

Research Title

Ethnicity, Exclusion and Entitlement: Politics of Development and Articulation of Indigenous Identity among the Mundas of Northwest Bangladesh

Year: 2008

Place of fieldwork: Niamatpur, Naogaon, Bangladesh

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Key Words: adibashi, development, economic exchange relationship, traditional.

Research background:

This study is about the Mundas of northwest Bangladesh, who are regarded as ‘adibashi’ both by themselves and by their Bengali neighbors who constitute the majority of the region. The Mundas are represented as primitive, excluded, underdeveloped and static localized people on policy agendas. Their fault, which has been claimed in policy agendas that they have not joined the ‘mainstream’ of social progress. I feel that, there is very little discussion about the changing histories of Mundas i.e. the undergoing political, economic and social changes of Mundas’ life. Through this study I hope it will shed light on the transformation that they had experienced over time.

Research purpose and aim:

I plan to trace the transformation by examining the ways in which new kinds of knowledge – values and practices comes to replace or co-exist with older forms and examine its effect on people’s social relationships. This study was began with this awareness that the Mundas are not juts an isolated, localized people; they respond and interpret their positioning in their everyday life. To establish a sustainable development program for Mundas and to search for a sustainable humanosphere, I think it is need to take account of on-going historical processes that shape the politics and socio organization in particular local context.

Results and achievements by fieldwork:

The study has examined the transformation of Mundas in the field of economic exchange relationship and their growing awareness in the political sphere. I have found Mundas involvement in different economic activities and their opinion on such diversification. I have witnessed some incidents where I found how they were reshaping their positioning in the present context. I found several forms of negotiation and understanding that are present in the economic exchange relationship, Mundas involvement and their sharp opinion about the politics, their desire to education, distrust and mistrust among themselves and with their neighbours. I came to know Mundas strategy of survival in the current socio, political and economic context of northwest Bangladesh. I see the Mundas effort in local situation who constantly responding to the current situation, in other words reformulating their position in their day to day interaction with the both Bengali and adibashi neighbours i.e. landowning groups, Bengali and adibashi peasants, NGO workers, school teachers, local leaders, state

official, local administrative unit and so on.

Implications and impacts on future research:

As the G-COE aim to discover and understand the cultural, social and institutional resources in localities and regions of the world to pursue the paradigm of humanosphere - sustainable development, I hope this study will contribute to that end.

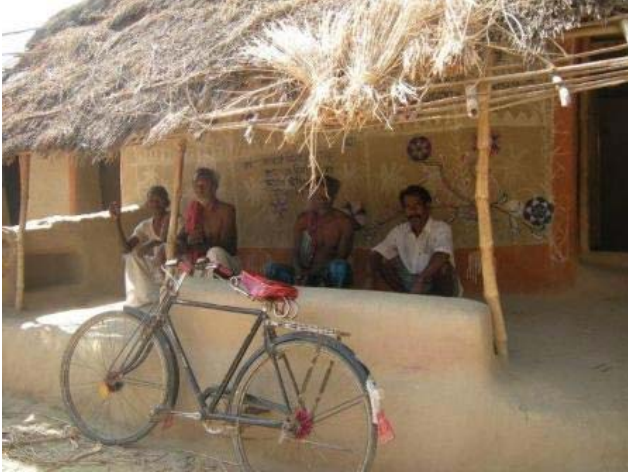
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Picture 1: On the occasion of “Durga Puja”(religious festival): The Mundas of Niamatpur, Naogaon, Bangladesh



Picture 2: Munda women working in the paddy field



Picture 3: A view of typical Munda House