

Tribe and Displacement: Social Implications of Rehabilitation

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Indian tribal situation provides a kaleidoscopic picture of varied social formations, cultural heterogeneity and diverse social structures. Being painted with different hues, the Indian tribal canvas has been of unending interest not only to anthropologists but also to administrators, planners and missionaries. The tribal world has attracted the attention of scholars from abroad and at home; however the interests of these scholars and the foci of their studies shifted periodically.

The early scholars, who were mainly missionaries and administrators, had colonial interests and generated works mainly of descriptive nature. Documentation and codification of the way of life of both tribes and castes, and their classification, were the foci of these exercises (Watson and Kaye, 1866; Sherring, 1873-81; Dalton, 1872; Risley, 1891; Thurston, 1906; Iyer, 1909). This phase continued till around the beginning of the twentieth century, during which many cyclopaedic accounts of tribes and castes were produced.

Often overlapping with the first, the second phase of tribal studies began around the beginning of the twentieth century and continued until the 1950s during which certain selected tribes were taken up for more intensive investigation. The emphasis shifted from the study of castes and tribes to the study of tribes. Monographs were produced on 'isolated' tribes with an attempt "to reconstruct tribal cultures in their primitive purity" rather than to understand how they were changing historically (Bose, 1963: 35). Towards the later part of this period, interest in the study of change was noticed among scholars at home (Roy, 1928; Majumdar, 1937). Tribes were viewed as if they were moving from a static and uncontaminated condition to the state of change. Phrases such as "tribes in transition" were popularised by scholars of this period. Such an interest in the socio-cultural change among the tribes was not because of the fact that these

communities were changing at a fast pace but mainly because of the conceptual problem inherent in the definition of tribe (Béteille, 1986).

Since the 1950s, interest shifted towards treating village as a fruitful unit of anthropological study. This could be attributed to the adoption of community development programme at the National level where village became the unit and focus of all economic planning. During the period from the 1950s to 1970s, though the Indian anthropologists have contributed substantially to the concepts and theoretical paradigms for understanding the structure and processes of change in caste and kinship of village India, the studies on tribes were largely relegated to the background or at best did not witness a substantial departure from its colonial legacy.

However, since the 1970s there has been a resurgence of tribal studies in India. The post-70s studies carried a humanistic understanding of these communities. This was the time when a majority of Indian tribes were being exposed to the forces of modernization and, quite naturally, anthropologists have taken interest in the studies of change. These are studies of those changes which resulted because of planned development such as installation of industries or construction of river dam projects in tribals areas.

In a nutshell, it is submitted here that the studies conducted on Indian tribes can be broadly classified into two traditions. The earlier studies, carried out by administrators and missionaries, romanticised the tribal cultures. The later were directed towards a humanistic understanding of these people where the study of the impact of modernization and development occupied a central place. However, a majority of them dealt with the processes of socio-economic transformations but at a superficial level. This study is an attempt to arrive at an indepth understanding of the

processes of change among the Paraja, a hill tribe of southern Orissa, resulting because of their dislocation from the traditional habitat due to the construction of a river dam project. Understanding the impact of displacement and rehabilitation on the social structure of the displaced community has been a challenging task for the anthropologists. They have also explored the different shades of meaning associated with the concept of "Development". For the economists, development is an increase in growth rate or per capita income, for politicians it is the acquisition of some symbols of modernization and progress, for administrators it is achieving the targets and for social anthropologists it is the enhancement of quality of life or standard of living or satisfaction of basic needs, aspiration level and happiness (Dube, 1988). There is a growing realization that development can no longer be understood in terms of statistical indices, political symbols or economic parameters. For an integral development of a community, the developmental strategies should be formulated in accordance with the locally-felt, culturally-conditioned individual and group needs.

But unfortunately our experiences with the issue of development have been far from satisfaction. After independence the Government of India introduced the five year plans which envisaged two major components, the poverty amelioration programmes and installation of modern and heavy industries. But none of them has been successful in its mission. The poverty alleviation programmes were meant for the economically backward communities, the major chunk of which comprised Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Though these programmes had tribes and other backward communities as their target groups, they were never formulated in accordance with the felt needs of the individuals and cultural nuances of the group. As a consequence, these programmes were mostly rejected or at best evoked lukewarm response (Dube, 1958; Vidyarthi, 1963; Bhandari, 1988; Chaudhury, 1993).

