



छत्तीसगढ़ की जन वेबसाइट



| [Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [History](#) | [Images](#) | [Useful Links](#) |

Search

Log in

If you are not able to see this page in Hindi, please download the Hindi font from the [BBC's Hindi Site](#)

जन मुददे

Tribals & Forests
Culture
Agriculture
Dalit
Education, Youth, Employment
Mining & Industry
Media
Naxal Issues
Water
Women & Health

आजकल

8 Years of CG

Campaigns

CGnet in Media

CGnet and Us

Jobs/Scholarships

Current Discussion

हमारे ज़िले

- [महासमुन्द](#)
- [बिलासपुर](#)
- [बस्तर](#)
- [दंतेवाड़ा](#)

Teak And Trickery: An Investigation on Malik Makbuja Case

By Keya Acharya

Nearly half a century ago, in 1955, an idealistic young IAS officer, nervous at his first appointment as District Collector(DC), found himself in a remote village called Bhanupratappur, in what is now Chhatisgarh's Bastar district. The villages there were exceptional for their magnificent teak and hardwood trees, growing naturally in the abundant jungles inhabited predominantly by Adivasis; simple jungle folk, ignorant of the ways of the world.

In feudal days, local zamindars needing handy labour encouraged tribals to live inside forests but without access to its trees. After 1949, changed land laws allowed tribal rights to forest-lands and trees, the latter on a government-fixed fee. Those holding 'tree-rights' thus became 'Malik Makbuja', currently an infamous phrase.

In Bhanupratappur, DC Nath found timber merchants duping Malik Makbuja tribals into bogus contracts surrendering their tree-rights. In one case, a blind man gave up his trees in exchange for his young daughter and him to be taken to the cinema in town. In another, a tribal resisting a contractor was arrested by the local police for criminal intimidation. Nath described the robbing spree as the 'teak rush', "an exploitation the likes of which has rarely been seen anywhere in the country".

With integrity and courage, there being no laws prohibiting these contracts, Nath curtailed the transportation of timber under flimsy Motor Vehicle violations, got the Chief Minister's unstinted support to see the MP Protection of Scheduled Tribes (Interest in Trees) Act 1956 passed within an unprecedented 6 months. The new law empowered only Malik Makbujas to seek permission from the Collector to sell a fixed amount of their timber annually. These could be sold only through the Forest Department which fixed the rate, the idea being to give a fair price to the tribal. Naith in his naivety and idealism thought the Collector as government administrator would ensure justice to the tribal.

Forty years later, a Bastar Commissioner, Mr. Narayan Singh, currently Member, Chhatisgarh Land Revenue Board at Bilaspur, along with four Additional Collectors, all still-serving officials, have been indicted in the country's biggest environmental corruption case unearthed so far, thick with trees and fraud, now known as the Malik Makbuja scandal. Tribals, tricked into thinking they were selling the trees have, through signed-off powers of attorney, lost their lands and handed a pittance for their trees. The fraud has also involved redesigning government maps to show Reserved Forests as private lands and its trees sold off.

OneWorld South Asia
Connecting Communities. Empowering People
Designed and managed under Ekdunia initiative of OneWorld South Asia

Discussion Forum

Network for the new Indian state of Chhattisgarh. Mainly meant to promote discussion on the region, specially related to its development and people. [More...](#)

CG Newspapers

- [Daily Deshbandhu](#)
- [Daily Chhattisgarh](#)
- [Bhaskar, Raipur](#)
- [Bhaskar, Bilaspur](#)
- [Dainik Jagran CG Page](#)
- [Hitavada, CG & MP](#)
- [Navabharat](#)
- [Central Chronicle](#)
- [HT, CG & MP page](#)
- [Outlook CG page](#)
- [Haribhumi](#)
- [Itwari Akhbar](#)
- [Raviwar](#)
- [www.36garh.in](#)

Member Area

[you can have your home page and communicate with other members here](#)

