

Tribal Majority in Jharkhand: Myth and Reality

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ABSTRACT

The state of Jharkhand is an abode of thirty two tribes found and settled in most of its districts. Undoubtedly the tribals played a key role in making Jharkhand a separate state, hence an idea gradually developed that it is a tribal dominated state. As per Census Reports 2011, the Population of Jharkhand stands at more than 32 million people, making it the 13th most populated state in India. The state makes up about 3.5% of the country's population a figure which was about 3% during the last census in 2001. The state is spread over an area of about 79000 sq. km. According to the Census 2011 the Scheduled Tribe population of the State is 8,645,042 persons. It only constitutes 26.2 per cent of the total population of the State. Even the Scheduled Tribe population of the State counted, as per 2001 census, 7,087,068 persons constituting 26.3 per cent of the total population (26,945,829) of the State. The Scheduled Tribes are primarily rural as 91.7 per cent of them reside in villages. Apparently, the tribes in the state is not in majority presently or historically. The present study, therefore, focuses on factual status of tribes and places them in true perspective in Jharkhand.

Keywords: Schedule Tribe, Census, Population, Chotanagpur, Santal Parganas. Percentage,

Introduction

In 2000, the geographical area of South Bihar consisting of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas was separated from Bihar and establishment of Jharkhand as 28th State (15 November 2000) under Indian Constitution was declared with its administrative headquarters at Ranchi. In view of the very name of the state i.e. Jharkhand, it appears that the tribal communities are in majority in the state as they fought for more than seven decades for the establishment of Jharkhand. But a close study of Demographic account of tribals and non-tribals of the state discloses that the tribals are not in majority in Jharkhand. In fact, the tribal majority in is a myth as far as population of the state is concerned. However, the study of other facts about the state also discloses the myth of tribal majority in Jharkhand. Apart from population account, in spheres of Parliamentary seats—Lok Sabha :14 and Rajya Sabha:6 and state legislature assembly seats –02 including one nominated member—tribals do not enjoy majority status in the state. In nine districts out of twenty four districts, no legislative seat is reserved for the tribals.

In the light of state's population—21843911 persons according to 1991 census, the tribal population is only 6044010 persons. It is only 27.67 percent of the state's total population. Thus tribal majority in the state is a misnomer and without ground realities. The myth is traced and reality is discussed in this paper.

Motivation and Objective

The objective of this paper is to explain and reveal the myth of tribal majority in Jharkhand. Apart from demographic status of the tribals, in sphere of parliamentary seats and legislative seats the tribals are not in majority in Jharkhand. Motivated by the data of demography and representation in democratic institutions, the paper explores the realities of tribal domination with its various aspects in Jharkhand.

Purpose and Hypothesis

The underlying purpose of the study is to trace and discuss the factual status of tribes in the state and explode the common understanding and idea that the tribal communities are in majority in respect of

demography, representative parliamentary and legislative seats etc. in Jharkhand. As the state is an abode of thirty two tribes found and settled in most of its districts and tribals played a key role in making Jharkhand a separate state, it is considered as a tribal dominated state but hypothetically the said idea of tribal domination is not well found rather a myth and in this paper it is properly discussed and assessed in historical perspective of its numerical strength, representative seats etc.

Methodology:

The study is completely based on published source materials available in libraries and archives. Books, articles published in journal and newspapers, smarika, Bihar District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas, etc .are included in published sources. After going through all the sources ,concerned historical facts and data are properly analysed and fairly assessed for discussion and description of reality behind the curtain in calling Jharkhand a state of tribal majority. These published sources provided authentic facts and figures in revealing the myth of tribal majority and reality of their true status in Jharkhand.