The other component of our planning involved installation of heavy industries most of which were located in inaccessible tribal areas. These programmes were elitist in their ap-

proach catering to the needs of industrialists, rich farmers and educated middle and upper class. The needs of the local populations and their problems were never considered in designing and implementing such projects. In other words, ideally speaking, these programmes had different target groups, which did not favour the Scheduled Tribes and other backward communities of the locality. Such projects (heavy industries and big dams) became the symbols of modernization and development primarily due to the advocacy they received from the political leaders. Though these projects were envisaged for the welfare of the entire society, they affected the local population in an adverse way, unleashing devastating consequences for them. Installation of heavy industries in tribal areas required a vast tract of the land to be colonised, thus leading to the displacement of the local populations, the logical entailment of which was rehabilitation of uprooted communities. The Government machinery never paid adequate attention to such issues, as a result of which the local communities suffered the most. Displacement of these people has affected their social structure. The so-called development (for a particular section of the society) brings out destruction for these communities virtually resulting in the breakdown of social network and creation of a cultural dysphoria.

After independence, the late Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru ordained high dams as India's 'secular temples'. India, seeking to realize Nehru's vision, has become the world's greatest dam builder (Morse, 1992). These dams have created large scale displacement of the local population. Several studies have been conducted to assess the impact of displacement and rehabilitation in different areas. These studies were primarily conducted either by the social geographers or economists (Sawant, 1985) or by voluntary activists and social workers as mentioned later in this chapter. They have confined themselves either to the discussion of infrastructural facilities, or to the cost-benefit analysis, or they have challenged the very idea of building big dams. Therefore the ethical issues along with the political ones occupied a central place in such studies. They

either condemned, in an emotional way, the Government's insensitivity towards the alarming issue of displacement or they have highlighted the immediate effect of dislocation. Most of these studies treated the displaced people as homogenous and thus ignored the cultural variability amongst them, as a result they produced studies of shallow depth throwing little light on the intricate relationship between social life and displacement.

This is not to deny that social anthropologists have not studied issues pertaining to displacement, rehabilitation and social structure. What is argued here is that very few studies have been conducted in this regard. Studies of displacement and rehabilitation were started by anthropologists as early as the 1950s (Scudder, 1973: 48), but could not become an enriched field of inquiry even after four decades. The studies of displacement and rehabilitation are still a relatively new and emerging area in anthropology: "It is an area which is relatively unexplored not only in Indian anthropology but also in anthropology anywhere" (Béteille, 1990: 12).

Studies of displacement and resettlement conducted in many third-world and developing nations such as Brazil, Indonesia, Java, Kenya and other countries report disappointing experiences. The development of Sao Francisco river basin in Brazil included the construction of several major dams such as Sobradinho, Paulo Alfonso, Itaparica and other dams. Lake Sobradinho, which displaced 65,000 people, had particularly disastrous socio-economic consequences. Even 14 years after the resettlement, the precarious economic situation at the relocation site has not significantly improved (Hall, 1989). Studies on Itaipu dam resettlement (Kohlhepp, 1987) and Tucuruí dam resettlement (Mougeot, 1986, 1988) have also reported similar findings.

In Indonesia, the Kedung Ombo dam and irrigation project located in central Java carried unrealistic assumptions about the transmigration of the reservoir inhabitants (World Bank Report 1983). The local people, mostly small land holders, altogether refused to move out from the reservoir area even after impoundment began (Budiman, 1989).

In Kenya's Kiambere reservoir area, the post-relocation impact study found that resettlers' average land holding size diminished to less than half and their livestock were reduced by more than a third and more than thirty three per cent of the resettlers were still without new houses by the end of the Project (Mburugu, 1988). Similar experiences were also reported from other countries. In Nepal, a survey found that the majority of the families displaced from the Kulekhani reservoir became poorer after dislocation (Hufschmidt and McCauley, 1988). These studies highlighted the counter development consequences of population displacement (Cerne, 1990).

Anthropological studies on displacement and rehabilitation started in India around the late 50s, and early 60s. Two important studies of this period are worth mentioning. Roy Burman's (1962) study of displaced tribals of undivided Sundergarh district of Orissa due to the construction of Rourkela steel plant highlighted various factors affecting the process of displacement. Karve and Kimbker's (1969) study of Koyna dam project dealt with the impact of displacement and rehabilitation on the family and kinship system of the displaced communities of Maharashtra. In addition, during this period (1950-1970) anthropologists also paid attention to the rehabilitation of nomadic and denotified communities (Majumdar, 1951; Biswas, 1954; Bose and Bharara, 1967; Bharal, 1968; Bhowmick, 1968; Mishra, 1969).

