DISPOSSESSION AND VIOLENCE: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF STATE REPRESSION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN CENTRAL INDIA

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts,
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Abstract

The thesis is an exploration of the relationship between institutional violence against women in Central India and the agenda of land dispossession. I focus on these connections within the state while paying attention to the social relations between the neoliberal-capitalist class to understand the political economy of the state that enacts the land acquisition and the subsequent land dispossession of its indigenous inhabitants. I further examine the gendered impact of this process and how the state apparatus reproduces the patriarchal structures to create a system of oppression of the indigenous women. I explain that a necessary strategy of such expansion of the state is violence against Adivasi women. The study is a textual analysis and adopts a Marxist feminist framework of analysis to study the complex relationship of state repression through sexual violence against women. I intend to inform activist agendas and academic scholarship on violence against women.
Acknowledgements

This Master’s thesis has come to fruition through a rigorous process of learning and unlearning that I went through. And yet, it is not just mine but the hard work, motivation and support of many.

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INTRODUCTION

“A typical neo-liberal construction of space, place and scale is taking place in India, thereby making issues of production disaggregation and the associated appropriation of space extremely relevant. The general thrust of any capitalist logic of power is not just that territories should not be held back from capitalist development, but that they should be continuously opened up to capitalist activity”. (Harvey, 2003, p.139)

Research Questions

The thesis focuses on the relationship between land acquisition processes and violence against indigenous women in India. Studies have documented that the region of Chhattisgarh in Central India has one of the highest reserves of mineral-rich lands and forests. (Guha et al. 2006; Sundar 2006; Chhattisgarh Industrial Policy Report, 2017). Subsequently, this potential of the land makes it highly susceptible to the processes of land acquisition by the state in order to set up mining and construction projects for the economic development of the region and the country, at large. However, these processes of acquisition and the accompanying agenda of development impacts class and gender disproportionately (Harvey, 2005; Levien 2017; Bannerji, 2016). The aim of my research is to uncover the conditions inherent in land acquisition processes that further forced the displacement of and violence against the Adivasi population, especially women. These conditions are examined and unmasked through an extensive review of documents and relevant literature.

In this thesis, I ask the following key questions:
• What are the prevalent processes of land acquisition in Chhattisgarh?
• What is the gendered impact of land dispossession?
• What is the relationship between land dispossession and violence against women?
• How does the state respond to resistance by indigenous women?

The Research Context

In the thesis, I provide a Marxist feminist analysis of the gendered impact of land acquisition by the state in the region of Chhattisgarh. I assert that there is a relationship between land dispossession and violence against women in the region. I further highlight that in order to dispossess the Adivasi population, the state uses the following strategies: a) Privatize land and forcibly expropriate native women and men b) Strengthen the judicial structure to provide impunity to private industries and security forces that engage in land grab c) Use violence against women as a tool to silence those who resist ‘development’.

Across the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America land dispossession is now an unprecedently ‘explosive political issue’ (Levien, 2018) as it is prevalent in all these areas in the process of neoliberalization where free trade and global investments are key. The processes of dispossession and the inherent violence is prevalent all across the world (Mies, 2014; Federici 2014; Federici 2018; Levien 2018). However, in this thesis, I choose to understand the dynamic of neoliberalism and its associated ‘war on people’ in the region of Chhattisgarh. The region is a hub of minerals such as coal, iron and bauxite, it is also the land of the most significant number of and the most impoverished Adivasi women.

The land acquisition agenda in India is in no way a recent process and rather dates back to the colonial era. However, in 1991, under the pressure of International Monetary Fund, the LPG
(Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) reforms were introduced in the country. Due to these reforms, land acquisition and its associated dispossession and violence started taking place at a scale never seen before. Several mining industries were set up throughout India and Chhattisgarh became one of the hubs of mining and like many other regions in India, started witnessing massive industrial and construction projects.

According to the Census (2011), almost 9% of the country’s 1.2 billion population are Adivasis, that is, 104 million. It is the largest indigenous population in any country in the world, occupying 22% of India’s geographical terrain. Chhattisgarh, a state in Central-Eastern India, has a population of about 20 million with almost half of its population comprising of the Adivasi communities, in vast areas of forest lands. The area that was once primarily an agricultural land is presently home to large industrial areas. The major industrial areas consist of the state-owned steel, coal, aluminum and power companies, and now, hundreds of sponge iron factories and private cement, steel and power plants as well as mining industries. Chhattisgarh has significant resources of high-quality iron ore, coal, dolomite, tin ore and diamond which respectively make up about a large part of the total Indian reserves of these minerals.

The Adivasi communities, who are the majority of inhabitants of this land, continuously experience exploitation of their land, resources and livelihood as a consequence of the neoliberal agenda of mining and production. Millions of Adivasis have been displaced in the past few decades due to development projects. The Tata Steel project in Bastar district, for instance, acquired 2044 hectares of land from 10 villages. However, due to the social protests, the project was abandoned though the land was never returned. Another project on Coal mining in the area of Haseo Arand acquired 1,70,000 hectares of forest land and forced out the inhabitants. Also, the regions of Raipur, Bilaspur, Jashpur, Dantewada, Jagdalpur and Sukma have 121 ongoing leases for 8615
hectares of limestone mining areas\textsuperscript{1}. These very districts of Bastar, Sukma and Dantewada are regions where brutal violence against the native population and against women, in particular, has been reported several times in the past few years.

Several studies indicate that these lands traditionally belonged to the Adivasis and were community-owned rather than by individuals (Guha, 2013; Fernandes 2008; Levien 2017; Sharma, 2017). Adivasi women, historically, were engaged in farming occupations along with other members of the household and depended primarily on the farms and forests for livelihood. With the neoliberal forces of privatization, these women are now experiencing dispossession- of land, of autonomy of decision making, of livelihood and increasingly becoming targets of brutal violence if they happen to be landowners under some conditions or if they protest against the oppressive conditions or only because they are women. More importantly, this intensification of violence mostly targets a woman’s sexuality as her body and the associated honour hold a specific value in a patriarchal society. Thus, targeting women’s body and raping or assaulting them is not only aimed at the specific women involved but also the honour of their family and the community, as such. To understand the social relations of neoliberalism and patriarchy, violence by the state is an important issue that needs to be delved deeper into and forms a primary focus of this research.

**Methodology**

The study is a textual analysis. In order to gather the material for the research, I have primarily examined texts and documents by the governmental institutions that directly disseminate policy reports, advocacy and announcements for bills and laws.

\textsuperscript{1}https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/agriculture/a-wrong-righted-chhattisgarh-becomes-first-state-to-give-farmers-their-land-back-6305
In order to understand the prevalent processes of land acquisition in Chhattisgarh, it is essential first to map the extent of land acquisition and understand the demographic distribution of dispossession. For this purpose, I have mainly looked at publicly available data from the Government of India as the Census Reports of 2011. These reports are surveys conducted once every ten years in India and are the primary source of demography in India. As I began to use the Census to understand the concentration of indigenous population in Chhattisgarh, the reports also revealed a stark poverty dynamic across different regions across India, which became an essential part of my thesis. These factual reports are indicative of a relationship between the development, displacement and dispossession amongst Adivasis, as I shall elaborate in Chapter 2 but are in no way adequate to understand this relation and hence, I delved further into government-based reports on development processes in the neoliberal era within Chhattisgarh.

To take a closer look into the mining projects and the national or internal investments in the region, I use the publicly accessible communication from the mining industries themselves, one of the biggest being the Adani group along with the reports by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of Chhattisgarh. The Chhattisgarh Industrial Policy report, in particular, highlights the neoliberal agenda of development and the desperation of the government to exploit the mineral resources of Chhattisgarh. Simultaneously, I have also tracked the role of the laws and acts passed through the ministry to legitimize the acquisition of land, dispossession of Adivasis and subsequent disparities in rehabilitation. I mainly concentrate on the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2015; Panchayati Extension to Scheduled Areas, 1996 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006 as stated in the Constitution of India.

The reports above begin to give a glimpse of the gendered impact of dispossession which is further understood from impact assessment studies by research institutions and non-profits in
India and abroad. The Centre for Policy and Research, New Delhi conducts periodic studies in various parts of India to understand the impact of policies targeted at economic development. Some of its reports were instrumental for this study from the point of view of data collection and analysis regarding the violation of land rights of women and men as well as an unequal and gendered process of resettlement of the Adivasi populations in Chhattisgarh as a result of land dispossession. On the same lines, the Action Aid report (2008) titled ‘Resource Rich, Tribal Poor’ and the Amnesty International report (2017) were relevant sources of information for the study to deconstruct the mining and development processes on the lands of the Adivasis as processes of perpetuating inequalities of gender and class.

In particular, to understand the violence by the state against Adivasi women or allies of these women in the form of activists, lawyers and journalists, required an in-depth exploration into case studies of violence in the recent years. I have been encouraged by a Marxist feminist framework of thinking to understand and present this violence as a dialectical relationship between the violence against individual women who resisted against the state and the systemic violence on Adivasi women, at large. To situate the case studies in this framework, at one level, I have examined cases as presented in the field-based research studies on activists like Soni Sori, Bela Bhatia and Sudha Bhardwaj in the region of Chhattisgarh. These studies are insightful to understand the state-sanctioned impunity to the security forces that function as an alliance to the government to ensure that there are no dissenting voices against the state. Upon an in-depth analysis, these case studies reflect that the state uses patriarchal notions of sexuality and morality to violate the bodies of these women in order to silence them.

On another level, I have also analyzed advocacy reports by organizations such as Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Sammittee to understand cases of witch-hunting, the National
Commission on Human Rights and Women Against State Repression and Sexual Violence to gather case studies on sexual violence against women by the state forces. The data gathered from these organizations is essential to understand how the state systematizes and normalizes violence against women in the state through witchcraft accusations against women in different villages in Chhattisgarh and mass rapes by security forces during resistance movements as well as during routine patrolling of the forces in the area.

To gauge the overall scale of violence against women in India and to understand the positionality of the state regarding the issue, I have looked at reports from Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Both the reports were deconstructed to understand the categories of analysis these create to understand or deal with violence against women in India. As I shall explain in Chapter 3, these reports clearly mask the role of the state in such violence and at the same time, mask the social relations of patriarchy within the capitalist agenda by establishing a binary of men-women in the reports as the sole factor and source for violence.

It is also essential to state particular limitations in the data collected. To understand the scale of the dispossessed people or the impact of land dispossession as such, it is crucial to identify the number of such people. However, it is unfortunate that the country does not have an official database of the number of such people. This lack of data, in a way, emphasizes that the state wants to ignore and silence or even worse, remove from public memory, the impact of land dispossession and the identity of the dispossessed as such. In order to gauge the scale; thus, I have primarily relied upon estimates that are calculated by various reports relying on field-based researches and reports by organizations. Another remarkable observation regarding the data is that, after 2016, the country discontinued valuable reports that documented violence in the country such as the
NCRB\textsuperscript{2} data and hence the most recent data regarding violence has only been raced up to 2016, although, specific field-based researches have indicated useful statistics and analysis.

It is important also to mention here that print and online media in the country is a massive repository of data, and some of the limitations of the study could have possibly been overcome by using media reports. However, I have knowingly refrained from using media reports as a source of information as several studies in the recent past have demonstrated that media is increasingly used as an instrument of the state to establish its own hegemonic ideology. This close involvement with the state raises several questions on the authenticity of the data and hence, its validity as a potential source for this research.

\textbf{Theoretical Framework}

The literature reviewed to interpret and analyze is approached from a Marxist feminist perspective where the focus is on understanding and unmasking social relations between patriarchy and capitalist structures. Hence, gender, caste and class are seen as social constructs that must be examined as inter-constitutive processes rather than as fixed categories of analysis.

“Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political-economic practices which proposes that the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms can best advance human well-being within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade.” (Harvey, 2015). In his analysis of the processes through which neoliberalism operates and maintains its continuity, Harvey identifies four significant mechanisms of accumulation by dispossession: privatization, financialization, the management and manipulation of crises, and state redistributions (Harvey 2003, 2006). This framework is handy to outline the process of land acquisition in the Adivasis land of Chhattisgarh and as well as to

\textsuperscript{2}NCRB - National Crime Record Bureau
conduct an analysis of the relationship between the public entities and the private companies in implementing the neoliberal agenda of land acquisition and dispossession. The state narrative along all of this is to increase investment in India, develop the ‘underdeveloped,’ provide modern forms of employment to the Adivasis on the industries being established in place of their land and alleviate their poverty through compensation and resettlement.

The literature on the gendered impact of land acquisition or dispossession focuses on how dispossession has caused a redistribution of labour and has caused women either to be ‘empowered’ or increased their mobility across spaces. On the other hand, the researchers focus on how male aggression has increased because they cannot deal with the frustration of unemployment and in order to deal with that, portray the aggression on women in their houses (Ray, 2016; Radhakrishnan, 2006; Radhakrishnan & Solari, 2015). “The impact of dispossession, in the name of development, creates a system for feminized opportunities as factory work, informal work, and opportunities for credit to women at the bottom of the class structure. Poor and working-class men, on the other hand, face either declining economic opportunities or an expansion that appears small concerning women, producing anxiety and backlash” (Radhakrishnan, 2015). This relationship between gender and the labour market creates ‘failed patriarchy’ as the ‘provider of the family’ male is now unable to fulfil his primary role. To exercise the lost superiority, he resorts to manifesting his patriarchal powers over women around him through violence (Radhakrishnan & Solari, 2015). I acknowledge this perspective wherein the structural forces of the capitalist-patriarchy have pervaded into labor markets and domestic spheres.

However, adopting a Marxist feminist approach, I conceptualize violence against women differently. The objective is ‘not to engage in a trade between class and gender’ (Mojab & Zia, 2019, p.270) but consider social relations as both the point of departure for inquiry and the point
of arrival (p. 269). In my study, I consider the social relations of the capitalist-neoliberal class and the patriarchal structures of Indian society as dialectical relationships. “Dialectical conceptualization means looking at the social world as sets of relations between multiple phenomena occurring simultaneously at both local/particular and global/universal levels” (p.269). Hence, while I acknowledge the violence against Adivasi women in the domestic spheres, I am more concerned with the ways in which the state uses violence against Adivasi women as a tool to displace and dispossess these women in Chhattisgarh to acquire land and accumulate capital.

In my research, therefore, I set out to uncover ways in which the state employs the machinery of actors, laws and discourse to facilitate women’s oppression and exploitation. I discuss the impunity granted to the government entities, the private companies and the security forces to ensure that when the state dispossesses and exerts violence, the state faces no consequence. With this context, I wish to highlight the dialectical relationship of the capitalist-neoliberal state and the patriarchal system and its use of violence against women as a tool to repress them and silence their voices. In other words, the dialectical relations between the state (in its call form) and ideology.

