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Mapping Tribal territories and Contextualizing Tribal Redistribution in Jharkhand and Orissa (1961 – 2001)

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Abstract: The long process of peopling in India has placed the tribal population in regions of *complete isolation*. Even a perfunctory glance at their distribution pattern reveals that the “*tribal territories*” or areas of concentration of tribal population are marked by *relative isolation* and have essentially been positioned in “*environmentally negative*” densely forested locales. These *jungles* have not only become their hearth areas but over the centuries have come to be a part and parcel of their cultures and economies.

This paper is a sincere effort towards situating the tribal plight by harping upon the problem of tribal redistribution amidst the process of development which has resulted in decades of diminishing forest cover and deteriorating sources of livelihood which have led to erosion of traditional economic activities, shifting workforce patterns and eventually in physically dislocating the indigenous tribes or the *adivasis* from their native lands. This paper investigates the redistribution of tribal population in the tribal belts of Jharkhand and Orissa by taking a spatial dimension over the last five decades i.e. 1961-2001, wherein *adivasis* have been receding and diminishing further and further into seclusion, unable to match the economically and technologically advanced incursive non-tribals. The process of dislocation and redistribution of tribal population have been considered here in this exclusionary context.

Keywords: tribal redistribution, ethnic isolationism, tribal marginalization, social exclusion.

The tribal population constitutes of a significant section in the kaleidoscopic Indian Social fabric. The contemporary setting of the tribals or *adivasis* is a product of the long process of peopling in India, in compliance with the miscellany of the geographical entity. The spatial manifestation of the process is remarkably evident in the placement of tribal population in *complete isolation*, often referred to as ‘*tribal territories*’, which have been generally speaking ‘*environmentally negative*’, ‘*physically isolated*’ and ‘*inaccessible areas*’.¹

For centuries together, the *adivasis* or the original settlers i.e. the tribes have been characterised by their “*ethnic isolationism*”² and are “*typified* by their geographical isolation”³. Ahmad (1985) is of the opinion that tribes exhibit a staunch propensity to concentrate in the hilly, isolated and stagnant economies⁴ giving the tribal territories the designation of *cul-de-sac* or refugee zones.⁵ However, the gradual evolutionary process and rapid regional development efforts in the backward tribal belts, over the last few decades have largely influenced the isolationist character of the tribals. Roy Burman (1978) argues that complete isolation of tribals is a myth.⁶ The ongoing processes of development-displacement, land alienation, mining in tribal areas, imposing forest-restrictions, non-tribal incursions, etc. in the name of tribal-regional development has been responsible for redistribution of the indigenous tribal population particularly in the central tribal belt of India.

¹ Moonis Raza and A.Ahmad. 1990. *An Atlas of Tribal India*. New Delhi: Concept Publication. p.5

² Corboridge S. 1988. “The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society: Politics in the Jharkhand, 1950-1980.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 22.1, p.7

³ *Ibid.* p. 7

⁴ Ahmad, A. 1985. “A Regional Distribution Process and Redistribution of Tribal population in Mid-India.” In *Population Redistribution and Development in S.Asia*, edited by L.A.Kosinki and K.M.Elahi. p.65.

⁵ Subba Rao. 1958. *Personality of India*. Baroda : University of Baroda, p.11.

⁶ Burman, B.K.Roy. 1978. “A Tribal India–Population and Society.” *Indian Anthropologist*, 8: 75-76.

The interest of the present study lies in studying the regional-spatial dimensions of tribal demography and socio-economic issues. In compliance to this the present study shall embark upon the problem of tribal redistribution by taking a spatial dimension. The unsustainable process of regional development in the tribal territories ever since the independence, as studies reveal, has been accountable for population redistribution particularly in the Central tribal belt of India. The tribes have been suffering gradual alienation from their conventional habitat as a result of which their traditional economy, societal organizations and design of social behaviour have consequentially been influenced.