The State of Jharkhand: A Cradle Land of Tribal Communities

The state of Jharkhand is a cradle land of thirty two tribes and settled more or less almost in its twenty four districts and 45 sub-divisions in the state .It is stretched over about 79714 square kilometers. It is situated between from 21.58 to 25.18 northern latitude and from 83.22 to 87.57 in eastern longitude. It is bounded by Bihar in the north, Odisha in the south, West Bengal in the east and Madhya Pradesh in the west. Its maximum length from east to west is 457 Kilometres and width from north to south is about 310 kilometres. According to 1991 census, the total population of the state is 21843911 persons, male 11363853,it is 52.02 percent and female 10480058,it is 47.98 percent of the total population of the state. Its total tribal population is 6044010 persons .It is only 27.67 percent of the total population of the state. There are total 1059715 tribal male males, it is 50.62 percent and 2984295 tribal females ,it is 49.38 percent of the tribal population of Jharkhand.

District and Division wise Percentage of Tribal Population

Before formation of Jharkhand in 2000, according to Census 1991, there were twenty two districts in the region i.e. south Bihar(now Jharkhand) ,only eight districts were tribal infested regions and these were following—Ranchi, Lohardaga, Gumla, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum,Sahibganj,Godda,and Dumka while following nine districts are less tribal infested areas—Deoghar, Hazaribagh, Chatra, Koderma, Dhanbad, Bokaro,Giridih,Palamau and Garwha.This apparently manifested in by following percentage of tribal population account based on

1991 Census: District and Division

District wise Percentage of Tribal Population

S.N.	District Tribal	Percentage of Population
1.	Dumka	41.55
2.	Godda	25.09
3.	Deoghar	12.76
4.	Sahibganj	31.08
5.	Pakur	49.33
6.	Hazaribagh	13.62
7.	Chatra	3.83
8.	Koderma	1.43
9.	Dhanbad	8.81
10.	Bokaro	12.18
11.	Giridih	9.91
12.	Ranchi	43.56
13.	Lohardaga	56.41
14.	Gumla	70.80
15.	East Singhbhum	28.92
16.	West Singhbhum	54.70
17.	Palamau	19.26
18.	Garhwa	15.65

Division Wise Numerical Percentage of Tribal Population: Census 1991

Santal Parganas Division	31.89
North Chotanagpur	9.65
South Chotanagpur	48.02
Palamau	19.08

Thus it is apparent that the non-tribals were in majority before the formation of Jharkhand formed after separation of South Bihar comprised of Chotanapur and Santal Parganas. The total population of Backward Communities was

7528710 persons, it was 34.48 per cent of the total population of the region now formed Jharkhand. The Muslims with numerical strength of 2659865 persons then accounted for 12.18 per cent of the total population of South Bihar. The total scheduled caste population was 2589252 persons and it was 11.85 per cent of the total population of Santal Parganas and Chotanagpur. The total population of general including minorities and other communities was 56 77 939 and it was 26 per cent of the total population of the region. The numerical strength of Hindu population was 16852864 and it was 77.15 per cent

of the total population of South Bihar.
Division Wise Numerical Strength of Tribal Population: Census 1991

Even on divisional level, the tribals are not in majority in any divisions in Jharkhand. On the occasion of formation of Jharkhand there were then four divisions Santal Parganas (H.O.Dumka), North Chotanapur (H.O.Hazaribagh), South Chotanagpur (H.O.Ranchi) and Palamau (H.O.Palamau) and undernoted data disclose that demographically tribals were not in majority—.

Sr. No	Divisions	Backwards	S.T.	S.C.	General & Others	Total Population
1.	Santal Parganas	1759448	1463937	363472	1004235	4591092
2.	North Chotanapur	3334883	747792	1249073	2411927	7743675
3.	South Chotanagpur	1476005	3389015	362147	1830786	7057953
4.	Palamau	962374	443266	414560	430991	2451191

It is significant to note that according to Census 1991 there were 27.67 percent of tribals and 72.33 percent of non-tribals (SC, Backward, General and others) in the state. In this regard, district wise comparative percentage of demographic strength of tribals and non-tribals according to Census Reports 1991 is highly significant that reveal the position of tribals and non-tribals in the state

