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Homogenising Discourses of Governance. Identity and Autonomy in Jharkhand[1]

Abstract: There is a great degree of discursive coherence about norms and principles of democratic governance, framed as they are in a global context of an ideational framework of a liberal state, premised on the rights of the individual. The local reality on the other hand is often premised on 'dissonant' construct of group identities. This article engages with the central challenge of liberal theory of reconciling rights of the individual with those asserted by highly articulate group identities. In the case of India, a large degree of political contestation is premised on the politics of identity leading to demands for autonomy. Thus, the local reality appears to have very little correspondence with the principles of democracy framed globally. In addition, most demands for recognition of identity and autonomy have to interact and internalise another global discourse – that of development. The article argues, with reference to Adivasi identity in Jharkhand, that politically articulate groups interact with both of these 'homogenising' discourses which are a derivative national identity of the state and that of development. In this process, the sub-national identities are able to articulate an Adivasi identity that is located in the global discourse, but at the same time is peculiarly local.

Keywords: *governance*, *gram panchayat*, *Jharkhand*, *Naxal*, *PRI*,

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Introduction

Interaction between various versions of central authority of India and the tribals of its mainland, since colonial times, has been the source of successive waves of violent social movement. These 'tribal uprisings' of the pre-independence era, as well as the 'tribal unrests' of post-colonial times, have largely been examined as isolated interactions between the state and the tribals at different points of time in history. Few have examined such organised resistance to tribal policies as part of an assemblage of the larger, modern processes of governing introduced by the 'enlightened' colonial masters. Each wave of resistance has informed subsequent policies for governing society – of which the tribal forms a very distinct category – in the name of security, development and social justice. This article studies the dialectical evolution of the state's attempts to govern the resistant world of the tribal in central India by exploring and elaborating upon the discourse of governance.

'Governance', used to denote processes of governing within and beyond the state, has gained increasing currency over the past two decade. It is a reflexive attempt to develop institutional mechanism to organise public life towards socially just and inclusive development while being participatory. Thus it involves the manipulation of the existing power relations in society in order to facilitate the desired or pursued conduct by various social actors, including and especially, but

not exclusively, of the state. However, like any institutional mechanism and the resultant distribution of power in society, governance needs to be legitimised by principles like freedom, equality, inclusiveness, and, empowerment. This requires a body of knowledge that informs the practice of governance in order to enhance its capabilities and address its pathologies so as to empower the subjects of governance, i.e., citizens, the locus of freedom and equality. This knowledge-power continuum or discourse establishes, sustains and transforms power relations in society. Therefore, any understanding of the discourse of governance has to not only delineate the knowledge-power continuum that establishes and sustains any institution, but also highlight the scope of political negotiation and contestation therein. It is this dialectical interaction between the imposition of the discourse of governance and its political contestation of operationalisation that is the focus of this article.

With such an understanding of discourse of governance, this article explores the consensus, contestation and the contested consensus of the discourse of governance in India. It identifies three dominant threads in the Indian discourse of governance: security of the state, participatory/democratic, and thereby, inclusive development, and concerns of social justice. Having identified these threads, it traces their constitution in colonial period, its contestation by the nationalist and the emerging consensus of post-colonial India. The article also elaborates mechanisms through which such consensus is contested over the 1970s and 1980s, leading to the contemporary contested consensus. The contested consensus of present times is characterised by a general agreement on the objectives toward which public affairs in organised, but democratic, electoral politics allows for sufficient contestation of the institutional mechanism for achieving such goals. Finally, the concluding part highlights the negotiation with the objective as well as institutional mechanism of this discourse.

Conceptual Scope and Contextual Background

Contemporary debates on governance challenge the long-standing focus of social sciences on the most efficacious and technocratically superior mechanism for orderly social change and speedy 'development'. It acknowledges the centrality of the socioeconomic and political context and contestations in the processes of policy implementation.[2] It has been argued that governance pertains to organising public affairs to ensure democratic economic growth and institutional mechanisms to achieve it. Contestations, on the other hand, have focused on the relationship between democracy and development and the role of state therein amidst pluralisation of actors as well as levels of governance.[3] Because of the complex relationship between democracy and development and the state's role as an anchor for citizens' rights and social justice, governance is legitimised by a knowledge-power continuum that establishes, sustains and/or transforms power relations in society.

[2] World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth. A Long Term Perspective Study* (Washington DC: World Bank, 1989).

[3] Amit Prakash, "Governance, Governmentality and the Study of Conflicts", in Janel B. Galvanek, Hans J. Giessmann and Mir Mubashir, eds., *Norms and Premises of Peace Governance: Socio-Cultural Commonalities and Differences in Europe and India* (Berlin: Berghof Foundation, 2012), 52.

This knowledge-power continuum or discourse relies on 'voluntarism and participation' to maintain the 'necessary degree of ideological unity' required for securing consent,[4] and produces 'the subject of rule' by assigning them capabilities and pathologies.[5] However, these subjective positions are 'negotiated with, embraced, adapted or discarded'[6] and politicised as collective identities based on "relation of equivalence between [various marginalised] subject positions".[7] This politicisation creates the scope for pluralist political actions[8] carried out in the name of social justice, involving recognition and representation of all in redistribution of resources, with 'participation parity' as its normative core.[9]

Discourses of governance therefore, denote a process by which a governmental knowledge-power continuum establishes, sustains and transforms power relations in a society. It involves a continuous process mediated by its institutional location and mechanism, the subjective positions it creates and the scope for pluralised political activity and resistance that it offers. In this light, the article looks at the evolution and dialectics of what started as the enlightened colonial project to understand India through detailed knowledge for 'technical control'. The colonial enterprise started with "economic reforms... rights based liberal discourse, bureaucratic language of English and a system of education"[10] secured by a centralised police force.[11] The nationalist challenge, while conceding the superiority of the colonial discourse in material/public realm, forged its distinctiveness in the spiritual/private realm. This derivative discourse forced Indian self-identity to follow and emulate the social values and organisation of an alien culture.[12] Herein lie the inherent dialectic of Indian discourse of governance as to how "a resolutely modern, secular and developmental centre is established in the face of a partially tradition and parochial forms of politics in the periphery".[13]

