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Introduction

Independent India saw the emergence of Nehru's Panchsheel as the guiding principle for tribal development. In this vision, the modernisation of tribal societies was to take place gradually, even while this was to be done by protecting the traditional customs and institutions. Keeping this in mind Nehru's India developed tribal welfare programmes that largely focused on education and health. Though some programmes were initiated in the agriculture, these were largely confined to the expansion of plough cultivation. The nature of programmes implemented, and the lack of rights on forests and non-agricultural land led to the crisis of livelihood which was faced by tribal people since the colonial times got accentuated after 1947. This resulted in the greater dependence of the tribal people on the welfare state for basic services and the lack of development of a self-reliant economy. The phase after the late 1980s initiated the first moves for the withdrawal of the state in the social sector thereby ensuring that any withdrawal of the state would only lead to further marginalisation of tribal societies and economy. At the same time it also started a process of peoples participation in forestry and a process of decentralisation that aimed to simultaneously meet the challenges of ecological security and the livelihood needs of local people. Given these objectives, the importance of non-timber forest produce, (NTFP), increased significantly as their development was considered very important for the growth of a self-reliant tribal economy. This monograph traces the genesis and studies the impact of the policies of devolution and liberalisation within the forestry sector. In particular, it sees this from the point of view of the survival strategies of tribal people in the new tribal states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

Essentially speaking, an exploration into the potential for NTFP development can be a good entry point into analysis of the relationship between tribal economies and the wider political economy. The post Rio

summit period has seen an increasing awareness and demand for green products. Therefore NTFP exports have been growing as many products like natural dyes, dried fruits, medicinal plants, fibres, lac, silk, plant extracts and gums and others are in great demand in the Indian and world market. Thus the development of this produce can enhance employment and income for the tribal people who are dependent on it for their very survival. Its processing through the introduction of small-scale technologies can also add value to the produce of the tribals and at the same time cut the costs of intermediate processing by the large industry. The potential for development of NTFP has to take the relationship of tribals with industrialisation and wider trading networks into account. This means that the way in which the link of the local tribal economy with the rest of the economies has been visualised is essential to the development of NTFP.

Though the scholarship on NTFP in India is in a nascent stage, there is enough work in other countries that throws some light on the issues raised above. The first question posed in this literature is concerning whether non-timber forest produce was in fact the main stay of the economy and whether its development can lead to the alleviation of poverty in tribal areas. The available scholarship suggests that more often than not the commercialisation of non-timber forest produce is less about poverty alleviation and more about basic survival. This means that non-timber forest produce usually bears out the shortfalls in income and do not necessarily provide a way of socio-economic advancement. Dependence on non-timber forest produce is significant amongst the most marginalised and the poorest of the poor and this reflects their economic, geographical and social isolation in the society. The question of what proportion non-timber forest produce forms of the total income is integrally linked to these factors and the type of land tenure which determine, not only forest rights but also other forms of tribal livelihoods. The discussion in this monograph tackles and bears out many of these propositions in the case of the new tribal states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

The second theme of importance in the debate, explicitly tackled by this monograph, is the question of the role of the state in managing forests and tribal development. Scholars and activists working on this question have largely assumed that state institutions have not worked

because of their excessive bureaucratisation and widespread inappropriate price setting. Apart from this state tenures also lead to illegal extraction and a situation that is more or less like an open access system in the wake of an inadequate institutional framework. The ways of removing these infirmities are by ensuring the withdrawal of the state from the trading of non-timber forest produce. However the alternative to state tenure is seen in two contradictory ways by different scholars: some people advocate customary tenures as one of the main alternatives, whereas others advocate the free-market or laissez faire market as a viable alternative. This monograph considers both these alternatives in the context of the current forestry reforms and also sees the implications of the demise of state capitalism in forestry for tribal livelihood. It attempts to answer the question of what the role of the state should be in the non-timber forest produce economy. It does this with the aim of intervening in the value chain of specific products so that tribals are able to have better control over the surplus generated by their own activities.

In short, this monograph essentially makes two methodological and theoretic points with regard to the interface of non-timber forest produce development with tribal livelihood, both of which are embedded within the socio-economic and power relations that define limits of the larger political economy. These relationships are characterised by the problem of unequal exchange in non-timber forest produce trade which is in turn symptomatic of the imbalance in the relationship of the local tribal economy with regional and national political economies. Thus in order to unravel the different layers of the political economy of tribal survival and its interface with forest management systems, an integrated framework of analysis is needed. Such an analysis should focus on the transformation of all social, political and economic relationships in the light of the larger systemic changes within the Central Indian region.

Land Tenures and the Mahajani System in Jharkhand

Tribal rights movements have been arguing for the restoration of land rights in forest areas. Studies on non-timber forest produce also show that land ownership and tenures have an important bearing on issues related to the interface between forest management and tribal

livelihoods. This section not only confirms this hypothesis but also shows how ownership of land and produce have an important bearing on the nature of forest rights, trade and use patterns in Central India. Two trends can be identified in the history of the land tenure systems in the Central Indian regions of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The first was the permanent settlement regime in eastern India which resulted in strengthening the hold of traders and moneylenders in the tribal economy. Non-timber forest produce formed an important part of this trade and facilitated the integration of the local tribal economy with the regional economy. The situation in Chhattisgarh was slightly different where another landholding pattern could be discerned. Here the government owned most of the forests and this facilitated the penetration of global industrial capital into forested areas. This displaced the local traders to some extent but resulted in the integration of tribal labour into the global capitalist system. The discussion that follows in the next two sections will see the evolution of these systems in the colonial period and analyse their implications for the post-colonial period.

The Chotanagpur plateau consisting of Ranchi, Palamu, Singhbhum, Manbhum and Hazaribagh districts formed part of the Bengal Division, which experienced British interventions since the late 18th century. It consisted of several tributary states and limited government-owned areas that were settled after the Permanent Settlement of 1793. However even after this period the estimates of the gross rentals, forest rights and revenues in the Chotanagpur region were not known in an authoritative fashion because a major portion of land and forest resources were owned by private persons. According to one estimate private persons owned 79% of the forests in these five districts till the early 20th century. Hunter's account of Bengal only corroborates this by recording that there were only 2 protected forests in the Manbhum district and some government estates in Palamu and Hazaribagh.[1] It is therefore not surprising that the emergence of a semi-feudal structure informed the production and exchange relations in both the agricultural and forest economies from the time of the land reclamation in woodlands.

Several scholars have recorded this process of reclamation and deforestation. K.S. Singh noted that the earliest deforestation for cultivation took place under the Raja of Chotanagpur who brought in

outsiders as *jagirdars* in the area. These people in turn gave estates to their relatives and creditors of the Raja, a considerable portion of whom lived peaceably with their tenants. But Singh notes that this was only possible because there was enough land for the Mundas to migrate into the hills.[2] At the same time Prabhu Mohapatra notes that the expansion of arable by the time of the late 19th century was uneven in character with Ranchi, Manbhum and Singhbhum experiencing vigorous expansion where as Hazaribagh and Palamu had reached a stagnation point. But even within this expansion process the nature of holdings remained under semi-feudatory character before survey operations were started in the 20th century.[3] Within this semi-feudatory system, Mohapatra notes, there were two types of trends. On the one hand there were the landlords' villages where the zamindars enjoyed all rights over wastelands and jungles and on the other hand there were the *khutkutti* villages, or villages where agricultural lands were held jointly by the founders of the villages. These founders paid nominal tributes to the zamindars and who also enjoyed exclusive rights over jungles and wastelands. There was also another system of rights over jungles called *Korkar* where ordinary rent paying tenants also had some customary usufruct rights in forests and the exclusive rights to reclaim wastelands.[4]

Subfeudation formed the basis of relative autonomy of control over forest and land resources by local institutions like tribal panchayats or headmen. The jungles of the Chotanagpur plateau were dominated by the *sal*, *asan*, *palas*, *mhowa* and *amla* trees, of which *sal* was the most prominent species. The main produce in mid 19th century was recorded as lac, silk, bee wax, *dhaura* or *sal* resin, leaves and roots. Of these flowers, leaves and roots were also used to supplement the diet of marginal and small cultivators. It also proved to be the sole food that people had in times of famine. Apart from this *mhowa* was used for making toddy and for ritualistic purposes.[5] It was also one of the most important local produces and was primarily collected by women and children. The zamindar owned virtually all the *mhowa* trees except the ones on the roadside. He in turn rented them out at the market price at which rice was selling. Estimates of *mhowa* yield show that a first class tree would yield 30 maunds of unprocessed *mhowa* in a season i.e., a daily fall of about 2 maunds in 15 days.

However, Hunter who recorded this evidence believed that this estimate was double of the actual amount that falls from a tree. The rent that is charged of the collectors depends on the forces of demand and supply. In Hazaribagh 2 or 3 small *mhowa* trees may come for a rupee where as in Manbhum one large tree may come for the same amount of money. The nature of rent in Manbhum may depend on the type of tree and may range from 4 annas to 2 or 3 rupees per tree. The saved crop can also vary much in price and can fetch from 2 to 8 maunds of *mhowa* per rupee, but mostly the exchange with the *mahajans* is in kind. They usually give 3-4 ser of rice and some salt for one maund of *mhowa*.[6]

One of the other important features of the permanent settlement areas was that the relatively autonomous control over local resources by village level institutions co-existed with powerful nexus between the contractors and the zamindars, who represented the state in these areas. For example *sal* logs were sent out of the area for construction of sleepers. Hunter records that trader of *sal* timber was controlled by the local *mahajans* who sold them to the forest department for a large profit. Officials often noted that the Government derived virtually no benefit from the forest sector, the major portion of which was appropriated by the *mahajan* who only paid a small royalty to the zamindar for the use of his land.[7] The *mahajani* system was dominant in the trading of lac and silk cocoons also as it yielded high profits even though their propagation was a labour intensive task which required a high degree of knowledge and competence. The tussar silk cocoon of Hazaribagh, Manbhum and Lohardaga was reared on the *asan* tree and its eggs were collected from the jungle and hatched either in the growers house or in specially erected huts in the jungle. The system of taxes on the silk propagators differed from region to region. In Manbhum every silk cocoon rearer paid Rs. 2 or 3 to the landlord. It is estimated that the landlord collected 300 pounds a year from such rent and the annual estimated produce was about 750 maunds from 1000 acres of land.[8] In Lohardaga, the silk growers paid three types of taxes. *Khutkar* or the rent demanded by the proprietor of the land on which farmer propagated the silk. Then there was the *patkar* or the revenue paid by the farmer of the cocoon to the government. The third type of tax was known as the *hansua* or the

sickle tax which was levied on each person who lived in the plantation where cocoon rearing took place and which usually took the form of a royalty of Rs. 5 per person. The settlement officer of Palamu division reveals that that there were 2000 *hansuas* in the division resulting in 3,140 cocoons or 3,190 maunds of silk yarn. In Hazaribagh on the other hand the silk growers paid 6-8 annas to the zamindar and the area on which silk was reared was not more than 30 square miles with not more than 5 to 6 *asan* trees in an acre.[9]

While on the one hand the system of taxation varied from one region to the next, the dynamics of the trading was almost the same in every region. In most cases there was a nexus between the money-lenders and many times the trader was also the '*sahukar*' or the moneylender. In Manbhum middlemen paid Santhals, Bhumijs, Kharias, Paharias and other lower caste people to rear cocoons. These cocoons were sold at the price of 213 cocoons to a rupee and were then exported to Bengal. In 1871 the silk exports were estimated at 10,000 pounds.[10] In Lohardaga district the cocoons were sold to the traders for Rs. 5 to 7 per maund and exported to Mirzapur, Benaras, and Patna. In Hazaribagh the middlemen supported the silk growers who were mostly Santhals, Kurmis or Goalas while they were watching the cocoons in the forest. Consequently the growers were obliged to sell their cocoons to these middlemen at the rate of Rs. 5 or 6 for 1,680 cocoons. The *banias* in turn sold these cocoons to the *mahajans* for Rs. 5 for 1,330 cocoons. The cocoons were then exported to Burdwan or Gaya at the price of Rs. 15 per 1,000. They were also sold to the *tanti banias* at the rate of Rs. 5 for 80 cocoons. The *tanti banias* are weavers who take out the thread from the cocoons and weave them into small pieces of silk and then they sell the pieces of silk to the *mahajans* at Rs. 8 and 8 annas.[11] The value addition to the cocoons was mostly at the level of small towns and urban cities. There was hardly any export of silk cloth from the region and most of the weavers sold their cloth in urban areas or in local *haats* through the *mahajans*. As in the case of silk, some small manufacturing units in the urban centres of the region also did value addition to lac (i.e. the preparation of lac dyes and stick lac).[12] Ranchi, the capital of Chotanagpur was a regional centre for the collection of lac. The *mahajans* brought lac from the Central Provinces and it was then processed in the Ranchi

Lac Factory before stick lac was exported out of the region.[13] But whatever the variations in the system of exchange and value chains, the *mahajani* system occupied a central position in the tribal areas of colonial Bihar. Further it was not only confined to the non-timber forest produce trade, but was also evident in agriculture and other spheres of life.

Scholars also document the fact that most of these *mahajans* were outsiders or *dikus* who accentuated the conflict between them and the tribals. The sharp contradictions and differentiation between the locals and *dikus* also underlined the class contradictions in Jharkhandi society.[14] This conflict took the form of various uprisings that have also been well documented in the past by several scholars.[15] In this sense the non-timber forest produce system was part of the larger agrarian system which was based on semi-feudal exploitation. By the time the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act came into operation in the early 20th century most of the tribals had already been pushed into marginal tracts and were at least partially dependent on forests for their livelihood since the productivity was low from their lands. In forestry too, attempts were made to acquire private forests and enact a Private Forest Bill, but these attempts failed quite badly. At best the zamindari forests could be administered under Section 38 of the Indian Forest Act.[16] This did not happen because of Jharkhand's rich mineral strength; the European managing agencies concentrated on trade in coal, mica, and iron ore and did not penetrate the trade of non-timber forest produce. For this reason there was some amount of co-existence between local exchange and value addition with the use and trading networks at the regional and global levels. The relationships of exchange and production determined their livelihood systems and made them totally dependent on the moneylender and trader for their survival.

