The Jharkhand movement has been basically a protest movement initiated by a group of people claiming to be the original inhabitants of the Chotanagpur region against the outsider dikus, the so-called 'colonisers' of the region. The main objective of the movement is to put an end to all sorts of social and economic exploitation in the region. To quote Dr Ram Dayal Minda, an eminent Jharkhandi ideologue, the aim of the movement is to "emancipate the area from the clutches of exploiters, money lenders, corrupt bureaucrats and vested interests" and for that it is absolutely necessary to secure some degree of autonomy for the region in the form of a separate state, a Union Territory or an autonomous council within the framework of the Indian Constitution. According to the leaders of the movement, an all-round development of the region is possible only by making the 'indigenous' people their own masters and by protecting and preserving their cultural identity. They describe the movement as a search for national identity and demand "the collective right of self-determination for economic, social, cultural and political identity of the indigenous tribal people" of the region. In this sense, it is a movement of self-assertion under the threat of losing one's
own identity - a desperate bid on the part of the backward people to survive in the face of ever increasing exploitation by the privileged sections of the society.

If one goes through the various memoranda submitted by the movement leaders to different authorities from time to time, a few broad categories of demands emerge out of them. Apart from the demand for a separate Jharkhand state which is common to all these memoranda, demands concerning the rights of the tribals over land and forest figure quite prominently. Restoration of lands to the tribals, protection of the forests from the unscrupulous timber merchants, prevention of the planting of quick-growing trees in place of the traditional ones with a business motive, tribals' rights over forest products are some of the major demands of the movement.

Besides, prevention of the entry of the profit making mahaJans in the region, stopping of the displacement of the tribals from their homeland owing to large scale industrialisation and corresponding urbanisation and revival of the old panchayati system of the tribals constitute some other goals of the movement.

In the cultural and educational sphere, the leaders seek constitutional recognition of the tribal languages under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and their use in providing education to the tribal masses. They demand arrangements for teaching tribal languages in schools and colleges and plead for opening separate departments in the universities to facilitate teaching and research in tribal languages. Better facilities for
the tribal students in the form of hostel accommodation and scholarships are also demanded.

Reservation of jobs for the tribals, unemployment allowance for the job-seekers, appropriate wages for the tribal labourers and proper prices for the agricultural and forestry products are some of the economic demands raised by the movement leaders in order to improve the conditions of the tribals. However, the leaders, over the last fifty years or so, have considered the formation of a separate Jharkhand state as the key to solve all other problems faced by the people in this region.

Though the leaders of the movement today contemplate a Jharkhand state comprising twenty five districts of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh they have differed, time and again, regarding the areas to be covered by the proposed state and the strategies to be adopted to achieve their goal. Moreover, the leaders of different factions have failed to arrive at a consensus regarding the degree of autonomy to be achieved. While some stick to their demand for a separate state and hold that nothing short of a state within the Indian Union will be able to satisfy them, there are others who are prepared to accept even an 'autonomous council' within Bihar, perhaps with the hope of turning it into a 'Vrihat Jharkhand Rajya' at a later stage.

The demand for a separate administrative unit in the Chotanagpur region was first raised by the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj under the leadership of Bishop Van Hoeck and Joel Lakra
in the twenties of the present century. The Samaj leaders submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission way back in 1928, asking for special privileges for the tribals of the Chotanagpur plateau. The subsequent Government of India Act, 1935 described the Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana region as 'partially excluded areas' ensuring the exclusive control of the British administration over the region.

However, the demand for a separate province for the tribals in the region was mooted for the first time by the Adivasi Mahasabha under Jaipal Singh. The Mahasabha, during its second session in 1939, demanded an exclusive tribal state completely separated from Bihar. The same demand was repeated once again by the Jharkhand Party in 1954 when the States Re-organisation Commission was formed to re-arrange the state boundaries in independent India. Curiously enough, Jaipal Singh contradicted the stand taken by the Jharkhand Party when he announced in a public meeting "we must live in Bihar, we must fight for Bihar and we must not allow any portion of Bihar to be shared by other states."

However, a memorandum, signed by thirty four Jharkhand Party MLAs of Bihar, was submitted to the Commission on the question of the 'formation of the State of Jharkhand within the Indian Union'. It claimed an area of about 63,859 square miles with a population of 1,63,67,177 to constitute the proposed state. The demand included areas falling under the districts of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas in Bihar. In fact, the movement leaders did not think of extending the boundaries of the proposed state of Jharkhand beyond the districts of South Bihar prior to the seventies.
The idea of including the adjoining districts of Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh within the 'new state of Jharkhand' was first revealed in a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1973 by the Jharkhand Party. The total area of the proposed state was stated to be 1,87,646 square k.m. (i.e. 72,457 square miles approximately) with a population of 3,05,98,991 scattered over sixteen districts of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.