Contemporary Discourses of Governance in India

In India, democratic governance through liberal institutions was not the outcome of class conflicts since popular democracy preceded the rise of liberal institutions.[14] Similarly, technologies of governmentality in India predate the rise of the modern state. Therefore, the resultant discourse was not the prerogative of technocratic elite, but was a highly contested political issue[15] involving "politics emerging out of the development policies of the state".[16] Therefore, securing the welfare of various categories of people, irrespective of their participation, has been the default rationality of governance in India. Furthermore, in the resource-contested political economy of India, the question of development is central to political mobilisation and contestation between various politically-active groups. Hence, while use of state power to empower the weaker section is seen as legitimate developmental politics, increasing political competition makes it "difficult for a democratically elected government to implement redistributive policies".[17] Furthermore, proportional representation of social groups and/or communities in the public and private

[4] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 328.

[5] Nikolas Rose, "Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies", in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds., *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2006), 159.

[6] Jonathan Xavier India, "Analytics of the Modern: An Introduction", in Jonathan Xavier Inda, ed., *Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics* (Maiden: Blackwell, 2005), 11.

[7] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 128-40.

[8] Rosemary J. Coombe, "The Work of Rights at the Limits of Governmentality", *Anthropologica,* 49.2 (2007), 286.

[9] Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political Philosophical Exchange*, trans. by Joel Golb, James Ingram and Christiane Wale (London: Verso, 2003), 68-69.

[10] Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Hamish and Hamilton, 1997), 23.

[11] Amit Prakash, "The Policing Functions of the Indian State", in Ajay K. Mehra and René Lévy, eds., *The Police, State and Society: Perspectives from India and France* (New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2011), 90.

[12] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton U. P. 1993), chs. 2 and 3.

[13] Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "India's Disordered Democracy", *Pacific Affairs*, 64, (Winter, 1991/92), 539.

[14] Subrata K. Mitra, *The Puzzle of India's Governance: Culture, Context and Comparative Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8.

[15] Subrata K. Mitra, *Power, Politics and Participation: Local Elites and the Politics of Development in India* (London: Routledge, 2002), 12-13.

[16] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflection on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia U. P., 2004), 40.

[17] Sudha Pai, *Developmental State and the Dalit Question in Madhya Pradesh: Congress Response* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 481.

sphere is advocated.[18]

Thus, the two quests – that of identity recognition and that of socio-economic change – have become inextricably intertwined. The claims of universality of the development discourse and poverty reduction schemes have been contested by claims of differentiated notions of development outcomes, premised on politics of recognition as the route to development. This led to contestations over production of 'poverty' and the 'poor' as well as its policy redressal in terms of assumptions about the capacities of state agencies, the voluntary sector, and poorer individuals, groups and communities such as the tribal population.[19] The democratic process further generates a fair degree of disagreements and contests. However, such contests do not undermine the discursive consensus, but strengthen it. This is on account of two factors: (a) the contests and disagreements are focused largely on the governmental techniques and modalities of public policy and do not interrogate the premises of the consensus itself; and, (b) the constitutive features of the discursive consensus have always been plural and contradictory which imparts strength to the consensus instead of weakening it.[20]

The complex ideational foundations and even more complex political process in the context of rapid socio-economic changes have generated multiple discursive threads and structures in India. This article shows that the contemporary political processes point to three intertwined, but distinct dominant threads: security of the state; democracy and development; and, recognition-redistribution continuum of social justice. Also, there is a broad discursive consensus across political actors with respect to the basic premises of democratic governance in India. However, this general consensus on a top-down approach notwithstanding, the negotiation with this consensus takes place at the level of practice of these remedies.

We explore these negotiations by looking at the discourse of governance adopted to deal with Left-wing Maoist extremism or Naxalism, as it is known in India. The choice of this particular dimension is based on certain key rationales. First, the Naxal threat effects majority of the states of mainland India, excluding Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern states, with violent activities being reported from 16 of 20 states. That is why, and rightly so, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as well as the Prime Minister recognises it as the single largest threat to internal security. Further, this threat specially targets the democratic and developmental discourse of India in the name of social justice. This is reflected in how the threat is being perceived by the state, as reflected in the annual report of MHA since 2003, as being embedded in socio-economic factors like unemployment, poverty, social injustice and institutional vacuum at the grassroots level as the root cause. The fact that this challenge has been violent undermines the basic premise of the Indian state's power – its legitimate monopoly over means of violence – further underlines its importance. Thus, apart from being widespread, the Naxal issue also covers the three broad thematics of Indian discourse: that of security, democratic development and social justice. The default response continues to be

[18] Kurmana Simha Chalam, *Caste Based Reservation and Human Development in India* (New Delhi: Sage, 2007), 180.

[19] Stuart Corbridge et al., *Seeing the State: Governance and Governmentality in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2005), 47-52.

[20] Prakash, "Governance, Governmentality".

the strengthening of the security apparatus. It is only as a complementary package that increased allocation of developmental funds becomes a governmental response.

It is within the above constitutive logic that the contemporary discourses on governance are embedded. What follows delineates the three thematics of governance discourse in India and their historical constitution in India, as well as their particular manifestation in the tribal regions of the state of Jharkhand. The empirical material is derived from both, primary and secondary sources, including academic writings, parliamentary debates, party political articulations, and, a set of semi-structured interviews conducted during the field study in select districts of Jharkhand and Bihar in 2011 and 2012.

The reason for choosing Bihar and Jharkhand, apart from their history, had to do with the fact that as per 2006 MHA categorisation of the 33 worst Naxal-affected regions, 16 were in these two states: six districts in Bihar and ten in Jharkhand. Accordingly, two districts from Bihar and three from Jharkhand were selected for purposive sampling so that they represent the diversity of these two states in terms of size, population, share of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) population, urbanisation and literacy rates. After visiting these district headquarters and doing a pilot study, snowball sampling method was followed by choosing one block and two *gram panchayats* in each district that have experienced Naxal violence in the current wave of the 21st century. Sites like block development office, local police station, health department, schools, *panchayat* offices and market places were primary locations for interviews and group discussions with key informants and local populace. These were sites of institutional materialisation where every day practices of developmental governance were enacted and negotiated.