The Researcher

My interest in this research stemmed from a repeated hearing of the word ‘development’ during my growing up years in the 1990s. It was a time when liberalization was introduced in India and one could easily witness an inflow of ‘imported goods’ in the market and a sudden burst of television channels from across the world, plethora of infrastructure projects, a peak in the demand of electricity and infrastructure. Overall, an idea of ‘Modern India’ that was on its path to economic prosperity.
However, belonging to a military background, my family was always on the move across states and different regions, providing me extensive exposure to the diversity of people, their socio-economic context. It was then during my early youth that along with this narrative of ‘Modern developing, India,’ I was parallely exposed to the narratives and visions of widespread poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. Also, what gained prominence was several protests across the country by farmers, inhabitants of the rural backgrounds and women on issues of unjust agricultural policies, sexual violence against women in the country. As I moved towards higher education and the work life, I was continuously exposed to the vast injustice that certain sections of the Indian population experienced as compared to the rest of the privileged urban population.

These experiences of my growing up, my education and the work-life exposed me to inherent contradictions that constituted the notion of developing India. Thought the country was categorized as ‘Developing’, clearly not everyone was developing with it. When we talked about modernity, women were indeed not free of traditional patriarchal systems. When the urban higher-class population was always dreaming about having a big car and a big house, my experiences as an adult educator in the villages of India indicated that the people in the rural areas were being displaced from their only land and occupations they practiced. Eventually, I was keen to explore if there is a relationship between these set of crude experiences and observations. I was interested in understanding the elements of the neoliberal wave that continues in India today and what is its relationship with particular gender (women), class (the poor) and caste (the indigenous Adivasis).

**Organization of the Study**

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In Chapter One, I outline the expanse of land acquisition, dispossession and displacement in India and Chhattisgarh in particular, constructing
an analysis from the primarily factual demographic data in the government reports. I highlight the social relations of the state in the current neoliberal context and established that the ‘state’ is a multi-faced entity constitutive of the public entities, the private companies and the security forces. This expansive arch of the state is instrumental in establishing an economic and political hegemony over the indigenous population of Chhattisgarh. In Chapter Two, I review the literature to see the interconnection of the structures of neoliberalism, capitalism and patriarchy. In exploring these interconnections, I examine the gendered impact of the neoliberal processes of land acquisition and dispossession. Building analyses using field-based research studies and theoretical commentary on the various strategies of legitimization of dispossession and the associated violence, in this chapter, I also establish that violence against women as a strategy of accumulation of capital is historically relevant and has been a tool of capitalist-patriarchy for a long time. In Chapter three, I aim to describe the state response to dissent by the Adivasis and reflects on specific case studies on violence against Adivasi women and their allies in Chhattisgarh and presents an analysis in light of the theoretical framework of capitalist patriarchy. In Chapter Four, I summarize the arguments of the thesis and also highlight particular implications that may be useful for scholars and activists.
CHAPTER ONE: LAND DISPOSSESSION IN CHHATTISGARH

“Whenever we take up a big task, some people are bound to suffer some losses. The poor farmers in the region were displaced. They have all been resettled elsewhere but it is not a nice thing to be evicted out of your house. I understand that”. These were the words of Jawaharlal Nehru at the Inauguration of the Hirakud Dam, Orissa, January 13, 1957” (Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2015). More than 70 years since the first Prime Minister of independent India uttered these words, the processes of land acquisition in India, continue. To understand this continuity, in my thesis, I ask, what are the processes inherent in land acquisition that create conditions for displacement and dispossession?

The main argument in my thesis is that land acquisition, displacement and violence against Adivasis are interconnected. In this chapter mainly, I focus on these connections and pay attention to the social relations between the governmental apparatus comprising of the political ruling class and the capitalist class of the industry owners. In this chapter, hence, one of my main arguments is that in the neoliberal era, the state emerges as a multi-faced structure constituting the government entities and the private companies. In conceptualizing the state as a non-homogenous entity, I challenge the larger discourse of the ‘Public-private’ duality that gains prominence when discussing issues of accumulation of capital. The state becomes an intervening body that must grab resources and land through forgery, regime-supportive laws and coercive means if people dare to resist. Hence, the state continuously advances its agenda of capital accumulation in which dispossession and extraction operate dialectically. It is important to note here, however, that the
state represents the interest of the ruling class, the bourgeoise which constitute its homogeneity, though not all members of the ruling class necessarily come from the dominant class.

Through my research, to understand the political economy of Chhattisgarh which governs these social relations, a point of departure will be to understand the demography of this area.

**Demography of Chhattisgarh.** More than sixty million persons have been displaced since Independence, from 25 million hectares of land in India, including 7 million hectares of forests and 6 million hectares of other Common Property Resources (CPRs)” (Fernandes 2008, p.91). Internal displacement disproportionately affects the communities that might vary in their degree of vulnerability due to their characteristics, geographical location, poverty, discrimination or other unique circumstances. Such groups may include indigenous peoples and ethnic, religious or other minorities, who are frequently numerically few relative to majority communities, among the poorest, and who may experience different forms of marginalization and commonly lack representation in political or other State bodies. In some cases, they may face long-standing discrimination and violence targeted against them. Such population groups are often overrepresented in internally displaced populations³.

The processes of dispossession and the inherent violence are prevalent all across the world but I focus on the Central-East Indian region of Chhattisgarh. This region came to be my focus area because it has the largest concentration of the Adivasi population living in poverty. Also, the region is a hub of minerals such as coal, iron and bauxite and also inhabits one of the largest and poorest women indigenous (now on Adivasi) populations. I demonstrate these conditions through an elaborate account of both of these conditions in the first part of this chapter.

³ Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2015)
The Census (2011) conducted by the Government of India shows that following the North Eastern region of India, the Central East Indian states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Jharkhand inhabit most of the Adivasi population. Out of these areas, Chhattisgarh inhabits the highest population of Adivasis, as is evident from Figure 1.1 below. The Indian Social Institute (ISI) conducted a study on the displacement of Adivasis and published a report titled, Resource Rich, Tribal Poor (2008). As per the report, it is estimated that over 21 million have been displaced in the post-Independent India by development projects (dams, mines, industries and wildlife sanctuaries). More than three million of these have been displaced by mines and industries that are situated in the Central Eastern regions of Chhattisgarh. Of the population and communities affected by the development projects, Adivasis have been the worst affected with as many as 8.54 million of them displaced[^4].

Adivasis have thus come to constitute 40 percent of the internally displaced population though they comprise only about 8.2 percent of the total population. The Census (2011) and the study by ISI indicate that a large number of Adivasis have been displaced as their lands have been acquired. In my opinion, the Adivasis, in particular, have been impacted primarily due to two reasons- one because historically, the Adivasis occupied the mineral-rich lands and two, because this population has remained poor and illiterate making it a fertile ground for the state to commit forgery, use force to acquire the land and or entice them into the elevating their economic/class status by promising compensation, resettlement and development. Let us take a closer look into these socio-economic conditions.

[^4]: In India, Census is conducted every ten years. The Census 2011 is the most recent Census.
The map below (Figure 1.2) details the demography of the State of Chhattisgarh indicating that the central region inhabits more than 25% of Adivasis and this concentration increases as we
move beyond, with as high as 50% or more in the Eastern, Northern and Southern regions of the state.

Figure 1.2: Demographic Status of Scheduled Tribe Population of India; Source: Government of India (2011) \(^1\), Ministry of Tribal Affairs
**Table 1.1** - Mineral resources contribution of Chhattisgarh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Mineral</th>
<th>Total Resources in India</th>
<th>Total Resources in Chhattisgarh</th>
<th>% of Resource in India (FY'16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolomite (Mt)²</td>
<td>8085</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin Conc. (Mt)²</td>
<td>83.72</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal (Mt)¹</td>
<td>301564</td>
<td>52533</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron ore (Mt)²</td>
<td>20575</td>
<td>4031</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauxite (Mt)²</td>
<td>3739</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limestone (Mt)²</td>
<td>184935</td>
<td>8959</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond (million carats)²</td>
<td>31.86</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold (Tonne)²</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Includes Reserves and Resource as on 1.4.2014
2) Includes Reserves and Resource as on 1.4.2013
3) Includes Reserves and Resource as on 1.4.2010

**Figure 1.3**: Mineral Map of Chhattisgarh

**Impoverished Adivasis.** It is a matter of great irony that, when the government and the private mining companies consistently accumulate high amounts of revenue by exploiting the land (and people) of these regions, the social-economic conditions of the population that originally owns this land in the state are deplorable (Figure 1.4). As per the World Bank report (2012), the population below poverty line is as high as 40%, which makes it one of the poorest states in India⁵.

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In particular, as far as the social group is concerned, the Adivasis are one of the poorest in the country, and the number has only risen as can be seen from 66.1 in 1993-94 to 66.8 to 2009-10. They are the most impoverished population in Chhattisgarh with as many as 51% of them being below the poverty line. (Figure 1.5)
The same World Bank report also points out that approximately 40% of the Chhattisgarh’s highest number of poor live in the Southern and Eastern districts (Figure 1.6). This data is relevant from the standpoint of an intersection between poverty, violence and dispossession. These regions, along with other areas of Chhattisgarh, have been used time and again to establish industries and mining projects.

**Figure 1.6:** District level poverty in Chhattisgarh

The Public and the Private: A Dialectical Relationship

In this section, I begin with mapping the land acquisition processes across Chhattisgarh. In doing so, I outline that the expanse of the mining industries in the region using data from the Chhattisgarh Industrial Policy report published annually by the Government of Chhattisgarh and the reports of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries. To get a closer look into the political-economic dynamics of setting up mining industries and their social relations with the inhabitants, I have conducted an in-depth analysis of one of the biggest coal mining industries in the region, the Adani Group. Further, I explore the efforts of the ruling political government and the private
mining companies to collaborate and consistently attract national and foreign direct investment in the region, acquire land from the inhabitant Adivasis and dispossess them of their lands, livelihood and culture.

Since the advent of the liberalization period in India in 1991, there has been considerable discourse and action around turning India from a developing to a developed country. Based on this discourse and the associated projects or laws, the state has justified the land acquisition. However, it is the inherent inequality in these processes that my thesis is concerned with. Oxfam conducted a study in 2015 on the impact of the development process in India in light of the *Sabka saath, sabka vikaas* (Development for all) discourse that was highly popularised in the 2014 national government elections by the Bhartiya Janata Party, a right-wing party that later won the elections and has been re-elected in 2019. The report argues that “Data clearly shows that the State’s national project of growth and so-called ‘development’ for all, has weighed disproportionately on the tribal population, forcibly displacing them from their lands, and dispossessing them of their access to common property resources and their livelihoods. This aggressive and voracious push towards an economic agenda in which tribals\(^6\) pay and others benefit has intensified since liberalization” (Gill et al., 2015). This aggressive push is, however, not just a discourse in the country but is evident in the ways the government entities such as the ruling political parties, the region-wise industrial, public enterprises have collaborated with the private mining companies and capitalists that own these companies. Since this relationship is of critical importance to my research, I investigated state policy reports as well as private mining company websites and reports to construct an understanding of how the relationship is manifested.

\(^6\) The word ‘tribal’ is used throughout the thesis only when quoting from different data sources. The use of the term ‘tribal’ is common in India, especially in formal reports as the Adivasis or the indigenous are identified as ‘tribal’ in the Constitution of India and all the laws and acts that stem from the Constitution.
Through my research, four main processes of have emerged:

a) The state continuously endorses the mineral reserves as a profit-driven business opportunity and hence advertises the potential of the region of Chhattisgarh for extraction and capital.

b) Several Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) have been established

c) The government regularly offers lower land prices to the public and private companies as compared to the original price value of the land, to attract investors.

d) Private companies appoint on-site public companies that function as control agencies for the capitalists.

I will now elaborate on each one of these processes in the following section.

Endorsing the Mineral Reserves. The Chhattisgarh Industrial Policy report\(^7\) boasts of Chhattisgarh as one of the ‘favourite states for investors. The Chhattisgarh government data also blatantly advertises the mineral richness of Chhattisgarh and the landscape of production and mining (Figure 1.7). Additionally, the industrial policy report also states that more than 30 Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum (IEMs) worth Rs. 45,025 crores have been filed for the state of Chhattisgarh which provides access to industries and companies that want to set up development-based projects in the region. Chhattisgarh State Industrial Development Corporation (CSIDC) Director Kartikeya Goel said, “Average per IEM in Chhattisgarh is, Rs 284 crore, which is 73% higher than the National average…With a total investment intent of Rs 2 lakh crore, Chhattisgarh is the best state in India”\(^8\).

\(^7\)https://csidc.in/IP914eng.pdf

**MOUs and Subsidies for the Private Companies.** The same report also mentions that “Additional Concessions/ facilities will be provided to 100% EOU, FDIs, NRIs” (CSIDC Report, 2015, p.6). It is evident on the expanse of the investments that the government is inclined to (and already has) attract the corporate revenues in Chhattisgarh. The government also provides subsidy/exemption to industries that set up private industrial parks or areas. Such lucrative offers for investment towards foreign and national companies are indicative of how the Chhattisgarh government is continuously making provisions for industries to set up their base in the region.

A detailed account of land subsidies is produced from a study conducted by Bhardwaj (2017). The research study on Adivasi struggles in the process of land acquisition suggests that
approximately 121 Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and a large number of Prospecting and Mining Lease was signed until 2013, as per the Chhattisgarh government website to set up power plants, steel plants and cement plants. Until 2011, already approximately 100,000 hectares were sanctioned by the government to the steel and mining giants. This process involved a large-scale transfer of agricultural lands, commons and other livelihood resources – particularly forest lands and water (both surface and groundwater). These lands traditionally belonged to the Adivasis and the farmers, where the ownership was with the community instead of individuals. Eventually, these people had to either claim individual rights over it or had to give it away to private entities.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs Report (2017) suggests that since the FRA first came into force on December 31, 2007, there have been 4.2 million title claims over 14 million acres of forest land nationwide, of which only 1.8 million have been accorded. Chhattisgarh topped the list among States. Nearly 8.9 lakh title claims, by individuals and communities, were made in the State of which only 4.16 lakh claims, or less than half, were actually granted.

“While this phenomenon of land acquisition and dispossession is visible all across this mineral-rich state, it is particularly acute in the districts of Raigarh, Sarguja, Janjgir-Champa and Korba. This is causing a crisis of livelihood among a vast rural population, intensifying earlier trends of migration to brick kilns, human trafficking and other forms of bondedness” (Bhardwaj, 2017).

