

Suman Koreti, Parivartan, NAA, India

Our lifelong struggle on Displacement

I am suman Koreti, a tribal girl living in Chhatisgarh, which is an eastern most state of India. I took birth in Astara which belongs to the Tahasil of Bhanupratappur of Kanker district. Kanker is highly concentrated with tribes Gound, Muria, Vatra, Halbi, Pardhi and Madia like other districts of Chhatisgarh. From the childhood, I had great interest in serving the tribal community inspired by the woeful condition of our society. As time passed, I met the great environmentalist and the founder of Parivartan Samaj Sevi Sanstha (Bardebhata, Kanker) Late Shri Ratneswar Nath who struggled for the tribes, deprived, marginalized and against exploitation, Injustice and oppression in Bastar Division. Greatly inspired by him I was encouraged to work among the the tribes. He was very affectionately and kept me as his own daughter; familiarize me with all aspects related to tribes and all other deprived people of our society. From 2003, our organization and I have been struggling for the deprived tribal community to take the dream of my teacher (Late Shri Ratneswar Nath) to the extent of new horizon. Bastar division is highly enriched with valuable mines and natural resources and inside which the Gound, Muria, Pardhi, Vatra, Halbi tribal community struggling for their life and livelihood security. There is a strict eye of the corporate sectors, multinational companies and all other dictatorships on the mines, fertile land, water, and forest those are harmful to the social, political and economic security as well as to the environment of tribes. More than 100 MoU's are signed by our state govt. with these multinational companies.

With the help of our networking organizations, our organization has been building pressure on the state and central government and administration to cancel all the MoU's and all other provisions acting against the tribes from the village level to the national level. For the long lasting existence of this struggle, our organization has arranged several training programs, workshops, rallies, sit INS to capacitate social activists, tribal youths, and community mobilizers and so on. As a result, Govt. of Chhatisgarh was forced to draw 22000 forest contravention cases out.

In Bastar division, 147000 tribal encroachers have been struggling for their individual and common property rights on water, forest, land and all other natural resources around them. Due to a continuous and long term struggle from the tribes, the central govt. was forced to pass the

Forest Right Act 2006 and 2007. On 8th February 2008, govt. of Chhattisgarh prepared directorial for the implementation of this law. During the implementation of this law, so many irregularities and disobedience have been done in all over Chhattisgarh state. Disobedience of the law have been done in getting claim forms, passing the claim forms through Grama Sabha village Assembly, DLC and SDLC level forest committees and getting the Patta. Till 1st January 2010, 4,00,000 claim forms for the forest land were submitted to SDLC. Among which, only 2,14,633 tribes were able to get certificates of the forest land and the rest were rejected due to irregularities of the administration and malevolence purpose of the state govt. to hand over forest land to the multinational companies with whom MoU's are signed. The law promises to provide 10 acres of land to each tribal forest land claimant. Even no adequate area of land is provided to each claimant as they claimed in their claim form. Sometimes it is found that ownership of land is provided to other person for which he has not applied for, to create misunderstanding among them. Now we are struggling for the tribes those are deprived from getting right on forest land and against the unwillingness and irregularities of govt. and administration.

Parivartan has been working with the tribes including all the issues related to them like their social, economic, political rights further which is related to their displacement. Displacement is a complex word and it is too hard to define. It may mean to the persons those are forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence due to several reasons such as 'conflict and civil strife', as well as 'human made and natural disasters'. In an calculation, 25 million people are displaced due to conflict while it is unpredictable about the number of persons displaced during the implementation of development projects. In India, in every minute, a person is displaced due to development projects.

The UNO has described 64 conflicts going on all over the world which are the main cause of displacement and in India, it is more than 10. Among them, conflict arisen due to real estate and industrialization are on the prime focus. Various factors are responsible for internal displacement such as- sudden impact disasters, slow onset disasters, epidemic diseases, industrial and technological disasters, complex emergencies etc. Tribes of Chhattisgarh are mainly suffering from the displacement due to industrial and technological enterprisers known as the God father of the state government.

