

Development-induced Displacement in Chhattisgarh: A Case Study from a Tribal Perspective

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A Profile of Chhattisgarh

In today's India internal displacement concentrates a large share of people's wealth in the hands of a few. In the process of 'development', there is 'disempowerment' of the subalterns. The rich become richer due to the exploitative and dehumanizing strategies of the powerful.

Historical

Chhattisgarh was bifurcated from the state of Madhya Pradesh in 2000. Out a total population of 20,759,956 in 2001; the SCs are 12 percent and STs 32 percent. The rural population was 79.9 percent. The main industries in the state are cement, steel, aluminum, etc. Mines found in the state are diamond, coal, iron ore, limestone, bauxite, dolomite, tin, etc. The forest-based livelihood depends on gum, lac, tendu leaves, fruits, herbs, honey and other items besides hunting and fishing (Shukla 1999:3). Forests occupy a central portion in the tribal economy and their socio-cultural life.

Forests in Chhattisgarh cover about 45 percent of the land areas and 41 percent is reserved, 29 percent is protected and 30 percent is unclassified forest (*Directorate of Economic and Statistics, 2001:34*).

Chhattisgarh is one of the mineral rich states of India. The state of Chhattisgarh is famous for its natural storage of minerals and ores. The geological and tectonic set up of the state is very conducive to provide many locales of minerals of different varieties. Almost 29 varieties of minerals have been reported in the state, most important being precious stone, diamond, gold, iron ore, limestone, dolomite, tin ore, bauxite and coal. It contains about 525 million tonnes of dolomite reserves, accounting

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for 24 percent of the country's share. With substantial deposits of limestone, iron ore, copper ore, rock phosphate, manganese ore, bauxite, coal, asbestos and mica, the mineral revenue that will accrue from Chhattisgarh may exceed Rs.600 crore annually (Bhatt 2003). It has bauxite reserves of iron ore at about 2,000 million tonnes and coal at 29,000 million tonnes. Tin ores reserves exceed 27,000 million tonnes. Deobhog in Raipur district contains deposits of diamonds. Prospects of diamonds began here and when extraction starts in about two years' time, it is expected to generate an additional Rs 2,000 crore a year for the state (ibid.). Aluminium, iron and steel industries in the state are famous in the world.

The sole occurrence of tin ore in the country is reported from the state to the tune of 28.89 million tonnes in southern part of Bastar region. The world's best quality of iron ore is found in Bailadila deposits of Dantewada district which is infested by Naxalites. The other important deposits of iron ore are located in Kanker, Durg and Rajnandgaon districts. The state is endowed with its huge reserves to the tune of 1969 million tonnes. At present the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) is exploring iron ore for export to Japan and catering to the needs of the Vishakhapatnam Steel Plant. The Dalli-Rajahara group of mines is being exploited by the Bhilai Steel Plant. Bauxite ore is found abundantly in Surguja, Jashpur, Korba, Kawardha and Bastar region. The public undertaking company BALCO has exploited Phutka Pahar deposit and now the Mainpat deposit is catering to the needs of BALCO through MPSC for their Aluminum plant at Korba (Ekka, 2002).

The limestone deposits contribute a major share of mineral deposits in the state. It sustains nine major cement plants with an installed capacity of 14.75 million tonnes and contributes to minor cement plants also. Cement grade limestone registered a significant presence in Raipur, Durg, Bilaspur, Bastar, Jangir, Kawardha and Raigarh districts. The reserves to the tune of 3580.6 MT have been located and vast area still remains to be explored. The other important industrial mineral dolomite, mostly used in steel plants and refractories, is located in Bastar, Durg, Bilaspur and Jangir-Champa districts and has a total 606 MT reserves in the state (ibid.). The largest share of mineral is contributed by coal. It is being exploited and marketed by Coal India Ltd.