The above study also indicates that the pace and extent of the land grab have intensified with now almost all the land in Adivasi areas of Jashpur have been allotted/cleared for mining licenses, with not an inch of mostly tribal Jashpur left untouched by prospecting and mining licenses. “The industries involved in establishing about thirty-four power plants in the district of Janjgir and seven cement plants in the newly formed district of Baloda Bazar are multinationals
such as Lafarge, Birla group, Ultratech, Grasim and Century.” Additionally, large mining and steel companies with strong links to the Indian political elite – most notably ESSAR and Tata – have increasingly coveted Dantewada's sizable reserves of iron ore (Guha et al. 2006; Sundar 2006).

The above data is indicative of the massive scale at which private companies and industries are setting up their mining, power and cement plants to exploit the iron and coal minerals of the region for infrastructure and other development projects on the land of the Adivasis. The rapid scale at which the government sanctions leases and subsidies indicates the unity between the public and the private spheres of the state. In fact, this unity of social relations between the two spheres is highlighted when the private companies appoint on-(mining)site public agencies to establish control over the local population and carry out the processes of dispossession.

The following case presents an in-depth analysis of one of the most prominent industrialists in the coal mining industry is in the region, the Adani group. The following is a table (Table 1.2) from the Adani group website that clearly indicates the number of projects this private group is currently operating to establish coal blocks in Chhattisgarh and its surrounding states of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. The data also indicates that not only are these projects sanctioned by the government, but the on-site owners are in fact, public companies. I elaborate on this case below.

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9 https://www.academia.edu/29531573/Adivasi_Struggles_in_Chhattisgarh_final_.doc
On-Site Public Companies- Control Agencies? The coal mining projects were established initially by the state in order to attend to the demands of electricity and power generation across the country and hence, it was classified as a project for the public good. My research reveals that although initially these were government owned projects only with greater regulations and accountability, after the 1990s, gradually the state began to auction the coal blocks to public and private companies. Table (1.2) shows that the government has either already sanctioned or is in the process of sanctioning over 2000 mineral reserves to Adani group across different districts of Chhattisgarh.

The Adani group has been sanctioned by the state as a coal mine developer-cum-operator (MDO). With this provision, the coal-block owner, mostly state-owned public companies such as

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<th>Table 1.2. Adani Group: Coal Mining in Chhattisgarh</th>
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<td><strong>Parsa East &amp; Kantan Basan Coal Block, Chhattisgarh</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Parsa Coal Block, Chhattisgarh</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Kente Extension Coal Block, Chhattisgarh</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gidhmuri Patura Coal Block, Chhattisgarh</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tahibira II &amp; III Coal Block, Odisha</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Salyari Coal Block, Madhya Pradesh</strong></td>
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the RRVNL, GSECL and MAHAGENCO contract entire operations, including land acquisition, rehabilitation, developing and operating mines. In fact, to facilitate its operations and escape the legislations governing and limiting allocation of coal blocks to private companies (Coal Mines Act, 2015), several public companies have collaborated with Adani group\textsuperscript{10}. This collaboration helps both, the public companies and the private enterprise. For instance, RRVUNL, a public power utility owned by the State of Rajasthan, is the owner of a coal block in the Parsa East-Kenta Basin mine in Hasdeo Arand. This public entity has partnered with the Adani group and in this way the state escapes the accountability of compensation, rehabilitation and acquisition of land from the inhabitants and yet yields the profit from the mining process. On the other hand, the coal produced by the Adani group is not completely used for the production of electricity but also for exporting and selling for profit. Additionally, the land revenue also accumulates with the state\textsuperscript{11}.

Similarly, the other agencies that have an alliance with the Adanis are the GSECL- Gujarat State Electricity Corporation owned by the State of Gujarat and Mahagenco- Maharashtra State Power Generation Company Limited owned by the State of Maharashtra. These subsidiaries are registered as ‘Companies’ and are owned by the state but managed by industrialists\textsuperscript{12}.

The website by the Adani group that is an introductory portal for foreign investors, mentions a section on ‘Key customer offerings’ where ‘land acquisition’ is placed as one of the very first ‘offerings’ that the company assists companies with (Figure 1.8). This declaration indicates that the company recognizes that their agenda of establishing industries cannot be

\textsuperscript{10} For more details about Adani group and its involvement in the ‘Coal-gate’ scam of 2014, refer to https://caravanmagazine.in/reportage/coalgate-2-0
\textsuperscript{11}https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/adanis-begin-operations-in-chhattisgarh-coal-mine/article20599778.ece
\textsuperscript{12}https://www.mahagenco.in/index.php/about-us/chairman-board-of-directors
successful without acquiring land. This land, as we have established earlier in the chapter, is primarily occupied by Adivasis and is indeed acquired through forced displacement.

Figure 1.8: Adani Enterprises Website advertisement for Coal Mining (Source: https://www.adanienterprises.com/businesses/mining/india)

In the report by the Commerce and Industries Department, the Chhattisgarh state government claims that “During last five years, the development has been reported mainly in the Core sectors (of steel, cement and power). The State Government is aiming at the development of backward area leading balanced development of the state” (CSIDC report, 2015, p.3). The core sector industries here enjoy a particular provision that they will be established on the plots reserved for industries/large industrial areas and special efforts will be made for the development of infrastructure in these areas. The core sector industries are also given exemption on stamp duty on purchase/lease of land as per the same report. However, these provisions apply only to ‘industries’ and not to the government as such. The classification of subsidiary agencies of the governmentas
‘Companies’ (such as Mahagencom GSECL etc.) helps to de-regulate the actions of the agency and keep them out of the purview of the limitation that would otherwise apply on the government conducting the same activities.

Pyne’s (2019) study on the political economy of capitalist development in the context of Adivasis in India highlights a specific aspect of land acquisition that is of interest to my analysis. His study mentions that “The land is not only a means of production but is also a base of livelihood for the land-dependent people to exercise other opportunities like employment and allied activities. Moreover, for the people rooted in the villages in India, the land has cultural value immeasurable by economic parameters” (Pyne, 2019, p.319). It is noteworthy that Adivasi communities depend on the land for agriculture, for food and subsistence consider the lands and forests as a source of livelihood as well engage in several associated traditions and cultural activities like festivals, celebrating harvests and farming seasons etc. I argue that economic parameters cannot measure these and consequently, this organic relationship of the people with their land is at risk when land acquisition processes take place. In other words, when the continuous legitimization of land acquisition and the greed for land grab amongst the state intensifies, it is the inhabitant population of these regions, Adivasis in Chhattisgarh, that suffer the most in terms of not only a loss of land but also the loss of culture.

A Historical Perspective - From Colonialism to Neoliberalism

To gauge a deeper understanding of the processes of dispossession and to analyze the social relations of the state, the indigenous and women, it is important to situate this process historically. In the pre-colonial period, Adivasis in Bastar, as well as the tribal belt more generally, had strong symbolic and material links to the forests (Sundar, 2006; Padel, 2009; Kennedy & King, 2011).
They practised shifting cultivation, hunted and collected forest produce for food, fuel, medicines, buildings materials and alcohol, as well as to exchange with traders for salt, cloth and cash. Surplus extraction from the tribal areas of Central East India did not occur through taxation on land or the exploitation of a class of landless labourers (Gell 1997; Sundar 2006). The “1861 Report on Bastar and Kharonde dependencies” (now districts of Chhattisgarh) stated that “savage hill tribes pay no tax whatsoever” (GoI 1861, p. 44) and that indeed must have been problematic for the capitalist colonized intentions. The abundant natural resources – timber, non-timber forest produce, and minerals were potential sources of state income, but commercial exploitation of the forest did not occur in a systematic manner until then.

The situation changed with the arrival of the East India Company, which set about acquiring control over India’s natural resources, using bureaucratic and legal means to recast patterns of ownership and rights to common resources in a manner that was detrimental to the indigenous population and established the Land Acquisition Act of 1894.

In 1947, when the Constitution of India was framed, on paper, the provisions of the Fifth Schedule were meant to protect the Adivasis’ rights to their land and also involve them in decision-making processes. But, in practice, the post-colonial Indian state exercised neo-colonial forms of control over Adivasi areas (Guha 2007; Sundar 2006; Kennedy and King, 2011). The situation worsened as we moved into the 1990s, when India was emerging from an economic crisis in the 1980s. At the time, World Bank and IMF offered massive amount of loans and in turn propelled the move towards what came to be called Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization (LPG) reforms. These reforms provided universal access to Indian land and resources. Throughout the post-colonial era, the Land Acquisition Act was subjected to several amendments targeted to
facilitate the land acquisition, bring about ambiguities in the clauses of resettlement and exempt private companies from taxes.\(^\text{13}\)

The response of the Adivasis to the unjust land acquisition has not been unanimous. It varies from silence to dissent. One the one hand, there is the active communist agenda of the Maoists in the region and on the other hand, there are defeated spirits of the inhabitants who have suffered the twin loss of livelihood and land. For this research, to develop a vivid understanding of dissent, I studied the analysis by Sundar (2016) in *The Burning Forest: India’s War in Bastar* that draws on experiences of incidents, personal encounters and observations combined with ethnographic field to provide a compelling narrative of state violence and the dispossession of Adivasis specifically in the district of Bastar in Chhattisgarh. From her study, it becomes clear that a group of activists Maoists, emerged in 1979 as some of whom belonged to the Communist Party of India (Marxist- Leninist). They mobilized Adivasis to organize against state oppression including land acquisition, low wages for agriculture, inadequate healthcare and violence by the security forces. However, to oppress the movement and continue to dominate and control Adivasi lives, the state increasingly began to respond with brutal incidents of violence.

Amnesty International (2017) conducted a study between 2014-16 to assess the impact of mining industries on the native population. The study was conducted in three coal mines in Chhattisgarh- Kusmunda mine, Tetriakhar mines and Betriakhar West. The data was collected through interviews with Adivasis, field visits to the mine sites and interviews with lawyers and journalists working in Chhattisgarh. A report based on this study, titled, *When land will be lost,*

\(^{13}\) A detailed understanding of the law amendments are available later in the chapter. Also, the Act is detailed in the report on Land Acquisition by the Centre for Policy Research Report.2017. http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Land%20Acquisition%20Report.pdf
will we eat coal? substantiated several case studies that highlighted the ‘enforced relationship’ of the Adivasis of with the private mining companies and the government.

The following is a case investigated by the team which reflect the condition of Adivasis in Korba district:

“Kusmunda is one of India’s largest coal mines, covering about 2382 hectares in Korba district. South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), which operates the mine, increased production capacity from 10 mtpa (million tonnes per annum) to 15 mtpa in 2009, to 18.75 mtpa in 2014 and 26 mtpa in early 2016”. The study further details that to facilitate the expansion of the mine, in June 2009, the Ministry of Coal declared its intention to acquire land under the CBA Act in four villages around the mine- Risdi, Sonpuri, Pali and Padaniya, followed by the village of Jatraj in 2010, in the official government gazette and in a notice in a newspaper. Over 3600 people live in these villages. Over a third of the residents in each village are not formally literate. None of the affected families that Amnesty International India spoke to said they had been directly informed about the government’s intention to acquire land. Some found out that their land may be acquired only through word of mouth months or even years later.

The case study is an example of the ways in which the mining companies take advantage of the illiteracy of the population. The insecurity of possession and dispossession leads to a desettling livelihood for the people. It is in this context that I introduce the notion of a dialectical relationship between poverty and development. The state makes use of the crisis of poverty and illiteracy in Chhattisgarh to provide a narrative of development but ironically, those social conditions of poverty and illiteracy, in effect, have been induced by neoliberalism itself. Thus, the use of the crisis and the structures of class and caste become essential tools at the hand of the state to grab land by making use of the lack of knowledge of the Adivasis and justify forced evictions.
The condition of massive production on the one hand, and enormous land dispossession, on the other hand, indicates how the state produces and reproduces the power dynamics that place a particular caste and class in an oppressive domain. In doing so, the dialectical relations of development and poverty are exposed. In the same report, I also found another case study that documents how violent and coercive means were adopted by the private companies (first case) and then the security forces operated by the state to ensure land acquisition in Chhattisgarh:

“On June 14, 2017, 81 Adivasi women and men tried to file First Information Reports at the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Special Police Station in Raigarh, alleging that they had been forced into selling their land – as a result of threats, intimidation, coercion and misinformation – to agents of TRN Energy and Mahavir Energy Coal Beneficiation Limited (MECBL), operating in collusion with local land registration officials”. Upon careful analysis of both these case studies stated in the report by Amnesty International, these substantiate the fact that land acquisition is being carried out against Adivasis in Chhattisgarh in a coercive manner—either through force or through forgery. It also highlights yet another constitutive element of the state – the security forces. These forces ensure that the Adivasis do not get justice and their voices are ignored or silenced and as and when required, the coercive takeover of land can be accomplished legitimately and through means of power.

The case studies outlined above and tracing the roots of dispossession in the British colonial regime indicate that neoliberalism is a continuation of colonialism in the imperialist stage of capitalism.

**The Legitimization of Land Acquisition and Land Dispossession**
We have seen in the previous section that to understand the process of land acquisition, the social relations of the government and the private companies are of particular importance. However, my findings show that these relations are legitimized through several laws and policies created by the state in the recent past to facilitate land grab and at the same time, apply the neoliberal logics of resettlement and compensation for the Adivasis. The latter logic portrays the state as the savior of the displaced population. I shall elaborate on these laws and also the unjust ways of resettlement and compensation that Adivasis have faced time and again in Chhattisgarh. The Centre for Policy and Research (2017) conducted a systematic review of the Supreme court cases related to land acquisition in India across the past six decades. The report titled, ‘Land Acquisition in India: Supreme Court Cases 1950-2016’ presents a thorough analysis of land rights in India, legitimization of acquisition and petitions by individuals and public as well as private companies and the unjust ways of the state as it dealt with the petitions from different social groups. The report was instrumental to build an understanding of the mechanisms of compensation provided against acquisition of land.

As per the LAA (1894), compensation for land acquisitions needed to be computed at the market value of the land acquired. In addition, the Act mandated compensation to land losers for any damage sustained by the individual or collective entity as a result of the acquisition, for instance due to the severing of land from other land, the drop in profits or earnings of the person, and reasonable expenses for relocation if that became necessary as a result of the acquisition. The Act further provided that a solatium or ‘solace’ amount should be paid to the land loser. Finally, the value of any property such as buildings, irrigation works, trees, etc. was also mandated to be paid to the land losers. The Act also prescribed that the market value will be determined by the current status of the land and not the intended use. In other words, if an agricultural land was
acquired for commercial use, then the compensation would be paid based on the prevailing market price for agricultural land and not its commercial use. All disputes regarding these processes were to be settled in civil courts.