Some of our victorious achievements

1. **Gobardhan land scandal:-** Gobardhan is a village in Bhanupratappur Tahasil of Chhatisgarh. Mr. Deblal Dugga (Member of legislative assembly, From BJP) bought illegally 72 acres of land in his sons' name which belong to tribes of Gobardhan. The valuable plants are cut down which profited cores of Indian currency to Mr. Dugga's account. Being a member of legislative assembly, he applied political and administrative power to displace the innocent tribes from their land. At that time Parivartan arranged rallies and sit INS against Mr. Dugga and built pressure on govt. and administration and the tribes were escaped from a sure displacement. Our organization not only shoved protection against the govt. and administration but also fought for the tribes in the honorable high court of Chhatisgarh.
2. **By-pass beside the Kanker city:-** A govt. project was made to build a bi-pass beside the Kanker city in which 350 tribes had to lose their valuable fertile land with little or no compensation. These lands were the only means of livelihood for them. People had to be displaced from the main foundation upon which their productive systems, commercial activities, and livelihoods are constructed. Parivartan united the farmers and convinced them about the harmful effects of the by-pass road. by the support of Parivartan, the newly made farmers' union shove resist, arranged rallies and sit ins against the govt. and administration and filed a case in the honorable high court for the interest of those innocent tribal farmers.
3. **Dokaranala Case:-** Dokaranala is a village belongs to the Behenapani Gram Panchayat of Chhatisgarh. 29 landless Pardhi (Tribe) families have been living there since 2003 encroaching forest land (1 to 5 acres of land each) sustaining their livelihood security. They had also filed claim forms in accordance with the forest right act 2006. As the time came, certificates of forest land (Patta) started to distribute among the
4. **claimants**, people from Gound community and the department of forest made strategy to throw the Pardhis away from the village. One day, about 1500 people (Encouraged by forest department) came with weapons, beat the Pardhis, destroyed Pardhis' crops by grazing animals and broke their houses. Police came and tried to resolve the matter at the spot under the pressure of forest department. Nobody listened to the poor Pardhis. Then Parivartan highlighted the issue and carried out the rest line up. Parivartan got the Pardhis united and fought for the ownership of land for the Pardhis. Also Parivartan

carried out rallies, sit ins and road side meetings against displacement of Pardhis from their native land.

5. **Salwa Zoodum:-** Dantewada is a southernmost district of Chhatisgarh which is rich in superior quality iron ore. Multinational companies like TATA, Birla and ESSAR Mittal have signed MoU's with Chhatisgarh Govt. But the area is concentrated with large number of tribes. Our constitution prohibits any other individual or govt. to buy land from the tribes. There was no other way to displace the tribes from that place. Then our govt played a brutal trick to throw the tribes away from that place. In the name of controlling the Maoists, the govt. planned a camp (like refugee camp) at Dantewada in the name of saving them from the Maoists, innocent tribes were kept inside the camp. The place was declared as the special zone. As per the characteristics of special zone, no body is allowed to enter into it. Cleverly the govt. occupied the land to hand over it to TATA. It is said that TATA is bearing the half expense of Salwa Zoodum. Tribes live an independent life with their land, water and forest. Now they are living an imprisoned life inside the camp. They are deprived from their land and forest cleverly. Tribal women are being exploited both sexually and mentally. Children are far away from education and nutrition.
6. **Green Hunt Operation:-** The word 'green' here we mean the 'nature' or the 'natural resource' and 'hunt' mean to exploit. From the total area of Bastar division, area of valuable forest (containing Sal, Teak etc is about 46%. Also it is enriched with mines of bauxite, iron, dolomite, and lime stone and so on. The govt. of Chhatisgarh is playing the same trick as Salwa zoodum in Dantewada to hand over the green forest and mines to the multinational companies with the help of central govt. Militants have settled their camps since a long time. Local youths are employed in the special police force as they conversant about their native land. Pressure from both police and Maoist is on the local youths to join each side. They have three alternatives to join police or Maoists or to leave the place completely. Being under pressure, most of the tribes are migrated to other states. Rarely some families are to be seen in this area. Suppression of police is growing day by day. Without any claim, innocent people are being arrested and put to jail. Now the govt. is forcing the indigenous people to leave that place declaring as the special zone.
7. **Ghastly situation of Pardhi community in districts of Kanker and Bastar:-** Social, economic and political status of Pardhi community is