After the 1970s, as stated earlier, there was a resurgence of tribal studies in Indian anthropology. In the 1980s, other social scientists such as economists, political scientists, human and social geographers, social activists and students of law became interested and involved in the academic issues and practical problems of tribal communities. It was mainly because of the fact that the question of dam building and the associated displacement of the indigenous people from their traditional habitat became linked up with the issue of human rights. The primary concern of these studies was the issue of economic vs social cost, the antagonism towards big dam, the state policies on displacement and rehabilita-

tion, and macro-level evaluation of large dams in India.

Towards the later part of the 80s and in the beginning of the present decade, social anthropologists are giving adequate attention to these issues (Behura and Mishra, 1988; Behura, 1989; Sudarsan and Kalam, 1990; Baboo, 1992; Mahapatra, 1992; and Sanwal and Sak-sena, 1993). Behura's 1989 study of relocatees of Rengali dam in Orissa insightfully analyses the rehabilitation policy, highlights the economic problem and socio-cultural consequences. It provides an understanding of the dynamics of social change with special reference to sibling relationship, nature of cooperation, causes of conflict and the institution of kinship and marriage. Baboo's (1992) study attempts to reconstruct the socio-cultural life of the oustees of the Hirakud dam who underwent traumatic experiences in the 1950s because of displacement. Mahapatra (1992) highlights the rehabilitation process and problems of displaced tribals of Orissa in the comparative perspective of the situation in some other states in India.

The present paper examines the social implication of rehabilitation in cases the Paraja, a hill tribe of South Orissa. The Paraja have been in a continuous process of adapting to the new environment by bringing out several changes in their social life and belief system. Some dimensions of the Paraja social structure have been severely affected though other dimensions have remained unaffected to that extent. In a nutshell, displacement had a differential impact on the organisation of the community studied. Any displacement essentially involves a change in territory and since a village is the territorial organisation, it underwent several perceptible changes due to displacement. The other dimension which underwent marked changes is the relationship of the Paraja with neighbouring communities. New relations have emerged, some of which are detrimental for the well-being of the community. There are also many frustrating experiences pertaining to formal education and the associated activities. We shall now discuss these changes in detail.

CHANGES IN THE VILLAGE ORGANISATION

The changing power structure – emergence of new leaders and relegation of the earlier leaders to the background – of the colony can be understood by having an idea about the village organisation at Paraja Pandi, the original village from where they were displayed.

The Village Organisation at Paraja Pandi

Paraja Pandi had four *Naiks* (village chiefs). They were: 1. Sunduru Naik s/o Sukuru Naik, 2. Arjun Jani s/o Taila Jani, 3. Hari Muduli s/o Dhanda Muduli and 4. Ghasi Muduli s/o Kulia Muduli. Of them, the father of Sunduru Naik and Arjun Jani were never *Naiks* of Paraja Pandi. But the father of Hari Muduli and Ghasi Muduli were former *Naiks*. Hari Muduli was also the Sarpanch of Paraja Pandi Panchayat.

Paraja Pandi was very large in terms of its area and population. Therefore, it was difficult for one *Naik* to manage the affairs of the village. The village was divided into two parts, *Oopar Sahi* and *Tala Sahi* (i.e., upper street and lower street respectively). Two *Naiks* were holding the charge of these two different streets, and were called *Bada Naiks*. Sunduru Naik and Hari Muduli were *Bada Naiks* and the other two, i.e. Arjun Jani and Ghasi Muduli, assisted the *Bada Naiks*. The villagers of Paraja Pandi used to call them *Naik*. They were deputed to direct the Chalan (another village official) regarding the reception and treatment of Government officials and other outsiders who visited the village.

Sunduru Naik remained *Naik* for nearly twenty years. He was very popular in Paraja Pandi. He died in 1982 at the age of 60. After his death, his brother Chaitan became the *Naik*. He functioned as *Naik* of Paraja Pandi for nearly five years. He was 50 years old when the village was displaced. Chaitan availed the compensation in cash and migrated to Koraput.

Hari Muduli's father Dhanda Muduli was also the *Naik* of Paraja Pandi. After the death of Dhanda, Hari became the *Naik*. He held the

position of *Naik* for nearly 7 to 8 years. He raised his voice against the Government's decision to displace them and organised protest by calling meetings, marching with people to the district collectorate and handing over memorandum to the concerned authority etc. He died in 1987 in Paraja Pandi when the village was being displaced.

