political encroachment was taking place rapidly from c 500 BC. Anga was permanently annexed to Magadha and afterwards the Kurusha was also included.

The territorial and administrative divisions of Bihar during the Mauryan rule were not clearly understood. But, it is presumed that some commissioners division under 'pradesikas' and districts under Rajjukes were in existence.

Very little is known about the historical geography of Bihar during the period 200 BC to 300 AD. The Kushans rules over Bihar from C AD 70 to 150, probably through one or more Mahakshatrapas or Kahatrapas, but their headquarters are still unknown. Except the territorial divisions the evidences of Gupta administration were well preserved. Epigraphs refer to Magadha bhukti include the present districts of Patna, Gaya but whether its boundry extends more or not is not within the perview of present knowledge. Tirabhukti include the epublic of Vaisali with its capital at the city and probably it includes the whole of north Bihar.

The historical geography of Bihar during C AD 500 to 750 also remains in dark. It is partially because during that period the capital Pataliputra suffered terribly by a sudden devastating flood of the river Son.

During the Hindu rule in India, Chotanagpur appears to have remained unmolested. It is stated that during Asoka (C. 273, C. 232 BC). The Atavi or forest states too acknowledged the lordship of Magadha, and thus the inclusion of Chotanagpur under the Mauryan rule was justified. There was frequent immigration between Kashi and Hazaribagh through the hill tracts of Chotanagpur. The various tribes that had settled in Chotanagpur much earlier to Aryan invession had no kings in the beginning. In course of time as their number increased and as there

were regular wars against foreigners, they elected, one of their chiefs as king. Most scholars believe that kingship in Chotanagpur began soon after the fall of the imperial Guptas in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Family history of the Chotanagpur Raj states that, the Mundas voluntarily superseded the son of their own patriarch Madra Munda of Sutiambe (In Ranchi district), in favour of Madra's foster Son, Phani Mukti, in consideration of his superior intelligence and elected him as their king. It is said that, just after his birth, Phani Mukti had been found lying by the side of a tank surrounded by a number of naga or serpent. For, this reason his descendants later on called themselves as Nagbanshi.

The name 'Nagpur' is probably taken from the Nagbanshi who ruled the country, and 'Chota' is a corrupt version of Chutia, a village on the outskirts of Ranchi where the remains of the old fort of the Nagbanshi Rajas still be seen. Even in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this tract was known as Chutia Nagpur. According to late Sir S. C. Roy, 'the name Chotanagpur is one of comparatively recent origin and appears to have been first coined by the early British administrators of the country to distinguish it from the other Nagpur possessed by the Marhathas.'

### ***Ramgarh Raj***

The founder of the Ramgarh Raj was Bagdeo Singh who along with his elder brother, Singdeo Singh, was in the service of the Raja of Chotanagpur. In due course they secured much strength and defeated the local Raja of Pargana Karanpore (i.e. Thana Baragaon) and took possession of the said pargane. They gradually conquered over twenty one other paraganos. Bagdeo Singh became their Raja at about 1368 AD and their capital was located at Sisai which in due course shifted to Urde, then to Badam and then to Ramgarh. Hemat Singh, the sixth Raja of the dynasty, invited a sason from Patna to build a fortified residence at Badam. Adjacent to the west the Mahudi hill which contained some sand stone caves which were excavated for Hindu ascetics. One of them was made at about 1660 AD it was probably due to the inconvenience the capital was transferred to Ramgarh nearly 36 kilometer east in 1670 AD.

### ***Muslim Period (1200-1765)***

According to Bacanan 1937, the Teliagarhi pass, the meeting point of Rajmahal hills to Ganga, formed the boundary between the Maghal provinces of Bihar and Bengal. The Muslim historians have very rarely mentioned about the area covering the districts of Ramgarh, Chotanagpur and Palamau. Abul Fezal called Chotanagpur by its old name of Kokrah. The entire area from Birbhum (West Bengal) and Panchet to Ratanpur in Central India and from Rohtas to the frontiers of Orissa, was collectively known as Jharkhand or jungle land. The exact position of Chotanagpur in Bihar remains a matter of great speculation as there exists no survey records. The area was wild and thickly covered with jungle thus the area did not fall under

any revenue division. Colonel Dalton, in his 'Notes on Chotanagpur area', published in Hunters' statistical account noted that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Malik Ibrahim Bayu, the 'Muqti' (Governor of Bihar) and his men conquered Chai-champa. In Ain-I-Akbari, this paragona was include in Bihar, and was assessed at 620,000 'dams' or Rs. 15,000. In the Padshahname- the official history of Shahjahan's reigm, the name of the Hazaribagh district we included. The entire area came to know as Vihar or Bihar, when Bakhtiyar Khalji reduced the 'Hisar-e-Bihar' or the fortress of Odantpuri Bihar and subjugated the neighbouring areas. The Karnata dynasty of Simraon was at this time ruling in the north and the power was distributed among four powerful states viz. Nepal in the north, Bengal in the east, the Pala kingdom of South Bihar in the south, and Kanauj-Kasi in the west. According to the account of Mulla Taquia of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Bakhtiyar Khalji invaded Tirhut and made its ruler a tributary.

It is evident from the writings of Mirhaj-as Siraj that Iltutmish was bent upon the separation of Bihar from Bengal and thus made it a separate province but, the new boundry of the province was not demarcated. It is mentioned in the inscription of Tughril Tughan doted 1242 AD, that Bihar was for the second time separated from Delhi and attached with Bengal. The southern part of the state was ruled by Malik Bir Afghan, who incourse of time extended his power upto Tirhut. It was during 1324, the Malik Bayu, the Mukti (Governor) of Bihar, conquered the area of Chai Champa at present locate in Hazaribagh district. Thus it is evident that some portion of present Chotanagpur formed part of the province of Bihar during that time, had gradually been driven out of Saran, Shahabad, Patna the regions of Hajipur to palamau, where they had built a strong fort. Daud Khan, however, returned to Patna, as Jol charnock wrote on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1663, "Dawet Cenna (Daudkhan) is returned from Dacca, by conquering Palamau, he extended the limits of the empire to include Chotanagpur".

## SECTION TWO

### Prehistoric Elements in Chotanagpur

#### Stone – industries

Nature has enriched Chotanagpur with all the essential amenities of life, under which the hunters, food gatherers and the cave dwellers could easily flourish. But, very little has been explored so far, thus the present state of knowledge about the prehistoric antiquity still remains elementary. The first discovery of old remains was made by captain; Beeching in 1868, a number of clipped implements were found near the river of Chaibase and Chakradharpur. V. Ball mentioned that the remains consisted of some old Chert flakes and Knives and refered the industry as Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age. Again in 1874 some more stone implements were excavated. The implements consisted of a large, excessively dense and hard quartzite, we dge-sharped stone of same material and a smaller size of a black

igneous rock. Similar stone artifacts have also been found at Birbhanpur in Durgapur (West Bengal).

In 1912, Shri S. C. Roy the father of Indian Ethnology of Ranchi drew attention to the prehistoric antiquities found in Uttar Pradesh and Chotanagpur. He opined that the Kolarian tribes of Madras and other places originally lived in the hilly regions to the north and occupied the valleys of the mighty rivers of north India, and where the admixture took place with the Dravidians. In 1917, Mr. C. W. Anderson reported about the finds of a number of implements from the valley of the Sanjaya and the tributary streams. The head of a wild horse, very much allied to the modern horse, was also reported. The implements were both chipped and polished thus belong to both old and new Stone Age. Similar implements were found by S. K. Biswas (1918) and were all found on the debris at the mouth of ancient copper mines. The rocks which were utilized in preparing the specimens are hornblende-schist, a rock which is not very common in the area. V. Ball also reported about the ancient copper workshops in Singhbhum, as old as 1869. He found (1868) ancient sites, at the top of hills, in valleys, in the thickest jungles, and even in the center of agricultural fields where heaps of rocks were found.

The first recorded discovery of stone implements in the Ranchi district appears to have been made of solitary stone celt. Professor Valentine Ball excavated these implements from the foot of a small hill near the village Burhadi in Tamar. The only other find hitherto recorded was that of a few small stone arrow heads, both having leaf-shaped and of the chisel edged patterns. In Ranchi a few polished celts, besides two stone polishers, some worked cores and flakes and a number of stone blades were discovered by W. H. P. Driver (1888).

In 1914, Sri S. C. Roy put specific attention of the prehistoric evidences of Ranchi district. A triangular stone axe-head presented to him by a Munda client. The fellow believed it to have been a thunder bolt and kept it in his house for its supposed curative virtues. It was a stone celt almost wholly chipped, the edge alone having been ground to a high polish. Roy then set about collecting ancient stone implements in the Ranchi district, and within eighteen months his collection reached upto nearly a hundred celts and fragments of celts. Besides, he also secured two beautiful polished quartzite celts from the Hazaribagh district of Chotanagpur. The bulk of the stone implements collected by him in Ranchi district are, however connected with Asura sites, and seem to belong to an antiquity more remote than that of the Asur period of Chotanagpur history. According to Roy the implements and ornaments of copper dug up during that time were invariably attributed to those pre-Mundainhabitants of the district. In fact the inhabitants of Chotanagpur did never consider these implements as the work of men's hands at all, but are invariably believed to have been "Thunder-bolts", and are commonly known as "ther-pathhal" or therdiri that is thunder stone (Roy, 1914).

Owing to this celestial belief these stone celts were popularly used for removing ailments. (In Ranchi district as elsewhere in India and also in many parts of the globe). In case of headache, scanty urination, rheumatic pain and even in infections of the lung, water with which one of these stones has been rubbed over another flat stone is applied to the affected part. In some villages it is regarded as protective against lightning and even in some other places it is instantly thrown away for the fear of its attracting lightning strokes to the house in which it may be kept.

The major components of these celts are mostly quartzite and various kinds of schistose and gneiss rocks. Most of the celts have been found on the ground surface and a few of them have been discovered from river bed. The evidence of Palaeolithic period in Chotanagpur is not so well marked in comparison to abundant relics of the Neolithic period, particularly in the southern and southeastern parts of the Ranchi district. From the "sites of ancient Asuras, it would seem that the use of stone beds and certain stone implements, tools, and household articles, continued well on into the copper age and even into the European iron age.

Following are the stone implements described by Sri S. C. Roy in the year 1916.

A medium-sized triangular polished celt in hornblends or pyroxene schist was discovered from village Chacho Nawatoli (P. S. Mandar). The colour is grey with dark patches. It has a crescentic edge and flattened sides slightly tapering to a flat straight butt. Its surfaces are very slightly convex, and the angles which they make with the sides are only slightly beveled and the last quarters of the faces slope sharper. Its dimensions are: length 7.5 cms, breadth-at the edge 5.5 cms and at the butt-end 3.5 cms, thickness 2cms.

A highly polished wedge-shaped chisel made of compact dark green quartzite (resembling flint) was located at village Sodag (P. S. Ranchi). The slightly convex faces gradually become broader and broader and finally slope towards the crescentic edge which is much impaired showing signs of rough use. Its dimensions are: length 8 cms, breadth at the edge 5.5 cms, at the butt, 3.5 cms thickness near the butt 1.5 cms.

A beautifully designed and highly polished celt from village Area (P. S. Ranchi) made of compact argillaceous schist with fine symmetrical triangular shape celt was found with reddish grey in colour. The sides and faces all taper towards a narrow, thin and slightly rounded butt. Its dimensions are: length – 10.5 cms, breadth at the blade, 5 cms, at the butt, 1.5 cms greatest thickness, 2.5 cms. A chisel made of compact basalt was discovered from village Kakra (P. S. Ranchi) the colour of which reddish grey. The dimensions of the chisel are: length 9.5 cms, breadth of the blade, 6cms, of the butt 2 cms, thickness 3 cms. A *broad chisel* of dark grey siliceous schist was found from village Chenegutu (P. S. Khunti). The corners of the blade are slightly rounded to meet the sides. Its dimensions are: length 6.25 cms, breadth, at the blade 3.75 cms, of the butt 2 cms thickness 1 cm. A *small chisel* made of grey gneiss was discovered from village Salgi (P. S. Khunti). The

dimensions are: length 7.5 cms, breadth of the blades, 5 cms, of the butt 2.5 cms, thickness near the blade 2 cms.

A *polished chisel* made of soft grey relicious slaty rock, found at village Burju (P. S. Khunti). The dimensions are: length, 9.5 cms breadth, of the blade 5 cms near the butt 2.5 cms, thickness 2 cms. A small *polished celt* was discovered from village Janumpiri (P. S. Khunti). It is made of brown aeonic tinted rock. The dimensions are: length 7.5 cms, breadth near the edge, 5 cms, at the butt, 1.75 cms, thickness 2 cms. A *chisel* of soft grayish white schistose stone was located from village Binda (P. S. Khunti). It is partly polished. The dimensions are lengths 8.25 cms, breadth at the blade 3.5 cms, near the butt 1 cm. thickness near the blade, 1.75 cms. A *small polished celt with convex faces well rounded to meet the broad sides* found at village Soparam (P. S. Ranchi). The material is much weathered and the specimen is thickly covered with a brown coating. The dimensions are: length 6 cms, greatest breadth 2.75 cms greatest thickness 1.5 cms. A *polished rectangular bread-edged axe head* was found from village Sinda (P. S. Khunti). It is made of gneissese rock, and is coated with brownish red decomposition product. The dimensions are length 7.5 cms, breadth of the blade 6.5 cms, m of the butt (probably broken) 5.5 cms, average thickness 2 cms. A *broken lower half of a broad axe* made of dark grey gneiss found at village Torangel (P. S. Khunti). The dimensions are – length (of the present broken celt) 6 cms, m breadth near the blade 8 cms, thickness 2 cms. An *elongated broad-bladed axe* was found from village Gora (P. S. Khunti). It is a large and heavy celt formed of compact silicious rock. The dimensions are length 20 cms, breadth near the blade 8.5 cms, of the rounded butt (5 cms from the apex) 2.5 cms, thickness in the middle 3 cms. A *large cylindrical celt made of hard grayish gneiss* was discovered from village Binda (P. S. Khunti). The dimensions are – length 18 cms, breadth near the adge 4 cms, in the middle 6cms, near the butt 3cms, thickness 5 cms.

A heavy broad polished axe of greenish grey gneise, found by the side of river Tajna near village Sanegutu (P. S. Khunti). The dimensions are length 16 cms, breadth from corner to corner of the blane 7 cms, near the butt 3 cms, thickness in the middle 2.70 cms.

A *broad chisel* was found from village Chandegutu (P. S. Khunti). It is formed of dark grey gneise, coated with a brownish red decomposition product. The dimensions are length 10.5 cms, breadth of the original blade 7.5 cms, of the presentbroken blade 5.5 cms, at the middle 7 cms, of the broken butt 7 cms thickness of the butt 2.75 cms.

An *alongated crude celt* of phyllitic rock, only chipped and not polished found at village Murud (P. S. Khunti). The dimensions are – length 13 cms, breadth of the blade 5 cms, a little above the blade 5 cms, of the butt 2.5 cms, average thickness 2 cms. A *small polished celt* found from village Kakra (P. S. Ranchi). It is composed of grey compact quartzite. The dimensions are – length 5.5 cms, breadth of the



blade 3.25 cms, of the butt 2.5 cms thickness at the middle 2 cms. *A rectangular polished chisel* found from village Chendagutu (P. S. Khunti). It is made of a basalti rock coated with a brownish red decomposition product. The dimensions are length 6.25 cms, breadth of the blade 3.5 cms of the butt, 2 cms thickness at the middle 1.4cms.

### SECTION THREE

#### *18<sup>th</sup> Century Demographic Changes in Chotanagpur*

The first national census published in the year 1872 when compared with the census of 1921, showed a trend of increment of 34.6 per cent during the last fifty years. The general trend of the increment in the demographic history during the following fifty years also showed a declining rate down to the year 1901 which had been converted into an actual decrease in the following decade (1910). The increase has no doubt been largely due to the rapid improvement in the standard of enumeration and in Bihar particularly where every ‘Cattah’ of land cultivated and the mean density per square mile raised at 642 in north Bihar and 502 in South Bihar.

In Chotanagpur, the increase in populations since 1872 and 1921 was very much significant (see table 5). For every thousand persons in 1872 in the plateau added over 850 persons. In other words the actual population had been nearly doubled without making any provision for the vast number of immigrants who were actually enumerated in the neighbouring states. During the years 1910 to 1922 the increment in Chotanagpur Plateau showed a slight high of 0.1 per cent while the other three divisions show decrease varying between 0.7 per cent in North Bihar to 4.6 per cent in Orissa.