The study region constitutes of present day Jharkhand and Orissa with its districts being the unit of study. The administrative boundaries of the districts in the study region have undergone drastic changes over the last five decades since the 1961 census. In order to uphold the spatial coherence of the temporal investigation, the district boundaries as per the 1961 census has been considered as the base and readjustments for the subsequent censuses of 1971-2001 have been carried out accordingly. The names of the districts however remain the same as given in the 1961 census.

Conceptualising Redistribution:

The term “redistribution” implies the ‘rearrangement or reshuffling of any phenomenon in time and space.’ Population redistribution is a function of birth, death, and migration. Migration may not be the sole factor of redistribution but is significant especially when tribal redistribution is being considered, as it also takes into consideration the displacement of population resulting from various processes. In context to the present study, the term “redistribution” has been considered in a restricted sense focusing at the varying share of tribal population with reference to total population in the study region.

Studies on Tribal Redistribution:

Immense researches have gone into investigating the causative factors of the exclusionary tribal redistribution process in this tribal belt and their consequences thereupon. Badgaiyan (1986) pointed out that

during the colonial period, in late 19th and early 20th century, various plantations and mining enclaves were established by the British. Need for cheap labour resulted in opening new economic vistas for tribal who migrated to these regions. This resulted in considerable alteration in the ethnic constitution of the tribal population in this region.⁷ This stands further justified by Chowdhury and Bhowmic (1986) who were of the opinion that “Chotanagpur region has experienced both out and in migration during 1961 and 1971...The low growth of tribal communities in Bihar and Orissa and simultaneous increase in neighbouring states like West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh strengthen the mass tribal exodus”.⁸

Ahmad (1985) came up with yet another form of intervention witnessed in this mineral rich region. The utilization of mineral resources coupled with the process of industrialization and urbanization brought “non- tribal elements of diverse origins into the tribal homelands”.⁹ The waves of this incursion were effectively vicious as it altered the tribal mode of life and ruined their conventional economic activities.

The design of tribal–non-tribal interface went through a qualitative revolution in the post independence period. The process of regional development in the planned era brought within its ambit the tribal regions as well. Thus began the entire process of integration in this region which went a long way in dismantling not only their traditional economic activities but also their social behaviour and unique traditional characteristics.

⁷ Badgaiyan. 1986. “19th century in Chotanagpur and Santhal parganas – Political Economy of migration.” In *Studies in Migration*, edited by M.C.A. Rao. New Delhi: Manohar Publication.

⁸ Choudhury, N.C. & S.K. Bhowmic. 1986. “Migration of Chotanagpur Tribes to West Bengal”, *Studies in Migration*, edited by M.C.A. Rao. New Delhi: Manohar Publication.

⁹ A.Ahmad. 1985. “A Regional Distribution Process and Redistribution of Tribal population in Mid-India.” In *Population Redistribution and Development in S.Asia*, edited by L.A.Kosinki and K.M.Elahi. Netherlands: Reidle Publishers Co.

More recent studies such as Maharatna & Chikte (2004) reveal that Jharkhand’s tribal population has since independence, persistently experienced a slower population growth than the non-tribal groups. They empirically analysed that in the recent past, substantial tribal out migration to other states over a long period appears to have been a major cause of this trend.¹⁰ Firdos (2005) has captured the aspect of forest degradation which has caused a change in the workforce structure of the tribes, finally resulting in redistribution of Birhors in Jharkhand. The Birhor population has not been diminishing, rather they are getting redistributed as a result of the dismantling of their traditional activity of rope making due to forest degradation.¹¹

Thus, the entire exclusionary process of tribal redistribution in this region went a long way in dismantling not only their traditional economic activities but also their social behaviour and unique traditional characteristics. Various indices have been considered here to capture the redistribution aspect.

Analysis:

The identification of regions with high tribal concentration in the study area has been done by the help of

- (i) the percentage of tribal population,
- (ii) the density of tribal population,
- (iii) the concentration of tribal population (location quotient),
- (iv) the exponential growth of tribal population and
- (v) the estimated net migration rate of tribal population.

