

## **Impact of Industry Led Displacement on Indigenous People: A Case Study of the Oraon Tribe Of India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Industrialization led displacement of tribal groups in India has been a major phenomenon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover after displacement the tribal groups are forced to adapt to, and adjust with the largely non-tribal set up. The present paper aspires to explore the economic changes brought about by industrialization and the cultural consequences of these changes on the indigenous people. This study, conducted in Odhisa's Rourkela, is based on a case study of the Oraon tribe which was displaced in the course of the installation of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) during the 1960s. The sample size of 300 was collected from various places of residence of the Oraons representing different social and economic conditions. The finding of the study indicated towards food security and higher standard of living after industrialization. However income inequality was conspicuous. Although there was an improvement on the educational status of women, urbanization had largely a negative effect on the participation of women in productive activities. Another interesting finding of the study was a positive relation between socio-economic status and trends of revivalism.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Displacement, Industrialization, Indigenous People, Tribes*

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Date of Submission: 16-08-2021

Date of Acceptance: 31-08-2021

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Throughout the history of civilizations, human beings have tried to manipulate their environment starting from the invention of the wheel, the discovery of agriculture and so on. However, the autonomy and the longevity of the autochthons were more or less undisturbed which can be explained by the slow pace of social change that occurs in an agriculturist society. But the social processes and relations changed rapidly with scientific development and advent of industrialization in the Western countries during 18th and 19th century. The demand for raw materials, labour, market, capital and space led to the beginning of European colonial expansion. Consequently, there was an increased contact between different civilizations and European values and skills. Many countries took the ineluctability of a European style of development for granted. Development became synonymous with the European way of life. Throughout this process the side effects included destruction of traditional social structures, their replacement by capitalistic relations and the promotion of modern techniques of production. European values and models were indiscriminately set as the model for education and social development for these societies often with results unwelcomed for (Lounev and Shirokov, 2002).

India after independence, embarked upon the programme of planned economic development of the country. During the 1950s and the 1960s many heavy industries like SAIL, BHEL etc were commissioned. The installation of these heavy industries led to displacement of people and movable property in large scale. The State and other project proponents justified the process for larger national interest. It was argued that while some displacement might have been inevitable in large development projects, the long term good these projects would bring merit to the sacrifice of a few in favour of the larger good. (Bartolome, Wet, Mander, Nagraj: 2000). According to C. Rangarajan, all developed countries have gone through a process of transition, that is, a shift from agriculture, to industry. Therefore growth was identified with industrialization in developing economies. The Indian planners talked of industrialization with emphasis on heavy industries. It was therefore obvious that for the process of industrialization to start there has to be a transfer of resources from agriculture. This transfer of resources started first with the transfer of land from agriculture to industries which meant displacement of large number of people who were till now depended on agriculture (Rangarajan 2004).

With the emergence of industrialization and the ever-increasing number of displaced communities, there is also a surge of interest amongst the anthropologists regarding the matter. This is because the tribal societies and the peasantry of the non-western world were also brought within the ambience of the industrialization process. It is argued that though earlier the remote areas of the tribals were difficult to approach and uneconomic to exploit, technological advancements, privatization and global capitalism have made the

tribal regions accessible to the capitalists. This pace of industrial development affected the lives of the people and communities in these parts (Bhandari, 1980).

In India almost 80 percent of the forest and mineral resources of the country are found in the Scheduled Areas, the exploitation of which has been the primary cause of land alienation among the adivasis. According to the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1984) displacement of tribes and acquisition of tribal lands by the Government for projects of national interests has been going on since the beginning of the First Five Year Plan. The economic impact of displacement on the tribes was very clearly visible in the census reports between 1960s and 1990s. According to the 1961 census 68.18 percent of Scheduled Tribes were cultivators which dropped to 54.50 percent in 1991 census, while an increase from 19.71 percent in 1950s to 32.69 percent of scheduled tribes as agricultural labourers was noticed in the 1991 census report.

The tribals are intrinsically dependent on their natural surroundings for their livelihood. Displacement or loss of land for them is catastrophic. Many landless Adivasis are unable to sustain themselves for more than 6 months after rains because of their reliance on single rain-fed crops. Since forests provided a range of uncultivated food sources such as vegetables, roots, tubers fish, birds, they rely of these for their daily needs. Keeping this fact in view, the Supreme Court of India in 1997, in its Samatha judgement has banned transfer of land and mining lease and license to the non-tribal in 5<sup>th</sup> schedule area (Samata and Mines, 2006).

Land has always been a part of tribal identity. Because of extension of their self to surroundings, the tribal people have a sense of custodial responsibility towards the endowment of nature in the geographical space, which is also social space for different tribes. Such a fusion of geographical and social space, with mystic touch of varying intensity and a sense of custodial responsibility provide the material base for defining the identity of a tribe (Roy Burman, 2006). For instance there are the Cholanayakkans who believe that to own a land is a sin. Then there is the Dongaria Khond of the Niyamgiri hills who consider their hills and forest sacred and forbid felling of trees in that area. In view of the tribal cultural and religious beliefs, the UN Human Rights Committee recognized the tribal and indigenous people's right to have control over their lands, territories, and natural resources and maintain their traditional way of life. In 1997 the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People recognized that,

*"in many indigenous cultures, traditional collective system for the control and use of land, territory and resources, including bodies of water and coastal areas, are a necessary condition for their survival, social organization, development and their individual and collective well-being and that the form of such control and ownership is varies and distinctive and does not necessarily coincide with the systems protected by the domestic laws of the states in which they live"*

Once displaced from their native villages and forests, the tribals stand face to face with cultures which were till now unknown to them, or with which they had limited interaction. The nature of contact between the two communities depend on various factors as pointed out by Melville J. Herkovitz (1964). First is the size of the population involved, that is, contact can occur between entire population, or one of its segments, or even individuals. Secondly, contacts can be hostile or friendly. Thirdly, contacts can be between equal or different sizes of population. Fourthly, where groups differ in their material or non-material culture, or both; or where there is equal degree of complexity. Lastly, where groups having one way of life comes into the habitat of another, or where the receiving group achieves its contact with the new culture in a new habitat.