In 1987 the newly formed student outfit, the All Jharkhand Students' Union in a memorandum to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi gave an ultimatum to the Central Government to concede the demand for a separate Jharkhand state within 1988. According to this memorandum, the new state was to comprise twenty one districts from four states with an area of 1,87,646 square k.m. and a population of about four crores. The rise in the number of districts from sixteen to twenty one was owing to the policy of the Bihar Government to create smaller districts out of the larger ones for administrative efficiency, though the area to be covered by the proposed state remained the same.

The same demand for carving out a 'Jharkhand state within the Union of India' was repeated by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in a memorandum to the President of India in 1989. The Morcha still stuck to its claim over the 'contiguous' districts of the three other states apart from those of Bihar. But in a major policy shift in July 1990, the JMM decided to confine the proposed state
to the geographical boundaries of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas alone. Almost following a similar line of thought, Surya Singh Besra, the Chief Secretary of the Jharkhand People's Party, expressed the desire to form a separate state comprising only the sixteen districts of tribal Bihar to start with.

Thus, while the JMM and the JPP revised their earlier stand and decided to press for carving out a separate state of Bihar only, the leaders of the Jharkhand Party, however, decided not to accept anything short of a Jharkhand state comprising twenty five districts from four states viz. Ranchi, Gumla, Tohardaga, Palamau, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Giridih, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Godda, Sahebganj, Dumka, Garhwa, Chhata and Bokaro of Bihar; Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh and Sambalpur of Orissa; Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur of West Bengal and Raigarh and Surguja of Madhya Pradesh.

Apart from these controversies regarding the size of the proposed state and the areas to be brought under it, leaders also differ regarding the future status of the region. In other words, there is hardly any unanimity of opinion among the leaders, regarding the degree of autonomy to be claimed for the Jharkhand region. While some of the leaders have stuck to the demand for a fullfledged state, some have favoured the idea of accepting a Union Territory status for the region and there are still others who are prepared to accept even an autonomous council, as recommended by the Committee on Jharkhand Matters. While the Jharkhand
Party is firm through-out in its demand for a separate statehood, Ram Dayal Munda, an eminent Jharkhandi ideologue and currently the president of the JPP, favoured the Union Territory status after considering all the options available and keeping in mind the constraints under which the governments, both at the Centre and the states, function. There is still a third group of leaders mostly from the AJSU and the JPP who are even ready to accept an autonomous council with adequate administrative and financial powers.

II

The dynamics of the Jharkhand movement are to be understood in terms of these controversies. Besides, if one goes through the evolution of the movement quite a number of distinct phases become evident. These are:

a) Phase of anti-Colonial, anti-Feudal Struggles:

The movement which, at present, looks for a tribal homeland free from exploitation, in its formative years was mostly concerned about the agricultural rights of the tribals. During the pre-independence days, the freedom-loving tribals distinguished themselves by resorting to occasional protests against the encroachers, interfering with their traditional rights. In fact, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century tribals in the Chotanagpur Plateau fought against
British expansionism and had to make a lot of sacrifices to thwart the imperialistic challenges to their rights over land and forest. The anti-colonial, anti-feudal content of the Chuar Rebellion (1798-99), Kol Ulgulan (1831-32), Santal Hool (1855) or the Birsa Munda uprising (1895-1900), to name the most famous ones, added a new dimension to these localised agrarian struggles. These occasional outbursts, which are considered to be the precursors of the Jharkhand movement of today, were 'messianic' in nature, localised and short-lived. These were generally, movements of a single tribe, centring around the traditional religious type of leadership of a messiah and could not sustain themselves for long, owing to organisational weakness.