TABLE 1: CENSUS OF BENGAL, 1881

Chotanagpur Division	Hazaribagh Lohardaga Singhbhum Manbhoom
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TABLE 2: CENSUS OF BENGAL 1881

STATE COMPARING THE DENSITY OF THE POPULATION IN EACH DISTRICT

District	Density / Sq. Mile						
	In Town	In Village	Whole district	Rank according to Village density	Rank according to Total density	Most populous thanas	Least populations thanas
Hazaribagh	8,638.00	152.51	157.35	43	45	245.59	89.74
Lohardugga	2,527.64	130.82	133.60	44	46	248.40	48
Singhbhum	6006.00	119.34	120.91	45	48	144.47	108.77
Manbhoom	1,523.92	151.19	255.18	41	43	376.26	138.62
Chotanagpur	2,992.38	153.35	156.72	ix – iv	ix – iv	376.26	48.73

CENSUS OF BENGAL 1881 LIST OF THE DISTRICTS,  
DIVISIONS AND PROVINCES OF LOWER BENGAL

<b>Burdwan Division</b>	Budwan Bankoorah Beerbhun Midnapore Hoogly Howrah	Bihar	Patna Divison	Patna Gaya Shahabad Mozufferpore Durbhanga Sarun Chumparun
<b>Presidency Division</b>	24 Paraganaha Suburbs Calcutta Nuddes Jessor Khulna Moorshedabad	Orissa	Bhagalpur Division     Orissa Division	Monghyr Bhaugulpore Purmeah Maldah Santhal Pargana Cuttack Pooree Balasore
<b>Rajshahya Division</b>	Dinapore  Rajshahye Rungpore Bogra Pubna Dargeeling Jalpigoree	Chotanagpur	Chotanagpur Division	Augul  Banki Hazaribagh Lohardugga Singbhun Manbhoom
<b>Dacca Division</b>	Dacca  Ferreedpore Backergunje Mymensing	Feudatory States		Cooch Behar  Hill Pipperah Tributary States Orissa Tributary Chotanagpur
<b>Chittagaong Division</b>	Chittagong Noakhally Tipperah Chittagong Hill – Tracts			

TABLE 3: TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF PERSONS BORN IN CHOTANAGPUR DIVISION FOUND ELSEWHERE IN BENGAL AT THE CENSUS OF 1881 AND THE PROPORTION WHICH THEY BEAR IN EVERY 100 PERSONS BORN IN THE LOCALITY

Division	District	Emigrants	
		Number	Percentage
Chotanagpur	Hazaribagh	70,705	6.29
	Lohardugga	60,760	3.29
	Singhbhoom	127,222	23.09
	Manbhoom	59,129	5.54

TABLE 4: TABLE SHOWING THE PROPORTION OF IMMIGRANTS IN EVERY 100 OF THE WHOLE POPULATION IN CHOTANAGPUR

<i>Division</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Emigrants</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Chotanagpur	Hazaribagh	52,086	4.71
	Lohardugga	68,833	4.27
	Singhbhoom	30,034	6.61
	Manbhoom	50,097	4.73

TABLE 5: THE TABLE SHOWS THE POPULATION OF THE FOUR CITIES AROUND CHOTANAGPUR DURING 1872 – 1921

<i>Cities</i>	<i>1982</i>	<i>1881</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>1921</i>
Patna	158,900	170,654	165,192	134,785	136,153	119,976
Gaya	66,843	76,415	80,383	71,288	49,921	67,562
Bhagalpur	65,377	68,238	69,106	75,760	74,349	68,878
Jamsedpur	—	—	—	—	5,672	57,360

The following table shows for the actual number and proportion of the amigrants (i.e. persons born in the district but anumerated outside in the Chotanagpur Plateau during 1872 to 1921.

<i>District</i>	<i>Number of emigrants</i>	<i>Actual population per mile</i>
Hazaribagh	147,535	115.53
Ranchi	348,172	260.91
Palamau	35,803	48.81
Manbhum	117,673	75.97
Singhbhum	100,849	132.78
Santal Paraganas	297,913	165.63
Angul	25,489	139.61
Semalpur	92,015	116.55
Orissa States	106,727	28.03
Chotanagpur States	2,449	16.06

### ***The Influenza Epidemic of 1918***

The first signs of this disease were noticed in July 1918 but not in a acute form. After a few weeks it began to spread along the routes of communication. Before the end of the year (1918), 17.2 per mile of the population or over half a million persons had perished of the disease. The districts whih suffered most were Gaya, Shahabad, Palamau, Ranchi and Hazaribagh. Further, following no rain fall after the middle of September 1918, the crops were universally poor and the out turn of winter rice was only 60 per cent of the normal.

Apart from all the above mentioned calamities the Chotanagpur plateau showed a marked increase of population by 65,044 persons or 9.4 per cent which was the biggest increase recorded during the time. This is primarily due to the rapid growth of Jamshedpur industrial sector and the development towards the lifting of the mineral resources of the district.

The area, population and density in the natural and administrative divisions (Bihar and Orissa) are given in the following tables.

NATURAL DIVISION			
<i>Natural Division</i>	<i>Area in sq. miles</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mean density per sq. miles</i>
North Bihar	21,822	14,007,646	642
South Bihar	15,076	7,574,003	502
Orissa	8,231	3,996,833	486
Chotanagpur Plateau	66,680	12,383,376	186

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION			
<i>Administrative Divisions</i>	<i>Area in sq. miles</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mean density per sq. miles</i>
Patna division	11,149	5,544,038	497
Tirhut division	12,598	9,949,268	790
Bhagalpur division	18,613	7,886,982	424
Orissa division	13,736	4,968,873	362
Chotanagpur division	27,065	5,653,028	209
Feudatory States	28,648	3,959,669	138

It is observed from the census report 1901, that the true increase in the Chotanagpur plateau including the tributary states of Orissa and Chotanagpur, the Santhal Paraganas and Angul, had been obscured by the extraordinary amount of amigration tolling the net increase of 7.8 per cent. The rate of growth shows greatest in the tributary states of Orissa and Chotanagpur where the increment shows 14.8 and 13.3 per cent respectively. The whole of the tract was very thinly inhabited. However, the actual growth during 1890 to 1901 was not less than 12 per cent.

Next to Angul which then situated in the midst of the Orissa states showed an increase of 12.8 per cent, the greatest increment was observed in Singhbhum. Singhbhum had suffered less from scarcity and showed less emigration than the other districts of Chotanagpur division. The district had been benefited by the opening of the new railway tract (1918). The net increase in the district of Singhbhum tolls 12.4 per cent, while in Manbhum it is 9.0 per cent. The most progressive tract in the Manbhum district was in the North West where the rapid development of the Jhoria Coal Field had created a growing demand for labour. Even then the district (Manbhum) had faced a net loss by immigration, owing to the recruitment of coolies for Assam, and the actual increase exceeded the census figures by 2 to 3 per cent.

The loss by immigration was more in Ranchi than any other district excepting Santhal Paragansa. More than 91,000 persons born in Ranchi district were enumerated in Assam. The trend of movement of people was mostly from the

Central Plateau towards the west and south of the district. More than 180,000 emigrants had left the district to work in the tea gardens of Assam and Jalpaiguri and as pioneers of cultivation in the *Barind*. Two major regions viz. Damin-i-koh and a narrow strip in the north east of the district were vastly evacuated due to the vigorous epidemics of plague broke out shortly before the census.

Hazaribagh had an increment of only 1.1 per cent, which was the lowest recorded increment in the plateau further there had been a tremendous loss of more than 90,000 persons during the decade. Hazaribagh is the place from where the Santals set forth sometimes during 1820-1830 A.D. to populate the Damin-i-koh in the Santhal Parganas. The intensity of the movement had become gradually less but the immigration to the district was numerous. There was a considerable loss of population to Manbhum, where the Coal mines offered remunerative employment. On the other hand Ranchi and Palamau had a considerable influx from Gaya and comparatively against a smaller amount of remunerations. The net result was a small gain, but a net loss of nearly 100,000 by emigration to more distant places. Assam alone accepted nearly 69,000 persons from the district (Palamau). The loss is of course nearly half that sustained by Ranchi which send out more than 200,000 persons to the distant places, including about 92,000 to Assam and 80,000 to Jalpaiguri. The interchange of population in the adjoining areas of the plateau was fairly even, there was a gain from Hazaribagh, and a heavy loss in the direction of the Chotanagpur states and Singhbhum.

The district of Palamau gained from Gaya, Shahabad and Hazaribagh the net result of this local immigration was a gain. The migration between Manbhum and the adjoining districts during the time showed considerable gain from hazaribagh on the north west also to Singhbhum and its political states on the south, a gain from Bankura (West Bengal) on the east, and a heavy loss to Burdwan (West Bengal) on the north east. The overall explanation of these figures is that the tendency of local emigration was directed towards two centers, viz. the coal mines in the north of the district and those in the Raniganj subdivision of Burdwan. The district had loss nearly 70,000 emigrants to Assam and received in exchange only some 4,000 from the united provinces, and a few hundred from the central provinces.

The most striking features of migration which took place in the Santal Parganas are its great volume and the tendency of the people to move towards east. There was strong inflow from all the adjoining districts west of a line drawn approximately north and south through the centre of the district (from Shabganj and Jamtara) i.e. from Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Hazaribagh and towards the east line viz. Purnea, Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Burdwan. The immigrants from the west exceeded 83,000 while the emigrants to the east numbered nearly 117,000. The great emigration of the Santals from the south and west to the district that now bears their name (Santal Parganas) took place during middle part of the last century. The movement was continued in the adjoining districts especially in those parts of

Dinajpur (west part of which is now in West Bengal), Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh) and Bogra. Dinajpur alone contained more than 48,000 persons born in the Santal Paraganas and Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh) and Bogra more than 8,000. More than 31,000 natives of this district were enumerated in the tea gardens of Assam and in Jalpaiguri where they were numbered more than 10,000.

In the census of 1901 the Presidency of Bengal and the Province of Bihar and Orissa (except the five feudatory states) were included in the Lieutenant Governorship of Bengal, a province extended over 196,408 sq. miles and hold a population of 78,493,410 persons. For its vast administrative difficulties the province had been portioned in 1905. a new province, called eastern Bengal and Assam, was constituted, which included Assam and a considerable portion of the old province of Bengal, viz. the division of Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi the district of Malda and the state of hill – Tripura excepting Darjeeling. The five feudatory states of Jashpur, Surguja, Udaipur, Korea and Changlhakar were at the same time transferred to the Central provinces, while the district of Sambalpur and the feudatory states of Patna, Sonpur, Kalahandi, Banra and Rairakhol were transferred from central province to Bengal. The province of Bengal, as constituted after these changes, extended over 148,592 Sq. miles, (Earlier 196,408 sq. miles) and contained a population of 57,206,430 persons (earlier 78,493,410 persons). The second partition which took place on 01<sup>st</sup> April, 1912, combined Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa into a separate province under a Lieutenant Governor's Council.

After this second division, the province of Bihar and Orissa had an area of 111,829 sq. miles and a population of 38,435,293 persons. It consisted of the divisions or commission ship of Patna, Tirhut and Bhagalpur, Orissa and Chotanagpur including the Orissa and Chotanagpur feudatory states.

Chotanagpur, which included the divisions of Kharsawan and Saraikela extended over 27,679 sq. miles, and had nearly 5,754,008 inhabitants. The most populated district in the province was Manbhum, which had exchanged places with the Santhal Paragans during the decade (1901 to 1910). In the two 'thanas' of Jharia and Topchanchi (in the Coal Field area) the density was 667 and 644 respectively, but in the adjoining Thana of Tundi, which was purely agricultural the density was only one third. Further south, in Chas and Ranghunathpur, were the land was more suitable for agriculture had attracted permanent settlers, and there were 498 and 442 persons per sq. miles respectively.

The average population density in Ranchi and Sambalpur was numbered exactly the same i.e. 195 persons per sq. miles. The Ranchi division had 256, the Khumti subdivision 226 and the Gumla subdivision only 146 persons to the square mile.

The population was universally distributed in Hazaribagh. In the coal field areas of Giridih subdivision of Hazaribagh, the density was nearly 50 per cent

greater than in the Sadar subdivision, which was completely an agricultural area. The Chotanagpur plateau by that time contained 27 towns, but only Ranchi and Purulia had over 20,000 inhabitants. In the feudatory states there were only six small towns, with an average population of 6,200, scattered over 28,000 square miles.

Hazaribagh, which lost its population strength slightly in the last decade of the last century had increased by the opening of the Grand Chord line, which constantly attracted visitors and permanent residents on account of its health resorts and educational facilities afforded by its colleges. Giridih in the same district was highly benefited by the development of the coal fields, and the population increased by 13 per cent.

The growth of Ranchi since 1891 has been largely enhanced. In 1901 it recorded a growth of 28 per cent and then added 7,000 more or 27 per cent during the decade 1901 to 1910. The area of the town increased by 1½ sq. miles. The decade ended in 1910 was a period of agricultural prosperity. The failure of the monsoon in 1907 led to a failure of the crops, and famine was declared in the kurdeg, kochedera, chainpur, Bishunpur, Gumla and Ghaghra Thana. In any case the total addition to the population was 199,591 or 16.8 per cent.

TABLE SHOWS THE DIVISIONS, DISTRICTS AND SUBDIVISIONS OF  
CHOTANAGPUR AS ON 01<sup>ST</sup> APRIL, 1922.

<i>Division</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Subdivision</i>
Chotanagpur	Hazaribagh	Sadar, Chatra, Giridh
	Ranchi	Sadar, Khunti, Simdega, Gumla
	Palamau	Nil
	Manbhum	Sadar, Dhanbad
	Singhbhum	Nil

Commissioner's Divisions (1922)  
Chotanagpur Plateau

Hazaribagh	Chotanagpur
Ranchi	Chotanagpur
Palamau	Chotanagpur
Manbhum	Chotanagpur
Santal Parganas	Bhagalpur
Augul	Orissa
Sambalpur	Orissa
Orissa States	Orissa State
Chotanagpur States	Chotanagpur State

## NATURAL DIVISION (1921)

<i>Natural Division</i>	<i>Area in sq. miles</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mean density per sq. miles</i>
North Bihar	21,822	14,007,646	642
South Bihar	15,076	7,574,003	502
Orissa	8,231	3,996,833	486
Chotanagpur Plateau	66,680	12,383,376	186

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION (1921)

<i>Administrative Divisions</i>	<i>Area in Sq. miles</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mean density per sq. miles</i>
Patna division	11,149	5,544,038	497
Tirhut division	12,598	9,949,268	790
Bhagalpur division	18,613	7,886,982	424
Orissa division	13,736	4,968,873	362
Chotanagpur division	27,065	5,653,028	209
Feudatory States	28,648	3,959,669	138

TABLES SHOWS THE POPULATION OF THE FOUR CITIES AROUND  
CHOTANAGPUR

<i>Cities</i>	<i>1982</i>	<i>1881</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>1921</i>
Patna	158,900	170,654	165,192	134,785	136,153	119,976
Gaya	66,843	76,415	80,383	71,288	49,921	67,562
Bhagalpur	65,377	68,238	69,106	75,760	74,349	68,878
Jamsedpur	—	—	—	—	5,672	57,360

The general trend of development in the population strength during fifty years (1872 to 1921) evidenced a steady increase at a declining rate to the year 1901 which has been converted into an actual increase during the first decade of this century. The major reasons behind this increase were largely due to the steady improving standard of enumeration. In North Bihar, particularly where every available 'cottah' of land was cultivated the mean density per square mile raised upto 642. Where as in south Bihar, the pressure of population on the soil was mostly remained same as was for the last few decades. In Chotanagpur, however, the increase was very much prominent. For every thousand persons in 1872 there were an addition of over, 1,850 persons. In other words the actual population had nearly been doubled without giving any provision for the vast number of emigrants who were enumerated elsewhere. Of course, during the last one decade (1910-1921) the plateau showed decrease varying between 0.7 per cent in north Bihar to 4.6 per cent on Orissa.



## CHAPTER – II

### Chotanagpur - the Physical Feature with Reference to Jharkhand

The Bihar state is situated between latitude 21.58' and 27.31' N and longitude 83°20' and 88°32'E. As per earlier geo-political features it was bounded on the east by West Bengal and on the west Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Orissa lies to the south and to the north lies the independent kingdom of Nepal. The State comprised of two district physical units of roughly equal area, the Gangetic plain and the Chotanagpur Plateau. The Ganga divides the plain into unequal divisions as northern and southern Bihar.

The North Gangetic plain extends from the base of the Tarai to the Ganga in the south, comprising an area of about 22,000 square miles. It includes the entire Rirhut division, Purnia district, north Monghyr and Saharsa. The *Sumswar* and the *Dunhills* cover an area of about 364 sq. miles in Champaran. They are the lowest and the outermost of all the Himalayan ranges and form the part of a long range which runs along the whole length of Nepal, at the southern base of which lies the sub-mountain tract the Tarai. The suneswa range runs along the northern frontier of the state for a distance of about 46 miles and varies in altitude from a few hundred feet to 2,884 feet at *Fort Sumswar*, from which a magnificent view of the Himalayas covered with eternal snow is found. The Dun hills lie to the south of Sumswar range, from which they are separated by the *Dun valley* a range of low hills extended for about 20 miles from the North West to the south east. The Tarai forms a narrow belt of sub-mountains and forests followed by a land of long *ready grasses*. The north Gangetic plain is the playground of rivers – the Gogra, Gandak, Bagmati, Kosi, Mohananda and a host of minor streams which descend from Himalayas and make their way to the Ganga in frequently changing Channels. The south Gangetic plain occupies the greater part which is popularly known as south Bihar. It covers hills and undulations of the Chotanagpur plateau encroaching upon the plain from the south, until near Monghyr. It is further extended in the Kharakpur hills as far north of the Ganga itself, and after a brief recession runs along the bank of the river for a considerable distance towards Rajmahal hills.

Chotanagpur plateau covers an enormous area of 34 to 35 thousand square miles, comprising the southern half of Bihar. The plateau is a region of great unevenness and consists of a succession of plateaus, hills and valleys. Most of the plateau has an elevation exceeding 1,000 feet, with a great part rising about 2,000 feet above sea level. But, there are hills rising to 3,000 feet or more. There are also river valleys which are only 400 feet above sea level. The heart of the main plateau consists of two large plateaus those of Hazaribagh and Ranchi separated by the structural basin of the Damodar River. These have an elevation of about 2,000 feet above on the west, a still higher plateau known as the 'Pats' which is about 1,000 feet higher. Characteristic features of the plateau are the huge, isolated, rounded or

conical protuberance of rock which rise suddenly from the general level and are visible for many miles around. The Hazaribagh plateau has on its eastern margin Parashnath, the highest hill in Bihar rising to a height of 4,480 feet. In the extreme south, in Singhbhum, is the hilly region of Porahat and Kolhan, a mountains tract comprising of high hills with alternating step valleys, especially west of the Karo River. The south west of Singhbhum comprises one mass of hills – the Saranda (seven hundred hills), the greater portion of which is under reserved forest. The table land in Singhbhum is confined to the valleys of the south Koal and Suvarnarekha Rivers.