Forest Produce and Capitalism in Chhattisgarh

State ownership and management of forest produce is not a new phenomenon in India and has been a legacy of the colonial rule. One such example of state control of forest produce lies in the history of undivided Madhya Pradesh, of which the new tribal state of Chhattisgarh formed an important part. While the zamindari areas in Chhattisgarh were confined to inaccessible parts of the highlands, the government

owned most other areas with rich *sal* and teak forests. The annexation of the provinces in the mid nineteenth century led to a debate on the nature of land settlements to be done in the Central Provinces. This debate reviewed the permanent settlement experience of Bengal and Orissa and decided that Munro's ryotwari settlements were more appropriate for these Provinces. Here private property rights were given to farmers who in turn paid a rent to the state for the use of the land. This meant that the state was the owner of all lands and had the right to collect rents from them. By the same measure the state also declared itself the proprietor of all forestlands by enacting the Forest Act of 1865. Henceforth the forest department of the British government would be directly responsible for the settlement of rights and management of forests. By the late 19th century it was clear that there was little forestland under private control and most of the forests were being either worked for timber or for *nistari* purposes.

Scholars of forest history in Central India have often argued that colonial forestry, or 'scientific forestry' as it was called, concentrated more on timber and less on produce that was used by local people in their daily life. The railways has always been defined as a turning point in the history of forestry in India as timber was harvested and sent to the factories that produced railway sleepers. Because of this the colonial programme of modern forestry was more bothered about timber and less about the forest diversity on which local livelihoods were integrally dependent. Under this mode of forest use the tribals lost their rights, and their use patterns and knowledge were marginalised as foresters preferred to look at the forests as an 'economic resource' and not as a living system that was essential for all aspects of the life of tribal people. This clash of visions reflected the differences between tribal cultures and perceptions and those of the foresters and was responsible for the neglect of non-timber forest produce in the colonial forestry programme.

But a closer inquiry into priorities of the colonial government in the forest sector show that this was not really true and two interrelated developments in mid 19th century had forced the colonial regime to intervene in harvesting and managing of non-timber forest produce. The first was the rise in global prices and demand for selected non-timber forest produce especially lac, dying and tanning agents. The

second was the need to maximise revenue through the incorporation of the household economy within the system of colonial forestry. This was done by the recognition and the reordering of customary rights of peasant communities in forests. The resultant *nistari* settlements of the 1930s were an attempt to extract revenue from forests that were not rich in timber resources.[17] Thus the working of the forests was driven by the need to maximise revenue from all forests and this necessitated the incorporation of village level institutions, local use patterns and knowledge within the colonial system. Trade in and propagation of non-timber forest produce in Chhattisgarh was one such example of the integration and modification of local tribal economies within the world capitalist system.

Within this framework the colonists attempted to try out several systems to manage local rights. Of these the commutation system was considered the most viable option. Under this system the unit of assessment would be the household. Each household was to make a small annual contribution to the government and in return earned the right to pick firewood and grass, but purely for household needs. Of course, the officials termed even this as a privilege, thus denying the household all its customary rights.[18] In this sense the provincial forest policy followed Baden-Powell's conventional position that recognised custom as a privilege and not a right that the local people could demand. At the same time Brandis's philosophy of recognising that local demands were crucial to the survival of colonial control over forested areas was also acknowledged under the commutation system.[19] The most ambiguous part of the commutation system related to the definition of 'household needs'. In Chanda the district administration held that every village would be assessed at two annas per household. This fixed rate would apply to the extraction of firewood and charcoal. In other words the people were allowed to take firewood, fuel and charcoal worth two annas. Other produce like *mhowa*, lac and *harra* were fixed at a rate of three annas and an equivalent amount of this produce could be collected by households who chose to pay this sum.[20] Only firewood and fuel were considered essential for household needs and therefore were fixed at a lower rate than other minor forest produce. This meant that other produce like ritual food e.g. liquor, *harra* and *mhowa* was considered a luxury. Within this limited view, officials

assumed that the needs of every household were similar and that the consumption followed a uniform pattern - both in terms of quantity and the kind of produce consumed. Whether the household contained 4 or 8 people, they were only entitled to 2 annas worth of fuel and firewood. A *chaukidar* or a *nakadar* would check the quantity taken out of the forest. By defining needs in this manner the state sought to regulate local practice by using the considerations of demand and supply and balancing them against the working and regeneration of forest produce so that long-term advantages could be drawn out of it. In the same period grazing rights were also specified in forests. Before the 1880s grazing was done in 'village forests' as 'reserved forests' were closed for this purpose. After the 1890s a new system was worked out for the regulation of grazing rights. In the working plans of 1890-97 all forest ranges were divided into blocs, each of which was systematically open to grazing. Grazing was a seasonal activity for groups like the Banjaras, but for those who formulated the working plans, the cycle of tree regeneration seemed to be more important than the cycle of peasant subsistence. Grazing was permitted in the forest for the removal of excess grass or the loosening of the soil to facilitate tree growth. If a circle had a lot of grass or lacked trees of commercial value it was declared to be a grazing circle. But such a circle was also open to graziers for only 10-15 years as efforts were made to regenerate these lands for long-term gains.[21] Thus we see that household use was redefined and local people were incorporated into the system of colonial exploitation through a system of direct control which aimed at eliminating the trader.

The best example of the elimination of the small trader is seen in the relationship between tribal livelihood systems, the propagation of lac and industrial capitalism in the forests of the Central Provinces.[22] The first evidence of rising international demand for non-timber forest produce was seen in the rising prices of lac that had many industrial uses and was in great demand in America, England and Germany and the exported lac was often converted into shellac in these countries in the 19th century.[23] The initial attempts to modify the ways in which lac was propagated failed in the Central Provinces. The government noted that since the Province was not capable of yielding lac of real value it was not worthwhile for the government to take up lac cultivation on its

own. Therefore it was considered better if private agencies and contractors were given the right to propagate lac.[24] The firms and managing agencies had to incorporate the local methods of lac propagation in their extraction of lac for export. In 1875 the government debated whether it should grant Messrs. Jardine and Skinner, an international managing agency, a contract for lac propagation in the Loisinga and Barapahar forests of Sambalpur. The District Commissioner of Sambalpur, Bowie reasoned that,

> The propagation of lac is only carried on by Gonds, Binjiwars and other jungle tribes who are poor and always require advances to survive. While they propagate lac the government can only give advances if it has the lease of the jungle. By taking a royalty, the interests of the government and the firm will be kept identical.[25]

This official assertion of the compatibility between Gond, official and industrial interests was one of the first steps towards the inclusion of Binjiwars into the world market. The royalty and advance were indicative of the presence of the European agencies in the forest economy.[26]

By 1919 the colonial government claimed that the methods used by the tribal people were inefficient for mass propagation. R.S. Troup contended that the methods of local lac propagation were inadequate in at least two ways: the expense involved in searching for the lac bearing shoots and large quantities of lac are lost due to the time taken to collect lac.[27] Troup carried out lac experiments to see the extent to which these disadvantages could be minimised at the Forest Research Institute. But as Troup pointed out these experiments led to no conclusive results in the techniques for propagating lac significantly. Troup held that the ambivalent results were due to the experiments carried out in the lower Shivaliks, a region distinctly unsuitable for lac cultivation. However he suggested some conditions under which lac cultivation could be carried out more effectively. The annual pollarding of lac trees, the growth of trees in an open position and the need for thinning trees more regularly were identified as some of the desirable steps to be undertaken.[28] While these experiments were being carried

out the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces proposed that,

> It would be better if the lac was produced without human aid and the only labour used was for collecting it for then labour would make its bargain before entering the forest. The fact is that the lac produced by the Bhumia whose work it has been for generations and the present system of leasing works very badly as far as they are concerned, only tying them down to one purchaser.... To remove the defects it is essential that the producer has a right to produce in the open market to get a better price..... But free trade can only be granted in two, ways: (1) By making the producer pay a certain sum on the quantity produced or the number of trees used, (2) To give passes to each producer to collect lac from its jungles.[29]

The Commissioner proposed the introduction of machinery in lac cultivation. He felt that by introducing technological innovations in forests the production of lac could increase and the production process made efficient. This would save the effort of watching lac throughout the season, and confine their labour to the collecting process. He refuted the proposition that employment opportunities of the Binjiwars and Gonds would be affected if this happened and instead stated that the measure would help tribal lac collectors to strike a better bargain with the representatives of managing agencies. In order to maximise production and assess the value of lac several government sponsored experiments were carried out in the early 20th century. Several techniques were tried to improve the quality of the seeds, minimise labour required and reduce the injury to trees. But the reported failure of all efforts, (according to the special lac officer), proved that the methods used by forest dwellers and the peasants were more effective.[30] This prompted European managers to incorporate local techniques for lac propagation within their own system of collection and production. The efforts to mechanise the propagation of lac were confined to rearing the cocoon and not to the collection of produce. An attempt was made to increase the productivity of lac cocoons by improving the propagation methods of lac. One of the main reasons for this was the need for the continuous and rapid supply of lac and shellac to the European industry in the inter-war period. It also saw a significant difference in the nature of trade. While in the 19th century

significant amounts of shellac was being produced outside the country, in the pre and inter war period some shellac producing units came up in urban areas on the hinterland. For example the Divisional Forest Officer of Bilaspur Division noted that a button and shellac company had been established in Champa by a European firm to reduce the charges of the middleman and save on freight carriage to Europe.[31] By the 1940s there were 35 shelllac factories in Chhattisgarh that produced 16 per cent of the lac in the entire country.[32]

The influx of European capital in lac provided the tribals with seasonal employment in the forest areas and helped to create labour opportunities for the Bhumias and Gonds who started working or managing agencies like Jardine and Skinner.[33] The adverse first impact of this was seen on the inter-linkages between the artisan and the forest dwellers. The forest dweller started supplying lac to the agents of the European firm instead of the artisan. The leasing system created monopolies of managing firms over forests and labour, pushing out smaller lac artisans from the market. It also put tribal lac collectors at the mercy of European capitalist firms whose main interest lay in using cheap labour to propagate lac and export it. In this context the main failure of the lac experiments lay in the inability to develop the conditions of their successful conclusion without incurring a substantial cost. Therefore the effort to introduce new technologies in lac production needed to be grounded in the willingness of the managing agencies to incur some infrastructural cost to induce their success.

From the discussion above it is clear that non-timber forest produce was used as an entry point for initiating a process of selective integration of local society into the colonial and the global capitalist system. This process of integration unleashed two trends. The first was one where substitution of forest produce took place in industrial processes. The most prominent example of this was the dyeing industry of the Province where many natural dyeing methods were replaced by chemical dyes for foreign cotton and synthetic fabric. This led to a certain amount of deindustrialisation within the local economy as pointed out by Tirthankar Roy. Another trend was the incorporation of local artisans into the Imperial system of taxation and production as seen in the case of the Agarias of the Central Provinces. These variegated trends however

underlined one common tendency, i.e., the manipulation of local conditions to meet the needs of the world capitalist system through the colonial machinery. This common thread in colonial policy was true of both Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and showed that the differentiated impact of colonialism was itself a manifestation of a larger process of exploitation. At the core of this process lay the unequal trade and economic relations between the metropolitan country and the colony. This was also reflected in the relationship between tribal and non-tribal areas as well as between the plains and highlands.

Within this broad framework, the Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh societies developed in divergent directions as far as the tribal livelihood systems were concerned. By the end of the colonial rule, Jharkhand and other zamindari areas in Chhattisgarh like Kawardha and Bastar saw the strengthening of the semi-feudal relations within the tribal forest economy. This meant that the tribal economy was subordinated to the *mahajan* and *sahukar* and embedded in a semi-primordial feudal system. In contrast, the influx of large industry was much greater in forests owned by the colonial government of the Central Provinces. This resulted in the greater incorporation of tribals into the national and world capitalist system. In both cases, however, the productive potential of the tribal economy was severely damaged and this trend continued in the post colonial period. Thus the tribal economies formed enclaves of capitalist and semi-feudal underdevelopment whose penury was accentuated with their integration into the larger imperial system.

Tribal Livelihood in an Era of State Capitalism

The case against state monopoly control over forests was first made by neo-Gandhian environmental and tribal movements who have been arguing that local people are intrinsically dependent on these resources for their livelihood and thus have the greatest interest in protecting and conserving these resources. They point out that local tradition, knowledge and histories provided enough evidence about the interface between the every-day needs of tribal people, and income from non-timber forest produce formed a significant part of the tribal income. This dependence, in turn, translated into a conservation system guided by customary rules and institutions, and essentially informal and decentralised in character. This was in sharp contrast with the

goals of the modern conservation system, which was centralised in character and represented the interests of large industry in both the colonial as well as post-colonial periods. This 'industrial mode of forest use' focuses less on the harnessing of non-timber forest produce and more on the exploitation of forests for timber because large industrial houses demand wood for fuel and raw material. It is therefore natural for post-colonial forestry to raise plantations of fast growing species and regenerating forests for timber. This forestry regime not only has a devastating impact on the biodiversity of the region, but also follows a strict rights regime to ensure that peoples access to forests is limited and controlled. This results in the marginalisation of people's rights (especially tribal rights) over their own resources and leads to the destruction of their livelihood systems and accentuates the conflict between the people and the state. The advocates of this position were vociferous in their opposition to the state and argued that communities should be given autonomous control over their own resources, and local interests and their resources should be protected from commercial exploitation.

The logical conclusion of this argument was that the state had no place in the conservation of forest resources and autonomous community control was the only institutional arrangement under which the process of deforestation could be reversed. The colonial legacy of state control over forests was strengthened in the immediate post-colonial period. The administration of tribal areas saw the imposition of a uniform system of governance in all states with the abolition of zamindaris in India. All private and zamindari forests were put under direct state control in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh under this system. Henceforth forest conservation and harvesting of forest produce from tribal areas was done with the aim of contributing to the construction of a strong nation. This nation building process required that India developed a strong industrial base and strengthened its food security through the expansion of permanent cultivation.