The Centre for Policy and Research Report (2017) conducted a historical analysis of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and its subsequent amendments. It established that through a series of constitutional amendments, the Parliament substantially ousted judicial review of the quantum of compensation payable in individual cases and ultimately post 1978 deleted this requirement from the text of the Constitution. “This resulted in a culture of payment of less than the market value for compensation, facilitated by inaccurate land records, rampant undervaluation of sale deeds and absence of land markets in many rural areas” (CPR report, 2017, p. 15). The report ultimately found that, over two thirds of all cases (67.3%) involved contest to the calculation and payment of the actual market value for the land, whether in terms of the principle on which such calculation was made, or the manner in which it was paid, or both. “Most of these claims involved a challenge to the principle on which the government had computed compensation (approximately 64%), while a small set (approximately 5%) of the cases involved a challenge to the manner in which parties were compensated” (CPR report, 2017, p.23).

To focus on the experiences and impact of the specific population of my study, I gathered data from several research studies conducted with the Adivasis in Chhattisgarh. Most of these studies maintained that while the legal provisions to compensate or petition against unjust compensation were bleak for the entire population from whom land was acquired, Adivasis inarguably, suffered the most owing to their poverty, illiteracy and indigeneity. (Ghosh, 2016; Mariotti, 2015; Sundar, 2016; Oskarsson, 2012). In particular, I present the findings of an ethnographic study by Ghosh (2016) in a coal-mining site in Chhattisgarh argues in her report,
“Will we Eat Coal?” that “Many adivasis claim that due compensation has not been paid for the land previously acquired by the government for mining in the district. Ram Pravesh, an Adivasi who gave up two acres of his ancestral land, told that he was paid only one hundred thousand rupees as compensation, although the land rate at that time was six to seven hundred thousand rupees per acre…. The collector promised us jobs, houses but it’s been six years and ... promises have not been fulfilled,” said the villager who works as a daily wage laborer in the city to earn his livelihood. “around fifty percent of all claims filed under this Act in Chhattisgarh were rejected and no community rights applications were accepted or processed or even provided”.

The notion of resettlement was formalized once again, only in the LARR Act, 2013 (Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition) focusing on making it a mandate to compensate the individuals and families displaced and provide alternate sources of livelihood. However, the Act was protested by the governments and industries on accounts of the losses that companies would have to incur in order to compensate or resettle people. Further, a bill was again passed by the parliament in 2015 that incorporated three amendments: a) Exemption of five categories of projects from the consent and social impact assessment provisions of the LARR Act. These categories consisted of defence, rural infrastructure, affordable housing, industrial corridors, and infrastructure projects including Public Private Partnership. b) The government entities do not need consent from the population before acquiring the land. c) It grants a choice to the native landowners to choose cash compensation (the dominant mode of compensation) or rehabilitation. All the three conditions are intended to benefit the companies that acquire land and further the injustice against the original land owners.

In 2017, a report was commissioned by the Ministry of Law and Justice to evaluate the LARR Act of 2013. In the Tenth Law Commission Report, it was highlighted that “Calls to provide
proper compensation to dispossessed commoners went unheeded and there were 289 ongoing land conflicts in India in 2016, 163 of which directly involve land acquisition”. (CPR report, 2017, p. 10). I consider the following note from the report to understand the unjust nature of compensation that has been implemented ever since the Act came into being:

As noted in the Tenth Law Commission Report, the various state laws incorporated different provision related to acquisition. These variations included multiple definitions of public purpose, ambiguous date for determination of the market value of the land, varied principles for determining compensation and the non-standard procedures for appointment of tribunals to determine compensation payable and adjudicate disputes. This led to a situation whereby the central and the state governments applied different principles of compensation and resettlement for acquisition of land situated in the same state according to the object of acquisition and their subjective discretion, thereby creating manifest injustice” (CPR, 2017, p.23). This analysis supports my argument that the LARR Act that was supposed to provide adequate resettlement and compensation did not indeed take place. Noting the situation above, it is clear how the displacement of Adivasis was accompanied by legislations that maintained the ambiguity of compensation and resettlement.

The Indian Constitution provides special status to several Adivasi communities (identified as ‘Scheduled Tribes’), acknowledging their historical disadvantages and their unique cultures and relationship with their lands. The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution lists certain districts and territories in nine states where Adivasi communities live as protected ‘Scheduled Areas,’ where these communities have exclusive customary rights over their land. The Constitution states that in these areas, state governments can make laws regulating the transfer of land by or among
Adivasis\textsuperscript{14}. The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (1996) should, in theory, allow the local community to veto such projects, but in practice, as we have seen the cases mentioned earlier in this chapter, the villagers are threatened by forces employed either by the public entities or the private companies who coerce the inhabitants into agreeing to their demands, the minutes of the Panchayat meetings are rewritten, or fake Gram Sabha are used to approve a project. All these legal debates indicate the appearance of liberal democracy and the essence of its authoritarianism.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I engaged with the question, ‘What are the prevalent processes of land acquisition and dispossession in Chhattisgarh’. I began with an exploration into the geo-political and economic conditions that make Chhattisgarh and its native population of Adivasis as vulnerable lands and people in the era of neoliberal extractivism.

I found out that the Adivasi population of the region is not only one of the largest indigenous population in India but is also immersed in poverty. As a consequence, of this population owning lands that are mineral rich and sources of generating and accumulating capital for the state, the natives end up being displaced and dispossessed of their lands, livelihood and culture.

The nature of the neoliberal state as deconstructed in this chapter is a dialectical unity of the public and the private entities which justify the land acquisition processes as a necessary stage

in developing India and the poor population living in ‘underdeveloped’ regions such as Chhattisgarh. To make the efforts for development visible and mask the intent of creating profit-based mining hubs, the state advertises the land as a product to the domestic and foreign market. This, in turn, attracts potential investment in the economically fertile regions of Chhattisgarh.

The processes of land acquisition include:

a) Forced displacement of the Adivasis who are the land owners in the mining regions. This displacement is forced directly on the people who are too poor and illiterate to question the power of the capitalist state.

b) The coalition of the government entities and private mining companies to ensure that land can be acquired by the state without consent from the owners and the acquired land can be managed by the private companies to facilitate de-regulation and exemption from taxes.

c) Legitimization of land acquisition through several amendments to the original Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and increasingly place power in the hands of the capitalist class while at the same time, creating obstacles for justice towards the poor and indigenous class and caste.

As a consequence of these processes, the Adivasis have increasingly been dispossessed not only of their lands but their entire livelihood and culture. The Adivasis were originally community-oriented with an emphasis on land and forests as a source of food, festivals and solidarity. However, with the neoliberal capitalist processes of acquisition, the population is now a target of unjust acquisition practices and further, comprises the highest of internally displaced people in the country. I end with a remark from the Human Rights Report (2015) that aptly summarizes the crisis that Adivasis in Chhattisgarh face today.

“Greater attention to development-induced and business-related internal displacement is overdue and urgently required. The Special Rapporteur recognizes the sensitivities and that a
balance must be drawn between the legitimate development needs and aspirations of national Governments and the human rights of those who are required to leave their homes. However, examples globally demonstrate that development projects and business activities are going ahead without due attention to the rights of affected persons” (Human Rights Report, 2015, p.221).
CHAPTER TWO: THE GENDERED IMPACT OF DISPOSSESSION

Introduction

This chapter highlights the patriarchal structures and practices inherent within processes of land dispossession. I argue that the processes of acquiring land and their impact, both have an exclusive relationship with gender. I provide a review of the literature of the ways in which neoliberal capitalism uses patriarchal relations in society to further its agenda. It is in this process of reviewing that I noticed that although, there is ample literature on the relationship between land dispossession and poverty as well as the Adivasis, the gendered impact of such dispossession has not been adequately analyzed.

Limitation of the present literature on land dispossession and gender. The literature on the impact of land acquisition or dispossession focuses on how dispossession has caused a redistribution of labour and brought about ‘women’s empowerment’ as the integration of women in the labour market has increased their mobility across spaces. Some of the studies that analyze the gendered issues in these labor market transitions focus on the increase in male aggression as a consequence of not being able to deal with the frustration of unemployment. This literature argues that in order to deal with their aggression, males within their families express their aggression on women in their houses in the form of domestic violence and marital rape (Ray, 2016; Radhakrishnan, 2015; Radhakrishnan & Solari, 2015; NCRB, 2015). Radhakrishnan (2015) succinctly articulates this phenomenon in her study and mentions that “The impact of dispossession, in the name of development, creates a system for feminized opportunities as factory work, informal work, and opportunities for credit to women at the bottom of the class structure. Poor and working-class men, on the other hand, face declining economic opportunities producing
anxiety and backlash... To exercise the lost superiority, they resort to manifesting his patriarchal powers over women around him through violence” (Radhakrishnan & Solari, 2015).

The above arguments, in my opinion, are important to situate violence against women prevalent in the processes of migration and unemployment that are consequences of dispossession of land as well as agriculture and forest-based occupations. The notion of ‘failed patriarchy’ emphasizes a dialectical relationship between gender and the labour market wherein the ‘provider of the family’ male is now unable to fulfil his primary role. However, it is also crucial at this juncture to specify that individualizing and psychologizing the male entity as a perpetrator of violence is an inadequate analysis for my thesis. It emerges from my study that the state is not only a perpetrator but also a perpetuator of violence in the current neoliberal-capitalist times. While I present a detailed analysis of institutional violence in the next chapter, the current chapter highlights the role of the State in unequal land relations and consequent violence against women by their families and/or communities.

Data Collection and Analysis. At this point, it is also important to mention that the data on the unjust impact of dispossession and displacement is scarce. This observation was also mentioned in a report by a high-level committee formed in 2014 to study the issues related to the indigenous population spread across different states of India. In the report, ironically, the committee remarks, “The Centre has not maintained either district-wise or State-wise data of Community-wise Displaced Persons/Project-affected persons or their rehabilitation and resettlement, which is symptomatic of the States’ disregard for the adverse impact of displacement on various communities” (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014). Hence, to find statistics that reflect the impact of dispossession on women, in particular, has been a challenging endeavour for the thesis. With this limitation, it is apt to now mention that the data gathering process for this chapter
is in two parts and is discussed in sequence in this chapter. In the first part of the chapter, I explore the gendered impact of land relations, using the Census reports from the Ministry of Agriculture for statistics and research studies from scholars investigating the violence against women that stems from issues in land relations. In the second part, I primarily draw on data from the previous chapter and combine it with a theoretical commentary to analyze the gendered impact of dispossession under the themes of indigeneity, the discourses of development in a neoliberal economy and the increasing surveillance efforts in Chhattisgarh.

In order to draw theoretical comparisons and connections in the above themes, I draw on the arguments made by theorists and researchers from the Marxist and feminist frameworks. In my opinion, with the advent of neoliberal policies, the accumulation of capital is on a larger scale than ever before. This accumulation requires coercive dispossession of the inhabitants of the ‘to be developed’ land, and in such coercion, violence against women is inherently a political and an economic strategy (Bannerji 2016; Harvey, 2005; Mies, 2014; Whitehead, 2016). In her analysis of patriarchy and accumulation, Mies (2014) asserts that “there is a direct causal connection between the global extension of capitalist relations and the escalation of violence against women, as the punishment against their resistance to the appropriation of their bodies and labour” (Mies, 2014).

In the previous chapter, the complex nature of land ownership was discussed, and it was established that strategies to take away land ownership from the Adivasis include forgery, forced displacement, unjust compensation and resettlement. In other words, in a neoliberal capitalist era, it is primarily the state that claims the power to take decisions of land ownership and acquisition. Adding to this argument, I elaborate in this chapter, that, in a patriarchal society, the displacement and dispossession that must accompany the processes of acquisition, impact most of all, women,
adversely. The next few sections highlight the gendered impact of the land acquisition agenda focusing on issues of land ownership, compensation and the associated violence against women.

**Land Relations and Adivasi Women**

Gendering the land question involves a fundamental rethinking of how property relations are reconfigured by a female subject (Whitehead, 1994). To understand the gendered impact of the neoliberal agenda of land acquisition, I consider it essential to firstly take a closer look into the relationship between women and land, considering the dual condition of ownership and decision-making.

**Land Ownership and Decision-Making.** “A careful reading of some of the research studies conducted in field on Adivasi culture and their relationship to land indicates that typically, in the Adivasi societies, traditionally community ownership of land was valued vis-a-vis individual ownership” (Pyne, 2019; Sundar, 2006). As I discussed in the previous chapter, that in order to protect one’s land rights or file petitions to oppose unjust acquisition, one must own the land individually.

According to the Forest Rights Act (Amendment, 2019), Adivasis may claim individual rights over land or forest areas if they can prove that they have been residents of the area before December 13, 2005. Their claims are vetted by a three-layered system: the gram sabha, where the claims are first submitted; a sub-divisional-level committee (SDLC) headed by a government officer; and a district-level committee (DLC) headed by the district collector. Forest claims have to be accompanied by documentary evidence such as government identity cards, statements by elders, and physical evidence of possession or use of land. The gram sabha’s forest rights committee verifies the claims. If the gram sabha is satisfied, it directs the claims to the SDLC for
review. If approved, the claim is forwarded to the DLC, which is the final legal authority to approve or reject claims.

In a patriarchal society, where a woman’s mobility is restricted and her primary responsibilities lies in the domestic sphere, it is a daunting task to undergo the bureaucratic procedures and hurdles involved in claiming land rights. Additionally, the literacy rate amongst Adivasi women is low and to prepare documents in the absence of adequate support is a barrier to access her own land. My study of the Annual reports prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, one of the significant sources to track land use in India, reveals that in the past few decades, Chhattisgarh has seen a rise in the numbers of individual land ownership amongst men as compared to women (MOA, 2016).

Adivasi women are on the losing end with them owning barely one-fifth of the land that men own (Agricultural census, 2015-16). Table 2.1 indicates that the total number of lands that female owned in each category of land-holding, be it marginal, small, semi-medium, medium or large. The difference is evident at a large scale amongst the marginal land owners who own less than 1 hectare which suggests that not only do women own less land but also the least of the smallest lands. Additionally, in the case of large holdings, men own 15 times more land with women holding only 6% of the large lands owned by the Adivasis. Of the total land-owner Adivasi population in Chhattisgarh, only 12.4% were women.
Table 2.1. Land Ownership of Adivasis in Chhattisgarh

For an in-depth understanding of Adivasi women and issues that emerge related to land ownership, I analyze the data that emerged from a study conducted in multiple districts of Chhattisgarh by Sharma (2017) to collect primary data on land ownership patterns amongst Adivasi women and understanding women’s perception of land rights available to them. Sharma mentions, “the rights of women are further compounded by their marital status and ability to bear children…women are mostly not included as inheritors as they would leave home after marriage and the practice of giving them land would lead to fragmentation in landholdings…even in cases where women were working on the agricultural lands as labourers and were primary stakeholders of the land, men viewed themselves as cultivators and owners of the land”.

