CrossMark

Modern Asian Studies **54**, 1 (2020) pp. 251–285. © Cambridge University Press 2019
doi:10.1017/S0026749X17000889 First published online 4 July 2019

*Money, Value, and Indigenous Citizenship: Notes from the Indian development state**

PINKY HOTA

Department of Anthropology, Smith College
Email: phota@smith.edu

Abstract

Based on fieldwork conducted in Kandhamal, Odisha in 2007–08, this article demonstrates how scripts about money, value, and indigeneity are used as exclusionary discourses by development state officials and caste Hindus to portray Indian tribals as failed citizens of the Indian development state. These discourses are used not only as a means of disciplining tribals as indigenous citizens, but also to elide other contradictions within the development state such as corruption, thereby sustaining 'modern development' as a project of perpetual deferral. However, this article also shows how Kandha tribals, in turn, appropriate these scripts to display their understanding of the shifting contours of indigenous citizenship and its mandates for entitlements from the development state and indigenous political agency. In so doing, this article demonstrates how historical discourses of money and indigeneity inform contemporary indigenous claims to citizenship. By attending to these discourses, it argues for indigeneity as a site to observe the folding-back of state power onto itself, as indigenous citizenship reanimates historical constructions of the *adivasi* as indigene but subverts these constructions by using a language of indigenous entitlement.

* I thank the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation, and the Committee on South Asian Studies at the University of Chicago for their support during the fieldwork and write-up stages of this research. I gratefully acknowledge the insightful comments from two anonymous reviewers for *Modern Asian Studies*, Fernando Armstrong-Fumero, Nusrat Chowdhury, Amy Cooper, Suchismita Das, and Christine Nutter El Ouardani. I benefitted from the opportunity to serve as a respondent to Jessica Cattelino's work on money and indigeneity at Amherst College, and thank her for engaging with this piece. Thanks also to Johan Matthew, who encouraged me to present an early draft at the Five College Inter Asia Faculty Seminar, and Norbert Peabody for his warm support.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Introduction

In July 2007, I hitched a ride in a van owned by a local non-governmental organization (NGO) in the tribal-majority Kandhamal district in the highlands of central Odisha[1] on the eastern coast of India. On our way, a group of Kandha[2] tribal youth appeared in front of the van. Holding long sticks in their hands, they stood in the van's path until it came to a halt. Beating the roof and windows with their hands, they shouted 'Open up!' As the driver rolled down a window, a young man shouted: 'Give us money, come on, give it to us—we want to buy some *pudiya* (chewing tobacco).' The driver asked: 'Why should we give you money?' The young man retorted: 'You think you are so smart. We know who is paying for this car. All of you say you are doing work for *adibasis* (literally original settlers)[3] —that is why you get money. This is our money, not yours!'

During the 18 months I spent in Kandhamal in 2007–08, *Kandhas*—especially those belonging to younger generations—insisted that development officials and caste Hindus repeatedly duped them and 'took money in their name' (*aama na re paisa nauchanti*) because of their 'simplicity'. Employing a vocabulary of entitlements as indigenes and using oft-repeated tropes of 'simplicity'—shorthand for their perceived inability to master money as a system of material and social exchange—they described how they had been cheated by upper castes, state officials, and researchers like myself who appeared to be 'swallowing up' money (*paisa gili jauchanti*) by claiming that their work would benefit tribals. These young Kandhas warned that this would no longer be the case, that they possessed a new awareness, and no one could 'hide the truth' from them.

There was no actual transaction of money that took place in this encounter. However, it was clear that securing cash was not the sole objective for these young tribals. Rather, they wished to perform their understanding of the 'value' of their indigenous positioning in the local development economy. By employing a language of ownership, Kandhas asserted their claims over development capital—capital

[1] Orissa was renamed Odisha in 2011 in keeping with a country-wide political phenomenon in which territories have been renamed in archaizing ways to demonstrably reject the Anglicized names acquired during the British colonial rule.

[2] I use the term 'Kandha' instead of the 'British Kond' to reflect the pronunciation that the Kandha tribals use themselves.

[3] The term *adibasi* is an Odia variant of the nationally used term *adivasi*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

circulating just through the formal bureaucratic processes of state development, but also through the informal economy that was its shadow—the pockets of state and development officials, NGO workers such as the driver, even unaffiliated researchers like myself who inquired after tribals' socio-economic problems but seemed to do little to change their experiences.

No straightforward narrative of indigenous privilege within the Indian state could explain Kandhas' assertion of proprietary ownership over development. In Kandhamal, as in other parts of India, state-led development of tribals is routinely pejorative of tribals, pegging them as anachronisms—the *raison d'être* for development initiatives yet 'impossible to develop' using 'modern' strategies. In fact, *Kandha* assertions over development precisely responded to state officials' and caste Hindus' pejorative characterizations of them. State officials and caste Hindus insisted that, though the Kandhas' status as *adibasis* (original settlers) accorded them both political power and proprietary ownership of land in the local socio-economic hierarchy, they were neither able to successfully receive the development state's patronage nor capitalize on the political potential of their indigenous status because of their fundamental inability to become 'worldly' by mastering money and exhibiting means–ends rationality. Kandhas' claims over development, however, suggested that they were using these pejorative characterizations to assertively claim and renegotiate indigenous citizenship.

This article illustrates how scripts about money, value, and indigeneity—how money works in market exchange to index the 'true' value of things and how such an understanding eludes indigenes due to their inherent 'simplicity'—are used as exclusionary discourses by development state officials and caste Hindus. As development officials and non-tribal citizens insist that tribals are incapable of mastering the cluster of traits around economic exchange and value—an inability to become canny in commerce, a lack of means–ends rationality, and an inability to understand and exchange true value—this article demonstrates how such discourses become critical to casting Indian tribals as failed citizens of the development state. These discourses are used not only as a means of disciplining tribals as indigenous citizens, but also to elide other contradictions within the development state such as corruption, thereby sustaining 'modern development' as a project of perpetual deferral. However, this article also shows how Kandha tribals, in turn, appropriate these scripts to display their understanding of the shifting contours of indigenous citizenship and its mandates for

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

entitlements from the development state and indigenous political agency. In various ways, from demanding their dues from development officials to accepting bribes when they become state officials themselves, Kandhas seek to counter widespread assumptions that they do not understand money's pragmatics—money's workings and the broader socio-cultural processes it indexes[4] in the local development economy.

The analysis that follows then highlights how historical discourses of money and indigeneity inform indigenous claims to citizenship,[5] but also how they reveal the blurring of state and market logics and consequent shifts in indigenous citizenship in contemporary development states. As Indian tribals reappropriate and subvert exclusionary and pejorative discourses as a strategic political tactic of indigenous citizenship, this article illustrates how indigeneity is not just an ontologically and temporally unruly category, but also one in which institutions and institutional power fold back onto themselves[6] in unanticipated ways. This article then argues for indigeneity as a site at which to observe the folding-back of state power onto itself, as indigenous citizenship reanimates historical constructions of the *adivasi* as indigene but subverts these constructions using a language of indigenous entitlement. More broadly, this article also draws attention to how patterned constructions of indigeneity transcend geographies to bring developments in contemporary *adivasi* politics into conversation with neo-liberal reconfigurations within indigenous politics elsewhere.

Sites, methods, and scope of study

This analysis is based on fieldwork conducted in Kandhamal, Odisha between March 2007 and July 2008. It draws on ethnographic, participant-observation, and archival research including interviews with 80 Kandha and Paana individuals as well as a smaller number of caste

[4] Keith Hart, *The Ethnography of Finance and the History of Money: 'New Perspectives in Economic Ethnography: Modalities of Exchange and Economic Calculation'*, Museu National, Rio de Janeiro, 2011; William M. Maurer, 'The Anthropology of Money'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35, 2006, pp. 15–36; Taylor C. Nelms and William Maurer, 'Materiality, Symbol, and Complexity in the Anthropology of Money' in *The Psychological Science of Money*, E. Bijleveld and H. Arts (eds), Springer, New York, 2014, p. 23.

[5] Cf. Jessica Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008.

[6] Lucas Bessire, *Behold the Black Caiman*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2015.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Hindu residents, Hindu nationalist mobilizers, Christian community leaders, as well as state and development officials in the district. During this time, Baliguda, the district subdivision, and Raikia, 100 kilometres from Baliguda, served as the two major bases.[7]

Kandhamal is home to three distinct subgroups of Kandha tribals—Desia, Dongria, and Kutia. The Kandhas who appear in this analysis all identify as Desia Kandhas—plains-dwelling Kandhas marked by the state as Hinduized. Desia Kandhas have a long history of contact with caste Hindus and exposure to state discourses of indigenous recognition. I use the word tribal rather than indigenous or *adivasi* (original settler) to refer to Kandhas to avoid marking them as always already indigenous and to reflect the contested nature of indigeneity in India, shown to be detrimental to other ethnic minorities excluded from the tribal identification. However, I retain the use of the word *adibasi* (an Odia variant of *adivasi*) when used by state officials, non-tribal, as well as Kandha interlocutors. I do so to illustrate the extent to which the *adivasi* category is taken for granted as a proprietary marker of indigeneity, used in claims and performances of indigeneity within the quotidian workings of Indian state and society.