In 1952 the first forest policy statement of Independent India reflected these concerns when it stated that the needs of "forest conservation" had to be subordinated to the larger objective of "industrialisation". In terms of tribal development however, the post-independence policy was quite contradictory and ambiguous. While it

created the monopoly control of the state over land and forest resources, it also created some autonomous spaces of development in the tribal areas. At the dawn of Independence these areas were included in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution after much discussion. These autonomous regions were under the direct administration of the Government and some development agencies were set up for carrying out the integrated social and economic development of these societies.[34] But instead of providing access to resources and developing the production capacity of tribal economies, the nation-builders sought to transform and modernise the tribal people through a slow and protective process that relied on welfare measures as its main instrument.

However it is important to note that these measures were not sufficient to solve the fundamental problems of tribal development as the pattern of industrialisation undertaken in this period only accentuated the unequal relations between the tribal and the mainstream national and regional economy. All minerals and forestlands were acquired and managed by the State in both these provinces after the abolition of zamindaris in Independent India. Till the mid 1970s, the emphasis of the post-colonial forest department was on the raising of plantations for industrial purposes. Natural forests were converted into plantations for timber wood and farm forestry projects also encouraged fast growing and commercially viable timber species. But non-timber forest produce was not entirely ignored in this period and the forest department harvested them from forests in order to auction the produce. Till the 1960s most of this produce was harvested by contractors who paid a royalty to the government. But by the 1960s several commercially important produce like *sal* seeds, *tendu* leaves, *harra* flowers and *karaya* gum were nationalised by several state governments like Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The monopoly and sale of these products served the interests of the big business with in the country. Some examples of the ways in which such monopoly trade worked till the 1980s are given below. The state monopoly over trading of produce ensured that conservation aims were in line with the needs of industries. In both Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, state monopolies were set up for non-timber forest produce trade for nationalised produce like *tendu* leaves, *sal* seeds, *karaya* gum and *harra*. The rest of the non-timber forest produce trade was in the hands of middlemen and this position

continues till today. In the 1960s the Government of Madhya Pradesh enacted laws that control the trade of minor forest produce. The *Madhya Pradesh Tendu Patta (Vyapar Viniyam) Adhiniyam*, 1964 created a monopoly over the trade of *tendu* leaves and the state decided who should be the agents for affecting this sale. These agents paid a royalty to the government and gave dues to the primary collectors who they exploited thoroughly. Instead of eliminating the trader through this nationalisation, the system ended up creating its own middlemen. The appointed agents not only paid the collectors low wages but also cheated the state by carrying on illegal trade. The agents appointed by the government sold their produce to LAMPS or MARKFED and paid a lump sum to government. This system prevailed till the first decade of the 1980s, and although the government managed to secure its own revenue under this system, it failed to protect the interests of the *tendu* leaf gatherers.

Seeing this the government sought to replace the middlemen with the view of benefiting gatherers. In 1984 the Madhya Pradesh government set up the Madhya Pradesh State Minor Forest Produce (Trading and Development) Co-operative Federation which brought the produce directly from LAMPS and MARKFED. But traders once again outdid the federation by bidding for areas contiguous to the MARKFED areas and facilitating illegal packing of *tendu* leaves. Thus a decision was taken to form primary collectors co-operatives under the federation in 1988. It was felt that this would ensure that the small trader or the *kochiya* would be eliminated from at least the trade of nationalised non-timber forest produce. The system set up a three-tier mechanism of the primary forest produce co-operative societies whose members are the produce collectors, district forest produce unions headed by the district collector and the state level federation. Each society and union were allotted commission rates on the amount they sold and subsequently the federation sold the produce to industry. Apart from nationalised produce like *tendu patta*, *sal* seed, *harra* and others, non-nationalised produce like tamarind, *amla* and honey was also bought by the MFPCF that was composed of many primary production and collection societies. An order of the Madhya Pradesh Government also held that 100% of the profits from non-timber forest produce trade would be repatriated to the village. Of this 50% would go to the collector, 20% towards the regeneration

of forests and the rest towards village infrastructure.[35] But this scheme was only for the proceeds of nationalised produce over which the state has some control. While there have been efforts to stream line the management of non-nationalised forest produce, these have not been very successful. Studies on the working of these co-operatives have showed that they did not reflect the interests of the poorest produce collectors.[36]

In Madhya Pradesh officials noted that the exploitation of tribal labour was immense before nationalisation of produce. Here the managing agencies were replaced by contractors under the pre-1969 regime and the primary collectors did not get even a living wage through collection of produce. For example the *tendu patta* collection only gave 30 days of work in one season. The contractors paid the labourer Rs. 80 for collecting 50,000 leaves and one labourer could pick 3000-5000 leaves a day.[37] This meant the seasonal income of the labourer could be Rs. 200-240 in one season and even if two people worked in one family than they would only make a seasonal income of Rs. 500. This was coupled with the lack of other employment opportunities that also included the sale of fuel wood and fodder to peasants. This function was also taken over by contractors and the forest department who had depots for selling fuel wood. In Jharkhand too there are instances to show that the incidence of indebtedness of the tribal people increased in this period. Amit Prakash notes the serious threats to land tenure security in this period as the amount of secured loans by moneylenders increased considerably between 1960s and the 1980s.[38]

As far as non-nationalised produce was concerned, a similar act titled *Madhya Pradesh Vanupaj (Vyapar Viniyam) Adhiniyam* was formulated in 1969. The Act gave the government the right to collect royalty and determine the agents for sale and distribution of minor forest produce to industry.[39] For example the *mhowa* seed was squeezed for oil which was sold by *sahukars* to soap and medicine making companies. Similarly *tendu* leaves were sold to bidi-making industries and *amla* was sold to companies like Dabur, Baidyanath, and Maharshi Ayurved as raw materials.[40] Similar laws were enacted in the 1970s in Bihar such as the Bihar *Tendu* Leaf (Regulation of Trade) Act, 1973 and Bihar Forest Produce (Regulation of Trade) Act, 1984. In case of Bihar the colonial system of extraction was left

in the initial decades after independence and this only increased the indebtedness of the tribal cultivators and collectors.

As is evident from this system, the entrenchment of the traders in the trade of non-timber forest produce is a result of the dearth of basic amenities in the tribal areas. The lack of knowledge and access to market is often the guiding factor of the collectors dependence on the small trader. Studies of specific areas have noted that the collectors preferred to sell their produce to the small traders because it eased their burden and they did not have to carry the produce for long distances. These traders also met the small credit needs of collectors who often sold their produce in advance in return for money which they needed to buy their daily provisions. The *sahukars* or the small traders in turn got an advance from the big traders in the town in order to buy the produce from the *haat*-bazaars.[41] Thus the terms of trade in the *haat*-bazaar were governed by the lack of rural credit, price control and basic communication facilities in these tribal areas. For example if we take the case of Chhattisgarh we find that most tribal districts like Bastar and Sarguja only had 1½ kilometres of rural roads per village and 21 km of metalled roads per 100 kilometres in 1996.[42] In Bastar most of these metalled roads comprised of the state and national highway which ran from Raipur to Vishakhapatnam. Activists also feel that highways and the road network were strengthened in most of these areas to facilitate the exploitation of mineral and forest resources in these areas. The lack of communications is reflected in the conditions of living of the tribal people of these states. Below we give the status of living conditions in the undivided states of Bihar and MP in 1991:

State	Total Percentages of STs with (1991) (Rural figures in brackets)			Percentages of STs Without These (1991)
	Safe Drinking Water	Toilets	Electricity	
Bihar	31.17 (29.68)	3.33 (0.97)	5.94 (2.9)	65.85
Madhya Pradesh	42.12 (40.75)	2.21 (1.14)	28.49 (27.51)	44.58

Source: *India Human Development Report 2001*, Planning Commission, New Delhi, pp.172-179.

This abysmal state of affairs is also reflected in the income and employment opportunities for the tribals in these areas arising out of the lack of surplus and limited nature of purchasing power of the people. For example two thirds of the income of tribal people in MP and Bihar was spent on purchasing food.[43] The rest went in purchasing essential goods such as clothes, soap, and other household articles. This means that these economies had little or no surplus to invest in any productive work or even in competitive trading in non-timber forest produce. Instead they are forced to do distress selling of their produce and collect the minimum collection price, getting reduced to providers of cheap labour and raw materials. The relationship of unequal exchange was accentuated and structured through a centralised forest management system that created its own set of intermediaries before the late 1980s.

The Era of Participatory and Joint Forest Management

The early 1980s saw the defense of customary institutions as the natural protectors of the forest by both environmental scholars and activists. Many of these arguements were a result of the documentation of movements like Chipko. Such work ensured that the ideology of the Indian environmental movement had enough historical backing and legitimacy to gloss over the inequities that were inherent in traditional structures. The stage was thus set for the debate over community versus state control over forests. The debate gathered steam by the late 1980s with the National Forest Policy of 1988 whose main aim was to ensure the ecological security of the nation along with its economic security for local people. One of the other significant features of this policy was its stress on local participation in forest conservation : a principle that cleared the way for the Joint Forest Management (JFM) resolutions of 1990.

But this shift in policy was preceded by the Arabari initiative in West Bengal where the Left Front government started its informal experiment in decentralised participatory forest management. The experiment was based on the experience that no sylvi-cultural operations could be successful in forests without the co-operation of local people. Realising this the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the region, A. K. Banerjee, started motivating people to help in the natural

regeneration of *sal* in the Arabari Range. The officer took over 1,272 hectares of forests for rehabilitation and promised productive employment to the local people through engagement in the process of regeneration. It also grew fuel-wood for people and gave it to them at cost price and worked out a system of rotational grazing. Above all, it allowed people to grow paddy on forestlands (and sell it at cost price to those who were maintaining the forests) in 700 hectares that were demarcated for the regeneration of natural degraded *sal* and acacia trees. In the end, it was promised that the local communities would get 25% of the net produce if the scheme succeeded.

The first fifteen years of the West Bengal project were rooted in an attitudinal change and a feeling of mutual trust between the forest department and the local people. By 1987, the Left Front government of West Bengal had begun to recognise this as a viable method of forest regeneration, and passed orders that formalised the benefit sharing mechanism between the forest department and the village communities. The impact of the initial experiments was very good and it was noted in later studies that the lost biodiversity of the region was beginning to regenerate, and that the benefits received from non-timber forest produce harvesting were increasing.[44] It is important to remember that these efforts were preceded by a whole process of social engineering, democratisation of local institutions and land reforms that had already led to some amount of empowerment of the rural poor and facilitated the institutionalisation of participatory forestry systems in the early 1980s. Though the protection committees were village level committees, many of the funds to them were channeled through the Zila Parishad and Panchayats, thus involving the local government in the programme. For fifteen years before the Ford Foundation finally stepped in with an evaluation report, Arabari followed the informal agreements between the foresters and the local population. And this arrangement was not only true of Arabari, for DFOs in other parts of the state also began to emulate Arabari and it came to be known as the Joint Forest Management (JFM) experiment. This initiative was unique and was introduced under specific conditions where the area had already come under the influence of progressive social and political movements.

By 1990 the Government of India had accepted it as a viable strategy for forest conservation and set out the guidelines for the implementation of JFM. Fifteen states had begun to issue guidelines and implement the programme in their areas by the year 1995 and JFM became a norm rather than an exception in forestry management. The forest protection committees that were formed as a result of these guidelines had the forest guard as their secretary. They performed the policing functions that the forest department had earlier been performing. The introduction of JFM was a departure from the social forestry practices of the 1970s and 1980s that were meant to generate employment and restore the depleting forest cover within the country. To this end externally aided projects were let into the sector to facilitate the participation of people in the forestry sector. However the nature of forestry remained much the same that the foresters had followed in the colonial times. Plantation forests were created for industrially and commercially viable species through the participation of farming and school communities. In Jharkhand for example there was a big SIDA assisted project from 1985-92. Here village protection committees were formed to do plantations and farm forestry along with protecting degraded forested tracts.[45] But the system of management remained much the same as before as the forest department prescribed the technology and harvested all the benefits from the forests. What is significant about these developments is that the state monopoly over non-timber forest produce only tightened in the 1980s when these programmes were introduced.[46]

This changed with the Government of India Resolution of 1990 which saw the adoption of JFM at an all India level. The shift in policy was propelled by the beginning of economic liberalisation in India with the express aim of cutting state spending and investments. This also signaled the advent of different donor agencies in funding the implementation of sectoral reforms. In the 1990s the JFM programme was a part of such long-term reforms of the forestry sector and attracted huge amounts of funding. Such funding rested on a firm critique of the role of the state in this sector and was exemplified by the World Bank

Strategy of 1991 which clearly outlined the weaknesses in the following manner:

- The forestry sector in India was ridden with externalities that interfered with market forces with a potential to bring about socially desired outcomes.
- Strong incentives to cut trees.
- Weak property rights in many forestry and wooded areas.
- Inappropriate government policies particularly concession arrangements.

In order to remove these deficits the Bank sought an environment where global externalities could be internalised locally and where the efforts of governments and international organisations could be co-ordinated effectively. This meant that legal reforms were to be carried out to ensure that market forces could begin operating in a proper manner. At the same time these measures were couched in ideological radical terminology that helped to justify them in the name of decentralisation. For example the second phase of the Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management Project called for a "Community Driven Development" approach, where the community would be empowered to take all decisions for protecting and developing the forests; and harvesting and distribution of the harvest.

In this context, JFM was introduced in 15 states of India including undivided Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in 1990 and was a part of this larger process.[47] By 1996 there was a total of 1,652 Village Forest Protection Committees in undivided Bihar protecting 0.72 million hectares of forestland. But this formed only a quarter of the entire forested area in Bihar and out of this about three fourths lies in the present day state of Jharkhand. In Madhya Pradesh too, the situation was somewhat similar. About 50% of the forest and village forest protection committees were in present day Chhattisgarh in 1998. The total number of committees was about 8,301 in 1998.[48] The first positive impact of these committees was meant to be on the forest cover of these regions. The JFM decentralised forest protection and

gave the responsibility of forest protection to the local committees in degraded forestlands and hoped that community pressures would work to ensure that the natural regeneration of forests was allowed. Therefore it is worth looking at the nature of the forest cover in these states before and after the introduction of JFM. In the tables given below we look at the changing nature of forest cover in these two states and in India as a whole and in terms of its degradation.