1. *Raison d'etat*: Internal Security

Colonial concerns of 'security of the realm' had shaped the Police Act, 1861, legislated after the 1857 Mutiny to establish a suitable police force for crushing resistance to the state. Ever since the discursive consensus over security has seen almost no change except for redistribution of police administration in favour of a strong Centre. However, there were regional variations in these universal policing functions. In the tribal world of Jharkhand, initial colonial efforts at establishing centralised administration in the region saw a series of agrarian revolts.[21] Even though the region had limited financial viability, it was critical for maintaining martial peace around Calcutta and for protection of the Grand Trunk Road to Delhi and the Jackson Road to Bombay.[22] Therefore, each of the subsequent revolts was followed by colonial legislations to redress the grievances around which these tribal mobilisations were centred.[23] As a result, colonial conquest and control of the Jharkhand region through the 19th century was attained by the actual exercise and

[21] For details see Nirmal Sengupta, "Class and Tribe in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15.14 (1980), 664-671; Sussana B. C. Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992); Purushottam Kumar, *History and Administration of Tribal Chotanagpur (Jharkhand)* (Delhi: Atma Ram & Sons., 1994).

[22] Kumar, *History and Administration,* 33.

[23] Alpa Shah, *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India* (Durham, NC: Duke U. P., 2010), 14-15.

permanent threat of force.[24]

After Independence, Constituent Assembly debates focused on three contradictory concerns of internal security: public order and rights of citizen; strong Union and the autonomy of the states; and, the provision concerning 'emergency'.[25] There was a consensus in the Constituent Assembly, for restrictions on the Right to Freedom of citizens on grounds of "sedition or any other matter which ... undermines the authority or foundation of the state", and "in the interests of the public order".[26] Similarly, on the issue of special responsibility of the Union government *vis-à-vis* internal security and defending the Union, the consensus was for a strong centre.[27] The Constituent Assembly accepted the need to place upon the Union government a higher responsibility which could override provincial autonomy in case peace was gravely threatened. This would not curtail the provincial legislative powers, but Union laws prevail in case of a clash.[28] The main contours of the consensus were clearly evident as the Union government had the duty "to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance and ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution".[29] Further, Union enactments prevail over state laws with respect to the policing framework and exercise of executive power. Non-compliance was to be seen as 'breakdown of the constitutional machinery' – a ground for imposition of President's rule. There was no serious challenge to this consensus on account of the continuing unsettled political situation in the country as also the dominance of the 'Congress system'.[30]

In case of the tribal lands of Jharkhand, agrarian protests of the 19th century were replaced by the urbanised issue of autonomy through separate state within the India Union as the key concern of popular mobilisation for the Jharkhand Movement.[31] In 1928, the first demand for a separate administrative unit in Chotanagpur placed before the Simon Commission was rejected and the Government of India Act 1935 declared Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana as Partially Excluded Areas. After Independence, with the constitution of State Reorganisation Commission (SRC), hopes of a separate state were revived, but with SRC's exclusive prioritisation of the linguistic criteria in the reorganisation of states led to the rejection of the demand. This short revival of hope for a separate state saw tribal electoral parties such as Jaipal Singh-led Jharkhand Party making significant electoral gains in the 1950s. However, with rejection of the demand, electoral mobilisation shifted to radical forms over the course of the 1960s.[32]

In the 1960s, with the revival of a plethora of mass-based popular mobilisation across India, the consensus on the centralised force began eroding. The *suo motu* deployment of Union armed forces in states without their consent became a matter of intense protests.[33] However, little has been done to institutionalise the contestations articulated by the states, who jealously defend their autonomy in policing, but have demonstrated a quick willingness to enforce the same security-oriented paradigm of governance. Thus, the dominance of the consensus

[24] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 68-70.

[25] Prakash, "The Policing Functions", 90.

[26] B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution: A Study* (Bombay: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1968), 218.

[27] *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1968), 64-103.

[28] Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution*, 546.

[29] *Constitution of India*, Ministry of Law and Justice (New Delhi: Government of India, 2007), Article 355.

[30] Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India", *Asian Survey*, 4.12 (1964), 1161-1173.

[31] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 150-52. Also see Amit Prakash, *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2001).

[32] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 50-51, 98-109.

[33] See Government of West Bengal, *Memorandum on Centre-State Relations*, (Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1987); Amit Prakash, "The Democratic Story of Twin Challenges to Governance: Identity Needs and Developmental Need", in Ranabir Samaddar and Suhit K. Sen, eds., *New Subjects and New Governance in India* (Delhi: Routledge, 2012).

concerning the defence of the realm from all threats has led to a host of 'temporary' extraordinary legislations such as the Preventive Detention Act (1950), National Security Act (1980), Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (1958) and the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002 (POTA) − all repeatedly upheld by the judiciary.

In the context of Jharkhand, popular uprisings of the 1970s saw the state's repression of direct peasant actions of forcible harvesting, colliery workers mobilisation, and struggles of the Kurmi peasantry against land alienation.[34] The mass movement became the target of state repression as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Bihar Military Police and Bihar Armed Police were given a free hand.[35] As a result, violence became a legitimate tactics of self-defence for the dominant section of society and perpetuated fear as an 'autonomous force', embedded in the process of socialisation.[36] However, by the late 1970s the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) was introduced to increase flow of developmental funds and to co-opt the tribal leadership and thereby demobilise the masses.

The discursive consensus that emerged in the transition to the 21st century shows the continued dominance of this security paradigm, with a shift away from territorial integrity to internal security. Internal security has been on the agenda of Congress Party (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for some time and the Left parties[37] have also recently acquiesced. In this securitisation the state, Universal Citizen Identity (UID) is offered as the magic bullet for "[enhancing] national security and countering illegal immigration".[38] In the parliamentary debates, important thematics on internal security include: internal security, cross-border terrorism across urban India and in Jammu and Kashmir; Bangladeshi and indigenous insurgents of the North East and Maoist/Naxal/Left-wing extremists across mainland India.