Diamond incidences in Mainpur region of Raipur district have been confirmed and eight potential blocks qualify in the state for possible incidents of kimberlite, the mother rock of diamond. Other minerals like corundum, clay, quartzite, fluorite, beryl, alusite, kyanite, sillimanite, talc, garnet, silica sand, etc., are reported from the state. Rare precious minerals like alexandrine and kornerupine are also reported.

It is precisely due to the rich resources of the state that the local Adivasis are impoverished. There was a systematic alienation of their land and forest in the past. Now globalisation and economic liberalisation have intensified the indiscriminate pillaging and plundering of the natural and human resources of the state.

Table-1 shows the land acquisition for different categories of development projects in the state of Chhattisgarh before and after its formation in 2000.

Table 1: Land Acquisition by Project Category in Chhattisgarh (1982-90; 1991-07) (in acres)

S. N.	Project Category	1982-1990	%	1991-07	%	Total	%
1.	Water Resources	49001.96	96.05	51429.54	49.90	100431.5	65.18
2.	Industry	279.73	0.55	5434.11	5.27	5713.84	3.71
3.	Mines	62.05	0.12	1330.76	1.29	1392.81	0.90
4.	Non-hydel Power	5.25	0.01	4083.04	3.96	4088.29	2.65
5.	Defence	3.74	0.01	3898.4	3.78	3902.14	2.53
6.	Environment Protection	39.23	0.08	4.09	0.00	43.32	0.03
7.	Transport	1480.6	2.90	35782.24	34.72	37262.84	24.18
8.	HRD	0.11	0.00	95.67	0.09	95.78	0.06
9.	Refugee Resettlement	5.22	0.01	0	0.00	5.22	0.00
10.	Farms & Fisheries	0	0.00	1.66	0.00	1.66	0.00
11.	Urban Development	39.68	0.08	381.89	0.37	421.57	0.27
12.	Housing	57.34	0.11	192.18	0.19	249.52	0.16
13.	Social Welfare	0.34	0.00	40.9	0.04	41.24	0.03
14.	Health	0	0.00	7.06	0.01	7.06	0.00
15.	Education	9.9	0.02	7.78	0.01	17.68	0.01
16.	Govt. Offices	31.41	0.06	377.02	0.37	408.43	0.27
17.	Tourism	0	0.00	0.37	0.00	0.37	0.00
18.	Chhattisgarh	51016.56	100.00	103066.7	100.00	154083.3	100.00

Source: Gazette Notifications, Madhya Pradesh 1982-2000;
Gazette Notifications, Chhattisgarh 2001-07.

Gazette notifications of Madhya Pradesh from 1982 to 1990 and 1991 to 2007, as shown in the above table, revealed that of the total 154,083.3 acres, the highest amount of land acquisition, that is 100,431.5 acres (65.18%), had taken place in Chhattisgarh due to the water resource projects. The second highest amount of land is shown to have been acquired on account of transport and communication projects to the tune of 37,262.84 (24.18%) acres. Industries during the above period occupied 57,13.84 (3.71%) acres of land. Non-hydel and defence projects, according to the gazettes during the above-mentioned periods acquired 4,088.29 (2.65%) acres and 3,902.14 (2.53%) acres respectively. Other categories of projects, such as mines, environment protection, human resource development, refugee settlement, farms and fisheries, urban development, housing, social welfare, health, education, infrastructure for government's administrative projects, tourism, etc. were negligible. However, this is only what could be gathered from the gazette notification accessible from government offices.

When the two time periods of the above study, namely 1982-90 and 1991-2007 are compared one finds that while 96.05 percent of the water projects were notified in the decades of the 1980s, only 49.90 percent of the water resource projects were notified from 1990s till date. However, whereas industry projects were only 0.55 percent during 1982-90, they are much higher now with 5.27 percent. Similarly, there is a jump in the non-hydel power projects as well from 0.01 percent in 1982-90 to 3.96 in 1991-07. A similar increase is very sharp in transport and communication sector from 2.90 percent in 1982-90 to 34.72 percent during 1991-07. Even in the category of mine projects an increase can be seen from 0.12 percent during 1982-90 to 1.29 percent in 1991-07.