Details of Forest Cover

Year	Recorded Forest Cover (m hectares)			Actual Forest Cover (m hectares)		
	Bihar	MP	India	Bihar	MP	India
1985-87	2.92	15.54	75.78	2.69	13.32	64.01
1987-89	2.92	15.54	77.01	2.67	13.58	63.92
1989-91	2.92	15.54	77.01	2.66	13.54	64.01
1991-93	2.92	15.54	76.52	2.66	13.52	63.96
1993-95	2.92	15.54	76.52	2.65	13.12	63.34

Source: Fifth Citizens Report, CSE, pp 60-63.

Details of Nature of Forest Cover

Year	Dense Forest Cover (m hectares)			Open Forest Cover (m hectares)			Scrub Forest Cover (m hectares)		
	Bihar	MP	India	Bihar	MP	India	Bihar	MP	India
1987-89	1.33	9.54	38.50	0.89	4.04	25.00	0.07	0.011	5.96
1991-93	1.33	9.52	38.58	0.84	4.00	24.93	0.06	0.008	6.05
1993-95	1.33	8.37	36.73	0.83	4.85	26.13	0.06	0.008	5.72

Source: Fifth Citizens Report, CSE, pp.64-65 & 67.

The tables show that there is hardly any change in the nature of forest cover in the undivided states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh of

which a significant portion lay in the Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh areas. The figures between 1985 (after the introduction of the social forestry programme) and 1995 (four years after the operationalisation of the JFM committees) show only marginal trends in the changes in the overall forest cover.[49] What is surprising is that there seems to have been a slight decline in the actual forest cover of these states after 1991. Again significantly the rate of this decline seems to have been marginally higher in MP than in Bihar. This is also seen in the changing nature of forest cover in these states. It is important to note that there was a decline in the dense forest cover and increase in the open forest cover of both the states. Since JFM was mainly meant to lead to the conservation and regeneration of degraded forest areas this aim seems to have failed in these states. What is especially important is that this decline seems to have increased marginally between 1993-95, i.e., five years after the notification of JFM in these states. Another important indicator of this failure was the loss of forest cover in tribal districts.[50]

The JFM was also meant to make forest administration and conservation programmes more people oriented. It was hoped that centralised forest departments would become more transparent and change their attitude towards local people, knowledge and their customs. However these hopes were belied after the first few years as the design of the programme in fact promoted its demise in areas where the conditions for its introduction were not ripe. The structure of the forest department and laws governing the sector remained largely the same; only the attitude of individual foresters underwent a change. The most radical change was noted in the case of West Bengal, where the administration was under the influence of the Left Front government, and where the programme had been started as an unconventional system of forest conservation. This change is noted by almost all field studies of the West Bengal programme, i.e., that a major reason for the change was the prevailing socio-economic climate of the state, where there was a political commitment to make the bureaucracy more accountable to the people. Beat officers and local officials were forced to go and negotiate with local people and institutions rather than dictate to them. In other cases the situation was different from this, as forest officers tended to impose pre-determined conditions on the communities rather than formalise an already existing informal system.[51]

Thus, groups mediating between the forest department and the local people felt that the programme was one where there was decentralisation of policing, and centralisation of decision-making especially in aspects like choice of species, how the funds are to be spent, and benefit sharing. In all states, including West Bengal, the government cornered a majority of the benefits of JFM, thus in short changing the Forest Protection Committee. The system became socially and politically unviable in areas where there were no social movements to protect the Forest Protection Committee, and bargain for a fair deal for them . This was especially true in cases where the programme was introduced as a way of meeting the establishment costs of the forest department through externally aided projects. Many studies have shown that the amount spent on infrastructure and establishments was a significant part of the project. For example, Samata, an organisation based in Vishakhapatnam, noted that the amount of money passed down to the people for the regeneration of forests has been quite disproportionate to the rest of the expenditure. This reveals a lack of seriousness in the implementation of JFM.[52]

The advent of these projects at the threshold of economic reforms is itself indicative of the fact that state governments had started looking for alternative methods to sustain their departments. This led to their dependence on funds from externally funded projects that have acted like catalysts in the opening up of the forest sector. This analysis has also been true of externally aided projects in other states like Madhya Pradesh, which have received the largest amount of aid for the forest sector. In this situation the introduction of Joint Forest Management and other such programmes have actually led to the disempowerment of groups that had spontaneously tried to protect and regenerate forests. Several organisations like the Ekta Parishad, Kisan Adivasi Sangathan and Adivasi Mukti Morcha have been making this point in Central India. In a report of the Joint Mission on the Madhya Pradesh Forestry Project, some representatives of movements opposing the process of globalisation stressed that there was an urgent need to review and rethink the project.[53]

Their main suspicion was that the JFM programmes and the devolution of power were more a way of privatising forest management than providing any real powers to local institutions. The replacement of spontaneous efforts of forest protection by state programmes that are superimposed on the people are evident in the example of the *van* panchayats of Uttaranchal, formed under a 1931 Act. The Act empowered the village communities to make their own decisions regarding forest use. Studies have shown that many of these *van* panchayats used customary rules to regulate access to forests and enjoyed some autonomous control over their own resources. These were mostly informal arrangements that had the tacit support of the forest department and the Gram Sabha. According to recent forest department estimates, there are 6,069 *van* panchayats protecting 4,05,426 hectares of forestland; but their authority has been weakened by many developments in the post-colonial era. *Van* panchayat rules were changed in 1976 after the introduction of the social forestry programme, and though this space was curtailed, it continued to have some relevance within the system of forest management. It is not as if this arrangement was an ideal one, with no adverse impact on women and the poorest people in the community. But, despite these negatives, the arrangement provided benefit to a large number of people, and also led to the regeneration of forests. However, the stiffest challenge to their authority has come in the wake of the introduction of the Village Forest Joint Management Programme in 1994, where the World Bank funded the forest department to bring the *van* panchayats under JFM. This has reinforced the department's claim of being the monopoly holder and controller over forests, thus disempowering the panchayats.[54]

If this is the case than one might ask the question about what impact such decentralisation has had on the management and trade of non-timber forest produce. It is well known that degradation of forests has an adverse impact on the propagation and regeneration of non-timber forest produce and this therefore also affects tribal livelihoods badly. Recognising this the donor agencies and governments of the present day have attempted to involve people in non-timber forest produce management. Regeneration, collection and management systems of an apparently participatory nature are set up through decentralised systems of governance. The mechanisms for this may be manifold. As far as

non-timber forest produce is concerned, the MP state government has attempted one of the most popular schemes such as devolution of power. The *Van Dhan* Scheme and the *Imli Andolan* was started by district administration in Bastar in 1999. As a part of this *Andolan* the *Krishi Upaj Mandi Act* was enforced to ensure that no buying took place outside designated markets. This meant that the *kochiyas* could not buy any produce outside the *haat* bazaars and their practices of valuation and weightment were being monitored and checked. The designated institutions collecting the produce were village forest development samitis and TRIFED co-operatives. As a result of this effort the forest produce gatherers received an additional income of Rs. 300 lakh in 1999 and the designated agencies made an additional income of Rs. 95 lakhs.

In this context the *Van Dhan* Scheme was started in 2000 to eliminate the middlemen from the *haat*. The concept of *van dhan* was evolved by the collector of Bastar and the *van dhan* samitis set up shops in village *haats*. They were to be the legitimate agents to buy forest produce from the gatherers. This produce was later sold to the TRIFED. By 2001 there were 750 *van dhan* samitis which had a membership of 10 members each. A study on the implementation of these initiatives shows that *kochiyas* had managed to infiltrate the *van dhan* samitis through their informal involvement with its working. This was facilitated by the presence of the traditional moneylender network that had strong links with the marketing network of non-timber forest produce. Small traders were an integral part of the power structure that dominated the area for long and enjoyed sufficient political support and influence to ensure that trading continues on terms that are favourable to them.[55] Visits to Bastar in the end of 2001 and the beginning of 2002 showed that people complained that the government, which was meant to pay a higher price than traders, was not paying an adequate price and did not have the money to purchase the entire produce. They also took the produce on credit of seven days which was not convenient to the tribal people who sold most of their produce under distress. Thus the local people were not in favour of the scheme and the poorest tribals preferred to sell their produce to the small trader in the region rather than the *van dhan* samiti.[56]

Similar is the case with *Lok Vaniki* Scheme under which farm forestry could be done on private lands. Experiences in Bastar have shown that even though farmers planted trees on their private lands, they were harvested and purchased for a significant sum of money by the private traders. This was especially true of lands where the farmers had Malik Makbuja where they could sell their timber trees. Private contractors and traders brought these lands at cheap rates from non-tribal small landholders and acted as agents for getting farmers permits. Through this process they made huge profits while the landholder only got a fraction of the price.[57] Such problems exist with the limited attempts to decentralise forest management in Jharkhand also. People were only getting seasonal wages out of forest produce trade, thus belying the underlying assumptions that peoples own control over their non-timber forest produce can substantially alter the nature of tribal life. Given these problems it is pertinent to ask why the state has failed to achieve its stated objective of tribal development through decentralised non-timber forest produce management? Further are the voluntary agencies and grassroots movements limited in their perspective when they confine their demands to local control over non-timber forest produce and a proper pricing structure? The answer to these questions is quite complex and has to be located in the general infrastructural conditions of tribal areas. The truth of the matter is that neither tribals nor the tribal areas find themselves in a position to take advantage of the benefits that can accrue from local non-timber forest produce.

The reasons for the failures of these efforts are embedded in the larger context of decentralisation programmes. The beginning of the sectoral reforms in the late 1980s saw the intervention of donor agencies in many sectors of the Indian economy, of which forests was one of the first. Under the forest sector reforms projects agencies like the World Bank and the Ford Foundation argued that a long period of state capitalism in forests had led to poverty and degradation of natural habitat. They argued that the withdrawal of the state from the forestry sector would be the first step towards the empowerment of people. But as several prominent researchers have pointed out, the devolution process has led to the extension of the state's power rather than giving real decision making power to local community institutions.[58] While

this may be true to a large extent, the motivation behind these decentralisation efforts is the privatisation of the commons rather than the extension of state control. The definition of the private in the sectoral reforms includes farmers, community institutions, gatherers, NGOs and of course private companies. Donor agencies argue that comparative advantage of the gatherers because they possess the knowledge and cheap labour that is required for a fair bargain in the open market. But this perception and argument seems to ignore the ground realities in the herbal states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Here non-nationalised forest produce trade can be identified as the prime reason for the excessive exploitation of tribal people.

Can Focus on NTFP Revive Tribal Livelihoods?

An analysis of field level situations shows that the domination of the *mahajan-sahukar* and large landholder nexus has become greater with initiative in decentralised forest management. The experience of the last decade in forestry sector reforms has some important lessons for evaluating the role of non-timber forest produce as one of the pillars for rebuilding tribal livelihoods in forested areas. There is a conception in all forestry sector reform projects that NTFP development can lead to the rejuvenation of the tribal livelihood systems in the country because they have formed a major part of the tribal livelihood patterns. But this proposition has yet to be substantiated by empirical evidence. Literature from different parts of the world shows that dependence on NTFP may induce and accentuate poverty rather than reducing it as tribals get very low returns from them. But at another level if we look at the nature of tribal livelihoods and see the contribution of agriculture in it than we find that its percentage in total income though higher than forests, is also quite low in overall terms. This is true for almost all the tribal landholders most of whom live on marginal landholdings with low productivity. In the wake of this factor a major portion of the tribal economy is dependent on daily wage labour for their livelihood. This is illustrated by the two case studies in this section.

The Baiga area of Dindori dist ict in Madhya Pradesh and Jungur village of Latehar district in Jharkhand form an important part of the tribal majority areas of Central India. While Latehar has been carved

out from the older district of Palamu, called Dalton Ganj in the new state of Jharkhand, Dindori remains in Madhya Pradesh and is the fifth schedule area of the erstwhile district of Mandla and was later carved out as an independent district. However the similarities between the two study areas end here as the historical status and social profiles of the tribal people living in these areas vary. For example, the Baigas of Dindori are largely a group of landless people and very marginal land holders. Of the 204 households surveyed our findings are that two thirds of the people are landless. This is not true of the Santhals of Jungur each of whom have atleast some marginal holdings in the area. The second important sociological difference in the two areas is that despite having land the Santhals of Jungur migrate from 6 to 9 months a year, where as none of the Baiga report this trend. Both these differences arise out of different historical settings of the Baiga and the Santhal areas. For example, the creation of the Baiga Chak and the Baiga Development Agency at the advent of Independence had ensured that the state established its monopoly rights over the forest lands on which the Baiga lived. For this reason these tribal people did not own any land and were primarily dependent on the forest department for their employment. The same is not true of Jungur, which is located near a protected forest in Jharkhand. Because of the nature of the land tenure system in the region most of the forests were protected forests and the tradition of tribal unrest had ensured that tribal land rights were unalienable and maintained under the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act. But the low productivity of lands has ensured that most households, including the 55 surveyed, migrate for at least 6 to 9 months a year. This village is at the heart of the Marxist Co-ordination Committee belt where there is no influence of administration.