Moreover, those women who inherit land from their fathers or husbands after their death, are often considered targets by the state as well as the males within their own immediate and distant family. The patriarchal actors in the domestic sphere as well as the level of the state make efforts to dispossess these women of their lands through direct use of forced displacement or through indirect ways of expressing violence such as witch-hunting against them to force them out of the lands. I shall elaborate on this violence in the next section.

The other aspect that I wish to discuss is the role of decision-making in a patriarchal society which by an established hegemonic understanding, mostly rests with the dominant gender – the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Tribe</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Semi-medium</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Large</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>532,000</td>
<td>296,000</td>
<td>228,000</td>
<td>104,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>455,000</td>
<td>261,000</td>
<td>205,000</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>77,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Agriculture Census, 2010–11 (Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, 2014).*
males. In making decisions of land ownership regarding buying and selling of land, as per the study by Sharma (2017), women have little or no control over decisions related to sale, mortgage or leasing of land. The laws related to land acquisition such as LARR (2013) or the Chhattisgarh Land Revenue Code also do not permit any joint entitlements or ownership of women. The only law that supports joint entitlement is the Forest regulation Act of 2006, but that is also silent on the issue of entitlement of single women, whether through a divorce, not getting married or widowhood.

**Witch Hunting Against Land-Owning Women.** To maintain the status quo and ensure that the perpetuation of power dynamics, it can be noticed in Chhattisgarh, that men along with their lineage make all efforts to ensure that women do not possess land even if they are the only inheritors in the family by way of being single daughters or widows or divorced women. In the region, witchcraft accusations are often an excuse to usurp properties and take money from women who own land by chances of inheritance, sporadic in occurrence though. In these cases, the state either participates in furthering the accusations against these women or remains a silent spectator which suggests the active role of the state in perpetuating such violence, of which I shall speak about more in the next chapter.

To gain an insight into the witchcraft accusations and their relationship with land ownership amongst Adivasi women, I borrowed ideas from a study conducted by Chaudhuri (2017) on the issue of witchcraft accusations in the tea plantation of West Bengal, with a dense Adivasi population. As per the study, witchcraft accusations against Adivasi women were a common occurrence in the societies where there were disputes over land ownership. The study

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15 The Chhattisgarh Land Revenue Code does not have provisions for joint entitlements of women although the neighbouring state of Orissa and many other states in India do.

16 In India, there are no major laws against witchcraft. In Chhattisgarh and four more states, there is the Witchcraft Prevention Act, but the local civil police forces refuse to act against it. More in Chapter 4.
categorically states that witches were identified, or names based on the notion that women in a community who seem to demonstrate deviant behaviour or attitudes as compared to what is expected of a daughter or wife in a patriarchal family. It mentions that “The narrative in the community of them being mentally and morally unfit to inherit and take care of land functions as a reason to discredit them and outcast them, leading to loss of inheritance”.

Chaudhuri’s (2012) analysis of why Adivasi women are easy targets of violence in witch-hunt is of particular relevance to this chapter. She mentions that, “The answer to the question of why women are easy targets in witch hunts lies in understanding how the witchcraft accusations developed from accusations to full-fledged attacks…women were targeted either to settle scores with their family members (calculated attacks) or to blame them for causing misfortune in the community (surprise attacks). In patriarchal societies, men control social boundaries through norms and regulations imposed on women, and women are the first ones to be targeted during situations of panic. The status of women as dispensable is common across all societies. This degrading of status is indicated by rape and other gender-related crimes committed against women in times of stress, such as war” (p.1229).

These remarks are a point of departure for me to discuss the violence against women that is inherent in the agenda of dispossession at large, and the relationship between property and propriety, in particular. In a patriarchal society, a woman’s morality is attributed a high significance, and that becomes a basis for a variety of norms and traditions associated with the assumed or expected conduct of a woman within the family or community. At the same time, in a neoliberal economy, where land ownership is a basis for the state to make decisions on acquisition,
compensation or resettlement, the men of the society target women’s morality as a tool dominating them. By way of blaming family feuds or misfortune on these women and attacking their propriety, violence against women is normalized.

Another study conducted by Mehra & Agrawal (2016) investigated witch-hunting in the areas of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar also supported the fact that witch-hunts and the associated violence are most common against lower caste and indigenous women. Describing the horrendous violence, they mention, “A victim of witch-hunting faces stigma, isolation and ostracism as the most prevalent and persistent form of violence. The victimization is continuing in nature—beginning with verbal taunts and slurs using local terms denoting “witch” as well as other abuses aimed at demonizing and isolating the victim and her family. Name calling is rarely limited to being called witch; it is almost always accompanied by a range of sexual slurs and local abuse” (Mehra & Agrawal, 2016, p.54).

The above studies, thus, indicate that witch-hunts are mostly against widowed/single women (Chaudhuri, 2012; Mehra & Agrawal, 2016; NCRB, 2016) who are left with an inheritance of the land in the form of farms, forests or houses. Based on these studies, along with other observations I made above such as low numbers of land ownership of Adivasi women, lack of participation by women in land-related decision making and inefficient or inappropriate laws against witch-hunting, help construct the following understanding of the impact of land dispossession on Adivasi women. a) With the growing scarcity of a vital resource such as land, there is an increasing need for the Adivasi and non-Adivasi men to grab as much land as they can to sustain their livelihood and claim individual ownership over the land. b) In such a process of grabbing of land, women are at a disadvantageous position since they are neither the choice when it comes to owning nor for inheritance. c) In order to control women and the means of ownership,
labelling single or widowed women as witches is a justification to outcast them and a strategy that targets their propriety to take away their ownership or relation to the property.

**Unjust Compensation and Resettlement of Adivasi Women**

In the earlier chapter, I discussed that Chhattisgarh is now one of the hubs of accumulation of capital in India, where the public enterprises and the private companies in various industrial sectors, especially mining, are collaboratively acquiring land and making vast amounts of monetary profit on the land. It has also been previously established that, as articulated to the landowners, the acquisition is neither compensated appropriately nor are the people resettled effectively. Additionally, the decision on compensation or resettlement, if at all, involves landowners, they are primarily men.18

Bharathi (2012), a Marxist sociologist, also supports this fact through her empirical study on the perspective of indigenous women on issues of development and displacement. The study comments on the then passed Land Acquisition Bill of 2011, mentioning that, “As per the Bill, the compensation and rehabilitation and resettlement assistance is to be deposited in the bank account of the male…the land allotted ‘may’ be in the joint names of wife and husband of the affected family and not ‘must’. Though the Bill starts initially with the “affected family”, it unwittingly identifies an “individual” male member as the representative to receive all the benefits”. It is clear from the above analysis that the process of compensation is gendered enough to perpetuate the patriarchal structures in society. It is also worth noting that although the above version of the Bill included a clause for a possibility for joint entitlement of land, this clause was completely removed from the recent version of the Bill passed in 2015. It needs to be emphasized

though, that this is only a minor tragedy as undoubtedly, most of the families do not receive compensation at all and are caught in long term petitioning against the companies in the court, mostly with no resolve.

Another study that proved to be relevant for my understanding was Levien’s (2017) study on gender and dispossession in the state of Rajasthan in India, which explicitly articulated concerns about the compensation process. The study was instrumental in two ways: Firstly, to situate the unjust compensation as a process at the intersection of dispossession and patriarchy. Secondly, to conduct a historical analysis to build an understanding of the logic of gendered land relations as essential for capitalist- patriarchy to prevail.

Levien (2017), commented on the compensation and resettlement provided to people displaced by dam constructions and mentioned, “Women were in almost all instances excluded from formal decision-making over displacement and resettlement. In India, state laws and policies regarding land acquisition and resettlement and rehabilitation treat ‘project-affected families’ as adequately represented by male ‘heads of household’. India’s Land Acquisition Act even prevented government officials from delivering acquisition notices to anyone but male members of the household. Such gender-discriminatory laws and policies marginalized women from decision-making over whether to accept compensation and from negotiations over the terms of resettlement… For the purposes of deciding who constitutes an independent family entitled to compensation, state governments typically only included the families of ‘major sons’ and not daughters” (Levien, 2017, p. 1121).

The excerpt from Levien’s study highlights the intersection of neoliberal and patriarchal structures. The procedures related to compensation outlined above suggest in the case of Adivasis that in addition to suffering displacement and dispossession as a consequence of living on the land,
Adivasi women also lose any hope for justice. The injustice for women clearly arises out of the very policies of the state to resettle these women or their families.

**Situating Gendered Land Relations Historically.** Levien (2017) mentioned, “What were the effects of the enclosures on women and gender relations? Historians such as Neeson, Snell, Humphries and Federici have persuasively shown that enclosure disproportionately impacted women and expanded gender inequalities – in ways, moreover, that are strikingly similar to more contemporary cases of dispossession” (Levien, 2017, p.1116). As a Marxist-feminist, I agree that a socio-historical analysis of the conditions of the present must be carried out in order to fully gauge the social relations within capitalism. To do so, I consider the work of Federici (2015; 2018) as instrumental in understanding the present land grabs and its task of producing and reproducing patriarchal relations.

Federici (2015) describes the case of the English enclosures, during the advent of capitalism in the Middle Ages in Europe, in great details in her book, Caliban and the Witch, which illustrates many of the gendered aspects of dispossession that continue under more contemporary guises. Firstly, in the English enclosures, women were intentionally excluded from decision-making over their own or their families’ land rights. We see that in the case of Adivasi women as well, the compensation usually goes to the males of the family and the consent for land acquisition also does not mostly involve the Adivasis as such, let alone women. Instead, the women who at all inherit land from their father or deceased husband, are subjected to torture and expropriation from the village itself as described above in the case of witch-hunts. Secondly, in the enclosures of that time, women who earlier experienced a greater autonomy over their means of livelihood lost that access to resources and hence ended them to be poor economically and socially. In the present times, too, the same phenomena can be observed in the case of Adivasi women. In fact,
they face an additional charge in case they choose to resist- that of being anti-development or anti-progress. This dissent further results in violence against women as a tool by the state to silence them, which I shall briefly discuss later in this chapter and through detailed case studies, in the next chapter. This striking similarity also demonstrates that the logics of capitalist patriarchy have permeated into neoliberalism wherein, the state continues to be an agent of reproducing patriarchal relations.

**Legitimized Violence Against Indigenous Women**

In the earlier chapter, I characterized the state as a multi-faced entity that facilitates social relations between the government entities and private companies to accumulate capital and make a profit from the lands of the Adivasis. The prevalent discourse, as is evident from the advertisements and marketing strategies of the state is that of, development. Increasingly in India, the political propaganda of the ruling governments has focused on the agenda of progress. Indigenous Women Need to be Developed. An even remarkable way in which the processes of dispossession are justified is by referring to them as being beneficial for all which in India’s case is evident in the recently popularized political agenda of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas’ (Development for all, with all) which was an instrumental propaganda of the current political regime to assume power. It is probably because of such strategies of the state that, Harvey calls neoliberalism as ‘creative destruction’ (Harvey 2006) and a system of ‘accumulation by dispossession,’ which is a new form of primitive accumulation (Harvey 2003; 2006). In the age of neoliberal globalization, the old methods of dispossession have been modified, and a few new ones invented in order “to play an even stronger role now than in the past” (Harvey 2003, 147).
Although, the discourse of development applies to a majority of the population, it is the indigenous people who are considered as needing urgent and maximum development. A great deal of literature on the idea of progress and development suggests that the masses were made to believe that the humans, the nature and the Earth, are not good enough and hence there is a need for it to make ‘progress’, ‘be better’ and ‘be developed’ which in turn will transcend them to a higher civilization (Mies, 2014; Federici, 2018). The 2014 Indian national elections saw a sweeping victory for the Bhartiya Janata Party where they scored a majority of the seats, an occurrence rare in the history of India post-independence. The party which openly declares itself a ‘Hindu nationalist party’ is led by Narendra Modi who claims himself and his party to focus on the single agenda of ‘Development’ in India. During his reign of five years, several campaign and slogans became popular – ‘Shining India’, ‘Make in India’, ‘Development for all’ and also accompanying accomplishments of ‘Highest index of Ease of doing business’ (CSIDC Report, 2015), ‘Invest in India’ and ‘6th largest economy’ aimed at attracting potential investors to ‘develop India’. All of these clearly point at manufacturing consent amongst the Indian population that development is good, and it is for all.

**Indigenous women as Backward.** This discourse of development and the labelling of Adivasi people as ‘savage,’ ‘tribal,’ ‘backward,’ legitimizes violence against them and positioning them at the bottom-most order of social hierarchy who do not contribute towards the ‘growing economy.’ It is in this context that barbarism against them is justified, legalized and promoted. At the intersection of this barbarism and patriarchal structures is violence against indigenous women. The NCRB Report (2016) indicates that Adivasis women in Chhattisgarh were victims of several crimes. The data shows 157 women raped, about 170 sexually assaulted and about 20, murdered. However, it must be noted that these were the reported crimes and do not indicate the actual data.
Considering the stigma that is attached with a woman being attacked sexually and being mistreated by male police officers in police stations is so high in patriarchal societies, that most of the women do not end up reporting violence against them.

**The Commodity of Women.** “Primitive accumulation affects men and women, though differentially, and combines with the violence of commodity fetishism and alienation. Women’s bodies are reified in and for the market and made into objects of consumption” (Bannerji et al., 2001). The ideology of the state that establishes indigenous people as lesser humans has specific implications for women in a neoliberal-patriarchy. While the neoliberal political economy is based on the marketization of everything, the logic also commodified women in a patriarchal society. The economic model shaped by capitalist patriarchy is based on the commodification of everything, including women. Shiva (2014) has written extensively on the role of commodification of women in neoliberal processes in India. In her pioneer work, Ecofeminism, she states that “In a patriarchal society like India, where a woman was already treated as a sub-human entity owing to the traditional, religious and patriarchal setup, the neoliberal project further exploits this condition and in the stride of commodification, objectifies the woman herself”. I agree with Shiva’s analysis also because as it is coherent with my findings pertaining to the status of violence in Chhattisgarh. The violence against Adivasi women, as we have seen in the previous chapter has intensified in the name of land acquisition, land rights and development. A woman is considered as an object to an increasingly ‘rare commodity’ who must be grabbed and controlled. This objectification explains the incidents of brutal gang-rapes and rapes in Chhattisgarh where the perpetrators whether they are from the security forces, the industry workers or family, but all of them are males.
It is these conditions of the neoliberal expanse that have led to the daily violence against women in the form of harassment on streets, custodial violence by the police, assaulting women during Maoist movements, trafficking of women when they migrate and practices of witch-hunting that further legitimize the violating of her body and identity.

