

# Impact of Globalisation on the Empowerment of Tribal Women at Mining Sector in India: (Special Reference to West Bengal)

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## ABSTRACT

Mining has become one of the most important sources for the nation's development. It is recorded that it earned many crores from mineral production per annum. This resulted in rapid expansions of mining activities and hence, over exploitation of natural resources. Ironically, most of the mineral resources are located in tribal lands and the forests. Thus, mines have had an impact on forest-dependent tribal the most. The greatest impact of displacement due to mining has been the transformation of tribal from a close association and symbiosis with nature to culturally and ecologically degraded communities. The situation in these areas are already extremely disturbing, with massive mining leading to displacement of tribal, destruction of their livelihood support system including forests and water sources, large scale air and water pollution, and destruction of socio-cultural life through massive influx of outsiders. Besides, the R&R Act, 2007, GOI is inadequate to safeguard the economic, cultural and social interests and identities of the tribal people. This has strongly affected the mindset of the tribal people. Undoubtedly, mining induced displacement has brought a drastic changed in socio-economic and cultural life of the tribal people which provide symbolic meaning to their existence, social control, and interaction. Subsequently, it also resulted in emergence of many revolutionary movements in tribal areas which act as counterproductive in nation building process. Therefore, there is urgent need for re-examining the rehabilitation project by considering the people's socio-economic and cultural needs and immediate attentions are required from corporate sectors to provide basic needs of the displaced people who sacrificed for the growth of the industry. Such initiatives will help in reviving the relationship between the tribal people and the state from a contractual type to a symbiotic type. Considering the fact, it is desirable to rethink and reformulate our policy for a justified distribution of development benefits and to protect the due share of the poor tribal. Especially separate set of development measures are needed for tribes who mostly depend on their land and forest resources. In the wake of unrest problems, there is more need to enlist people's participation by creating employment opportunities and income generation activities through industry and other service sectors.

**Keywords:** Globalisation, Tribal Women, Impact of Empowerment, Mining Sector, Governmental provision.

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## INTRODUCTION

Our economic, social, cultural and political life is rigorously enmeshed into much wider and faster networks of modern world. Impact of westernization and modernization are very much evident in our socio-cultural life since mid-eighteenth century and as a result values to societies are fast changing. In other words, processes and dynamics related to globalization of ideas, institutions, products, objects and values are not new in human society. The term globalization is a short hand description of set interdependent processes, however, refers to a number of meanings. Popularly globalization is conceived in economic terms as the spread of free market of capitalism or more particularly 'multinational capitalism' to each and every part of the world.

The tribal population in India numerically constitutes a small segment of the total population of the country but it is a significant part of the population. According to 2001 census data (The constitution of India), total population of scheduled Tribes constitutes 8.2% of the total population of the country. Most of the Scheduled tribe population lives in rural areas and their population comprise 10.4% of the total rural population of the country.

Coal mining in India developed during the British rule. It was a semi-feudal economic system of production. Since 1940s, there was a growing demand for labour force in the collieries. Coal mining in India until 1947 largely took place in the eastern part of India. It was one area where women also took part in productive role in the labour

process. The so called marginalized ethnic groups and tribal people from Chhotanagpur plateau, Santal Pargana and adjoining Mayurbhanj area of Odisha and nearby Manbhum came to work in the Bengal collieries and brought their womenfolk and children with them. They are the major labour force in the Coal mining area of Bengal.

The productive organization in Indian rural society is carried out on the basis of division of labour. The farmers and artisans are in especial relationship of inter-dependence which is not only limited to economic aspect but has provided to other aspect of life. The tribal groups are not exceptions to the feature as they have also been brought within the sphere of Hindu economic organization. The Indian rural society is, therefore, considered as pre-dominantly non-industrial in nature. However, it is observed that a different picture among the tribal groups who have been pulled within the ambit of industrial set-up. Obviously these enterprises are located outside their natal places, and these tribal people due to growth of population and consequent pressure on land, are moving to these places as wage earners to balance their subsistence pattern.

