

Quest for Identity

This book lays bare the reality of being an *adivasi* in India today and, beyond that, a woman in a globalising world, building commonalities with the author's own personal experiences and life trajectory. The lived experiences of Santal women and men are unfolded here along with the political and economic changes that took place after the creation of the Jharkhand state. Using ethnographic methods, the book weaves a multidimensional and multi-relational mosaic of lives and livelihoods, struggles for resources, gender identities and new narratives of citizenship. Ordinary people's everyday struggles for survival with dignity and respect form the core of the analysis. Rich in field insights, the gender lens adopted gives a fresh perspective to understanding issues of land and labour, indigenous identity, political aspirations and state relations. It contributes significantly to the slim literature on *adivasi* development in Jharkhand and fills a gap in knowledge on gender relations.

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Quest for Identity

Gender, Land and Migration
in Contemporary Jharkhand

Nitya Rao



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*To Mina and M. S. Swaminathan, my parents,
who inspired me to speak for the voiceless*

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Acknowledgements

This book recounts the everyday struggles and agency of poor women and men to lead dignified lives. Despite the multiple crises they confront, they seek not just welfare, but a renegotiation and even a redefinition of power and knowledge hierarchies across institutions of the state and society. Portrayed as voiceless, and in need of help, they want recognition and respect as individuals and to not be labelled as categories.

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Nitya Rao