The movement took a reformistic character in its initial years during the first quarter of the present century. Led by the Christian missionaries and guided by philanthropic ideas, various social reform organisations and student bodies took upon themselves the responsibility of educating the illiterate tribals and introducing social reforms in this backward region. Close links with the Churches and missionary zeal to enlighten the poor tribals marked the movement during this phase.

b) Phase of Participation in the Freedom Movement:

In the twenties and thirties, the tribals very often identified themselves with the non-cooperation and the civil disobedience movements sweeping the country at that time. They
put up road blocks in some places to prevent export of paddy, boycotted foreign clothes and liquor to prove once again their anti-colonial credentials. The Tana Bhagats of Ranchi adopted the path of non-violent satyagraha in the face of ruthless repression by the British. Quite interestingly, the Adivasi Mahasabha, under the charismatic leadership of Jaipal Singh, preferred to swim against the tide and stayed outside the mainstream of nationalist politics and the freedom movement. Jaipal Singh even went to the extent of supporting the British Government and helping them to recruit tribals for their army during the Second World War. However, during the Quit India movement of 1942, the tribals, especially the Tana Bhagats of Ranchi and the Kherwars of Palamau, joined the national mainstream to fight for the independence of the country as a whole. A large number of tribals courted arrest along with the people from other regions, while protesting against the colonial rule. The prospect of winning freedom from the foreign rulers in near future kept the morale of the tribals quite high during this period.

c) Phase of Constitutional Participation:

During the pre-independence days the Jharkhand movement was basically a tribal movement, with very little participation from the non-tribals. Moreover, before the emergence of the Jharkhand Party in 1949, the movement primarily centred around charismatic individuals without a proper organisation to sustain the movement. The emergence of the Jharkhand Party and its subsequent participation in the electoral politics of free India gradually transformed the individual centred movement into a party based one.
Moreover, participation in the General Elections since 1952, both at the Union and the state levels, marked the beginning of a new phase of constitutional participation in the movement. Indian independence brought with it renewed hope and rising aspirations among the deprived sections of the people. Guarantees and protections under the new Constitution gave rise to expectation for a better future for the tribals. Riding on this enthusiasm the Jharkhand Party achieved spectacular success in the first two General Elections in the South Bihar region. However, the lack of any clear-cut policy for the future and absence of any concrete plan of action to achieve the cherished goal of the movement resulted in a gradual erosion of the support-base of the movement, which was reflected in the performance of the Jharkhand Party in the subsequent elections.

d) Phase of Confusion and Factionalism:

The merger of the Jharkhand Party with the Congress in 1963, with the hope of serving the tribal interest better from within the ruling party, created a vacuum in the politics of tribal Bihar. This led to an era of confusion and factionalism in the region. Mutual bickerings among the leaders brought frustration among the rank and file and gave rise to a number of splinter groups which led to further fragmentation and weakening of the movement.

Among the newly emerging groups, the Birsa Seva Dal introduced a new trend in the politics of the Chotanagpur region by declaring socialism as its basic goal. Violent attacks on the zamindars, armed demonstrations in the streets of urban areas as well as
boycotting of elections added a new dimension to the movement.
The influence of the Naxalbari movement on the Birsa Seva Dal as well as on the Jharkhand movement in general, in the early seventies, gave a leftist orientation to the movement. Even the memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1973 by the Jharkhand party (Horo faction) declared 'socialism and secularism' as the goal of the movement.

e) Phase of Radicalism:

The movement under the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha was further radicalised as it embraced marxism as its basic ideology and pledged not only to form a separate state of Jharkhand but also to free that state from class exploitation. A large number of workers was drawn towards the movement for the first time and the Morcha took special care to develop a close relationship between the workers and the peasants in the fight against their common enemies. Agrarian radicalism found expression through the 'Dhan Katti Andolan' (forcible harvesting) in the Dhanbad and Santal Pargana regions. The JMM also led the local people in their effort to recover alienated lands from the mahajans and the zamindars.

This radical posture of the movement continued even under the banner of the All Jharkhand Students' Union. The student body not only injected fresh blood into the movement but also kept the Central Government under constant pressure to concede their demand for a separate state. The AJSU's call for the boycott of elections, resorting to violence during the Jharkhand Bandhs and
economic blockades in the region, introduced a new phase of militancy in the movement. This militancy was, however, short-lived as the AJSU soon reversed its earlier stand and decided to take part in the electoral politics once again during the Assembly Elections of Bihar in 1990.