Dispossession of Women’s bodies. The Adivasi women who are treated as ‘lesser humans’ and the logic of commodification in a neoliberal economy make them vulnerable to violence that inevitably targets their bodies as a woman’s body holds centrality in a patriarchal society. The project of dispossession is accomplished through oppressive measures like ‘blood and fire’ Whitehead (2016). However, the literature that deals with violence against women, at large and specific violence such as rape, gang rape or abuse most often posits men in a position of power as far as law is concerned and hence many feminists argue for stronger law structures that are not biased against women and those that punish ‘the’ perpetrator (Gangoli & Solanki, 2016; Roychowdhary, 2013).

The literature on land dispossession, on the other hand, highlights class inequalities and a significant emphasis on primitive accumulation and the neoliberal-capitalist system (Harvey, 2005; Levien, 2018). The relationship between women and land dispossession is limited to a discourse on land rights. It is critical at this juncture to specify that there is a direct link between the rhetoric of development that has been established by the state, the intensification of coercive means to dispossess people of their lands and use of ‘dispossession of women’s bodies’ from their self as an inherent process for the land grab. Shiva (2014) also calls for a “need to examine the connections between the violence of unjust, non-sustainable economic systems and the growing frequency and brutality of violence against women. It is to (this) context of the dynamics of more
brutal and more vicious violence against women and multiple interconnected forms of violence that the processes unleashed by neoliberalism are contributory factors”.

The Table 2.2 shows the expanse of reported crimes against Adivasi women and although all of these do not directly demonstrate a link to land dispossession, per se, but this is an important statistic to understand how Adivasi women’s bodies are the targets of violence in the present times. The data specified that between 2009-13, there has been a sharp increase in brutal violence such as murders and rapes against Adivasi women apart from other violent cases of kidnapping and robbery. It is important to note that the Constitution recognizes the vulnerability of the indigenous towards violence and hence provides protection to the indigenous through the Scheduled Tribes Prevention Act19. However, crimes categorized as violation of this act amongst Adivasi women have also seen a tremendous rise.

Subsequent data from NCRB (NCRB, 2014, 2015, 2016) has shown similar trends highlighting that violence against Adivasi women is reportedly increasing. The evidence in my thesis so far suggests that, high levels of poverty, illiteracy, forced displacement from lands and forests are prevalent in the lives of Adivasi women. Hence, they are vulnerable to violence and are also less likely to dissent against such violence.

19 See Endnote A
Rising Surveillance for Public Safety

Throughout the previous chapter, I have highlighted several situations where the Adivasis have been forced to leave their homes, their lands and their livelihood. Since such a process of dispossession and displacement cannot mostly be a voluntary process, the use of force and forgery to expropriate people from their land is normalized. The Adivasis are perceived by the state as dispensable entities occupying the land who must exit for the state to fulfil its neoliberal aims of establishing industries and hubs of capital. The use of security forces to discipline and punish people is common in Chhattisgarh. Hence, the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act (CSPSA), 2005 legitimized the massive deployment of police and paramilitary forces in the state. After the
North-Eastern states and the states of Jammu and Kashmir, this is the only region where the use of these forces is as massive.

To place greater power with the forces, The CSPSA Act grants impunity to the forces against encounters or violence against suspected Maoists or the activists who dissent against the processes of dispossession. In a patriarchal society, such control on mobility and on maintaining order makes women as easy targets of the highly masculinized security forces. Several cases of brutal violence against women by men in uniform have come forth as highlighted by petitions from human rights organizations. I shall take up these cases in the next chapter.

This discussion is not to suggest that violence against women begins within the neoliberal era and that patriarchy is a function of capitalism only. I am deeply aware of the gender-based oppression rooted in Indian traditions, cultures and society as such. However, what is deeply disturbing is that violence against women has taken on brutal and vicious forms as traditional ‘patriarchal structures have hybridized with the structures of capitalist patriarchy’ (Federici, 2015, p.50). In other words, capitalism subsumes previous forms of domination such as patriarchy or feudal forms of culture and religion and refashion them in its image.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, my main agenda is to investigate the gendered impact of dispossession. Based on the study, three significant impacts can be identified:

a) The neoliberal processes of dispossession reproduce the gendered roles inherent in land ownership in a patriarchal society as India. This perpetuation of patriarchal relations is evident in the ways that the laws (or absence of them) empower men in the community and the to-be decision makers concerning issues of land ownership as well as buying and selling. This structural inequity impacts women directly in not only outcasting them from ownership and decision-making
but also making them susceptible to practices of witch-hunting that attack her morality and legitimize her expropriation from the land and the community, at large.

   b) As a consequence of the land acquisition, the state provides mostly cash compensation, if at all, to the dispossessed since resettling the natives can be a complicated process and does not provide tangible evidence. In most patriarchal families, wherein the male is responsible for the financial accounts of a household, this cash compensation ends up with them. Yet again, the Adivasi women, who otherwise contribute to the family in the sustenance of livelihood are not considered primary members who run the household. Additionally, the processes of compensation do not allow joint entitlement, or which further diminishes the possibility that women end up living in poverty and further dependent on men.

   c) In a country where the primary discourse and policy creation revolves around the agenda of ‘Developing India’, the premise on which the state justifies land dispossession in Adivasi areas is development. In particular, the state, since colonial times, has emphasized upon the need for ‘ancient’ and ‘tribal’ people like the Adivasis to be advanced by the state. In this way, the state justifies the implementing of a variety of mining, infrastructure and construction projects and promising a ‘bright’ future to the Adivasis where they can prosper through employment in industries. Consequently, this discourse impacts Adivasi men and women to be treated as ‘lesser humans’, the women become further vulnerable to violence, to commodification and suffering dispossession of their identity itself. Additionally, those who oppose development in the form of protests against the acquisition of land that was formerly used for agriculture or protecting the diminishing indigenous habitats, or forests and rivers are increasingly labelled as anti-development, pro-Maoists or urban-Maoists. In the next chapter, I shall discuss how this discourse
has been used by the state to normalize surveillance and violence against Adivasi women inhabitants and activists in particular.
CHAPTER 3 – THE STATE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

“This paradoxical situation of women in India is alarming. On one hand they are worshipped as goddesses, and on the other, burnt for dowry. Boys are more desirable and seen as a support for parents in their old age as necessary to continue the family lineage. Girls are considered an unwanted burden yet used to support their brothers and men and suffer in silence as atrocities such as abuse, violence, rape and early marriages. When and if they break their silence, the repercussions are immense…The state, as the largest public institution can initiate, strengthen and ensure implementation (of) its economic, and social policies for gender equality”. (Ministry of Women and Child Development Report, 2015).

What happens when the state itself is the perpetrator of violence against women? What happens when women break their silence against the state? Moreover, what happens when the state itself uses patriarchy as a tool to further its capitalist agenda? The thesis asserts a direct causal connection between the neoliberal-capitalist relations and the violence against women. In the previous chapter, I argued that the state reproduces the social relations of patriarchy through unequal land relations and creating conditions for violence against women. In this chapter, I argue that in a neoliberal setup, to fulfil its agenda of land-grab, violence against Adivasi women is a tool that the state adopts to silence and control these women. I present several extensive cases of violence against women in Chhattisgarh in the past few years and examine how attacking and oppressing women is not just a consequence of the capitalistic accumulation processes but is as much a tool to facilitate these processes.

20. https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Executive%20Summary_HLC_0.pdf
Before I delve into the cases, it is essential to note the ways and means I gained access to these cases. Some of the cases have been quoted directly from scholarly research in the past, others have also been traced from non-governmental organizations working in Chhattisgarh and other states of India, such as the Women Against State Repression and Sexual Violence in India. The latter works as a pan-Indian organization formed by a collective of women from different social contexts, they also document state-wise cases of violence against women, investigate on ground and advocate with the government, engage in solidarity movements.

**Violence Against Women- A Tool of Neoliberal Patriarchy**

Every rape and gangrape of a woman being reported in India sparks a discourse at the local, national and international level. One of the commonly attributed factors to rape is the way India is developing to become a country where women are increasingly becoming modern, and yet the men are conservative as ever which causes a clash of tradition and modernity. This clash gives rise to frustration amongst men and out of that aggression, they exploit women through violent means. “The new economies in which the young women require mobilities of time and space…this mobility is purposeful, and it may well put them at risk of violence” (Ray, 2016, p. 398). Moreover, about the men, Ray states that “The men reveal a story of repeated failure…precarity for men provokes far more anxiety…the disjuncture between the discourse around failed men and successful mobile women is also productive of particular sorts of violence, as the gangrape showed, dominant narratives about such violence produce their own effects” (2016, p. 402). In my opinion, these discourses polarize the problem into a man-woman binary. This polarized narrative takes precedence not only in the civil society but is also reproduced in the State reports where maximum incidents of crime against women are focused on domestic violence.
So far, I have outlined the gendered impact of dispossession that inherently involved violence against women in the different form either by their family, the community or individual males. In this section, I aim to explicate the relationship between state and violence against women.

To understand this relationship, I begin with firstly reinforcing an understanding of capitalist patriarchy. “The capitalist patriarchy denotes the system that maintains women’s exploitation and oppression. ‘Patriarchy’ literally means the rule of the fathers. However, today it goes beyond just fathers and extends to husbands, brothers, men bosses, ruling men in societal institutions, in politics and in economics. Moreover, the term patriarchy denotes a historical and societal dimension of women’s exploitation and oppression. Capitalism, as a system, is the latest development of patriarchy and cannot function without the exploitation and oppression of women. It would be therefore misleading to talk of the two systems separately” Mies (2014, p.38). This framework of analysis fits my findings so far related to oppression of women in their relationship with land and their vulnerability to violence by individual males as well as structural state forces.

The concept of multi-faced patriarchy is a useful one for my work, emphasizing that not only fathers (in the way of inheritance of land to their daughters), but other masculine forces around women are institutionalized to ensure that women are in a disadvantageous position. This concept has been used in the previous chapter to show how the police, the private companies and the legal-political leaders establish dominance over women in process of acquiring land and ensuring that women do not get justice during displacement and dispossession. In the next few sections, I further highlight the multi-faced character of patriarchy as well as describe cases that substantiate the thought of oppression and violence against women as essential for neoliberal-capitalist forces.
Adivasi Women and Forced Displacement by the State

The Chhattisgarh Land Revenue Code prohibits the transfer of tribal lands to non-tribals vide (Section 170 B). There are many similar provisions, laws, regulations in different states applying to tribal areas or tribal owned lands prohibiting the alienation of Adivasi land to non-Adivasis. However, most often these provisions are violated where non-Adivasi men belonging to families of political leaders or from an upper class or caste grabs the land by false lease or ownership documents (Bhardwaj, 2017). For instance, consider the case of an Adivasi nurse, Tarika Lakra was grabbed by Jindal steels21.

In Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh, Jindal steels planned to acquire farm-land owned by Tarika, who inherited this land as her father passed away. She received a notice by the company but did not respond as she had not made up her mind to sell. In May 2003, Lakra went out to her orchard to check on the harvest, only to find a mountain of debris dumped on the land. “I thought it was a mistake,” she said. But when she went to her farm, a group of thugs stopped her at her gate, claiming that the property belonged to JSPL (Jindal Steels Private Limited). She filed a complaint accusing the company of grabbing her land, but the police and state government officials ignored her. JSPL paid her about 1.5 million rupees ($24,000) as compensation, which she estimated to be a fourth of the market value for a plot as fertile as hers. JSPL’s lawyers in Chhattisgarh High Court said it was barren land and they had paid for its worth. Further her family including her mother was kept hostage by the officials of Jindal steel and her brother was murdered. Tarika, herself, was sexually assaulted by a group of men from the same company after which she was told “A part of your land is already occupied (forcefully) by us. Now, write a letter to the Collector, that you are giving up possession for your other land too”. Further, it took Lakra

several years to gather the courage to approach Human Rights Law Network and file a case in the Supreme Court against Jindal steels in 2015\(^2\) regarding the assault as well as her brother’s murder which was not even investigated by the police. She has not received justice yet and her case is still unresolved.

The case above highlights how the steel company and the police have collaborated to implement the neoliberal agenda of dispossessing people. In the process of acquiring land from Adivasis, one of the primary forms of coercion that has been used is of violation of the rights of Adivasi women. The case also clearly suggests that women become immediate targets of such an agenda, and anybody who supports them also faces violence by the state. In my analysis, women become immediate targets because, firstly, they are marginalized in a patriarchal society and hence resistance from them, such as that of Tarika’s unwillingness to vacate her land is least expected. If they do resist, they are met with a sustained neoliberal-patriarchal state-sponsored institutions that oppress these women or direct forms of violence like Tarika did. Secondly, controlling women is essential to the capitalist-patriarchal state and taking away ownership of land, the means of livelihood is one of the major means to do so. The injustice that Tarika experienced is telling of how the state purposefully denies justice to women in order to maintain dominance over them.

**Security Forces and Sexual Violence against Adivasi Women**

In the previous chapter, I mentioned the increasing surveillance in several districts of Chhatisgarh as a response to the Maoist movement. The legal provision of the CSPSA Act provides power and impunity to the security forces to conduct search operations on the basis of suspicion. Several studies have documented that these operations end up with violence against the

\(^2\)https://www.sci.gov.in/jonew/cl/2019-03-25/M_J_1_1_13408.pdf
Adivasis (Gunti, 2016; Bhardwaj, 2017; Punwani, 2007). While men are tortured or killed in encounters, it is the women who are victims or survivors of brutal sexual violence by the security forces during these operations. Gunti (2016) conducted a study in Chhattisgarh to highlight the socio-political movement against plundering resources and the resultant use of force to suppress this movement in collusion with corporate interests by the Indian State. In his study, he details one of the incidents of violence, “Between the 11th and 14th of January 2016, five batches of police and security forces entered the village of Bellam-Lendra in the Basaguda thana area of Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh. They blindly fired a round of bullets into the surrounding hills…The ones who protested had it worse - “They took four kilos of rice from my home and promised to pay me. They also took four chickens. I told them we sell chickens to buy clothes and asked them not to take them. When I told them this and asked them for money for the rice, they threw a fishing net over my face and pushed me into my house. They took off my clothes and threw them. They even held my breasts. One of them held my legs down, another my shoulders. A third raped me…she was held by two men and taken into her house. “They threw me on the floor. They took off my clothes, tore my blouse and squeezed my breasts. One of them raped me and said You give food to the Naxals. We will set fire to your homes. You're lucky it's daytime. If it was night, we would kill you”.

