

## The Government could not entice the tribals off their land with their R & R Policy

*Mittal ka dalal R & R Policy ke dum parr adivasiyon se unki jaageer khareedne ki koshish mein naakaam.* (Mittal's agent failed to entice the tribals to sell their property)



*Nabi ji! Hum ek inch bhi zameen nabi dena chahte'* (No Sir! We don't want to give even an inch of land) said Sushila a farmer from Kamdara vehemently to Rahul Sharma the Deputy Commissioner of Gumla when he talked of appropriate compensation through Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R & R) Policy. *Par humari sanskriti, pehchan, itibaas aur astitva ka keya mol lagaiyega? Aur aap humey bataa kar vikas kerna chahte hai. Yeh kaisa vikas hai aur kiska vikas hai?* (But how will you evaluate the loss of our culture, identity, history and existence? You want to displace us and make

development, what kind of development is this and whose development is it?) retorted Lohra a young man whose land is at stake.

The anti Mittal cry is getting louder each day with the *adivasis* (tribal) ready to fight 'till the end' to safeguard their Rights over water, forest and land. Gumla a small town in Jharkhand came alive on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2009, with the lively faces and sound of tens of thousands of determined *adivasi* (tribal) men, women and youths from 8 blocks carrying their traditional weapons, branches of trees and cradling infants enduring the heat and travelling long hours to present their memorandum of demands to the Deputy Commissioner of Gumla.

A sheer contrast to the colourful festivity of deepawali in the market these *adivasi* (tribal) farmers led by their village leaders were shouting slogans like '*Ladenge- JeeTENge*' (We will fight



and we will win), ‘*ek inch bhi zameen nahi denge*’ (Won’t give even an inch of land) and ‘*Steel nahi anaaj chaahiye*’ (We want grain and not steel) along with slogans against Mittal and government officials. There is increasing discontent and distrust in the government.



Despite their large numbers the crowd walked two kilometres with utmost discipline and coordination to gather at the premises of the Deputy Commissioner’s Office. PP Surin, Raju Lohra and Dayamani were among the few who addressed the gathering. They thanked the gathering for travelling long distances and coming together in support of the movement and encouraged them with their motivating speeches.

They shared the contents of the memorandum of demands, the development that has taken place in land acquisition and the stance of the government on it. They also examined the possible impact the steel plant may have on their land, culture and livelihood.



The gathering listened to every speaker patiently as the speeches were made in hindi and the native language to facilitate better understanding for all. The gathering exhibited their unanimous solidarity and support by clapping and hoisting their traditional weapons and banners. It was a surreal experience to see so many people coming together not for money nor for food but for a cause.



CNI SBSS with its partner Chotanagpur DBSS is accompanying *Adivasi Moolvasi Astitva Raksha Manch* (AMRAM) to safeguard the interest of the *adivasi* (tribal) brothers and sisters; they have been an integral part of all the activities embarked on under the banner. AMARM is a People’s Movement that began in 2005 against land grabbing by Arcelor Mittal Company in Jharkhand. It is actively and effectively advocating the plight of *adivasis*.