f) **Phase of Elitist Domination**

A distinct urban and elitist trend marked the Jharkhand movement even during its initial stages. The Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj was dominated by educated Christians mostly with an urban background. The Samaj had very little connection with the rural and people was mostly concerned with the problems faced by the educated tribal youth. This particular deficiency in the ranks of the Unnati Samaj was partially responsible for the emergence of the Kisan Sabha, which appeared with the avowed objective of promoting and safeguarding the interests of the exploited peasants. Inspite of its good intentions, the Kisan Sabha, however, could not do much to improve the conditions of the kisans. Later, the Adivasi Mahasabha tried to go beyond Ranchi to reach the rural masses, but the elitist background of the leaders like Jaipal Singh and others stood in its way. When the Jharkhand Party came into being by the middle of this century, the movement was still marked by an urban orientation in its planning and programmes with very little concern for the agrarian problems.
Agrarian issues figured prominently in the movement during the late sixties, when the Birsa Seva Dal as well as the Sivaji Samaj took up the challenge to fight for the poor peasants against the exploiting landlords. Agrarian reforms continued in a much bigger way under the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, which took special interest in restoring lands to the tribals, introduced collective farming and even resorted to forcible harvesting. During this phase of the movement, the leaders were able to mobilise a large number of peasants, both tribal and non-tribal, in support of the agrarian programmes and the movement touched even remote villages shedding for a while its exclusively urban character.

Of late, the movement has again gone back to the control of the urban, educated middle class. Opening of the Tribal and Regional Languages Department in the Ranchi University as well as the emergence of the All Jharkhand Students' Union has once again made Ranchi the nerve centre of the movement. Though this has ensured the participation of some intellectuals and educated youth in the movement it has put the rural people in the background. Land is no longer a major issue of the movement. Agrarian and forest based struggles have become things of the past. Today issues mostly arise out of the urban middle class aspirations and sentiments.

But surprisingly enough, despite an urban orientation in the thinking and activities of the movement and inspite of the fact that the Chotanagpur region has the distinction of being
the most industrialised part of Bihar, lack of any significant participation of the working class marks the movement since its very beginning. Moreover, the quantitative expansion of the movement, extending its membership to the non-tribals, as well, has resulted in what A.L. Raj describes as a 'qualitative dilution' of the movement. Most of the new entrants do not represent the working class or the peasantry, rather they belong to the elite section and other opportunistic elements of the society. A good number of landlords, moneylenders and contractors have not only infiltrated the movement but have also occupied important executive positions in different Jharkhandi outfits. Infiltration of landed interest in the movement came to light when the Jharkhand Party leaders opposed the land-ceiling measures adopted by the West Bengal government on the ground that no such restriction was imposed on urban property. The rise of sectional interests within the movement has not only sown the seeds of division among the followers but has also taken the movement away from the path of establishing an exploitation-free state.

g) Phase of Transition from Ethnicity to Regionalism:

However, the Jharkhand movement which began with a tribal character during the early years of the present century and remained largely an ethnic movement even during the sixties, began to secularise itself in the mid-seventies when it started projecting some non-tribal leaders at the forefront of the movement. Even the definition of the term 'Jharkhandi' was widened to include both the
tribals and the non-tribals. In fact, according to this liberal
definition, any one who resides today in the Jharkhand region,
observeres local festivals, shares tribal culture, worships tribal
deities and takes pride in the martyrdom of the local heroes,
irrespective of his language, religion, caste or sect, is consid-
dered to be a 'Jharkhandi'. In a declaration the Jharkhand
Coordination Committee clearly stated that "the Jharkhand movement
is the movement for the emancipation of all the sons of the
soil, both the tribes, the Sadans and others who share a common
history and cultural heritage and practise a common value system
of Jharkhand". The JCC even went to the extent of warning that
"any attempt to divide (the Jharkhandis) in terms of tribes, Sadans,
Christians, Hindus, Sarnaite or Musalmans will be firmly resisted".

Thus, the Jharkhand movement has transformed itself primarily
from a struggle of the tribal masses to preserve, strengthen and
assert their distinct ethnic culture, identity, values, history and
independence into a movement for the development of the tribals and
the non-tribals alike, living in the region. In the process, the
initial ethnic character of the movement has given way to a regional
one with a much broader base.

Perhaps this broadening of the base is owing to a realisation,
on the part of the leadership, of the need for accepting the non-
tribals to make the movement more viable. The fact that the tribals
constitute a minority in most of the districts and their experience
regarding the intricacies of electoral politics, have led the
Jharkhand leaders to become much more pragmatic in their approach.
Even if such liberalisation is prompted by some strategic considerations, one cannot, however, take away from the leaders the credit of secularising a movement which started on a narrow ethnic line.

**Finally,** it must be admitted to the credit of the movement leaders that separatism, in this part of our land, has not so far degenerated into secessionism. Barring the case of sending a five member delegation, representing different tribes of India, to the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations at Geneva in August 1987, the leaders of the Jharkhand movement have more or less confined their activities within the boundaries of the Indian Union. They demand nothing more than a separate state within India in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Constitution.