To analyse the cases above, I use Federici’s ideas on the torture inflicted on women’s bodies by security forces. Federici (2015) has spoken of extensively of an expressive violence and pedagogical cruelty arguing that their (security forces’) objective is to “terrorize, to send a message, first to women and then through them, to entire populations that no mercy should be expected. This ‘handbook violence’ is indeed a planned strategy that takes place within the social and productive organizations of the state (Federici, 201, p.51). In light of this framework, I analyse
the cases mentioned above and argue that a) The violence in the search operations is state sanctioned since the security forces cannot operate without the appropriate legal provision of search operation and a high level of impunity for the actions within these operations such that the men in uniform do not fear the consequences of their actions. b) Sexual violence against women, in this case, cannot be attributed to the psychology of men or their aggression as such, but should rather be considered a tool to convey to the women and their families or villages and is ‘handbook violence’ to convey that dissent from women or allying with people who dissent shall be punished. Such punishment for women is in the form of sexual violence against them in an attempt to conquer and control her body.

Sundar (2016, p.124) quotes a fact-finding report in which an Adivasi woman describes what the security forces said to her after a gang-rape during a resistance movement organized by the Adivasis: “You are a Maoist and we have taught you a lesson today.” Women were raped irrespective of their age. Wives raped in front of their husbands, mothers raped in front of their children, and children raped in front of their parents. With impunity, the so-called relief camps have in effect been turned into brutal death camps and “rape centers” (People’s March, 2007). Punwani (2007) conducted a detailed study on the relief camps. Her study mentions several cases of violence against Adivasi women in relief camps located in and around Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh. Overall, the study indicates that “21 of these women had been killed, three of them after having their breasts and genitals mutilated. 37 had been raped (23 of them gang-rape) or molested. Ten had been subjected to sexual violence in the camps, and four in police stations” (Punwani, 2007, p.277). The numbers of these incidents and the brutal nature of this violence can be termed as ‘handbook violence’ as Federici would describe it, the purpose of which is to use patriarchy as a tool to maintain the position of power of the state apparatus.
It is important to reinforce here that the rhetoric of domestic violence or violence perpetrated by individual males cannot be responsible for the intensity and scale of violence against women in Chhattisgarh. It has to do with the unjust laws of land acquisition, oppressive systems of compensation or resettlement, forced privatization and individualization of land ownership and yet, there must be a guarantee of impunity. This guarantee of impunity cannot be achieved by the government or the private companies alone. Hence, laws like the PESA Act, the LARR Act and the acts pertaining to keeping suspicious people in custody, are all calculated moves of the judiciary to support the government to grant impunity against any dissent from amongst the people. Further, such impunity for violence against women is at an even grander scale and normalized, as if women’s sexuality and body were under the direct control of the state. The incidents of Sukma and Bijapur in 2016 is just one example where more than 15 women were gang-raped by the forces did not end up with any action whatsoever against the security forces.

In legitimizing such violence, just normalizing the commodification of women or committing violence against them is hardly sufficient. I believe that the rhetoric of the security forces to be employed across the state of Chhattisgarh for the ‘safety and security’ of Adivasis and especially women is yet another strategy that the state employs. Rikagos’s (2016) analysis of security as pacification caught my attention to understand this dialectical relation between security and violence. He argues that the most vital stratum of pacification is dispossession- the vital confiscation of lands where non-capitalist land use necessitates its widespread seizure through forces. He situates the role of the police in the Middle Ages as that of the ‘preservators’ of the right of private property. I consider that capitalist forces still invest heavily in the police and the military to ensure surveillance in areas where industries in Chhattisgarh plan to set up their base as well to ensure that people can be coerced, punished and violated to ensure that land is acquired. It is this
contradiction of security (of women) and violence (for security) that came to be exposed when examining the dialectical concepts of security and violence in the region.

The relation between the accumulation of capital and violence against women as an inter-constitutive phenomenon is established by several Marxist-feminists, ecofeminists and neoliberal feminists. Bannerji (2016) in her analysis on a qualitative and quantitative increase in sexual violence in India, remarks that, to explore the symbiotic violence of capitalist patriarchy we begin with primitive accumulation - not as an ‘event’ in history but a continuing process. “Primitive accumulation involves covert and overt violations of life resources, as of land, lives and bodies of all the underclasses, especially of women belonging to them” (Bannerji et al., 2001). Her analysis is an apt framework for my research to situate the violence inherent in dispossession processes in Chhattisgarh and the continuity of this violence since the past many decades.

**Witch Hunting and Role of the State**

From the very beginning, while bringing her up as a girl, through a variety of norms and traditions, the society ensures that a woman conforms to the behaviour and actions that are inscribed in the patriarchal structures. Anybody who deviates from those norms is targeted for punishment by society. However, women are susceptible to such punishment most often and most brutally. In the previous chapter, I elaborated on specific cases of witch-hunting in Chhattisgarh wherein it was highlighted that the accused women were often land-owners and hence the males in the family were the perpetrators. In this chapter, within the context of state as a perpetrator of violence, I demonstrate the relationship between the neoliberal processes of establishing mining companies, the legal inefficiency to protect violence against women accused of witchcraft and the scale of this violence in Chhattisgarh.
In a patriarchal society, there is a great emphasis on the morality of women. A non-governmental organization, Andhshraddha Nirmoolan Samitee, fights against black magic and superstition in Chhattisgarh filed an RTI\textsuperscript{23} query and found that since the introduction of Chhattisgarh Witchcraft Atrocities (Prevention) Act 2005, the state has witnessed 1,268 incidents of witch hunt with more than 210 women beaten to death. Women in Chhattisgarh undergo extreme humiliation and are torturd, harassed, beaten, kicked, tonsured and forced to gulp urine if a village or family suffer an untimely death, illness, bad crops or death of a baby. “While the targeted women are usually childless, widow or lonely women, the atrocities for her continues as she leads a boycotted life.” According to the data collected by the NGO, Korba tops the list of the highest number of 208 cases reported followed by 114 cases reported from Koriya district. It is worth noting that both these districts are coal mining regions. Also, worth noting is that the cases mentioned in the report by Andhshraddha Nirmoolan Samitee indicated highest witch-hunting rates in Korba and Koriya, which are districts with one of the highest coal mining potential. Another fact to consider is that land that is disputed, is given to the state. This indicates that the state is invisible as a direct perpetrator in witch-hunting, however, it is the processes of land grab brought about by the state and structural legal institutions that facilitate such violence.

\textbf{Dealing with Dissenting Women}

In particular, women activists who resist are susceptible to all kinds of violence in a patriarchal society not only by the state but by the civil society as well. Below, I concentrate on women activists resisting the capitalist-patriarchal agenda of the state in Chhattisgarh and the response of the state towards them.

\textsuperscript{23}RTI- Right to Information Act
The Case of Pavitri. Amnesty Organisation International is an active organization that consistently advocates for human rights in Chhattisgarh in India. In a report published by the organization in 2017, one of the cases that was taken up is of particular interest to my study. In the district of Raipur in Chhattisgarh, 81 Adivasi women and men tried to file First Information Reports at the Police Station in Raigarh, alleging that they were forced into selling their land as a result of threats, intimidation, coercion and misinformation to the agents of TRN Energy and Mahavir Energy Coal Beneficiation Limited (MECBL). The villagers asserted that the companies were operating in collusion with local land registration officials. The police, however, refused to register First Information Reports and the organization was called in by human right activists in the region to act. The report included the case of an Adivasi women activists who was the elected representative of one of the villages in the district and was actively petitioning against the state. “Pavitri Manjhi, the Adivasi Sarpanch of the Bhengari village council, has been facing sexual harassment for her peaceful activism. In April 2018, two men visited her home on multiple occasions and told her to “withdraw all the cases filed against the company”24. They said, “Nothing will happen with the complaints you filed, better to withdraw all your complaints” and “everyone who helped you file the complaints are outsiders and will not be able to save you and we will silence them”. Pavitri reported the harassment to the police but no FIR was registered in relation to the harassment. The case helps make three strands of analyses:

a) The private companies, the government officials and the police forces all work in unison to employ the dual strategy of forced displacement and punishing dissent. This reminds us of the state as the multi-faced neoliberal-patriarchal actor that carried out violence against the native landowners, particularly, women who dissent.

b) Women who dissent face violence of a particular kind in a capitalist-patriarchal society where the state assumes the greatest power. While men may be tortured or threatened, women are harassed sexually and their bodies are targeted to create fear and terror. The men in the above case mentioning “No one can save you” highlights the ultimate power to the patriarchal entities and impunity for their actions.

c) Dissenting women, in particular, are a threat to the capitalist-patriarchy and women who dissent against development, are a double threat as they target the neoliberal ideology. Hence, to control such women, the state uses violence and creating an environment of fear for the women which is a masculine logic to establish dominance over women.

*The Case of Bela Bhatia.* “Women Against Sexual Violence and State Repression condemns the recent attack against Bela Bhatia, a researcher and activist, based in Bastar, Chhattisgarh. On the 23rd of January 2017, a group of 30-odd men attacked Bela near her house. They barged into her house violently and threatened to burn the building down if she did not leave immediately. The mob also attacked the owners of the building as well as their children, threatening them with dire consequences if Bela was not evicted immediately”25. Bela Bhatia, a lawyer, an ally of the Adivasis and an activist was instrumental in bringing to light before the National Human Rights Commission, the incidents of sexual assault of women in the Bijapur district. Owing to the high rate of violence in different districts of Chhattisgarh, a large population of Adivasi women have been silenced with the terrorized means of the state. While the fact that most Indian women would never go to report crimes against them that are sexual, this potentially holds for Chhattisgarh as well. The reasons, in my opinion, are several. There is the fear of assault by the security forces and also, prevalent conditions of poverty and illiteracy amongst these women.

who are unsure how a First Information Report (FIR) could be filed. Several legal aid advisors, mostly women activist, work in Chhattisgarh to aid these women. Within the same context, Bela Bhatia also was instrumental in assisting women in the villages of Chinnagelur, Peddagelur, Gundam, Burgicheru and Pegdapalli to file FIRs against police personnel. However, the violence against her clearly suggests that for the state to establish its own dominance and also position the security forces as a powerful patriarchal actor, such a dissenting voice, indeed, cannot be tolerated.

The Case of Sudha Bhardwaj. In protests of this unjust land acquisition, several social movements have been organized by the Adivasi inhabitants and activists. The protests routinely were followed or included women and girls to be victims of rape and assault either on the streets, in forests, near the industries, within their homes or within police custody. Sustained protests against the LARR Act and land acquisition in general, included several activists belonging to the academia, law or journalism backgrounds, many of them being women. These dissenting women were indeed a threat for the ruling state. Recently, in 2016, the forest rights of Adivasis were being compromised as big private industries like Adani Group moved on to establish coal mining in the forest region at the cost of INR 2369 crore.

However, activists like Sudha Bhardwaj as a member of the Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (Save Chhattisgarh Movement) along with other members protested this mining and the coercive means of pushing out dwellers of the region. Apart from this, she participated in several other movements as well as aided inhabitants to file FIRs (First Information reports) in police stations against violence experienced. In 2018, August, Sudha Bhardwaj was tortured and arrested from her home on ambiguous charges. It is, therefore, telling of the state response to dissent. It clearly suggests that the state shall punish dissenting women and since the security forces conduct such
violence, albeit, under ambiguous charges, the broader civil society is neither in a position to question it nor address it as intentional violence.

**The Case of Soni Sori.** Soni Sori was a public-school teacher and an indigenous land rights activist from the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. Soni Sori belongs to a minority tribal community that has historically been impoverished and marginalized. She lives in the district of Dantewada, a mineral-rich area with an active mining industry. In September 2011, the police in Dantewada accused Soni Sori of extracting protection money from a mining company on behalf of a Maoist group…She was arrested and tortured in the custody and mentioned “The superintendent asked me to sign documents that would confirm I was involved with the Maoists. I refused. He then asked the lady constables to leave. The police officials started abusing me, calling me a whore and saying I indulge in sexual acts with Maoists. They stripped me naked, made me stand in an "attention" position and gave me electric shocks on various parts of my body. I still didn't relent. They then shoved red chili powder inside my vagina. By now, I was losing consciousness, but I refused to sign the documents. The cops started inserting stones into my private parts. Many stones - so many that they started falling out. I finally collapsed.¹

Soni Sori’s case is a perfect representation of how the state has time and again used the agenda of wiping out Maoists from the region as a condition to the development of the region of Chhattisgarh. In this ‘wiping out’ operation, several incidents of violence have been exchanged between the Maoists and the state, the largest victims of this violence undoubtedly have been women. To clarify that this is not beyond the scope of the thesis, it is important to remember that Maoists is an activist group that was established with and among the Adivasis for the purposes of unjust land acquisition by the state and its means of expropriating the population at a rapid rate without any possible benefits in return. It is therefore essential to be reminded that the brutal acts
of violence against women while labelling them to be as or with Maoists is same as saying that women who dissent against state agenda of neoliberal extractivism and dispossession will be punished with violence against their bodies and their identity.

Also, custodial violence against women is common in various parts of Chhattisgarh. Punyani’s (2007) study mentioned earlier in this chapter also traced the statistics of custodial violence. She found out that “More than 68 inmates in prison are booked on suspicious involvement with Maoists”. Her study and several others have time and again pointed out at the brutality in custodial violence as there are no laws that govern the violence against inmates booked as Maoist supporters. Women, in particular, face brutal forms of sexual violence more than any other punishment.

The final argument that I want to make in the context institutional violence is concerned with the masking of the state agenda in the discourse on development. “The earlier patriarchal systems did not deny the violence and did not claim to be saviours. However, the capitalist system envisages that it is better than the barbaric and savage systems of the past and that they are pro-progress” (Mies, 2014, p.27). Based, on the data collected, I agree with this argument as the state in Chhattisgarh, and the narrative in India has continuously emphasized that development is for everyone and that in order to become a ‘rich’ state, we need to make sacrifices of our land and forests. It is a question that needs to be then asked repeatedly, as to why the sacrifices in the name of development, need to be made only by the already oppressed and marginalized population of poor Adivasi women and their allies?
The Positionality of the State

“The most common form of VAW that has been studied and documented in India is domestic, intimate partner and spousal violence” (MWCD\textsuperscript{26}, 2015, p.144). The section is an extensive analysis of the reports released by the Ministry of Women and Child Development since 2015, Ministry of Health and Family Survey Sheets 2015 onward and the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) from 2015 onward. The former two release reports on an annual basis that are mostly factual but also analyzes issues based on gender, violence and displacement. The latter released annual reports until 2016 but has ceased releasing any such data after that. It is important to note that these reports are the source of knowledge for researchers studying violence in India and also highly instrumental in shaping policies and projects that the government or the non-governmental organizations take up to address issues of violence. I present the following arguments based on the reports mentioned above:

a) The reports maintain that violence against women in the country is a consequence of conventional mindsets of men who have been raised (and continue to live) in a patriarchal society.

b) The reports lack a deeper analysis of institutional violence against women.