The Rajmahal hills fall in the north east angles of the plateau and are only considerable mass of hills which approach the Ganga in its course in that region. The Kaimur hills, separated from the rest of the plateau by the valley of Son, are structurally very different from what we see in Chotanagpur. They are the eastern most termination of the vindhyan range and form an undulating table land rising abruptly from the plain.

### ***Chotanagpur Region***

Chotanagpur marks the north-eastern projection of the Indian peninsula, being one the major components of the eastern plateaus. The physiographic map of the national atlas depicts it as the plateau portion of Bihar combined with the eastern margin of Madhya Pradesh. The monograph on economic regionalization of India published by the census of India has treated Chotanagpur as a natural region being an integral component of the north-eastern plateaus. The western boundary coincides with the Bihar-madhya Pradesh boundary but groups it together with the northern hills of Orissa in the South. Some geographers exclude the Rajmahal hills and the highland of Santhal Parganas from Chotanagpur. The entire tract except the Kaimur plateau in Shahabad and Santal pargana is known as the Chotanagpur plateau. The exclusion of Santhal Paragana has taken place because of its inclusion in the Bhagalpur division and not in Chotanagpur. However, it is not justified by the nature of habitat, economy and society which are more akin to the plateau region rather than to the plain region of Bihar. According to S. P. Chatterjee, "Chotanagpur plateau covers the districts of Santhal Praganas including the Rajmahal hills in the north, the Ranchi and Singhbhum in the south and the palamau in the west beyond the Damodar valley covering the Hazaribagh and Dhanbad districts."

Conventionally, Chotanagpur is limited within the bounds of Bihar as before the re-organization of states which resulted in the merger of parts of former Manbhum, now Purulia district, in West Bengal on grounds of Predominance of Bengali population. Although there is no sharp change in the nature of terrain either across the Bihar – Madhya Pradesh boundary traversing through the Pat (high level latitude plateaus) or across the drainage lines. Chotanagpur thus exhibits relatively greater uniformity of terrain in the form of predominantly plateau

topography at different elevations as against the mass of confused hills alternating with enclosed river basins in Bashelkhand or the Garhjat hills of Orissa.

The region, thus delimited, as very irregular boundaries on all sides, the extreme points lying between 20°0' - 25°30' N latitudes and 83°47' – 87°50' E longitudes covering an area of 86,239 Km<sup>2</sup> and comprising the districts of Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Palamau and Santhal Paraganas of Bihar and Purulia district of West Bengal.

#### SECTION FOUR

##### *Geological profile of Chotanagpur*

The oldest geological formations of India are found in the Chotanagpur plateau of Bihar (Jharkhand), and the youngest are found in the northern plains. In Chotanagpur we come across a portion of the oldest part of the Earth's rocky crust. Part of it might have belonged to the primeval crust of the earth when it first cooled and condensed from liquid state. The crust was originally very thin and molten rocks through it along vertical fractures forming wall like masses known as dykes, flooding the surface or forming volcanoes more often than in later geological periods.

##### *The Geological Past*

We find that the whole of the state, including the northern plains, formed a part of the ancient continent called by the geologist Gondwanaland, named after the kingdom of Gondwana, the land of the Gonds in Madhya Pradesh. Both in Chotanagpur Plateau and in the Southern part of the Himalayas, the older rocks of the peninsula have been raised up together with newer strata.

##### *The Satpura Belt*

There are remains of at least two ancient mountain chains, the older of which ran across Bihar towards Assam in a Wse-Ene direction as the continuation of the Satpura range, for which reason it is considered as belonging to the Satpura cycle of mountain formation. On the other hand its eastern termination, the latter is in the Kaimur plateau, which is the eastern termination of the Kaimur range of the great Vindhyan cycle of mountain building. The isotopic analysis of lead from an uraninite obtained from the pegmatites of Singar in the Gaya district gave an average age of 955±40 million years (Earth's age is – 3,350 million years approx.). The pegmatites, carrying mica and other rare minerals, are intensive in the Satpura rocks. According to the geologists the age of the main mountain building period must have been even older than this. The determination of age from a magnetite from Chaibasa in the Singhbhum district gave 970 million years. The Satpura range was younger than the Eastern Ghats, the north-eastern end of which lies south of the Singhbhum district. Part of the Shillong series of old metamorphic rocks in the

Assam plateau has a Satpura strike and part has an Eastern ghat strike, so the Eastern ghats continued almost to the borders of Bihar and Assam.

The Ganitic areas of the Chotanagpur region intruded into the core of this ancient mountain chain. The old sedimentary rocks have been highly metamorphosed and very much denuded through the ages. The period of the Earth's history when this ranges developed is known as the Archaean. More than ninety per cent of the area of Bihar south of the plains of the Ganga is occupied by Archaean rocks and, in the remaining tenth of the area; the basement Archaean rocks are overlain by sedimentary strata of the Vindhyan and Gondwana periods. It covers the Rajmahal hills of the north east corner of the Chotanagpur plateau, and the Deccan lavas which extend upto the fringes of the state.

### *The Dharwar System of Rocks*

These were the first formed sediments to be deposited in the depressions and hollows of the primeval crust. This granitic or gneissic crust has, however, not been located anywhere in the Chotanagpur region. The Dharwar system of rocks is best developed in the Singhbhum district of Bihar and in the western part of Manbhum, the southern margin of the Ranchi Plateau, the northern fringe of the Chotanagpur plateau and in the Santal Parganas.

The component rocks the Singhbhum district and in the Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar district in the adjoining parts of Orissa, are great masses of quartzites interbedded with thick mass of iron ore. Jasper is found. The whole being known as banded haemaquartz. This is the most important source of iron in India. The other rocks are phyllites, schists, conglomerates and tuff. Owing to their richness in iron ore, these strata have been grouped under the name of the iron-ore series. In some places the phyllites have been partly replaced by manganese ores and constitute manganese ore deposits. Quartzites, schists and phyllites again form hill ranges along the northern edge of the Chotanagpur plateau as found in the Bhajaure, Gidhaur, Shaikhpura and Rajgir hills, and the Kharakpur hill.

### *Granite*

In the Singhbhum district there are several sources of granitic rocks which, in view of their different textures, variation of mineral composition and degree of metamorphism, have been given different regional names such as the Chotanagpur granite – gneiss, the Singhbhum granites and Chakradharpur granite-gneisses, the Arkasani granite of Kharawan and the sodic - granites of the copper belt in the zone of shearing following the south-eastern trend of the rocks that ranges from Tatanagar eastwards. Of these, the Chotanagpur granite gneisses occupies a small area in the Singhbhum district, but a larger area in the Ranchi, Santal Parganas, Hazaribagh and Manbhum districts. The Ranchi and Hazaribagh plateau are flanked by the denuded outcrops of old sedimentary rocks which have been so highly

metamorphosed and impregnated by granite injections as to make them look like granites. The Chutupalu range, up through which the motor road to Ranchi is laid on a relic of the old fold-mountain of the Archean period.

### ***The Cuddapah system***

In the Singhbhum district, the Cuddapah system of rocks is known as the Kolhan series consisting of sandstones, shales and limestones, beginning with a basal conglomerate. Kolhan sandstones can be seen in Chaibasa resting upon an eroded surface of Singhbhum granite.

### ***The Vindhyan Strata***

Vindhya Mountains, known as the Vindhyan system is younger than the Cuddapah system of rocks. The Vindhyan rocks occupy a small area in the extreme northeastern part of Bihar between Sasaram and the Son Valley and forms the eastern end of the Kaimur plateau. The strata are almost horizontal which according to the geologists an indication of block uplift without much folding.

After the uplifting of the Vindhyan system of deposits, the sea finally disappeared from India and an epoch of continental conditions set in. Shallow seas extended from the set over the region north of the central axis of the Himalayas in the Spiti valley in Tibet, and in the Salt Range area. These were the forerunners of the *Tethys Sea* which considered the next surge of mountain building activity.

### ***The Upper Carboniferous Glaciations***

From the close of the Vindhyan period to the end of the Middle Carboniferous there has been continuous land conditioning but without any deposition of strata. Therefore these chapters of the Earth's history in Peninsular India are completely missing. In the Upper Carboniferous, about two hundred million years back, Gondwanaland experienced a glacial climate and much of it lay under a thick mantle of ice. Evidence of this continental glaciation is to be found in the presence of *boulder beds containing pebbles and boulders of different rocks with ice-marks and scratches*, which form the base of the coal-bearing beds in certain parts of the coalfields of Bihar. It has been named the *Talchir boulder bed*, because it was recognized first in the Talchir district of Orissa.

### **The Gondwana Coal Basins**

While in the north a gigantic down-warping of the crust was taking place and letting in the sea, the Chotanagpur plateau was split into two portions by this series of faults and the depressions. The portions thus formed are now marked by the coalfields of Bihar and Bengal and the basin of the Damodar. North of the Hazaribagh plateau and the dissected uplands of the Gaya district was another basin of fluvial deposition which extended northward round about the Tethys

Sea. Thus the Gondwana beds are now found in the outer fringe of the Himalayas in the Darjeeling district and in Sikkim.

The principal basins of the Gondwana strata are distributed in an east-west belt, parallel to the general structural trends of the Archean rocks which determined the drainage of the Auranga-Damodar system with a divide of watershed between them which connects the Ranchi and Hazaribagh plateaus. From west to east there are six basins of varying areas, namely, Hutar, Auranga, Karanpura, Ramgarh, Bokaro and Jharia.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE GIVES THE CLASSIFICATION OF  
THE GONDWANA SYSTEM AS DEVELOPED IN BIHAR

Upper Gondwana Beds	Damodar Valley Rajmahal Supra Panchet	Rajmahal area Rajmahal with traps and inter traps Dubrajpur	Age Lower Juras Upper Tries
Lower Gondwana Beds	Panchet (not represented in Jharia Field) Raniganj Sand-Stone and Coal seams Barren Measures (Ironstone shales) Barakar Sandstones Karharbari coal seams and shales Rikhba plant beds Talchir Shales Boulder beds	Barakar Talchir	Lower Tries Upper Permian Middle Permian Lower Permian Upper Carboniferous

### *Laterite*

In the western fringes of the state, in the Palamau and Ranchi districts, some of the high plateaus or Pats, such as that of Natarhat, rise to over three thousand feet above sea level and being the eastern most outline of the Deccan traps, are capped of lavas. Capping these plateau are spreads of high level laterite containing valuable deposits of bauxite which is the source of aluminium. This high level laterite is of some geological antiquity and is perhaps of the Eocene age. Low level laterite is found at intervals along a belt on the western edge of the alluvial tract of the Ganga, beginning at the eastern foot of the Rajmahal hills.

### *The siwalik system and the formation of the Ganga basin*

Champan district, in the extreme north-west corner of the state encroaches upon the Siwalik system of deposits of Tertiary fresh water formation which are found along the entire length of the Himalaya Mountains.

The alluvial deposits of the Ganga and her tributaries constitute the last chapter of the geological history, not only a Bihar, but of India. These deposits conceal

beneath them the northern extension of the Chotanagpur plateau in Bihar and of Peninsular India as a whole.

### ***The Earthquake Belt***

The fault is shallow at its two ends and deepest in its middle part in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In Bihar earthquake of 1934 was due to further movement along these sub-surface faults, as the epicentral tract of the highest intensity extended from Sitamarhi to Madhubani.

### ***Hazaribagh, Manbhm & Palamau District***

The hot sulphur springs at Charak, Jherbari, Sheopur and the Kawagandhwani series of alkaline springs in Hazaribagh district are situated in the Archaean terrain in zones more or less parallel and close to the boundary of Gondwanas and are related to the post-Gondwana faulting. The hot sulphur springs of Surjakund and Duari in the Hazaribagh district are also situated in the Archaeans.

### ***Geology and Mineral Resources***

The State being richest of all the states, so far as the mineral resources are concerned is geologically most important and commands a great attention. The state has an area of 172,000 sq. km. out of this about 80,000 sq. km. area is covered by Gangetic alluvium in the north part and about 92,000 sq. km. is occupied by hard rock in the south. Till the time of independence (1947) only about 55,000 sq. km. area was systematically mapped, while over 32,000 sq. km. area has been mapped since independence. It has remained till now the only state where uranium and copper ores are being produced. Several other important minerals, like coal, iron-ore, limestone, mica, kyanite, china-clay and bauxite are produced in the state. The total production of minerals in the state values over 30 per cent of the countries production.

The state attracted the attention of a number of British geologists; notable among them are T. W. H. Hungles (1866-72), V. Ball (1867-81), F. H. Hatch (1901), A. Jowett (1925), C. X. Fox (1923, 1930) and J. A. Dunn (1920-41). Among the Indian geologists names of Shri A. K. Roy (1942), M. K. RoyChoudhary (1958), Dr R. S. Mehta (1957, 1963), A. B. Dutt (1963), H. S. Pareek (1965), T. M. Mahadevan (1967) and S. R. A. Rizvi (1972), deserve special mention. Besides the above, a large number of geologists have worked on the structure, stratigraphy and economic minerals of the state.

V. Ball (1881) was first describe the geology of Singbhum and Manbhum district. Dunn (1929-41) carried out detailed work in the Singbhum and surrounding areas, and has given a detailed description of his work in his memoir volumes 54, 63 (Pt- III) and 69 (Pt. I & II). He has also described the economic geology and mineral resources of the state in his memoir volume 78. A large part

of the state has been systematically mapped in the recent years by S. N. P. Srivastava (1952-55, 1958-60), U. Prasad (1962-73), A. N. Sarkar (1966-73), B. P. Bhattacharya (1964-73) and others.

The coalfields of Bihar have remained through ages the places of special attention. T. W. H. Hugles (1866-67, 1870-72) was first to give accounts of Jharia, Bokaro, Karanpura, Deoghar and Itkohori coalfields, while V. Ball (1867, 1872, 1880) described the Ramgarh, Chope, Auranga and Hurat coalfields. Later Albert Jowett (1925) discussed the geological structures of Karanpura coal fields in the memoir volume 52. A geology and coal resource of Jharia coalfields was revised by C. S. Fox in 1930, and later on by D. R. S. Mehta and B. R. Narayan Murthy 1957. The petrographic studies of the coals of Karanpura coalfields have been made in detail by H. S. Pareek (1965). A. B. Dutt (1963) has revised the geology of Bokaro coalfield, while S. R. A. Rizvi (1972) has described in details the geology and sedimentation trends of Palamau coalfields. The reserves of coal in Bihar are now estimated to be 35,258 million tones against 20,000 millions tones of pre-independence days.

The pioneer workers on the iron-ore deposits of Bihar are F. G. Percival (1931), A. C. Jones (1934) and J. A. Dunn (1935). The bauxite deposits of the state have been examined and described in detail by Dr. M. K. RoyChoudury in his memoir volume 85 (1958), W. S. Sherwill (1851), A. Smith (1899), T. H. Holland (1902), A. A. C. Dickson (1907), A. F. Dixon (1913), G. H. Tipper (1920), C. S. Fox (1930) and J. A. Dunn (1940). Recently the geology and petrology of the mine-pegmatites in Bihar has been studied and discussed in detail by T. M. Mahadevan and J. B. P. Maithani (1967). A large number of geologists have carried out work in the Singhbhum Copper belt. J. A. Dunn (1937) was the first to give a full account of the history and geology of the copper deposits. Among the young officials, names of N. K. Mukherjee, B. K. S. Dhruva Rao, A. B. Saha, K. R. Parthasarathi, R. S. Sharma and M. M. Sengupta etc. may be mentioned. The base mental occurrence of the other parts of Bihar comprising mainly the district of Bhagalpur, Santal Perganas, Hazaribagh and Palamau have also been studied in detail mainly by the young geologists.

### **A. Stratigraphy**

The Archaean metamophitee with associated intusives, and the sedimentaries belonging to Vindhyan and Gondwana systems and the associated intrusives and extrusives, comprise the most predominant hard rocks in the state. They include diversified litho-units and are confined to the Chotanagpur Peninaular mass. The rest of the area, about half of the surface area in the state, is occupied by quaternary sediments of recent to the sub-Recent age. A narrow fringe of area, in the northern most part is undertaken by loosely compacted sediments belonging to Siwalik group of rocks. The Archaeans are represented by various types of Schists, gneisses,



granulites, quarterites, metabasics and other basic intrusives and granites, in general. The Vindhya's comprise calcareous and arenaceous sediments, whereas the Gondwanas are represented essentially by alternations of argillaceous and arenaceous sediments, containing within their pile a number of coal reserves. Conglomeratic and conglomeratic sandstones, clay, gragwacker and calcareous sediments represent the Siwalike, and the plain deposits and some piedmont deposits comprising the quaternary sedimentary in the state.

A STRATIGRAPHIC SUCCESSION

Age -	Formations
Recent -	Newer alluvium
Pleistocene Tertiary -	
Lower-Middle Jurassic -	
Upper Carboniferous to Triassic -	Gondwanas
Upper Precambrian -	Vindhya
Lower Palaeozoic -	
Archaean (Precambrian) -	Pre-cambrian metamorphics, igneous intrusives, metavolcanic and sedimentaries

**Archaean**

The correlation of the Archaean occurring in different parts of Bihar is not yet authentically possible, and so the pre-cambrian geology is described below under separate headings based on the areal distribution.