Perhaps the locational disadvantage of the Jharkhand region, situated in the middle of the land, far away from the international borders, has worked as a deterrent in the minds of the Jharkhand leaders to dream of a sovereign Jharkhand State. The fact remains, however, that unlike the Naga, Mizos, Kashmiris or the Sikhs the Jharkhandis are not posing any direct threat to India’s unity.

**III**

The Jharkhand movement during the past decade or so has come out of quite a number of its initial weaknesses. It has broadened its base to become more regional in character than ethnic. The
tribal - non-tribal rift, the Christian - non-Christian schism or the urban - rural divide among the followers has been reduced considerably over the years. But factionalism, personality clashes among the leaders etc. are some of the perennial problems faced by the movement. The weaknesses can be broadly identified as follows:

a) Factionalism:

One often comes across more than one Jharkhandi candidate contesting from a single constituency during the elections. All the major Jharkhandi parties have two or more factions. Disagreements among the leaders regarding issues like participation in the elections, choice of candidates, attitude towards the Congress party or acceptance of an autonomous council in place of a full-fledged state, often come into the open to create confusion among the followers. Perhaps the lack of any genuine ideological bond to hold the factions together and the absence of any concrete programme regarding the future course of action, allow petty personal matters to take precedence over the collective interest.

Besides, frequent shifting of stands by the leaders, mostly on opportunistic lines, not only confuses the followers but also leads to further fragmentation of the movement. Thus the Jharkhand Party was divided between the Horo faction and the Sumbrai faction, with the Hul Jharkhand Party representing a third faction. The party was again fragmented between Horo and Hansda factions when Naren Hansda was suspended for aligning with the Congress during the 1981 elections in West Bengal. Similarly, the Jharkhand Mukt Morcha was divided between the JMM (Soren) and JMM (Binod) in 1980 on the issue of joining hands with the Congress during elections.
The party faced another split in 1991 on the issue of its attitude towards the Janata Dal government in Bihar. The story was repeated once again in 1992 when a faction led by Krishna Mardi M.P. opposed the pro-Congress line pursued by the leadership of the JMM and decided to stay within the National Front and support the Janata Dal government in Bihar. Even the All Jharkhand Students' Union, still in its infancy, was divided between the Prabhakar Tirkey group and the Deo Sharan Bhagat group in 1992. The efforts of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee and that of the United Jharkhand Party to bring a semblance of unity to the faction-ridden movement did not meet with success as internal squabbles, mostly arising out of personal ambitions of the tribal elites continued.

b) Ideological Confusion:

The Jharkhand movement in fact, suffers from an extreme ideological confusion. While some of its leaders subscribe to the Gandhian path of non-violence, there are others who favour militant struggle to achieve their goal. Though some of the leaders advocate the marxist brand of socialism and pledge to establish a 'lalkhand' (red state) free from exploitation, the movement has moved a long way from the path of class struggle. Even some landlords and money-lenders have infiltrated the movement changing its overall character.

Interestingly, while the leaders in Bihar go with the leftists on various issues and support jointly the ruling Janata Dal government there, in the neighbouring West Bengal, the protagonists of the Jharkhand movement find the Congress as their natural ally. Inspite of the claims by the Birsa Seva Dal, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha or the Jharkhand Kranti Dal to be marxists, declaring socialism as their
goal, the pro-Congress bias of the Jharkhandi communities was quite evident ever since the days of Indian independence. To quote K.S. Singh, "the Hinduised Bhagats, Sapha Hors among the Santals, thread-wearing Santals in Hazaribagh and Tana Bhagats among the Oraons have always been pro-Congress". Besides, some of the minor tribes like the paharias, the Asurs of Ranchi and the Kherwars of Palamau "have generally voted for the Congress" in the elections. Even the Catholic Christians normally supported the Congress candidates in the electoral fray as part of their global strategy against Communism. So the merger of the Jharkhand Party with the Congress in 1963 was only a logical outcome of the closeness of the two political parties. Apart from entering into electoral alliances with the Congress, the JMM had no hesitation joining hands with the Bharatiya Janata Party after its spectacular success in the South Bihar region during the Assembly Elections of February 1990. The idea was to win over the non-tribals who, by now, were in a majority in the region and to that end no ideological inhibition stood in the way.