Despite these basic differences, the patterns of livelihood show that within a particular poverty bracket the status of tribal people is similar. According to a recent survey of the National Council for Economic and Applied Research there are four poverty groups in Central India. The highest or the most poor group is in the range of an household income of Rs. 8,161.00, and the next category has a mean income of Rs.12,359. The middle and lower poverty groups consist of a mean household income of Rs. 21,424 and Rs. 57,302 per annum respectively. The survey also states that the STs and SCs are amongst the first two income brackets which is the poorest of the poor amongst

the poor. The results of surveys in Dindori and Jungur have been classified and according to this classification show the following differentiation amongst the tribal poor of these regions:

Table Showing Class Differentiation amongst Tribals By Income

Annual Household Income (Rs.)	Dindori Survey (Percentage of Surveyed Population)	Jungur Survey(Percentage of Surveyed Population)
No Response	16.7	0.1
Up to 8161	31.4	19.3
8162 to 12359	12.7	10.8
12360 to 21424	15.2	22.8
21425 to 57302	23.0	42.0
Above 57303	1.0	5.3

The table above shows that the Jungur has far more people in the lower poverty bracket than Dindori whose mean per household income appears to be less than Jungur in Jharkhand. This is primarily because of the nature of land ownership and the patterns of employment in the two states that differ from each other significantly:

Percentage of Total Income	Forests (%)		All Labour (%)		Agriculture (%)		Income from Migration as %age of Labour	
	D	J	D	J	D	J*	D	J
0 Percent	11.8	39.6	0.0	0.0	59.4	0.0	0.0	14.3
Below 25%	29.4	29.2	49.4	14.3	25.3	81.6	0.0	2.4
25 % to 50 %	58.8	18.8	25.6	10.2	15.3	9.2	0.0	9.3
50% to 75%	0.0	6.3	25.0	18.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	16.7
Above 75%	0.0	6.3	0.0	57.1	1.0	8.2	0.0	57.1

D - Dindori **J - Jungur**

*This includes agriculture as a part of other occupations.

The one striking feature about the table above is that both forests and agriculture form less than half of the total household income and in

most cases the tribals are dependent on all types of labour for their livelihood. Most of the income from labour in Jungur comes from migratory labour that is mostly in brick kilns in Banaras or in other construction works. We can see that more than 75 per cent of the labour based income of 57 per cent of all labouring people in Jungur comes from migratory labour. Typically except for one adult (mostly woman) and children, the whole family migrates for labour, the women typically getting 5 or 10 rupees less than the men in daily wages. As for those who do not migrate in these areas, they mostly work on the lands of a few large holders in their own and neighbouring villages. Most of these people are not ST but Scheduled Castes who are even worse off than the lower rung of the tribals. Most of these people are sharecroppers, who get about 2 kilograms of rice and 20 rupees per day. One other thing about this region is that most of their forest dependency is for fuelwood and most respondents report that they only use it for home consumption in this area. It is only in Piraiya Tola, a village of basket weavers, where most of the income is from forest based activity. However the only people for whom forest income forms a substantial portion of their income are from the forest-based cottage industry of making brooms and mats. For the rest of the people, income from *tendu patta* or *mhowa* gathering is below 25% of their income.

In contrast to this the Baiga case is slightly different from Jungur as the dependency on forests is higher and constitutes about 25 to 50 per cent of the total income. It is also significant that a major portion of the sample surveyed in Dindori was in the high poverty bracket with about 55 per cent of the households earning less than Rs. 12,359 per annum. This is not true of Jungur where about 58 per cent of the households earn more than Rs. 27,425 per annum and less than Rs. 57,302 per annum. This means that many households are in the lower poverty bracket. In keeping with this we find that dependence on forests is much higher amongst the Baiga of Dindori as a much larger percentage of people depend on the forests for their daily needs. This means that for most people forest income formed about 25 to 50 per cent of the total income. In the combined sample of Jungur and Dindori only 6 households have a total income contribution from 20 to 50 per cent from forests. All these people belong to three villages

surveyed in Jungur and Chandwa blocks and most of them are small traders who are buying forest produce from more than 5 villages and selling them to traders in bigger markets.

In the Baiga area a third of the men report their main occupation to be head loading where as the same number of women consider it their supplementary occupation. Most of the women consider themselves as agricultural labourers who work either on the field of their own households or others. The other factor that emerges is that more women consider themselves dependent on sale of non-timber forest produce, but the sale of such produce is mostly a supplementary occupation and no family fully depends on it. Both these facts clearly highlight the worsening situation for the family and the reported per month income has decreased to about Rs. 500 to 800 at an average. Thus it is possible to conclude that households face a decline in incomes when their dependence on forests increases. In this context it is pertinent to consider the relationship between the income and land distribution and forest dependency. The tables below illustrate the point that all those in the poverty zone depend on forest produce to some extent or the other:

Baiga Forest Dependency by Household Income

Count

Household Income	Percentage of Forest Income				
(Rs.)	0 %	Below 5%	5 to 25%	25 to 50%	Total
Below 8161	13	2	22	27	64
8162 to 12359	6	10	4	6	26
12360 to 21424	1	6	3	21	31
21425 to 57302	-	2	1	44	47
Above 57302	-	-	-	2	2
Total	**20**	**20**	**30**	**100**	**170**

Forest Dependency by Income Distribution, Jungur

Count

Household Income	Percentage of Income from Forest					
(Rs.)	0 %	Below 25	25 to 50	50 to 75	Above 75	Total
Below 8161	2	-	-	-	1	3
8162 to 12359	4	1	1	-	-	6
12360 to 21424	8	1	4	-	-	13
21425 to 57302	4	10	4	3	2	23
Above 57302	1	2	-	-	-	3
Total	**19**	**14**	**9**	**3**	**3**	**48**

If we compare the two tables above we find that the poorest of the poor people depend more on forest produce than the people in the lower poverty bracket in Dindori. This means that the Baigas dependence on forests is propelled by their poverty. In the case of Jungur the situation is quite different. Since most of the population is dependent on migratory labour, forest use patterns are dependent upon the amount of time that these people spend in the village which is dependent on their agriculture. Hence the possession of cultivable land is a necessity for some months of permanent residence which in turn influences forest use patterns in the Jungur area. The ownership of land and security of tenure are some of the most important factors influencing forest use as can be seen in the following tables.

Percentage of Income from Forests by Land Ownership, Jungur

Count

Land (acres)	Forest Income as Percentage of Total Income					
	0.00	Below 5	5 to 20	21 to 50	Above 50	Total
0.00	11	1	1	-	-	13
Below 0.75	5	7	2	1	1	16
0.76 to 1.5	1	5	4	2	2	14
1.5 to 4.0	1	1	2	-	-	4
4.0 to 5.0	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	**19**	**14**	**9**	**3**	**3**	**48**

Income Distribution by Land Ownership, Baiga

Count

Land (Acres)	Annual Household Income (Rs.)						
	No Response	Below 8161	8162 - 12359	12360 - 21424	21425 - 57302	Above 57302	Total
0.00	30	27	14	18	39	2	130
0.1 to 1	2	18	4	5	2	-	31
1.1 to 3	2	19	5	5	3	-	34
3.1 to 5	-	-	1	2	1	-	4
5.1 to 8	-	-	2	1	1	-	4
Above 8	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total	**34**	**64**	**26**	**31**	**47**	**2**	**204**

Perhaps one of the most striking fact emerging from these tables is that most of the landless people depend on forests as a source of

supplementary income. In the case of the Baiga, dependence on income from forests goes down progressively with the ownership of land. In the case of Jungur, this situation gets reversed. For the landless, which constitute one fifth of the total surveyed sample, labour is a more lucrative option than collection of forest produce. Forest produce only starts forming a part of an important supplementary income once agriculture becomes a primary occupation. But even here the dependence on income from forests is less than one fifth of the total income in most cases. More than 20% of income comes from forests in case of small farmers with marginal holdings. Thus one may conclude that under the current circumstances it is impossible to argue that the development of income from forests in both the Baiga and the Santhal case can be an important poverty alleviation mechanism. Rather the Baiga case supports the view that dependence on forests is accentuated by lack of alternatives and poverty. In contrast the Jungur case shows that labour is a more lucrative and better option to raise ones income, the dependence on forests is only a small supplement.

Other surveys and case studies from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh indicate the same trends when we analyse the average income and consumption pattern of the tribal family. Here I take one case study from a survey done in 2002 in Bastar, a tribal area in Chhattisgarh having one of the richest NTFP inventory in the country. This survey was done in Kondagaon, one of the newly carved out districts after the formation of the new tribal state. However despite the hand over of political power to the new tribal elite, the situation with regard to tribal livelihoods remained much the same as shown in table in the next page.

If these average estimates are correct in terms of range, then the tribals can make about Rs. 12,249.00 per family per annum if they are able to sell their rice. For farmers who have less than 1 acre of land or dry lands even this limit would be hard to achieve. In a region where the net area of cultivation is approximately 32% only with more than two thirds being non-irrigated, and still 73.2% of the people depend on agriculture the situation becomes even more precarious. We can therefore surmise that most people sell their produce, but only in distress and without keeping enough for themselves for periods of crisis as shown in the following table:

Sources of Livelihood for Tribal People in Kondagaon

Source of Revenue	Unit Rate	Quantity/Remarks	Total
Rice Cultivation	Rs 2.50-3/kg.	Most tribals of the area have 0.5-1.0 acre of land that does one rain fed crop in a year.	Rs. 1200
		The production is about 720 kg/acre in one year. The cost of the seed if they buy certified seed is Rs. 60.00/acre. Most tribals prefer not to sell rice but end up selling about 50%-60% as and when they need money. Here we assume they sell 400 kg per year if the crop is good.	
Collection of produce for forest department.	Rs 60/day	50 days per person by MPFD estimates	Rs. 3000
NTFP Collection		Details in Section on Exchange	Rs. 5049
Other labour for construction or during harvesting	Rs. 35-50/day depending on work.	60 days by peoples estimates. One male member goes out. We take Rs. 50.00- average daily wage for male worker.	Rs. 3000
Total (approx)			**Rs. 12,249**

Given this source of income it is now pertinent to see the nature of expenditure that is made by a tribal living in that area. While considering this it is important to remember that the expenditure made by tribal people can be divided into two categories. The first are the expenses of a permanent nature like clothes, salt, oil, and even some toiletries like soap and toothpaste. The second is seasonal expenditure on *mhowa* and rice that they buy from the trader. In the first case the nature of unequal exchange can be gauged from the fact that some tribals exchange even *chironji* for

salt. For example some families in Bunagaon told me that they exchange one *pehli* (i.e., 1 kilo and 200 grams) of *chironji* for five *pehli* of rice. This means that 6 kilograms of rice cost about Rs. 190 through this exchange mechanism. In the second case too, tribal people get severely cheated by the traders. For example the *mhowa* that they sell to the trader for Rs. 200-300 quintal in the season of collection, gets sold back to them for Rs. 15-20 per kilogram in the off season. This *mhowa* is stored in the cold storage after bulk purchases in the season. A small trader, Girdharilal Golcha of Kondagaon estimates that 1500 trucks of *mhowa* were sold in tribal *haats* every year.[59] Similarly the rice that they sell for Rs 2-3 per kilogram during the harvest time gets sold to them for Rs 6-7 per kilogram during a period of distress.[60] While there are few estimates of the amount of rice and *mhowa* brought from the trader but there are studies to suggest that since independence the tribals of undivided Madhya Pradesh were spending about 75% to 90% of their income on food and the rest on essential items.[61] This shows that trade in forest and other essential products is the bulwark that fulfils the essential needs of tribals on the one hand and is also a source of major exploitation of tribals on the other side. The reasons for this are not hard to find if we see the systems of trade, exchange and value addition in these areas.

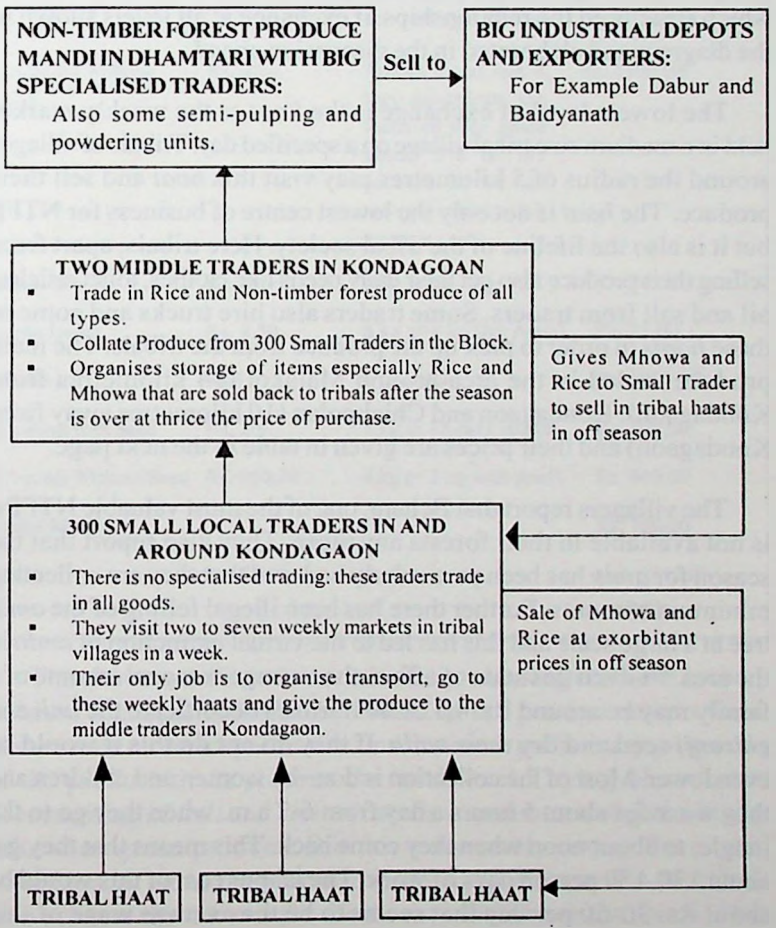
Tribals and the Political Economy of NTFP Trade

It has often been argued that the easing state control over NTFP will benefit the tribals who can compete for the best price for their produce. In this section we examine this proposition and examine its implications and impacts in two tribal areas: Kondagaon (Chhattisgarh) and Tundi (Jharkhand).

Kondagaon: One of the most striking characteristics of trade of non-nationalised non-timber forest produce is that it is non-specialised in nature. This means that there is no local trader who trades only in non-timber forest produce. In fact the trader to trade in non-timber forest produce also trades in rice, pulses, and may be even local soaps. The main non-timber forest products marketed in the tribal regions of

Chhattisgarh are *imli*, *amla*, *mhowa*, *safed musli* and *chironji*. The system of trading and processing has four tiers in the Kondagaon region and is explained below:

Diagram Showing the Trading Pattern of Non-Timber Forest Produce in Kondagaon



The diagram above elucidates the structure of trade and processing of non-timber forest produce in the Kondagaon block of Chhattisgarh. It

shows that there is hardly any value addition to the produce within the region. What is even more surprising is the fact that despite being designated a "herbal state" there is no plant for processing herbs within the state. Let alone this, even Madhya Pradesh does not have such a plant within its boundaries. Large traders tell us that there was a Dabur plant in Northern Madhya Pradesh a few years back but it shut down because of infrastructural problems.[62] This suggests that there is an unequal exchange between Chhattisgarh and the rest of the country which structured the relationships of exchange at all levels shown in the diagram and elaborated in the discussion ahead.