**Singhbhum**

The Archean rocks of Singhbhum can be broadly divided into two facies, an unmetamorphosed one in the south and a metamorphosed one in the north, separated by a major shear zone known as the Singhbhum Copper belt. Two lesser zones of shear occur further north, one along the northern border of the Dalma hills and the other still further north along the southern boundary of the Chotanagpur granitic terrain. These three zones are parallel to each other and the Satpura range prevailing in southern Bihar.

- Arkarain granophyre, Sode-granite, Knilapal granite
- Chotanagpur granite-gneise
- ..... Dhanjori Orogeny .....
- Pyrozena granite-granophyre
- Grbbro anothosite (Vanadiferous magnetite in Places)
- Dhanjori state (Kolhan series?)
- Trubidite sequence with quartz conglomerate
- Singhbhum granite
- Iron-ore series

Granites and Pegmatites  
Older Metamorphics

***Santhal Paraganas, Hazaribagh and Ranchi districts***

The northern most shear zone in Singhbhum, as mentioned above, separates the gneissic terrain to the north from the schistose rocks.

**Distribution of Therapeutic Reputation**

***Mineral springs of Bihar***

There are three main belts of mineral springs in Bihar (i) The belt running more or less parallel to the coalfield boundaries, (ii) The belt around Rajgir, and (iii) The belt around Monghyr. These springs cure skin diseases, digestive disorders and rheumatism and gout.

**CHAPTER – III**  
**LAND ACQUISITION IN CHOTANAGPUR**

**Introduction**

Apart from distinct tribal identity the system of social stratification in Chotanagpur plateau was based on the control of land and labour that ultimately led the plateau towards formation of a separate state. At the top there was a rent receiving ruling class comprising of Raja; his family and the new landlord section. Next come a dominant peasant group (Khuntkattidars later Bhuinhass), descendants of the original settlers. They had the privilege of paying small amount of rent to the Raja and holding some land rent free. One more group of peasants, who used to render labour on rajaha's lands, paid either rent or produce or both of the upper groups. The fourth layer was that of the landless agricultural labourers working on the landlord's privileged private lands (Manjihass). The Rajas being largely Hinduized handed over land to Brahmans from Upper castes of Central India who spread Hinduism among these population. The Hindu and Muslim money lenders, marchants and potential people accepted the system.

Since the 'Raja', his family members and jagirdari were already came largely under the debt trap of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh money lenders and merchants, many of the original settlers had been transformed through this process and ultimately, only the wastelands and the forestry were left to them. In the next phase the new landlords intervened in the internal affairs of the villages by restricting the activities of the Panchayat and exerting pressure on the Chiefs in order to preclude independent decision. Thus a complex land tenure system evolved in Chotanagpur.

According to S. C. Roy, the Mundas settled in Chotanagpur around the sixth Century B.C. The lands they occupied were considered to be the villagers' patrimony

and were controlled by the descendants of the founding class the Khuntkatti. The old provision for adoption of individuals and thus allotment of land for cultivation and maintenance was very much prevailing.

The Khuntkatti system and egalitarian character of Munda society gradually began to change with the development of social stratification based on differential power over land. According to many scholars this marked the beginning of a tendency towards the establishment of Chiefdoms. The election of 'Raja' among the Mundas and Oraons, initially with no prerogatives over land brought with a change in their economic and political patterns which led to state formation.

The East India Company brought Chotanagpur under their rule in 1765 and the first agreement on rents was made with the Raja of Chotanagpur in 1771. In the year 1789 the company suggested not to venture for permanent settlement with the view that collected revenue from this area was a fixed tribute than a tax determined by land production. This however caused an adverse reaction in the rural areas among the Zamindars. When their lands have been auctioned off to cover revenue arrears (Gopal, 1949; J. C. Jha, 1963). Thus the land started passing into the hand of money lenders and there left no provision for customary land right of the original settlers and the village office holders.

The land of Oraon and Munda were brought under the direct administration of the East India Company in the year 1837 and then took over the right to tax on the production of liquor, road tolls and tax the products sold in market, from the raja and his jagirdars in the year 1823. These led to the situation of instability and incidence of recurrent rural insurgency and the company brought administrative change by the formation of the South Western frontier agency in the year 1833. Thus with the formation of courts of Justice and military cantonments the Jagirdars got empowered and continued to engulf tribals land property. A record says that around the year 1856, some 600 Jagirdars of the region got control over approximately 150 villages each thus completely disregarded the Munda land inheritance law. The adivasis had been deprived with the authority to sale up their land and in the absence of male heirs the land had been taken of by the landlord as mentioned by G. Hoffmann (1961).

This permanent settlement reinforced the new Jamindars position and seriously weakened the interest of common peasantry thus, created sharp conflicts in the country side. With the issue of inheritance earlier there was series of protest among the Mundas of Tamar in 1789, 1797 led by Dukan Shahi Munda of Rahe and Sitti in 1796-1798. The major movement led by Radu and Konta Munda in the year 1819 -1820 and that of Munda of Sonepur in 1831-1832 gave tremendous thrust on the company.

Though the process of exploitation and land alienation took place in Chotanagpur much earlier the Britishers came in but, it gained major momentum after the induction of company administration with the introductions of an alien

legal and tax system thus led to systematic exploitation of fundamental economy of the land. Thus, the system of rent payment in service (*Kamiotia beth begari*) gave birth to bonded labour system. Such irregularities regarding peasant land was not regarded by the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (Act II BC, 1869). Thus illegal increase of land rent and tenants product took such a shape that landlords even imposed rent on trees, (Especially those that produce lac) (Gait *et al.* 1909; S. C. Roy, 1912). The emergence of a class of adivasi came into surface when restriction was imposed to transfer of land from adivasi to non adivasi people of the land under section 46 of the act (K. S. Singh, 1972a, 370-380).

On the other hand from ecological point of view the position of Singhbhum was quite secured and thus being driven out from Chotanagpur the Kolhan Ho's 1837 settled here under the protected wall of hills and thick jungle. The Kolhan province was thus very much secured till 1836 when the British troops entered the province. Thus the Ho's surrendered to the company troop in the year 1837 and Kolhan was made a Government estate, Singhbhum emerged as a new district with district office at Chaibasa which had the authority to control 620 villages holding around 90,000 people (Risley, 1908). Company fixed the rent of 'eight annas' on every plough and after wards, a settlement was made based on affixed assessment on the lands was introduced to bring an end of the semi-independent life of Ho's.

## SECTION SIX

### The History of land Right

Major J. R. Ouseley, the then Governor General's agent at Kishanpur in a letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1839 wrote about the Zaminders and Cultivators. According to him a large proportion of the population of Chota Nagpur as known to the Europeans – a coal and largely considered as Mundas including i.e. Kharias and Oraons. Mundas being cleared the country started cultivation. Since then, there was no Rajs for rulling the whole country known as Nagpur. The entire country was divided into Purhas or patches of land consisting of 15 to 20 villages under Rajas (Rajhas). The Rajhas use to receive assistance during war and some amount in the form of salaries during festivals. Vertually the Mundas elected the Raja from Palkot family to become overall controller of the entire land while by that time occupied by nearly sixty two Rajas of the Palkot family, with a few adoptions.

The Rajas and their friends pretended as if they belong to Rajput dinesty at the time of election. While, actually they were Rajas of Munda dinesty. The Rajas as prospire, managed by force to get married in to the Rajput families nearby Singbhum, Manbhum and Puchate and there by conceive the identity a Rajput like that of any where in India. The remaining Cole Rajas were still existed in Pergh, Khookra and other parts of the then Chota Nagpur and frequently assembled to hunt, amuse themselves and decide disputes.

Each Purha had its identity with distinguishign flag or ensing and misused of the identity by the Kols of other areas (Purha) was taken seriously and may sometimes led to quars. Virtually, it was custormay during those days that ownership of land would be claimed by the persos who cleared it and obviously the person concerned enjoyed free of rent and on the return rendered some service to the head Munda of the village. Incase of death of the Munda land owner without descendent, the head Munda used to hand over the land on the same tenure to some of his own relative or person of his choise. A certain amount of rent from each village used to pore in the fund of Palkote Raja to keep the peace process and if required to carry on the wors with neighbouring countries.

In the process of becoming Hindu, the Palkote family regularly fixed marriage ties with neighbouring Hindu families and thus encouraged them to settle in Chota Nagpur.

In this process the Burraicks, Rajputs, Brahmins, Rawtee as etc. had been catyorically brought in by Palkote family and thereby strengthened the military force to enable them to support in war situation against the neighbouring Rajas and also to control the Coles. The southern part of the province was still under the possession of Mundas as formally prevailed over entire Chota Nagpur. Infact, no government what so ever interfered in the internal management of land and people of Chota Nagpur until the Paramount British Power than initially remained contented with moderate rent. In case of non-payment of rent the Raja had the role to send police or put the person under justice. There was no Police Station (Thana) in Chotanagpur but every thing was left to the discretion of Raja. The Rajahood could have been continued in the state much longer had the disputes between the father of the then Raja and his brother not employed a military force which led to the establishment of Thanas under the Magistorial control.

There were three principal classes three Rajas usually decided to grant lands.

- I. The younger brothers of the different Rajas and their descendents against a small rent.
- II. Rajputs, Rawteas etc. who had Jaggeers in possasion granted originally on payment of a fixed rent for extending military services.
- III. Brahmins and individuals of other castes who came from lower areas of the plateau and sometimes they enjoyed land without rent as desired by Raja for performing religious activities.

Therefore as a whole almost the entire Nagur excepting that of religions uses was put to the system of inheritance of a “Potra – Pootradik” tenure shisp subject to the grantee and his direct male descendants. The above system created oppressions to the tribals, but fortunately the system has been abolished in due course. The extended support to the Rajas by the British administration widely acted against the land holders all over the country and indeed it disgusted the

authority with strong belief that against the payment of rent, the Government will support them against all oppositions.

### **Theekadars**

The rent of occupied or allotted land – the *Rughus* was made by Theekadars. A certain portion of land the ‘*Bhet – Khela*’ is generally allowed to cultivate free of rent, and for which he was suppose to perform, various services like thatching his house, cultivating the land etc. to the land lord or his representative. *Munshis* or ground allotted to the land lord or his Theekadar, was cultivated chiefly by the ryots in turn for their *Bhatukheta* land and *Bhoonjahan* the land held rent free by the original clearers of the same or their descendants.

The Theekadar or owner of the village had no right whatsoever by the established custom of Chota-Nagpur to take a higher rent from the cultivations of the Rajas, nor did they had the right to turn out an old cultivator as long as he is willing and able to pay his rent. Due to ignorance and tenidity of the ryots, the Thikadars often imposed injustice to the ryots. The scheduled labour that the Ryots use to extend to Theekadars for their *Bhetkalta* and *Bhoonjasi* is 3 days ploughing, 3 days work and 3 days work in planting rice and the same for cutting it. Along with these they are supposed to bring grass and bamboo and thatch their houses.

The affendetes did not get relieve from the administration but the system had in some places been practiced so long, and the roys accepted these as system to be followed.

The owner of the village often resort to false complaints against the Bhoongers just to force them to leave the village and restricted their wishdom to return and resore their lands. Thus a great injustice had been enacted on the ryots who by law and customs of the country had an undoubted right to receive back his lands, whenever he, or his heirs return. The Bhoonjer often visited to the court with plain paper and the Zaminders desided his right and status and referred to a regular suit. Under the pressure of the Zaminders the British administration in most cases succumbed and compelled to diamiss the Bhoonjer’s complaint and referred them for a regular suit.

The Bhoonjers were deeply attached to their land even they were buried in the villages where their Bhoonjeri lands were situated. As even if they died at a distance, their heirs considered it a necessary act to transport the bones of the diseased to their own village and buried in the “*Hursali*”, a burying ground of the village.

In the year 1832 an wide disturbance spreaded due to diprivation of possession of *Mundas* and *Monkies* the Bhoonjers of *Sonepoor*. There was a strong recommendation by Major. *Ousby* the Governo Generals agent at *Kishanpoor* to investigate all cases for disposition of Bhoonjeri lands banning the rule of twenty years of possession of land and there by dispose of justice to the poor Bhujars other wise to added in nine out of ten cases, the powerful Zaminders will thereby be able to defeat the poor Bhoonjer.

As it never there was no Patwaries in the entire land, the Mahto of the village use to act as Patwari. Distribution, disputes and land related issues are settled in the 'Ukhra' a place of assembly of the village in the presence of Mahato, Bhandari and many of the ryotes as chosen to attend. An over all account about the status of cultivation of different ryots, starting the number of 'Pawas' and the rent cultivated by each ryot and invited new ryots who may wished to have land in the village. Quantity and rent known a 'Goti' (Gravel) was settled as first engagement. The Patwaries could not read or write they had the skill to calculate by means of little hits of gravel the 'Goti' – instead of pen and ink. Being a cole, they did seldom land him to any injustice for the land owner rather rendered substantial justice to both parties.

Though apparently they appear very simple, the coles were very much conscious about their own small transactions and frequently not to the impressed upon by their land holders.

### **Composition of Kol Villages**

A Kol village community consisted of the Munda, Mahato, Pahn, Bhondari, Gorait, Gowalla and Backsmith. There was no Hajams or Dhoobees. The Mundas were the chief of the Bhoonjers was generally considered as representative of the old Munda head of the village. His opinion always carried much weight. Any dispute as regard to money, land or labour the Mundas always played a significant role. The Munda did never receive any salary or remuneration as such excepting the Bhoonjari land.

Next to Munda the mahato was regarded as most important person in the village. He held the authority to assign land to the ryots, issue the "gotee", collection of the rent and ultimately pay to the owner or his representative. The person on whom the settlement of the whole pecuniary affairs of the village depended. In return the Mahato received one 'Pawa' of the Rughus free of rent as his 'Jageer'.

The performance of all sacred activities was solely dependent on the Pahn in return he used to enjoy a Juggeer called as 'Dali Khettari'. Unlike Mahato the office of the Pahn was hereditary.

The role of 'Bhandari' was something like an agent through whom the owner orders to the ryots were signified. He further assisted the Mahato towards the collection of rent. He had a Jaggeer of one 'pawa' rent free land from the owner and used to collect three 'Kuraes' or bundles of the crops weighing each about the 'seers' from the ryots.

Accountability of all stolen cattles if so even was fixed to the 'Gowalla' the milkman and in return he used to enjoy three 'Kuraes' of crop from each ryots.

During the currency of his lease the land holders usually could not turn his Theekar excepting the proof of his having fallen into arrears. The Theekadars were not empowered to oust the old cultivators as long as they pay their rent. The

Zaminders had no claim from the Theekadar beyond what is stipulated in his 'Kabooliut'.

There were three annual 'Poojas' which were usually common in Chota Nagpur viz., the 'Sarhool' in the month of Chyet, Kudlta pooja in Sawan and Khura pooja in Aghran. Pahn was supposed to supply rice and 'Handea' (Rice Beer) from the produce of his 'Dali Ketari' and the ryots used to supply fowls by a general contribution. The performance of Dhura or Desmali in every third year was significant for the sacrifice of buffaloes, goats, sheeps, fowls.

The expense is remitted out of the accumulated rents of the 'Bhoot Khetta' for three years. Irrespective of race and status the people of Chota Nagpur hold strong belief that unless the said poojas are performed, the crops will fail and the village in which the pooja was neglected will be immediately deserted.

The Kist a instalment of payment in Chota Nagpur was known as 'Sona motty'. It is paid at about ten per cent on the Jummia kist pancha, payable at the end of 'Kartick nahina'. About thirty per cent 'kist' payable in Chyet, about thirty per cent 'kist Hakmee' payable in Jeyt about fifteen per cent and 'kist' 'Barawtra' was payable in 'Assar' amounting to about fifteen per cent thus completed the year rent. At time the Zaminders were in the habit of demanding their 'Kists' in advance and that to irregularly and which led the kols into debt. In case of such rental defaulter, a Jemadar at 'eight annas' a day and sometimes two at the same rate, accompanied by three or four 'Burkundazes' at one and half annas a day, were sent from Palkote to collect the same. In that case they remained in the village and were fed at the expense of the ryote, sometimes for several months.

The arrears were in general only very nominal due to the coles, who were most regular rent payers, excepting one or two distressed persons who were unable to pay their 'Kists'. It happened, that Zaminders etc. came from Palkote, on pretence of the checking balance due by a few of the ryote and eventually pulled the whole village to the expense of feeding and paying undue payment. The truth appeared to be that this was one of the ways the Zaminders maintained the establishment on such small payments.

Further, some times the manager of the villages pretended as if he had spent certain sums in 'Tulbanna' and fed the servants of Zaminders who visited the village with the Zamindar. The offenders as such had been severely punished and the money had been restored by the administration. An order had been circulated to deply a 'Paida' to compel the payment instead of existing system at the cost of not exceeding one and half anna a day.

In certain villages particularly what were called the Rajas Bhandars, there existed a custom of offering a rupee called "buyswani" to the ryots in exchange of ten "tamburas" of ghee equal to abcent a 'Seer' and half each. At the Dussara festival, the buffalows were sacrificed and were taken at a cheaper cost of rupees ten to twelve rupees below the market price. They were in the practice of employing



‘Piadas’ who were empowered to ‘tulbanna’ from the ryots and at discretion of selecting goat or buffalo.