Even those leaders who profess to believe in socialism are not very clear about what they actually mean by that. Their idea about Communism also varies from person to person. Such confusion and vacillation among the leaders only point towards their lack of seriousness in adopting a particular ideology to achieve their goal. Their approach can at best be described as opportunistic and selfish. Most of the leaders are anxious to get into power, but with little concern to get to the roots of the problems faced by the people in the region and to offer a permanent solution to the problems.
c) **Lack of Homogeneity:**

The Jharkhand region in reality, lacks a homogeneous culture. Though the people living in this region are generally categorised as tribals, they hardly constitute a homogeneous lot in terms of their background history, language, religious rites or overall cultural patterns. These people actually owe their origin to three different racial stocks viz. Proto - Austro-loid, Mediterranean and Nordic. While the Santals, Mundas, Hos, Kharias, Bhumijes, Birhors etc. belong to the Proto - Austroloid group, the Oraons, Maltos, Kisans, Dhangiris and some others fall under the category of Mediterranean stock and the Nordics include the Magpuris, Kurmis, Tamadias, Domalis etc. All these categories have their own distinct cultural traits. Moreover, these tribal communities hardly get an opportunity to interact freely among themselves to develop common cultural patterns as they are scattered over four different states. The leaders of the Jharkhand movement allege that the Jharkhandis have been artificially and deliberately divided by the British in order to weaken the process of nationality formation among the tribes of the region. Such divisions have in fact, given rise to the problem of finding a common language and script for the tribal communities which are absolutely necessary for generating a 'we feeling' among the tribesmen. Thus, the existence of a mixed population, comprising both tribals and non-tribals, in the region nullifies the theory of a distinct cultural identity of the people of Jharkhand.
d) **Lack of Common Language and Script**

The reason cited by the States Reorganisation Commission, while rejecting the demand for a separate Jharkhand state, was lack of viability of the area as a linguistic unit. In fact, different tribal communities of the region speak in different languages like Santali, Mundari, Ho, Oraon, Malpahari, Nagpuria, Kurukh, Kurmali etc. Some of the tribes have even adopted the dominant language of a particular region for practical reasons. Thus, the Mundas and some of the Santals have gradually made Bengali their own language.

Besides, though the tribals have their own languages, none of these languages, however, has a common script for the people spread over a number of states. The literate Santals, for instance, express themselves through the Bengali script in West Bengal; use the Devnagri script in Bihar and in Orissa they take recourse to the Oriya script for writing in their mother tongue. Since the Roman script is found to be phonetically inadequate, efforts are on to develop the 'Ol-Chiki' script, invented by Pandit Raghunath Murmu, to serve as the common script for the Santals in general.

Thus, while the absence of a common language for all the tribal communities stands in the way of developing inter-tribal unity and weakens the case for a separate state of Jharkhand, the lack of a common script for the tribal languages leads to an intra-tribal division. Tribals not only face difficulties in learning something new with the help of an alien script, even their own literature becomes unintelligible for those who though belong to the same community, live in an adjoining state.
However, the protagonists of the Jharkhand movement project 'Sadani' (the mother tongue of the Sadans — the non-tribals) or 'Sadri' (the language of Sadar or the official language) as the Lingua Franca of the cherished Jharkhand state. It is argued that Sadani has been accepted by various tribal groups either as their mother tongue or as their second language. Hence it has the potentiality of becoming the link language of Jharkhand.

In a memorandum to the President of India in December, 1987, the Jharkhand Coordination Committee declared: "In the Jharkhand region, everyone understands Hindi and till the time 'our' language develops we can use Hindi as the link language." Hindi was thus given the status of a link language for the first time in the history of the movement. This recognition of Hindi was purely from a practical standpoint, in sheer desperation to counter the criticisms regarding the viability of a separate state. However, the granting of such a temporary status to Hindi by the movement leaders themselves amounts to an indirect admission of one of the vital deficiencies of the movement even today.

e) Ethnic Division:

The Jharkhand movement was never marked by a monolithic unity. Tribal — non-tribal rivalry, inter-tribal schism as well as intra-tribal divide were some of its major features even during the initial years of the movement.
A steady influx of diku migrants into the region was a constant source of anxiety to the local tribals even during the middle of the nineteenth century. Tribals were not only worried about losing their ancestral land but were also apprehensive of becoming minorities in their own land. Gradually the term diku, which normally meant the outsiders got an additional dimension, referring to the outsider exploiters.\(^{48}\) Apart from the hatred resulting out of the demographic imbalance caused by migration, the British rulers consciously and intentionally described the Sadans as 'unwarranted intruders'\(^{49}\) to create an ill-feeling among the adivasis and the Sadans.