Though the ethnographic and demographic data shows a considerable difference amongst various tribes with regard to education, urbanization, life styles etc anthropologists have observed that during the last century the tribes have emerged as a unified category.

*"...as the outcome of the common experience of dispossession from age old rights of access to and control and management of resources, marginalization in significant spheres of decision making in the state process, intended or unintended assault on deeper structures of their cultures and history, the tribal peoples are emerging as a unified social category. Through the processes of reinterpretation, syncretism, revivalism, revitalization of the core, innovative focus on humanist essence of respective cultures, most of them have retrieved the lost ground. As a cumulative effect of these, while historically they were many, essentially they are tending to be one in the contemporary world" (Roy Burman, 2006:65).*

Hall and Fenelon (2009), in the concluding chapter of their work on 'Indigenous People and Globalization' emphasized the need for the study of the pattern of adaptation, adjustment, resistance and revitalization among the tribes of modern era. They observed that in this globalization era as the indigenous people are organizing and comparing their socio-political relations with dominant elites in terms of their habitation as survivors, these new alliances are producing new forms of indignity that influence existing relations, including claims to sovereignty, the land and social justice issues. Hall and Fenelon argued that understanding the changes in indigenous societies is vital to understanding long term social change and transformation of human societies.

Further clarifying the need to study the recent developments in the various local, regional, national and especially global forces which shape indigenous survival and resistance they referred to Immanuel Wallenstein who argued that although the conflict between state and indigenous people had existed since a long time, the rise of European mercantile capitalism brought a new level of intensity in it. Hall and Fenelon emphasized that to “omit any level of these interaction is to distort and fundamentally misunderstand indigenous survival and resistance” (Hall and Fenelon, 2009:143).

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The impact of industrialization and displacement on indigenous societies has been extensively studied by scholars across the world. It was observed that the process of globalization has integrated the tribes into the nation states with all its political and economic repercussions. Whether it is class formation among Bhils of Rajasthan due to diversion of development funds by the Government in order to create viable vote banks (Doshi,1989) or formation of class structures due to unplanned and forceful imposition of settled agriculture and settled life among the tribal societies of North Eastern Regions (NER) (Ganguly, 1996) , the Mogs of Tripura (Gupta, 1997) and the Gaduliya Lohars of eastern Rajasthan (Misra,1977) the impact have been detrimental.

Exposure to a cash economy brought about many tectonic changes among the tribes. In a study by Pingle and Furer-Haimendorf (1998) among the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh a shift from production of food grains to cash crops was observed which the authors argued may lead to the exploitation of the tribals. On the other hand Anubha Roy (1998) reports loss of Santhal land holdings to the non-tribal money-lenders due to poverty and indebtedness in the Dumka and Godda district of Santhal Paraganas in West Bengal.

The integration of the tribals in the market system not only affected them economically but also brought structural changes. For example, formation of caste-like structures amongst the migrant tea labourers of Assam (Kar, 1997) or adoption of the dowry system and restriction on widow remarriages among Kudubi tribe of Dakshin Kannada under the influence of caste Hindus (Rao, 1995) or destruction of tribal traditional authority among the Bhils of Udaipur, Rajasthan (Ram, 2001) and among the tribes of Chotanagpur (Sarkar,1997). Adverse impact on health like chronic malnutrition among the tribals of Odisha living in urban areas (Patel,1988 ) and environmental problems like water pollution among the Dandami Maria tribe of the Dantewara Tehsil in South Bastar due to excavation of Bailadila mines (Srivastava, 1990) was also reported. Decline in women’s status due to deforestation and loss of MFPs was observed by Dash and Tripathy (2002) and by Reddy (1981) among the displaced Yanadis of Sri Hari Kota Island.

Efforts for adaptation and adjustment by tribals exposed to economically powerful societies were studied by various researchers. Adoption of language, food and dressing style of the dominant community by the displaced Vasava Bhils of Sardar Sarovar dam of Gujarat in order to gain acceptance and respect was observed by Hakim (2006). Similar phenomenon was noted by Pattanaik (1997) among the Sabara tribe in Ghorabar village in Cuttack, Odisha and by Dube (2004) among the Kamars of Chattisgarh. Mehta (1997) argues that acceptance of trends of the dominant society strengthens social placement and marks identification thereby reducing alienation and isolation.

If adoption of cultural and religious practices of a dominant community is an effort to gain power and privileges, so is the practice of reviving and strengthening original traditions of the community. Trends of revivalism among the tribes was observed by many anthropologists studying the indigenous people. Burman (2006) argued

*“... Through the processes of reinterpretation, syncretism, revivalism, revitalization of the core, innovative focus on humanist essence of respective cultures, most of them have retrieved the lost ground. As a cumulative effect of these, while historically they were many, essentially they are tending to be one in the contemporary world”* (Roy Burman 2006:65).