This analysis is crucial to my study as it is vital to gather the perspective of the state as to what they have to say about the ongoing violence in spite of claiming that the country is swinging smoothly in the tides of development and yet they themselves are aware of the extent of violence. Also, it was important to refer to these reports as the only other legitimate source seemed to be media reports. I did not use the media reports for two reasons- One, it is widespread. With the widespread media, over 4000 TV channels, magazines and hence merely choosing based on viewership/readership would reflect a bias towards the majoritarian and to the literate. Secondly,

\textsuperscript{26} Ministry of Women and Child Development Annual Report, 2015
the bias inherent within media is enormous, considering that most of the media publishing houses and video channels are themselves owned by either political parties themselves or by private companies.

Coming back to the analysis I draw from the Ministry reports and the NCRB data, it is intriguing how all these reports pay little to no emphasis on violence against women by state perpetrators. This lack of emphasis is indicative of the intention of the state to mask the conditions that they are continuously creating to violate against women in different ways. The Chhattisgarh Survey by the Ministry of Family and Health Welfare, MFHW\(^\text{27}\) in 2015-16 aimed to “provide essential data on health and family welfare and emerging issues in the area.” (MFHW Report, 2016, p.1) while mapping the health of women in Chhattisgarh, there was only a single indicator – ‘Women’s Empowerment and Gender Based Violence’ (MFHW Report, 2016, p.4). As much as the title itself indicates a dichotomy, the indicator mentioned only two indicators related to violence in particular – ‘Ever-married women who have experienced spousal violence’ and ‘Ever-married women who have experienced violence during pregnancy’. It is important to co-relate that this is the same year when incidents of the Sukma violence happened (mentioned earlier in this chapter) wherein several Adivasi women were victims of mass-rapes. The physical, emotional and mental assault would have undoubtedly impacted the survivors’ health in traumatic ways but yet, it does not figure out in this report. Instead, what seems to be highlighted is the spousal violence as if, this was the only source of violence against women in the state. Although, I do not negate the issue of spousal violence and marital rape that is yet another ill constituent of patriarchy in India, my argument is that these are now being used to cover the role of the state in violating against women’s bodies and their health and instead claiming to ‘empower’ them.

\(^{27}\)http://rchiips.org/NFHS/pdf/NFHS4/CT_FactSheet.pdf
The report of the High-Level Committee on the status of women in India published annually by the MWCD aims to collects and analyze data based on various issues related to women in order to design schemes and policies state-wise and district-wise in the country. The report through the years marks a separate category titled ‘Women Empowerment and Protection’ wherein the expanse of violence against women is mentioned along with schemes targeted to address the problem. In the reports within the past five years, the categories of violence against women addressed ‘Violence due to Dowry’, ‘Domestic Violence’ and ‘Trafficking of persons’ (MWCD Report, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015). The report in 2015, however, is a more analytical report that looks at relationships between gender and environment, economic disparities, legal access, educational level etc. In this report, the section, *A Silent epidemic: Violence Against Women and Girls in India*28, in particular, attempts to analyze the ‘reasons for violence’ (p. 139). It considers the following as contributory factors: patriarchy as a societal ill, regressive and oppressive norms alcoholic men, local regressive communities such as *Khap Panchayats* (p.142). This section has no mention whatsoever of the violence on women that is committed by security forces in Chhattisgarh and similar cases across the North Eastern part of India and the states of Jammu Kashmir. The analysis also fails to mention the violence caused in the process of displacement of women during land acquisition processes and migratory processes as such from the dispossessed lands. I argue that, masking of data related to displacement and violence inherent in displacement is a conscious attempt to constantly slip the cases into the individual lives of the women and related men by highlighting domestic violence, pathologized men and ‘regressive’ norms that the civil society has supposedly created through ages. With the elaborate presentation of schemes for women and concern for women’s lives. The narrative of conservative and patriarchal society is

28 https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Vol%201.compressed.pdf
furthered, and the political power is positioned as accountable to develop, uplift and empower the women and the society at large.

In the same report, however, the only place that the state gets mentioned as a perpetrator is where custodial violence and trafficking in camps where internally displaced women take refuge is considered as a form of violence (2015, p.152-155). However, it worth noting that here the violence is perceived more as consequential than as a strategy. Such a conception prevents the state from looking inward and strategizing and rather reforming laws and policies to protect women when the cases have happened. It then helps escape the public imagination that the state itself indeed uses the tools of patriarchy such as that of oppressing women, incarcerating them to keep them under control and then violate their bodies and sexuality in particular in order to ensure that capitalist logic of power and hegemony stay strong.

There is also the issue of the state masking the data altogether and not just in perception or analysis as mentioned above, despite being aware of the ways in which women’s bodies and lives are violated. In the efforts of such covering-up, several contradictions with the reports can be highlighted. For instance, the report 29 admits that witch-hunting is a form of violence that women face while no data is released. It offers remedy too mentioning that, “Strict and immediate action from police to prevent such forms of violence… Develop schemes for proper counselling, rehabilitation and compensation for women who have suffered” (MWCD Executive Summary 2015, p.16). However, several pieces of research have documented that witch-hunting continues to be practiced, and despite the provision of the abolition of Witchcraft Atrocities Prevention Act, Chhattisgarh, 2005, the practice continues as state earlier in this chapter. The NCRB data too only documents the witch-hunts that led to murder and hence misses all the other brutal witch-hunts.

29 https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Executive%20Summary_HLC_0.pdf
Another instance is when the same report mentions, “Lack of reliable and periodical data on VAW and girls leads to a situation of speculations and sensationalism, creates an atmosphere of fear and anxiety, and inhibits targeted policy initiatives” (MWCD, 2015, p.9) yet, the government did not release any official data on violence against women after 2016 in the country.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the social relations that govern the neoliberal-patriarchy. I assert a direct causal connection between the neoliberal-capitalist relations and the violence against women, as the punishment against their resistance to the appropriation of their bodies and labour (Mies, 2014). I also established that violence against women is not only a consequence of the processes of land dispossession but is indeed a tool to further the process of land acquisition, dispossession in particular, and the neoliberal process of capital accumulation in the hands of a few, at large.

In this chapter, I claimed that violence against women in a neoliberal era comes in many forms: as direct violence by the state, be it through industries or security forces with the intention of violation of a woman’s land rights, her autonomy over her livelihood resources, targeting her morality and sexuality or silencing the protesting women, their family and their community. Violence against women in Chhattisgarh is also prevalent in many kinds- as forgery of land acquisition, sexual harassment, rapes, gang-rapes, custodial violence, torture, encounters and murder.

Patriarchy as a structure has prevailed across different periods in India, however, what is worrying is the intensification of violence against women and the use of such violence as a tool to
propagate the neoliberal-capitalist agenda. Shiva (2014) also states that “violence against women is as old as patriarchy and traditional patriarchy has structured our world-views and mindsets, our social and cultural worlds based on domination over women, and the denial of their full humanity and right to equality. However, it has intensified and become more pervasive in the recent past…Violence against women is a necessary force to drive neoliberalism in its current context”. With that understanding, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the processes of neoliberalism create and perpetuate conditions for violence against women. Violence against women in a neoliberal-patriarchal structure is intensified as well as tactically masked. This enables the state to reproduce the polarization of men and women in society continuously.
CHAPTER 4 – CONCLUSION

The thesis reflects upon the relationship between land dispossession, dispossession of Adivasis and violence against women in particular. The thesis is built upon the following arguments:

a) Neoliberalism that began in Indian in the early 1990s was the starting of an era of rampant land acquisition and dispossession in the façade of development. The power to acquire ‘land’ for private parties in the name of public purpose already existed within the government, under the colonial and draconian Land Acquisition Act. The process of land acquisition has continued since then. The thesis explored the particular processes of land acquisition and concluded that these process are: Forced displacement of the illiterate and impoverished Adivasis who are the land owners in the mining regions, the dialectical unity of the public and the private to facilitate de-regulation and exemption from taxes and legitimization of land acquisition through laws and policies that increasingly place power in the hands of the capitalist class while at the same time, creating obstacles for justice towards the poor and indigenous class and caste.

b) The processes of land acquisition inherently include dispossession, and such unjust processes reproduce the structures of caste and class. Therefore, the populations that are dispossessed is the most oppressed class- the poor and the most oppressed caste- the Adivasis that are the targets of dispossession. Moreover, its benefits are reaped in the form of accumulation of capital by the state which comprises of the public entities, the private companies and industries and the security forces, all in collaboration with each other. Unsurprisingly, given the model of predatory accumulation by dispossession that the Indian state has embraced, Chhattisgarh had the highest large-scale investment of all states in recent times. Since the early 2000s, several districts
including Sukma, Korba, Bastar and Dantewada districts have seen an influx of transnational mining corporations. This has resulted in the displacement and dispossession and appropriation of agricultural land, the uprooting of entire villages and the displacement of thousands of Adivasi people. Security forces, private industries including Tata Steel and Essar have played a vital role in this displacement and the militarization of the region. The Adivasi bodies and livelihood are perceived as mere obstructions their livelihoods to development.

c) Neoliberalism and patriarchy are intricately connected as the processes of dispossession involve coercive means to ensure their control and hegemony. This structural inequity impacts women directly in not only dispossessing them from ownership and decision-making but also making them susceptible to practices of witch-hunting that attack her morality and legitimize her expropriation from the land and the community, at large. The gendered impact of dispossession thus ranges from lack of land ownership to lack of voice for dissent, to restricted mobility, to unsustainable means of livelihood and violence.

d) In a patriarchal society, violence against women is normalized and often legitimised. The neoliberal structures thus reproduce the oppressive practices and structures of patriarchy in order to use violence against women as an organized form of coercion to expel from the land as well as a daily form of violence to create a terrorized environment amongst the inhabitants of the land. The thesis illuminates the mechanism of capitalist neoliberalism and state while establishing that although violence against women has been a deep-rooted and historic condition of patriarchy, the intensity is much larger and much brutal in neoliberal times.
Where is the State heading?

Recent data from the Census of India 2011 that the decadal rate of growth of the population of these districts is far below that of the State and Country. In Bijapur and Dantewada, it is as low as 8.76% and 11.90% respectively as compared to 22.59% for the state. They have far higher levels of mortality because of inadequate incomes, nutrition, health services and the ongoing conflict; and Internal displacement to other states like Andhra Pradesh, or other districts of Chhattisgarh.

Another piece of data indicates an increasing death rate of the population of Chhattisgarh, a majority of whom are Adivasis. Relying on this single piece of data is not sufficient, primarily because this does not explicitly mention the Adivasis. Additionally, it considers only people who reside in the state or who are formally counted as a population of Chhattisgarh, whereas throughout the research we have seen that a large population has been displaced and hence has migrated to urban areas.

Based on the research, the rampant violence against Adivasis, the encounters, murders and violence against women, are we leading towards an Adivasi genocide in Chhattisgarh in India? I believe that this is precisely the goal of the state because then they do not face an obstruction towards their agenda of primitive accumulation of capital.

What Can be Done?

The implications of for further research could be several including scholarly analysis of some of the under-addressed issues in the thesis such as Adivasi women in the labour market and their socio-economic conditions. I will, however, focus on a particular implication for social movements and protests in India that resist violence against women.
Social movements that resist violence against women in India, I believe focus primarily on a discourse on rights and choices for women along with stricter laws of punishment for male perpetrators of violence. This does not challenge the neoliberal conceptualization of gender inequality, a process and consequence of which is brutal violence against women. This instead emphasizes the individual relationships of women and men, which is essential to challenge but not adequate. The discourse of freedom and choice seems to be yet another neoliberal narrative that places vital on individual liberty and individual action. What needs to be done is to bring in narratives of state-sponsored, and state intended violence. Social movements can be powerful places of dissent against the state’s capitalistic, neoliberal moves and that is probably evident in the fact that the state continuously tries to silence dissent. Potentially, dissent is a powerful means to question.

I believe that feminist movements must consider anti-dispossession discourse as one of their main agendas. The gender inequality inherent in land relations, process of land dispossession and state mechanisms to control these relations and processes are fundamental issues that feminist should deal with.
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ENDNOTE:

A. Crimes against Scheduled Castes and Tribes included under the Special and Local Laws (SLL) category

1) The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955
Sections 3 - 7A of the Act define the following as offences if committed on the ground of “untouchability”:

1. Prevention from entering public worship places, using sacred water resources.
2. Denial of access to any shop, public restaurant, hotel, public entertainment, cremation ground etc.
3. Refusal of admission to any hospital, dispensary, educational institutions etc.
4. Refusal to sell goods and render services.
5. Molestation, causing injury, insult etc.
6. Compelling a person on the ground of untouchability to do any scavenging or sweeping or to remove any carcass etc.

(2) The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

Whoever, not being a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe:

1. Forces a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe to drink or eat any inedible or obnoxious substance;
2. Acts with intent to cause injury, insult or annoyance to any member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe by dumping excreta, waste matter, carcasses or any other obnoxious substance in his premises or neighbourhood;
3. Forcibly removes clothes from the person of a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe or parades him naked or with painted face or body or commits any similar act which is derogatory to human dignity;
4. Wrongfully occupies or cultivates any land owned by, or allotted to, or notified by any competent authority to be allotted to, a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe or gets the land allotted to him transferred;

5. Wrongfully dispossesses a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe from his land or premises or interferes with the enjoyment of his rights over any land, premises or water;

6. Compels or entices a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe to beg or other similar forms of forced or bonded labour other than any compulsory service for public purposes imposed by Government;

7. Forces or intimidates a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe not to vote or vote for a particular candidate or to vote in a manner other than that provided by law;

8. Institutes false, malicious or vexatious suit or criminal or other proceedings against a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe;

9. Gives any false or frivolous information to any public servant and thereby causes such public servant to use his lawful power to the injury or annoyance of a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe;

10. Intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe;

11. Assaul ts or uses force to any woman belonging to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe with intent to dishonour or outrage her modesty;

12. Being in a position to dominate the will of a woman belonging to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe and uses that position to exploit her sexually to which she would not have otherwise agreed;
13. Corrupts or fouls the water of any spring, reservoir, or any other source ordinarily used by members of the Scheduled Caste or the Scheduled Tribe so as to render it less fit for the purpose for which it is ordinarily used;

14. Denies a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe any customary rite of passage to a place of public resort or obstructs such members so as to prevent him for using or having access to a place of public resort to which other members of public or any section thereof have a right to use or access to;

15. Forces or causes a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe to leave his house, village, or any other place of residence.