Audio-Video

[Jagdish Upasane, Editor, India Today\(Hindi\) on CG Peoples Website](#)

Upcoming Events

- CGnet weekly chat at 5 pm IST every Saturday at <http://www.cgnet.in/chat>

Dream CG Meet

[Report of Dream Chhattisgarh Meet, Barnawapara, Raipur 7-9](#)

- [दुर्ग](#)
 - [जशपुर](#)
 - [जाँजगीर-चाम्पा](#)
 - [कबीरधाम](#)
 - [कोरिया](#)
 - [कोरबा](#)
 - [कॉंकेर](#)
 - [रायगढ़](#)
 - [राजनाँदगाँव](#)
 - [रायपुर](#)
 - [सरयुजा](#)
 - [धमतरी](#)
- Out of the Rs 12 crore 14 lakhs that the forest department is recorded to have paid to the attorney-holders for the timber (several cases have no records of money paid by the FD), Malik Makbujas received only 13 lakhs, 80 thousand approximately. (see box 1) On average, a tribal received Rs. 2000 for a tree worth Rs. 25,000. For the approximately 282 acres of land (many again have no records) sold by tribals assuming only trees were being felled, they received 12 lakhs 37 thousand on paper. In actuality, the amount was far less.
- Ironically enough, Devinder Nath's case study is being used studiously every year to train IAS cadres in Mussourie.
- Yet, not all IAS officers in Bastar have been corrupt. In December 1996, Collector B. Rajagopala Naidu exposed Narayan Singh, writing to Mr. Lakshmi Narain, Principal Secretary, MP Revenue Department, detailing facts on his boss, Commissioner Narayan Singh's involvement in Malik Makbuja fraud.
- "During the 3-year tenure of Shr Narayan Singh, the district has witnessed unprecedented and illegal felling. The Commissioner himself has given a corrupt orientation to the entire Revenue Department in Bastar.. and aided and abetted the cutting of trees", he wrote. By 1997, forest cover had decreased drastically from 55% to 30%. There are no studies done to date on the negative impact this huge desecration of national wealth has had on the environment.

Read more... Instead of a departmental Inquiry which Naidu requested, this time to Chief Secretary , MP, Sharad Chandra Behar in January 1997, he found himself abruptly transferred in February 1997, along with Commissioner Singh.....[contd \[/36garh/FT/t3 \]](#).

[Meet, Barnawapara, Raipur 7-9 April 2005](#)

Donation Appeal

Chhattisgarh Net is a Citizen Journalism experiment. CGnet is trying to train citizens in remote Tribal Chhattisgarh on how to use new technology to communicate.

Your help can make a difference. Pls write to us at cgnet.in@gmail.com

Shade Acclimated Trees

3 Acre, 40 Foot Shade House Pics Online: 150,000 Florida Trees!
www.CalusaCreek.com

Top Headlines

OneWorld South Asia
Connecting Communities. Empowering People

[Indian children make rights manifesto for elections](#)

[Radio show on government accountability](#)

[Celebrating the composite culture of India](#)

[Sore homecoming for Kosi survivors](#)

[Economic crisis decolonising Asian minds](#)

[India to launch weather satellite](#)

[India releases Pakistani prisoners](#)

[Taliban bans girls' education in northwest Pakistan](#)

[An year of natural disasters](#)

[Tougher times ahead for India's textiles industry](#)

[Teaching English the MAD way](#)

[Bilaspur Girls](#)

Marry Well Settled Bilaspur Girl Register Free! Search, Chat & Marry

[Jobs in Chhattisgarh](#)

1000s of Jobs in Chhattisgarh Submit Your Resume & Find Jobs.

Contact us at cgnet.in@gmail.com

The authors in www.cgnet.in are responsible for their writings. Though we try to check the facts but ultimate responsibility with the facts are with the writers for the pages. On each page we have given the e mail address for the writers. For any clarification please check with them direct. Pls also copy us in cgnet.in@gmail.com for follow ups.