All the sources of energy including coal also have its numerous negative impacts. On the march of development the resource rich earth is being destroyed and the dependent of natural resources are becoming the victims (Sahoo, 2005). Whatever may be its form, it may be an opencast or underground, involves itself with widespread social, environmental and ecological complications such as pollution of air, water, noise and soil, deterioration of agricultural production, degradation of both physical and mental health, involuntary displacement, breakdown of community ties and social networks etc. Usually, opencast mines require larger amount of land and owing to its nature of extraction, it nurtures several socio-economic and environmental hazards (Singh, 2015).

From the perspective of the mining industries, their thrust is to robustly carry out their monopoly activities without having any attention towards the primitive dwellers of the land. No doubt, mining take a step forward to empower the project affected communities by providing circumstances to avail employment opportunities, alleviated poverty, established new and planned connecting roads, school buildings etc. At the same time, mining also threatened the dominion of the indigenous communities (Mishra, 2012; Turton, 2009). As a result the local resources such as land, water, livelihood etc. are encountering varied faces of transformation (Bury & Jeffrey, 2002). So it is debatable, what happened with the indigenous communities, are they the beneficiaries or victims? By carrying out endless mining activities undoubtedly the country is becoming resource rich but at the same time it has brought displacement, modified their livelihood and also ignored the social and economic life of the indigenous communities (Velath, 2009).

Sometimes, coal extraction is leading to land use conflicts with the native inhabitants. Local residents used to oppose the establishment of mining industries owing to the fear of hindering their habitual pattern of livelihood. Usually, mining takes place in the mineral rich regions where, people are mostly dependent on nature and natural resources to sustain their livelihoods. But the modern commercial activities like coal mining industries are hampering their traditional way of life and also forcibly vacating their homestead lands. The assurance of reclamation and reuse of land, proper rehabilitation etc. remains in the pen and paper only. At the same time, the welfare measures serving directly to the governing fragments and others remain as victims without adequate manifestations of these so called development activities (Hilson, 2002; Andrew, 2003).

The growth of mining industries has contributed to the world's economic development including India. However, the mining industries are proving to be better investors by providing employment, both directly and indirectly, local infrastructural development and through foreign exchange earnings. Essentially, the establishment of mining industry necessitates the acquisition of fertile regions and on this march; they have been recognized as environmentally and socially stubborn substance (Melanie *et al.*, 2007). In this regard, the impact of mining has been undertaken by varieties of researchers around the world.

Moreover, mining is a cost-effective industry in many developing countries. Activities that can be either small or large scale are intrinsically offensive to the society, while producing mass scale displacement. Whereas, mining has its root in insensitive long term effects on the affected communities, it barely cares for their betterment. It has enormous juncture of deeds, each one of which has buried range of impact on the social networks, natural environment, cultural identity and traditional authority. Up to some degree, mining companies are trying to be better commune by adopting the resettlement and rehabilitation policies, under which the displaced communities are able to ascertain the remuneration on certain aspects like physical, job and monetary. But, if we look intently into the sustainable feature of improving human well-being, we could draw the conclusion of wasteful deterioration as a consequence of mining (Downing, 2002). Displacement not only engrosses the substantial expulsion from the land but also involves in the process of disarticulation of moveable and immovable assets. Across the world, displacement is causing horrifying effects on the life and livelihood of uncountable people (Mishra, & Sahoo, 2015).

## METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on descriptive research design by using case study analysis. The research is done by the secondary sources of data includes books, news reports, journals, articles published from time to time, news paper coverage,

reportage, archives of government records, unpublished papers, media and any insightful thoughts expressed by any individual working on this related research. The study has relied on various information and data collected from Internet.

### FINDINGS

The present paper emphasis the empowerment of tribal women in mines sector in India. Women and children are more than two-thirds of the country's total population and constitute the most important target groups in the context of the present day developmental planning. In globalized era the empowerment is the process of challenging power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power. The present paper intends to highlight the women empowerment in the colliery region of Asansol- Raniganj area.

In India, the scheduled Tribes are usually referred to as Adivasis, which literally means indigenous people. The present paper emphasis the empowerment of tribal women in mines sector in India. In globalised era the empowerment is the process of challenging power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power. The goals of women's empowerment especially tribal women are to challenge patriarchal ideology to transform the structures and institutions that strengthen and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality and to enable poor women to gain access to and control of both material and informational resources.