The movement in the early decades of the present century had a distinct pro-tribal bias. Both the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj and the Adivasi Mahasabha made their appearances as all-tribal platforms. The pan-tribal sentiment spread by these organisations and their demand for a separate tribal province made the 'adivasi non-tribals' (living since long in the region) apprehensive of their future status and created a fear psychosis among them. Though the Adivasi Mahasabha did allow the non-tribals to take part in its activities, it was not before 1949 that the non-tribals were recognised officially, as part and parcel of the movement. It was under the initiative of Jaipal Singh that the membership of the Jharkhand Party was extended to the non-tribals. But it took some twenty years more for the movement to project some non-tribal leaders under the JMM. It is true that the movement leaders have broadened the definition of Jharkhandi to include the
non-tribals also, but the emergence of organisations like the Sadavasi Sadan Sangh, the Yuva Sadavasi Sadan Sangh or the Sadavasi Sadan Chhatra Sangh amply proves that the Sadans are yet to identify themselves with a wider Jharkhandi identity and still feel the need for organisations of their own to fight against discrimination and injustice meted out to them.

Besides, though broadly referred to as tribals, different tribal communities like the Santals, Mundas, Oraons, Hos etc. differ among themselves on genetic, linguistic, religious and other considerations. Their customs and rituals are different, they have their own unique historical experiences too. This is not to suggest that these tribal communities have nothing in common or differ on every aspect of their day to day life. Rather it is to re-emphasise the lack of homogeneity among the tribal groups which partially explains the lack of success of the Jharkhand movement till today.

The anti-colonial movements in the Jharkhand region during the nineteenth century were mostly confined to a particular region and were spearheaded by a particular community in which people from other tribal communities with similar grievances hardly took part. Thus the Santal Hool, Birsa Munda Uprising or the Tana Bhagat Movement, for instance, were mainly confined to the Santals, Mundas and the Oraons respectively.

Even during the initial years of the movement in the present century, since most of the activists belonged either to the Munda
or the Oraon Community, the Santals kept themselves away from the movement for quite some time. Efforts of the Chotanagpur Umnati Samaj and those of the Adivasi Mahasabha to bring all the tribal communities under one umbrella were not much of a help. Interestingly, when the movement entered a phase of constitutional participation and quite a number of political parties made their appearances to represent the Jharkhandi interest in the electoral fray, they could not shed their ethnic identity. The much needed 'we feeling' among the different tribal communities was still missing. While the Jharkhand Party was backed mostly by the Mundas and Oraons, the All India Jharkhand Party drew its support from the Hos and Mundas. Likewise, the Hul Jharkhand Party and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha were dominated by the Santals. In fact, it is said that the Hul Jharkhand Party emerged as an expression of Santal grievances against the Munda and Oraon domination of the movement.

Moreover, today, none of the tribal communities has a predominant position over the entire Jharkhand region. The Santals, Mundas, Oraons—all have their own pockets of influence but they can hardly represent the entire area to be included in the proposed state. Thus while the Santals dominate the Santal Parganas and the adjoining areas, the Mundas and Oraons constitute a majority in and around Ranchi and the Hos come from the Singbhum region. Until and unless a regional Jharkhandi identity takes precedence over the ethnic identity of the tribals it is difficult to project them as a unified people ready to work unitedly for their own advancement.
The movement got further weakened on account of an intra-tribal division on religious lines. Educated Christians were in the forefront of the movement ever since its beginning. In fact, the Christian missionaries were the first to think in terms of organising the backward tribals for introducing socio-economic reforms. Naturally, the Christian tribals, despite being less in number in the Jharkhand region, were not only educated but also had better access to some social privileges like getting jobs or enjoying other social benefits. This made the majority of the tribals, who believed in Hinduism or some other tribal religion, unhappy. They alleged that the tribal Christians not only looked down upon the tribals from other religious faiths, but they also considered themselves Christians first and tribals later.53

Apart from the Christian - non-Christian or the convert-non-convert divide, inter-denominational rivalry among the Anglican, Lutheran and Catholic Christians made the situation further complicated. Inspite of the efforts by the Chotanagpur Charitable Association and the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj to bring the Christians and the non-Christians closer, their efforts failed when two new splinter groups viz. the Catholic Sabha and the Kisan Sabha made their appearances soon. Even the Adim Jati Seva Mandal was organised to counter the Christian missionary influence on the tribals and it gradually became identified with the Hindus.54

The gulf between the Christians and the Hindus was further widened with the emergence of Kartick Craon, a Hindu version of
Jaipal Singh, who strongly pleaded for the discontinuation of the special privileges enjoyed by the Christian tribals under the Constitution of India. He was successful in persuading the Central Government to amend the Constitution disqualifying the converted tribals to enjoy the benefits of reservation. Oraon even succeeded in diverting the money meant for the privileged Christian tribals to the welfare of the deprived non-Christians, by appealing to the A.K. Chanda Committee, which visited Ranchi in late 1968.