Methodologically, this article employs a finely attuned ethnographic attention to older historical constructions of the Kandha community in Kandhamal as well as newer idioms through which claims to indigeneity are staked, suggestive of reconfigurations within indigenous politics in tribal communities in contemporary India. Scholars have noted how marginalized groups have begun to deploy strategic articulations of indigeneity to precisely navigate the tumult of neo-liberal shifts of state restructuring, receding welfare services, and competing bids for recognition.[8] Others caution against looking at indigeneity as a wholly novel phenomenon, urging instead that we attend to older, local scripts that become important for identity claims.[9]

[7] I also travelled to and conducted interviews in several other blocks and villages—including Chakkapada, Tumudibandha, Raikia, Daringbadi, Kotagada, G. Udaygiri, and Phiringia. I conducted archival research in the State Archives and the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Research and Training Institute in Bhubaneswar during this time, as well as between 2012 and 2014.

[8] Dorothy Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2011; Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez, *Indigenous Encounters With Neoliberalism*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2013.

[9] Fernando Armstrong-Fumero, 'A Heritage of Ambiguity: The Historical Substrate of Vernacular Multiculturalism in Yucatan, Mexico'. *American Ethnologist* 36:2, 2006, pp. 299–

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

By employing attention to discourses of money and indigeneity birthed in colonial imaginaries and adapted around the specifics of local indigenous populations, the analysis undertaken here employs attention to both, demonstrating the methodological necessity of doing ethnography on an 'awkward scale'[10] at once attentive to locally salient histories as well as circulations of political and economic processes beyond the local ethnographic site for an understanding of indigenous citizenship.

In so doing, this analysis also challenges an implicit dichotomy drawn between the coercive nation state and a liberating transnationalism as two poles informing contemporary discourses of indigenous citizenship.[11] While indigenous claims are seen as marginalized and limited within contemporary nation states and dramatically ameliorated by transitional discourses of indigeneity and indigenous activism, this analysis reflects on the more subtle and nuanced ways in which more recently energized discourses of indigeneity are invoked and laminated onto long-circulating, older scripts in indigenous communities. These indigenous assertions, though informed by international and national discourses of indigeneity, present themselves in incremental and subtle shifts unaccounted for in descriptions of indigenous activism. They demonstrate how indigenous citizens draw on discourses of indigenous rights to make claims not just *within* the confines of the development state, but indeed in many ways *from* the development state.

Indigenous citizenship in the Indian development state

Amidst debates as to whether notions of citizenship already have currency within Indian tribal communities or are being imposed on them through the activism of advocates, including Maoists,[12] this article illustrates how and through what idioms Indian tribal communities understand and

316; Kaushik Ghosh, 'Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenousness, Locality, and the Transnational Sphere in Jharkhand, India'. *Cultural Anthropology* 21:4, 2006, pp. 501–534.

[10] Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 'Ethnography on an Awkward Scale: Postcolonial Anthropology and the Violence of Abstraction'. *Ethnography* 4:2, 2003, pp. 147–179.

[11] Ghosh, 2006, pp. 502–503.

[12] Alpa Shah, 'The Tensions Over Liberal Citizenship in a Marxist Revolutionary Situation: The Maoists in India'. *Critique of Anthropology* 33:1, 2013, pp. 91–109; Nandini Sundar, 'Reflections on Civil Liberties, Citizenship, Adivasi Agency and Maoism: A Response to Alpa Shah'. *Critique of Anthropology* 33:1, 2013, pp. 361–368.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

claim indigenous citizenship in contemporary India. While these may not resemble dimensions of 'liberal citizenship'[13] in any canonical sense, tribals' discursive deployments of indigenous ownership in relation to development demonstrate that rights-based understandings of citizenship[14] are not only in wide circulation, but are constantly revised and renegotiated in their interactions with the state. Such attention to semiotic and discursive dimensions of citizenship emphasizes that, in order to understand indigenous citizenship and recognition, we must engage with how minority citizens understand, learn, and deploy notions of citizenship instead of focusing purely on formal juridical and political understandings.[15]

Scholars have debated indigeneity as an analytic category for Indian tribals,[16] questioning to what extent tribals can lay claim to proprietary indigeneity in India, and its exclusionary implications for other minorities.[17] Moreover, they point out that tribal communities are not explicitly granted indigenous status in the Indian state[18] unlike indigenous groups in other contexts. However, it should also be noted that Indian tribal groups' juridical recognition through the category of Scheduled Tribe serves as the de facto marker of indigenous identification in India.[19] Moreover, the self-conscious adoption of *adivasi* (original settler) as a self-referent since the 1930s[20] makes it clear that, by engaging terms that draw attention to their claims as autochthons, *adivasis* have been engaged in a politics of indigeneity that predates the

[13] Ibid., p. 91; Judy Meltzer and Cristina Rojas, 'Transformation in Imaginings and Practices of Citizenship in Latin America' in *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*, Engin F. Isin and Peter Nyers (eds), Routledge, London, 2014; cf. James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2009.

[14] Sundar, 2013, p. 367.

[15] Gerard Delanty, 'Citizenship as a Learning Process: Disciplinary Citizenship versus Cultural Citizenship', *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 22:6, 2003, pp. 597–605.

[16] Andre Béteille, *The Backward Classes in Contemporary India*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992; Bengt T. Karlsson and Thanka B. Subba, *Indigeneity in India*, Routledge, London, 2006; Rycroft and Dasgupta, 2011; Uday Chandra, 'Towards Adivasi Studies: New Perspectives on "Tribal" Margins of Modern India'. *Studies in History* 31:1, 2015, pp. 122–127, at p. 125.

[17] Béteille, 1992; Amita Baviskar, 'Adivasi Encounters with Hindu Nationalism in MP'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40:48, 2005, pp. 5105–5113.

[18] Alpa Shah, *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2010, p. 10.

[19] Townsend Middleton, *The Demands of Recognition: State Anthropology and Ethnopolitics in Darjeeling*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 2015.

[20] Karlsson and Subba, 2006; Ghosh, 2006.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

formation of the modern Indian state in 1947. It is a testament to the success of such a politics that the term *adivasi* is now commonsensically understood as a natural and proprietary marker of tribal communities' indigenous status within the Indian nation state. However, since the 1930s, few accounts have attempted to trace reconfigurations within *adivasi* politics as indigenous politics and claims to citizenship in contemporary India.[21,22] This article specifically focuses on reconfigurations in *adivasi* politics as developments that betray how indigenous politics and citizenship shed light on the colluding logics of the development state and market exchange that form a key feature of the neo-liberal state[23]: an ideology valuing market exchange as 'an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs'[24] and a mode of governance embracing the self-regulating free market with its associated values of competition and self-interest as the model for effective and efficient government.[25] In so doing, the analysis presented here attends to the relationship between money and indigeneity to examine how *adivasi* citizenship in contemporary India precisely hinges on understanding how ideals of market exchange have percolated into the development state's logics. As Indian tribals identify these collusions, they come to understand that, in order to be a successful recipient of the development state's patronage, they must navigate the market economy as indigenous citizens. Departing from other accounts of minority citizenship in the development state, this analysis is then not merely a narrative of a thinning state[26] with receding welfare functions,

[21] For exceptions, see Ghosh, 2006; Amita Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River*. Oxford University Press, 1995; 2005; Shah, 2010.

[22] Amita Baviskar (2005) has alluded to the importance of observing such interactions by highlighting significant continuities in the articulation of tribal cultural rights with respect to the primacy of indigenous assertions over land and Hindu supremacy, and points out that discourses of indigeneity are now often deployed within the discursive claims of Hindu nationalism, disenfranchising other minority communities and legitimizing a 'politics of hate' towards religious minorities.

[23] Tejaswini Ganti, 'Neoliberalism'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, 2014, pp. 89–104.

[24] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

[25] Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 12; Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004; Tania Murray Li, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2014.

[26] James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2006.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

including within minority development, and a definitive turn away from the state towards the market. Rather, it shows how the interactions of *adivasi* citizens with the development state evidence the coexistence of market logics with increasing expectations of modernity and development from the state[27] as a key feature of contemporary indigenous citizenship.