The distinct tribal nucleuses are:

Jharkhand-Orissa Tribal Nucleus (Nucleus 1)	Ranchi and Singhbhum districts of Jharkhand.* Mayurbhanj, Sundergarh and Keonjhar districts of Orissa*
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¹⁰ Maharatna, Arup and Rasika Chikte. 2004. “Demography of tribal population in Jharkhand 1951-1991.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 46-47, Nov. 13-26, p. 5053.

¹¹ Firdos, Sohel. 2005. “Forest Degradation, changing workforce structure and population redistribution: the case of Birhors in Jharkhand.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 8, Feb. 19-25.

Orissa tribal Nucleus (Nucleus 2)	Koraput, Kalahandi and Phulbani districts of Orissa.*
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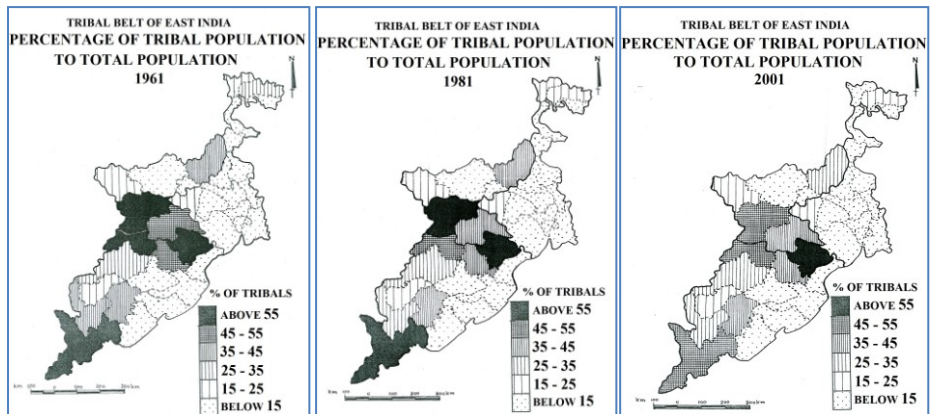
*the districts refer to the administrative districts of Census of India, 1961.

1. PERCENTAGE OF TRIBAL POPULATION:

The spatial distribution of tribal population is necessary to understand its redistribution. Any change or shift in the spatial distribution reveals the pattern of redistribution.

$$\text{Percentage of tribal population} = \frac{\text{Tribal population of a district} \times 100}{\text{Total Population of the district}}$$

Fig. 1 Percentage of Tribal Population to Total Population (1961 – 2001)



Source: All maps prepared by the author from data computed from Census of India, 1961, 1981 and 2001

Initially, in 1961, there were four major districts of Ranchi, Koraput, Mayurbhanj and Sundergarh with very high tribal proportion. But by 2001, only Mayurbhanj remained in this category, the rest of it drastically declined in their tribal proportion. Such a categorical shift makes it clear that the tribal population is declining in the nucleus tribal areas.

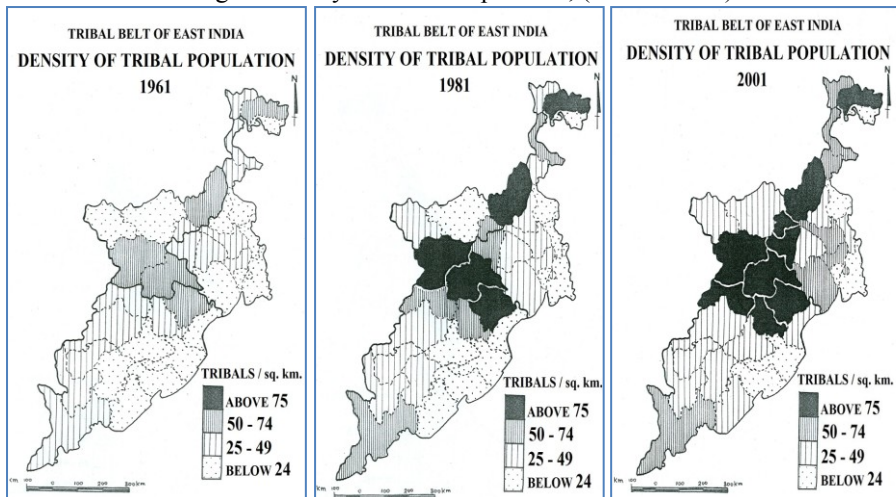
2. DENSITY OF TRIBAL POPULATION:

Density is a viable measure of the redistribution of tribal population. Any increase in the density of tribal population shall indicate that the

tribals are being squeezed into limited area, generally their homeland. This results when there is high in migration of non tribals into tribal areas or tribals being displaced from areas and they are forced to settle in limited land available to them.

$$\text{Density of Tribal Population} = \frac{\text{Total Tribal Population of a district}}{\text{Total Area of the district}}$$

Fig. 2 Density of Tribal Population, (1961 – 2001)



Source: All maps prepared by the author from data computed from Census of India, 1961, 1981 and 2001

An overview of the density conditions of tribal population from 1961-2001 clearly reveals that initially there were no areas with high tribal density but gradually the high density areas were converted into very high density areas and simultaneously the moderate getting converted into high density areas. There is a kind of continuous belt formed of very high tribal density.

Table 1. In-migration and Out-migration: Santhal Parganas and Chotanagpur, 1891-1971

Year	Immigration	Emigration
1891	96,000	3,33,000
1901	1,79,000	NA
1911	2,93,000	7,07,000
1921	3,07,000	9,47,000

1931	3,07,000	NA
1941	NA	NA
1951	4,80,000	NA
1961	10,73,920	NA
1971	14,29,805	NA

Source: K.S. Singh (1978), Statement VII, p. 69 and Stuart Corbridge (1988), p. 22

The reason that can be sought here is of high in migration in the tribal areas (Table 1). The years 1951, 1961, and 1971 have recorded high in migration in these regions.

The 'migration budgets' of most Jharkhand districts between 1891 and 1971 (see Table 1) reveals that prior to the 1930s both Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas (and especially Ranchi District) were areas of high net out-migration. The lack of agricultural employment opportunities, allied to a general absence of double-cropping in agriculture, ensured that the tribals were a favoured target for the contractors recruiting for the Calcutta brickyards and the Assam tea plantations.¹² After 1931 a very different picture pertains. In the wake of the burgeoning industrialization of Dhanbad and Singhbhum Districts, Chotanagpur becomes a division of significant net in-migration.

The effects of this immigration are further inscribed in the changing ethnic composition of Jharkhand, revealed in the percentage of tribal population; these records, for each Census year, the percentage of a District's population that would be classified as Scheduled Tribal according to the 1971 list of Scheduled Tribes. It reveals a relative decline in the tribal population of the Jharkhand between 1961 and 2001. The 1971 census records a tribal majority in Ranchi District alone in Jharkhand. Overall, the northern parts of Chotanagpur are considerably less 'tribal' than it's southern and south-western portions. In Santal Parganas the picture has been a good deal more stable, in part because the area has lacked the sort of industry-led immigration which is common to Singhbhum and Dhanbad leading to very low share of tribal population in this region.

¹² Corbridge Stuart (1988): "The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society: Politics in the Jharkhand, 1950-1980", *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 1 (1988), pp.21

