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Agrarian transitions and rural social relations in Jharkhand, India

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Abstract

Rural Jharkhand has attracted lesser attention in the field of agrarian studies in India, despite more than eighty percent of its rural population being directly dependent on agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. The limited studies on agrarian issues in Jharkhand have focused predominantly on the subsistence nature of agriculture and low crop productivity. Also, there has not been much research on agrarian social relations between 'tribe' and 'non-tribe' communities in the region. Our ethnographic village studies of regions- 'Khunti' and 'Palamu' depicts steady agrarian transitions (especially shift from indigenous to HYV paddy seeds), enabling food sufficiency in the villages to a larger extent. The other kinds of agrarian transitions can be observed in the recent initiation of commercial crops such as watermelon, marigold and vegetable cultivations. While agricultural productivity still remains low, both the regions are witnessing slow but gradual agrarian transitions influenced by range of (old and new forms) agricultural intermediaries, particularly Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and agriculture input companies. These agricultural intermediaries in the field villages can be understood between; i) the state and farmers; ii) non-state actor (NGO) and farmers; and iii) agricultural input companies and farmers. Also, rural-urban linkages in the form of seasonal labor migration are creating capital and technical inflows that are transforming agricultural activities. In additions, the study also tries to understand existing agrarian labour relations between tribal and non-tribal communities. In Palamu, agrarian relations are dominated by the presence and significant population size of Hindu (high and backward) caste land owners, whereas in the Khunti, agrarian relations are characterized by the population size and dominance of tribes and low caste (artisans-Dalits) land owner cum cultivators. The agrarian labour relations between 'Hindu (high and backward) castes' and 'tribes' in these regions are primarily related to agricultural 'daily wage labour'. However, the agrarian labour relations between 'Dalits' and 'Tribes' take the form

of 'communal system of labour exchange' and 'household-based labour'. Since, the land sizes are small and fragmented, the share-cropping is observed very limited in the region. This study describes and interprets the above changes through the lens of 'regional rurality'. The term 'regional rurality' in our study is confined to distinctive relationships between various castes, castes and tribes, institutions and forms of agrarian classes that vary from one region to another region and its historical specificities. With this approach, the study tries to understand this distinctive region and its rurality by breaking up the idea of 'universality of subsistence' character of agrarian Jharkhand.

Keywords

Rural Jharkhand, regional rurality, agricultural intermediaries, agrarian transitions, tribes, non-tribes.

Acronyms

HYV - High Yielding Variety

CNTA - Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act

CPI (ML) - Communist Party of India (Marxist-Lenin)

NGO - Non Governmental Organization

OBC - Other Backward Caste

SC - Scheduled Caste

ST - Scheduled Tribe

SHG - Self Help Group

SRI - Systematic Rice Intensification

SJGSY - Swarna Jayanti Grameen Swarozgar Yojana

GRT - Green Revolution Technology

I. Introduction

Rural Jharkhand has attracted lesser attention in the field of agrarian studies in India, despite more than eighty percent¹ of its rural population is directly dependent on agriculture as the primary source of livelihood. The studies in the past about the nature of agriculture in Jharkhand highlights low crop productivity and predominance of subsistence agriculture (Prakash, 2001). Unlike other states such as Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu where production relations in agriculture have been the subject of scholarly debate in the 1970s, popularly known as the ‘mode of production’ debate (Utsa Patnaik 1968, Gail Omvedt 1981, Jairus Banaji 1977, Amit Bhaduri 1973, and Hamza Alavi 1975), the region of Jharkhand was completely absent in the discussion. This absence can be explained on various accounts; One, the debate was more or less confined to crop productivity in the plains and irrigated areas of India where adoption of Green Revolution Technology² was comparatively high. But in the case of Jharkhand, since most of the plateau region of Jharkhand (at that time, south Bihar) is under forest cover and inhabited by tribes, it was observed that tribes were significantly dependent on forest produce goods and less on settled agricultural activity (Shah 2013, 430). Another reason could be that historically the notion of private property in land and forest were not well established and was much on community ownership (Shah 2013). Thirdly, agriculture in

¹<http://www.jharkhand.gov.in/agri>

² Hence forth GRT

Jharkhand³ was understood to be subsistence in nature and it was observed that the market for agriculture commodities either remained low or did not expand much. Also, studies that have focused on pre-2000 Bihar have not dealt in detail with the Chhotanapur plateau regions of Bihar (present-day Jharkhand) separately.

Figure 1: Location of Jharkhand on India map



The studies on the “agrarian transition, agrarian classes and political development have been primarily focused on the changes of production relations with the adoption of GRT” (Lerche, 1998). It primarily emphasized the need to understand whether the agrarian economy was characterized by semi-feudal or capitalist production relations. “Their main

³ Jharkhand was before a part of South Bihar. It became as an independent State in the year 2000

focus were not on agricultural laborers but on dominant landowning agrarian classes. They especially investigate the extent to which, and how, these groups pursue capitalist agrarian development, their political strategies and their political importance” (Lerche, 1998, pp. A-29). Also, many studies have focused on the state apparatus as tools for rural elites in influencing the local caste based power structure (Lerche, 1998). But studies on agrarian production relations of low crop productivity regions have not been studied much or considered, especially in the context of caste, tribe and class perspective and relations vis a vis its different kinds of agrarian transitions with its ‘regional variations and rurality’.

This paper is an attempt to understand agrarian transitions and social relations of tribes and non-tribes engaged in agriculture with context to its ‘regional rurality’. Jharkhand’s agrarian economy is mostly understood as ‘subsistence’ in nature, this restrict us in understanding the distinctiveness of ‘region’ and ‘rurality’ of Jharkhand. It simply universalizes the agrarian character as ‘subsistence’ despite the evidence that in rural Jharkhand, regional variations differs from its ecological setting, ethnic compositions of its population, demographic trend; in level of commercialization of the agrarian economy, and persistence of customary tenures, and cultivating rights (Mohapatra, 1990, p. 164).

If we study the historical context⁴ of the regional variations of Jharkhand in aspects of land and credit markets, we find that it were reshaped periodically from colonial land

⁴ From the year 1880-1950

legislation of Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act (CNTA) 1908 and series of amendments⁵ to it. Highlighting land and credit market relations in Chhotanapur region⁶ (Jharkhand), in the years between 1880-1950, it was observed that before the enactment of CNTA 1908, development of land transactions and land mortgages were strongly prevalent in the region. However, after enactment of CNTA 1908 there have been gradual decline in registered sales of *Raiyati*⁷ lands of tribes and decline of land mortgages⁸, but it had developed stupendous rise in the level of land price. This re-shaping of land and credit market by the actions of economic and social forces and interventions of the colonial states periodically have also brought the emergence of a section of class of (*Raiyati*) tribes as moneylenders (Mohapatra, 1990).

It is interesting to note that land and credit market in *Palamu* and *Ranchi* (includes *Khunti*) differed in terms of social groups of buyers and mortgagees. The buyers in the region were classified into; a) mahajans; b) zamindars; c) intermediate tenure holders; d) raiyat; e) others⁹. These social groups varied according to their positions in the broader agrarian context. It was observed that in *Ranchi* (including *Khunti*), there have been no substantial market for tenure, but the large proportion of buyers were from the category of

⁵ CNTA amendments took in the years of 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1934.