The ploughmen in service annually received two to three rupees wages and 18 ‘Kats’ of ‘Dhan’ and some bundle of rice in the straw for each day of service. In Chota Nagpur there was no system of measuring land. The measure was done by ‘Bhuries’, ‘Kharies’ and ‘Pawas’ arbitrarily. The measure of Pawas in the same village often differed and in different villages it differed a lot. The ‘Pawa’ land in some cases was sufficient to sow two mands of seed while in other it admitted of ten or twelve moands being sown. The measure was four Powas equivalent to one ‘Kharie’ and Eight Kharies was one ‘Bhurie’. The said measure was applied for Doon or rice field while for Dan or dry field, the estimate was kats which in general admitted a mand of seed.

In view of protecting the interest of the tribal people of Chota Nagpur and to protect the interest and right of the Raja as their families were always enjoyed the company deployed agents who did always kept vigil about the activities of frands specially the Mahajans. A special order in this respect had been forwarded from the personal assistants office at Lohardaga to Major J. R. Ouseley, Governor General’s agent at Kishanpoor on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1839.

## SECTION SEVEN

### **Land Tenures – Politics & Power Structure/Selected infusk of population**

The political history of Chota Nagpur is directly connected with its land tenures. The various land tenures of the Chota Nagpur and Ranchi district in particular highlight several stages of development or decay from very early stages of village organization. Here impact of Khunt Katti village and its successive stage of disintegration as broken Khunt Katti, the ‘Bhuinhari’ and Zamindari village are to be narrated in brief.

The Khunt Kattidar and Khunt Katti village were originally in the exclusive possession of aboriginal settlers, who cleared the jungles and established village. The villages thus formed were under the joint ownership by all the members of the village known as ‘Khun Kattidars’. For the purpose of mutual support and protection, these villagers found it necessary to organize themselves in batches of twelve or more under the leadership of the most powerful or intelligent person among them a headman. Each of these groups of villages constitutes a ‘Parha’ and its chief was denoted as ‘Manki’. In due course, the Raja arose amongst them and gradually brought all the village communities under his domination. This Nagbansi Rajas of Chota Nagpur were perhaps of the same race gradually identified themselves as Hindu.

In due course the Raja first acquired some villages as his special choice or Khas bhandar and further granted some other villages to his brothers and near

relatives – the Thakurs, Lals etc. for their maintenance or ‘Khorpash’ with impending power the Raja became more and more ambitious and gradually compromised with Hindu intruders from Bihar and Central Provinces. The users in due course granted ‘Jagirs’ of villages. These alien Jagirdars gradually attempted to acquire clear rights to lands and villages within their ‘Jagirs’ and been supported by the Raja and his Khorposh brigade. The original settlers naturally protested and the Raja and his Jagirdars forced upon to displace the aboriginal or to submit. These newly arrived military force – like the Chatris, the Baraiks, the Rautias etc. were similarly gifted with Jagir – grant of villages against the grantees to render military service whenever required.

The paraphernalia of a Hindu Rajas Court could not be completed without the step in of Brahmins. Therefore, a large number of Brahman Priests were invited in the country from outside – especially from North India. Consequently, a large number of temples of Hindu deities were installed towards the maintenance ‘Khorpash’ ‘bramhottar’ ‘dedottar’ grants of lands were made for Brahmin priests and their families.

In the first quarter of nineteenth century – a different class of people appeared in the country. They were mostly north Indian traders composing of Mohamadan, Sikhs and other Hindus who brought with various merchandise and sold them at exorbitant price to the Nagbanshi Raja and his Jagirdars and ‘Khorposhdars’. Due to growing luxurious habits thus entertained some of the Rajas and Jagirdars put them under the liabilities by loans at high interest from the Sahus or money lenders. Eventually being unable to pay their creditors in cash, the Raja and his Jagirdars from time to time granted permanent or temporary land at leases to these creditors over the heads of the aboriginal proprietors. On best of their bargain, these money lenders systematically broke down the original village system of the Mundas and Oraons. This is how the different intermediate tenures developed under the leadership of Raja of Chota Nagpur.

The Ranchi district of the then Chota Nagpur held 7,103.6 square miles out of which 7,052.28 square miles constituted on revenue – paying estate owned by the Maharaja of Chota Nagpur. Manbhum with area of 21.5 square miles constituted the second revenue paying estate as owned by Raja of Pachete the land has been granted as a marriage gift by the former Raja of Chota Nagpur. The Raja of Padma mentioned as Ramgarh in the district of Hazaribagh held 30 – 27 square miles as revenue paying area.

Out of 7,052.28 square miles of the Maharaja’s estate only 96.04 square miles were directly possessed by as Mundari Khunt Katti lands by the descendents of the original Munda settlers. However, the total area never exceeding more than 1.4 per cent of the total area of the district. Other Khunt Katti lands measuring only 21.21 square miles within Ranchi district and only 21.16 square miles with Chota Nagpur has been reclaimed by non-Mundas aboriginal and their descendents.

Maharajas–Khas possession as his private campus measured 631.93 square mile within Ranchi district – known as Khas Bhandar.

The Khorposh tenures as created by Maharaja or his predecessors within the Ranchi district measured 1,050.93 square miles. In other name the estate was popularly known as Deori Mahals or villages granted to the Maharanis by way of maintenance.

The tenures granted to Brahmins measured 134.89 square miles while other service tenures measured 0.15 square miles and that of miscellaneous tenures measuring 12.29 square miles all under the Maharajas estate in the Ranchi district.

Maharaja and his predecessors gave away as much as 659.15 square miles of land either permanently or temporarily as on leases.

***Different modes of leases are:***

**Moharrari Tenure** – 22.55 square miles as permanent (doamni) or absolute grants

**Temporary Leases (Thika Proper)** – 493.34 square miles

**Rent Free (Khairat) Tenure** – Measuring 12.11 square miles as rent free land.

**On Mortgages (Zarpeshgi Sh)** – Measuring 2.77 square miles.

**Mundari Khunt Katti Villages**

In Ranchi district all together of 156 villages had with stood the aggressions of Jagirdars and Thikadars and successfully retained their “Khunt Katti” character intact. Of these ‘87’ were within Khunti Thana, ‘59’ in Tamar, ‘9’ in Bundu and ‘1’ in Rahe.

The first stage in the process of disintegration of the intact ‘Khunti Katti’ system evident in some villages of Tamar where the ‘Raja’ had succeeded in getting hold of a few acres of land as his own share and named such land as the Raj – angs.

In the next stage of gradual change, the Khunt Katti brotherhood gradually lost its joint ownership of the entire village area while each Khunt Kattidar only retained their property rights over lands and cultivation. In these broken Khunt Katti villages either an alien (Diku) landlord or the village head man himself, gradually encroached the proprietary rights and thereby broke its communal identity. Though the Khunt Katti brotherhood lost its joint ownership of the entire village area, but each Khunt Kattidar retained their property rights over lands and cultivation. The Khunt Katti tenancies were heritable without increment of rents unless a new tenancy had been created. In this class of broken village the ‘Raja’ or superior landlord, had introduced an intermediate landlord called – Manjhi. These intermediate landlords or Manjhis began to cast greedy eyes on the village lands. Oflate the Khunt Katti system had been obliterated and only a few miserable fragments of the old Khunt Katti lands of the original clearers. Incidentally, the raja of Tamar became the master of the entire land as he secured as his “Raj–has” and

started collecting donations 'Chandas' from each individual 'Khunt Kattidar'. Like Tamar, the total area of broken Khunt Katti in the Ranchi district measured about 35 square miles.

In this process of change, the Khunt Katti system and the very names of "Khunt Katti" and Khunt Kattidar had been completely obliterated – excepting a few fragments of old 'Khunt Katti' lands of original clearers of the soil which had been left their descendents as privileged tenures and called as "Bhuhari" lands.

The "Raj-has" lands in most Bhuhari villages covered with large area of cultivable lands and as generally cultivated both by holders of Bhuhari lands and other cultivators as ordinary rayots on cash rent or produce rent or both with greater disintegration of the ancient system in such villages, the larger had been the number of subdivisions or classes of 'Rajhas' land in them.

Bhuhari tenures mark the final change from joint ownership of land to individual ownership – when the old 'Khunt Katti' lands were fully broken by "Raja" or the Jagirdar or the Thikadar (Lessee). With this change originally an oboriginal village community in the Ranchi district was separated into two 'Khunts' or strip of land, as they virtually remained as an intact "Khunt Katti" village – demarcated as 'Khunt' of the Pahan or village priest and the 'Khunt' of the Mubda or secular headman of the village. In western paraganas some villages under the subdivision of Pahan 'Khunt' came into existence as 'Pujar Khunt'. Further along with number of 'Khunt' or strip in the 'Bhuhari' and purely 'Zamindari' villages came into existence to same guard the interest of land lords. This is how the original 'Munda Khunt' changed to 'Mahato Khunt'. In a 'Bhuhari' village, specific land has been allotted as service land. The Munadai and Pahanai lands were generally hereditary as their office too. Exception existed in some Munda villages situated near Oraon villages which were not hereditary.

Each class of these privileged tenure in a 'Bhuhari' village were as follows:

- (1) **Khunt Bhuhari Lands** – These were proper Bhuhari lands. The holders of such lands were supposed to render certain specific services known as 'beth – bega' which in turn commuted into cash payment. These rent and service could not have been enhanced on any account whatsoever. Till the passage of Bengal Act 'V' of 1903, these lands were used to be transferred though previously it could not be made by an individual Bhuhari without the consent of all members of his 'Khunt'.

By the end of November, 1880 the final report of the Bhuhari operations, published in the Calcutta Gazette, where in it was stated that "Where the lands of the 'Khunt' are held jointly or atleast under the control of a single Head Bhuhari, such right of transfer cannot be exercised unless the members of the Khunt choose jointly to do so". But this older communal character of the tenure ultimately went out of existence resulting into force transfer of even individuated Bhuhari lands. Even after imposition of revised law, the Zamindars had been

forcefully talking possession and in many cases resorted the poor farmers to leave his home to sell or mortgage his lands for their own benefits (Government Report, 1880, By Mr. R. D. Haldar – Bhuinhari Commissioner – Chota Nagpur).

- (2) **Bhut Kheta Lands** – These were private lands included within the Bhuinhari lands of a Particular Khunt. The members of one Khunt had no right to the Bhuinhari Bhut Kheta of another Khunt. As former commissioner of Chota Nagpur, Colonel Datlon said “Such land are like the Debottar -----  
- lands of the Hindus and cannot be alienated”.

*The Gaore or Mardana Bhut Kheta* – This class of Bhut Kheta was found only in the Oraon villages. These lands had been demarcated as property of the aboriginal village community including village headman with different rayots who used to pay small rent for the performance of Pujas and Festivals.

*The Deshwali or Public Bhut Kheta* – These lands had been demarcated for the cultivation by the Pahan or village priest himself only for the raiyats, who had to pay rent for it. The income generated from such land was spent on a grand triennial festival in honour of Desauli bonga. The village landlord had no demand for these lands.

*The Andher Bhut Kheta* – these types of land was restricted to certain villages, consequent upon certain calamity or epidemics these fields had been developed to worship certain spirits mysteriously imported on the land by the ojha or ghost finder.

- (3) **The Pahani Lands** – These were lands hold by Pahan or village priests also known as Baiga in certain villages.

The principal divisions of these lands are as follows:

(a) *The Dalikatan* – These Pahani land was largely enjoyed by the Pahan himself for extending priestly services to the village community. After the tenour of Pahanship no binding had been noted for his successor.

(b) *The Panbhara Land* – Further known as tahalu land in some Oraon villages were ment as service land of the Panbhara (called tahalu) whose duty was to supply water for the pujas.

- (4) **The Mundai Land** – The land is ment as rent free land by the village – Munda. The landlord had no right to take possession of the land so long as there existe a single member of the Munda Khunt.

- (5) **The Mahatoi Land** – These were the service land of the Mahatos and were held rent free by the land in certain cases. The landlord had the power to dismiss a Mahato for absolute neglect of duty. However, if there existe a Mahato Kunt in the village, the new Mahato must by custom be appointed from among the members of the Mahato Khunt.

- (6) **The Majhas Land** – Evidently in Ranchi district of Chota Nagpur most of the villages – where Bhuinhari lands were demarcated and registered under Bengal Act – 11 of 1869, the landlord were found to have been in possession of the privileged private land called Maji-has or Maji-has. The total area of such land within Ranchi district was 89 square miles or 56,904 acres.

Further, in villages where “landlords” “Private lands” were not demarcated under Bengal Act – 11 of 1869, the landlord held 65 square miles of such land within the district.

### **Purely Zamindari Villages**

This is what we see total replacement of old communal system of Isnf holders or the old Khunt Katti system. The old Khunt Katti community had died away or abliged to aleandon the village, bearing no trace excepting their time – worn tombstones. The land lords were the absolute master of such villages. These lands had been further classified as follows:

- (I) **Chatisa** – This was the principal class of Rajhas land. These lands were supposed to pay higher rent. The name was said to have derived from the word thirty six or Chatisa tenant used formerly to obey “Thirty Six” orders of the landlord.
- (II) **Murili Chatisa Land** – These are don lands without are appendage of complementary donass. No payments on kind are twenty two realizable for such lands.
- (III) **Uttakar or Balkat** – Owner of these lands are subjected to pay ‘Kar’ or rent for the year in which he raised any crops on it. These lands are of inferior quality therefore the rent of such land was very low.
- (IV) **Korkar Land** – Amongst Rajhas land, it carried the greatest privilege. These lands were originally located at Jungles. Inhabited by the ‘Khunt’ or village families. A right of occupancy occurred to such land as soon as they are prepared NO rent is payable for the first few years. In the Panch Parganas these lands were called “Baiballa” lands.
- (V) **Maswar Don Land** – These are up lands held in excess of the complementary or lagandars lands of the tenant. For such lands rent in kind equal to the quality of seed grains sown had to be paid.
- (VI) **Bet Kheta Lands** – These are lowest class of ‘Rajhas’ lands and no right of occupancy can occure to such lands.

Interestingly in very few parts of India these diverse stages of evolution of successive village systems and forms of land holding be found existing side by side. Originally the entire Chota Nagpur country was composed of a cluster of independent village communities who were ownng all the land inside the village

boundary. Further these village communities formed themselves into groups or parhas for mutual support and use to acknowledge a leader the 'Manki'.

The Raja's were orthodox Hindu and a Nagbansi potentate. Further, his relative had joined the crusade with avidity. Their ceaseless attacks on the ancient village community in many parts of Chota Nagpur successfully forced to evacuate them from their home land. Initially many of the occasions the villagers protested. And, finally in the year 1820, a land of upper Indian mercantiles were introduced as lessees over the heads of some Munda village – proprietors of the paraganas. And, under desperation almost the entire aboriginal population of the Ranchi, Lohardaga and many parts of Chota Nagpur rose up in arms against the alien landlords in the year 1831 to 1832. The British authorities from Sherghati came to rescue the aboriginal Mundas and Monkis and restated their and confirmed their rights by written Pattas, Counter signed by the Governor General.

#### CHAPTER – IV

##### **Ethnic Situation in Chotanagpur During Mughal Period, British Rule and Jamindars Resme Including – A Brief History of Administrative Changes and Tribal Disputes in Chotanagpur During 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 2<sup>th</sup> Century**

According to S. C. Roy, "the name Chotanagpur is of comparatively recent origin and appears to have been first coined by the early British administrators of the country to distinguish it from another Nagpur possessed by the Marathas." Bagdeo Singh the founder of the Ramgarh Raj along with his elder brother, Singhdeo Singh was in the assistance of the then Raja of Chotanagpur. They gradually conquered over twenty one other paraganas and Bagdeo Singh became their Raja at about 1368 AD. The capital of the state was at Sisai (now in Ranchi District) which in due course shifted to Urda, then Badam and then to Ramgarh. Hamat Singh, the sixth Raja of dynasty, invited a Sasine from Patna to build a fortified residence at Badam. It was probably due to the inconvenience the capital was transferred to Ramgarh, nearly 36 kilometer east in 1670 AD.

Buchanan (1937) stated that, the Teliagarhi pass, the meeting point of Rajmahal hills to Ganga formed the boundary between the Mughal provinces of Bihar and Bengal. The area has been very rarely mentioned in the writing of Muslim historians. Abul Fazal called Chotanagpur by its old name of *Kokrah*. The entire area covering from Birbhum (West Bengal and Panchet to Ratanpur in Central India and from Rohtas to the frontiers of Orissa, was collectively known as Jharkhand or Jungle Land. In the administrative history of Mughal dynasty the exact position of Chotanagpur in Bihar was not properly located. The area was wild and thickly covered with jungle thus the area did not fall under any revenue division. Colonel Dalton, in his 'Note on Chotanagpur area', published in Hunters' statistical account noted that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Malik Ibrahim Bayu, the Muqti

(Governor of Bihar) and his men conquered Chai-Champa. In *Ain-I-Akbari*, this paraganas was included in Bihar, and was assessed at 620,000 'dams' or Rs.15,000/-. In the *Padshahnama* – the official history of Shahjahan's region, the name of the Hazratibagh district was included. The area as a whole was known as vihar or Bihar, when Bakhtiyar Kalji reduced the 'Hisar-e-Bihar' of Odantpuri Bihar and subjugated the neighbouring areas. The *Karnata* dynasty of Simraon was at that time ruling in the north and the power was distributed among four powerful states viz. Nepal in the North, Bengal in the east the Palakingdom of South Bihar in the South, and *Kananjkasi* in the west. According to the account of Mulla Taquia of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Bakhtiyar Kalji invaded Tirhut and made *its ruler a tributary*.