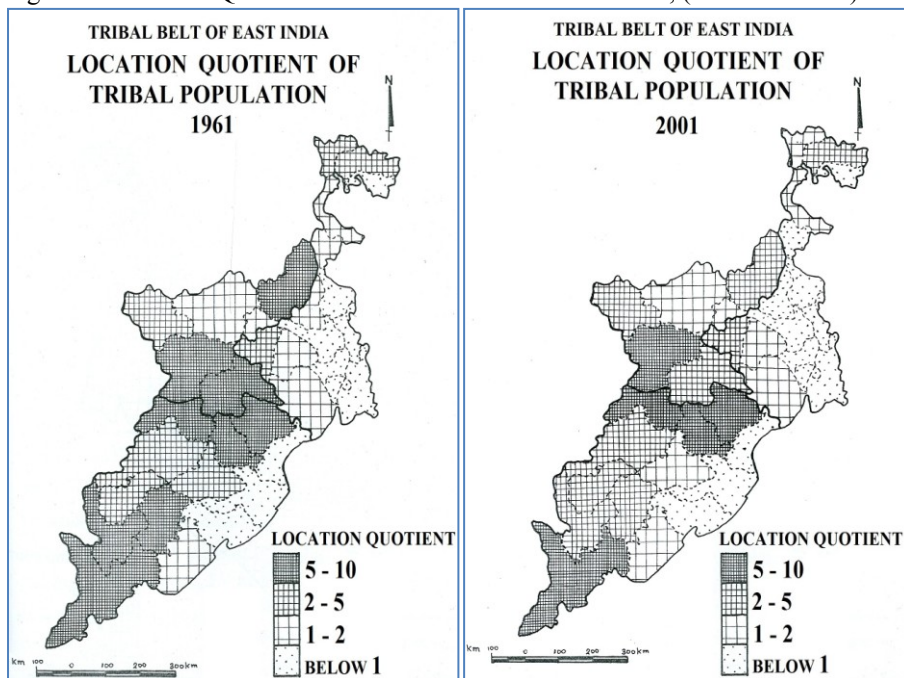
3. CONCENTRATION OF TRIBAL POPULATION (Location Quotient)

The location quotient index offers the relative variation between the concentration pattern at the national level and the level of component spatial unit/ district in this case. Location quotient is indicative of “local specialization” or local concentration. The basic thrust here is to see the change in the concentration of tribal population at two points of time i.e. 1961 and 2001. Location quotient is the best method to show the concentration and clustering of tribal population.

Location Quotient (L.Q.) =

$$\frac{\text{Total tribal population in the district} / \text{Total population in the district}}{\text{Total tribal population of the region} / \text{Total population of the region}}$$

Fig. 3 LOCATION QUOTIENT OF TRIBAL POPULATION, (1961 and 2001)



Source: All maps prepared by the author from data computed from Census of India, 1961 and 2001

The tribal concentration depicted by location quotient shows that the nucleus tribal areas of Ranchi, Singhbhum and Santhal Parganas of Jharkhand and Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Kalahandi, and Phulbani experienced high tribal concentration in 1961. But by 2001 Santhal Parganas, Singhbhum, Kalahandi and Phulbani recorded drastic decline in their tribal concentration. Areas with low concentration did not show much change but the high concentration areas have declined drastically in tribal concentration.

4. EXPONENTIAL GROWTH RATE OF TRIBAL POPULATION:

Growth rate is an indirect method of analyzing population redistribution. The direction of growth rate by areal units give an indication, whether any realignment or reshuffling has taken place in the distribution of population.

$$\text{Growth rate} = P_t = P_o e^{rt}$$

Where, P_o = population at the beginning of the period

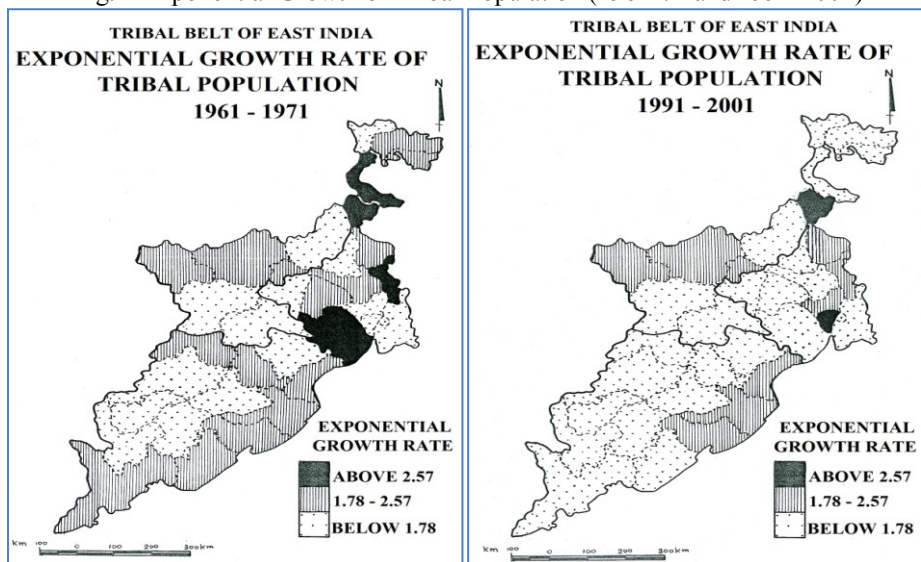
P_t = population at the end of the period of t years