Naxalism emerged in Jharkhand for the first time in the 1970s and was the primary security concern in the region. Scholars have rightly argued that during the 1990s, Naxal had shifted to mountainous, tribal areas of central and eastern India where there was still limited projection of state's disciplinary power.[39] The formation of CPI (Maoist) in 2004 benefited from a large hinterland conducive to guerrilla warfare amidst rugged terrain.[40] This led to a rapid expansion in their territorial spread across central and eastern India. The Union government took note of increasing attacks on government and private properties, especially, railway and police property, and of massive militarisation drive by Naxals.[41] It also acknowledged that this was due to institutional vacuum created by functional inadequacies of grassroots governance structures, prevalent dissatisfaction, and perceived neglect and injustice among the marginalised tribal population in these Naxal-affected areas.[42]

In response, the Central Government adopted 'a multi-pronged strategy' that included better-trained police force, focused attention on development and public grievances redressal. After initial experimentation with peace talks and local

[34] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 103-04, 183-85; Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 119.

[35] EPW, "Exploitation, Protest and Repression", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14.22 (1979), 940-943. Also see Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 101-03, 142; Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 120.

[36] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 197-98, 209.

[37] Left parties in India are comprised of a cluster of leftist parties, many of which have little electoral relevance. Hence, articulations of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which is electorally most significant, have been analysed here as the representative the Leftist political opinion.

[38] Anon., "Unique Identification Project will help in improving security", *The Hindu*, Chennai, June 23, 2010.

[39] J. Kennedy and S. Purushotham, "Beyond Naxalbari: A Comparative Analysis of Maoist Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Independent India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54.4 (2012), 851-52; Alpa Shah, "The Intimacy of Insurgency: Beyond Coercion, Greed or Grievance in Maoist India", *Economy and Society*, 42.3 (2013) 480-506.

[40] Stuart Corbridge, John Harriss, and Craig Jeffrey, *India Today: Economy, Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 201.

[41] Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report 2003-04* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2004), 24.

[42] Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report 2004-05 - 2012-13* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2013). Also see T. D. Gupta, "Maoism in India: Ideology, Programme and Armed Struggle", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41.29 (2006), 3172.

resistance mobilisation, from 2006 onwards the government undertook massive deployment of paramilitary battalion and specially-trained forces in these areas. It also pumped in huge volumes of developmental funds, taken up in the next section.[43] However, the Indian state reports degrees of Naxal affectedness of various districts without giving any detail regarding the parameters of intensities of impact. And police capacity and ratio *vis-à-vis* population continues to remain abysmal across all the major Maoist-affected states.[44] Further, any governmental 'squeeze' on a particular area leads to escalation of violence in other regions and the tactical withdrawal of the Maoist leadership and forces from the area under squeeze.[45] To add to these, Naxals have made innovative reflexive strategies to change from guerrilla warfare to mobile warfare to extend the operational zone to newer areas and build an interface for mass movements around issues of land and Special Economic Zones (SEZ) to acquire influence in local agenda setting.[46]

At the same, amidst the dominant governance deficit thesis, Maoists have paralysed state capacity while building a criminal economy, based on "a predatory financial base through demonstrative use of violence." This gives structural effects of "parasitic shadow state, feeding off benefits provided by the formal state structure while simultaneously using these to undermine the state".[47] Their spread into mineral-rich central India has opened mines as cash registers for a loose militia confederation with money-minded local elites. In this pursuit, they have struck deals with businesses houses, extracted party funds from labourers, imposed 'levies' on local sellers, and, extorted contributions from schools.[48] Maoists also extract protection fees from local bureaucrats and appropriate government-provided development funds from private contractors.[49] This shadow economy was estimated to be 25 billion Rupees (approximately, US$552 million) in 2010 alone.[50]

The local practice of Naxal outfits and the security apparatus of the state at the grassroots level reveal these ignored aspects of the Naxal threat. The empirical evidence from the field suggests that the security discourse of the state fails to adequately engage with the ground level dynamic. It ignores the complex interaction for negotiated consensus between local elite, the Panchayati Raj institutions (PRI) representatives, and the Naxals – including officials, in some cases. A police official and a Naxal sympathiser, both point to the complex relation between "the politician, contractor/businessman, and Naxals; and also to the role that intermediaries play in facilitating these interactions".[51] It is this complex relationship that sustains the levy-economy, which facilitates Naxal operations in the region. Furthermore, as the deputy commandant of a specialised CPRF battalion elaborates: "the excessive use of paramilitary forces limits the scope for development of the local police force, which is central for security from the Naxal threat".[52]

[43] Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report 2004-05 - 2012-13*.

[44] Ajai Sahni, "Jharkhand: Paralysis and Drift", *South Asia Intelligence Review*, 6.8 (September 2007).

[45] Ajai Sahni, "Left Wing Extremism in India: Evolving Strategies for Containment", *CRPF Samachar*, 2006.

[46] Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, *Naxal Terror*, 2007, http://www.flonnet.com/fl2418/stories/20070921500400400.htm, accessed 28/03/2010.

[47] Prem Mahadevan, "The Maoist Insurgency in India: Between Crime and Revolution", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 23.2 (2012), 203, 211.

[48] Mahadevan, "The Maoist Insurgency", 210-15; Rajat Kumar Kujur, "From CRZ to SEZ: Naxal Reins of Terror", Article No. 2271 (New Delhi: Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies), 2007.

[49] Mahadevan, "The Maoist Insurgency", 208-10.

[50] Ibid., 219-20; Sukanya Podder, "The Politics of Gun Control and India's Internal Security", *Strategic Analysis,* 1.4 (2007), 675–87.

[51] Interview with Sub Inspector of Imamganj on 4/8/2012 and with a Naxal sympathiser in Imamganj on 31/7/2012.

[52] Interview with Deputy Commandant of CoBRA Battalion at Barhi, Hazaribagh on 6/8/2012.