It is evident from the writing of Mirhaj-as-Siraj that Iltutmish was bent upon the separation of Bihar from Bengal and thus making it a separate province but the new boundary of the province was not demarcated. In the inscription of Tighril Tughan dated 1242 AD, it is mentioned, that Bihar was for the second time separated from Delhi and attached with Bengal. The southern part of the state was ruled by Malik Bir Afghan, who in course of time extended his power upto Tirhut. In 1324, the Malik Bayu, the then 'Mukti' (Governor) of Bihar, conquered the area of Chai Champa at present located in Hazaribagh district.

From 1397 to 1480 Bihar formed part of the Shargi kingdom of Najankpur, Khawaja Jahan, entitled Malik-ush-Sharq, who was also the virtual founder of the dynasty and who extended his eastern frontiers into South Bihar and Tirhut.

During the time of Rama Pala of Pala dynasty, different parts of South Bihar were under defacto sovereigns, such as Mahanadeva of Anga, Devarakshita or Bhimayaas of Magadha, and other rulers of the Forest tracts of the Santhal paraganas and Chotanagpur. Jahangir described that "the team of Jafar-Khan would have been uneventful but for a raid he had led into Chotanagpur and became the governor of Bengal. The succeeding governor, Ibrahim Khan, a brother of Nurjahan, was sent to Bihar in 1605 and he was successful in capturing Kukradesh (Chotanagpur) and the acquisition of the diamond mines which lay in the river beds of somewhere in Chotanagpur. He was honoured with the title of Fatch Jong and appointed as the governor of Bengal in the year 1617. During Aurangzeb the first governor of Bihar was Daudkhan Quraishi, the chief clans in palamau in the 17 – 18<sup>th</sup> century were the Cherors-a tribe belonging to Dravidian linguistic group. But in the latter part they had gradually been driven out of Saran, Shahabad, Patna and concentrated to palamau, where they had built a strong fort but could not resist the attack of Daud Khan on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1663.

Hemat Singh, the sixth Raja of the Bagdeo Sing's dynasty, invited a mason from Patna to build a fortified residence at Badam. The door has an inscription that it was built for him in 1642 AD it was probably due to the inconvenient proximity of Badam to the route by which the Muhammadans reached Hotanagpur, the capital was transferred from there to Ramgarh thirty miles east in 1670 AD. The *Kunda*



estate was founded by one Ram Singh, a personal servant of the Emperor Aurangzeb. In 1669 AD he was granted a thanadari jaagir by Daud Khan and Mangal Khan a subordinate of that emperor. The early history of Kendi and Chai is not known. At about 1770 AD the former was reduced by the Muhamadan to the position of a Zamindar.

The year 1765 AD opened a fresh chapter in the administrative history of Chotanagpur. On 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1765, Emperor Shah Alam II granted the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the British East India Company. As Chotanagpur formed a part of Bihar, the company now got the right to receive the tribute of Ramgarh, the land revenue of Kharagdihe and Kendi and the services of Kunda.

The primary activity of the British authority at Calcutta, in the beginning, was very much restricted and cautions were given to take any quick action against the different Rajas of Chotanagpur. The latter of the 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1769 AD from Mr. T. Rumbold of Patna to the President and Governor of Calcutta clearly indicate that the latter contain strict orders to avoid any attempt to intervene in Ramgarh and Palamau (Select Committee, 1769, page 432). It was only in 1769 AD that the British administrators first came into contact with the district.

Before searching into the accounts of successive period of British rule in Chotanagpur plateau, it will be worth mentioning a few words regarding the period of transition between the grant of the Diwani by Emperor Shah Alam and the establishment of the Military Collectorate of Ramgarh. Chotanagpur, as part of the Diwani of Bihar though passed to the East India Company in 1765 yet it was in the year 1770 that the first British officer, Captain John Camac, entered the country. In the first settlement revenue with the Raja of Chotanagpur in the year 1771 was made by the Government Agent, Captain Jacle Camac. Chotanagpur or Kokerah was shown in the revenue returns as a *Mokharaji* or Dismembered Mahal within Sarkar Bihar. This country was neither placed under any of the supervisors appointed by the company in 1769, nor under any Collectors appointed in 1772 for the province of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. The frequent attacks of the Marhathas, risings of the aboriginals supported by the oppressions of the Jagirdars, occasional raids by the Hor or Larka Kols from the adjoining pargans of Singhbhum, and more over, mutual hostilities between rival Jagirdars, Chotanagpur at that period was not mostly attended by the company people. In the year 1772, the supervisors who were appointed to look after the other districts of the Presidency were given the charge of Chotanagpur. The government agent in Chotanagpur, captain Camac continued to act in these parts as a sort of "Military Collector". In the year 1774, the lower provinces of the plateau were formed into six administrative divisions under a Provincial Revenue Council.

Nagpur or chotanagpur proper with Palamau and Ramgarh was treated as a special tract and was allowed to continue as Military Collectorate under Captain Camac. Captain Camac was succeeded by Captain Heatley and latter by Captain

Romas. The military Collector was placed originally under the direct control of the Governor at Fort William in Calcutte, and since 1774 it was fully controlled by the Governor and his council. The collector was more concerned with the settlement and realization of revenues and with bringing the country into a proper state of subjection. The head quarter was at Chatra where the Raja of Ramgarh resided since his removal from Ramgarh.

Captain Camac in the year 1771, made a settlement with Drip Nath Sahi, the then Raja of Chotanagpur for a term of three years, from Fushi 1179 to 1181 (1771 to 1773 AD). The annual rent of Rs.6,000/- and an annual nazzarana of Rs.6,000/- including customs and transit duties was fixed for the same. A fresh settlement for another three years for an annual sum of Rs.15,001/- was made in 1774. This increase of revenue was apparently due to the inclusion of Pargana *Tori*, as ordered by the Patna Revenue Council to be granted to the Raja. From 1777, yearly pattas were granted to the Raja till 1788. In the year 1789 the settlement was extended for a period of ten years at the termination of which, in 1799, the settlement was hold to the permanent. The amount of revenue subsequently increased upto Rs.15,041/- Since the Government could rule over *Barlagarj* Dehat in 1858, the rent payable to the Chotanagpur Raj for the Dehat was set off against the revenue, which was thus reduced.

Although the Raja readily accepted Zamindari pattas from the company and executed engagements, he was not readily able to pay up the stipulated revenue in proper time. Thus companies of regiments from time to time had to dispatch to Raja's dominions in the early years of British rule to execute payment. *Ramas*, himself visited the Rajas capital to induce him to pay up his arrears and the Captain had to explain Rajas' difficulties to the Governor-General, the Hon'ble Warren Hastings. The British authority gave military assistance to the Nagpur Raja to subjugate the Rujas of the five paraganas who were reluctant to pay their tax to Nagpur Raja. During this period, the internal administration of Chotanagpur was left entirely in the hands of its Rajas. The Raja was obliged to leave, his own tributaries and vassals the Mankis, the semi independent and quasi subordinate Rajas, and the Jagirdars, to manage the internal administration as best as they could.

In the year 1780, provincial civil judges were appointed in fourteen out of the eighteen districts of the Bengal presidency. The district of Chatra or Ramgarh was provided with a special system of administration under the vigilance of an officer who functioned as a judge, a Magistrate and also a collector of the area. The Collector of Ramgarh was made subordinate to the newly established committees of Revenue at Calcutta, since 1786 and the judge was, till the year 1793 kept under the direct appellate jurisdiction of the Governor-General and since that year, under the provincial court of civil appeallate established at Patna.

In April, 1799, the office of Collector in Zilla Ramgarh was separated from that of Judge-Magistrate, and one year later, in April 1800, the post of Collector of Ramgarh was abolished. In the same year the Collector of Bihar was placed in charge of the revenue administration of Zilla Ramgarh as well.

Within a few years, the Raja of Chotanagpur was found to have been more constantly in arrears of Government revenue than ever and a *Sexawal* was first stationed in his Estate. Subsequently, in the year 1809, the collections of the Ramgarh district were placed under an officer stationed at the headquarters of Zilla Ramgarh and designated as the assistant Collector of Bihar. Mr. Richard Walpole was the first Assistant Collector who till the middle of 1816 was a deputy to the Collector of Behar. In the mean while, by a regulation, Ramgarh was removed from the jurisdiction of the Calcutta Board of Revenue, and placed under the Behar Board of Commissioners at Patna in the year 1817. On the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1825, the officers of Judge Magistrate and Collector of Ramgarh were again united in one. As civil business increased in time, subordinate judicial officers came to be appointed. In the year 1793 a Hindu law officer and a Mahamadan Law officer were appointed to expound the *Sashtra* and *Koran* respectively. First Munsiff was appointed in the year 1799 and in 1825 other Munsiff were appointed. In the year 1828 a fourth Munsiff was appointed while two years earlier in the year 1826, the judiciary had been further strengthened by the formation of a Pandit Adalat presided over by a Hindu Pandit and Moulvi Adalat ruled over by a Mohamadan with knowledge in the *Koran*.

In January 1819, a new and very important office was created by appointing Major Edward Roughsedge, the then Commanding Officer of the Ramgarh Battalion at Hazaribagh, as Political Agent to Government in South Behar and the districts adjacent to that Province. Even when he had only been the commanding officer of the Ramgarh Battalion this officer appears to have exercised a great influence over the Chotanagpur Raja and his Jagirdars.

The great Kol insurrection broke out in 1831, and Captain Wilkinson, who was then officiating as Political agent of South Behar and Mr. Cuthbert, the Judge-Magistrate-Collector of Zilla Ramgarh, were appointed Joint Commissioners for Chotanagpur. In the mean while authorities like Mr. Cuthbert, W. Dent, Ensign Alexander and E. P. Nicolson hold the power of Chotanagpur and lastly Captain Ouseley appeared in the scene. This arrangement continued till the Ramgarh District was broken up and the South-Western Agency was established under regulation XIII of 1833.

The Raja and his Jagirdars from the very beginning vehemently opposed all these proposals to introduce the excise system into Chotanagpur. They on each occasion represented that the Kols who distilled their own liquor were frightened at the proposal and were leaving the country in vast numbers and “going to Garh Ruidas” (Rohtasgarh). Raja continued to collect *sayer duties* as before and his

income from this source was estimated by the Collector, Mr. Nathaniel Smith was Rs.8,000/- in the year 1822. The sayer included not only excise duties but also rehadari or a tax on travelers, taxes on goods sold at the markets, and similar other customs and duties. The tax on 'Handia' or rice beer, which was collected since 1824, was found to cause great hardship to the aborigines, and was finally abolished in the year 1833.

The country was over all passing a trouble less time while in 1798 though the aggressions against the ancient rights and lands of the Mundari-Khuntkattidars and other aboriginal tenants were most active at this period. Thus in June and July 1789, the Mundas of Tamar rose up in arms against their superior landlords and *reputed* the *trooped* against them by Captain Hagan. A subsequent expedition led by Captain Cooper met with better success, and the revolt was finally suppressed. Within ten years, however, the Mundas of Tamar under the leadership of one Bishun Manki again revolted and committed several outrages before they could be put down, in 1797, by Lieutenant Cooper and his troops. Just ten years later, in 1807, about 5000 Mundas of Pargane Tamar again rose up in arms, and found a capable leader in one Dukan or Dakhin Sai Manki, and attacked and burnt a large number of villages. They went on unchecked and continued violence till the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1808, when their leader was captured by Captain Roughsedge. From 1796 to 1798, Paraganas Rahe and Silli were the scenes of great *commotion* and lawlessness consequent on the aggressions of the ancient rights of the Mundas. The disturbances in the Panch Parganas reached their climax in 1819 when a large number of disaffected Mundas of the Parganas under the leadership of Rudu Munda and Konta Munda produced a crusade against their *oppressors*. The disturbances were too violent that a special Joint Magistrate had to be deputed to Tamar. This Joint Magistrate, Mr. A. J. Colvin, with the help of a regiment of the Ramgarh Battalion under Lieutenant Francis Billu, succeeded in finally quelling the insurrection by the middle of 1820. In the year 1831-1832 the insurrection was wide spreaded and the Mundas and the Mankis of Pargana Sonapur determined to take the law into their own hands, and were eagerly joined by the disaffected Mundas and Mankis of Tamar. Mundas and has of twenty eight villages of the adjoining parganas of Singhbhum and also for the Oraons of the Western Parganas. Several regiments had to bring by Captain Wilkinson in quelling the insurrection.

The *Kol rebellion of 1831-32 revealed* the necessity for a thorough administrative change, and accordingly under a new regulation in the year 1833, the administration of Chotanagpur, Palamau, Karukdiha, Ramgarh, Kornde, Dhalbhum and portions of Jungle Mehals, were brought under a new officer designated as the Governor-Generals agent. The first Governor-General's agent, Captain Wilkinson, assumed charge of his new office on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1834 and Kishanpur was selected as the head quarter of the agency and Doranda, about three miles south of the civil headquarters as the military station. On 27<sup>th</sup> September

1842, Government ordered to remove the headquarters of the principal Assistant Agent of Lohardaga to Kishenpur.

In the year 1853 the pargana of Palamau was constituted a subdivision with its headquarters at Dornda under an Assistant Agent. Colonel Dalton – the most capable and sympathetic officer ever ruled over the destinies of Chotanagpur. He wrote in 1871 “The insurrection of 1831 was put down by a strong force. The Koles were thoroughly subjugated, and in some prominent cases measures had been taken to protect them from further oppression, and especially from wrongful eviction, and I believe it was then the great disturbance of peasant *propristory* tenure occurred. Many Kols left the country that afterwards returned and claimed their lands ....” The oppressions continued practically unchecked till the advent, in 1845, of the German Lutheran Mission. The aboriginal’s converts soon *imbibed* a spirit of independence, but till the close of this period there were no serious contests.

The administrative structure was once more changed in the year 1854, when the South-Western Frontier Agency was abolished by Act XX of 1854. Under this Act the Districts of the Agency were formed into Non-Regulation division under a Commissioner and the Government General Agent became the Commissioner of the Division and the Principal Assistants to the Agent became Principal Assistant Commissioners of their respective districts. Other Assistant Agents became either Senior Assistant Commissioners or Junior Assistant Commissioners. The designation of the Deputy Commissioner remained unchanged as before, the Chief Judicial Officer in the Division. In May 1861, the designation of the Deputy Commissioner was changed into the “Judicial Commissioner of Chotanagpur”, of the Principal Assistant Commissioners into “Deputy Commissioner’s (1<sup>st</sup> class), of Senior Assistant Commissioners into “Deputy Commissioners”(2<sup>nd</sup> class), of Junior Assistant Commissioners into “Deputy Commissioner” (3<sup>rd</sup> class), and a Sub-Assistants of the Commissioners into “Extra Assistant Commissioners”.

The epoch started with struggle between the aborigines and their superior landlords. After the Sepay Mutiny of 1857, in which some of the Jagirdars had joined, the Mundas and Oraons specially who have been converted to Christian missions, resolutely stood up for their rights and in some cases forcibly re-possessed themselves of lands from which they had been previously evicted. The Government ordered an inquiry into the documents of registration of the privileged lands of landlords and tenants respectively. But Act II (BC) of 1869, under which registration was made, was only a partial measure and subsequently failed to find a final solution over the dispute. As a result violence spreaded throughout the plateau, at the sametime with the advent of the Catholic Mission in the district, conversion of the aboriginals into Christianity became more rapid. The Christianity brought the spirit of independence and strong determination to stand up at all hazards for their rights and this spirit affected even many of the aborigism who are unconvered. This movement, known as the Sardar Agitation, was most active during the two last

decades of the nineteenth century. The Birsaite movement of the last five years of nineteenth century was partly religious and partly agrarian. These and other events of the last quarter of the nineteenth century brought into prominence many long standing grievances of the aboriginals of the plateau. The British Government, adopted several measures with a view to settle these long standing disputes and bring peace in the country. The preparation of a record of all existing rights in land was undertaken for the plateau and an exhaustive Tenancy Act was passed. The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908, though required to be revised, had been an undoubtedly improvement over the crucial issues.

## **CHAPTER – V**

### **CHOTANAGPUR - A DETAIL STUDY LAND AND PEOPLE**

#### **Record of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Movements in Chotanagpur**

In its issue of 1-12, 1938, the 'Adivasi' given at page 3, an account of the Adivasi meeting at Simdega where about 25,000 Chotanagpurians assembled. Babu Ignesh Beck explaining the objectives of the 'Sabha' said that the Adivasi Sabha was in no way antagonistic to any other organization individual but a peaceful organization of the oppressed and the down-trodden for the safe guarding of their legitimate right and for their own self-determination. Consequently he very strongly warned the members not to give any ground to the enemies of the Sabha to accuse them of using any unconstitutional means.

In the editorial article printed at P. 5 of Ex-21, the Adivasi of No.15, 1938 headed "Adivasi Sabha ahinshak ha" (i.e. "The Adivasi Sabha entertains a spirit of harmlessness to every body) "*Adivasi Sabha ki or se in bhaychit mitane ko hame kahna hai ki Gair Adivasi bhaiyo Chotanagpur ek shuoha rup Hindusthan hi hai.*" "*Is Braj-bhumi me Girja, Mandir, Masjid aur Saran agal bagal kharey ho, elu updesh suna rahan hain ki Adivasi Sabha se darne ka koi karan nahi hai.*"

As Uthn Munda narrates the aim of Adivasi Sabha was primordially to preserve culture and rights of the residents of Chotanagpur and also to open new vista for the improvement of the good wills latent among them and this is how they wanted to improve all the races at large. There is reference in the same paper 'Adivasi' of the 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1939, when the memorial presented to the Hon'ble premier of Bihar. Mr. Jaipal Singh as President of Adivasi Sabha stated we includes among us in word and deed, every one who is resident within our land and in consequence has wasted interests therein. Virtually a Mahamandan and a Bengali Hindu representative were members of this deputation of the "Adivasi Sabha."