e = Euler number = 2.71828

t = time span between the first and subsequent population count

r = exponential rate of growth

Fig. 4 Exponential Growth of Tribal Population (1961-71 and 1991-2001)



Source: All maps prepared by the author from data computed from Census of India, 1961 to 2001

If we compare the growth rate of tribal population with non tribal population, we find that, in Jharkhand the growth rates of tribal population remained lower than the non-tribal population in the district. Same is the case with Orissa (Table 3). The reason for this is large scale influx of non tribal population into the district/state. In general, Jharkhand has not much variation in its growth rate, but the declining trend has been found throughout the study area. Declining trend of growth rate means reduction in tribal population, where as increasing trend of growth rate means increase in tribal population.

Table 3: GROWTH RATE OF TRIBAL AND NON TRIBAL POPULATION

States	1961-1971 (in %)		1971-1981 (in %)		1981-1991 (in %)	
	ST	Non ST	ST	Non ST	ST	Non ST
Jharkhand	1.64	1.97	1.64	2.21	1.30	2.19
Orissa	1.84	2.37	1.54	1.93	1.74	1.86

Source: Census of India, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991.

5. ESTIMATED NET MIGRATION RATE:

Since data on migration for tribal are separately not available in the Census of India, the estimates of Net Migration Rate by the “National Growth Rate method”¹³ have been taken. For a geographic division, a rate of growth greater than the national average is interpreted as net in-migration and a rate less than the national average as net out-migration. Here, slight modification has been done on the original formula. Instead of taking national average we have taken state average. Tribals are concentrated in segmented regions, so that the exaggeration at the state level could be minimized.

Migration rate = District Growth rate – State Growth rate.

(Following the “National Growth Rate Method”)

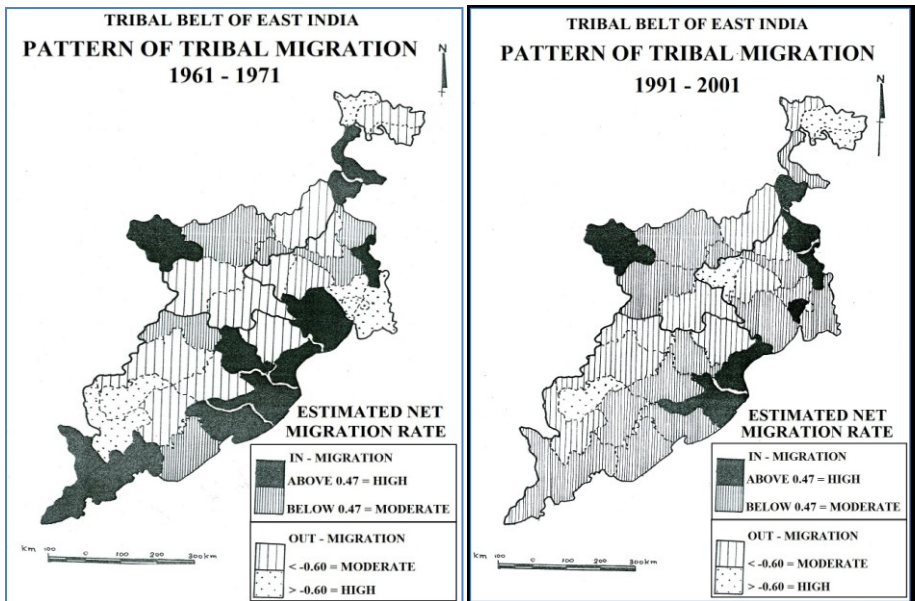
If, value is negative = out migration; If, value is positive = in migration

In this tribal belt, the pattern of tribal migration follows the route of south to north. Here the northern districts like Palamau, Hazaribagh which are relatively less exploited as far as the regional development process is concerned continues to be the place of destination of poor tribal. Ranchi and Singhbhum, relatively more exposed to the alien

¹³ Shryock, Henry S., Jacon S. Siegel, & Elizabeth A. Larmon. 1975. *The Methods and Materials of Demography*, volume 2. p. 388.