2. Democracy and Development

The British colonial state saw the backwardness of Indian economy and its widespread poverty as an affect of 'Indian-ness'. Against the turbulent introduction of governmental legislation in Jharkhand, discussed in the previous section, the logic behind the emergent governmental apparatus saw "circulation of money in the hills ... [as] the most likely bait to ensure attachment of the [tribal] chiefs". By introducing the *zamindari* system whereby *zamindars* (landlords) acquired legal rights to evict peasants from land, an attempt was made to replace the customary land regime with legal land regimes.[53] The forested areas were brought under direct rule through land use regimes for mining and forest management.[54] The main feature of the emerging exclusionary policy was a paternalistic rule that was to facilitate maximum revenue with minimum administration mainly by extracting the mineral and forest resources of the region, but in the name of protecting the tribal from 'wily outsiders'.[55]

The nationalist discourse, contrarily, saw the colonial drain of wealth, agrarian involution, ruined handicraft industries, and suppressed manufacturing industry as the source of its backwardness.[56] Therefore the Indian state, aimed "to feed the starving people, and to clothe the naked masses, and to give every Indian the fullest opportunity to develop himself according to his capacity".[57] Furthermore, it was to be undertaken by the modern bureaucratic elite and intelligentsia to avoid severity of pre-industrial transformation through a 'passive revolution'.[58] Thus, the state and its planning mechanism was to "become the positive instruments of resolving conflict"[59] rooted in developmental deficit, by securing economic growth[60] instead of mass mobilisation and political negotiation.[61] Ironically, for the Jharkhand region, the post-colonial Indian state continued with the colonial, rationalist, integrationist, and bureaucratic model of tribal administration. The future of tribal administration, decided upon by the Constituent Assembly, argued that "(a) the tribals need to be 'civilised'; (b) development as defined by the mainstream [national industrial led development] is extremely desirable [for the tribals]; (c) the tribal groups need to integrated and assimilated into the mainstream; and (d) tribal customs need protection from the majority community".[62]

In the post-colonial Nehruvian discursive regime, the Planning Commission was to create conditions to ensure high living standards with full and equal opportunity for all its citizens by satisfying their basic needs for active social participation.[63] However, excessive bureaucratisation led to a technocratic understanding of poverty,[64] with poverty lines and poverty headcounts based on contested definitions of minimum needs, means to collect information and units of analysis. Poverty, thus, instead of being rooted in exploitative socio-economic and political structure, was seen to be caused by low levels of productivity and a lack of continuous work. Therefore, remedies involved enabling "the lowest income groups to earn enough through productive employment to meet their minimum

[53] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 59, 66-67.

[54] Alpa Shah, "The Intimacy of Insurgency: Beyond Coercion, Greed or Grievance in Maoist India", *Economy and Society,* 42.3 (2013), 429-31.

[55] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 44, 48.

[56] Corbridge et al., *Seeing the State*, 59.

[57] Speech by Jawaharlal Nehru while moving the 'Resolution on Aims and Objects', Constituent Assembly Debates, 22 January 1947.

[58] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments,* 208-09.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy: 1947–1977* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1978), 18.

[61] Thomas B. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Chichester: Princeton U. P., 1999).

[62] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 80-81.

[63] Government of India, *The First Five Year Plan*, (New Delhi: Planning Commission 1951), 613.

[64] Sudipta Kaviraj, "On State, Society and Discourse in India", *IDS Bulletin*, 21.4 (1990), 9.

needs".[65] This production of statistics on increasing absolute poverty amid acute agrarian crisis, an eroding Congress system and suspended planning symbolised serious issues confronting a weakened polity. This bureaucratic understanding and redressal of poverty and underdevelopment in India translated very poorly for the tribal regions of the state of Bihar. Over the course of this regime of development, Jharkhand saw increasing relative decline in the developmental profile of the region relative to that of Bihar.[66] Thus, it produced a paradoxical situation wherein industrial development was accompanied by agrarian impoverishment in the region of Jharkhand as it increasingly became an internal colony of Bihar and India. The commercial development of forest resources increased the restriction on the population dependent of them. On the industrial front, the region received one-fifth of India's total investment in the public sector undertaking in the industrial sector leading to rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. However, with steady increase in immigration, 10% of the immigrants ended up occupying 50% of the industries.[67]

In the closing years of the 1960s, a loosely aligned Jharkhand Legislative Party joined the coalition government in Bihar of 1967. In return, a statutory body for Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana was formed for deciding on matters of tribal education, employment, welfare and development policies. With the return of Congress in the next general election in 1972, developmental concerns of the region emerged on the national political scene.[68] However, institutional politics and its dominant development discourse of industrialisation for nation-building failed to redress local grievances. In both tribal and non-tribal agrarian areas, peasants mobilised on the issue of land-alienation and the poverty of share-croppers and agricultural labourers. By late 1960s, protest against growing encroachment on forest areas and natural resources became wide spread, together with struggles against coal companies of Dhanbad and Hazaribagh. The issue included compensation and rehabilitation of displaced peasants. The period between 1973 and 1975 was also the peak years of worker peasant alliance.[69]

The government response to the growing turbulence across India was the '*garibi hatao'* [remove poverty] campaign, which led to a highly populist and deinstitutionalising 'demand politics'[70] wherein interest groups could influence government agencies. Thus, capital-goods-based industrialisation was abandoned in the name of redistribution of growth[71] and benefits of development[72] through specific programmes for selected target groups of population and areas[73] to reduce disparities in income and living. In all this, 'redistribution with growth' and 'integrated rural development' with targeted beneficiaries became the hallmark of the developmental discourse of the 1970s.[74] For tribal Jharkhand, a distributive strategy of delivery of funds earmarked for tribal welfare policies and the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) was adopted. Administrative blocks, sub-divisions and districts with more than 50% of tribal population were chosen under the policy. The share of TSP in the total outlay of the plan increased from 14% to 17% during the fifth Five Year Plan, to 21% in the sixth Five Year Plan, 24% seventh Five Year Plan, and then

[65] Government of India, *The Third Five Year Plan*, (New Delhi: Planning Commission, 1961), 11.

[66] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 135, 150-68.

[67] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity*, 78, 82-88.

[68] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 115.