⁶ During the colonial time it comprises of five district namely, Manbhum, Ranchi, Singhbhum, Hazaribgh and Palamu.

⁷ A raiyat is defined as someone who has acquired a right to hold land for the purpose of cultivating it, whether alone or by members of his family

⁸ Mostly by non-tribe mortgagees.

⁹ This category includes a variety of occupational categories such as urban professional, lawyers and petty traders belonging from non-tribes.

‘others’. In contrast, in *Palamu* the largest single group of buyers were the Zamindars¹⁰ who controlled both credit and the market.

The other historical contexts of agrarian regimes in Chhotanapur between 1860-1950, we find that there have been a differential characters of arable expansions in these periods. In the region of *Palamu* with the dominance of high landlordism¹¹ revealed arable stagnation, whereas in the *Ranchi* (including *Khunti*) there were vigorously expansions of arable land. The main reasons for this differential patterns were due to ; a) different form of tenurial systems ; b) different social categories of landlords and social composition of tenant populations (ethnic compositions); and c) difference of nature of cultivation rights with context to social structure. In other words, it can be understood that there was a great diversity within Chhotanapur as regards to the character of agrarian (class) structure and the level of commercialization of economy (Mohapatra, 1990, p. 165).

We purview our study by focusing agrarian rural Jharkhand from its ‘regional rurality’ and its ‘historical specificities’ in the present scenario. The historical process of a region is a significant element in the formation of its ‘rurality’ and understanding the present agrarian rural Jharkhand. In our study regional rurality indicates distinctive relationships between various castes, castes and tribes, institutions and forms of agrarian classes that vary from one region to another region and its historical specificities. With

¹⁰ They constituted 72 percent of the total buyers in Palamu region, and comprise of non-tribes.

¹¹ Landlords were non-tribes, who have settled from adjoining plains of Bihar region.

this approach, our study tries to understand this distinctive region and its rurality by breaking up the idea of ‘universality of subsistence’ character of agrarian rural Jharkhand.

Through field studies of *Palamu* and *Khunti* villages that lies in two distinct regions of Jharkhand embodies distinct kinds of regional variations and historical specificities in its agrarian land systems, and agrarian (class) structure. Both the regions have a different history, ‘tribe and non-tribe’ agrarian relations which is in-itself distinct from the other regions. The field studies is conducted in four villages in two districts of Jharkhand- *Khunti* (central) and *Palamu* (north-western) to understand the existing form of agrarian social relations and agrarian changes. Despite the fact that agricultural productivity still remains low and there is only a small market for agricultural commodity exchange, the region is silently witnessing a slow but gradual agrarian transitions. Through “communal system of labour exchange”¹² (Harriss-White, 2009; Shah, 2013) and household-based labour, farmers are growing vegetables and HYV paddy crops which are for both market and household consumptions. Also, there are substantial shift from indigenous paddy seeds to HYV seeds that have brought changes in the cropping pattern and agricultural practices. In order to explore the implications of these changes, an extensive ethnographic study¹³ was carried out using focused-group discussions, in-depth interviews and participant observation methods. It is observed that changes in Khunti have primarily

¹²The communal system of labour exchange is where households exchange their labour. In the Khunti village it exists in the form of mutual co-operations by households for agricultural cultivation.

¹³ The ongoing field study is being carried out in different time durations of my PhD research work. The preliminary study was carried out in the month June to August, 2014. The next field visit was in May to July, 2015. Another field work was carried out in November to December, 2015. The subsequent field work was carried out in May to June, 2016, and finally in July to August 2017.

taken place with the influence of NGOs, agricultural input manufacturers and suppliers, and government schemes like SGSY. In the Palamu, in the absence of NGOs, and agriculture input suppliers are enabling agrarian transitions in the region. In addition, rural-urban linkages in the form of seasonal labour migration are creating capital and technical inflows that are transforming agricultural activities in the regions.

The other significant observation is on agricultural production relations. The agrarian relations between ‘Hindu (high and backward) castes’ and ‘tribes’ in both regions are primarily related to agricultural daily wage labour; whereas, the agrarian social relations between Dalits and tribes take the form of ‘communal system of labour exchange’ and ‘household-based labour’. It is noteworthy to see that in agrarian studies, agrarian relations have mostly been understood in terms of the relationship between dominant cultivating classes and agricultural laborers. The agrarian relations between Hindu lower castes¹⁴ (as land owners cum cultivators) and tribes (as landowners cum cultivators) in rural Jharkhand provides a different kind of social relations that are free from social subjugations and exploitations of Hindu high castes . This kind of relationship lies on a horizontal plane of caste hierarchy of agrarian social relations.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the importance of tracing land settlement histories and agrarian characters of Palamu and Khunti. The empathizes in this section is to understand the agrarian economy of the region; through

¹⁴ Referred here for Scheduled Caste. It is in the context of the castes present in the field study like *Sawasi*, *Bhokta*, *Bhuiya* and *Chamaars*

land settlement histories, agrarian characters of the regions; and settlement of tribe and non-tribe communities. The purpose is to formulate and expand the understanding of ‘regional variations and rurality’. The second section deals with; a) field-I (Palamu villages) ; and b) Field-II (Khunti villages). This section engages on social and economic profiles, land ownerships, change in cropping patterns, labour relations, and range of existing agricultural intermediaries that enable the process of agrarian changes in rural Jharkhand. Finally, the last section is followed by a conclusion that summarizes the range and types of agricultural and agrarian changes that are happening, and the types and categories of intermediaries that have emerged in our ethnographic study.

Tracing land settlement histories and agrarian characters of Palamu and Khunti regions

The region *Palamu* and *Khunti* are located in two different administrative divisions of Jharkhand. The former is located in a Non- Scheduled region¹⁵ while, the latter is in the Scheduled region of Jharkhand. These administrative divisions are formed on the basis of tribe and non-tribe populations that provides reservations of seats in panchayat institutions¹⁶ and certain customary rights to tribes over forests. The other major significance that it provides is the protection of land Rights¹⁷ to the tribe. However, in the Non-Scheduled region there are no such prohibitions applicable. These differences can be

¹⁵Please note that certain parts of Palamu also comes under Scheduled region. But, my field village are located on Non-Scheduled regions.

¹⁶ It is a democratic decentralization of local- self-government, functioning from grass-root levels in Indian villages. In Jharkhand it is implemented under 5th Schedule of the Indian Constitution

¹⁷ There few two main land protection Acts in Jharkhand namely, Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act and Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act. Both these Acts prohibits land transfer of tribes to non-tribes.

seen in the *Palamu* villages where non-tribes have higher land holding to tribes, whereas *Khunti* has significantly tribal landholding population. These land holdings differences can be understood with land settlement histories of these regions.

Palamu had been originally reigned by tribal chiefs from the *Chero* community until the region formally came into the possession of the British in 1772. When British introduced reservation of the forest, new population of outsiders (*diku*), mostly higher-caste Hindu from agricultural plains of Bihar, entered through settled agriculture in the region. Shah writes “....the harvesting of the forests brought in two types of migrants to the area. First, there were Sahu and Muslim traders of varying wealth – some who fared well off the forest economy (e.g. through trade in forest products) and others who merely survived at its margins, selling utensils or brewing alcohol for instance. Second, there were poor Dalits who arrived as wage labour for the logging” (Shah, 2013, p. 440). However, she observes that these outsiders came in more into as traders of forest economy than as agriculturalists.