This was particularly seen among the Deswali Majhis of Paschim Medinipur and Bankura district of West Bengal. The Deswali Majhis, as studied by Bhowmick and Jana (2008), wanted to re-establish and maintain their separate cultural identity in order to avail themselves of different facilities and opportunities ensured to the weaker sections in the Constitution. Another example of revivalism as studied by Banerjee (1981) was seen among the Santals of Ranigunge-Jharia coalfields. It was observed that to emphasize their tribal identity, the Santals in the colliery followed their religious rituals more stringently than their peers in the hinterland. Similarly, Kulkarni in his study among the tribes of Jamshedpur pointed out that the identity of interests among the larger tribal groups have given birth to a kind of revivalism in the name of pan-tribalism. Similar sentiments of a growing urge for identity among the tribes were observed by Rath (1990) who studied the displaced Oraons of Rourkela. It was found that their standard of living went up and there was a rising political consciousness. *“The awareness that they belong to an inferior position in the jati hierarchy grew among the Oraons due to the maintenance of social segregation mainly in the field acceptance of cooked food...It is observed that the Oraons assert that they have their own distinctive ‘adivasi mode of religion’.*

*Although this is known under various heads like Sarna, Samsar and Karama Dharama, the Adi Dharam is most popular and became most prevalent religion in the industrial region” (Rath, 1990).*

## **PRESENT PAPER**

The present paper dwells into the impact of industry led displacement on the Oraon tribe of Odisha who were displaced from their native villages in the 1950s and 1960s during the installation of the Rourkela Steel Plant. The paper is based on the doctoral thesis entitled, ‘Impact of Displacement on Indigenous People: A Case Study of the Oraon tribe of Rourkela’ which was carried out with the objective to study the impact of displacement on the cultural, social, political and economic ethos of the tribe.

This study aspires to tread beyond a description of the economic changes brought about by industrialization and tries to explore their cultural consequences. In doing so, the study endeavours to find ways and means of a progressive balance of economic prosperity, the indigenous skill and knowledge base and a catholic tribal identity that will insulate them against predatory influence. Going beyond earlier research work on the displaced Oraons, the present study explores the growth of cultural identity in relation to various economic groups within the Oraons. Aspects like linguistic pattern, folk traditions, status of women, religious practices, and governance have been discussed in relation to areas which came into existence as a consequence of displacement and resettlement. Thus, issues like language, religion, kinship, status of women have been given special emphasis because of their intrinsic importance in the making of tribal identity. The objectives of this particular paper are

- To study the impact of industry led displacement on the economic status of the Oraons
- To study the impact of economic status on reinterpretation Oraon culture and identity

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study was to observe a “fairly extensive picture of a small society and its interaction over time” (Cargan, 2008:205). For this type of requirement a case study of the entire community of displaced Oraons of Rourkela Steel Plant was preferred. “Case study research is characterized by a microscopic approach where intensive examination of the “particular” is emphasized; ...Typical of this research is what many label naturalistic inquiry, where the case researcher makes every attempt to leave the program undisturbed during observation” (Lapan and Armfield, 2009).

### ***Area of Study***

In 1956, the Government of India, decided to set up a steel plant for meeting the national demand for steel and considering its geographical positioning Rourkela in Sundergarh district, Odisha was chosen as the viable location. At that time this area was inhabited by various non-tribal and tribal groups which included large number of Oraons. The villages were linguistically heterogeneous but had homogenous *tolas* or hamlets. As mentioned in a *Sarini* occasional paper, *Adivasis of Rourkela* (2006), the process of displacement started during the latter half of the 1950s. According to a monograph on industrialization in Rourkela, as a part of the 1961 census report, it was observed that at least 519 Oraon households (including Christian and non-Christian) were displaced due to the installation of the RSP. Other tribes which were displaced included Munda, Kharia, Lohra, Mahuli and Kisan and also a number of caste groups. In total 15,200 persons and 2,465 households were displaced from 33 villages. The 1961 Census states that the displaced families were allotted plots close to the RSP of whom 1,373 of the displaced families were relocated in Jalda, 916 families at Jhirpani and 176 families at Bondamunda. Out of these only 1,028 settled at Jalda, 637 at Jhirpani and 56 at Bondamunda (Census of India, 1961). As a second line of action land was also provided for agriculture in remote forest areas. Quite a few number of families migrated to these remote forests where they cleared and levelled the land for cultivation. These areas were also known as reclamation camps (Adivasis of Rourkela, 2006).

There was also a group of Oraons who, though earlier relocated in the resettlement colonies, moved on to the government or private residential areas across Rourkela with rising standard of living. In many cases government quarters were allocated to respondents working in government sector. There were also Oraons who had to move out of their houses in the resettlement colonies due to other reasons. Unlike the resettlement colonies these residential areas had heterogeneous neighbourhoods.

Data had been collected from different settlements as the objectives of the research was to study the economic and social impact of displacement and industrialization and the consequent interpretation or reinterpretation of culture and society. These settlements have come into existence as a direct result of displacement and represent different economic groups among the Oraons as well as different social settings. A tabular description of the different settlements from where data was collected is as given below:

**Table 1**  
**Description of different settlements from where data was collected**

Area of Study	Type of area	Occupation	Average monthly income(in Rs)	House structure	Literacy level of respondents	Infrastructural facilities
Sectors	Government and Private quarters at the steel and civil township. Dispersed settlement	Business, White collar jobs, wage labour	22000	Electrified Brick structures with water and sanitation	100	All, transport health, education, banking and market facilities available
Jhirpani	Urban resettlement colony. 7 Km North East of RSP	White and blue collar jobs, wage labour, business	5993.85	Electrified Brick structures with water and sanitation	85.10	All, transport health, education, banking and market facilities available
Jalda	Semi-urban resettlement colony. 16 Km South East of RSP	Agriculture, wage labour, blue collar jobs	1347.11	Electrified Brick structures mostly with water and sanitation	86.70	All, transport health, education, banking and market facilities available
Tangarpalli	Partially acquired village. Located adjacent to the RSP	Agriculture , collection of MFPs, wage labour	1140.8	Mud and Brick structures mostly without water and sanitation	60.70	No basic facilities due to lack of funds
Sili Kata	Reclamation camp. Forest village. 56 Km south of RSP	Agriculture , collection of MFPs	94.21	Mud structures without water and sanitation	46.90	Only Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan school till 5 <sup>th</sup> Standard