[69] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity*, 103-04, 142.

[70] Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: Chicago U. P., 1987).

[71] Corbridge et al., *Seeing the State,* 65-66.

[72] Government of India, *The Fifth Five Year Plan*, (New Delhi: Planning Commission, 1974), 8.

[73] Government of India, *The Sixth Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: Planning Commission. 1981), 17.

[74] Corbridge et al. *Seeing the State,* 68.

up to 36%. However with only 4% to 10% of the total allotted funds of the TSP was actually utilised, with marginal improvement in the developmental profile of the Jharkhand region. Soon Congress co-opted JMM leaders in the elections of 1980 as the more militant movement in the region was withdrawn.[75]

A new political constituency of 'the poor' was invented by making planning increasingly central to populist democracy and its vote bank politics.[76] Thus, politics of recognition, redistribution and representation within the context of the 'political society'[77] led to a functioning democracy amidst increasing political violence. It became increasingly difficult for the political process to accommodate the demands of the newly mobilised groups[78] that aimed to enhance the capabilities of the 'poor', by pursuing 'inclusive growth'.[79] Furthermore, development was evaluated in terms of the quality of life of people based on three critical dimensions of well-being: longevity, education and command over resources.[80] This led to the idea of active 'poor', participation, accountability, decentralisation and democratisation in poverty reduction schemes.[81] Debates focused on coverage, efficacy and reach of governance initiatives, its contestation through the politics of social justice and its democratic institutionalisation in the local socio-political context. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI)[82] thus generated a lot of expectations as institutions of local democracy as well as anchors of socio-economic transformation, rooted in their ability to structure the access of marginalised sections to local governance institutions, their control over developmental resources and distribution of developmental funds.[83] This new emphasis on the participation of the citizens, through PRI, has been on the agenda of all the political parties since 1999.

With wide discursive consensus about decentralisation and participation, the parliamentary debates focused on contesting implementation issues, challenging the centrality of PRIs as the primary implementing mechanism for all governance initiatives. In the 21st century, the democratic developmental discourse in India continued to see poverty emanating from unemployment and illiteracy as the main governance problem. In this pursuit, two primary legislations debated in parliament were the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA/MNREGA) 2005, directed against poverty and unemployment, and, the Right to Education (RTE).[84]

At the turn of the century, the state of Jharkhand was created on 15 November 2001. As the 28th state of the Union of India comprising of 18 districts of Bihar, the state of Jharkhand was created to enable the people of the region to chart alternate paths of development. However, as developmental funds from national and international agencies began to flow in, many tribal communities came to believe that "Jharkhand has been delivered to the very *dikus* (non-Adivasi or outsiders) that the Jharkhand movement had long committed to remove from power, and perhaps even residence, in the Land of Forests".[85] Due to the lack of stable political coalitions and opportunistic politics, Jharkhand has seen three general elections, six chief ministers and four periods of President's Rule since its

[75] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 123-4, 204-05.

[76] Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments,* 218-19.

[77] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflection on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia U. P., 2004).

[78] Several authors have argued for this point including Francine R. Frankel and M. S. A. Rao, eds., *Dominance and State Power in Modern India, Decline of social order*, 2 vols. (Delhi: Oxford U. P., 1989-90); Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (New York: Cambridge U. P., 1990); Francine R. Frankel et al., eds., *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2002); Ghanshyam Shah, *Social Movements in India: A Review of the Literature* (New Delhi: Sage, 2004).

[79] Government of India, *Approach to the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012)* (New Delhi: Planning Commission, 2006), 1.

[80] Government of India, *National Human Development Report 2001* (New Delhi: NHRC, 2002), 23.

[81] Ibid., 75-79.

[82] Emerged only after the 72nd and 73rd Amendments to the Constitution of India in 1992.

[83] For details see Niraja Gopal Jayal et al., eds., *Local Governance in India: Decentralisation and Beyond* (New Delhi: Oxford U. P., 2006); David N. Gellner and Krishna Hachhethu, eds., *Local Democracy in South Asia: Microprocesses of Democratisation in Nepal and Its Neighbours* (New Delhi: Sage, 2008); Girish Kumar, *Local Democracy in India: Interpreting Decentralisation* (New Delhi: Sage, 2006).

[84] Under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

[85] Stuart Corbridge, et. al., eds., *Jharkhand: Environment, Development, Ethnicity* (New Delhi: Oxford U. P. 2004), 1.

creation. The sheer diversity of ruling elites and their changing alliances has ensured that no chief minister has ever completed a full tenure in 15 years of the state's existence.

The developmental profile of the new state continued with its deplorable historical legacies with more than half its population living below the poverty line. Further its infrastructure was poor, with 60% of the villages lacking road connectivity and 85% lacking electrification. Jharkhand has the highest rate of food insecurity in the country, with a very poor, limited and corrupt public distribution.[86] In terms of health policies, the document hopes to provide free access to primary health care for all, but low budgetary allocation and lack of accountability at local levels of government makes the primary health system largely ineffective. With more than half its population illiterate, the state needs to improve school infrastructure. However, instead of filling teacher vacancies and strengthening the government school system, there is an increasing trend towards privatisation of education. Tribal students are more deprived as the medium of instruction is not in their mother tongue. Inadequate numbers of school with low number of teachers add to the severity of the problems of primary schooling system.[87] There is no reference to land reform in the Vision 2010 document despite widespread prevalence of land alienation amongst *Adivasis*. Moreover, the Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act, 2001, did not provide for any role of *gram sabha* (village community) consultation for acquiring land. Transfer of land from *Adivasis* to contractors through privately negotiated temporary leases has had serious implications for the livelihood of the local population as well as sustenance of common property resources.[88]