In another study, *Palamu* is shown as having an agrarian character mostly because of its proximity to Bihar (which is mostly a plains region). The region had in the past starkly witnessed feudal and zamindari system. “The upper caste landlords are mainly from Rajput, (along with some Brahmin) caste and their former feudal retainues (DN, 1988). These castes have possessed land from *Chero* tribe who lost their zamindari to them settling of upper caste Hindus from Bihar have also continued their caste-lineage, dominated social and political lives in the region, where Dalits and tribe were at the

margins of the society (Shah, 2013). Also, there have been a few noticeable incidences of Maoist insurgencies that took place against upper caste landlords. As DN writes “the rise in the form of peasant movement (in the form of Maoist movement) that had considerably eroded the feudal authority. The major CPI (ML) organizations like Party Unity, MCC merged with People’s war and PCC and started struggles deep inside the *Paanki* and *Ranka* Blocks of Palamu led by related organizations like Jharkhand Kranti Dal (JKD) and Bihar Kisan Samiti (BKS). The erosion of feudal authority has benefited not only the peasants (castes) but also the shopkeepers and petty traders” (DN, 1988).

The *Khunti* region is significantly dominated by the *Munda* tribe. The oldest custom of the founding villages was the *Khutkatti system* found amongst the *Mundas*. Under this system the original settlers of the land have all the rights over the land they have cleared and settled from forest land. Some traits of Khutkatti system given by Hoffman¹⁸ (1915) can be summarized as;

1. The man (Munda) who first clears the jungle and turns it into an arable land becomes the owner of that piece of land.
2. The rights of ownership once acquired remains with the man until he himself disposes freely to others.

1. ¹⁸ Summarized from M.Phil thesis of Bara, A. H. (2006). Management and working of common pool resources : a case study of Jharkhand. IIT Bombay. p 128

3. It is believed that owners/ancestors' spirit continues to live in this land (called '*sasandiri*') and their off spring generation have to protect their *Khutkatti* lands

However, there are no clear evidences in history about non-tribes settling in the region. It is said that artisan-castes like *Lohars* and *Sawasi* had come along with their tribal chief. They played a vital role in attending to their farm needs. The living and social lives of these artisan caste groups are very much similar to tribes. The culture is much imbibed in their village living, for example the performance of 'Sarana puja'. Castes like *Teli* and *Sahu* (Backward caste Hindus) are recent settlers in the region. In Mundari language they are called '*dikus*' (outsiders) who have mostly settled for forest economy related business.

It can be seen that Jharkhand's economy have primarily revolved around forests, but the agrarian character of the region was also evidently present that was mainly seen as subsistence and low crop productivity in character. In recent years, the region has been influenced (with the coming of neo-liberal economy and more recently as formation of independent state as 'Jharkhand') from the presence of open market (commercialized agriculture), and range of agricultural intermediaries (old and new) like NGOs (working on rural livelihoods), and State itself.

The field studies are done in four villages (from three panchayats) consisting of two each villages of *Palamu* and *Khunti*. The villages were considered on the basis of its road connectivity, proximity to the market place, tribe and non-tribe populations, and minor

dependency over forests¹⁹. In order to provide a comparative study of both the regions, this paper would deal the *Khunti* and *Palamu* villages separately to provide distinctiveness of the region and its rurality.

Field- I

Social and Economic profiles of the Palamu villages

The field villages in *Palamu* are ‘*Paatan*²⁰’ and ‘*Sikidiki*²¹’ village. The *Paatan* village is a panchayat village that comes under block *Manatu* of district *Daltongunj*. It is situated at a distance of nearly forty five kilometers from *Daltongunj*, which is the district headquarter of *Palamu* region. According to 2011 census²², the village had 307 households and a population of 1672. There are about 11 castes in the village. Among these, upper caste Hindus consists of *Brahmin* and *Rajput*. The Other Backward Caste (OBCs) consists of *Teli*, *Mahto*, *Blacksmith*²³, *Carpenter*, *Potter* and *Barbers*. The Scheduled Caste (SCs) population comprises of *Chamaars* and *Bhuiyas*. Also, there is a substantial population of Muslims (comprising of Ansari communities).

The other village *Sikidiki* is a neighboring village majorly inhabited by Oraon tribe. It comes under the *Paatan* panchayat, block *Manatu* of district *Daltongunj*. According to 2011 census, the village had 97 households and a population of 493. There are merely 5 households of SCs (comprising of *Bhuiya* and *Chamaar* castes), while the rest are Oraon

¹⁹ As it was observed during pilot study that remote locations revealed major dependency on forest and subsistence agriculture, and less non-tribe population.

²⁰ Name of the village has been changed for keeping the anonymity of the village

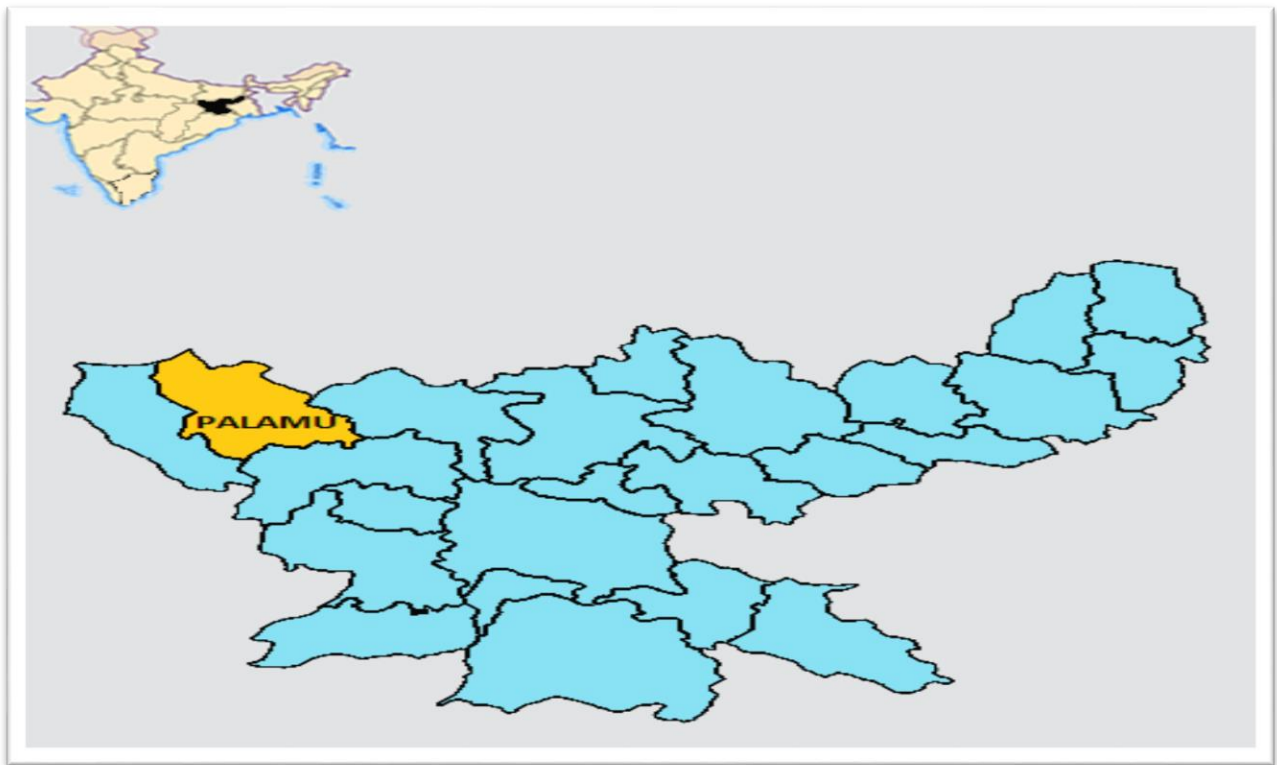
²¹ Name of the village has been changed for keeping the anonymity of the village