However, during the district board election campaign in April and May 1938, the Adivasi Sabhites stripped up class hatred. In numbers of issues of Adivasi Newspaper of those days it is seen that the Adivasi Sabha had been exhorting all the influences in favour of communal harmony, co-operation and unity, whereas it is

the politically motivated persons who, by the issue of pamphlets said “White leprocy will overtake those who put votes in the white box of the Adivasis”. While in actuality, we see that the method of election propoganda of the Adivasis was quite dignified, friendly and conciliatory (Adivasi 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1939). To this word “*Hum Adivasi aur Nagpur-vasi to etne jugon se Chotanagpur ko dill se pyar karta a rahe hain, hamare dil ki janch bhot ke dwara ho rahi hai.*” Further stated “*Hamari arji hark Adivasi, Sadan Bhai, Musalman bhai, Hindu bhai our anya bahai se how jo Chotanagpur ke. Pyar karte our wsko apna samajhta hai, ki Adivasi Sabha ko bhotde kar is bar sare Bharat our Sansar ko janade ki (Chota) Nagpur kisi bho duse des se pichhe Nahi.*”

Our request to every Adivasi, Sadan Brothers, Mahamadan brothers, Hindu brothers and others is that whoever leaves in Chotanagpur and regards it as his mother law should vote for Adivasi Sabha this time and thus prove to the world that (Chota) Nagpur is not behind hand in patriotism in comparison with any other province.

Again at page 3, col. 1 lines 8 – 11 of the Adivasi of 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1939 we written “*(Chota) Nagpur ki phukar hai ki na kewal Bengali, parantes harek Musalman, Hindu, Rayat, Zamindar, Jo (Chota) nagpur ki apni matri-bhuni manta hai, is Adivasi Sabha ke agadi ke Juoha me samil ho sakta hai.*”

The call of Chota Nagpur is that not only a Bengali but every Muhamadan, Hindu, Rayat and Zamindar who belives Chotanagpur to be his mother land can join in the struggle for independence launched by the Adivasi Sabha.” On the August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939 (page – 7). Adivasi publishes contents about the policy in the following terms:

“*Adivasi Sabha ne kewal (Chota) nagpur ke harek barga aur loyakti ko kashanik labh pahychane chalet hain; par uska dhaya hai ki swaviman or swashashanki anmol sampati ko hasil kar apne ang pratayang man bhojan ka nai parikrom kar de. Banna ek, taran ek, aur is liye shur bhi anak. Par iska lye arth nehi hain ki ek tar alag alag gil ga askta hai, git bhi beena ki nai ek hona alasyak hai. Isi prakar, Adivasi Sabha rupi beena nke latke hye hyue “Santan Sabha”, Progressive language “Separation league” adi tar Prithiakaran ki sue me sunane ke karan “bhagya-nirman –bhumi (Chotanagpur) ke Charino ke puja kar rahe hain.*” As it meaend that, The Adivasi Sabha is seeking not merely to secure temporary benefit for every class or individual in Chota Nagpur, but its aim is to secure new arrangements for the nourishment of every limb while maintaining self-respect and securing independence. Although the harp is one, its strings are many. But, that does not mean that each string can sing separately to its own tune. It is necessary that the song (music) like the harp, should be one, similarly, the Sanatan (Hindu) Sabha, the progressive league, the separation league, like so many separate strings, are attached to the Adivasi Sabha and are worshipping at the feet of our common “Luck Making” a “prosperity bringing” motherland (Chotanagpur) by singing to the tune of administrative separation from Bihar.

In the month of September i.e. after two months of the controversial 1<sup>st</sup> July issue of Adivasi the “Progressive League” leading by Shri S. K. Sahay came into existence and claimed that Adivasi Sabha was principally spreading class hatred and thus looking Adivasis separately from Non-Adivasi of the region and it was prime interest to combat the Adivasi demand of administrative change which he considered as ‘mischievous and vile’ propaganda. Obviously Adivasis of Chotanagpur took it seriously and grilled Raj Kumar Lal as among the local leaders of an “Anti-Separation and Anti-Adivasi Conspiracy.”

While the matter was put to court the learned lower of district court stated “Finding itself opposed by the people of Bihar (high & low) the Adivasi Sabha begins to preach class hatred through its organ the “Adivashi” is an absolute misconception.” Blame has been given on Adivasi Sabha that it is a Christian Association interested to convert the non Christian Adivasi into Christianity, and that the Christian Missionaries are at the back of it. The principle motive behind this attitude was to create a split between the Christian and non Christian aborigines by disseminating the malignant poison of communal passions. There was a strong protest as appeared in 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November of ‘Adivasi’, stating that so far as the Adivasi Sabha is concerned these missionaries keep themselves aloof and we Adivasis know it in our experience that there is no trace of any differences between the Christian and non Christian adivasis. As regard the allegation that Bengalies are at the back of the “Separation Movement” of the Adivasis, they respond in the issue of the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1938.

“As an important element of the entire population the Adivasis had the same rights and claims upon the intelligentsia as any other section that their words be given a patient hearing. It is to the greatly deplored that one groups is up against another in Bihar for the allegiance the latter bear to truth the claims of Adivasis can it be possible for one, even if one wished to up root the heavenly attribute of fellow feeling from the depths of heart? Were, it possible, God forbid it. But perhaps the reason of later and bitterness lies in the assumptions, that Bengal is at the back of Chotanagpur in the much talked of question of separation of Chotanagpur from Bihar is as false as it is speculative. We, however, have to mind our own business and not watch the attractions of the controversy between the Bengalies and the Biharis. We feel it our duty to call upon all the lovers and well-wishers of Adivasis in their onward march to freedom to weight and scrutinize our arguments and demands on their merits. We pray for fair and equitable justice both from the intellectuals and the Government in Power.”

The allegation that the Bengalies are at the back of the agitation for the separation of Chotanagpur was a distorted truth as evident from the fact that it is a Bangali of the name of Babu Keshitish Chandra Bose who was the then leader of the anti-separation campaign of the congress in the D. B. elections at Ranchi.



The innate hankering of the Adibasis after co-operation with the Bihar authorities was expressed in the “Adibasi” newspaper of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939. Here Adibasi writes, “*Pahile Adibasi Sabha ke sath khle Dil se peshaoye. Hriday Kula aur dono paksha me Siriph bhalai aur unnati ke sote phut millenge, Jis-se Chota Nagpur aur Bihar donon ke man pure ho jaenge.*” i.e. First, let them discuss matters with open hearts with the Adibasi Sabha. When, hearts are open out, the source of mutual good and progress will come forward. And, in this process the wishes of both Chota Nagpur and Bihar will be resolved.

Thus it is clear that a catholic spirit of good-will, accommodation and compromises was the keynote of the Adibasi movement during that time. Actually it would have been fatal to press down the lid on the seething cauldron of their enthusiasm for progress and political aspirations, and thus helping it to go on boiling and bubbling and generationg more and more heat under the cover clapped on it.

In driving their political yearnings and aspirations underground, there was great chance that they may one day *burstout in a terrible convulsion and conflagration*. Perhaps the anti-separationists were under the delusion that the aborigines of Chota Nagpur were in the state of primitiveness under which they could not be told and courageous and can only hold a dram on the voice of leader. Thus assume if the leaders were removed the followers would lose heart and their movement would collapse. The contents of Adibasi conference in January and D. B. election in May, 1939 put one living touch to the social and political aspirations to men and women in such a degree that no artificial dam a forcible abstraction could any longer arrest the tide of their progress towards independent social and political self realization.

The great leader Shri Jaipal Singh said in his welcome address “We are happy to find that most other communities in Chota Nagpur have joined hands with us in our movement and I want to thank our non-Adibasi friends who help us in so many ways to provide amenities for out visitors from distant villages. The police conducted themselves wisely. Zamindars gave us rice and fuel. Merchant offered specious accommodation ————— in every way we received co-operation from all sections of the community.

During January, 1940 there held a monster meeting at Ranchi known as Adibasi Conference and attended by some 25,000 to 50,000 persons in which a resolution was unanimously passed first by the Adibasi section and then by the Chota Nagpur separation league of where the resolution was unanimously passed by representatives of different sections of Chota Nagpur population forming Chotanagpur separate league which was duely formed at the first meeting of the Adibasi Sabha.

The heavey defeat of Congressmen at Ranchi D. B. election at the hand of Adibasi Sbha did not make any change among in Adibasis as they remain wonderfully cool and carried on their agitation for separation in a perfectly calm

and constitutional manner with an array of facts, figures and logical arguments raised by all recognized authorities. Jharkhand party under the leadership of Jaipal Singh was perhaps the most powerful force but the non-Christian force who felt aggrieved as being not properly paid importance by the Christian leaders gradually rejected leaders like Kartik Oraon, Sukrn Bhagat, Bhaya Ran Munda, Lal Hembrom, Bariar Hembrom and others who had been educated from Thakkar Bapu educational institutions – mostly located at interior parts of the plateau and supervised under the administration of Adim Jati Seva Mandal, Nibaranpur and Santal Paharia Seva Mandal, Deoghar. Actually they challenged the leadership of Jharkhand Party by taking support of Congress Party. With innetial difficulties gradually they had been successful in marging Jharkhand Party with the Congress party in the year 1963. As a result the Congress Party started sending large group of reseved legislator to the Bihar legislative assembly and Jharkhand as a united force of Chotanagpur became minority and gave birth to Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.

In issue after issue the “Adibasi” articles have appeared advocating reasons and logical arguments supported by authorities to justify the Adibasi Claim for administrative separation. Even an Adibasi school-Boy from Jela school of Ranchi summed up these grounds in an article and asserted by all recognized authorities that “until 500 years ago no aliens had come to (Chota) Nagpur to disturb the peaceful tenour of aboriginal life in Chotanagpur which was then in sole occupation and possession of the aboriginals, and that the aborigines were then living in peace, plenty and prosperity.

While the anti separationists opined “Chotanagpur has been a part and parcel of Bihar, not from to-day and yesterday, but from time immemorial.” In an article published from Ranchi they say, “Before the kolarian races come to this part, it was once inhabited by people having higher and different civilization and this part was within the control of Empire – Maharaja Karna Suvarna, after whose name the rive Subarnarekha goes (vids. Ranchi – Gazetter, pp. 20 – 21). They refer the Maharaja family of (Chota) Nagpur who are reigning continuously for about two thousand years and Maharaja Karna Suvarna must be reigning long before that.”

The basic reseasons behind the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century peasant protest in Chotanagpur plateau were mainly, against the forceful establishment of outsiders in the adivasi lands, socio-economic oppression, dispossession of lands, tax and rent increment, violation of forest rights, forced labour and more oppressively, payment of debt through labour. The urgent need to resolve the conflicts of agrarian character the adivasis of Chotanagpur became very much furious during the time. In the beginning there was “passive” protest in the form of gathering of peasants and thus mostly aimed to avoid direct confrontations against the colonial rulers. The consequences turned different when the peasants decided to abandon cultivation and thus ignored the strategy of colonial system and thus organized themselves for non-cooperation. It was however, first reflected through *Birsaitte movement*.

The colonial system reinforced itself supported by its own law, by armed force and with the collaboration of the local sectors with control over land and peasants. As a preparatory measure to unite and organize themselves for large movements against the English rulers, the adivasis first wanted to define their due authority and right to their immediate dominant sectors. The Zamindars, Thikadars, Jagirdass, Money Lenders and Merchants. They became gradually conscious of defending their right over the land they are tilling for generations and on the contrary the persons who did never participated at any stage of agricultural operation but enjoying the lion share of agricultural product by controlling the adivasis as employed labour force.

The grievances of adivasis as forwarded through legal channels to the appropriate authorities in the form of memoranda, petitions and even useful documents did never attended. Evidently, those sent by the Santals before and during the Santal rebellion of 1855, the Sardar movement, antecedent of *Birsait movement* are a few examples of long and unsuccessful experience in legal protest against the entair structure of colonial rule over the plateau. In the year 1854, the Santal peasants filed a petition to Commissioner Brown, stating that they feel very much unprotected and Government authority may kindly make an urgent enquiry and they may kindly ensure their security by removing the Mahajans from Damin their home land. But, alas, there was no justice, no protection nor even any answer of acceptance of the same. Thus the adivasi had been left with no alternative but to get prepare for an armed protest against the administration. The gradual awareness about their legal demand in the form of Ethnic consiousness acted as a vehicle among the adivasis to express their appression for not enjoying the economic and political independence, and an instrument to organize action and to make possible the formation of “pan-ethnic alliance” against the colonizers and their representatives. Though the ethnic banner to be united against the colonial system was necessary to crystallize the collective ethnic force of the plateau was of urdent need. The issue of ethnic identity appeared imperative for the moment. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century uprisings of the adivasis of Chotanagpur were directed at one side to eliminate the elien elements (the dikus) known as oppressors and thus to restore rights and possessions over their home land and also recover their cultural identity and history, as the great leader Birsa organized in the year 1895. The intension of the great movement was however well under stood during its innetial phase in the year 1899 and gradually aggravated to a phase of political struggle.

The movement of 1895 among the Mundas is considered as a stage of organization, continuity and moreover a stage of bringing coherence for an organized action against the oppressions. While, the Birsoite movement brought the true revolutionary spirit but could not achive the ultimate due to sheer repression of destroying the spirit of organization. The period of Birsiat movement extended from February 1900 to October 1901 and which ultimately remained restricted under the sect hood.

The long history of tribal oppression during the eighteenth and nineteenth century was organized mostly under isolated and in very rare cases it was organized under in united front. The history of 20<sup>th</sup> century Jharkhand movement for the establishment of an adivasi state within the Indian republic was in the beginning very much disintegrated among the various ethnic grouping of the plateau comprising the areas of south-eastern Bihar (Chotanagpur and the Santal Paraganas) and the adjacent tribal areas of Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Jaipal Singh the pioneering central figure of the movement was very much successful to hold the united force for some period of time. But, with the constant influence of other political parties the real image of the movement was greatly hampered and tribal unity was seriously damaged. Thus the effectiveness was largely centered on the local groups and no joint action was taken for along period of time. The clever political leaders however took this advantage and tried to make them understand about their fractions, linguistic and ethnic differences and more over they tried to exaggerate the history of their migration in terms of attack of one ethnic group against the other. Actually there exists no historical evidence or any oral tradition in support of the fact that oraons drove the Mundas to the Southeast of country, but the political leaders of adjoining states took it as a major tool to disintegrate the adivasis of various origins. Some scholars are holding the opinion that "some damaging factionalism that has developed in the tribal world is on Christian non-christian lines" as it did by the politicians earlier too (Munia, R. D. 1980). The greatest faction created by the political leaders was directed to draw a separation between the adivasis and the non-adivasis.

### **Jharkhand State Hood**

The Jharkand movement has been weakened because of lack of unity among its top leader. The latest attempt to creat unity through the formation of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee (JCC) did not last long because the leaders of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) came out of it. Moreover the party has been failed to bring unity among the constituents in different states (JCC - Jharkhand Coordination Committee in Ranchi, the JMM – Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in Santal Pargana, JMA – Jharkhand Mukti Andalan in Orissa).

In middle India the Jharkhand region combine served features which give it a place of the foremost position in various aspects in general and region movement in particulars. During the last few decades it has experienced the worst disaster as regard to industrialization and faulty policies of the then state of Bihar. Despite being well advanced in literacy and education the land and people were ignored. Since long and a complex nature of dominance has been clearly understood.

At last the Jharkhand coordination Committee was formed in the month of October, 19\_\_\_\_. The century old agitation pickedup momentum with unanimous declaration of activists and the Jharkhand question became a national issue.

The basis of the claim behind this politico geographic region is highly *inleaded* in its cultural identity, geographical similarity, and structural similarity of socio-economic life. Most of these features differ with the adjoining states like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. The component of the proposed state with 21 districts seems to be the integrated part of its cultural entity holding the same ethnohistorical background and great traditions. Therefore, any proposal towards the discouraging the sanction of the proposed territory was considered to be anti people as it disregards the age old aspiration of the people thus can in no way be acceptable.

The co-ordination committee retained the historical call of Jai Pal Singh and categorically declared that all the sons of the soil may that be Tribal, Sadans and others who share a common history and cultural heritage and practice a common value system of the people of Jharkhand are Jharkhandis. The movement is meant for the upliftment of these people, and therefore any attempt to divide them in terms of tribes, sadans, Christians, Hindus, Sarnaits and Muslims will be firmly dealt with.

The co-ordination committee being headed with highly educated people felt the need to spread the flame of the movement from political fold to the social economic cultural and literary movements as symbols of aspirations of the people of Jharkhand land. Some important mentions relating to the agitations are the Maurbhanj agitation for merger with Bihar in 1949, the displaced persons movement relating to the displacement from Damodar Valley Project and Bokaro Steel factory and in seventies the resistance struggles at Subarnarekha and Koel-Karo projects. The worker peasant movement of 1973-74 in formative period of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha was another important milestone. In the post emergency period all political parties came together in 1977 and form an all parties Sangharsh Samiti. Despite the involvement of economic and political movements the foundation for a lasting units maintained by the literacy and cultural movements only. Reference may be made about of Chiki Script Movements among the Santals largely to resist the cultural alienation for one another residing in different status.