With its dismal human development index at the bottom among all Indian states, 22 out of the 24 districts of Jharkhand are affected in varying degrees, by Naxalism. These districts were clubbed with the Backward Districts Initiative (BDI), later extended as Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF). The original objective of the policy initiative was to remove barriers to growth, accelerate development and improve the quality of life. The index of backwardness comprised three parameters of equal weightage: "(i) value of output per agricultural worker; (ii) agriculture wage rate; and (iii) percentage of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population of the districts." However, two thirds of the districts identified do not satisfy the above criteria of backwardness.[89] Later, the Planning Commission categorised Naxal-affected districts across ten significant factors including high SC/ST population ration, low literacy, low urbanisation, high forest cover, high share of agricultural labour, low per capita food grain production, low level of road length per 100 square km, high share of rural households lacking bank accounts and high share of rural households without specified assets.[90] With the Forest Right Act (2006), forest dwellers have been given non-transferable, inalienable and inheritable land rights in forest areas.[91] However, despite increasing amount of developmental funds being poured into these Naxal-affected areas there remains the governance issue of seriousness in realizing policy. Further mobilisation against Special

[86] M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, *Food Insecurity Atlas of Rural India*, Chennai and World Food Programme, India, 2001; N. Rao, "Jharkhand Vision 2010: Chasing Mirages", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38.18 (2003), 1755; Jos Mooij, "Food and Power in Bihar and Jharkhand: PDS and its Functioning", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36.34 (2001), 3289-90.

[87] Kumar Rana and Samantak Das, "Primary Education in Jharkhand", *Economic and Political Weekly,* 39.11 (2004), 1171-1178.

[88] N. Rao, "Jharkhand Vision 2010", 1757; Nandini Sundar, "Bastar, Maoism and Salwa Judum", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41.29 (2006), 3187-92; Nitya Rao, "Displacement from Land: Case of Santal Parganas", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40.41 (2005), 4439-4442.

[89] V. Venkatesan, "A Flawed Concept", 2007 http://www.flonnet.com/fl2418/stories/20070921501702100.htm, accessed 28/3/2010.

[90] Planning Commission, *Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas: Report of an Expert Committee to the Planning Commission* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2008), 19-20.

[91] Corbridge, et al., *India Today,* 206-09**;** B. Bhatia, "The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40.14 (2005), 1536-1549.

Economic Zone (SEZ) has given a new lease of life to the mass movements of the CPI (Maoist).[92] SEZs have become mechanisms of 'accumulation by dispossession' with particularly adverse effects on Adivasi livelihood.

In practice, welfare schemes anchored on the 3-tier PRIs are seen as mechanisms ensuring redistribution and local participatory governance. This was believed to allow for a more coherent and effective public policy process, with responsibility for implementing developmental schemes.[93] However, nearly all respondents agreed that local state actors continued to wield decisive authority over the choice of developmental work and beneficiaries, in spite of claims about decentralisation and devolution of substantive power to PRIs. A *pramukhpati*[94] pointed out, "*afsarshahi* [rule by official] still continues".[95] Their autonomy is further curtailed by the over-insistence on procedure by officials to the detriment of the project. Thus, rigid and mechanical guidelines combined with a veto function performed by the local state circumscribe the fruitful participation under the PRIs.[96]

Turning to the efficacy of PRIs in structuring development policy outcomes, it was reported that they have been successful in ensuring the accountability of some components of development bureaucracy such as the local *anganwadi* (women and childcare units) workers and primary schools.[97] However, PRIs are not always successful in ensuring such a positive policy outcomes. For instance, an official in Hazaribagh pointed out that "only those who are better off among the reserved categories have been able to avail the benefits of reservation in education and employment".[98] Also, as the PRIs acquire a degree of participation-based legitimacy, the Naxal leadership is keen to partake of it by contesting elections to the PRIs and enhance their claims of legitimacy at the cost of the state.[99]

PRIs have increased the inclusivity of policies with effective and transparent verification of the beneficiaries, but have not had autonomy in term of choice of project and the manner in which they are to be implemented. Also, while they are successful in ensuring accountable governance by PRI-level official, they are ineffective against those higher-up. In terms of facilitating politically differentiating development, while the reservation of beneficiaries has created bottlenecks for the implementation of policies, those for women have varied in terms of the socio-cultural background of the representatives. In tribal areas, women PRIs have been extremely effective and reservation of seats has led to inclusion of many hitherto marginalised sections into the PRIs, which bode well for increasing popular participation and legitimacy.[100] However, in non-tribal areas, patriarchy rules ensure that more affluent, upper-caste women are side-lined by their husbands notwithstanding reservation of seats for them. Furthermore, problems of proxy-representation persist, especially in case of women are visible wherein husband or a male relative of such PRI representatives exercise her powers as *mukhiyapati* and *pramukhpati*.[101]This undermines the efficacy of the participative logic of empowerment that is embedded in the PRIs.

[92] Venkatesan, *A Flawed Concept*; Ramakrishnan, "Naxal Terror", http://www.flonnet.com/fl2418/stories/20070921500400400.htm, accessed 28/03/2010.

[93] Government of India, *Annual Report 2006-07* (New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2007), 27.

[94] A colloquial term for the husbands of women PRI representatives who interact with the larger public while the elected representative, the wife, meets officials.

[95] Interview at Kataksandi block, Hazaribag district, Jharkhand, 6/11/2011.

[96] Interview in Gaya on 10/11/2011.

[97] Interview with female Ward member of Banhepanchayat, Simariya on 17/11/2011.

[98] Interview in DRDO, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, on 3/11/2011.

[99] Interview with PRI representative in Lohardaga district, Jharkhand, on 12/11/2011; and with a state official in Chatra district on 17/11/2011.

[100] Address of PRI representative to the Gram Sabha in Lohardaga district, Jharkhand, on 12/11/2011.

[101] Interview in Chatra district, Jharkhand on 17/11/2011.

3. Recognition and Redistribution

The issue of special provision on grounds of social justice, first introduced in case of the tribal population in India, was based on the theory that two communities could not be expected to vote together for one common good. It was given official recognition by the Morley-Minto reforms, 1909, which granted separate electorate for Muslims. Since then all subsequent concessions for popular government with representative institutions was accompanied by an obligation on part of the government to ensure that minorities were protected from oppression and exploitation. The Government of India Act, 1919, gave the Provincial Governor special responsibility 'to protect the legitimate interests of the minorities'. With the 'Communal Award' of 1932, separate electorates were granted to Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo Indians, Depressed Classes (i.e., Scheduled Castes or Dalits in contemporary parlance), women, labour, commerce and industry, mining and planting and landholders.[102]

[102] Rao, *The Framing of India's Constituion,* 741-42.