²² Source: http://jsac.jharkhand.gov.in:8082/Village_profile/Default.aspx

²³ In *Palamu* region, Blacksmith (Lohars) are not considered as tribes (but, in *Khunti* they are categories under Tribes more recently). They are categorized as backward classes.

tribe in the village. Since, the *Sikidiki* village shares a proximity with the neighboring panchayat village *Paatan*, the Oraons are dependent on neighboring *Paatan* village for their day to day needs.

Figure 2: Location of Palamu in Jharkhand map



The region has undulating land types comprising uplands and lowlands. As Mohapatra writes “Chotanagpur division consisting of the five districts, namely, Hazaribagh, Palamu, Ranchi, Manbhum and Singhbhum constituted the largest portion of the Chotanagpur plateau, the north-eastern corner of the central Indian upland. The most important topographical feature of the plateau lay in its undulating terrain. The surface of the plateau was marked by alternating inter-fluvial ridges and water channels. In local

parlance the division is known as ‘*don*’ and ‘*tanr*’ respectively” (Mohapatra, 1991, p. 1043). *Don* land was given over exclusively to rice, while a variety of millets, pulses and oilseeds were grown in *tanr* land. Further, each of the broad division of *don* and *tanr* was further sub-divided into different classes of land according to their topographic position in the terrain. In revenue parlance, the lowest *don* land was called the ‘*don -I*’ land and the highest terraced rice land was called the ‘*Don- III*’ land. Terraced land in intermediate position was ‘*don- II*’ land (Mohapatra, 1991). Paddy cultivation is the dominant crop in the region. They are primarily grown in *Don-I* land, and *Don-II* land type. Crops like maize, pulses are mostly grown in *Don-III* land type. Mostly the HYV paddy seeds have taken over from indigenous paddy varieties. As a consequence, indigenous rice variety seeds are almost on the verge of extinction. The majority of agricultural operations are carried out using oxen, but there are a few households in the villages that own tractors. There are seven tractors in the Paatan village, while in the Oraon village there is no tractor. Land cultivation by tractors are recent changes in the village and are used for a very specific the type of land (*Don lands*). Mostly OBCs are using tractors for ploughing land for cultivation. In the *Paatan* village tractors are owned by *Teli*, *Mahto*, *Kumhars* and *Muslim* households who rent them out to for agricultural activities for Rupees 500-600 per hour.

Land ownership and labour relations

Palamu region embodies agrarian character and distinct rurality from other regions, where land ownership plays a vital role in the political economy of both the villages. It is observed that major land owning caste are OBCs (primarily *Mahtos*). However, there is

one *Rajput*²⁴ household that succeeds all the others castes and communities in term of land ownerships. Other land owning caste followed by *Mahto* are *Teli*, later it is followed by *Kumhars* in the *Paatan* village. No SCs households own agricultural land in the village. For them land is only confined to their area of their household settlements. Castes like *Mahto*, *Teli*, and *Kumhars* (that comes under OBCs), have significant amount of land holdings as compared to other castes.

Table 1: Caste-wise land ownership in Paatan village

Sl. No	Category	Total land holding (in Acres)	No. of respondents (sample size)
1.	OBC	47.06	36
2.	Muslim	10.4	18
3.	SC	0	13

Source: Field data

However, the adjacent Oraon tribe village *Sikidiki*, reveals a completely different scenario from *Paatan* village. It is found that almost all Oraon people have small and marginal land holdings (there is only one Oraon household who is a landless peasant). The land size in this tribe village comprised from 0.5 to 4 acres of land.

Table 2: Land ownership in Sikidiki village

²⁴ He is the MLA of the region for the last 15 consecutive years. Recently he died and his son is carrying forward the legacy of political dominance representing from Indian National Congress (INC) party. He owns about 40 acres of land.

Category	Tribe	Total land holdings (in acres)	No. of respondent (sample size)
ST	Oraon	18.97	18

Source: Field data

Now, the question arises, how to do we see castes and tribe landholdings in understanding agrarian social relations, where castes and tribe of the village fall under the category of small and marginal farmers and engaged in low crop productivity? The next section describes caste and tribe lineages of agrarian production relations.

Share-cropping in Palamu villages

In order to perform agricultural cultivation and meeting food requirements, sharecropping (called as '*sajha*') is one significant production relations that are observed in villages. Despite the villagers are small and marginal farmers, and crop productivity remain low, they engage in Share-cropping activities. Share-cropping is mostly confined amongst land owning OBCs. The SCs and tribe are not able to participate in this production relation because of economic unaffordability to invest on agricultural inputs. Also, no SCs have oxen. They mostly work as daily agricultural labors in OBC's agricultural lands. It is observed that only four SCs have taken land for share-cropping from Muslims and the sum total of four SCs households taken for share-cropping are merely 1.8 acres of land.

Table 3: Sharecropping between the various castes and communities in Paatan village

	Sharecropping between the various castes
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Sl. No						
	Communities Given land for cultivations	No. of Households	Land in acres	Communities Taken for cultivations	No. of Households	Land in acres
1	OBCs	7	9.2	OBCs	14	12.73
2	Muslims	13	9.7	SCs	4	1.8
3	SC	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Data

Apart from OBCs, there are few Muslims households engaged in share-cropping with OBCs. There are very few *Mahtos* (OBCs) who have taken land from Muslims for share-cropping. It is observed that castes like *carpenter*, *potter* and *blacksmith* are also engaging in sharecropping with Muslims and *Mahtos* (OBCs). It is observed that Muslims households are gradually on decline as self-cultivators. Some of the reasons are; the productivity from their land holdings are insufficient to meet household needs (because of small landholdings), their family have extended over the years and land being divided among kin`s, resulting in very small land holdings where agriculture cultivation is not economically viable, and they are mostly engaged in non-agricultural employment opportunities. It is observed that most of the Muslim household members have either migrated to big cities or run small shops like or are into tailoring and driving motor-cars.

The most exploited caste in the Paatan village are the SCs (comprising *Bhuiya* and *Chamaar* castes), they are landless agricultural laborers who work on Hindu high castes and OBCs as daily wage labourers. The daily wage work ranges from Rs150 - 200 to men, and for women ranges from 120 – 150. Castes like *Mahto*, *Teli* and *Kumhars* also engage themselves into self-cultivation process, but limited to certain engagement of agricultural work such as ploughing of land by tractors and miniscule farm works. They hire daily wage labourers during sowing and harvesting seasons. However, women are mostly engaged in most of the farm activities such as sowing, weeding and harvesting as compared to men.