The lowest level of exchange is the *haat* or the weekly market held in a medium size tribal village on a specified day. Tribals of villages around the radius of 5 kilometres may visit this *haat* and sell their produce. The *haat* is not only the lowest centre of business for NTFP but it is also the lifeline of the tribal society. Here tribals, apart from selling their produce also get their daily needs like clothes, toilet articles, oil and salt from traders. Some traders also hire trucks and come to these *haats* in order to pick up the produce from the tribals. The main produce traded in the area around Malakot (14 kilometres from Kondagaon), Kondagaon and Chichpolan (10 kilometres away from Kondagaon) and their prices are given in table in the next page.

The villagers report that Behara, one of the most valuable NTFPs, is not available in their forests any more. They also report that the season for *amla* has been particularly bad and that they are collecting minimum amounts. Further there has been illegal felling of the *amla* tree at a large scale and this has led to the virtual extinction of *amla* in the area.[63] Given this state of affairs the average seasonal income of a family may be around Rs. 4,128.00 if tribals decorticate the *imli* and *chironji* seed and dry their *amla*. If they do not do this it would be even lower. Most of the collection is done by women and children and they work for about 5 hours a day from 6-7 a.m. when they go to the jungle, to about noon when they come back. This means that they get about 130-150 person days of work. The labour cost of this would be about Rs. 30-50 per day that seems to be the average wage of this area.[64] The total cost of labour collection works out to about Rs. 4,500-5,000 if we take it on the lower side of the estimate.

Prices and Income from Non-Timber Forest Produce in Bastar Haats, 2001-2002 Season

Name of Produce	Prices Per Kg.	Approx. Seasonal Quantity Collected by a Family	Approx. Per Capita Seasonal Income (Rs.)
Tamarind with Seed	Rs. 2.00	3-4 Quintal per tree. One family collects an average of this	Rs. 800.00
Tamarind without Seed	Rs. 4.00	Tribals report that if they decorticate the tamarind they loose about 5% in the process. So we can assume about 3.8 quintals	Rs. 1600.00
Amla Dry	Rs. 7	4 kg	Rs. 28.00
Amla Green	Rs. 3.50	6 kg (= 4 kg Dry Amla)	Rs. 21.00
Mhowa	Rs.3	6 quintals	Rs. 1800.00
Chironji with Seed	Rs. 20	5 kg in 15 days season	Rs. 100.00
Chironji Without Seed	Rs. 150.00	4 kg (= 5 kg with seed)	Rs. 600.00
Safed Musli			Rs. 100.00
Harra	Rs. 3.00		Not currently available.

The above estimates do not take the processing cost into account because it is assumed that the tribals do not process any produce. However on closer inspection we find that some preliminary processing of the produce takes place at the local level. Drying of *amla* and decorticating of *imli* and *chironji* seeds is common and gets a higher price than green produce. But this price rarely covers the cost of collection let alone the processing costs. Apart from this the tribals also process the *mhowa* for their own subsistence purposes. They make toddy out of the flowers and press the seed to take out oil for home consumption. The ratio for taking out the oil is 1:3, i.e., if 3 kgs of seeds are pressed then 1 kg of oil will be obtained. While the

mhowa oil is never sold, the flowers are almost always sold to the small trader after some are kept for current use. These are mostly distress sales to obtain immediate cash to fulfil short-term needs.

The unequal exchange between the tribal and the small trader is reflected at every level of trading. Therefore it is worth exploring the level at which the small trader operates. An interview with Girdharilal Golcha revealed that there were about 300 retailers cum small traders in Kondagaon. They visited about 7-8 *haats* per week and collected produce from the tribals. They operated on a margin of about 10%-15% and simply transported produce from the *haats* to the godown of the block level trader. There were two such traders in Kondagaon: Ranoo Das Sancheti and TMK. Though Ranoo Das Sancheti and other middle traders refused to reveal their margins, the *Kochiyas* (small traders) contend that these margins are about 5%-10%. But these are all estimates, as margins are trade secrets like in any other trade. However some evidence also gives us broad estimates of the income of these traders. For example it is estimated that if a trader visits two *haats* per week than his turnover is about Rs. 15,000, and if he visits 7 *haats* per week his turnover is about 50,000 per month. If there are three hundred such traders than the turnover of two middle traders can vary from 50 lakhs to 1 crore per month depending on the level of collection.[65] Unfortunately the scale and margins of the traders in Dhamtari are not known, but some idea of the margins can be gauged from the final sale prices of the produce in Dhamtari and other markets.

Sale Prices of Major Non-Timber Forest Produce at Different Destinations

Items	Collectors Price (Rs/Kg)	Dhamtari (Rs/Kg)	Bombay/Delhi/Others (Rs/Kg)
Amla	3.50	15.00	22.00-32.00
Imli (decorticated)	4.00	12.00-15.00	32.00-34.00
Chironji (decorticated)	150.00	200.00-250.00	350.00-400.00
Safed Musli	100.00	-	250.00-1200.00

This structure of trade and marketing of non-timber forest produce reveals that the maximum amount of exploitation exists at the lowest level: that is at the level of the collector. The collectors receive barely enough, if at all, to cover their labour costs, but only if the system of measurement is correct and fair. Most tribals believe that they are cheated of at least 30-50% of their produce because they do not measure their own produce when the trader buys it from them. They also believe that the balances possessed by the trader are tampered resulting in the sale of twice the amount of produce than they should ordinarily be selling. Further individual tribals themselves have little idea of weights and measures unless they belong to some self-help group or the other.[66] Apart from this their labour costs for processing the produce is not recovered in the price that is paid by the trader. In most cases the produce collected from the tribal is considered as "unprocessed". These lacunae will have to be removed if non-timber forest produce is to serve as a good instrument for tribal development.

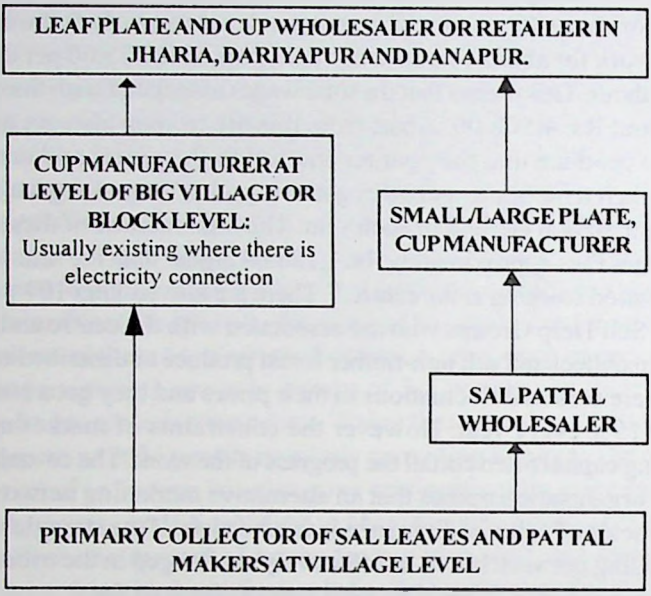
The voluntary sector in Bastar has made some progress towards thinking and taking some steps on these issues. One such organisation based in Kondagaon is Vikas Mitra started by a group of young people working in CAPART in 1994. The organisation aimed at undertaking science and technology interventions for people oriented development and decentralised local development. To this end their main target groups have been women self help groups that can be trained to weigh, grade and process the non-timber forest produce. They purchase non-timber forest produce and honey from the collectors and process them at a nearby village.[67] In all there are 5-6 villages in which non-timber forest produce purchase is going on. These groups are given balances and trained in weighing the produce so that they are able to get a fairer deal. The price that they get for their produce is the same as the *haat* prices, the difference being that they get the stated price for the right amount of produce and therefore their income is about 30%-50% higher than when they deal with the small trader. The self-help group itself gets an additional Rs. 1.50 per kilogram for processing and packing the produce. It is then marketed through Vikas Mitra, which adds its own transport and overhead costs to the collection, packaging and processing costs of the self help group. The groups had collected about 6 quintals of *imli* last year and sold it at the rate of Rs 15 per kg in Delhi.[68]

Apart from collection and selling of non-timber forest produce Vikas Mitra intervenes to improve methods of honey collection and bee keeping. The project was first started two years ago when people from Wardha trained beekeepers in eco-friendly methods of processing and collecting honey. Maldhari, today the master trainer at the Chichpolan centre run by Vikas Mitra, was once himself a bee-keeper and collector. He says that earlier methods of honey collection severely damaged the beehive as bee-keepers would cut them open fully. The bees escaped and only one comb of honey was possible. Further beekeepers were prone to injury and had no insurance against failures from crop.[69] Vikas Mitra made some changes in these techniques. They provided protective gear and insurance to the beekeepers and also trained them to cut only one third of the entire hive at one time. This allowed them to comb one beehive at least once or twice. The beekeepers used to move in groups of 3-5 people and their honey was to be processed in the centre. Today there are about 100 trained beekeepers with 55 people regularly providing honey to the centre. The level of collection has also gone up significantly since this new technique was used. According to Maldhari one group of 5 people can collect one quintal of honey from a hive with this technique. Comparing this with the earlier level of collection they say that collection was erratic and varied from 4 to 5 kilos per person. The centre buys this honey from beekeepers and gives them Rs. 600.00 per quintal as a minimum support price. Through this process about 15 tonnes of honey was collected at the centre that gave the beekeepers an income of about 9 lakhs or Rs. 3,300.00 per beekeeper if this is to be divided by 55 beekeepers. Under other circumstances beekeepers usually market their produce to the traders and get about Rs. 40.00 per kilogram from them.[70] Once collected, the honey is taken to the mother unit at Chichpolan and processed. It is also tested for purity and its protein, vitamin and sugar content. Further the honey is then bottled and marketed by Vikas Mitra under the brand name Wild's. The third intervention in forest-based industries is in the processing of medicinal plants. The centre at Chichpolan cultivates some medicinal plants like *Satawari* and *Ashwagandha*. It also collects wild *Bhringraj* and trains women to take out its oil. All these are marketed by the organisation.

The organisation has managed to increase the income and the employment of its region by 10-15% through these interventions. The centre at Chichpolan is able to generate about 180 person days of work for about 40 women who are associated regularly at the centre. They work for about 4 hours a day and are paid Rs. 25.00 per day for their labour. This means that the total wages associated with the centre are about Rs. 4,500.00. Apart from this the women also get money for the produce that they gather and sell to the centre and carry on doing their agriculture and other gathering jobs. They also get a bonus of about 50% at the end of each year. The total income of these forty women is thus approximately Rs. 1,180.00 higher than the time before they started working at the centre.[71] There are also another 100 women of the Self Help Groups who are associated with the centre and these women collect and sell non-timber forest produce as described earlier. There are seasonal fluctuations in their prices and they get a bonus of about 15% every year. However the constraints of marketing and working capital often curtail the progress of the work. The co-ordinator of the organisation opines that an alternative marketing network and larger scale of value addition needs to take place if the stranglehold of the trading network has to be effectively challenged in the tribal areas of Bastar. Clearly there is no state support for it so far.[72]

Sal Leaf Plate Making Trade in Tundi: In stark contrast with Kondagaon district, Tundi has no dense forests any more. There are signs of obvious deforestation on the way to the foothills that separate Tundi from Topchachi and the Ranchi Plateau. This is even reflected in the conversations with the people who live there today. By and large these people say that there was thick forest in the region which had many more species than they can remember now and now there are only two species: *sal* and *mhowa*. Women also recollect that they have to now walk about two hours more than before. After much probing they do state that they had to walk even 10 years ago to get their fuelwood and enough *sal* leaves to make the plates for the *Kochiyas*. The system of marketing and production of leaf plates and cups could be the following:

Diagram Showing the Marketing and Processing of Sal Leaf



The diagram above shows the trading network that is characteristic of an area whose major non-timber forest produce is the *sal* leaf. The best season for collecting the *sal* leaf is September and October when the leaf falls heavily. There after it is also possible to get some leaves in November and December. Women and children of the household go to the forest for about 3-4 hours every morning once the season arrives. The women from Bhalgada and Lodharia panchayats of Tundi block hold that the collection time is not only increasing but they also have to walk for longer distances with forest degradation each year. Once they come back they do their household chores and in the afternoon prepare to make *pattals* out of leaves. These *pattals* form the base and the basic raw materials that are used by the leaf cup and plate manufacturers. One *pattal* is made out of 6 leaves that are pinned together in a circular circumference with small flexible bamboo twigs that are the size of a matchstick.[73] According to one study in another area it takes 49 hours to make and sell 1500 *pattals* per person. This means that one person is able to sell 6000 *pattals* in a month. The

author and his group's survey of 888 households in Madhupur shows that they do this work for about 10 months and each family gets an annual income of about Rs. 2,124.00 from this work.[74] If we use this as a correct estimate for Tundi than we can assume that women of about 20 households go into the forest together and collect leaves for *pattals* in one village. However unlike Ghanshyam's study it would be unrealistic to assume that this collection and *pattal* making is done for 10 months. My estimate is made on the basis of the fact that the leaf falls for four months in season (as told by the women) and the work may carry on for another two months when the leaf falls but not so heavily. This would be the most optimistic estimate and it would mean that 36,000 *pattals* are made by woman in one season.[75] The *pattals* are sold in bundles of 1000 to the traders whereas the wholesalers sell the *pattals* in terms of *hunda* or 350 pairs of pattals to a *hunda*. Their prices in different *haats* and markets are given below:

Reported Price of Pattals Sold at Different Markets

Name	Village/Haat Price (Rs. per bundle)	Wholesale Price
Bhalgada	50-70	
Piprahaat	60	
Saunad	60-70	
Jharia (Dhanbad)		80-100 per bundle sold by women who can go to Jharia.
Dariyapur (Patna)		60 per hunda to manufacturer or Rs 80-100 per thousand

The level of exploitation in the *pattal* trade is itself evident in the table above. If women can go to Jharia to sell their pattals than the rate of exploitation is about 41.1 per cent. However if the trader goes to the *haat* and picks up the *pattals* than the price difference is about 64.4%. The price that tribal women can get in Jharia is about 10-20% more than the price in their village. The truth is that hardly any women find it convenient to go to Jharia that is about 35 km away from the block headquarters at Tundi. Given this state of affairs one woman is

able to earn about Rs. 2,160.00 per season from selling *pattals*. But most women, especially in remote panchayats like Saunad and Maniyari feel that this is the best case scenario for them. Apart from this most tribals in the region have 0.5-1 acre land but do not generally sell their rice. They only get enough for their own use. Further the men of their village may get labour for 2 months of the year making about Rs 3,600 a year if we assume that they are paid at the rate of Rs. 60 for an eight hour day. During harvest time too, women go to work in other farms and their annual income from this is about Rs. 1200 per year.[76] Therefore total income of a family can be about Rs. 6,960.00 per year. Apart from this if they were able to sell *mhowa* their income would increase by another Rs. 1000 – 1200 per year. However the sale of *mhowa* is erratic as the ecological degradation has reduced the *mhowa* in their region. Therefore it is clear that the trade in *sal pattals* forms the major portion of the tribal livelihood system in this region. However it is also clear that the *pattals* from Jharkhand hardly go beyond Ranchi or Jharia. It is mostly the *pattals* from Orissa that are used in Patna and Danapur as they are considered to be of a better quality.