fully dependent on weaving baskets from bamboo and planting plants in forests as daily laborers. Weaving baskets from bamboo plates and its selling is main source of income for the sustenance of their livelihood. Due to deforestation in a large scale, declaration of some part of forest as reserved forests and sanctuaries, scarcity of bamboo stalk is the prime obstruction before them for collecting their livelihood. Our organizations have continuous negotiation with forest department and the administration to supply bamboo from the forest and also demanded bamboo from nursery to the Pardhis. Again our organization insists on new bamboo plantation on community land for reservation of bamboo for future utilization. During 2006/2008, 7570 bamboo plants have been planted by 879 families of 18 villages on community land. At first Pardhis lived as the forest dwellers. They lived on killing animals in the forest and weaving baskets. As the forest started to minimize, they started to live permanently in a place depending upon agriculture and bamboo works. Due to our endeavor, the state govt. became ready to supply 1500 bamboo to each Pardhi family every year, but they are supplied with only 150/ 200 pieces where as multinational companies like TATA, Birla are supplied with whole the forest in cheapest rate.

8. Environmental condition:- Parivartan has been struggling for the preservation of bio-diversity. Our continuous endeavor and struggle is against the deforestation in the name 'Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana', land mafias, mines' mafias and corrupted govt. officials those are exploiting the natural resources and tribes regularly. Due to globalization and exploitation of natural resources, our environment is polluted dangerously. As a result, We see growing evidence of human-caused harm in many regions of the earth such as dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings, destruction and depletion of irreplaceable life forms, natural resources, major undesirable disturbances in the earth's climate around us etc.

Vainskanhar is a village which belongs to Kanker dist of Chhatisgarh and is enriched with high quality of iron ore. Another village named Chargaon belonging to Antagarh Tahasil also has rich forest covering with high quality iron ore. Some of the industrialist accessed the no objection certificate (Due to misuse of political power) from central ministry of forest and environment and started mining in both places. Forests were cut down in a large scale illegally. Parivartan shove resist against the dual nature of the govt. and illegal unification between the govt. and mine mafias with the help of indigenous people. Media performed the vital role with us.

Opposition party supported us and demanded for its investigation. Govt. of Chhatisgarh has given freedom to the private companies and industrialists to exploit and to take our own natural resources out of our state. When public demands for the truth, our govt. misleads them which put the issue into a critical situation. Due to the inactiveness of the govt. Parivartan decided to raise the issue in the Supreme Court and filed a case there with following 5 main issues-

1. Giving permit to make the forest roads for developing it as main road.
2. Handing over the green forest of Chargaon of Antagarh Tahsil to the mine mafias.
3. Handing 18 acres of land of Vainskanhar of Bhanupratappur Developmental block to Lunia and co. of Durg.
4. Handing over 3.5 hectares of land of Budhiamari village of Kanker developmental block as lease for mines purpose.

A written petition was filed in the Supreme Court against the illegal mining work and cutting of forest (against Violation of Forest Rights Act) to save the bio-diversity.

Raoghat is world famous for its heavy deposit high quality of iron ore which is situated in the midst of Antagarh and Narayanpur Tahsils. It is covered with rich dense forest and our govt. has signed MOU with multinational companies for mines purpose. Once mining work is started here, millions of valuable trees will be cut down, god gifted bio-diversity will be destroyed for ever. As the company starts its mining work, its associated small units will be placed beside it for which a large number of people will be displaced and the bio-diversity will be completely destroyed with pollution of the environment. For free movement of these multinational companies and transportation of goods, state govt. has made a project to build railway track (about 150 km long) from Dallirajhara to Raoghat. It increases the possibility of displacement tribes from their own land. To exploit the valuable iron ore, bauxite and all other natural resources in Bastar division, govt. has signed so many MOUs with multinational companies.

National highways are going to build across the forests for easy access of multinational companies into the forests. Cores of tribes are going to be displaced from the forests. In this developmental process, govt. has only 10% of land contribution where public has to contribute 70% of their forest and revenue land.