In India, British colonial administrators created the very category of 'tribal' as distinct from caste-based Hindu society by transporting an Enlightenment framework of primitivity to the subcontinent. While such a framework engaged a suite of judgements and expectations that framed the tribal as Other in India, British colonists explicitly deployed themes of money and primitivity to create a temporality of modernity. In these deployments, there was an uncanny repetition of tropes of lack of knowledge of money, private property, and inability of comprehension of true value as in the case of indigenous groups in settler colonial contexts elsewhere.[28] In colonial Bengal, Banerjee notes that colonial administrators such as Augustus Cleveland were inspired by the Scottish Enlightenment to insist on the civilizing impact of money on primitives. Cleveland insisted that Paharia tribals preferred to 'plunder' instead of trading and working, seizing what they immediately wanted rather than engaging in the impersonal and regulated exchange of money, evidencing a need for the immediate satisfaction of desires rather than their rational deferral. The 'primitive' tribal without such a sense of temporal deferral was surmised as having no grasp over mediatory entities like money, machinery, and the state. Colonists insisted that tribals existed in a condition of unpremeditated and immediate subsistence acts and were always already outside the money form. At the same time, they emphasized that money could serve as a civilizational force for tribals, including the taming of their 'natural' violent proclivities.[29]

By linking the mastery of money to the mastery over temporality and corporeality,[30] money also became instrumental in crafting the figure of

[27] Daniel Mains, 'Blackouts and Progress: Privatization, Infrastructure, and a Developmentalist State in Jimma, Ethiopia'. *Cultural Anthropology* 27:1, 2012, pp. 3–27.

[28] Jessica Cattelino, 'From Locke to Slots: Money and the Politics of Indigeneity'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60:2, 2018, pp. 274–307; Prathama Banerjee, 'Debt, Time and Extravagance: Money and the Making of "Primitives" in Colonial Bengal'. *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 37:4, 2000, p. 429; Ghosh, 2006.

[29] Banerjee, 2000, p. 429.

[30] Ghosh, 2006, p. 512.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the sensuous, bodily, archetypal primitive.[31] Ghosh's discussion of his Munda tribal interlocutors and their reflections on money[32] echoes these refrains about how the 'primitive' is seen as conceptualizing money as a thing in itself rather than as a means to an object in the future. If pure abstract exchange was 'investment' for a deferred and more productive future, money used to satiate immediate needs and desires—such as alcohol and drunkenness—was seen as the 'primitive' form of money or, in effect, the absence of a true understanding of money. Colonists then linked the inability to master money to a proclivity in indigenes to succumb to sensuous, embodied immediate desires, demonstrating a lack of understanding of futures.

The British discovery, collection, and codification of information about Indian society contributed to colonial cultural hegemony and political control[33] while the law became the instrument through which peculiarly British notions about how to regulate a colonial society made up of Others was institutionally reactivated.[34] Both British ethnographers and colonial administrators asserted that the primitivity of tribals required them to be separated from caste Hindu society into a 'savage slot'.[35] The tribal as primitive then carried over from colonial times to the formation of the modern Indian state to become firmly encoded in the epistemological and legal categories of state recognition. This separation became the enduring basis of social classification in Indian society and juridical classification in liberal recognition through the juridical category Scheduled Tribe, rendering tribals the Other of Indian liberalism.[36]

With the inception of the modern Indian state, the paradigm of development has structured the Indian state's paternalistic governance of its tribal citizens. This paternalistic relationship was consolidated by the formal adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 that juridically classified Indian tribes as Scheduled Tribes, assuring tribal communities

[31] Banerjee 2000; Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-writing in a Colonial Society*, Oxford University Press, 2006; Ghosh, 2006.

[32] Ghosh, 2006, p. 512.

[33] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1996.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 'Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness' in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, R. Fox (ed.), School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, NM, 1991, pp. 17–44.

[36] Uday Chandra, 'Liberalism and Its Other: The Politics of Primitivism in Colonial and Postcolonial Indian Law'. *Law and Society Review* 47:1, 2013, pp. 135–168.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

state-mandated affirmative action. In its earliest Nehruvian iteration starting from 1947 onwards, the modern Indian state was wedded to an aspirational secular, aggressively developmentalist form. However, Verrier Elwin, the architect of Nehru's tribal policy, insisted that such an industrialization-focused, aggressively developmentalist paradigm was unsuitable for tribals. Advocating gradualism and simplicity in governance, he insisted that tribal life be gauged by development of 'human character' rather than by the metric of economic advancement.[37] Elwin was emphatic that the economic exploitation of tribals by caste Hindu society was a forceful argument against the mainstreaming of tribals, insisting that tribal history could be essentially narrated as 'a story of economic exploitation and cultural destruction by caste society'.[38] These differing modalities of development and associated temporalities of modernity for the nation and its Tribal Others carried forward the colonial temporal lag between the primitive and the civilized into the modern Indian development state. This non-assimilationist paradigm for tribal development aiming at non-interference and gradualism transitioned to other forms of governmentality, which became instrumental in the proliferation of state and non-state agencies to reinforce the imperative of indigenous development as well as the increasing circulation of contemporary discourses of transnational indigeneity within Indian tribal communities.[39] In 1991, India transitioned to a free-market economy with a substantial reduction in state control of the economy. Though neo-liberal reforms have been thought to erode welfare functions of the state, India remained an interventionist and developmentalist state, even as it transitioned from its earlier socialist form. The neo-liberal character of tribal development in contemporary India is then characterized by the dominant and expansive presence of the state in minority development and welfare as well as the incorporation of free-market ideals within state development.

Through these transitions in state-tribal governmentality, the figure of the tribal as unable to grasp money continued to serve as the basis of colonial paternalist protections and lingers on in the Indian nation

[37] See Gobind Chandra Rath, *Tribal Development in India: The Contemporary Debate*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 77–78.

[38] Ramachandra Guha, *Savaging the Civilized*, University of Chicago Press, 1999.

[39] Ghosh, 2006; Amita Baviskar, 'Indian Indigeneities: Adivasi Engagements with Hindu Nationalism in India' in *Indigenous Experience Today*, M. De La Cadena and O. Starn (eds), Berg, Oxford/New York, 2007.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

state's governance of tribals. For instance, citing the example of a 1998 ruling by the Supreme Court of India mandating all development projects that threaten to displace tribals must work with a land-for-land rehabilitation plan as opposed to rehabilitation through monetary compensation, Kaushik Ghosh[40] emphasizes that tribal governance continues to rely on an understanding of indigenes as unable to understand and transact with money. Moreover, while, unlike the settler colonial North American context, Indian tribal communities have not had access to large revenue that unsettles their position at the lowest rung in the socio-economic order,[41] it would be erroneous to equate the relative material absence of money with a conceptual and symbolic absence of money as an organizing discourse of indigeneity. While ethnographic and policy accounts are rife with references to the economic exploitation of tribals, discourses of money and indigeneity that undergird commerce and market exchange are rarely theorized in these accounts. They also uncritically reproduce the colonial view of tribals as untainted by the worldly ways of depraved market exchange and therefore naturally perennially exploited by those more savvy in commerce, from moneylenders under colonialism to landlords in the modern Indian state.[42] Building on recent investigations into a 'fiscal politics of indigeneity, where governmental authority, economy, and culture intersect',[43] the analysis that follows builds bridges between economic and political anthropology to illustrate not just how historical discourses of money and indigeneity inform contemporary indigenous claims to citizenship, but also how they reveal the blurring of state and market logics in the workings of the contemporary development state.

The Kandhas in market society

In the local history of Kandhamal, British colonists linked tribals' grasp of materiality to an embodied violent primitivity. The Kandhas (a tribal group in the central highlands of Odisha state) became identified in the historical and anthropological record through their engagement in

[40] Ghosh, 2006, p. 512.

[41] Cf. Cattelino, 2008.

[42] Nihar Ranjan Patnaik, *Economic History of Orissa*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1997; Rath, 2006, p. 77.

[43] Jessica Cattelino, 'Fungibility: Florida Seminole Casino Dividends and the Fiscal Politics of Indigeneity'. *American Anthropologist* 111:2, 2009, pp. 190–200.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

meriah human sacrifice[44]—a subject of great consternation for British colonists. British colonial authorities understood *meriah* sacrifice to be a part of a Kandha religious cosmology in which human blood was used to appease land to ensure fertility for a community that sustained itself through agriculture. Such an interpretation relied on an absolute distinction between religious and political practice, entirely overlooking *meriah* sacrifice's political implications, including assertion of autonomy from Hindu kingship.[45] Instead, the colonial administration understood it as the placation of divine forces, the attempts to nurture soil with human blood appearing to be a sign of Kandhas' fundamental misrecognition of the workings of the material world. The Kandhas relied on a neighbouring minority community, the Paanas, who served as economic liaisons between the Kandhas and an 'outside' world of colonial moneylenders, caste Hindu traders, and landowners.[46] This reliance on others for commercial transactions resulted in Kandhas' delayed introduction into market exchange. Kandhas were painted with the brushstrokes of romantic primitivism as noble savages even as they were subjected to pacification and censure of their violent proclivities, with the colonial institution of the Meriah Agency specifically to stop the 'barbaric savagery' of human sacrifice.[47] Kandhas were insistently cast as honest and laborious but not 'clever enough' to handle the marketing of the products of their agrarian toil,[48] with their encounters with commerce always mediated through exploitative and canny others.