**Structure and Size of Sample**

The sample population was divided on the basis of age between those who witnessed the pre-displacement era and those who were born after displacement. Sixty years of age was set as water shed from beyond which the respondents were asked to tell about their experiences in the pre-displacement village while those below the age of 60 years were asked to narrate about their position in the present scenario. In total 300 respondents were interviewed with 40 of them above 60 years of age and the rest of them below 60. The size and structure of sample is as given below:

**Table 2**  
**Sample structure for the entire area**

Area of Study	Respondent between 15-60	Respondents above 60 years of age	No. of respondents
Jhirpani	114	21	135
Jalda	45	6	51
Tangarpalli	56	6	62
Sili Kata	32	7	39
Sectors	13	0	13
Total	260	40	300

**Data Collection**

For the collection of primary data two different sets of interview schedule with more than a hundred questions each were prepared for respondents in the age group of 15-60 years and those above 60 years. While those above 60 years of age were mostly asked to narrate their experiences in the pre-displacement era, those below 60 years were asked questions regarding economic, educational and cultural status in a largely non-tribal setting. The schedules had both structured and unstructured question for in-depth analysis.

In order to avoid any recall error by the 60 year old respondents and to get a first-hand experience of pre-displacement Oraon villages, the researcher visited and stayed in a village named Ludhni at the Bonaigarh block in Sundergarh. The village presented a picture of pre-industrial Oraon lifestyle. During her stay she used unstructured participant observation for data collection.

Community leaders and elders of the tribe were interviewed using unstructured open-ended questions regarding the impact of displacement and industrialization on the Oraon community.

Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in Jhirpani, Tangarpalli, Udit Nagar Sarna, Ganju Basti. The discussions centred around changes in language, cultural ceremonies, role of Parha. In Tangarpalli and Jhirpani, these FGDs were held during the Parha meeting as this was the time when most of them assembled at one place.

#### IV. FINDINGS

##### *Impact on Economic Status*

Before displacement and installation of the RSP the Oraons mainly depended on settled subsistent agriculture. The idea of private property was present among the Oraons before their settlement in Chota Nagpur. However lack of market intervention was an important reason for absence of any income disparity among the Oraons before displacement and industrialization. Only a few Oraon families were engaged in income generating activities as casual labourers. The 1960 census corroborates the fact that while the non-tribals were engaged in trade and commerce, members of the various tribes depended solely on agriculture (Census of India, 1961). Another source of sustenance for the tribals were the Minor Forest Produces (MFP) which were usually collected by the women of the families. These MFPs were used as food items as well as household items by the Oraons. Lack of alternate livelihood options and basic facilities led to poverty and extreme cases of hunger among the tribes of Rourkela during erratic monsoons, floods or droughts. During the interviews many elderly respondents narrated how their families survived on *mahuli* leaves and wild fruits during times of drought.

As discussed earlier the Government of India decided to set up a steel plant after the general elections of 1952 in Rourkela. In the process of land acquisition a population of around 13,000 were evicted from 33 villages. These PAPs of tribal and non-tribal groups were given vacant plots of land in Jhirpani and Jalda, along with the monetary compensation. Land was also given for agricultural purposes to those who wanted to opt for the same. These plots were allotted in far flung forested areas like Sili Kata, Hathidharsa etc. Like their predecessors before displacement, these respondents too followed subsistent agriculture and largely depended on the MFPs for their daily needs. Mostly settled in remote and inaccessible areas these villages are cut off from the main market.

In the next couple of years after displacement the Oraons had to face tremendous hardship which has been described in detail in the *Sarini* article – **Adivasis of Rourkela (2006)**. The paper speaks of the high mortality rate among the Adivasis in the earlier years of their resettlement, lack of safe drinking water, proper medical care and the tremendous psychological pressure. Most of the resettlement sites had a mixed population from different evacuated villages. This occasionally created further problems.

In the course of time with the spread of industrialization, Rourkela developed into an urban centre. The male Oraons Project Affected People (PAPs) resettled in Jhirpani and Jalda were recruited in the Plant as casual labourers. Later, these labourers were absorbed on the permanent roll of the Plant. The RSP though presenting difficult working conditions, provided the Oraons in these areas with a comparatively permanent source of income. Various Government social security schemes ensured a safety net from hunger and malnourishment which was widely prevalent before displacement as per the narrations by the respondents. Consequently, there was a rise in the standard of living of the Oraons resettled in Jhirpani and Jalda. With rapid urbanization of the area, health and education facilities became more and more accessible. Varied employment opportunities opened up for the Oraons in the course of time. However this rise of income was not even across the displaced group. The data observed significant income inequality among the Oraons in Jhirpani and to some extent in Jalda.

Out of the 114 respondents interviewed from Jhirpani, 44 were employed. While in the unorganized sector most of the respondents worked as casual labourers, in organized sector they were employed in blue collar jobs in the RSP or worked as teachers, cleaners, cooks etc. Only 5 respondents reported of working in managerial posts. The lowest monthly income was less than Rs.3000/- per month, while the highest was above Rs.50,000/- per month. Those who earned less than Rs.3000/- per month usually worked as casual wage labourers. Work was only available to them for a certain number of days in a year. They were paid according to the then minimum wage of Rs.130/- per day.