f) Minority:

The most significant weakness of the Jharkhand movement, however, arises out of the fact that the tribals, taking all the communities like the Santals, Mendas, Hos, Oraons etc. together, do not constitute a majority even in the Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana regions. They account for only around 25.7% of the population in the sixteen districts of South Bihar. Population figures of the districts, claimed to be part of the proposed state, show that with the exceptions of Ranchi (56.41%) in Bihar, Sundargarh (51.26%) and Mayurbhanj (57.67%) in Orissa and Surguja (54.81%) in Madhya Pradesh no other district has a tribal majority. So far as the districts of West Bengal are concerned, tribals do not account for even 20% of the population in any of the three districts of the state.

Naturally, the leaders of the movement had to think of liberalising the definition of the term 'Jharkhandi' for strategic reasons. Thus, the Sadans got the recognition of
Jharkhandi to make the movement for a separate state more viable. But the fact remains that while there are some non-tribal supporters of the Jharkhand movement, conversely, not all the tribals favour the idea of a separate Jharkhand state. That is why one very often comes across incidents of direct confrontation between the pro-Jharkhand tribals and their pro-CPI(M) tribal brethren in West Bengal. Similarly, the tribal followers of the Janata Dal in Bihar do not see eye to eye with those tribals who plan to carve out a separate state of Jharkhand. The point becomes clearer if one goes through the electoral results of the Jharkhandi candidates in different elections. The number of tribals living in a particular constituency never tally with the number of votes polled by a Jharkhandi candidate there.

Recently, there has been a perceptible change in the attitude of the leaders of the movement regarding the practicability of the proposed state. The JMM at a joint meeting with the BJP held in Patna on July 18, 1990, decided to confine the Jharkhand state to the geographical boundaries of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas alone. Sibu Soren, the JMM President, has conceded in an interview that the party organisation outside Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas in Bihar is not very strong. Almost in the same vein Surya Singh Besra, the Chief Secretary of the Jharkhand People's Party has expressed the desire to form a separate state comprising sixteen districts of tribal Bihar to start with. This revised demand sounds more realistic especially when one takes into account factors like the percentage of tribal population and the electoral performance of the Jharkhandi candidates in all the twenty five districts from four states.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Presidential address by Pam Dayal Munda at the two-day conference of the Jharkhand Coordination Committee at Ranchi on July 7 and 8, 1990 as quoted in *The Statesman* (Calcutta), July 9, 1990.


3.a) Jharkhand Alag Prant Sanjukt Morcha, Memorandum to the Central Government, submitted on September 25, 1978.
   b) Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Memorandum to the Chief Minister of Bihar, submitted on September 22, 1979.
   c) Jharkhand Coordination Committee, Memorandum to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, submitted on January 31, 1989.
   d) Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Memorandum to the President of India, submitted on August 11, 1989.

4. JCC Memorandum to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, submitted on January 31, 1989.


8. Memorandum submitted to the States Re-organisation Commission on April 22, 1954 by thirty four Members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, all belonging to the Jharkhand Party.


11. All Jharkhand Students' Union, Memorandum to the Prime Minister, submitted on February 4, 1987.

12. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Memorandum to the President of India, submitted on August 11, 1989.


15. COJM report, as mentioned in The Statesman (Calcutta), March 31, 1992.


17. As reported in The Statesman (Calcutta), May 7, 1993.

18. Movements of a single tribe under the traditional religious type of leadership of a messianic leader as discussed in Fuchs Stephen, Rebellious Prophets: A Study of Messianic Movements in Indian Religions, Bombay, 1965.


25. Ibid., p 54.
35. Ibid., p 1111.

37. Tana Bhagats for instance, who are now concentrated around the police station Bishunpur of Ranchi believe in the Gandhian principle of non-violence since the days of the Non-cooperation movement.


40. Ibid., p 24.

41. Ibid., p 22.

42. As discussed by Chakraborty Satyabrata, op. cit., p 187.


47. JCC Memorandum to the President of India, submitted in December, 1987.


55. Ibid., p 184. See also Singh A.K., op. cit., p 23.
59. Biswas Kanti, Tapshili Jati - Upajati Samasya O Bamfront Sarkarer Karmatatratra (in Bengali), CPI(M), West Bengal State Committee, 1989, p 11. Tribals constitute 18.79% in Purulia, 10.55% in Bankura and 7.99% in Midnapur districts according to the 1981 census figures.