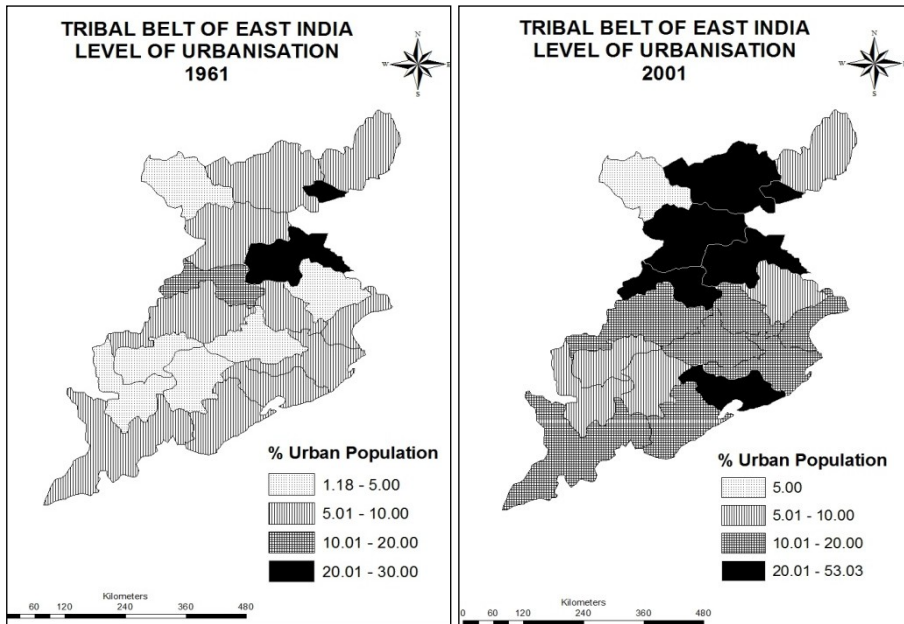
world, have always been showing out migration of nature loving tribal. This pattern of tribal migration suggests that out migration in tribal population is generally observed in those areas/districts which showed the ongoing regional development processes either through rapid industrialization or urbanization in that region. In migration is found in those districts which are relatively less exploited and found interiority of its location towards inter-state borders.

Fig. 5 PATTERN OF TRIBAL MIGRATION, (1961-71 and 1991-2001)



Source: All maps prepared by the author from data computed from Census of India, 1961 to 2001

Fig. 6. LEVEL OF URBANIZATION 1961 – 2001



Source: Census of India 1961 and 2001.

The level of Urbanization is an indicator of modernization in the region. If we compare the tribal nucleus, the pattern of tribal migration and level of urbanization, we can note an interesting conclusion that the regions which have been touched by modernization, have shown declining tribal proportion, out migration of tribal population, in migration of non tribal population and thus these areas are more prone to tribal integration. The Ranchi, Dhanbad and Singhbhum districts have shown rapid urbanization and at the same time have drastically declined in their tribal proportion and are also areas of high tribal out migration.

Results and Conclusion:

- The % of tribal population is declining in tribal nucleus as a result of entry of more and more non-tribes.
- Density of tribal population increasing in tribal nucleus & tribes being squeezed into lesser and remote areas.

- Concentration of tribal population gone down drastically in tribal nucleus.

The implications of urbanization and modernization in the tribal nucleus are visible in the form of such tribal redistribution, fragmentation of tribal nucleus, mass immigration of non tribal population in the tribal areas and social integration that followed as a result.

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