Until the early nineteenth century, Kandhas transacted business chiefly through barter,[49] with money sometimes refused as compensation or used instead as ornamentation. By the end of the nineteenth century, the money economy had entirely replaced the barter system and Kandhas sold their commodities for cash and made purchases with money. However, their enduring figuration as unable to succeed in commerce and market exchange, or rather profit, tenaciously lingered. During the

[44] James George Frazier, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009 [1890]; Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981 [1964].

[45] Felix Padel, *The Sacrifice of Human Being*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991.

[46] Frederick George Bailey, *Tribe, Caste, Nation: A Study of Political Activity and Political Change in Highland Orissa*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1960.

[47] Barbara Boal, *The Konds: Human Sacrifice and Religious Change*, Aris & Phillips, Warminster, 1982; Padel, 1991.

[48] Patnaik, 1997, p. 380.

[49] Ibid., p. 372.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

transition from colonial rule into the modern Indian state, colonial constructions of Kandhas' inability to grasp materiality and transact in the marketplace became layered with caste Hindus and state officials' insistence about Kandhas' inability to master exchange of commensurable value. As tribal areas opened up to 'outsiders' who wished to acquire land to maximize production, Kandhas parted with their lands for sums far below the market value. Moreover, Kandhas were seen as unable to learn by experience that terms of land mortgages were unfavourable to them and resulted in the seizure of their lands, turning them into landless proletariat.[50] Tribal labour, including for the clearance of jungle and the building of roads, was also exploited by local feudal chiefs, *rajas*, and even local government officials under the *bethi* system of feudal servitude, which naturalized for Kandhas the idea that their labour ought to be free for those who had authority over them and were consequently owed customary services.[51]

Kandhas traditionally practised slash-and-burn shifting cultivation or *poddu chaasa*—a practice banned by colonial forest-use acts. This ban continued under the modern Indian state's legislation for fear of environmental imbalances and consequent implications for the state economy.[52] This required Kandhas to start engaging in more rooted agrarian practices, increasingly limiting them to state-enforced settled agriculture[53] that were never entirely successful in meeting the community's needs. At the time of my fieldwork, the Kandhas, forming 52 per cent of Kandhamal district's population, were largely engaged in subsistence farming, mostly of *kandula* legumes and rice for their own consumption, which they supplemented by gathering forest produce such as honey, roots, and berries for their own consumption and for sale in weekly *haatas* (markets). I often observed Kandhas participating in weekly *haatas*. These *haatas* served as crucial nodes of commercial exchange, where Kandhas sold produce, forest products, timber, and

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p. 381.

[52] Rath, 2006, p. 80.

[53] The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act was passed in 2006 to restore the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land for agriculture and other uses. However, at the time of my fieldwork in early 2007, most of my Kandha interlocutors were not aware that this new law had restored their rights. This was not in the least because of the continued presence of colonial signage issuing warnings about the illegality of slash-and-burn practices that remained scattered throughout the surrounding forest cover.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

firewood. They also bought everyday objects from vendors—brightly coloured plastic vessels, dried fish, and vegetables transported from other districts—engaging in sophisticated economic transactions that connected the local economy to state and national commercial networks. Moreover, *haatas* provided Kandhas with reprieve from the daily routine of agrarian toil and were integral to Kandha sociality. It was at the weekly *haata* that Kandhas engaged in festive banter and interacted with a wider community, making it clear that economic exchange bolstered rather than eroded sociality in indigenous communities as colonists had feared.[54]

Observing Kandhas at *haatas*, it became clear that they had become sophisticated participants within market society, despite the challenges they faced due to restrictive lifestyle shifts under colonial and modern Indian legislation. However, Kandhas' historical figuration as lacking a grasp of money and materiality had become implicated in a tenacious representational economy that was clearly evident in the socio-economic fabric of Kandhamal decades later. This representational economy engaged a cluster of social and morally loaded valences with Kandhas lamented as lacking an understanding of money and consequently of value, their failure to understand true value and rational means–end calculation a sign of their slothful recalcitrance. At other times, they were lauded as being 'simple yet honest' by state officials and caste Odias, including local Hindu nationalist mobilizers, who valorized their incorruptibility by capital in a region where they rued that development had reduced minority residents to being 'beggars ready for the next handout' and easy prey for mission-led development. These ideologies converged and congealed around Kandha tribals' inability to use money as a medium of exchange, to master commensuration in value, but also as shorthand to cast them as anachronistic within the development state.

The Kandha tribal citizen and the Indian development state

Since the formation of the modern Indian state in 1947, tribal development has transitioned from the Nehruvian ideal of non-interference and gradualism[55] to a form of governmentality reinforced by multiple

[54] Ghosh, 2006, p. 510.

[55] Ramachandra Guha, *Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin, His Tribals, and India*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1999.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

stakeholders—state agencies, NGOs, transnational development organizations, and faith-based organizations.[56] In Kandhamal, these included national agencies such as Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), regional institutions such as the Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Program (OTELP), transnational organizations like the World Bank and United Nations, and faith-based organizations such as World Vision. While such a multitude of development agencies implies a recession in the welfare state and a consequent decline in state-led patronage of minority citizens' development, the state continued to loom large as the chief patron of tribal development in Kandhamal. Several Kandhas used the English word 'develop', usually in the refrain 'How will we develop/get developed?' (*Aame kemiti* develop *hebu*?), directly indicting the *sarkaar* (government) as their chief benefactor who could do 'everything for them' but was choosing to 'do nothing' (*sarkaar aama pain sabu kari paribe kentu aama pain kicchi karu nahanti*) to secure their economic advancement.

At the state-run Kutia Kandha Development Agency (KKDA) in Belghar, I asked an official about the agency's work. He shrugged: 'It may not seem like much to you but the fact that we have been able to make *adibasis* wash themselves and wear clothes is itself a very big thing. They are just too ignorant and simple-minded.' His statement was one of many issued by state officials who expressed great cynicism about their ability to do work of value in state-led tribal development.[57] They characterized Kandhas as 'simple *adibasis*' who were impediments to the successful implementation of state-run schemes because they were too superstitious and primitive to be persuaded with rational logics of development. Officials almost immediately explained the futility of development work among Kandhas by lamenting their continuing state of socio-economic underdevelopment, pegging them as easy targets for economic exploitation because of their inability to understand the value of money and social scripts of economic exchange.

State officials used such a shorthand of simplicity to stand in for the ignorance and irrationality of tribal communities, locating the failure of state development in the inability of tribal individuals to receive the

[56] Sangeeta Kamat, *Development Hegemony: NGOs and the State in India*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002; Rath, 2006.

[57] Cf. Nayanika Mathur, 'Effecting Development: Bureaucratic Knowledges, Cynicism, and the Desire for Development in the Indian Himalaya' in *Differentiating Development: Beyond an Anthropology of Critique*, S. Venkatesan and T. Yarrow (eds), Berghahn Books, Oxford/New York, 2012.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

information and benefits of the schemes targeted towards their welfare. They also genuinely subscribed to the view that tribals occupied a distinct primitive temporality distinct from mainstream Indian society and were governed by primitive cosmologies irreconcilable with the workings of modern development institutions and governance. As a Block Development Officer (BDO) explained to me:

> Look Madam, there is only so much you can explain [to them]. Take, for example, the matter of cultivation. Every year we hold a agricultural practices training workshop for these people- how to practice irrigation, how not to let your livestock wander around so they do not graze on your fields, how to pick vegetables that can be grown with less water. But after that, they go right back to doing what they were doing. Teaching them new things is useless. They cannot understand these things so it is difficult to make them change.

He went on to add: 'There is only so much you can explain [to them]. Teaching them new things is useless. They cannot understand these things so it is difficult to make them change.' He added that Kandhas were so simple that they were easily conned: 'They sign over their land for a bottle of liquor. How can you make such a person understand anything?' The BDO used the *Kandha*'s glaring misapprehension of value in failing to see the incommensurability between a piece of land and a bottle of liquor to point to their inability to engage in economic transactions. By pointing to this failed exchange, he emphasized that the ideal subject of the development state ought to be able grasp exchange and value in modern market society, and that the failure to do so was a failure to benefit from development.

Noting repeated references to 'simplicity' and 'failed' economic transactions, I asked both state officials and development workers what they meant by the simplicity of tribals. They furnished a cluster of traits around economic exchange and value—an inability to become canny in commerce, a lack of means–ends rationality that made them unsuccessful in their farming labour and an inability to understand true value, exemplified by transactions in which Kandhas failed to commensurate value in exchange, including selling land for a bottle of liquor, gold for grains and forest produce for a pittance of its market value. Over time, it became clear that state officials were invoking modern money not as a literal currency form, but a semiotic system of market society in which development mandated a mastery of the modern economy that Kandhas were seemingly unable to exhibit. As Nelms and Maurer[58] point out, the

[58] Nelms and Maurer, 2014, p. 44.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

mastery of money is a process of psychological transformation, the inculcation of a disposition of readiness for the market economy including 'the imposition of impersonal, rational, instrumental, calculative modes of thought and comparison; the detachment of human beings from the world of things; and the "hollowing out" and weakening of social relations and promotion of individualism'. Drawing on Georg Simmel's[59] characterization of money as 'transform[ing] the world into an arithmetic problem', they remind us that, in market society, the mastery of modern money is synonymous with the inculcation of mental dispositions oriented towards quantitative means–ends calculation of self-interest. Most state officials used tribals' perceived failure to engage in successful self-interested exchange as a marker of their inability to develop the necessary psycho-cultural traits to benefit from the development state's interventions. Most surmised that tribals' simplicity was essentially an inability to become 'worldly', which made them honest, gullible and incorruptible by capital yet unable to become worthy recipients of state patronage and flourish in contemporary market society.

