

COMMENT

‘OPERATION MINERAL HUNT’

Anti-Naxal operation, has been in operation in the state of Jharkhand since March 2010. And it has created tremendous uncertainty, brought threat to life and seized the freedom of the villagers, mostly the Adivasis in different parts of the state. The Adivasis who live in or around the forests and depend on it for their livelihoods are not allowed to enter/roam in the forests any more by the security forces, the water resources are captured by them, the villagers are unnecessarily harassed, children are denied their right to education as the schools have been transformed into military camps and women are also misbehaved by the security forces.

People have been told for several years that the Palamu region of Jharkhand is the most Maoists infested area. Presently, Simdega district comes under the same category but everybody is surprised to know about the anti-Naxal operation, which was first launched in the Kolhan region, where most of the MoUs were signed with the corporate houses for establishment of the mining industries, the power projects and the steel plants. It is very clear that the anti-Naxal operations are being carried out in those districts (East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Khunti, Gumla, Bokaro, Giridih, Chatra, Latehar, Ramgarh and Hazaribagh) where the villagers are opposing the proposed projects for steel plants, mining industries, Power projects, Dams and sponge iron factories.

Ironically, the government of India has launched another operation on March 17th in the same areas where the anti-Naxal operations are being operated, which can be called an ‘Operation Mineral Hunt’. According to the latest report, the choppers are engaged for conducting an aerial survey to find out the existence of minerals in Chhotanagpur region. Both the operations are being carried out simultaneously in these areas by the government of India. Therefore, people have every reason to believe that the so-called ‘operation green hunt’ or anti-Naxal operation is to get the Adivasis’ and other local settlers’ lands clear for the Corporate Houses rather than cleansing the Maoists from the areas. It seems that the state is essentially battling for the corporate houses in the name of combating the Maoists and instead of creating peace the government is creating insecurity in the state to displace the tribals.

The demands of the tribals are simple. They urge the union government to ensure the livelihoods to the villagers and their remaining resources should not be taken away, they demand MoUs signed with the Corporate Houses since 2000 till the date must be withdrawn, the people whose lands had been taken away for the development projects must be rehabilitated in proper manner and in case of signing a new MoU; the traditional Gram Sabhas must be made a party to it.

The existing land laws must be enforced strongly, address all kinds of land related problems and the Adivasis must be returned their snatched land.

The agro-forest based development process should be enhanced in the state with the complete involvement of the villagers rather than pushing the corporate model of development in the state. No that is not happening. Blaming it on the

maoists for all the evils under the sun cannot hide the real design of the
Government of India. □□□
[contributed]