In Bengal, the influence of British culture and education was felt earlier than in other parts of India. In the metropolis of Calcutta, a category of gentle women emerged or were rather created under the patronage of both Indian and European social reformers. At the same time local poor and lower caste women were engaged in coal extracting job in the remote collieries of Bengal. Educated people were least interested in knowing the dilemma of these women who mostly came from the local adivasis.

Coal was first struck in eastern India by two employees of the East India Company in 1774, Mr. S.G Heatly and John Summer. However after initial stage the industry began to take shape in the 1820s. Actually the abolition of east India Company's trading monopoly in 1813 and introduction of railways proved encouraging for the growth of the industry. Initially mining exploration and production were confined to the Europeans only. But Prince Dwarkanath Tagore's Carr, Tagore and Company was an exception. Carr, Tagore and Company was soon merged with Gilmore Humphrey and company to form the Bengal Coal Company that soon became the largest operator. In 1860 the fifty collieries of Bengal Coal Company produced 99 per cent of Indian coal. Since the beginning of coal industry in Bengal, the mine workers used to work in family groups consisting of husband, wife and children. Rupert William Jones was the first to employ local adivasi and lower caste labour around the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century in chinakoori mine in Raniganj. The santhals and Bauris started using the pike axes and chisel for cutting coal. They easily got absorbed in their new occupation. The adult males would cut the coal at the pit face which was then loaded into baskets or tubs by the women and children and taken to the shaft (pipe) bottom. If the mine was much deep, a series of ladders had to be climbed by women carrying baskets on their heads. (Banerjee, 2015).

Opening of mines provided an alternative opportunity for the women. Female labour was relatively unassuming and well equipped to undertake many unskilled tasks. The high point of women's employment in the mines was around 1920, when they formed about two-fifths of the total work force. This dropped to one-tenth after the complete ban of women from underground work in 1939. The original adivasi workforce was replaced by upcountry labourers who were single male at the turn of the century. Thus the collieries soon began to breed a generation of their own specialist women labourers. Actually the uneconomic holdings of cultivable land combined with better economic prospect drew the rural masses together with their women folk to work in coal mines. Women were found as loaders or transporters to subsidize family income.

But safety and security were sadly lacking. The Mines Maternity Benefit and the coal Mines Provident Fund Scheme Act of 1948 did not improve matters. The proportion of women in pre-nationalization coal mining industry thus began to fall. The ILO conventions and the Indian Mines Act of 1952 restricted the job of women labour in mines between the War and just after India's independence. However, no special measures have been taken for female workers. During pregnancy they have to work between different gasses, colliery is likely to collapse at any time.

In post nationalization times, women's participation in the coal mines of India rapidly declined. By this time new technologies such as dragline and shovel for the open caste mines, long wall for underground mines have been introduced. Though Tribal women are being marginalized in the coal industry, some efforts have been made to look into the interest of women. In 1997 the Coal India Limited encouraged the formation of an organization called "Women in Public Sector" (WIPS). Its objective was to optimize the full potential of its women employees and to play a catalytic role in improving the status of women within the industry. But the development of science and technology, we find that, women engineers in the CMPDIL or women dumper operators in big projects like Sonepur Bazari under ECL. With the change in technology the coal industry has undergone all round development. But the development has

provided little opportunities for tribal women. Now women can equally work with men in extraction of coal with the help of modern science and technology.

Globalization is usually biased against unskilled workers. Rural women mostly engaged in unskilled labour have to suffer because their unskilled work is invisible and unprotected in the work 'economy'. Their impoverished situation is making them more vulnerable to a social evil like prostitution. In remote areas the literacy rate of women belonging to Backward Classes and tribal is not even 4%. Thus it becomes easier for the procurers and the middlemen to influence or coerce these women and girls into prostitution. Globalization has also made inter-state and international trafficking of women easier due to increased mobility on the one hand and increased vulnerability on the other. Girls and young women living below the poverty line or belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Schedules Tribes or Backward Class or illiterate unskilled workers in rural areas are comparatively more vulnerable to this evil. Education and economic independence of women can counter this vulnerability.

