

Dayamani Barla  
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Jharkhand, India

**I We need food, not steel!**

**We need development of our land, not factories!!**

Tribal and indigenous people are self sufficient in producing food grains for their livelihood. Anything that grows on land is the social, cultural and economic backbone of the local people. ArcelorMittal wants to set up a steel plant in Khoonti and Gumla by demolishing dozens of villages. Villagers have raised the slogan "We will neither loose our lives nor will give a single inch of land". As per officials from Torpa, Kamdara, Raniya and Karra, ArcelorMittal has identified the following villages:

Karra subdivision- Dist. Khunti

Jamhar  
Hudma Toli  
Bhusoor  
Urikel  
Rahedgadha  
Churle  
Bikwadag  
Jojodag  
Bakaspur  
Lappa  
Regre

Torpa subdivision-Dist. Khunti

Kulda  
Kanakloya  
Aama  
Chukru  
Urmi  
Satal  
Karoda  
Marcha  
Turigadha  
Urikel  
Banabira  
Jimlong  
Kherkai  
Raikera

Rania-subdivision-Dist. Khunti

Digri  
Loagadha  
Manhatu  
Garai  
Token  
Kulai  
Khatanga

Kamdara subdivision-Dist. Gumla  
Kisni  
Bongda  
Sarita  
Titih  
Pakra  
Bamhandi  
Turundu  
Poje  
Kondkera  
Kuda  
Suruhi  
Kitapidi  
Pakut  
Pokla  
Sonmer  
Chatakpur  
Ramtoliya  
Kenaloya  
Bamhadi

Mittal's Company needs 12000-hectares of land. The company is installing a plant of 12 million ton capacity. It will also establish a 2500 MW power plant and a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The rivers in this area are Koyal, Karo, Chhata and many small water resources. The Company has been allotted 500 acres and 1086 acres of land in Kapmapda for Iron Ore. The Koyal belt has also been handed over for coal. The Company is investing capital in major areas which itself speaks of the devastation that will be caused to people, rivers and forests:

1. Koyla block- area of forestland to be acquired is undeclared.
2. Iron Ore- 1586 acre of land is already allotted, rest in waiting.
3. Construction of canals and dams- undeclared.
4. For plant- 12000-hectare land is needed, but as per MOU, company needs 25000 acres of land.
5. Land required for railway line.
6. Land required for urbanization.
7. Land required for associated factories.

The local people are raising questions about the displacement of hundreds and thousands of people, whereas the company is denying this. The Hindi daily Hindustan's August 22, 2008 issue says that the company's CEO Vijay Bhatnagar claims the Jharkhand plant is the world's largest plant. He said that "our plant would be as large as HEC, Bokaro, Tata and Rourkela combined." He has said that this will be a model plant. We have vowed that we will not hand over even an inch of our ancestral land to the company. We have raised the slogan- neither we give lives, nor land. We need food, not steel. We need development of our land, not factories.

## **II Whom is this government trying to fool: Local people or the Company?**

Jharkhand Government is selling out the community resources of 10 villages in Kamdara sub divisions of district Gumla having 1025 acres of land. This is a clear repression of tribal indigenous people of this area. The CNT law is applicable here, which means that all the land in these villages is a community property. This is stated in Khatiyani part two. But the

government is unanimously identifying this land as the government property for selling it to Mittal. This is a violation of Chhotanagpur Kashtkari law. All these plots vary in size, some are 5-20 decimel and are situated apart having water resources and mountains. The Government is asking for an amount of Rs. 15,48,71,550.00 for this land. It is evident that government has the responsibility to protect these lands in the interest of the villagers who have natural control over it. Since people are opposed to selling land to Mittal, the administration is selling off community resources like roads, rivers and culverts. For example, a village has a total land area of 1740.80 acres out of which 111.05 acre is being identified for sale. This is the height of repression! When the government officials were asked whether it is possible to set up industries on this land, they denied. So the question arises, whom is this government trying to fool: Local people or the company? The people inhabit the land that the government has declared its own. Farmers plough over it and it is used for grazing. This land has been awarded during Bhoodan (land redistribution campaign) to marginalised peasants and they have valid certificates for this. They are also paying taxes. Kamdara officials were asked as to who has prepared the list of plots being sold out to Mittal? They answered that the company itself has provided this. It is to be noted that the last land survey was done in 1932! At that time, most of the land was uninhabited. It is clear that the population has risen in the last 77 years and these people have only inhabited the villages which were once uninhabited. The most striking feature is the unaccountability of the state administration. They are playing in the hands of the company officials. If this had not been so, it would have first verified the list provided by the company. This proves that both are ready to evict the villagers out of their heritage. The government is working as the company's agent. The district administration, on the one hand, arranges Gram Sabha meetings on 16th of every month in Gumla district; but at the same time is involved in repression of the people. If ArcelorMittal has any morals, it must rethink on the repression of the people. The government is trying to pave the way for company's entry into the villages, which is the height of inhumanity. The plots identified lie in between the homes of peasants. Obviously, they will not give their land, then how will the company set up plant on these plots? In order to bring justice to the tribal indigenous people it is imperative to understand the geographical, economic, social, cultural conditions of these villages. The 10 villages identified for land transfer have a total land area of 12000 acres among which farmland is 10032.50 acres, forestland 1005.87 acres and irrigated land is 433.80 acres. The land identified for setting up industry in Kamdara is not less than 20-25 acre. The Mittal Company facing the wrath of world economic recession is now ready to cut down the project size. It is talking of 6MT production in the first phase whereas it was decided to produce 12MT earlier. People are aware of the cunningness of the company officials. The tribal-indigenous people have decided not to hand over 16 even a single inch of land to the company.