Thus, a clear shift from the past to the present is visible. However, the above data are only indicators of the process of industrialisation that is taking place now. The crisis is much larger than what is signified by the data generated through government notifications and documents.

Industrialization and Displacement

According to the contemporary literature on displacement in Chhattisgarh, in the last few years, a sum of over Rs 60 thousand crores has been invested for the development of mining and transportation in these areas. In Bastar alone, MoUs for an investment of Rs 17,000 crores were signed in 2005 for the proposed Tata and Essar Steel Plants

(PUCL Bulletin, 16 November 2005). Prior to these 8,755 new factories were established with Rs 632 crore investments from private companies. There are 195 large and medium industries and 1,27,425 small industries (Tete 2006). Most of the industries in the state are in Raipur and Durg districts. New industries are also proposed to come up in the areas of Kunkuri, Bagicha and Jashpur of the Jashpur district. There are three steel plants in the offing, owned by the Tatas, Essar and NMDC, and two large dams, the Bodhghat Hydroelectric Project and the Polavaram dam, all of which will cause major displacement (PUCL Bulletin, 16 November 2005).

In Chhattisgarh 10 major projects have already been completed, for which 257032.585 acres of land have been acquired. In all 238 villages are affected by these dams and their rehabilitation has not yet been done. In addition to this there are 30 medium projects affecting 123 villages, for which 32,745.13 acres of land have been acquired. Further, there are eight projects pending and six medium projects have been proposed affecting 150 villages for which 261,314.59 acres of land is to be occupied. Majority of the land lost is forestland. These are the statistics in 2000 when the state was about to be created. They are probably much higher now (George 2004).

Displacement due to Tourism Projects

The year 2004 has seen the forced displacement of hundreds of tribals from the inner states of India, in Chhattisgarh, due to the government plans to bring tourism to the area through the development of a national park (Tourism and people: <http://www.peopleandplanet.net/doc.php?id=1113>). In Chhattisgarh itself almost 17 lakh acres of land have been demarcated as protected area for the sake of wildlife conservation, where people face the threat of eviction. According to government sources there are more than 250 villages with a population above 35,000 where tourism projects have been proposed (George, 2004). The majority of them are Adivasis and Dalits.

Salwa Judum-induced Displacement and Genocide

Apart from the development-induced displacements in Chhattisgarh, another important factor for displacing adivasis of the state is 'Salwa Judum' (Peace). In June 2005, a movement called 'Salwa Judum' was launched to combat the Maoists in the Dantewada district (The South

Asian, 04 June, 2006). Since June 2005, the Government of Chhattisgarh, with the support of the Home Ministry, has been waging a counter-insurgency operation against the Naxalites in the guise of a 'people's movement'. Officially, the campaign is a 'spontaneous', 'self-initiated' 'people's movement for peace', but in practice, it has the government support, and has increased violence all around. Hundreds of people have died, killed either by the Salwa Judum or the Naxalites. The Salwa Judum enjoys the joint patronage of the state government, the leader of the opposition in the state Assembly, sections of the Congress party, the state police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). It is officially described as a non-violent peace campaign to put an end to the problem of Naxalism in the state, and is currently being carried out in the Bijapur and Bhairamgarh areas of Dantewada (South Bastar) district. The campaign has already been extended to other areas (The Chhattisgarh Lok Swatantrya Sangathan, PUCL, November 2005).

The Naxalites have been active here since the early eighties. Their struggles for higher wages for non-timber forest produce, specifically *tendu patta* (*tendu* leaves) and land redistribution have gained them wide popularity among the poor tribal majority. They claim to have set up a parallel administration. However, it has angered sections of the traditional-elite. Their anti-administration stand has created conflicts in the community.

The government has not been able to address the Naxal problem adequately. Through Salwa Judum the state is using the civilian population to do the work of the armed forces and the administration. There is no record of the First Information Reports (FIRs) for the people killed and for rapes and arson in the process of the Salwa Judum. A number of independent groups have confirmed that such incidents are taking place.