While state officials referred to the futility of development work by referencing tribals' tendency to be easily economically exploited, they said little about the state's role in offering paternalistic protection of tribal communities against said exploitation. State literature purports the purpose of tribal development, and the institution of bodies such as the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies, to be the protection of tribals against exploitation, echoing the ideals of Nehruvian protectionism. In Kandhamal, however, there appeared to be little emphasis on the role of the state as paternalistic protector of tribals. Instead, state and non-state development officials emphasized how development demanded the successful navigation of a market economy and in the commensurate exchange of value. For instance, several NGOs in the region had instituted a microcredit model, giving small sums of money as loans for 'livelihood generation', most frequently to groups of women, who used them to buy sewing machines or livestock. Though microcredit was a widely prevalent model of development in the district thought to encourage entrepreneurship, fiscal responsibility, and financial ownership, Kandhas were often excluded from microcredit schemes. NGO officials cited Kandhas' inability to handle money to make a case for why the particular challenges of 'doing development work' amongst Kandhas were unique. Insisting that

[59] Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, Free Press, New York, 1950.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

indigenous development could not rely on Kandhas' successful understanding of money, NGO workers often spoke of the need to engage Kandhas on different terms, which recognized the distinction of their heritage as *adivasis* who were prideful and rooted in their land but ultimately not well versed in worldly matters of commerce. Like state officials, NGO workers reinscribed Kandhas as difficult to engage through strategies employed by contemporary development models, demonstrating how the figuration of tribals as inept in handling money traversed the neo-liberal governmentality of tribals across state and non-state development.

Kandha and caste Hindu economic relations

If the weekly *haata* was a time of joyous social and economic exchange for Kandha tribals, then the town *bajaar* as a marketplace was the setting for the reinscription of tribals as primitives who were intoxicated and unproductive, incapable of mastering true value and therefore misfits in contemporary market society. In Kandhamal, while tribal individuals have primary ownership over land, commercial businesses, and trade continued to be controlled by Odias—Brahmins, Sahus, Karanas—from outside the district. These businesses included the trading of *kandula* legumes and *siali* leaf plates made by Kandhas, forest produce such as leaves, roots, honey, and, prominently, *mahuli* liquor. Odia caste Hindu shopkeepers also ran the smattering of shops close to village squares that constituted the *bajaar* (the marketplace)—grocery stores with rice, lentils, and dry goods; a few housewares stores; and 'meals ready' places where travellers could eat. These shops mostly catered to caste Hindus, passing traders, and administrative officials who lived in the region. Few tribals could actually afford to buy goods from these shops, usually waiting for the weekly *haata* to make their few purchases: brightly coloured cloth, glass bangles, and plastic wares considered luxuries. However, the *bajaar* was where some Kandha men bought the popular *mahuli* liquor, now brewed more strongly with the addition of cheap 'spirit'—a too-readily-available chemical-based alcohol that catalysed fermentation and produced a state of deeper intoxication than the traditional brews. As some Kandha men would stagger home from the *bajaar*, they wandered into the town square, shouting insults and endearments at one another and occasionally breaking into song. On such occasions, one could find them requesting food at a tea stall and being rudely shoved away by the shopkeeper. Caste Hindus would often

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

say: 'These Kandhas—tell me how can they improve. They just drink and lie around, they do not know how to do, how will they develop, you tell me.' Tribals' drunken inebriation, which colonial officials deemed as the definitional 'primitive' condition of excess and irrationality,[60] was now a 'statist symbol of savagery'.[61] Caste Hindu onlookers repeated laments about how indigenous peoples were 'useless' and unskilled at construing value—of money, time, property—thereby producing waste.[62]

On one such instance, seated at a 'meals ready' canteen in the Baliguda *bajaar*, I watched a Kandha man stagger in and demand a meal. With a look of annoyance, the Odia proprietor asked him to be quiet, commenting that his improper conduct would get him thrown out rather than seated at a table. Almost immediately, the Kandha man responded to accusations of incivility and impropriety by invoking money. 'What do you mean? I have money!' he shouted. '*Ei brahmuna*, why are you not listening to me? I have money. Give me meat! Give me meat, fish, and rice. Give me all that you have!' The proprietor asked him how much money he had. When the Kandha man announced he had Rs 5, the proprietor scoffed, saying the Kandha would be lucky to get a morsel of plain rice for that sum. At that point, the Kandha man turned to all those present with a laugh at once self-mocking and cynical: 'See, you can all see, the Brahmin will take every penny I have but still will not give me anything.'

At face value, this encounter seemed like any other between a shopkeeper and an inebriated and potentially disruptive customer who could not afford the merchandise. However, this interaction contained valences shaped by a long-standing history of caste Hindu and tribe relations structured by inequities in economic exchange and development. The caste Hindu proprietor took the opportunity to reinscribe the tribal as not only impoverished and lacking funds, but also lacking a grasp of the value of goods in the marketplace, drawing attention to his drunken figure as irrational and unproductive. At the same time, the inebriated Kandha quite lucidly invoked a history in which the caste Hindu would extract all his funds from him but never reciprocate the exchange in commensurate value, always cheating him of his due. Economic exploitation had come to be an organizing discourse for caste tribe relations in Kandhamal in a deeply visceral

[60] Banerjee, 2000.
[61] Ghosh, 2006, p. 511.
[62] Cattelino, n.d.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

way for the Kandha community, even though there have existed modes of patronage and exchange between Kandha and caste Odia groups that exceed narratives of exploitation, including political patronage by Hindu kingship, cultural, and religious exchange.[63] Kandhas often reiterated that their simplicity and naïveté had led them to be repeatedly exploited by caste Hindus in commercial transactions of forest produce or the wrongful seizing of tribal lands and insisted that 'nothing much has changed', characterizing their current state of underdevelopment as a direct outcome of this long history of socio-economic oppression. Moreover, contemporary development in Kandhamal, as in other parts of India, had ordered caste Hindus and tribes using a teleological link between civilization and economic development in which Kandhas were primitives that needed to be civilized and developed, while caste Hindus were already civilized and therefore 'developed'. Development officials actively fused these teleological colonial, casteist, and developmentalist understandings to fix tribals as both natural prey for caste Hindu exploitation and failed recipients of the development state.

It was also clear that the development state had institutionalized class and caste privilege, echoing other scholars' observations that the Indian development state is complicit in the continuation of class-based frameworks in which feudal systems get converted into privileged relationships between elites and the state to the detriment of the economic progress of tribals.[64] Gopal Pradhan, a Brahmin from coastal Orissa, ran a jewellery store in the Baliguda *bajaar*, while being frequently delinquent in his role as a local government schoolteacher. Pradhan was an upper-caste Hindu—a business owner as well as a local state official, employed as a schoolteacher in a local government school where most of the students were Kandha. He candidly explained to me that he did not really need the income from the teacher position but had taken it because of the pension benefits. Pradhan manned his shop all day and only sporadically went into the school, perhaps once a week, when he knew there might be inspections or visitors. 'What do the children do all day?' I enquired. He explained that the school was a safe place for the Kandha villagers to leave their young children while

[63] Padel, 1991.

[64] Alpa Shah (2010, p. 70) points to the correlation between caste hierarchies and development in Jharkhand, a tribal-majority state neighbouring Odisha, showing how rural elites harness development projects to maintain their economic dominance, sidelining *Munda* tribals from the benefits of state development.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

they worked in the fields or went into the forest to gather produce. The school provided rice and lentils for a midday meal that were cooked by the children themselves. This, he said, was enough to ensure the attendance of the children.

Pradhan opined that the Kandha were 'very simple' and prone to getting conned by merchants: 'They have very little understanding of money, what the actual value of things are.' He gave the example of Kandha villagers pawning their gold or silver jewellery to him for a bottle of *mahuli* liquor or money to buy grains. Like so many state officials, Pradhan pointed to the seemingly absurd incommensurability of value in that exchange. Not only did he pejoratively and erroneously characterize Kandhas' acceptance of terms of unfavourable exchange due to economic deprivation as a failure to grasp true value; he seemed oblivious to the fact that his own economic success was predicated on Kandhas' continued economic exploitation. By his own admission, most Kandhas left gold and silver items at his shop for a few rupees and never reclaimed their pawned items until Pradhan sold them as 'antiques' for a substantial profit to the occasional foreigner. Pradhan, like other caste Hindus, believed the underdeveloped state of Kandhamal could be squarely blamed on the 'main people' of Kandhamal—the Kandhas—because of their inability to understand and benefit from governance and economic policies. Pradhan described Kandhas as having become, in some sense, rulers of Kandhamal—*rajas*—with the renaming of Kandhamal not only according Kandhas proprietary land rights, but also refocusing attention on the primacy of *Kandha* claims not just over land and territory, asserting their powerful status in a local socio-political order. However, he demurred:

> They are the main people here, they are not learning, they are not prospering, how will Kandhamal as a whole prosper? But now they own everything, the government has made them *raja* (king) and us *praja* (the ruled/the public). But how will making them *raja* help, when they do not understand the world?