Nationalists like Gokhale were quick to critique this as a policy of 'divide and rule'. They put forth an assimilationist all-inclusive ideology of 'unity in diversity' with "adequate safeguards ... for minorities, backward tribal areas, depressed and other backward classes.[103] With this goal, the Constituent Assembly discussed the scope of economic, political, and socio-cultural safeguards as well as the institutional mechanisms needed to administer these and ensure their subsequent continuation. Following these debates, the sub-committee rejected the provision of separate electorate, but conceded the reservation of seats in the legislature and in public service.

[103] Constitutent Assembly Debates, Vol. I, 57.

The attitude of the Constituent Assembly was to further 'exoticise' the Scheduled Tribes who were seen as "requiring long term protection and development. Thus, besides affirmative action policies, tribal areas (or Scheduled Areas) further benefited from being treated as separate administrative categories in order to protect the rights of Adivasis over land forest and water."[104] The Indian Constitution too, accepted the category of tribal as given, without offering clear guidelines for the identification of tribes. The Report of the Scheduled Caste and Tribe Commission, 1952, further reinforced this image by suggesting certain indicators for identifying tribal groups – isolation, racial characteristics, the use of 'tribal dialects', 'animism', 'primitive' economic activities, eating habits (non-vegetarian), dress ('naked or semi naked'), nomadism, propensity to drink and dance. Even the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission, appointed under the chairmanship of U.N. Dhebar set out the eligibility for declaration of Scheduled Areas as: "preponderance of tribals in the population; compact and reasonable size; under-developed nature of the areas; [and] marked disparity in economic standards of the people".[105]

[104] Shah, *In the Shadows of the State*, 18-19.

[105] Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity,* 32.

In Jharkhand, demands for a separate state was rejected by the State Reorganisation Commission. Electoral considerations, moreover, pushed regional

parties to open their membership to non-tribals as well. Moreover, segmentation of labour along ethnic lines occurred because of a discriminatory and exploitative mindset regarding the inability of tribals to acquire industrial skills, perpetuating pre-capitalist modes of production in service of the needs of capital. There was, above all, a steady increase in immigration of non-tribals who came to occupy 50% of the industrial jobs, accentuating the already existing Jharkhandi-*diku* tensions in the region.[106] There was also an increasing divide between Christian and non-Christian tribals, with demands to exclude the former from the list of Scheduled Tribes and its reservation benefits.[107] To further complicate the situation, there was an increasing number of marginalised non-tribals in the region since the mid-1970s. Hence, efforts were directed towards forming an alliance between tribal and non-tribal peasantry and workers. In this pursuit, the regional Jharkhandi identity was redefined as anyone who worked in the region, and a *diku* was anyone who exploited others.[108] Thus the mobilisation identity acquired a regional rather than ethnic basis in its demand for separate state.

[106] Ibid., 82-99.

[107] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 118-19.

[108] Prakash, *Jharkhand*, 120-2; Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity*, 145-46, 165-73.

In course of the 1980s, with the rise of caste-based leaders and lower caste and Scheduled Caste-based socialist parties focusing on reservation, the decision to implement the recommendations of the Second Backward Classes Commission (the Mandal Commission) extended the scope of reservations for the Socially and Economically Backward Classes at an all-India level of 49.5 per cent in the public sector.[109] However, the rise of Hindu nationalism under BJP, the communal politics of the Congress and anti-reservation sentiments of post-Mandal politics − all became a central feature of the political process at the turn of the century. The 1990s also saw a more general assault on the rise to power of the Other Backward Castes (OBC), with various caste groups demanding OBC status and contesting the scope of reservation, and with the growing support for reservations for women.[110] The rise of Hindu nationalist BJP in the 1990s in the tribal land of Jharkhand with their alternative project of Vananchal was supported by big businessmen, small traders and pretty bourgeoisie from the *sahu*, *teli*, and *bania* communities. It only included eighteen district of Bihar, instead of the 'Greater Jharkhand' demand that had been put forward by the Jharkhand movement which included districts from three other states as well. The more important strategy was to exploit the division within the tribal communities between the *saran dharmis* (indigenous tribal religious communities) and tribals who had converted to Christianity. The difference between the two communities was established and accentuated by the vast difference in their socio-economic status.

[109] Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 73.

[110] Corbridge et al., *Seeing the State,* 70-74.

Conclusion

The contemporary discursive consensus in India is dominated by concerns of coverage, efficiency and reach of governmental intervention, their political differentiation on grounds of redistribution, recognition and representation, and

the democratic institutional anchor to embed these practices. The multi-pronged consensus that anchors the contemporary governance processes is a product of both colonial and the post-colonial discourse. While some of the core premises of the colonial discourse were incorporated, the keenly-contested political context of the country has led the discursive premises to be rearticulated and renegotiated. The contemporary discursive consensus is thus a result of both, the constitutive premises as also the political experience of the country. Consequently, certain elements seem to have run unbroken for the past six decades (such as the consensus over security, particularly, internal security), while other elements have been introduced and renegotiated though the politics of the country. As has been delineated earlier, the discursive consensus on democracy and development has demonstrated a remarkable ability to incorporate continuity with change. So, while the dependence of the discourse on state-led development process to secure social change continues, a democratisation of the process in terms of many new actors and issues alongside institutional innovation (such as the PRIs) can be noticed.

Moreover, a remarkable degree of consensus exists on each of the threads of the discourse. The contests and disagreements do not interrogate the premises of the discourse, but focus on the governmental mechanisms and modalities. Its strength lies in the fact that it has been able to incorporate challenges as an integral thread of the discourse itself. The implications of such a process is that there is a degree of discursive coherence and stability in the governance processes, but this very stability also reduces the pace of social change in the context of a restless and highly mobilised polity. The extent to which the discursive consensus is able to accommodate the twin challenges of reconciling stability and socio-economic transformation will be a function of state capacity to address social conflict without violence.