In the last two years, Salwa Judum has displaced more than 50,000 people, many of whom are living in camps. Some are in the jungles and some have fled to neighbouring states. There are reports of plans to establish around 600 new villages and to convert some of the camps into long-term strategic settlements, attached to police stations, with a permanent base of informers. However this information is not in the public interest.

People are afraid to leave the camps. Anyone who is not in the camp is deemed by the Salwa Judum and administration to be a Naxal supporter.

The environment is one of fear and getting people to express their wish in such a situation is difficult. All entry into camps is monitored and permission of the armed forces and local police department is required for visiting and talking to people living there even for journalists and voluntary agencies.

The rolls of the people in the camps are not available for public scrutiny. In the camps, people are surviving on food for work programmes. The Naxals have retaliated by killing individual villagers and SPOs who have been actively associated with the Salwa Judum, blasted a truck carrying Salwa Judum processionists (Darbhaguda, February 2006), attacked the Errabor camp and destroyed schools which are being used by the paramilitary as a base.

The new Industrial Policy (2004-09) for Chhattisgarh formulated by the Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Chhattisgarh has added fire to the fuel. On the one hand it claims to take the state to the category of "developed states" by bringing about prosperity to the people of Chhattisgarh, but is silent on its devastatingly adverse impact on the economy, society, ecology and identity of the locals who have been living in the region for the past many centuries. The policy indiscreetly invites investments by non-resident Indians and foreign direct investment whose only aim is profiteering and who are not concerned about the weaker sections of the society who need social security, rehabilitation, and other safeguards for their survival. The most dangerous part of the policy is that it offers incentives for "industrial investment in the State in the form of interest subsidy, infrastructure development/capital investment subsidy, exemption from electricity duty, exemption from stamp duty, exemption from entry tax, allotment of plots at concessional premium in industrial areas, exemption from land diversion fee, reimbursement of project report expenses, quality certification subsidy, technology patent subsidy, interest subsidy for technology up-gradation, etc" (No. 4.4.1).

Conclusion

Three things emerge in the above findings: one, the correspondence between land-alienation and the resource-rich habitats, predominantly inhabited by tribals; two, shift in the development relationships from the past; and three, shrinking space of democracy from a tribal perspective.

The resource-rich areas have been the habitat predominantly of tribal populations and it is proving them costly to be in symbiotic relationship with nature in the midst of flora and fauna. Majority of the so-called development projects, especially pertaining to water resource, mine, industry, tourism, etc., have been established in tribally dominant areas, indiscreetly displacing hundreds and thousands of the locals who are left to fend for themselves. The alienation of land was one of the main reasons for the many tribal uprisings all over the country and if there is resistance to development projects now, the trend is going to escalate in the near future.

There has been a shift in the pattern of land acquisition from the past. In the past, most of the 'development' projects were in the category of the water resources. Now most of the projects are in the mining and industry sector. Some projects are also in the areas of tourism, transport and communication, and infrastructure. A dangerous shift in the land acquisition that has taken place recently is the model of evacuation of the villages by Salwa Judum type 'projects' displacing thousands of the tribals from their homeland under the pretext of countering 'Naxalism'.

It can be argued that the Government has washed her hands off the responsibility to safeguard the interests of every citizen of the country. The democratic space created at the independence of the nation seems to have shrunk for the vulnerable sections of the society. On the contrary, the democracy of India appears to be the democracy of the rich and the powerful, who understand the language of profiteering and hoarding at the cost of depletion of natural resources and the people living in conformity with them.

If the democratically elected continues the same model of development which from the perspective of the subaltern is very 'undemocratic', the gap between the rich and the poor will be further widened, more and more children will be malnourished and school drop outs, the weaker sections of the society will be more dehumanized and excluded resulting in resistance movements including violent protests. There will be no surprise if a civil war-like situation becomes imminent due to the current model of development.

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