Whether the occupation and designation of the Oraons were influenced by their tribal status, is a matter of further research. However, the data in the present study shows trend of high concentration of respondents in the unorganized sector where they worked as casual labourers. Most of the respondents who worked in the organized sectors were involved in blue collar jobs as riggers and fitters. The fact that caste is not merely a rural phenomenon but also an urban phenomenon has been proved by a number of studies. One of them being by Navlakha (1971) who observed the uneven growth of professions revealing the pattern of recruitment process heavily biased in favour of upper castes, urban dwelling groups and metropolitan population.

The impact of income inequality was clearly visible in Jhirpani. While families with high monthly income lived in pucca structures equipped with all the modern facilities, those with lower monthly income lived in mud structures devoid of even the basic facilities like sanitation.

In Jalda, which is a semi-urban resettlement colony, the residents practiced subsistence agriculture while supplementing it by working as casual labourer during off-season. Out of the forty five respondents interviewed from this area, only thirteen were working. The range of monthly income was between Rs.3500/- to Rs.6500/-. Hence the income divide was comparatively narrower than in Jhirpani. Only one respondent in Jalda was working in organized sector. The housing structures were of same pattern and did not manifest much income disparity. One might accrue the absence of income inequality in this area to more or less agricultural set up.

In another area of study- Tangarpalli, a partially displaced village adjacent to the RSP, all the respondents practiced subsistent agriculture and supplemented it with other income generating activities. In addition to agriculture eighteen respondents were earning. Most of the them (13 nos) worked in unorganized sector as casual labourers while the rest of them were either self-employed or owned small business. Those who were hired as labourers inside the RSP earned more and had a longer tenure of one month than their counterparts working as casual labourers in other parts of Rourkela. For the casual labourers working under private contractors, employment was not available for more than 15 days a month. Unlike the casual labourers, those who were self-employed or owned small business or worked in private houses, had a comparatively permanent source of income. Out of the total eighteen earning respondents, fifteen had a monthly income between Rs.2000/- to Rs.4000/-. However the rest of the respondents earned as high as Rs.9000/- per month.

Being a partially displaced village lying adjacent to the RSP, it was believed that the rest of the land would be acquired soon and the villagers would be resettled somewhere else. Hence no development funds were allotted to Tangarpalli which had no roads and streets, schools, dispensaries or even a Panchayat. The village was not electrified and most of the structures were mud houses. However, the researcher observed that most of the leaders of the *Parha* (a traditional authority system of the Oraons) like the treasurer, the *dewan* (Chairperson) and secretary lived in permanent structures with modern décor. They also owned bigger livestock.

Another area of study was Sili Kata which was a reclamation camp located within the Hathidharsa forest range. Being surrounded by dense forests and hills, with a non-existent transport and communication infrastructure the contact between Sili Kata and the macro society was very limited during the data collection phase of this study. Hence it remained untouched by the various economic forces. All the respondents from Sili Kata practiced subsistent agriculture, except two of them- one a mall shop owner and another a rickshaw driver in the nearest town, Gurundia. The only income generation activity taken up by the villagers was collection and sale of minor forest produces which was particularly carried out by the women. A hundred bundles of 45 leaves fetched them Rs.30/- from the middlemen during the time of the study. Women from almost all the Oraon families in the village participated in collection and sale of MFPs. All the houses in the village were mud structures with no sanitation or electricity facilities. As the level of income of all the villagers were more or less the same, their life style did not differ much.

In sharp contrast to Sili Kata were the most urbanized group among the displaced Oraons living in the Rourkela residential sectors. These were respondents living in apartments or plots in civil or steel township in Rourkela. The number of such people was very few in the entire displaced Oraon population of Rourkela. This group had hundred percent literacy rate. The range of monthly income among the Oraon in the residential section was between Rs.3000/- to Rs.35000/-. Thus income inequality was sharp in this group. The respondents in this group were engaged in high salaried jobs and businesses as well as blue collar jobs.

The differential income disparities in the five different levels of industrialization can be understood in the light of the observations made by Kuznet. He argues that there is greater inequality in industrial society than in agrarian economies. The reason for such inequality are the rise in population due to declining death rate and rising birth rate as well as internal migration from rural to urban areas. The income gap is further widened in a newly industrialized society with the top income groups appropriating most of the gains arising out of the new industries by an unusually rapid rate of creation of new fortunes (Kuznet, 2003).

Lipton (2003) observes, since income creates the power to distribute extra income, a policy that concentrates on raising income in the urban sector will worsen inequalities in two ways: by transferring not only from poor to rich, but also from more equal to less equal. Thus for the reduction of income inequality it is important to accentuate the rise in income of the poor sectors outside the traditional agricultural economy.

This study tried to understand the impact of income inequality on the kinship structure of the Oraons. Data was therefore collected from both Jhirpani and Sili Kata, as the respondents from both the areas had kinship relations with each other. It was found members of same households before displacement, decided to split into Jhirpani and Sili Kata so that while one family member living in Jhirpani can earn livelihood in the RSP, the other can supplement it by cultivating soil in Sili Kata which could work as a safety net for the family in case things do not work out in Jhirpani. Similar, kinship relation was found among members of Jalda and Tangarpalli. Most of the respondents in Jalda were natives of Tangarpalli before acquisition of land in the village for construction of RSP. Once their lands were acquired, they were provided plots of lands in Jalda for resettlement. Certain members of their families decided to shift to a more urban locale in Jalda, while the other

members receded into the remaining portions of the partially displaced village Tangarpalli to cultivate the lands they were left with.