### **Our demands**

1. Respect the rights of Gram Sabha (village general body). Stop the land sale to Mittal.
2. Assure the rights given in Section 46 of Chhotanagpur Kashtkari Law 1908.
3. We will not hand over even a single inch of land to the company.
4. Stop displacement of tribal indigenous people.
5. Assure the water of Koyal, Karo and Chhhata rivers for irrigation.
6. Mittal or any company will not be tolerated as the proprietor of the village

**III Mittal Says : we are doing CSR in this area since last four years, so no point in going away...**

**.....But Outsiders are not allowed into the village without prior permission of Gram Sabha.**

It is a historical fact that our ancestors possessed this land after fighting fierce pythons and

bears, so why should we leave this land? Mittal is trying to grab the peasant's land by hook or by crook. He is trying to lure villagers by educational, health, employment, ITI training, nursing facilities. It is also involved in free plantations. All this is being done to grab land from the farmers. But people have halted all these programs in the area. People have banned the entry of any person opposed to the movement. They have installed a board on the entry points of all villages which says "Outsiders are not allowed into the village without prior permission of the Gram Sabha." Company officials are trying to convince people by taking the services of some touts. They are intimidating people from the movements, providing them liquor etc. They are trying to lure away the youth and taking them to training programs run by the company. The plantation work being done by the Mittal Company is ridiculous. This area is agriculturally sound having dozens of forests spread in thousands acres of land. These have many fruit bearing trees and herbs. This flora-fauna has helped in balancing the ecosystem of this area. Mittal's claim of doing plantation in the area is ridiculous. He is just devastating this land of the rich heritage. They have done plantations in two schools of Kamdara of trees namely Siris, Mango, Ashok etc. and some herbs. It has been done in DAV School premises of Jamhar, Karra districts. These plants are useless in nature. Even goats do not consume these plants. All these plants bear a company board. Our organization has asked for clarification from the school management whether they support the company or the people.

The company has given contract to Ranchi Trust for distribution of medicines in this area. When the people came to know about this, they stopped the entry of trust officials in the villages. Once the Trust vehicle was seen on the Torpa road entering Kamdara, people stopped the vehicle and asked whether they have taken permission for entry. They denied, after which a bond was executed and signed by them stating that they will not repeat this without prior permission. When the vehicle number was asked, they said that this vehicle is without a number. Now it is not possible for any trust vehicle to enter into the village. Hindi daily Prabhat Khabar had published a story regarding a school run by Mittal Company in Marcha of Torpa district. This school was run in the house of Kishun Sahoo. When our organization inquired Sahoo, he refused it. It was found that the school was being run behind closed doors and whenever anyone visits the place, the guard says that there is no one inside. If the company is running a school, why is it behind closed doors? The same question arises regarding the trust's vehicle, which does not bear any number, which is illegal. It may be possible that the company must have been sending some anti-social elements in these vehicles to intimidate the villagers. Our organization demands a high level inquiry into these acts as all the CSR works claimed by the company are suspicious and dubious..

Mittal is providing security training through an NGO to 50 girls under CSR. The company has conspired to destroy the state's youth by these acts. These youngsters belong to standard 8th to 10th pass. The question arises as to what kind of employment will be given to these youngsters? Obviously, these all are done just to misguide the young population. People are aware that company is paying salaries to some people, who are working to weaken the protest against Mittal. It is boosting anti-social elements in the society. It has crossed all human norms in destroying the lives of tribal and farmers.

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