However, this led to random growth of local languages in Jharkhand area (Keshari, 1982). The year 1977 year marked for concentrating all the intellectuals in a shape of democratic political wave. It is during this time a short lived journal 'SHALPATRA' helped all the intellectuals of Jharkhand to come together under one umbrella. A conference was held at the tribal and regional languages department in Ranchi University with a view to look into the propagation and scientific evolution of Jharkhandi languages. The forum also invited scholars from all communities residing in Jharkhand and exchanged ideas.

### **Birsa Movement**

The study of Birsa and his affairs has of late been taken up with some interest and several articles have been published in various journals and books. But still there

are many things to be told on his subject. The purpose of this text is to present an account of Birsa Religion.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century whole of Chotanagpur was undergoing a change due to intermingling of various forces at work in that area. The old system was crumbling under the heavy weight of administrative change. The age-old Munda Khundkatti system of the middlemen who were known as Jagirdar and Thikadars, under whose steam roller of exploitation the whole indigenous population was being crushed. The Adivasi were being ejected from their hearth and home; they had to pay excessive taxes, they had to engage in unpaid forced labour called 'begar' for their masters, and in return, they got only disappointment and maltreatment. These alien oppressive landlords had exploited the local population to the utmost. There was no justice, no fairpay. The British Government which took up administration of this area by 1860 was of no help. The only way to have some redress of their grievances was to seek help from the German and other missionaries who had started converting people in the Munda country by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The aboriginals learnt that Christians usually were accorded better treatment in the courts of law than the non-Christians. The Mission people also had held out a vague hope of getting their original land and forest returned to the aboriginals who were the earliest settlers of the land and forest as such considered themselves to be rightful owners of the whole tract of the country. But with the passage of time the missionaries also avoided their claim and whole lot of Adivasis felt that they had been deceived by the mission people. Their Sardars took up this cause, but it was also of no avail to them. The whole area was seething with discontent which burst into the unsuccessful agrarian disturbances of 1889 and 1890.

The aboriginals were getting frustrated as they had no leader. In July, 1895, however Birsa Munda of Chalkad came upon the scene and in him the aboriginals found the embodiment of their aspirations. The Mundas were the worst victims of exploitation. They had no liberty and rights. They had begun to lose their faith in their deities since the latter could not save them any longer from their oppressions. Birsa gave them a new faith, a new philosophy of life, a new code of conduct, a programme of action to get back what they had lost and prospect of a new destination to achieve their lost glory.

Birsa, the prophet – politician, was the product of circumstance. "Born in or about 1874 in Gareria Ulihate in the Tamar police station of the Khunti subdivision, he was the fourth child of Sugua Munda, a peasant of very small means," who sent 5 year old Birsa to Ayubhatu his mother's native village, to be reared up. His mother's sister took him to Christian Missionaries who taught inquisitive Birsa reading and writing and while engaged in his studies, he completely used to forget his surroundings. For this habit Birsa had to suffer. Once he was beaten severely by the husband of his mother's sister because some of the goats under his charge for

grazing were lifted by wolves. Pained at it he had to seek the shelter of his eldest brother. Urged by his thirst, for knowledge, Birsa entered the household services of a Brahman pandit named Anand Panda who used to attract students in the village Gaurbera from nearby villages. That Brahmin guru used to recite stories from the great Hindu epics. The courageous deeds of Rama, Lakshmana, Bhima and Arjuna impressed Birsa much. He also came in contact with a reputed Vaishnava saint who was giving discourses on Bhakti at *Bomhani*. He was so much influenced by the doctrine of non violence preached by the saint that he became a strict vegetarian and gave up hunting etc. At Khatanga he came across a preacher of German Mission who took him to Burju where he passed the upper primary standard. At Chaibassa he did his middle standard. But his restless spirit was stifled in the atmosphere where abuses were discouraged at his religion and culture. It was only his anxiety to educate himself that kept him in the mission schools. At that time there were on non-Mission schools in that area. But Birsa had to leave the school to live with his parents at Chalked, the village to which they had migrated and the village which later on became the seat of Birsaites.

By that time intelligent Birsa had enough wisdom to discover the dark spots in his own culture and also the causes of the maladies of the Adivasis. He was pained to see his backward men and women clinging to the traditional lines of behaviour and thought. He was pained to find that the condition of people around him had become worse than that of serf; the whole lot had been turned into a nation of hewers of wood and drawers of water. There was no food for them, no money to buy even a morsel of food. They were starving once Birsa and his whole family also had to starve.

Thus, Birsa embarked on the path of a preacher. He was fully equipped with sufficient knowledge of Munda, Christian & Sanatan as well as Vaisnava sects of Hinduism. All these influences and the circumstances under which he had to struggle moulded the tenets of his faith.

Sri Sarat Chandra Roy in his book 'The Munda, and their Country' has not done full justice to Birsa and his faith. According to him the first idea of propagating a new religion was apparently accidental and rather curious. He has attributed this to an incident that happened with Birsa and his friend in the jungle in June or July 1895. According to him a thunder storm overtook Birsa and his friend in the jungle. At that time a brilliant flash of lightning passed over Birsa's features which gave an impression to his friend that for the moment from ordinary brown-black colour Birsa's face had changed into a glowing red and white. Birsa told his friend that he was just having a revelation from God. His friend lost no time in spreading the news of Birsa's marvellous communion with God in his village. This incident, according to Sri Roy, made Birsa a Bhagwan.

On the other hand, Muchi Roy Munda in his 'Birsa Bhagwan' and Prof. Sachchidanand, in his article in *Vanyajati* on 'Birsa an Adivasi fighter for freedom'

have a different observation to tell which is logical and convincing. They feel that environmental set up and Birsa's association with different faiths contributed much and making Birsa a 'Bhagwan'. According to them, the fame of Birsa spread far and wide for his religious discourses and many came to hear him regularly. After Hari-kirtan he began to give discourses on religion. He wanted to uproot superstitions, and taught that the highest religion was service to others. Instead of worshipping so many spirits and godlings he asked the people to worship only one deity—'Singabonga' the ever beneficent God of gods, by whose appointment the inferior deities hold their places and perform their functions, and who is, in fact, the author of the whole universe, including the whole host of the different Bongas themselves. The propagation of monotheism in the land of animism was, perhaps, the effect of the sermons of Christian preachers at Khatanga and other places that he had visited. He also advised them to eschew violence and give up animal-sacrifice. Here also a Vaishnava saint (whom he met at Bombani) speaks through him.

He forbade the taking of wine and other intoxicants including Hanria. He asked his followers to use the sacred thread and stressed the purity of heart at the time of worship. These teachings were the direct result of his association with his preceptor Anand Panda, a Brahmin Pandit. He thought that building is not needed for worship and retained the worship of Singbonga in the SARNA or the sacred grave of the village. Here he showed his fondness of the old Mundari plan of worshipping i.e. sarna. He wrote a prayer book which is not exist now, reclaimed many converts from the Christian fold, and saved many from conversion.

Old Mundas of the village were perturbed by Birsa's activities and preachings because of their traditional belief that if sacrifices were not offered to the village deities, and harmful spirits were not propitiated, some calamity was bound to befall the village. When small-pox broke out in their village in an epidemic form and ravaged the country with unabated fury causing heavy toll to life the people forced him to leave the village as he was thought responsible for such a far flung pestilence. Though he was forced to leave the village he could not stay away long. As soon as he learnt that his parents had fallen victim to this virulent disease he came back and took up nursing not only of his parents but also of other people who were attacked by it. With untiring zeal he started serving the sick with selfless devotion. What he preached himself and this selfless service earned for him admiration and respect from the villagers.

In 1895 there was a similar devastated of epidemic near Muchia Chalkad. The news of the calamity reached him and as his heart was overflowing with the milk of human kindness he visited to the affected area and threw himself heart and soul in relieving the distress of the people and thus saved the life of many. This led the people to believe that there must have been magic in his touch and he was the possessor of some supernatural power. Henceforth people from far and near came streaming to his place to have a darshan of him and to hear his sermon.



Sri Roy narrates the story of one of the miracles of Birsa. A Munda mother first arrived with her baby, whom the mother said to have been ailing. Birsa solemnly touched the baby, calmly passed puff of breath over his body, sonorously chanted some mantras in an unintelligible jargon, and confidently declared the baby perfectly cured. The baby became perfectly all right from that very moment! Sri Roy took note of this incident alone. It was, however, not the whole reason of Birsa becoming a miracle worker. Presumably Sri Roy did not enter deep in the matter and with some preconceived notion has painted Birsa in such a lurid light. Birsa built up his reputation by did of his selfless service, austere living and high character.

By and by Birsa came to be regarded as a person possessing some supernatural power. 'His fame spread to the remotest part of the Munda country. Expectations ran high. The credulous Mundas and even non-Mundas flocked in from all directions to see the young prophet newly arisen in the realm.' Heedless of the inclemencies of weather, the inconveniences of journey through the wood, the lame, the crippled, the blind and the sick all came to Birsa to be healed as there was a rumour that he could cure all diseases and bring back to life even the dead. Father Hoffman was also reported to have witnessed huge crowd going to Chalkad. About the same time another rumour also spread which motivated the Munda population to give up their agricultural pursuits and join their new prophet at Chalkad on the top of a hill, according to a report from Lohardaga. Birsa was reported to have prophesied of a shortly coming deluge when only dry spot would be the place where he was camping i.e. the space on the top of the hill. Birsa, in the same report, was reported to have told that those who were with him could be saved, that all money in the world would become water and people, therefore, should spend all they had in purchasing new clothes and that owing to the coming deluge they should stop cultivation. Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy wrote: 'the demand for clothes became so great in Murhee and other neighbouring markets that it considerably exceeded the supply.' As many as six or seven thousand people gathered at Chalkad (Roy also gives the same number on p. 331 of his book). Birsa, in the same report, was said to have appointed a Munda, and a Paur or Tatana to be his Dewans. They are named at other place as Deoki Paur and Sao Munda (No.814). This Government Report from Lohardaga is very important as it gives a picture of the way in which Birsa were living in one camp and deliberating for future action. According to it, 'Birsa himself never came out of his house till dusk, but occasionally during the day showed his face or his hand through the partially opened door in order to bear out the story that his body had turned to gold, as he had rubbed himself all over with turmeric and oil. A thread had been passed round outside his premises within which no outsider was allowed to intrude, and gave out that when this thread was broken the promised deluge would come. He also promised to cure all diseases and a large number of people came to him to be cured. These he sent away telling one that he would be well in three months, another that he declined to do anything for him as

God had called him (sick man), another that he should six days hence, bring some offerings and then he would see about him. A corpse was also brought to him to resuscitate, but after looking at it he said that it was not a real corpse but merely a lump of clay; let him bring a real corpse and he would prove his power in bringing him to life. He further said that after the deluge he would be Raja and the Sirkar (Government) would not be able to do anything to him. Should they attempt to seize him by force their bullets would turn to water, and even if he were taken any time to jail his body would remain there in the form of a log of wood, but he himself would be in their midst at the time. Gradually the first story that he had been sent by God changed into one that he himself was "Bhagwan" and he began sending for people who had hitherto had no belief in him or did not come to see him and also threatening to kill those who did not obey him. Even a head constable, who was deputed at Chalkad to watch and report his doings and activities was forcibly turned out of the place, his tent thrown into the river and he was chased away by his followings."

Matter gradually became a serious one and Mr. W. H. Grimley, Commissioner of Chotanagpur reacted to the situation strongly. He wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Government, "Among ordinary people a silly incident of this kind might not be allowed to pass unnoticed by the authorities ..... And after hearing the particulars I strongly advised that the man should be brought in either as a suspected lunatic or as a person whose actions were likely to create a breach of peace. Accordingly, warrant of arrest u/s 505, 353, 143 Cr. P. C. was issued against Birsa and his seven accomplices. Mr. Meares, District Supdt. of Police with a force of ten constables, accompanied by Father Zusty of Murhee and Babu Jagmohan Singh, Zamindar of Badgaon and his men made a silent raid on a dark night on the hut of Birsa and dragged him out with some of his accomplices without least possible force. He was brought to Ranchi in chains and was sentenced to undergo two and half years' imprisonment.

The news of Birsa's arrest naturally brought the whole countryside once more to Chalkad. Streams of men and women again began to pour in from all directions to the Bhagwan's village; many of them came from long distances in the Birsa and Karra circles. Father Haufmann of Sarwady also saw large crowds of Mundas daily going there for worshipping (Darshan Kurowel) at his empty house. There had been great excitement among the Mundas and they started a sort of non-cooperation movement. They wanted to be sent along with their "Dhartiaba" or Bhagwan to jail. One of the Mundas named Masida demanded from the Deputy Commissioner – 'Today show me my Dhartiaba, and put me where you kept him' If you do not show him to me I shall not tolerate it.' Others demanded the release of their Father, their Bhagwan. They wanted to offer their own neck and in return the release of their Bhagwan. The affection and respect that Birsa commanded from his followers was demonstrated by the facts the Birsaites clamoured for the

release of their Father even though the various prophecies attributed to him did not come out true.

This was the first phase of the religious movement of Birsa Bhagwan which was characterized by its calm, peaceful non-violent nature. Birsa in this phase carried out the process of education by dint of his selfless service, religious discourses and leadership. He was calm and not violent; (rather he and his followers courted arrest much in the way of Mahatma Gandhi).

The fire of enthusiasm which Birsa Bhagwan had kindled had died away when, on the occasion of celebration of Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Empress Victoria, Birsa Munda was released from jail sometime before the expiry of the terms of his sentence. He gathered a large number of followers round him again. He started contacting his old disciples for making preparation for the final show down. He went in hiding for about two years and engaged himself in organizing his followers in right earnest. His dewans were moving in villages to organize forces of opposition. Birsa could not remain in hiding for long and in the year 1899 he once more came out from his temporary eclipse. He felt the pulse of his people with tolerable accuracy, and now made a dramatic bid for renewed popularity by adding dangerous political tenets to his innocent religious teaching. He now sounded the call for open teachings.

Birsaites had got excellent opportunity for social service when famine, scarcity and small-pox ravaged the whole Munda country in 1898-99. This created a great confidence in Birsa in the hearts of suffering masses who were still oppressed by the Zaminders. Birsa exhorted people to fight injustice and to come under this banner. Gradually, he began to build up a force trained in the use of bows, arrows and swords. Gaya Munda, close follower of Birsa was made the Minister and Commander-in-Chief. Birsa, as a dynamic leader, went from place to place looking after training, organization and moral of the forces in Khunti, Ranchi, Chakradharpur, Bundu, Tamar, Karra, Tarpa, Basia, Sisai etc. Khunti was the head quarter of the rebel forces. Birsaites held a series of revolutionary meetings throughout the district. Bir-da (literally, hero water) was sprinkled over his followers by Birsa a few days before the insurgece. Various ceremonies were performed which Birsa claimed would make his effort invincible. The revolt came off on the Christmas day of 1899 but the Mundas were put down with the help of a large number of troops under the direction of local Deputy Commissioner on Dumbari Hill. About 200 men, women and children were killed. Birsa was captured and put to jail where he died while awaiting trial. Thus Birsa became a martyr thus ended a great life every moment of which was spent in the betterment of the lot of the people he loved.

The second phase of movement of Birsa was revolutionary. His preaching was mixed with eternal and political contents. He was no more non-violent, calm and innocent as before. His detention in jail for sometime had changed him a lot.

He was now a rebellious Birsa, determined to carry out a programme of the extermination of the Dikus and also determined to remove the yoke of slavery from the shoulders of the Mundas.

Thus, Birsa Dharam, a movement of considerable importance, was a strange movement. This religion was curious blending of Hinduism (including its various sects like Sanatan Dharma and Vaishnava Dharma) and Christianity – with a typical Munda background. Birsa, the prophet, was a product of Circumstances and his philosophy was the direct product of the environments and the age in which he lived. He turned to be a rebel, a rebel against the age old repression of the Mundas by the acts of the Zamindars, money-lenders and Christian missionaries. The new faith brought solidarity among his followers and it became a means for doing away with oppressions from different quarters: the Zaminders, missionaries and the Government. The first phase of his movement was quite religious, but in its second phase it assumed a quasi-political and militaristic form. It was, perhaps, of the gorilla type, organizing violent attacks on landlords and Christian missionaries, but was characterised by the preaching of Hinduism and Christianity. Birsa was also said to have used supernatural techniques and thus his religion was different in nature. Birsa's religion, inspite of its nativistic bias, was largely magical. Birsa movement began in a way typical nativistic movement, with Birsa Munda obtained a prophetic vision. But it incorporated so many elements of Hindu religion that it must be considered as primarily reformative in nature.

With regard to his devotees and followers, it is very interesting to find that selfless Birsa had gathered around himself a band of selfless workers who like their master were very greatly tought with the ideal of selfless service to their own community. Government officials were suspicious when they found sardars or land agitators also got themselves associated with the mission of Birsa. For sometime they were looking at Birsa movement as the projection of sardari agitation. But that was their fault. Birsa was reported to have a follower of about 7000 active Mundas including the Christian converts (Sir), who were camping at Chalkad. What was the number of followers in the country side was not known and we are left guessing about it only. In a hilly country like Chotanagpur which then was very sparsely populated, the following of active seven or eight thousand followers ready to do and die with their master demonstrated the importance of the religions as a whole. Again, when the Mundas assembled on Dumbari Hill for final show down, according to reports, as many as 200 persons were killed and the number of wounders was not known. Such casualty number proved that, Birsa had collected a very large number of his followers on Dumbari Hill. After the relentless oppression the very essence of Birsa movement had been destroyed but Munda ferment still continued. His followers (said to be mostly in Khunti sub-division) still then believed that he will come back to life once more to lift them up from the miserable condition of their life to which they had fallen.

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