

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding aborigines of Santhal pargana region in Jharkhand-laid.

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY (GODDA): I refer to the matter raised under Rule 377 regarding inclusion of Khetauri, Ghatwal-Ghatwar and others as Scheduled Tribes in Parliament and received a reply from Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Affairs. But, amidst all this, no development has taken place in this regard so far.

I want to place a piece of great historical record – a book titled: “The Little World of an Indian District Officer”, written by R. Carstairs and published by Macmillan & Co., London in 1912. In this book there is a detailed, historical record of the fact that the Santhal Pargana was created and named in 1855, and thus was the youngest of the Bengal districts. The writer provides a wonderful account and description of the Ghatwals (guardians of the passes) and the Khetowrie (Khetauri) and how at the time of the Permanent settlement in 1790, every part of the territory was occupied. It says that at the time of the Permanent Settlement there was NOT a single Sonthal in the whole of this area. “Bhunyas, Khetowries, Hindoos, Mahomedans, Highlanders – yes, but Sonthals, no”.

It is a fact that when these findings were recorded and when the book in question was published, the concept of Scheduled Castes and Tribes did not exist in the context of what it means administratively today.

Thus, the aborigines of the region are the ones who have been deprived of their rightful status and claim to be recognized as Scheduled Tribes.