It is observed that *Teli* caste also have some amount of land holdings in the village. They are also engaged in cultivation as self-cultivators. We did not find any land-less *Teli* caste households in the village. They deploy daily wage laborers to carry out cultivation and at times engages for share-cropping with OBCs and SCs. However, they are mostly inclined towards non-agricultural activities like runny petty businesses. Most of the vegetable sellers and local hawkers are from Teli caste. However, they do not have strong political network unlike the *Mahto* and *Yadavs* in the Palamu region. *Mahto* caste forms a very strong and central caste category in the *Paatan* village. They are the most resourceful caste category in the village. Being a land owning class they have a strong hold in political, social and economic spheres in the village. Most of the government jobs available in the village, such as school teachers and in panchayat post –offices, have been secured by *Mahto* caste people only.

Communal system of labour relations

On the other hand, Oraon village depicts a different scenario. Almost all the houses have oxen in their home and no household owns a tractor in the village. Since Oraons have small and marginal landholdings they engage in household labours for cultivation and do not practice share-cropping activities on usual basis. In addition they significantly exchange their households labours for free with their fellow tribe household. This process of household labour sharing is called as '*madaiti*' in the village. However, it is just confined to their kith and kin's of their village hamlets. In this kind of labour arrangement the service taker has to provide lunch, some snacks in the evening and bottle of countryside alcohol called 'mahua' (it is made from Mahua tree's fruit). Drinking of countryside alcohol is a very vital part of social life in the Oraons village. Since the economy of the tribe village is very poor, they do not prefer to take cash /wage for agriculture work. This kind of arrangement is also applied in non-agricultural work like repair of fellow Oraons houses during summer (non-cultivating season).

Changes in cropping pattern and induction of technology

Due to erratic rainfall, the region has only one crop season (June- December). Paddy is the main crop in the region. The crops that are cultivated in the upland (*tanr*) are Maize, pulses (lenthils) and some varieties of vegetables. There have been substantial agrarian changes with the introduction of HVY seed varieties. Indigenous seeds have now been taken over by HYV seeds. In both the villages it is observed that HYV Paddy seeds are only used, and this has influenced the cropping pattern to some extent. In order to increase the crop

productivity ‘Systematic Rice Intensification’ (SRI) method (locally known as *Srividhi*) are applied in the villages, however, this method is limited to certain castes like Mahtos. Only a few Oraon households are engaging in this method (sowing of crops are confined only to women in the villages). The presence of HYV seeds can be seen in the *Paatan market*. There are two agricultural input shops in the village, both the shops are owned by *Mahtos*. These two shops supply all the agricultural inputs requirements to the nearby panchayat villages . Since Daltongunj is at a distance of 40-45 Kms, which is quite far people rely on these two shops during cultivation seasons. While interacting with one of the *Mahto* shopkeeper, he told that the agricultural input company gives lucrative offers to the shopkeeper/s if they are able to sell certain desired target amount of HYV paddy seeds set by the seed input companies .

Remittance from seasonal labour migration into Palamu villages

Seasonal labour migration is prominent in both villages. The pattern is dependent upon household economic needs, urgency of financial requirement, and age groups. For meeting household and agricultural needs, a substantial population migrates to nearby and far away cities. As the region is very close to Bihar, many people migrate for work to nearby districts of Bihar like Gaya, Sasaram and Dehri On Son. The kind of work they are engaged include stone crushing, daily agricultural labor in sugarcane harvesting (Sasaram and Dehri On Son are located on the banks of Son river²⁵). Since these regions are in proximity,

²⁵ Son River links Son Nagar and Dehri through a popularly known bridge called as Son Bridge. The Son River (spelled as ‘Sone’), is a southern tributary of the Ganges (Ganga) River, rising in Madhya Pradesh state, central India. It flows north past Manpur and then turns northeast. The river cuts through the Kaimur Range and joins the Ganges above Patna, after a 487-mile (784-km) course. The Son valley is geologically almost a continuation of that of

people always come back to their village after 1-2 months. Whereas for those working in faraway cities come back to their village twice or thrice a year. Mostly they come back before the onset of cultivating seasons. The money that have been earned are deployed for both household and agricultural purposes.

Field - II

Social and Economic profile of Khunti villages

The two villages in *Khunti* are ‘*Sonahatu*²⁶’ and ‘*Itki*²⁷’, both are neighboring villages that come under Khunti district of Jharkhand. The *Sonahatu* village comes under Tirla Panchayat of Khunti district. It is about 6 kilometers from the district and has good road connectivity. The total area of the village is about 1085.90 acres. The village has 171 households and has four hamlets. The population is 896 of which 831 are from Munda tribe, 60 Scheduled Castes (SCs) called *Sawasi* (weaver community) and 5 from *Teli* (OBCs). There are also handful an artisan community household called *Lohar* (*Blacksmith*). *Lohars* have recently been categorized as a Scheduled Tribe²⁸ in the Khunti region of Jharkhand.

The *Itki* village has 238 households with a population of 1233, where significant population are OBCs (comprising mostly *Teli and few Mahto*) households, then followed

the Narmada River to the southwest. It is largely forested and sparsely populated. The valley is bordered by the Kaimur Range to the north and the Chhota Nagpur plateau to the south. The river’s flow is seasonal, and the Son is unimportant for navigation. Dams have been constructed on some of its tributaries. At Dehri, in Bihar state, are the head-works of the Son canal system.

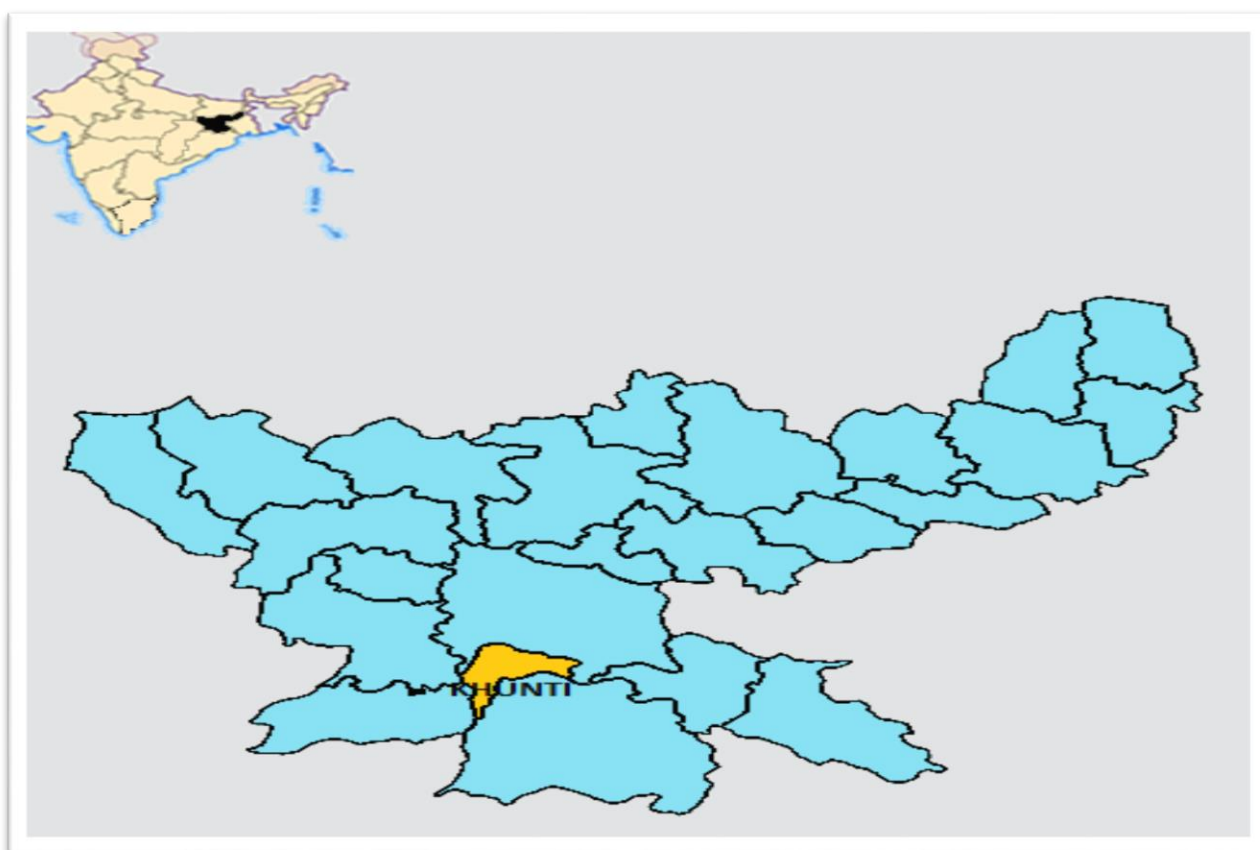
²⁶ Name of the village has been changed for keeping the anonymity of the village