Caste Hindus like Pradhan frequently glossed over Kandhas' insistence that the repeated economic exploitation of Kandhas by caste Hindus in the past and continuing into the present day was a major reason for Kandhas' current economic standing. Instead, they echoed state officials to locate the underdevelopment of the district in the Kandhas' inability to become worldly subjects, neglecting issues of administrative failure as well as a lack of local infrastructure and industrial growth. Through such pronouncements, Kandhas were cast not only as the reason for

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

their own underdevelopment, but also scapegoats for Kandhamal's lack of economic progress, including that of its caste Hindu residents.

Pradhan also gestured towards the shifting relations between caste Odias and Kandhas with the strengthening of tribal identity and shifting political import of indigenous citizenship in the area. Though the Kandha as indigene was a discourse since colonial governance,[65] the renaming of Phulbani district as Kandhamal in 1992 ensured the primacy of Kandha land rights, according Kandhas' state-backed status as rightful landowners. The renaming of the district under the Biju Patnaik-led state administration was itself a culmination of a long brewing indigenous assertion by the Kandhas. Kandhas, through the Kandha identity platform Kui Samaj and under the leadership of local Kandha leader Lambodhar Kanhar, had repeatedly requested the state administration that Phulbani be renamed Kandhamal to assert the primacy of Kandha claims. These claims of Kandhas, some informants emphasized, precisely reacted to a neighbouring Schedule Caste group—the Paanas'—bids to be accorded tribal status and to maintain a proprietary distinction for Kandhas as the rightful occupants of the region as *adibasis*. Though the renaming of the district was not seen as a development of consequence for the Odisha state, it was a watershed moment for local indigenous politics and identity in which indigeneity was specifically invoked to achieve political ends and deployed as an identity category from which other minorities should be excluded in order to protect *adibasi* proprietary claims to autochthony. These shifts reflected the extent to which Kandhas were drawing from pan national *adivasi* politics to shape the discursive terrain in Kandhamal and impose limits on who could or could not claim *adivasi* status, understanding indigeneity as a position of socio-political privilege even with its attendant pejorative connotations.

Though these shifts seemed inconsequential for national politics at the time, they were part of a nationwide surge in the strengthening of tribal identity with developments such the carving-out of new states around tribal identity,[66] proliferating claims to juridical recognition via the tribal category,[67] and increasing provisions through quotas in state

[65] Bailey, 1960; Boal, 1982; Padel, 1991.

[66] Stuart Corbridge and John Harriss, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000.

[67] Townsend Middleton, 'Across the Interface of State Ethnography: Rethinking Ethnology and Its Subjects in Multicultural India'. *American Ethnologist* 38:2, 2011, pp. 249–266; 2015.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

schools and jobs.[68] They gestured at significant upheavals underway in tribal politics within the Indian nation state linked to India's economic liberalization in ways that remain under-theorized, particularly in terms of the material and symbolic connections between political and economic rights within *adivasi* assertions.

The renaming of Kandhamal as an indigenous assertion underscored that political and economic rights were not synonymous within *adivasi* communities. Even as the renaming underscored the political and land rights of Kandhas, it did not necessarily translate into greater economic rights or mobility for Kandhas. However, many local residents insisted that the renaming of Kandhamal as an indigenous assertion was symbolically and materially significant because it effectively positioned upper castes as an ethnic minority, leading them to newly realize that Kandhas' indigenous claims might unsettle their dominance in the local socio-economic hierarchy, making them 'lower' than Kandhas—a disruption of great significance. Caste Hindu locals voiced feelings of instability, mindful that they occupied land 'belonging' to Kandhas and were, in some ways, subject to their 'rule'. Along with state officials, caste Hindus had now come to commonsensically proclaim the primacy of Kandha land rights as paramount. These understandings sharply contrasted with other minority claims, such as those of the Scheduled Caste Paanas, who were seen as landless and perennially slotted as outsiders and squatters on Kandha land and, by implication, the entire district. They were also especially salient given the long history of economic exploitation described by Kandhas, who often spoke of being tricked out of their lands by caste Hindu landlords and traders. Caste Hindus relied on an understanding of Kandhas as lacking a grasp of the value of their land, insisting that Kandhas of their own will handed over their land for a sack of rice or, worse, a bottle of liquor. While it would then seem that caste Hindu acknowledgement of Kandha land rights was an important shift both symbolically and economically, Kandhas continued to be characterized as incapable of comprehending true value, even of that of their 'rightfully owned' land. As Ghosh[69] notes, tribal sovereignty in India is understood, or rather undermined, both by the paternalistic state and upper castes with recourse to the formulation that '*adibasis* know how to live on land but are incapable of

[68] Stuart Corbridge, Sarah Jewitt, and Sanjay Kumar, *Jharkhand: Environment, Development, Ethnicity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004.

[69] Ghosh, 2006, p. 511.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

handling money'. Despite their acknowledgement of *adibasi* property rights and grudging acceptance of Kandhas as rightful owners, even 'kings' of local lands, caste Hindus still viewed Kandhas as unable to fully capitalize on their powerful indigenous status because of their inability to master money. This simple tribal characterization of Kandhas then constantly eclipsed the mandates of indigenous identity and its new political iconicity.

If state officials and caste Hindus invoked the simplicity of tribals to naturalize their disenfranchised position within the local economy, Kandhas unsurprisingly explained their alleged simplicity differently. Both older and younger Kandhas believed that their community had been exploited because of their inability to be wily—a trait they saw as essential for success in economic transactions in the marketplace and for accumulation of profit. Some older Kandhas claimed they really were simple in the past because their ancestors lacked the knowledge to adjudge the fair price for their land or their produce because of their delayed transition to commercial transactions from a barter economy.[70] Some others asserted that they were aware of the true value of their possessions all along and the extent to which they were being cheated but were too oppressed and intimidated by caste Hindus to ask for their dues.

Older Kandhas insisted that the younger generation was challenging the social order in which they had been slotted as perennially exploited. Sura, a 60-year-old Kandha man, reported a distinct shift in his community: 'Earlier, we never complained, we were okay being who we are. We had ordinary needs. Maybe that's why there were fewer problems. But now, everyone knows more, wants more.' His young grandson, Biju, added: 'We were forgotten in the world out there. This is why we are like frogs in a well, noone knows about us. Only we know what we should have, what is rightfully due to us, noone else does.' Sura pointed out that his community may have been exploited in the past, but they more content with their circumstances, while young Kandhas were increasingly dissatisfied with their economic circumstances. Indeed, his grandson, Biju, drew on the folk icon of the *kupamanduka* from an Odia parable to describe Kandhas as trapped in the dark well of Kandhamal. In the parable, the *kupamanduka* lives his life largely in the falsely secure confines of his world, thinking himself and his life to be complete. As the tale goes, the *kupamanduka* is deluded and ignorant, for he is not

[70] Patnaik, 1997.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

king of all that he surveys. He is, in fact, trapped in a world of darkness, unaware of the better life that lies beyond his myopic surveying. As Biju referred to Kandhas as *kupamandukas*, he indicated that younger Kandhas were acutely aware of their elders' contentment as a myopic happiness that had been replaced by their more 'realistic' assessment of their world as it was seen by others including caste Hindus and development officials—as a world darkened by deprivation.

These differing perceptions among older and younger Kandhas indicated just how different younger Kandhas' understanding and deployment of indigenous citizenship were from previous generations. Older Kandhas commonsensically understood their *adibasi* status as indigenous but did not claim it using the same vocabulary of entitlements, nor did they see their patronage from the state as necessarily tied to their ability to participate in the market economy. While older generations often declared themselves as resigned to the economic exploitation that seemed fated for the community (*aamara bhagya*), younger Kandhas marshalled an incendiary language of rights and ownership to both criticize their exploitation in market exchange and claim capital circulating through circuits of development. Both older and younger Kandhas insisted that their community's 'simplicity' was a marker of their moral superiority that distinguished them from exploitative caste Hindus, valorizing their incorruptibility by capital. At the same time, Kandha youth voiced anger about being denied their economic dues and staked their claims anew. They described several instances in which they were acutely aware that their land was being 'stolen' for a fraction of its worth or that a caste Hindu moneylender was imposing disproportionately high terms of interest for a loan but were forced to agree to the exchange because of extreme economic hardship and immediate financial need. For younger Kandhas, clearly the assertion of economic claims in market exchange and entitlements as indigenous citizens reinforced one another. They insisted that they were not only well aware of their sense of ownership of land and its value, but also knew that *adibasis* should not and could not be easily intimidated by caste Hindus and would assert their fair due. In so doing, they displayed an understanding of indigenous citizenship distinctly different from older Kandhas, contemporaneously linking success in market exchange to becoming successful recipients of the development state's patronage.

