



AN ANALYSIS OF JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

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Abstract: The study of social and regional movements has been one of the fundamental themes in sociology. In fact, the sociologists are thought to be the pioneer in dealing with such movements. It was later on that the anthropologist, political scientist, and historians took up the study of these issues. Geographers have joined this field relatively in recent times. Geographers narrowed themselves to the study of the region in terms of its various physical and socio-economic attributes. It was mainly in early 1970s that they took up the matter of regional disparities among different social groups. Although not directly linked to the political movements, but, these gave momentum to the study as most of these movement arose due to the differences and/or non-participation of locals in the development process. It has been seen that the underprivileged section of the population is always of the front side of such political movements. Jharkhand movement was one of such which results in creation of a separate state within Indian union. Possibly the only state formed on the basis of Regional differences.

Key Words: JAAC, Regionalism, Movements, Unrest

1. INTRODUCTION

Many studies in Jharkhand were taken out mostly during the British period. However, a few references of the region are found in literature also before the Britishers came to India. The region attained greater importance after independence due to the political movement for separate statehood under the Indian Union. Even a memorandum was given to the State Reorganization Committee (SRC) in 1953. But the demand was not accepted by the commission and the movement also loosened. With the enactment of Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council (JAAC) in 1995, it has again risen and a number of scholars have started paying attention to the literature on Jharkhand.

Tribals, being among the backward section of the society involved the attention of policy makers, planners and social scientists. Socio-economic data for tribal groups was created by Census of India and other Government agencies. All these factors led to a growth in tribal studies of India and Jharkhand is no exception in this regard. The well published material in tribal literature are in the form of administrative reports like District Gazetteers or the articles which were founded on material collected from secondary sources. The geographical studies on the issue of Jharkhand movement are a few. However, literature transcribed by Anthropologist, Sociologist, Political Scientists, Economists, Administrators, and even Journalists are widely available. To cognize and analyze the socio-political movements among the tribes of India it is



appropriate first to debate the definitions and types of such movements. As already stated that this is a chunk of sociological research and hence, a lot of sociologists have given dissimilar definitions.

Wilkinson (1971) gave a representative definition of social movement which is founded on the following formulations:

(a) A social movement is a thoughtful collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, revolution, illegality, or withdrawal into utopian community.

(b) A social movement must show a minimal degree of organization through this may range from a loose, partial or informal level of organization to a highly institutionalized or bureaucratized form.

(c) A social movement's commitment to change and the *raison d'être* of its organization are originated upon the normative commitment, conscious violation to the movement's beliefs or aims and active participation on the part of the followers or members.

Thus according to him, conscious commitment to change minimal organization and normative commitment and contribution are the major characteristics of social movements. Besides, they are multidimensional and kaleidoscopic and appeared from a variety of reasons or motivating factors. In India, Mahapatra (1968) mentions two other definitions of social movements. First, "a social movement occurs when a fairly large number of people are bound together in order to alter or supplant some position of existing cultural or social order or to redistribute the power of control within a society." Second, "a direct orientation towards the change in the social order, that is, in the patterns of human relations, in social institutions and social norms"

Tribes in India denote a discrete cultural stratum and a definite demographic position in India's national life. Despite their relative isolation they have maintained a unique place in the history and civilization of India. Though their historic self-awareness may be of limited range and depth, there are several examples of their participation in the socio-political life of the region and the country. They have proclaimed themselves in an organized manner in the local and regional power politics throughout the history, mainly during medieval period.

2. Historical Outlook

Nearly two centuries ago, Mundas took up arms against the local landlords and the British administration. The leader of the revolution was Binsu Manki. The reason of dissatisfaction is transfer of Jharkhand to East India Company in 1771. The movement narrowed to Bundu area of Ranchi district. With very limited influence, this movement was conquered but it gave enough recognition to Britishers. Within a short span of time other movements arose in other part of region like Bhumiji Revolt of Manbhum (1798-99); Chero uprising of Palamu (1800) under the leadership of Bhukan Singh, and two uprising of Munda in Tamar region during 1807 and 1819-



20 under the leadership of Dukan Mank and Bundu and Konta. Not many orientations are found on these movements due to their localization.

Kol insurgence, under the leadership of Singhhray and Binray Manki during 1830-33, was thought-out as the earliest rebellion with more influence and effect. The Munda tribes took up other tribes like Oraon and Hos by which lot of area came under the contact. Even this was the first joint rebellion against the “outsider” in the region. The main uprising which has made an influence on the tribal as well as non-tribal population was Santhal Rebellion during 1855-57. The leader was Sidhu and Kanu. They protested against the landlords who subjugated them for many years. This has opened the eyes of Britishers who’s Contractors and Zamindars were engaged to collect tax from the local people. This movement got impetus due to mass support. But soon the Britishers with their power subjugated the movement.