²⁷ Name of the village has been changed for keeping the anonymity of the village

²⁸ Official designations given to various groups of historically and socially disadvantaged indigenous people (also referred as tribal/ adivasi)

by a SCs (*Sawasi*), and substantial population of STs (*Munda* and *Lohars*). Also, there are few households of Muslim households and 2 Brahmin households in the village. The village has three hamlets. Two of its hamlets are inhabited by SCs (*Sawasi*) and (STs) *Lohars*, while the third is inhabited by *Teli*, *Mahto*, *Muslims* and few *Lohar* households. The total area of the village is about 1012.43 Acres. The Itki village is situated at a distance of about 6 Kms from Khunti. The village comes under Maranghada panchayat of Khunti district.

Figure 3: Location of Khunti in Jharkhand map



Paddy is the dominant crop in the region. Mostly the HVY seeds have taken over from indigenous rice varieties. As a consequence, indigenous rice variety seeds are almost

on the verge of extinction. However, there are a few indigenous rice varieties still being cultivated by some households where there is availability of water. The indigenous paddy variety seeds have low productivity but are still preferred as they are found amenable to adaptation under unfavorable conditions. However, since the past five years, cultivation of marigold flowers during the winter and watermelon cultivation during the summer are being widely undertaken for commercial purposes. The majority of agricultural operations are carried out using oxen, but there are a few households in the villages that own tractors. Land cultivation by tractors are recent changes in the village. In both the villages there are four tractors in total. They are owned by *Sawasi*, *Teli*, and *Munda* households who rent them out to for agricultural activities for Rupees 500-600 per hour.

Land ownership and labour relations

In both the Khunti villages, there are no landless households. Every household possesses some amount of landholding in the village. In Senegutu village, after STs (*Munda*) who have large amount of land holdings, SCs (*Sawasi*) have significant land holdings compared to other castes. The other major land owning group is OBCs (*Teli*). The STs (*Lohars*) have the least amount of land holdings in the village.

Table 4: Caste-wise land ownership in Itki village

Category	Total land holding form sample (in acre)	No. of respondent (sample)
General (Brahmins)	4	2

OBCs	36.76	9
SCs	58.44	18
STs (<i>Lohar</i>)	12	6
STs (<i>Munda</i>)	5.5	3
Muslim	4	3

Source: Field Data

In the Sonahatu village, Munda tribe has significant amount of land holdings as being a tribal village. The land holding of Mundas are much higher than any other non-tribes of the regions that has come through a historical process.

Table 5: Land ownership in Sonahatu village

Category	Total land holding form sample (in acre)	No. of respondent (sample)
STs (<i>Munda</i>)	69.27	13
SCs	22	5

Source: Field Data

Share-cropping in Khunti villages

Share-cropping is also common in both the *Khunti* villages. The OBCs (*Teli*) are extensively involved in this process since, they are mostly into non-agricultural business.

It is observed that SCs and STs (*Munda*) are into share-cropping relations with OBCs (*Teli*). The sharing of crop ratio is fifty percent. As the people in the village use organic fertilizers (cow dung) and not extensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the cost of cultivation in sharing cropping is low. The cost of cultivation in this kind of production relation consists only of purchase of paddy seeds that are shared between them. The labour requirement is met by the SCs and Tribe family who have taken OBCs land for share-cropping. However, share-cropping is not see in the Munda village. They mostly engage ‘household labour’ and ‘common system of labour exchange relation’.

Table 6: Sharecropping between various castes and tribe in Itki village

Category	Land given for share-cropping (in Acre)	Category	Land taken for share-cropping (in Acre)
OBCs	11	General	2
SCs	2	SCss	5
STs (<i>Munda</i>)	3.5	STs (<i>Lohar</i>)	6
Muslim	2	OB	1
General	-	Muslim	1

Source: Field Data

Communal system of labour relations

In carrying out agricultural activities, tribe and non-tribe (SCs) of Khunti villages also have informal way of household labour sharing called '*madaiti*'. Unlike the *Sikidiki* village where tribes only engage in this labour relation, here SCs (non-tribe) and tribe participate in informal labour relations. One of the main reason is that SCs have significant amount of land holdings in this village. Providing a meal and rice beer is one important social customs that are followed in this informal labour relation. In these villages every tribe and non-tribe engage in household labour for agricultural activities. However, when SCs and tribe work on other high caste Hindus agricultural lands they work as daily agricultural wage labour, and this informal labour sharing does not takes place. It is observed that no Teli women work in Tribe and SCs (Sawasi) agricultural lands. The daily wage for women is Rs 150 and for men Rs 200 in the village.

Cropping pattern

Itki and *Sonahatu* being neighboring villages are influenced by intermediaries (particularly by an NGO). The cropping patterns have changed more in *Sonahatu* village compared to *Itki* village. As *Sonahatu* village is located on the stream of Tajna River, this small river stream allows the Munda people to have a good source of water for irrigation purposes and, thus enables them to cultivate commercial crops. Though paddy cultivation remains the dominant and staple food crop of the region, the cultivation of vegetables has emerged as a recent development. However, this is limited to small scale production that serves for both market sale and household consumption. The local NGO (discussed in a later section) with the help of a government scheme called *Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna*

(SGSY), has installed a diesel pump-set which is managed by a women's self-help group (SHG). The availability of water has also introduced commercial crops in the region, primarily initiated by the NGO. The NGO dominant in these villages has played a crucial role in influencing tomato and watermelon cultivation and recently Marigold flowers.²⁹

There has been a noticeable change in the cropping pattern of rice. Systematic Rice Intensification method (SRI),³⁰ called as *Srividhi* in the region, is practiced by most farmers for better yield of HVY paddy crops. Induction of HYV seeds also brought utilization of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, but their use is very limited. Most of the households rely on natural manure that comes from the cattle they rear at home. It was also observed that people in the village are very much aware about the adverse effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. However, sometimes the state government (agricultural department) provides them with urea at subsidized rates³¹. Also, farmers buy from Khunti market and the women's SHG cooperative.