In one such instance, I sat around the Baliguda square listening to alcohol-fuelled, angry slogan-shouting as Kandhas vociferously pointed out how state officials had denied them their due as *adibasis*. In the midst of their heated statements about how state officials cheated them

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

out of uplift, a shift took place in the speech of the Kandhas. As their anger escalated, some *Kandha* men began describing how upper-caste Hindus had economically exploited them for years. One young man, Galaa, alternated between the roles of Hindu upper-caste trader and duped tribal peasant in a highly emotive performance. Alternately shouting as the trader and cowering as the peasant, he enacted how an Odia trader would buy *kendu* leaves and forest produce for a few *paise* by intimidating the tribal who could not claim his rightful due. Puffing up to embody authority as the trader, Galaa barked at an imaginary figure on the ground: 'Ei *Kandha*, give me those leaves for two rupees.' Shifting to the ground, he cowered with exaggerated fear at the tribal 'Take it, *mai-baap*'.[71] Galaa spoke of humble leaf plates selling for 'thousands', conjuring up a dark fantasy of a large impasse between Kandhas' grasp of money and the canny ways of the 'modern' market economy. He shouted: 'Now look what has happened—the trader made his money selling our goods for thousands and thousands of rupees and look where we are! Just because we are simple and trusting! Look how we live!' Galaa's performance clearly showed that the denial of mastery of money and the desire for money bled into one another, particularly for the younger generation. As he spoke of humble leaf plates selling for 'thousands', he conjured up a dark fantasy of the imagined impasse between Kandhas' grasp of money and the canny ways of the modern market economy. Galaa's enactment showcased how Kandhas' experiences of economic marginalities often bled into one another. Young Kandhas forcefully emphasized that their economic exploitation by caste Hindus continued to shape the community's future, including their interactions with the development state where caste development officials appeared to be 'only continuing the exploitation of the past'.

As Kandhas drew attention to the modalities and perpetrators of their exploitation, they forcefully contrasted their simplicity with the canny immorality of those who exploited them. Kandhas themselves invoked this inability to understand money to explain why they had been exploited, because of their lack of monetary greed, because they did not know how to cheat people for monetary profit, because they were 'simple'. They insisted that they had not and could not be tainted by capital, valorizing their morality and uncritically reproducing tropes about the socially and morally corrosive effects of money. At the same

[71] Literally mother-father, used as an utterance of deference akin to filial deference to parental authority.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

time, they voiced resentment about the exclusion of Kandhas from networks through which capital flowed in the district, asserting that they were being denied the development 'rightfully theirs' and using a language of ownership to speak of 'their money' taken away by moneylenders, petty traders, and now development officials. In that sense, this language of ownership precisely signalled the distinct shift in the ways the Kandhas claimed no knowledge of money and could not be faulted for their inability to understand the cunning of economic transactions to indigenous citizens who were aware of their entitlements both in the marketplace and from the state, and would no longer be kept outside of circulations of capital in these settings.

These generational shifts in how Kandhas spoke of money and materialism were not without some ambivalence in the community, amongst both older and younger Kandhas. Regardless of the sophisticated shifts in their understanding of money's *pragmatics* in the local economy,[72] they continued to express ambivalence about its *meaning*. For the older generation, discussions about growing materialism amongst the young became occasions where Kandhas would discuss the decline of interest in community practices. Parents spoke of a hankering for cycles and radios amongst their young that could only be slaked with money, linking it to growing disinterest in Kandha traditions. During one such discussion, an old man, Sura, sang a *Kui* song about the hills (*dongaras*) that surrounded Kandha villages in a clear, bell-like voice, sighing as bittersweet nostalgia overcame him: 'Who wants to learn this song anymore? Young people today want transistors and cycles; they do not want what we wanted. We try to teach them but their mind is somewhere else. They are already elsewhere.' Often, these conversations ended with older Kandhas emphasizing the need to preserve and transmit practices such as youth dormitories and forms of ritualized song and dance. Kandha elders insisted that the pride that older generations took in these practices was on the decline amongst youth, who seemed too preoccupied with rejecting a Kandha past marked by economic exploitation to remember to take pride in those aspects of their heritage that could never be grasped through processes of commerce and material exchange—as one man said, where their real *sanskruti* (civilization/heritage) lay. It would be easy to regard such discussions as proof of Kandhas' internalization of long-circulating tropes about money's corrosive effects on social relations and resulting cultural loss. However,

[72] Hart, 2011; Maurer, 2006; Nelms and Maurer, 2014, p. 23.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contrary to the projected fears about cultural loss and erosion of social ties, indigenous societies take modern money in their stride rather than being subjected to its impersonal logic.[73] They precisely recognize panics around money and use its fungibility—its substitutability and exchangeability for itself—to break and make social ties.[74] At a time when Kandha elders were contemplating not just political shifts in the community, but its links to the generational transmission and preservation of a distinct Kandha identity, these discussions were equally informed by the community's own discourses about social reproduction and served as mechanisms for the articulation and regulation of values.[75]

State corruption and tribal political agency

Corruption is noted across state settings in contemporary India[76] and is not restricted to tribal development alone. Indeed, corruption in the development state undercuts its claims to an idealized modernity. However, in Kandhamal, as in other parts of India, corruption had been fully integrated into the understanding of the workings of a modern development state with any contradictions presented by the 'unmodern' circulation of capital circulating through corruption elided by state officials and local citizens. Moreover, local residents attributed state officials' unchecked accumulation via corrupt practices, such as money hoarding and siphoning of funds from development and infrastructure projects, to the 'unseeing' gaze of Kandhas. Both state officials and caste Odias assumed that corruption and its role in the apparent nexus between caste hierarchy and socio-economic development[77] were hidden from tribals because of their inability to understand the 'true value' of

[73] Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch, *Money and the Morality of Exchange*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

[74] Cattelino, 2009.

[75] Cattelino, 2008, p. 13.

[76] Jonathan Parry, '"The Crisis of Corruption" and the "Idea of India": A Worm's Eye View' in *The Morals of Legitimacy: Between Agency and System*, I. Pardo (ed.), Berghahn Books, Oxford, 2000, pp. 27–56; Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State'. *American Ethnologist* 22, 1995, pp. 375–402; Beatrice Jauregui, 'Provisional Agency in India: *Jugaad* and Legitimation of Corruption'. *American Ethnologist*, 41, 2014, pp. 76–91.

[77] See also Shah, 2010, p. 70.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

money and therefore the lucre of government office. In reality, Kandhas frequently employed a register of indigenous entitlements to articulate their long-standing dissatisfaction with local state corruption. As in the opening vignette, Kandhas claimed that the money coursing through state development was earmarked for tribals, and was being 'swallowed whole' by state officials and caste Hindu road and public-works contractors.

As mentioned before, the renaming of the district in 1992 had started the most acute phase of consolidation of indigenous discourses. While caste Hindus believed Kandhas could not avail of the full political potential of this newly energized indigenous position, some locals who were themselves not in privileged positions in the local economy in Kandhamal believed a seismic shift to be underway in which Kandhas would upend the hegemonic hierarchy of social and economic relations upon which state officials and upper-caste Hindus had come to rely. Among them was Bijoy Behera, a journalist who belonged to the barber (*nai*) caste—a caste juridically classified as Other Backward Caste, which acknowledged socio-economic underdevelopment and ensured provisions for affirmative action. Despite these provisions, Behera insisted that his identification did not come with the powerful political iconicity of the tribal classification. He complained that he and others like him were truly disenfranchised in Kandhamal, being neither wealthy and exploitative like upper castes nor able to claim the political visibility and land entitlements that came with tribal recognition. He issued a caveat for times to come when the tyranny of caste Hindus and state officials would come to an end: '*Kandha kebe thila andha, au nahin sei andha* [The *Kandha*, he was once blind, now he is no longer blind/he is no longer that blind].' Behera, along with a few low-caste and Paana Dalit locals, insisted that, now that Kandhas could 'see' state corruption and the nexus between caste and economic development it had created, they had the 'anger' and power to disrupt this hierarchy as indigenous citizens in ways that they themselves could not.

While Kandhas drew on discourses of proprietary indigeneity to critique the project of state development and its seeming double—corruption—few indigenous alternatives to state politics had emerged in the region. While several Kandhas linked the growth of Maoism to widespread dissatisfaction with the state, few reported participation in Maoism and instead emphasized the power of the development state's patronage. Kanu, a middle-aged farmer, underscored the limited reach of alternatives to the state via faith-based development or Maoism: 'Can the church build whole roads? Can the Maoists give you electricity? Anything you want, you have to go to the *sarkaar* [government].'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mohan Patmajhi, a young tribal leader, had mobilized a sizable number of Kandhas around land-rights issues. Hard-pressed to find collaborators and funds to sustain his independent platform, he ran for the position of Chairman of Kotagada block in 2006, claiming the distinction of becoming the youngest Kandha elected to state office in the district. His election did not, however, deter him from engaging in public violence against corrupt state officials to signal his aggressive protection of his community, showing an uneasy coexistence of his resentment of the state and his desire to wield political influence backed by statist power.