While Santhal’s were on rampage, another tribal group, Mundas initiated their movement. under the leadership of Birsa Munda during 1896-1901. He was flexible and efficient in taking whole tribal people in unidirection. His main notion was to reintroduce tribal religion and challenge the Christianity. But since, the movement did not get a mass support due to anti-Christian attitude it underwent a setback with the arrest of Birsa Munda in 1901.

3. Causes of Unrest

Land and forest Alienation

Ever since the outline of the laws of permanent settlement in 1793 and the following sale and rent law of 1859, large scale transfer of tribal land into the hands of the outsiders, the absentee landlords has taken place in the entire Jharkhand region, especially in Chotanagpur hill area. The key concern of East India Company and the consequent British Government was the collection of revenue. This contract with the local tribal chiefs, if fulfilled, then their estate or parts were given away to someone who can pay the said amount. This transfer of land to the outsiders were the prime reasons in most of the earlier uprising. Tribals contemplate land as their home and forest as a source of livelihood. By staying in these areas, tribals established a deep affinity towards the land and forest. They were completely unhappy with the process of transfer, as this resulted in not only in immigration of outsiders or non-tribals, but also giving away their home and source of livelihood.

Later on, Indian Forest Act in 1878 limited the people to collect materials or by-products from the forests. Like earlier, tribals were the core suffers. They completely depend upon the forests for daily purposes. This shows the course of transfer leads to conflict between tribals and non-tribals outsiders which caused in a lot of uprising both peaceful and armed. Santhal’s Rebellion and Birsaites Crusade was repercussions of this. By this time, the British Government has presented the Chotanagpur Tendency Act (Amendment) of 1903 and the Santhal Pargana Settlement (Amendment) Reputaion of 1908. This slowed down the process a bit but opening up



of the area through mining and industry like Tata Iron and Steel Company, further added the process definitely. The other large industrial companies like the Hindustan Copper Mines, The Indian Aluminium Company, The National Coal Development Corporation and the Heavy Engineering Corporation etc. followed soon.

While taking the lands, the recompense was paid but it was not correctly given to them. Since the land possession was common and chief of the tribal managed the land, the poor tribal did not get their proper share. On the other hand, most of the tribal were not aware of the currency system of Britishers. They were left on the worst land which others do not want. Further, added to their woes when a large amount (nearly 50 lakh acres) of forest land was taken away by the Government under the Indian Forest Act of 1878, 1927 and Bihar Private Forest Act of 1927. The purpose was to manage forests for scientific purpose and making forest products marketable. After independence, with the initiation of Five Year Plans, additional industrialization and urban expansion began. The only difference from pre- independence was that, the exploitation is now through the government, both central and state which occurred as a result of increase in the demand for power. Thus, the creation of the big power projects under the Damodar Valley Corporation and the Patratu Thermal Power Projects was done which engulfed thousands of acres of land resulting in large scale land estrangement. Further, added to it, subsidiary industries which were established to achieve the demand of big industries thereby taking away more land. The tribal became the main sufferer as most of this land was in tribal areas. Today 50-60 percent of the best tribal land is in the land of non-tribal which was due to a large scale immigration of nontribal to these industrialized areas.

Training and Job Deprivation

As stated in previous section, the new industries and power projects started mainly during Five Year Plans. These new establishments required specialized personnel which were filled by people from outside the region who came in large numbers. Industrial development was on a roar and the region has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country from the point of view of population growth. Main contribution in this growth was due to a large scale immigration of non-tribal population especially from adjoining areas of Bengal. The tribal on the other side were enforced to live in search of menial jobs in faraway places like Punjab, Assam and others. This influx of an outside population and emigration of tribal, had led the ratio between the two to become 70:30 in 1996 which was 40:60 correspondingly four decades earlier in 1951. This reversing rate is still going on and the worst affected section is tribal. Although the government has provided reservation for tribal in jobs and educational institution, sources disclose that majority of it were lying vacant due to the “no availability of suitable candidates”, which after sometime were filled up by the non-tribal candidates. It is necessary to recognize this process of de-reservation to the tribal people of Jharkhand. As most of the collar jobs was taken by outsider



and now with opening of lot of job opportunities these outsiders favored their own people to settle in the area. This preference usually led to the deprivation against the tribals. As the process of industrialization continue the tribals lost more and more of their productive land and the ruling class never paid them the amount of compensation that they deserved. Even this can be affordable to tribals but worst thing happen to them was not able to get a job in that industry. Enough lucky, if they had then, had to fulfil with class III or class IV jobs. It was only then these tribal migrate to far off places.