The rapid expansion of industries and mines in tribal areas was followed by a phenomenal growth in urbanization and a large-scale influx of outsiders to the area. This in turn has resulted in increased land alienation and displacement of indigenous people. This displacement, caused by the expansion of the industrial-urban sector further resulted, in many cases, in the migration of tribal people to outside regions in search of livelihood. The immigrant outsiders have legally or by fraud displaced the tribal people from their habitat. In Singhbhum the proportion of STs and SCs fell from 58.54 per cent in 1931 to 47.38 per cent in 1991; the proportion of ST alone fell from 54.08 per cent in 1931 to 42.28 per cent in 1991. The situation is similar in other parts of Jharkhand. Districts like Dhanbad, Ranchi and Hazaribagh have also had a very great increase in the number of immigrants. About 32 per cent of the people living in Dhanbad district in 1981 were in-migrants. During 1981-91 alone the proportion of STs to the total population in the whole of Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas fell from 30.26 per cent to 27.67 per cent. This clearly shows the rapid increase in the influx of outsiders. The displacement of indigenous people can also occur through indirect pressure on their lives by the establishment of industries, mines, towns, etc. One such factor which forces them to move out of their habitats is the pollution of air and water. For example, the cement dust from the ACC cement factory at Jhinkpani in Singhbhum is polluting the air and making vast areas of agricultural and practically useless. Besides this, the adivasis have an aversion towards the dikus and move out of their areas because of conflict of cultures when the dikus become a majority (Areeparampil, Mathew, 1996). The increasing criminalization of society in the industrial-urban sector due to robbery, goondaism, prostitution, communal riots, etc, is another reason why the simple tribal people opt out of such areas. This negative urban pressure is accompanied by rising price offers by speculators for their land. These push and pull effects have indirectly forced the tribal people to move out of their hearths and homes.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> amendments of the constitution of India have fixed 33% reservation for women in local bodies and it is further enhanced to 50% in 2010 which came into force in 2012, the reservation for SC/ ST women within the quota will be proportionate to be the population in the area. This brings an opportunity for the tribal women to come forward and be part of the decision making process. They came out of the periphery of the village and be a part of the administration. They are encouraging other of the community to move to the path of empowerment.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, mining has become one of the most important sources for the nation's development. It is recorded that it earned Rs.59509 crores from mineral production per annum. This resulted in rapid expansions of mining activities and hence, over exploitation of natural resources. Ironically, most of the mineral resources are located in tribal lands and the forests. Thus, mines have had an impact on forest-dependent tribal the most. The greatest impact of displacement due to mining has been the transformation of tribal from a close association and symbiosis with nature to culturally and ecologically degraded communities. The situation in these areas are already extremely disturbing, with massive mining leading to displacement of tribal, destruction of their livelihood support system including forests and water sources, large scale air and water pollution, and destruction of socio-cultural life through massive influx of outsiders.. Undoubtedly, mining induced displacement has brought a drastic changed in socio-economic and cultural life of the tribal people which provide symbolic meaning to their existence, social control, and interaction. Subsequently, it also resulted in emergence of many revolutionary movements in tribal areas which act as counterproductive in nation building process. Therefore, there is urgent need for re-examining the rehabilitation project by considering the people's socio-economic and cultural needs and immediate attentions are required from corporate sectors to provide basic needs of the displaced people who sacrificed for the growth of the industry. Such initiatives will help in reviving the relationship between the tribal people and the state from a contractual type to a symbiotic type. Considering the fact, it is desirable to rethink and reformulate our policy for a justified distribution of development benefits and to protect the due share of the poor tribal. Especially separate set of development measures are needed for tribes who mostly depend on their land and forest resources. In the wake of unrest problems, there is more need to enlist people's participation by creating employment opportunities and income generation activities through industry and other service sectors.

In spite of various constitutional provisions and policies for the tribal's, it is a hard reality that the tribal women still are lagging behind in many respects and they have to face many challenges. Government is providing a lot of support and

grant for the education of tribal students. This will help to increase the literacy rate and it will lead to the right way to development. Thus increasing the literacy rate and providing opportunities for gainful employment for tribal women will be instrumental in bringing about a change in the status of tribal women in India and to handle to challenges successfully.

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