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Jharkhand: An Introduction

Enriched with Natural Resources, Forests and Rivers Jharkhand was declared the 28th state of India on 15th November 2000. The state neighbours Bihar in North, Orissa in South, West Bengal in East and Chhatishgarh in West. Earlier Jharkhand was in the southern part of Bihar and was known as South Bihar.

The state enjoys the mansoon climate and lies between 21058'10" to 25018' North and 83019'50" to 87057' East. The state covers a length of 463 kms from East to West and a width of 380 kms from North to South, a total area of 79714 km2 i.e approximately 46.6% of Undivided Bihar and 2.34% of India. The state posseses 13th position for area whereas 15th position for population of 3,29,66,238 (census 2011) i.e 2.72% of total population of the country. The sex ratio is 947 woman (48.48%) by 1000 man (51.52%) and the literacy rate is 67.63%.

The state has a sound population of Schedule Tribes and Scheduled Castes, 26.3 % and 12% respectively; and the tribal/ regional languages they use are Khortha, Nagpuri, Panchparganiya, Mundari, Kurmali, Santhali, Ho, Khadia and Kudukh. The State language Hindi is broadly used for communication in common as well as official works whereas Urdu is the state's second language.

Administrative works are being controlled from the capital Ranchi which looks after the system of total 24 districts of the state, are:

1. Ranchi
2. Khunti
3. Gumla

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4. Simdega
5. Lohardaga
6. Hazaribag
7. Ramgarh
8. Chatra
9. Koderma
10. Giridih
11. Bokaro
12. Dhanbad
13. Palamu
14. Latehar
15. Gadhwa
16. Purvi Sinhbhum
17. Paschimi Sinhbhum
18. Saraikela/ Kharsawa
19. Dumka
20. Jamtara
21. Devghar
22. Godda
23. Sahebganj
24. Pakud

Paddy is the main crop being practiced to grow by the state. Sattu— a beverage made up of grilled gram, is traditional beverage and which it shares with Bihar.

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Jharkhand is a proud state for patriots and great personalities like Birsa Munda, Tilka Manjhi, Siddho-Kanho, Chand Bhairav, Sheikh Bhikhari, Thakur Vishwanath Shahdeo, Ganpat Rai, Jatra Bhagat, Buddhu Bhagat, Neelambar- Peetambar, Albert Ekka, Jaipal Singh etc.

Jharkhand has its own style of living and is enriched with numerous artworks. Folk songs and dances are being organised in the festivals like Sarhul, Karma etc. that shows relation with the nature and tradition.

Jharkhand has large deposits of minerals. 40 percent of the total minerals of the country are available in the State. The State is the sole producer of cooking coal, uranium and pyrite. It ranks first in the production of coal, mica, kyanite and copper in India. The geological exploration and exploitation of gold, silver, base metals precious stones etc. are the potential areas of futures. The principal export destinations for minerals are Bangladesh, Nepal, South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

Geological history

The spatial extent of Jharkhand State is approximately 21° 55' to 25° 35' North Latitude and 83° 20' to 88° 02' East Longitude. The state is land locked and it shares its boundary with Orissa on the southeast, Chattisgarh on the southwest, Bihar on the north, West Bengal on the east and Uttar Pradesh on the northwest. It comprises of the Chotanagpur Plateau, which forms a part of Deccan bio-geographic province. It is a hilly undulating plateau characterized by predominantly tropical forests and tribal settlements. The State is endowed with natural resources that need to be conserved and utilized in a sustainable manner for all-round development of the state in general and the marginalized tribal population in particular.

The total geographical area of the State is 79.70 lakh hectares, out of which 23.22 lakh hectares (29.33%) are under forests; 5.66 lakh hectares (7.12%) are barren lands; 7.24 lakh hectares (9.10%) are put to non-agricultural use; 0.90 lakh hectares (1.15%) are under pastures &

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other grazing lands; 3.07 lakh hectares (3.86%) are cultivable wastelands; 0.88 lakh hectares (1.11%) are under miscellaneous trees and groves; 12.04 lakh hectares (15.14%) are current fallows; 8.45 lakh hectares (10.63%) are under other fallows; and 17.95 lakh hectares (22.58%) are the net sown area. The number of electrified villages is 14667 (45.0 per cent of the total villages). 26.0 per cent (8484) per cent of the total villages are connected by roads. The lengths of the National Highways and the State Highways are 1006 and 4662 kms respectively. The state has different relief because of its physiography as it consists of four series of plateaus of having different heights. The highest plateau lies in the west known as Western or Higher Ranchi Plateau or locally known as the Pat region located at 2500 to 3600 feet above sea level covering northern part of the old Ranchi district and the southern edge of the old Palamu district. The term Pat represents a feature similar to a table with steep edges around and a flat top. It is full of dissected hills having a hill station, Netarhat, at the top. The second plateau is known as Ranchi Plateau having a height of 2000 feet composed of gneisses and granites. It is separated by the Damodar trough from the Hazaribagh Plateau. The next plateau is Lower Chotanagpur Plateau consisting mainly of gneisses and granite and partly of schists and other Dharwar rocks.

The other plateaus are the Rajmahal Hills and the Kaimur Plateau. These plateaus are separated by the narrow and steep slopes known as scarps. It is believed that before the Chotanagpur Peneplain was successfully uplifted thrice by the side effect of the three violent Himalayan movements in Tertiary times continued till Pleistocene times resulting in well-known waterfalls like Hundru, Jonha, etc. on the scarps. The first upliftment took place during the Eocene to Oligocene period creating Pat region, the second one during Miocene forming the Ranchi and Hazaribagh Plateau and the third one during Pliocene and Pleistocene period uplifting the outer Chotanagpur Plateau. All plateaus are the parts of the same plain successively uplifted during Tertiary and Pliestocene times. Marvelous eye catching rare geological/geomorphological features like rejuvenated meandering and deep cutting young rivers like Damodar are the uniqueness in the State.

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