Cultural Submergence

Preservance of own ethos, culture and tradition is the main characteristic of every people. This concern for preserving their own ethos, culture and tradition were one of the main issues of the movement in Jharkhand since ancient period. Due to the fact that it is the only area in India where three major cultural streams have met and had shaped an integrated synthesis. Thus, the culture of Jharkhand region has reached distinctiveness by foresting a balance between nature and culture, egalitarianism in social structure, accommodative history, equal sharing of economy, secularism in religious pursuit, a democratic political thinking and the people oriented art and literature over the years. But now we find completely different culture which has subjugated the earlier culture. A large scale destruction of nature due to deforestation and unmindful, unscientific mining led to a danger to the prevailing culture. Besides natural environment, their religious, social and psychological attitudes are also changing. It became categorized in place of egalitarian, faced exploitation by incoming people in terms of accommodativeness. In fact, the tribal of Jharkhand, out of utter frustration and inability to cope with the external pressure, have established a negative identity for themselves. In most of the urban areas of the region, they are being trademarked as lazy, good for nothing, drunk and criminals etc. These developments in the environment of tribal, led to utter frustration and the movement was out busted of it. In the name of integration these tribal are facing degradation of what they thought of was their identity. Many thought that it should be stopped, if India as a nation needs to have better future for every citizen of her.

Unbalanced Development

All of the above factors have led to differentiated development of the Jharkhand region. The movement largely stated in the Bihar part of Jharkhand. If the level of the progress that has taken place in Jharkhand region in compared to that of the state, then the discrepancy become prominent between the two. The region funds approximately 70 percent of the total revenue to the state where as the states assistance for development expenditure of this region was merely 20 percent. Total contribution of the Bihar revenue from Jharkhand was nearly 70 percent whereas the expenditure state is providing to this region was merely 20 percent. Rest of it went to other parts of the state. The irrigated land was only 5 percent to the total area. Even the villages



electrified were merely 5 percent whereas rest of the state had 40 percent rural electrification. Further added to this the pucca road per 1000 KM was only 5 KM in Jharkhand region as compared to 20 KM in rest of the state. Therefore, the people of Jharkhand thought that the state government was ill-using the region and this was a new type of colonial rule. Under such conditions the people got frustrated and reacted against these forces. Even lot of studies shows that this exploitation of Jharkhand by state as well as central governments has made it the “fourth world”.

Due to discernment faced by the tribal, they mostly wandered from the region in search of better living conditions than before. They generally find themselves in slum of urban areas. These are the local tribal whose land has been taken up for industrialization. Such activities of step-motherly led to a lot of dissatisfaction among tribal of Jharkhand region. Thus, those tribal who can recognize these issues will descent over the ongoing process. The demand for separate statehood was oriented towards solving all these problems.

4. MOVEMENT FOR STATEHOOD

The modern tribal movement for regional sovereignty is a phenomenon after India got independence. Jharkhand movement too is such a phenomenon. The main goal of the Jharkhand movement was the creation of a separate “Adivasi state”. Before independence, it was the key issue. But after independence, decks were clear to orient the movement from ethnicity to regionalism. With this, Adivasi Mahasabha got affected since they were the champions for separate Adivasi state. According to 1941 census the “land” of Jharkhand had only 44 percent of tribal, thus the demand of having a distinct tribal state could not be fulfilled. This caused in the formation of a new regional party, ‘United Jharkhand Party’ in 1948. This was molded by Justin Richard, a tribal leader who latter invited Jaipal Singh to join it . After hesitation, Adivasi Mahasabha combined the United Jharkhand Party and thus results in the formation of Jharkhand Party in 1950.

The tribal political awakening touched its culmination point with the inauguration of the Jharkhand Party. It was exclusively declaring as a “Political Party” and not an economic, social, religious organization like the previous one. For the first time, non-tribal were asked in the ongoing movement for autonomy and there was a change from ethnicity to regionalism in the objectives of the movement. The main credit was given to Jaipal Singh who comprised all the people of Jharkhand. The Jharkhand Party acknowledged to establish a separate state comprising of mineral belts of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. The request for a separate state includes autonomy and preservation of tribal culture and language. This was made by 52 MLA’s of Bihar Assembly, who were also in opposition in the Assembly under the initiative taken by DavendraChampia. Although the Jharkhand Party persisted in the opposition in the Bihar Assembly, it was not able to prove its majority for a distinct Jharkhand State. In general



elections of 1952 the party won 33 seats for the Jharkhand area. Having political power, they submitted a memorandum signed by 34 legislators to Faizle Ali, Chairman of States Reorganization Commission in 1953. They wanted a Jharkhand state consisting of districts of Chotanagpur and Santhal pargana and portions of Gaya, Shahabad and Bhagalpur in Bihar, Mirjapur district in Uttar Pradesh beside the portion of Raigarh and Sarguja in Madhya Pradesh and Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj in Orrisa. The commission however in its report, overruled their demand for the separate state by giving the following points.