Once the *pattals* are given to the trader, they may follow two separate paths of reaching the manufacturer. In the first system the small manufacturer who may be located in a big village or the *mohalla* town in the same block. There may also be small, medium and big producers located in bigger towns like Jharia, Patna and other areas. Both these categories of plate manufacturers have different types of links with the tribal people and the *pattals* that are made and sold to them. An analysis of their trade shows that even small scale processing of *sal* leaves may not be as viable as it is made out to be as many of the small producers are not taking their labour costs into account when they calculate their sale price. This estimate is done on the basis of interview of a small producer in Piprahaat and parameters of analysis as provided by AMI machine manufacturers. We assume that the machine works for 8 hours a day and produces about 1000 *thalis* per day for 30 days a month given the fluctuation of the electricity. The production of each *thali* requires 2 *pattals*. Though the cost of just the plate making electrical machine is estimated at Rs. 6,690.00 according to the AMI manufacturers, this particular producer, like many

others bought his machine second hand for Rs.3000.00. Work is done by the producer himself or through family labour. On the basis of these assumptions the cost-benefit analysis of the block level producer is the following:

Details of Items	Monthly Cost (Rs)	Monthly Income (Rs)
RAW MATERIALS		
▪ 60,000 pattals for 1000 thalis per day i.e 30,000 thalis @ Rs 70 per 1000 pattals.	4,200.00	
▪ 1kg of polythene strips to make them leak proof @ Rs 70 per kg	70.00	
▪ **Total**	**4,270.00**	
OTHER COSTS		
▪ Maintenance	50.00	
▪ Depreciation	100.00	
▪ Electricity/ Kerosene Oil	100.00	
▪ Marketing Expenses	100.00	
▪ Miscellaneous	50.00	
▪ **Total**	**400.00**	
MONTHLY SALES		
▪ 30,000 Thalis @ Rs 24.00 per 100 thalis in Jharia.		7,200.00
TOTAL	**4,670.00**	**7,200.00**
PROFIT		**2,530.00**

From the above table we can see that the margin of profit of a small producer is about 50%. However we also notice that the labour of even one person is not costed in this operation. If it takes 8 hours to produce these many plates and the total cost of producing these plates @ Rs. 3 per 100 is Rs. 900. This itself reduces the profit of the enterprise to about Rs. 1,630.00 a month. In general we see that the small producers do not cost their family labour when it comes to the production of leaf plates.

The AMI manufacturer states that 1200 *thalis* or 2500 *katoris* can be made per day if the machine runs for 8 hours for a total of 25 days a month. The producer interviewed, Saket Kumar of Bhartiya Patta Udyog, who has a machine with two plates that can produce either 5-6 *thalis* at one time or 3 *thalis* and 4 *katoris* at one time depending on what dies are used. He said his production was of about 3000 *thalis* and 1500 *katoris* per day if the machine worked for 8 hours. The manufacturer of *thalis* and *katoris* has provided this estimate and we assume that it is his current practice. The manufacturer usually hires labour to achieve his production target that costs about Rs. 3 per 100 for the *thalis* and Rs. 5 per 1000 for the *katoris*. Further he elaborated on his economics in the following manner:

Cost and Benefit Analysis of the Leaf Cup Value Chain

Item	Quantity Produced	Cost of Production (Rs)	Sale Price to Wholesaler/ Retailer (Rs)	Retailers Price at Dariyapur/ Danapur (Rs)	Retailers Price in Delhi
Thalis	2.000/day	12 per 70	19 per 70	40 per 100	55 per 100
Katoris	1,500/day	4.5 per 80-100	5.5 per 80-100	15 per 100	20-25 per 100

The total monthly income and cost of production of the producer as he perceives it can be the following:

Monthly Cost, Income and Profit of Town Level Producer

Item	Monthly Production	Monthly Cost (Rs.)	Monthly Income(Rs.)	Monthly Profit(Rs.)
Thalis	60,000	10,285.00	16,285.00	6,000.00
Katoris	45,000	2,025.00	2,475.00	450.00
Total		**12,310.00**	**18,761.00**	**6,450.00**

The margin of profit as elucidated by this producer is about 48%. However the figures of the producer are not accurate as his cost of production is barely equal to the cost of the leaf. That

means that his margin of profit will reduce drastically once his other costs are taken into account. It may also mean that the small producers are either doing other jobs or going to *haats* and trading in *pattals* simultaneously to make their operations more cost effective. In most cases trading and leaf cup and plate making was a combined operation.[77]

The modalities of feasibility and the type of systematic intervention needed are only relevant in this context when we look at the possibilities for alternatives to the current system of livelihood in tribal areas. However one thing that is quite clear from the analysis of the *sal* leaf cup making and trading system is that price that tribals get for their produce is a fraction of the selling price of the final product. Assuming that two *pattals* are used in the creation of one plate we can see the share of the tribal collector in terms of the percentage of the final cost at different points.

Percentage Share of Tribals in Final Sale of Sal Leaf Plates after Processing

Place of Sale by Tribals	Cost of 2 Pattals(Rs.)	Final Selling Price Plates (Rs.)			Tribal Selling Cost as approx. percentage of Final Sale Price		
		Jharia	Patna	Delhi	Jharia	Patna	Delhi
Village Haat Sale	0.12	0.28	0.35	0.50	42	34	24
Sale at Tundi	0.14	0.30	0.40	0.55	46	35	25
Sale at Jharia	0.16	0.30	0.40	0.55	50	40	29

It can be seen from the table above that tribal people get the best sale price when their produce is sold directly in Jharia and when they sell to the local markets. It is also seen that margins of the middlemen (manufacturers or traders) increase once the plates are produced and the produce is sold in non-local markets. Given these conclusions and experience of tribal people that has been documented in this section, the Self Help Groups formed by the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti in Tundi have suggested two remedies that can improve their situation to

a considerable extent. The first is co-operative marketing of *pattals* through a federation of the existing Self Help Groups and the second is the setting up a mother unit of the *sal* leaf cup making machine at the local level.

Globalisation, Forestry and Tribal Livelihoods

By the end of 2002 the women of Tundi started their leaf cup making co-operative with the help of the Jan Shikshan Kendra. After an initial value chain analysis done through a study and a survey, the women started to produce leaves. They made co-operatives for gathering and processing the produce, and started saving money for buying off the machine from the Jan Shikshan Kendra. At an average the women were making five hundred rupees per month and had saved six thousand rupees in two seasons in their group. But after running for two seasons the work stopped suddenly because the families of the women involved in the exercise were forced to migrate from their village. Activists informed us that the reason for this was that agriculture of the area had failed and that most of the tribals had begun to depend on casual labour for their livelihoods. This scenario, is however, not limited to Tundi. Most of the surveyed areas in Central India yield the similar results and the efforts made at generating surplus income at the local level meets the same fate as Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti's initiative in Tundi. The reasons for this are structural in nature and this monograph has tried to explore them in order to understand impact of state monopolies and free market policies on tribal livelihoods.

In the preceding discussion we have seen that an exploration into NTFP management and control serves as a good entry point into the study of the impact of state monopolies and the open market. The management of NTFP shows that most forest produce is traded in the open market with only a few of the produces being nationalised in the 1960s and the 70s. The background of the emergence of this system was conditioned by the land settlement patterns of the British and the advent of industrial capitalism in forested areas. Thus the relationship between forest rights and land tenure and agriculture was an integral one and formed the fulcrum of tribal livelihood systems. This basic factor has been usually ignored by donor agencies who argue that NTFP development can lead to solving the problems of tribal livelihood.

Contrary to this our analysis has shown that dependence on NTFP is conditioned by poverty and that NTFP dependence is more a matter of survival than of improving the livelihood status of tribal people. An analysis of the system of NTFP trade, management and processing shows that the negative impact of the current processes of devolution of powers in forest management are a result of the structural constraints and inequalities within which these initiatives are embedded. Thus this monograph has attempted to unravel the extent and parameters of these structural constraints in the age of globalisation.

The devolution of powers within the forestry sector and new initiatives in tribal development described in this monograph have to be seen in the context of the current phase of neo-liberalisation in this country. Under this economic programme, the Government of India and donor agencies have stepped to ease the way of the trans-national companies who are interested in capturing the Indian markets for their goods. Within this framework sectoral reforms have been initiated where donor agencies are involved in the sectoral reforms in forests, one of the first to undergo such changes. These reforms are in keeping with the ideological principles of laissez faire capitalism that advocates the loosening of state control over all areas of development. The social sector and social welfare measures have been particularly hit by these measures and the consequent lack of infrastructural development in marginal areas has increased the inequities between the people living in these areas and others. It is therefore difficult to understand how these reforms will help and solve the problems of tribal people, many of whom are confined to the marginal economies that are worst impacted by the economic reforms. In line with this thinking the advocates of neo-liberal globalisation have also been arguing that the creation of wealth and the loosening of state controls will have a trickle down effect and improve the lot of the tribal people. But in order to ensure this and reduce the resistance to reform process premier institutions like the World Bank have been arguing that there needs to be a "human face" of this neo-liberal policy.

There are two important elements of globalisation programmes in forestry: decentralisation and development of non-timber forest produce. It is hoped that through these measures the tribal economies can upgrade themselves to suit the needs of the globalised economy.

Essentially speaking the forestry sector reforms aim to meet the needs of the global capitalism by supplying essential raw materials to many industries. But this monograph has shown that the existing devolution projects are neither new and nor do they ensure that the unequal relationship between the tribal people, trader and the industry is eliminated. Rather it assumes that the abolition of state monopoly over forests will inevitably lead to better terms of trade for the tribals. It will also provide the space for "community driven" initiatives, which they hope will tilt the balance towards the toiling masses.

This is not the first time that arguments have been made in favour of processes of decentralisation and community rights and ownership of land and produce in forests. In fact, tribal rights movements and activists of all hues have been arguing that local people are intrinsically dependent on these resources for their livelihood and thus have the greatest interest in protecting and conserving these resources. They point to that local tradition, knowledge and histories provided enough evidence about the interface between the every-day needs of tribal people and the income from non-timber forest produce which formed a significant part of the tribal income. This dependence, in turn, translated into a conservation system guided by customary rules and institutions, that were essentially informal and decentralised in character. This was in sharp contrast with the goals of the modern conservation system, which was centralised in character and represented the interests of large industry in both the colonial as well as post-colonial periods. This 'industrial mode of forest use' focuses less on the harnessing of non-timber forest produce and more on the exploitation of forests for timber because large industrial houses demand wood for fuel and raw material. It is therefore natural for post-colonial forestry to raise plantations of fast growing species and regenerating forests for timber. This forestry regime not only has a devastating impact on the biodiversity of the region, but also follows a strict rights regime to ensure that peoples access to forests is limited and controlled. This results in the marginalisation of people's rights (especially tribal rights) over their own resources and leads to the destruction of their livelihood systems and accentuates the conflict between the people and the state. The advocates of this position were vociferous in their opposition to the state and argued that communities should be given autonomous control over their own resources, and local interests and their resources should

be protected from commercial exploitation. This meant that environmental and tribal movements have also been essentially arguing against the introduction of market forces in the tribal areas. In this sense these activists are fundamentally against the free market economy being proposed by the donor agencies even though some of their important themes have been incorporated within that framework. They argue that the process of decentralisation of forest and NTFP management has in fact led to greater state control, rather than providing space to communities for local management of forests. But the commitment to a position that demands a withdrawal of the state from forest conservation has in fact blunted their attack on neo-liberal globalisation even though they are against it in principle.

Refuting both these positions this monograph has shown that an argument for the withdrawal of the state in favour of the community is inappropriate at this juncture. As seen in the case of NTFP, the free market was operating in the case of non-nationalised forest produce since independence. However local institutions were unable to take advantage of this system because of the *mahajan* trader nexus that has existed in these areas since time immemorial. This means that any meaningful devolution and decentralisation has to be accompanied by a change in the semi-feudal relations within this area. Given the state of infrastructure and development of tribal regions, I have shown that tribal people are unable to take advantage of any free trade. Rather the withdrawal of the state only works in favour of the entrenched semi-feudal interests and makes them even more powerful than before. Therefore any NTFP development has to be rooted in initiatives that work towards the rejuvenation of the tribal agrarian system and establishment of an egalitarian social and economic order. It is also clear that neither systems of state monopoly nor free market systems have worked towards this in independent tribal India. This is because neither of these systems or their practitioners aim to use these programmes towards building a larger movement for social engineering in tribal India. In conclusion, the initial impact of globalisation has sent warning signals to grassroots movements of all hues: it has shown the urgent need for grassroots movements and advocates of tribal rights to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of the state in tribal development. If this does not happen than their ideological positions will be vulnerable to incorporation by the Imperial globalisers.