Patmajhi often lamented that state officials treated Kandhas 'like garbage' and that, because Kandhas were too intimidated by them to respond, their treatment of tribals went unchecked. On a Sunday in Kotagada in July 2007, a Kandha man, Hari, walked into the town bajaar. Clearly inebriated, Hari stumbled along in front of a line of shops. Patmajhi and I were seated in a jeep on our way to Baliguda. As soon as Hari saw him seated in the car, he came up to him: 'You sitting in this car, so high and mighty, spare a few rupees for my drink.' Patmajhi appeared both embarrassed and saddened by this inebriated man—his gaunt, dusty, staggering figure iconic of his community's problems. He tried to softly shoo him off, promising to talk to him later. When Hari did not relent, Patmajhi lost his temper a little: 'Do you know who I am? I was the Block Chairman.' Hari teetered unsteadily and looked puzzled, not understanding. He hesitated, then scrambled around in his trouser pocket and took out a Rs 5 note. With an apologetic face, he offered it to Mohan, saying: 'I guess I do not recognize big people. But since you are a big person and I did not speak to you like that, I must pay a fine. Here it is. Take it. Take it. Take it.' Mohan's discomfort was visible, but he finally relented and accepted the grubby note. Later, he explained that it is rude to decline fines in Kandha society and that it would have meant that he did not accept Hari's apology.

As Hari stumbled away from the car and walked a few steps ahead, a local policeman grabbed him by the collar and shouted: 'You dirty, filthy scoundrel! All you people do is drink and create trouble. Today I am going to thrash you and teach you a lesson.' Hari struggled and muttered belligerently, kicking and protesting as the policeman started dragging him towards the police jeep parked down the road. Seeing this, Mohan got out of the car and stormed towards the policeman, with us in tow: 'What did he do? You can't just take him to the police station for nothing. Do you know who I am?' The policeman scoffed: 'Yes Big Man, I know what you used to be. Do whatever you want.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Your kind [Kandhas] is always up to something—you are all useless and create trouble. Do what you want.' Mohan looked as though he was going to strike the policeman but hesitated, remembering our presence. He told his associate to follow them to the station and that he would try to come up with a way to get Hari out. He came back to the car and slumped in his seat: 'You see how they treat us. This happens every day. To them we are garbage. Just because our people did not understand the insults that have been levelled at us for so long.' He looked up with anger: 'But we are not the simpletons we used to be. They will know when we hit back. Then they will understand.' Patmajhi too referenced the simple tribal figuration but insisted that Kandhas were not simpletons any longer, echoing other young Kandhas that their community was now aware of itself as one of empowered indigenes who could and should assert themselves, even by resorting to violence if necessary.

After several months of conversations in which he repeatedly expressed his anger against local state officials who treated tribals poorly and did nothing for their development, Patmajhi walked me to a concrete house-in-progress. He described it as his 'sole legacy' from his time as chairman—a 'city house' that sharply contrasted his current shanty one-room dwelling that he had constructed by taking bribes from road contractors to pass tenders while in office. Patmajhi rushed to furnish explanations to make sure that I understood that his bribe-taking was not motivated by self-interest. It was not enough for him to merely display antagonism against state officials to act as a protective leader for Kandhas. Rather, he felt burdened to provide resources to fellow Kandhas—a burden he felt only more keenly upon becoming chairman.

When Patmajhi first organized rallies and demonstrations, participating Kandhas asked him for small sums of money, sometimes just to fund their travel to the protest site. To model sovereignty as a Kandha leader, it was not enough for him to merely display an antagonistic position vis-à-vis state officials. Rather, he also had to act as a local patron by providing financial and social resources to fellow Kandhas in a way that could equal the power of state officials. When he became chairman, this became even harder to do because he felt more keenly burdened to demonstrate his power by helping community members who came to him with requests. Participating in local state processes led him to gain access to a position of administrative power, but also power supported by access to capital. Patmajhi's sheer need for capital to index himself as a leader who could provide for his community gestured to the importance of patronage in the moral economy of corruption for tribal

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

political agents.[78] His explanations underscored the continued potency of state as a site of community patronage and political action for tribal political agents, even as they expressed genuine dislike of the state as an inscrutable and withholding patron of Kandha tribals. As Jonathan Parry[79] has said, corruption is less a critique of the state than it is a sign of the state's ever widening grasp. Significantly, Patmajhi said:

> You know they [state officials and Odias] think we are foolish, if I had not taken any money while I was Chairman, they would have thought I did not understand the value of my position and someone else would've grabbed all the money. Don't I know the way money works?

Patmajhi indicated that, while critiquing corrupt state officials, Kandha leaders felt the need to engage in corruption themselves to demonstrate their knowledge of the way power circulates within the state precisely because of the material and symbolic possibilities of corruption—indeed, their awareness of the 'lucre' of public office. For the tribal political agent, corruption's power went beyond providing means for self-interest, patronage, or modelling tribal self-governance. It was entangled with scripts that reinforced that the mastery of money was essential for the full inhabitation of a form of indigenous citizenship that could capitalize on the intimacies between state development and market exchange.

Conclusion

This analysis has shown how scripts of money, value, and indigeneity thread through the cog-like movements of indigenous citizenship within the Indian development state, outside the domain of the 'properly political'.[80] It has demonstrated how the relationship between money and indigeneity within the Indian development state illuminates processes through which indigenous citizenship is understood and claimed within socially established structures of meaning,[81] gesturing to how such processes might inform new definitions of 'work, social

[78] Cf. Jeffrey Witsoe, 'Corruption As Power: Caste and the Political Imagination of the Postcolonial State'. *American Ethnologist* 38, 2011, pp. 73–85; Anastasia Piliavsky (ed.), *Patronage as Politics in South Asia*, University Press, Cambridge, 2014.

[79] Parry, 2000.

[80] Delanty, 2003.

[81] Judith Vega and Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Cultural Citizenship in Political Theory*, Routledge, London, 2014, p. 7 .

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

relations and the material environment'.[82] *Adivasi* political entitlements have significant import for shifts in claims to economic rights such as land rights and material resources. However, as *adivasi* assertions such as those resulting in the renaming of Kandhamal show, just how political entitlements inform and reshape economic entitlements for *adivasi* communities needs to be carefully and critically analysed.[83]

In the Kandha community, money's implication in indigenous citizenship reveals itself in uneven shifts across hierarchies of age and class. These shifts reflect the inextricability of the moral–personal from the socio-political in indigenous citizenship in contemporary India, facilitated by an attention to money that bridges the gap between everyday personal experience and a society whose wider reaches are impersonal.[84] The emotive volatility and moral ambivalence they evidence have as much to do with the money form as with the state—a site of disenfranchisement for tribal citizens that they continue to be driven towards as indigenous citizens. This analysis has highlighted how criticisms of the state and recognition of its potential for indigenous citizenship uneasily coexist in the uneven terrain of tribal politics—a terrain as uneven as that of changes effected by neo-liberal reforms within the Indian state.[85] It is imperative that we parse this uneven terrain 'without guarantees'[86] to document how the advent of a language of entitlement and empowerment may have unforeseen and counterintuitive consequences for indigenous citizenship within the development state. In 2008, riots between Hindu Kandhas and Christian Paanas broke out as Kandhas once again asserted their proprietary indigeneity by taking issue with Paana bids towards reclassification and tribal recognition. These riots demonstrated that Kandhas were not just shaping the discursive terrain of indigeneity within Kandhamal, but also refracting state power to violently adjudicate the recognition of minorities. This article, then, argues for indigeneity as a site to observe the folding-back of state power onto itself in unexpected ways. As indigenous citizenship in the Indian state

[82] Delanty, 2003; ibid., p. 7.

[83] Cf. Carly Schuster, 'Reconciling Debt: Microcredit and the Politics of Indigeneity in Argentina's Altiplano'. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 33:1, 2010, pp. 47–66.

[84] Hart, 2011.

[85] Aradhana Sharma, *Logics of Empowerment: Development, Gender, and Governance in Neoliberal India*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008, p. xviii.

[86] Kim Fortun, Mike Fortun, and Steven Rubenstein, 'Editors' Introduction to Emergent Indigeneities'. *Cultural Anthropology* 25:2, 2010, pp. 222–234.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reanimates historical constructions of the *adivasi* as indigene, it also subverts these constructions using a language of indigenous entitlement. These subversions have consequences not just for *adivasi* engagements with tribal development, but also for non-*adivasi* minority entitlements and citizenship within the Indian state.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000889 Published online by Cambridge University Press