Itki village is situated at some distance from the Tajna river stream and so, people here have to depend more on small wells and monsoon rains. The cultivation of commercial crops such as vegetables is not being practiced on a wide scale. But every household cultivates some vegetable varieties on the high lands where there is availability of water (mostly mud wells). Though vegetables are cultivated on a small scale, the

²⁹ In the Rabi (winter) season, there is cultivation of vegetables and marigold. In kharif (monsoon) season, rice is grown.

³⁰ Refer: <http://www.crispindia.org/docs/sri%20in%20india%20innovation%20and%20institutions.pdf>

³¹ Distribution of Urea is limited in stock and has many govt. flow leading untimely distribution in the cultivation season. It is distributed through 'LAMPUS'. It is a form of a co-operative society managed by govt. offices.

farmers sell the surplus in the daily local market located at the outskirts of their village³². Recently, people have also started cultivating watermelons and marigold flowers. These initiatives have been propagated by the NGO working in this region.

Role of intermediaries in Khunti

One of the major areas of focus of this study is the role of intermediaries in transforming the agrarian sector in Khunti. An intermediary is generally understood as an agent ‘who acts as a link between people in order to try and bring about an agreement’³³. In other words, an intermediary is a mediator/s between two party who influence/s decision. How does one contextualize intermediaries in agriculture that influences cropping patterns, land relations, labour relations and links to the agricultural commodity market? There are many forms of intermediaries that may influence agrarian changes. Since the intermediaries encapsulate a wide range and variety of linkages in agriculture, this paper particularly studies intermediaries between; i) the state and farmers; ii) non-state actor (NGO) and farmers; and iii) agricultural input companies and farmers, that have been crucial for transitions in agrarian production and distribution in Jharkhand. These have played a significant role in transforming and influencing the political economy of agrarian change in Khunti. I have categorized the role of these three intermediaries under two broad types: old intermediaries and new intermediaries. The intermediaries between ‘the state and farmers’ come under old intermediaries. However, it is not appropriate to restrict this

³² Mostly in Tirla and Maranghada bazar (Market). And some time in Khunti bazar also

³³Reference: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/intermediary>

relationship only to the old form of intermediaries, since in the contemporary neoliberal regime, NGOs function as intermediaries between the state and farmers and between the market and farmers, eg. NGO- KOSHISH in Khunti village. Old intermediaries include state agents such as agricultural departments (who initiate and implement government schemes related to agriculture and irrigation) such as irrigation department, Land revenue department and a range of anti-poverty and rural livelihood projects. The role of the latter kind of intermediaries in bringing about agrarian changes in Jharkhand have been very limited especially in these villages, as they have poor reach.

The second form of intermediaries is between ‘the NGO and farmers’ that constitute new form of intermediaries in the village. As notionally non-state actors, they have developed a better outreach with farm households. KOSHISH has widely influenced agrarian production and relations of village households.

Finally agricultural input companies are a new form of intermediaries that are active in Khunti. These agricultural input companies provide seeds and fertilizers to local markets. The seed retailers control the seed market of the village. They decide which seeds are to be sold to the farmers according to seasonal demands. This has reduced the traditional control of farmers on their seed varieties, ownership, and decision-making, Rights of farmers to choose seed variety for sowing are curbed, limiting their choice to few agricultural seeds companies.

Old intermediaries

In both the Khunti villages, the State, particularly the agricultural department, has been an important intermediary in the region from the time of independence. But, its outreach has not been extensive, nor has it penetrated to the household level. The people have to suffer on various accounts: poor governance, highly corrupt bureaucratic structure, and the region being located in one of the Guerrilla Zone areas.³⁴ However, since, the formation of Jharkhand in the year 2000, there has been increased state penetration in the region through various development programmes. These include construction of wells under the ‘million wells scheme’ that was later merged with MGNREGA³⁵, the National Food Security Mission (NSM), and the Pulses and Oilseeds Mission. The state has tied up with the NGOs because of their deeper outreach in the villages.

New intermediaries

1. NGO

KOSHISH was established in the early 1980s with its main office located in New Delhi. It began its work focusing on promoting agriculture and forest based livelihoods in ‘backward’ states of India. Recently, it has expanded its focus areas to land and water resource management in Jharkhand and its adjoining states. In order to carry out its rural livelihood activities, KOSHISH channelizes its aid through three main supporting agencies, namely the government, international research agencies and multilateral/private foundations. These agencies, provide assistance to KOSHISH in the form of

³⁴ Referred to the area where the Maoist groups are in conflict with the state. Jharkhand is one such Guerrilla Zone areas of India

³⁵ Stands for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

developmental research, grants and findings. The below table provide details of a few such agencies and the nature of providing assistance to KOSHISH.

Table 7: Supporting agencies and nature of aid to KOSHISH

Supporting Agencies for KOSHISH		Nature of Aid
Government Agency	1. Jharkhand Watershed Mission 2. District Rural Development Agency 3. Jharkhand State Livelihoods Promotion Society 4. Jharkhand Rural Development Department (NRLM, MGNREGA)	1. Grants 2. Grants 3. Grants 4. Grants
Multilateral / Private Foundation	1. Monsanto Fund 2. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation 3. Centre for Micro-Finance	1. Funding 2. Funding 3. Funding
	1. International Crops Research Institute For the Semi-Arid Tropics	1. Research

International Research Agency	2. International Food Policy Research Institute 3. International Water Management Institute	2. Research 3. Research
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A study conducted by the anthropologist Uday Chandra on rural Jharkhand reveals that “The government had not surveyed rural Jharkhand since the settlement operation of the twentieth century. NGOs provide them an option of intervening indirectly in the rural political economy without any formal restructuring of the state itself” (Chandra, 2013, 306). This was also very evident during field work in Khunti. These supporting agencies bridge the channels via KOSHISH at a macro level and thus influence the rural village economy. At the micro level, KOSHISH intervenes by forming women’s micro-finance SHGs. Through SHGs they develop small savings schemes in the village. These SHGs also allows KOSHISH to channel technical inputs and development funds into the villages with the multiple aims of enhancing agricultural productivity, raise farm incomes and food security. However in the process they simultaneously modernize agricultural production systems, transform the agrarian structure, and enable large private corporations to get a foothold in the rural economy through processes of commodification, commercialization and market access.

2. Self Help Groups

SHGs are one set of new intermediaries that links NGOs and farmers, as well as farmers to markets and input suppliers. According to data provided by KOSHISH, they have formed 28592 SHGs in their operational regions. Such SHGs can be seen functioning very efficiently in Khunti region as well. Since the state outreach in the village is quite limited, KOSHISH has become the most accessible and influential means for the village population to connect them to modern farming techniques and practices. One such example is seen in the recent and widespread acceptance of HYV seeds by the farmers in the Khunti region. Formation of SHGs by KOSHISH plays a vital role in the village in many ways. First, this rural micro-finance activity ensures access to rural credit for its participant women members in the village; second, it opens a gate-way for KOSHISH to enter in the village and carry out their intervention activities in a systematic manner, such as promoting commercial (vegetables, watermelon) crops in the village; third it enables the entry of external commercial inputs manufactured by private corporations into the village. Agricultural co-operatives started by KOSHISH with the help of SHGs in Khunti is one such prominent illustration.