The findings revealed impact of the huge economic and infrastructural gap between Jhirpani and Sili Kata on the kinship relations. Once members of the same household and having equal economic status, these families were now way apart in their standard of living. The average monthly income of the respondents in Jhirpani was Rs.5993.85 while in Sili Kata it was Rs.94.21. The respondents in Jhirpani cited lack of basic facilities and huge cultural gap with their kinsmen in Sili Kata for lack of contact with them. While the residents in Sili Kata charged their relatives in Jhirpani with 'snobbery'. It was observed that lack of commutation and communication facilities between these two centres due to poor infrastructure was also an important reason for loss of links.

In the symbolic identification and evaluation made by the kinsmen in Sili Kata and Tagarpalli one can see manifestation of class divisions. These class divisions cut across the ethnic and caste group and even kinship groups. The question which remains unanswered is whether the ethnic or caste identity of the person is losing importance as a determinant of his/her position in the society.

The economic and infrastructural gulf between Tangarpalli and Jalda was much narrower. The mean monthly income of respondents in Tangarpalli was Rs.1141, whereas in Jalda it was Rs.1347. Proximity to urban centres ensured the availability of certain basic facilities in Tangarpalli. Further, the distance between the two centres is not significant and can be covered within half an hour by road. Many respondents in Jalda still have land holdings in Tangarpalli, which was either managed by their children, relatives or hired labour. One could, therefore, find people from Jalda visiting their relatives in Tangarpalli almost every weekend.

### ***Impact on tribal language***

Language is the embodiment of the unique cultural wisdom of a community and is the most efficient means of transmitting a culture. It is not just a medium for communication about experience but actually a more or less powerful constituent of that experience (Eller, 2009). Language used by a people are indicative of a view of life, metaphysics of their culture, compounded of unquestioned and mainly unstated premises which define the nature of the universe and man's position within it (Bernstein, 1972). Loss of a language implies loss of a part of recorded history from the face of the world (Osaaji, 2009).

Some of the reasons as charted by UNESCO for disappearance of languages of speech communities include forceful transplanting and splitting of speech communities and placing groups and individuals of the speech community into communities that speak other languages. Secondly, the face-to-face contact between a speech community and a more aggressive culture speaking a metropolitan language. Thirdly, the destruction of the habitat, livelihood and environment of the speakers of a local language by the people of a dominant culture (UNESCO, 2010).

The conditions as mentioned by the UNESCO for loss of language in speech communities are similar to what was experienced by the members of the Oraon tribe in Rourkela. Before displacement the Oraons lived in small hamlets comprising clan members within large ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous villages. The mother tongue of the Oraon tribe, Kurukh was used as a medium of communication within the tribe, while *Sadri*, a hybrid of Bengali and Oriya, was used for inter-community interaction. Language and folklores were easily passed on from one generation to another without any interference from outside forces in the pre-displacement villages. The spatial compactness was a major factor in the preservation of language. After displacement the Oraons were resettled in different places across Rourkela and while effort was made to maintain the erstwhile neighbourhoods, large scale influx of non-tribal population who arrived after industrialization broke the cultural isolation, especially in resettlement colonies. Proficiency in *Sadri*, Oriya and Hindi became very important for day to day interaction and were therefore encouraged.

The demand for proficiency in non-tribal languages was further reinforced by a heterogeneous workplace. After losing their lands, the Oraons became dependent on RSP for their livelihood where they had to interact with non-tribals. Thus, proficiency in Oriya and Hindi was paramount. As fluency in Oriya and Hindi ensured good employment opportunities and better future prospects, the Oraon parents communicated in Oriya and Hindi with their children. The researcher observed parent talking among them in Kurukh during the data collection, while using Oriya and Hindi to communicate with their children.

A wider interface of the displaced Oraons to the non-tribal world came with the starting of schools following the central/state board syllabus. The medium of instruction were Oriya, Hindi or English in these schools. This compelled the Oraon children and their parents to give more importance to the non-tribal language than their own mother-tongue for better academic performance. The combined effect of these two factors resulted in the gradual loss of the Oraon, mother tongue Kurukh. The data observed an inverse relationship between proficiency in Kurukh and age of the respondents, that is, the younger the respondent the less likely he/she will have a fluent knowledge of Kurukh.

Another issue which was reflected in responses of the interviewees who consider it important to use Oriya or Hindi because of their political importance was their evolving national and state identity. The linking

of the tribal economy with the larger market led to the evolution of the identity of an Indian or as an inhabitant of Odisha. This process was further accentuated through instruments of mass media and print media which had linked them with the rest of the nation. This can be seen as a major factor for the growing acceptance for the State and National languages.

Though the loss of the tribal language was a reality, there was a simultaneous effort among the Oraons to revive and popularise the language. As an effort for reviving their mother tongue the Oraons of the Rourkela residential areas had collaborated with the Ranchi University for the promotion of the newly invented script for Kurukh. They were also organizing weekly Kurukh classes for revival of the language among the younger generations.

This effort was strongest in the urban areas. The Oraons of the Rourkela residential areas armed with economic stability and high educational levels had access to various forms of media and social networks. The heterogeneity of their cultural and linguistic identities in their neighbourhood make them wish for an identity of their own. This is not to say that there was any lack of concern for the language loss among the Oraons in the resettlement colonies but lack of a medium to channelize the concerns and the consequent efforts for reviving language.

### ***Concept of purity and pollution***

Modernization of economy and exposure to different ideologies have not only impacted the way the Oraons define their religion but also the way they visualize ritual hierarchy and status. Though an egalitarian society within itself with no ritual hierarchy and stratification, the Oraons as a tribe consider themselves superior to tribes like the *Lohars*, *Mahuli* and *Kharia* and caste groups like the *Ghasi*, *Panna* and *Dom* and refused to accept uncooked food and water given by the members of these groups.