15. E.Singhbhum	28.92	16.16	4.79	50.13
16. Lohardaga	56.41	23.86	3.78	15.94
17. Palamau	19.26	37.02	25.68	18.02
18. Garhwa	15.65	43.87	23.81	15.66
Jharkhand	27.67	34.48	11.85	26.00

District wise Population :Census 1991 (Before formation of Jharkhand)

District wise Percentage of Tribal Demography(Census 1991) Non-Tribals

Sr. no	District	Tribals	Backward	S.C. Castes	Others
1.	Godda	25.09	45.29	8.46	21.15
2.	Sahibganj	31.08	30.75	6.69	31.47
3.	Pakur	49.33	19.50	3.81	21.87
4.	Dumka	41.55	39.58	6.69	11.91
5.	Deoghar	12.76	47.24	12.40	27.60
6.	Hazaribagh	3.62	49.95	14.63	25.80
7.	Chatra	3.63	43.48	32.42	20.25
8.	Koderma	1.43	59.19	16.96	22.82
9.	Dhanbad	8.81	33.27	16.03	41.89
10.	Bokaro	12.18	30.39	13.57	43.85
11.	Giridih	9.91	58.11	13.51	18.47
12.	Ranchi	43.56	22.18	5.57	28.69
13.	Gumla	70.80	17.55	5.31	6.34
14.	West Singhbhum	54.70	25.33	5.01	14.96

	Total Population	Tribal Population
1.Godda	861182	216047
2.Sahibganj	736835	228990
3.Pakur	564253	278331
4.Dumka	1495709	621484
5.Deoghar	933113	119085
6.Hazaribagh	601567	218121
7.Chatra	612713	23487
8.Koderma	629264	8978
9.Dhanbad	1949526	1741
10.Bokaro	1454416	177123
11.Giridih	1496182	148342
12. Ranchi	2214048	964422
13.Gumla	1153976	816988
14.W.Singhbhum	1787955	978069
15.E.Singhbhum	1613088	466572
16.Lohardaga	288886	162964
17.Palamau	1 649841	317834
18.Garhwa	801350	125432
Jharkhand	21843911	6044010
	(72.33 %)	(27.67%)

Tribal Majority in Districts

As far as district wise statistics of the population is concerned, only in four districts tribals are in majority. According to Census 1991, in Gumla district tribal population account for 70.80 per cent, in Lohardaga 56.41 per cent, in Western Singhbhum 54.70 per cent and in Pakur district 49.33 per cent of the total population of the each district. In nine districts—Deoghar, Hazaribagh, Chatra, Koderma, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Giridih, Palamu and Garhwa—of the state, the numerical strength of tribal population is less than 20 per cent of the population of each district. In rest of five districts the maximum strength of tribal population accounted for 44 per cent approximately as it is mentioned below

	District	Percentage of Tribal Population
1.	Godda	25.09
2.	East Singhbhum	28.92
3.	Ranchi	43.56
4.	Sahibganj	31.08
5.	Dumka	41.55

Census 2001 and 2011

Thus demographically the tribals were not in majority before formation of Jharkhand (South Bihar comprised of Santal Pargana and Chotanagpur) in 2000. There were only 27.67 percent of tribal population against 72.33 percent of non tribal population in the region later formed as Jharkhand in 2000. According to the Census 2011 the Scheduled Tribe population of the State is 8,645,042 persons. It only constitutes 26.2 per cent of the total population of the State. Even the Scheduled Tribe population of the State counted, as per 2001 census, 7,087,068 persons constituting 26.3 per cent of the total population (26,945,829) of the State.