In both the Khunti villages, it is observed that almost all female household members were associated with an SHG. Generally a SHG consists of 15-20 women from the village. It is also interesting to note that promotion of commercial agricultural activities by KOSHISH is carried out through a planned and strategic approach that reflects its larger role as a new agrarian intermediary. Before encouraging SHG members for practicing commercial cultivation, a series of capacity building exercises were carried out by the field

staff of KOSHISH. These include rural visits where SHG members are taken to other nearby villages, where the NGO has introduced and promoted commercial agricultural practices and farmers are able to sell their crops in the local markets. Also, at the cluster/block offices of KOSHISH, regular workshops and meetings are held where SHG members are informed about the benefits of SHG formation, commercial agriculture and government schemes. In addition, it also provides regular training to its own staff and women SHG members about new agricultural techniques for the region. SRI method of paddy cultivation is one such example.

3. Agricultural input companies

The Khunti region does not have a well-developed market for agricultural commodity exchange. The people sell their agricultural produce either to local merchants in the shops at Khunti or sell to customers directly in the panchayat's biweekly market. However, marigold flowers and watermelon are sold to private agents who come from Bengal and Bihar. Since the cultivation of Marigold flowers and watermelon are an outcome of recent initiatives by the NGO, they initially helped the farmers to link them with agents, but, now farmers contact directly to these agents and vice-versa.

The recent enhanced production of commercial crops in the region has also allowed the private seed companies to establish their market in the Khunti region. As tribe and non-tribe farmers are increasingly purchasing HYV paddy seeds, the market for private seeds companies has become competitive. However, the choice of HYV paddy seeds varieties is controlled by local seed retailers. It was observed that people merely inform

the seed shop about their land type. *eg. Don-1, don-2*, and the retailers decide which kind of hybrid seeds need to be given to the farmer.

During field visit, when retailers were interviewed about what are the basis through which they decide and sell the varieties of HYV paddy seeds to the farmers? it was told that it is determined on the basis of type of land the farmer wants to cultivate and the time at which the farmer is about to sow paddy seeds. For example, if the farmer has missed the early monsoon season for paddy cultivation but he intends to sow 15 days late, they give them different quality of HYV paddy seeds that take less time for harvesting (generally paddy seeds takes 120-150 days for complete harvesting); these seed selections are made depending upon the budget of the farmer. A seed retail agent Ramesh Kumar³⁶ who is the area distributor in the Bihar and Jharkhand region of *Bhim seeds private limited*³⁷ (from Bangalore) and tied up with the co-operative society started by KOSHISH (managed by SHG women for the distribution of vegetable seeds) briefed me about how seed retailers and suppliers get an entry into the village agriculture sector as intermediaries. He emphasized that one need to develop a good rapport with clients (seed selling retailers/shops), for which the seeds company provides incentives, like arranging tours for the local seed selling vendors. Last year, a leisure tour was arranged for the vendors to Shimla and Dehradun. Seed companies provide such perks to convince the local seed

³⁶ Name Changed

³⁷ Name Changed

shopkeepers in the region, since once they are accepted by these local seed selling merchants, it is likely that entire regions would come to adopt their seeds.

In addition to the three types of intermediaries that influence the agricultural change, there is another aspect which affects the agrarian dynamics through the circulation of capital. The capital inflow from seasonal labour migration enables households to buy seeds, fertilizers, and use of tractors for cultivation. It not only supports agricultural activity in the village, but also indirectly supports NGOs in the Khunti region to act as intermediaries to bring in state sponsored projects and market commodities by enhancing the purchasing power of local households.

Remittance from seasonal labour migrations

Seasonal labour migration in both *Khunti* villages are showing signs of decline in recent years. In *Sonahatu* village people have almost stopped migrating to big cities. However 20 years earlier this was not the scenario. Watermelon cultivation and SHGs³⁸ have provide them a kind of additional. Despite this however, migration does happen - the pattern of migration being dependent upon household economic needs, urgency of financial requirement, and age groups. During non-cultivating seasons people migrate to the nearest cities, like *Khunti* and *Ranchi*. Their working days range from a few days to a few weeks. Remittance from seasonal labour migration are invested in agriculture

³⁸ The role of intermediaries and agrarian transition are to be understood in terms of additional income sources that have become available to Khunti households

activities, such as hiring tractors and purchase of HYV seeds from SHG cooperatives and local seed shops.

In addition to this, there is an informal network of credit and finance system called '*Bandhik*' that exists in the region. It is observed that SCs and Tribe are majorly into this informal credit system. The system operates as follows: SCs/STs households lease out their agricultural land as security deposit for seeking cash (monetary assistance) from other SCs /STs households. There is no written deed, no specific time period of agreement and no interest is charged. Once, the households repay the cash amount to the borrower households, their land is returned back to them. Till the period of the households who have given cash does the agricultural activities.

Conclusion

In the field studies of the region *Khunti* and *Palamu* villages reveals the process of agrarian change and different agrarian (class) structure that have evolved through contexts of regional variations in agrarian histories of land settlements, ethnic compositions and ranges of intermediaries that have emerged in the process. By understanding the importance of distinct relationships between various castes, castes and tribes, institutions and forms of agrarian classes in our study urges the need to revisit Indian agrarian studies from 'regional variations' and 'rurality' perspectives. Our study tried to understand this distinctiveness of region and its rurality by breaking up the idea of universality of 'subsistence' character of agrarian rural Jharkhand. *Palamu*'s distinctive rurality is embedded within feudal history and Hindu castes migrations (though the region was ruled

over by the *Chero* tribe long) who now have settled as land owning classes. The agrarian relation between tribe and non-tribe, and absence of NGOs reveals a different scenario from the Khunti village. Whereas, *Khunti*'s distinctive rurality derives from its *Munda* tribe population and their land reclamation histories. The agrarian relation between tribe and non-tribe (SCs), and presence of intermediaries (State and Non State actors) reveal a different situation from *Palamu* villages. Both the regions witness agrarian changes that evolve and derive from their 'regional variations' and 'ruralities'. Some of the significant range and type of agricultural and agrarian changes that are happening can be summarized as:

1. Agrarian relations between 'Hindu high and backward castes' and 'tribes' in these regions are primarily related to agricultural daily wage labour. However, agrarian social relations between Dalits and tribal people take the form of 'communal system of labour exchange' and 'household-based labour'.
2. Agricultural change involving a shift to commercial crops, and HYV seeds for paddy, as well as attendant changes in labour relations took place through a range of intermediaries and interventions involving a complex web of state agencies, NGOs, self-help groups, and private suppliers and dealers of inputs.
3. The understanding of intermediaries that emerges questions the typical distinction that is made between state, market and civil society in much of the literature. NGOs work as intermediaries and create new ones which both link state and market to peasants and agriculture and transforms cultivation practices, cropping patterns,

and agrarian relations. NGOs are seen to act as an intermediary for modernizing agriculture and facilitating the greater influence of state and market agencies in the region

4. The developmental role of the state, and the work of private corporate funded foundations are channeled through NGOs and new rural institutions such as SHGs to bring about change. At the same time migration patterns into and out of the village, along with land transfers transform both the nature of land holding and land relations, and create scope for new investments to flow into agricultural operations.

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