Strong adherence to purity and pollution practices was observed in rural areas like Sili Kata where eighty four percent of the respondents reported of practicing food and water based caste practices. On the other hand, in urban areas of Rourkela sectors a whopping seventy seven percent of the respondents said that they would accept water and food from people irrespective of their tribe and caste.

The data suggested an inverse relationship between attainment of educational qualifications and caste practices. Close to 72% of respondents who were illiterate refused to take water or food from the tribes and castes they considered ritually inferior. The numbers dropped markedly to around fifty five percent among respondents who have completed till 12<sup>th</sup> standard. While seventy one percent of respondents who have completed their bachelors said that do not mind accepting food and water from different tribes and caste groups, ninety percent of respondents with post-graduation degrees reported to taking water and food from everyone irrespective of caste or tribe. However, it is important to note that though the highly educated Oraons do not mind accepting food and water from any person irrespective of his/her caste, tribe or ethnicity, having a marital alliance with anybody from a lower caste is still a preposterous idea for an Oraon either living in an urban or rural area.

Another aspect of the Oraon society which was affected by the displacement and industrialization was the concept of purity and pollution and ethnic superiority. It was observed by the data that while in the urban areas large number of respondents refused to follow any caste discrimination based on sharing of uncooked food and water with members of tribes and castes, they consider inferior, in the rural areas like Sili Kata and Tangarpalli the respondents still held tight to these practices. The chief reason for this change was the spread of education as shown by the data. An inverse relation between educational qualification and food based caste practices was found as in urban areas like Jhirpani, Jalda and Rourkela residential sectors the spread of education was vaster, the decline in caste practices related to sharing of food was also visible. In the rural areas lower literacy rate could be attributed to adherence to the traditional rules of exclusion.

### ***Impact on tribal religion***

The religion of the Oraons is known as Adi-dharma. It is a polytheistic religion characterized by worship of ancestors and nature. The main place of worship in Adi-dharma is the sacred grove or the *Sarna* which is considered as the abode of the deities and the ancestral spirits. The mode of worship was chiefly characterized by animal sacrifice and offering of liquor my tribesmen, mostly aimed to address mundane problems like spread of epidemic, drought etc. As per the traditional Adi-dharma, women and children are strictly prohibited from entering the *sarna* as they were seen as impure and their entry in the *Sarna* was inauspicious.

These norms of exclusion were seen with contempt by the modern young Oraons especially in the urban areas many of whom prefer to walk away from the religion while others focus to reform the practices in the religion. The effort to redefine the religion was visible in the Udit Nagar *Sarna* within the Rourkela city. In an attempt to eliminate gender based discrimination in Adi-Dharma, the patrons and attendants of the *Sarna*, not only allowed women inside the sacred site but also nominated a woman as the chief priest of the place of worship. However the strict practice of prohibiting women in *Sarna* continues in the villages and sub-urban

areas. Interestingly, many women and their families who confirmed to the discriminatory norm in their villages and local *Sarna*, freely entered and worshipped inside the sacred grove in Udit Nagar.

The *Sarna* was managed and maintained by the Oraons living in Jhirpani and the steel and civil townships in Rourkela. It was characterized by certain devotional fervour and prayer ceremony promoting ethical and spiritual values apart from addressing daily problems. As per the modified rules animal sacrifice and offering of liquor were strictly prohibited in the *Sarna*. Women, free to enter the *Sarna*, are equal participants in all the ceremonies. Going a step further, the Udit Nagar *Sarna* enjoins a women with priestly duties to the dieties.

Thus, the Udit Nagar *Sarna* stood as a modified form of the traditional Adi-Dharma on many points. For this it drew the angst of the supporters of traditional Adi-dharma who did not even consider it as a part of their religion or saw it as a hoax to gain popularity and power. In spite of such opposition, the researcher observed that the general population of the Oraon tribe did not mind frequenting the Udit Nagar *Sarna* and accepted it as a part of their religion. They lived the dual and almost opposite ways of perceiving the supernatural within the boundary of the same religion. While in the Udit Nagar *Sarna* the women themselves carried out ceremonies, they strictly followed the religious taboos of non-entry of women in the village *Sarnas*.

It was widely believed in Udit Nagar, that more educated people were attracted towards the Udit Nagar *Sarna* as a consequence of the endeavours for reforms in Adi Dharma. This carried in itself a strain or revivalism and a demand for recognition. These reforms and changes are in tune with the general global trend among religious and ethnic groups for gaining acceptance and recognition in that age. This is similar to what had been observed by Beyer (2005) wherein 'aboriginal' people mobilize in opposite directions and seek to reconstruct and have their religious ways recognized as distinct religious (Beyer, 2007).

### ***Status of Women***

Displacement and industrialization has not only affected the religious status of the Oraon women, as discussed above, but has also influenced other aspects of their lives. The shift of the regime of power from a traditional patriarchy to a globalized network of value exchanges via technology and market had led to a change in the way 'well-being' of women is defined. The major factors in the changeover are the state and the market as seen in the context of an increasingly globalizing world. It was observed in the data that large number of respondents consider that women are far better after displacement as they are now provided with education, freedom of movement and opportunity for self-reliance. On the other hand some respondents consider that women were better before displacement as they adhered to the traditional code of 'morality'.