- A) Although the Jharkhand Party got considerable verdict of the people, they did not get clear majority within Jharkhand area and the assembly members did not represent the majority's view
- B) Public opinion outside Jharkhand did not favor the division and even within the Jharkhand other parties opposes the division.
- C) The demand of having a bulk of tribal area was decline by saying that it constituted only one third of the total population and there are several languages spoken by the tribal. Thus, this is a dissimilar question and cannot be decided on the basis of only "majority".
- D) The separation of South Bihar would harmfully affect the entire economy of the state as the plains were mostly agriculture and Jharkhand provided the industrial balance. Thus, the loss of this area could not be afforded by the rest of the state.
- E) The parting would upset the balance between agriculture and industry in the residual state which would be a poorer area with fewer opportunities and resources for development.
- F) Beside this, the centers for the higher education like Patna University and Bihar University were outside Jharkhand, so it would be very tiresome from this point of view to go for a separation.

Failing to make Jharkhand as a distinct state, there was a lot of inconsistency within the Jharkhand Party. In 1963 a section of it merged the congress and with that the movement got slackened. Further disintegration the party resulted in losing the people's decision for a separate statehood. A lot of parties arose after like Birsa Sea Dal, Jharkhand Kranti Dal, Jharkhand Peoples Party, Jharkhand Vichar Manch and so on. The boundless list of splinter parties made the movement suffer. After a thin period of ten years, in 1973 a new leader came into the arena. A new party Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) under the leadership of Sibum Soren came into fame. With lot of non-Christian tribal assisting this party, it readily communicated a rays of hope in the mind of the people. It enlarged their roots to the Hazaribagh plateau and Santal Pargna area and soon it was found that the center of the movement has shifted from Ranchi area to Santhal Pargna region. Sibum Soren soon turned into the champion of the movement and carried it through his inclusive philosophy and systematic analysis of the whole affair. Going through an Assam Model of agitation, an All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) was fashioned, whose main aim



was to include youth of the region in the ongoing movement. This resulted in gearing up of the movement in a militant way. On the other hand, the Jharkhand Party, presented another memorandum which was again for the creation of the separate statehood. The reasons were again the same, i.e. for good and efficient administrations of this abandoned and backward region by the people themselves of the region, in furtherance of functional socialism, democracy, and secularism; and for upholding the basic human rights of the people majority of them are backward and belong to “ethnic groups”. Once again this suggestion was refused by the parliament. A lot of reasons were given and the most important was “lack of mutual language” across the region. As most of the states were formed by taking a mutual language criterion, this was irrelevant in proposed Jharkhand. Besides, there was a lack of “unified movement” among dissimilar parties. This further contributed meaningfully in weakening of the movement for statehood. Even the people were fed up with this “power politics” which most of the parties were frolicking. The people of Jharkhand required an identity and not power but political parties were on a different track. The political dominance of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha was upon 1984. Then again a slender period in the process of the movement was seen. The verdict started shifting towards the non-congress national party as now they thought it would be efficient to have their members in the ministry at the center. Thus Bhartiya Janta Party emerged as a major political force. Their key aim was to assimilate the region in the national political system and came up with the proposal of making “Jharkhand” as “Vananchal”. As Bhartiya Janta Party was a new party with high probability of being in or near center, the people braced them freely. They were the first national non-Jharkhand party, who supported the issue of Jharkhand. And after the fiasco of Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council and the charge sheet of Shibu Soren and Suraj Mandal, JMM leaders, there was no choice for the people to vote for them. Thus in the 1996 general election, BJP made almost a clean sweep by captivating 14 seats out of 16 Lok Sabha from this region.

5. CONCLUSION

Thus it can be specified that the movement was through diverse phases of development. There was earlier the educated Christian tribal who controlled the area which shifted to non-Christian tribal. For many years of political actions, the parties of the region got familiar with power politics. This was the key reason in unfulfilment of the demand. Besides, there was an absence of coordinated strategy which made each and every party to go in their own way. Breakdown of the major parties like Jharkhand Party and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha additionally added to it. Of the main setback of the movement was the linking of hands with parties like Jharkhand Party did with Indian National Congress in 1963 and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha with Janta Dal in 1989. Even today the parties are un-united. Although their aim and goal was alike but still a coordination was needed between them. Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee was designed in 1991 to have a



joint effort instead of disintegrated approach between the political parties. But still lot of parties did not show interest to join the committee. Those comprise the major party such as Bhartiya Janta Party and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Soren) group. If these parties could join the ongoing movement and had a combine approach and plan, then this movement would have got the demand fulfilled long back

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