References

[1] For this point see W.W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, volumes xvi-xvii, Delhi, 1976, reprint, first published 1877. Also see B.B. Sinha, *Socio-Economic Life in Chotanagpur, 1858-1935*, Delhi, 1979, pp.139-40.

[2] K.S. Singh, *Birsa Munda and his Movement*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983, p 10.

[3] Prabhu Mohapatra, 'Class Conflict and Agrarian Regimes in Chotanagpur', Occasional Paper Number XV, 1990, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, pp.10-11.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp.15-16.

[5] Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, volume xvi-xvii, descriptions of forest for Singhbhum, Manbhum and Hazaribagh districts.

[6] *Ibid.*, volume xvii, p. 315.

[7] *Ibid.*, volume xvii, p.260.

[8] *Ibid.*, volume xvi, p.168.

[9] *Ibid.*, volume xvi, pp.168 and 348-49.

[10] *Ibid.*, volume xvi, pp.106 and p.315.

[11] *Ibid.*, volume xvi, pp. 169 and 348-49.

[12] Tirthankar Roy, *Traditional Industry in the Economy of Colonial India*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Chapter 3 on Handlooms and Textiles which discusses the special case of silk.

[13] Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, volume xvi, pp.416-420.

[14] Prabhu Mohapatra, 'Class Conflicts and Agrarian Regimes in Chotanagpur', pp.15-20, and K.S. Singh, *Birsa Munda and his Movement*, Chapter 2.

[15] Singh, *Birsa Munda and his Movement*, Susan Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in the Jharkhand*, New Delhi, Sage, 1992.

[16] B.B. Sinha , *Socio-Economic Life in Chotanagpur, 1858-1935*, Delhi, 1979, pp.141-42.

[17] There were four systems of managing peasant use of forests between 1860-90. They were the *kham* system; leasing forests for *nistar;* summary settlements; and the commutation system. While the first two were systems of indirect management, the last two were considered more important for administrative purposes as they involved a system of direct control. For more details of all these systems see Archana Prasad, 'Forests and Subsistence Economies of Colonial India: A Case Study of the Central Provinces', chapter 5 (Ph.D. thesis, JNU, 1994).

[18] CPSR Forest Department, Compilation No : 416 of 1872, p. 30.

[19] Historians like Guha and Sundar have often argued that Brandis was the father of current day participatory forestry that has characterised Joint Forest Management.

[20] CPSR Forest Department, Compilation No: 229 of 1878, pp. 1-2.

[21] Most working plans of the 1890s show this. There were not more than one or maximum two grazing circles in one forest. In over populated areas this was not enough.

[22] The lac seed swarmed twice a year, in June and December. Labour for its collection was available in June-July for the baisakh crop and in October-November for the kartik crop. Thereafter lac was taken to the markets where the forest dwellers sold it to the craftsmen. The main lac market was in Seoni where lac was in great demand. After collection stick lac was cleared of the wood and then placed the encrusted twigs and barks in long cotton bags. These bags were put before the fire and heated, and the lacquer gum squeezed from the sticks and mixed with clay and other materials to make toys and bangles. Since the best business for the Lakheras (or artisans working on lacquer goods) was in the season of festivals, their income was seasonal and any transaction of the forest communities to propagate lac must take that into account. While the main markets of the Lakheras were in small towns like Mandla and Seoni, they also sold bangles in the villages till the late 19th century. (CPSR, Forest Department, Case File No 22, 'B' Progs, April 1919, (henceforth Lac, 1919), 3. Also See CPSR Forest Department, Compilation 50(6), 1875 (henceforth Lac, 1875), 85-86. Also see Russell and Hiralal, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*, volume 3, 106).

[23] Lac 1919, p.51.

[24] Lac 1875, pp.32-33.

[25] Lac 1875, p.8.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp.26-30. In the wake of such demand there were two courses open to the government. First they could allocate leases according to the axioms of a competitive market. The highest bidder (for the payment of royalty) was to get the contract. While the cultivator had a right to sell his labour at a price he decided, in practice the lessee was the only purchaser of this labour. The lessee was to pay the labour for lac propagation and fix the wage rate according to the number of maunds produced. Thereafter the lessee acquired an ownership right over produce. According to the logic of this system, the government royalty would remain static, while the lessee's profits rose or declined according to the fluctuations of the market. Alternatively the government would plan to receive a minimum royalty (to be fixed at 25 per cent) of the income earned through the sale of produce by the lessee. Here the government would fix the wages of the lac cultivator as well as the price at which the lessee could sell lac in the market. The maximum price at which the lessee was allowed to sell lac in the market was Rs. 10 per maund or Rs. 30 per bullock load. By fixing the price thus, the government attempted to narrow the gap between the profit of the leaseholder and the price paid to the lac propagator.

[27] R.S. Troup, 'Experiments in the pollarding odd Butea Frondosa for lac cultivation', *Indian Forester*, May 1919, p.225.

[28] *Ibid*, pp.227-228. Troup and his team carried out experiments over ten years. They divided the forested tracts with trees of different girth and ages into strips and applied the lac worm at different times. At each time they recorded the amount of lac that they got from the tree. In this way they determined the ideal conditions for the harvest of lac.

[29] Lac 1919, pp.85-89.

[30] Madhya Pradesh Secretariat Records Bhopal (Hereafter MPSR), Forest Department, file No: 114, September 1920.

[31] James Best, Messrs. Becker & Co.'s Lac Factory at Champa in Bilaspur District, C.P. *Indian Forester*, 1912, p.514.

[32] *Provincial Industries Committee Report*, 1946, (Nagpur: Government Press, 1947), p.67.

[33] These opportunities were important for their survival in the wake of restrictions over forest use especially after the reservation of forests in 1878. Other authors like Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forests: Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces: 1860-1914*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996 and Ramachandra Guha, 'Forestry in British and Post-British India', have described this process.

[34] For the details of the debate see Savyasachi, *Tribal Self Rule in India: The Constituent Assembly Debates.* Provisions of the Fifth Schedule are reproduced in Savyasachi, *Tribal Forest Dwellers and Self-Rule: The Constituent Assembly Debates on Fifth and Sixth Schedules*, (Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1998), pp. 54-58. This view was a result of the debates within the Constituent Assembly that focused on the provisions that were laid down under the Government of India Act of 1935. The debate itself was dominated by the situation in the North East and Bihar where the demand for self-rule had attained considerable importance and resulted in the imposition of the Fifth Schedule in large parts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The Fifth Schedule under which partially excluded areas were to be governed, were to be administered by the Governor with the help of the Tribal Advisory Council that was to consist of tribal representatives in considerable numbers. They were not to be excluded from the working of the Constitution except in respect of provisions concerning marriage, social customs or land distribution if the Governor deemed it necessary. Mandla and all other partially excluded areas of the Central Provinces were included in the Fifth Schedule. Congress nationalists, however, felt that the provisions would only create separatist movements and identities in the country and prevent the forging of a broad unity and interests under the umbrella of a common nationalist sentiment. The leader of the Adibasi Sabha, Jaipal Singh, demanded a separate Jharkhand State in Bihar in 1939. The Chief Minister of the time, Shri Krishna Saha, in turn accused the leader of exploiting the sentiments of the people to keep Chotanagpur a backward region. Following

from this analysis the nationalists of the Constituent Assembly roundly accused the Christians of fanning separatist tendencies in the country, especially in the North East. Rajendra Prasad Papers, I/M 1939, pp.3 and 15-17.

[35] *MP Human Development Report*, p.40.

[36] Ranu Bhogal and Manish Shankar, 'Nationalised Forest Produce: A study of Tendu Patta Policy of Madhya Pradesh, India: A Devolution or a Welfare Policy', July 2000 (Unpublished Paper for CIFOR).

[37] Pethya, B.P., *Collection and Marketing of Tendu Leaves in Sehore Division*, (Bhopal: IIFM, 1993), pp.5-6.

[38] Amit Prakash, *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*, Orient Longman, 2001, p.166.

[39] *Expert Report of Committee on Conferring Ownership Rights of MFP on Panchayat/Gram Sabhas*, (New Delhi: January 1998), Annexure 8 on Madhya Pradesh.

[40] Khandit, Vasudev, *A Study of NTFP in Local Economy of a Tribal Area of Betul District, M.P.* (Bhopal: Indian Institute of Forest Management (hereafter IIFM), 1996), pp.40-45.

[41] Ranu Bhogal and Manish Shankar, 'Van Dhan Initiative in Central Bastar', July 2000 (Unpublished Paper for CIFOR).

[42] *MP Human Development Report*, p.200.

[43] *India Human Development Report 2001*, pp. 153-154. According to the figures given in this table for expenditure of food in 1991 are 74.1% for tribals in undivided Bihar and 71.99% for tribals in undivided MP.

[44] K.C. Malhotra et al., 'Joint Management of Forest Lands in West Bengal: A case of Jamboni District' in S.B. Roy, *Policy to Commissioning of Joint Forest Management*, pp.160-208.

[45] Jha and Kumar eds, *Development of Bihar and Jharkhand*, Forestry and Development, p.151.

[46] *National Forest Policy Resolution, 1988*. The Forest Protection Act of 1980 had already attempted to limit commercial and industrial activity in forest.

[47] For a larger critique of Joint Forest Management see N.C. Saxena, *The Saga of Participatory Forest Management*, CIFOR Publications, 1997.

[48] For these figures see *Forestry Development in Bihar*, Chief Conservator of Forests (Development), Ranchi, 1996 and *Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report*, 1998, p.35.

[49] For a greater analysis of JFM in Bihar see Sarah Jewitt, *Environment, Knowledge and Gender: Local Development in India's Jharkhand*, Ashgate, 2002.

[50] *State of India's Environment: The Citizens Fifth Report*, CSE, volume II, 1999, pp.71-73.

[51] Mark Poffenberger and Betsy Mcgean eds., *Village Voices, Forest Choices: Joint Forest Management in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996, introduction.

[52] *Joint Forest Management: A Critique Based on Peoples Perceptions*, published by Samata Hyderabad, and CRY Net, Vishakhapatnam, 2001, p.iv.

[53] *Report of the Joint Mission of the Madhya Pradesh Forestry Project* (Bhopal: Circulated by Ekta Parishad, 1999), 12. Instead of using the systems of local governance that prevail within the ambit of formal government structures these agencies are attempting to control the natural resources of the country by creating parallel systems of control. The Village Resource Development institution is one such institution that is generating social unrest and conflict in remote tribal areas.

[54] Madhu Sarin, 'Defenders of the Forests: Disempowerment in the name of 'participatory' forestry – Village forests joint management in Uttarakhand, India' in *Forest, Trees and People*, Newsletter No: 44, April 2001, FAO. For other instances of the disempowerment of local institutions see Madhu Sarin, et al., *Devolution as a Threat to Democratic Decision-Making in Forestry? Findings from Three States in India*, Working Paper 197, Overseas Development Institute, London.

[55] Ranu Bhogal and Manish Shankar, 'Van Dhan Initiative in Central Bastar', July 2000 (Unpublished Paper for CIFOR), pp.26-27.

[56] Visit to Malakot and Buna Villages, December 2001.

[57] Nandini Sundar, Roger Jeffery and Neil Thin, *Branching Out: Joint Forest Management in India*, OUP 2001, p.72.

[58] For this point see Madhu Sarin et al., *Devolution as a threat to democratic decision making*, see the concluding chapter.

[59] Interview, Girdharilal Golcha, Kondagaon, 26.01.2002.

[60] This phenomenon has also been noted in other hunger prone zones like Kalahandi, Bolangir and Sarguja. For this point see Archana Prasad, *The Political Economy of Hunger*, Frontline, September 2001.

[61] See D.S. Nag on Baigas and MP Human Development Report.

[62] Interview Ranoo Das Sancheti, Kondagaon, 28.01.2002.

[63] Interview Members of Self Help Groups, Bunagaon, 27.01.2002.

[64] The average wage for a woman worker is Rs. 35 per day and for a male worker Rs. 50 per day when they harvest for others.

[65] This is based on the estimates of Girdharilal Golcha and after cross checking the prices in the market in January 2002. Market survey and conversations with Dhamtari traders took place on 29.01.2002.

[66] Visit to Malakot and Kondagaon *haat* in Kondagaon block, January 2002.

[67] Interview Dhanraj Kuldip, Coordinator Vikas Mitra, Kondagaon, 26.01.2002.

[68] This information was gained from Radha, the Self Help Groups at Chichpolan and Bunagaon.

[69] Interview Maldhari, 28.01.2002, Chichpolan, Kondagaon.

[70] Maldhari's estimates are based on his own experience before and after training. His record of the amount of honey collected is available at the processing centre that he runs. During the lean season Maldhari travels to different villages to attempt to induce other beekeepers to undertake improved techniques of honey collection.

[71] Meeting with the village workers at Chichpolan, 28.01.2002.

[72] Meeting with Dhanraj Kuldip, Coordinator Vikas Mitra, 27.01.2002.

[73] Meeting with 20-25 women of Lodharia and Bhalgada panchayats, 19.03.2002 and 20.03.2002.

[74] Ghanshyam, *Jharkhand: Vikas Par Vimarsh*, Abhiyan, Madhupur Deogarh, 1994, pp.104-106.

[75] These estimates are based on the basis of meetings with village Self Help Group representatives in: Sheetalpura (Maniyari Panchayat), Kolhar (Bhalgada panchayat), Piprahaat (Bhalgada Panchayat), Gopinathpur di (Lodharia Panchayat) and Saunad (Hathrasa Panchayat) in Tundi block. Each meeting was attended by 45-50 people from different villages of the Panchayat.

[76] The estimates of other income are taken from interviews at Gopinathpur di and Saunad, 23.03.2002.

[77] This conclusion is also supported by an earlier study that also argued that differentiation amongst the producers was increasing and small producers were forced to combine leaf cup making with other activities like trading and grocery shops etc., because the economic viability factor. See Dinesh Abrol et al., *Evaluation of Rural Technologies of CSIR*, March 1998.

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