The need for self-protection is a strong incentive for rearing large families in the subsistence economies. This had been a major cause of early marriages of girls in such societies (Boserup,1990). After the displacement of the Oraons from their subsistent economy to a market economy, self-protection was now increasingly being seen as synonymous to acquiring marketable skills. This led to a growing emphasis on education for children for both sexes. Urbanization and growing educational infrastructure in Rourkela helped in spread of education among the tribes. Highlighting the progress in the educational status of women since displacement, the data revealed increasing literacy rate and higher educational achievement among decreasing age groups. Thus while all the respondents of 70 years and above were illiterate there was hundred percent literacy rate in the youngest group of 15-24 years. This is to note that this data covers female respondents from the urban as well as the remote village settings.

The growing awareness regarding girl's education was found to be almost uniform in both rural and urban areas, however, the factor which varied in the rural and urban localities was the accessibility and availability of educational facilities. On one hand, high dropout rate among school girls was observed in rural areas like Sili Kata and Tangarpalli due to lack of road and transportation and absence of school in the vicinity. In urban resettlement colonies, on the other hand, like Jalda and Jhirpani the educational achievement of women was much higher. Many of the female respondents in Jalda and Jhirpani reported of completing post-graduation. Though child marriage is a taboo in Oraon traditions, it had crept in as an influence of other communities. Increased emphasis on education has led to increase in the age of marriage among girls. The researcher did not find any incidence of child marriage among women below 50 years of age.

Rising levels of education as well as exposure to other cultures and ethnicities, both among men as well as women, has led to reflexive modernization and re-defining of identities among the Oraons. The reform movement among the adherents of Adi Dharma in urban areas to make their religion more inclusive to the women has already been discussed in the previous section.

During interviews many elderly respondents felt "loss of moral values amongst women" after industrialization. "Good Moral values" as told by the respondents is characterized by submission to the will of elders and family members, especially on matters related to marriage, traditional dressing and a reserved nature. One could understand that industrialization coupled with education and exposure to the larger society through mass media has presented the Oraon women with a number of choices giving them opportunity to choose a way of life other than the traditional one. This, in many cases, lead to non-conformist attitude among young Oraon

women resulting to conflict between them and their families. Nonetheless it could be said that young Oraon women have been experiencing more freedom after industrialization than their counterparts before displacement.

Despite all the benefits of industrialization and urbanization, lesser number of Oraon women in the urban areas was found to be self-reliant. Out of the total 140 female respondents in the sample only 36 women were engaged in income generating activities (This includes women engaged in collection and sale of MFPs). Out of these 36 working women only 5, hailing from Jhirpani and Jalda, were in organized sector. An inverse correlation was observed between the level of urbanization and the engagement of women in income generating activities. Majority of the female respondents (17), engaged in income generating activities, were living in Sili Kata where they were involved in collection and sale of MFPs while their male counterparts carried out the agricultural activities like ploughing, sowing, harvesting etc.

In contrast, very few women in urban areas like Jhirpani and Jalda were found to be working. The first reason being, that after displacement and industrialization the available jobs were male oriented and involved physical risks and hard manual labour inside the steel plant. The data revealed that most of the men were involved in ITI work like rigger, fitter, welder etc. This sector is still male dominated.

Secondly, unlike the CPRs which is accessible to all, the jobs in a market economy is subject to competition. Lack of exposure, encouragement and training amongst women in a male dominated job market led most of the womenfolk stay back at home as housewives.

Thirdly, economic status of a family is an important determinant of participation of women in workforce. With rise in economic status of the families there were no felt need for women to undertake hard work in the organized or unorganized sectors. They preferred to concentrate more on their household responsibilities.

Despite decrease in financial self-reliance among displaced Oraon women in industrial society, it is interesting to note that none of these women in urban areas preferred to live in a situation like that of a pre-displacement society, when they were asked to choose. The reason they gave was that of lack of facilities and intense physical labour in a rural setting.

It was observed that the collection and sale of MFPs may make the Oraon women self reliant in rural areas, it does not necessarily mean a better living condition for them compared to their urban counterparts as basic infrastructural facilities like roads, water supply, transport, electricity, medical help, market etc were completely absent from the village. As women usually are responsible for both productive and reproductive roles, the lack of basic facilities double their burden of work which mostly involved hard manual labour in the rural areas. Absence of basic provisions in the rural areas restricted their movement and choices.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Displacement and industrialization are a reality across the world. Many times the displaced are tribal groups whose identity and cultures are intrinsically attached to their land and surroundings. Displacement from their land brought about tectonic changes in their society often pushing them into extreme poverty and disintegration in the view of the unequal relationship with assertive metropolitan communities which they were forced into. They also risk losing their language, belief systems, traditional knowledge etc. Displacement therefore has a different connotation for tribes than non-tribal communities.

The paper has delved into the impact of displacement and industrialization on the various aspects of the Oraon society. Though, the initial years of displacement had been particularly problematic, the process of industrialization had clearly been a mixed bag for the Oraons. On one hand while their educational and economic status improved, on the other, there were problems like rise in income inequality, loss of language etc.

In the paper a trend of questioning and reinterpretation of many traditional beliefs and practices were seen. Tribal revivalism was an important feature especially among those living in urban areas. The status of women after industrialization has been that of a dichotomy, that is, though there was a marked improvement in the educational status of the women their employment status is negligible and their level of economic self reliance has declined when compared to pre-displacement scenario.

In the present context it is important to ensure protection to the tribal language, culture and handicrafts of the Oraon as a cultural heritage of India. The tribal handicrafts can be promoted and used as a livelihood option for the Oraons of Rourkela, especially those who are living in the rural areas as the raw materials required for the handicraft items as well as the skills to produce them are abundantly available in the rural areas.

Kurukh, the mother tongue of the Oraons, should be made an optional subject in the secondary schools in Rourkela thereby giving the language a new lease of life and ensuring its preservation. This may be done on priority because the decline of usage of Kurukh is acute and it may soon go into extinction if not promoted urgently.

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