District wise Percentage of Tribal Population : Census 2001

	District	Percentage of Tribal Population
1.	Garhwa	15.35
2.	Palamu	18.69
3.	Chatra	3.83
4.	Hazaribagh	4.78
5.	Koderma	0.81
6.	Giridih	9.68
7.	Deoghar	12.24
8.	Godda	23.62
9.	Sahibganj	29.14

10.	Pakur	45.58
11.	Dumka	39.88
12.	Dhanbad	8.42
13.	Bokaro	12.29
14.	Ranchi	12.29
15.	Lohardaga	55.70
16.	Gumla	68.35
17.	West Singhbhum	55.35
18.	East Singhbhum	27.84

District wise Percentage of Tribal Population : Census 2011

	District	Percentage of Tribal Population
1.	Khunti	73.25
2.	Simdega	70.78
3.	Gumla	68.94
4.	West Singhbhum	67.31
5.	Lohardaga	56.89
6.	Latehar	45.54
7.	Dumka	43.22
8.	Pakur	42.10
9.	Ranchi	35.76
10.	Saraikela/Kharsawan	35.18
11.	Jamtara	30.40
12.	East Singhbhum	28.51
13.	Sahibganj	26.80
14.	Godda	21.26
15.	Ramgarh	21.19
16.	Garhwa	15.56
17.	Bokaro	12.39
18.	Deoghar	12.13
19.	Giridih	9.74
20.	Palamu	9.34
21.	Dhanbad	8.68
22.	Hazaribagh	7.02
23.	Chatra	4.37
24.	Koderma	0.96

Gradual Decline in Percentage of Tribal Population

Census	Year	Percentage of Tribal Population
1.	1991	27.67
2.	2001	26.3
3.	2011	26.2

Legislative Assembly Seats and Tribals

The total number of Legislative Assembly seats is 81 and one nominated member of Anglo Indian Community. (total 82 seats) But only 22 seats are reserved for tribals rest 59 seats—10 seats for SC and 49 for General, are for non-tribals. So non-tribals

are in a position to hold the reins of government in Jharkhand. Tribals independently can not form government with 22 seats only in the state.

Parliamentary Seats and Tribals

There are 14 Parliamentary seats in Jharkhand. But only five Parliamentary seats – Rajmahal, Dumka, Singhum, Khunti and Lohardaga—are reserved for Scheduled Tribes, one Parliamentary Seat Palamu—is reserved for Scheduled Castes, and rest eight seats Godda, Chatra, Koderma, Giridih, Dhanbad, Ranchi, Jamshedpur and Hazaribagh are general seats. Thus it is apparently clear that in allotment of Assembly Seats and Parliamentary Seats, tribals do not enjoy majority.

Tribal and Reservation of Legislative Assembly Seats in Districts

Out of 24 districts (presently in the state), in five districts only, i.e. West Singhbhum, Khunti, Gumla, Simdega and Lohardaga (total = 5+2+3+2+1=13 seats respectively) all thirteen seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes. But in eleven districts of the State not a single seat is reserved for the tribals. These districts are Jharkhand, Deoga, Godda, Koderma, Hazaribagh, Ramgarh, Chatra, Giridih, Bokaro, Palamu and Garhwa. It is interesting to note that after its formation the non-tribal ministers dominated the state cabinet in Jharkhand. There were total seventeen cabinet ministers in the state, but there were only five tribal cabinet ministers. There were ten state ministers in the state cabinet, but only tribal M.L.A.s were state ministers. Presently Coalition Government led by Hemant Soren is in power with total eleven ministers, but there are only four tribals (M.L.A.) are Ministers (including C.M.) in Jharkhand. Thus from all perspective it is apparently clear that the tribals never enjoyed majority status in Jharkhand although it occupies a huge tribal population with one of the biggest tribal zones in the country.

Conclusion :

As the tribals played a key role in making Jharkhand a separate state under Indian Constitution, a misnomer gradually developed that it is a tribal dominated state. After assessing Census Records 1991-2011, it is crystal clear that tribal domination in Jharkhand is a myth and demographically the tribals constitute even less than 27 percent of the total population of the State. Historically or presently the tribals were/are not in dominant status in Jharkhand.

According to the Census 2011 the Scheduled Tribe population of the State is 8,645,042 persons. It only constitutes 26.2 per cent of the total population of the State. In respect of reservation of seats of Legislative Assembly and Parliament also, tribals are not in majority in Jharkhand.

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