The *Barik* of Paraja Pandi was Donguru Hantal, a Dom by caste. The Dom occupy a very low position in the existing local ritual hierarchy. The office of *Barik* in Paraja Pandi was hereditary. Donguru Hantal's father Kamulu Hantal was also the *Barik* of Paraja Pandi. Kamulu Hantal had two sons, Donguru and Urdhab. After the death of Kamulu, Donguru, being the elder one, was selected as *Barik* of Paraja Pandi.

Emerging Village Organisation in the Colony

The villagers of Paraja Pandi have settled at two different places - near Batasana and near Lalmunda. In the process of displacement, the existing village organisation of Paraja Pandi was also dismantled. Since village organisation is necessarily a territorial organisation, it was quite obvious that the existing village organisation suffered a set back with the change of the place of dwelling.

In needs to be mentioned here that the Paraja practice of *padabhidiba* - performed by the *Disari* before selecting the *Naik* and *Barik* of the village - legitimizes the claim that village organization is essentially a territorial organisation. In the ritual of *padabhidiba* the *Disari* matches the quality of the soil (*matigune*) with the qualities of the person aspiring for the offices of the *Naik* and *Barik*. In this ritual the person concerned puts his feet on the soil at a central place of the village. The *Disari* chants some verses and enter into a meditative state and after few minutes he goes into trance. In this condition, he gives his judgements whether this person is suitable for this particular land or not. If the *Naik's pada* (foot) matches with the soil then, the Paraja believe, agriculture, domestic animals like cow, hen and boar (*Bariha* or wild pig) food items like ragi and rice of the village will be alright. Natural ca-

lamities like cyclone and epidemics would not be able to cause much harm to the village. The Paraja believe that the suitability of a person is not absolute. It depends, to a great extent, on the qualities of the soil on which the whole social space is located. Therefore before selecting persons for such responsible positions of the *Naik* and *Barik*, they take the help of *Disari* who matches the quality of the soil and the suitability of a person.

When the villagers of Paraja Pandi landed on a new soil (*i.e.* Lalmunda and Batasana Rehabilitation Colony), it was imperative for them, according to the traditional Paraja beliefs and practices, to change the existing office bearers of the village and select new ones more suitable to this new soil. In Lalmunda Rehabilitation Colony, Laichan Muduli, brother of former *Naik* Hari Muduli was selected by *Disari* as the *Naik* in the year 1988. He occupied the office for 3 years. In January 1991, he had gone to visit his daughter who was married and was staying in a nearby village. There he fell ill and died in the month of Pusa. When the last phase of the field work was being conducted in January 1992, it was found that the post of *Naik* of Lalmunda Rehabilitation colony was vacant for the last one year, they had not formally selected anyone for this office. They were planning to do so in the month of *Chait* (March-April) of 1992.

In the Lalmunda colony, Kamlaichan Hantal was selected as *Barik* of the village. He was the son of Urdhab Hantal who was the brother of Donguru, the *Barik* of Paraja Pandi. He was also selected by the *Disari* along with Laichan Muduli (*Naik*) in 1988.

In the Bastasana Rehabilitation Colony, Magha Jani was selected as the *Naik* of the village. One year after their arrival in the village, in the month of *Chait*, the Kumhar *Disari* was called to select the *Naik* and *Barik* of the village. Initially, the *Disari* selected Taila Jani for the office of *Naik*. But he was a person of different aptitude. He preferred to lead an easy going life than to discharge the responsibility. He thought that he cannot discharge the duties of a *Naik* which demands lot of time and energy. After his refusal, the *Disari* selected Magha Jani as *Naik*.

After few months the villagers felt the necessity of an assistant to *Naik* because it was not easy for Magha Jani to move around for keeping the liaison with the Government officials and outsiders as well as to look after the village affairs. Therefore, the villagers selected Bandhu Kirsani, popularly known as Bandhu *Naik*, as the second *Naik* of the village. However, Bandu was not selected by *Disari*; rather, he was selected by the people.

The selection of *Naik* by *Disari*, and the selection of a *Naik* by the people do not entail similar social consequences. When the *Disari* selects a *Naik*, such a selection derives its legitimacy from the other world, i.e. the world of supernatural. The Paraja believe that there are few persons with some extrahuman qualities, and only they can occupy the office of a *Naik*. If the *Naik* is having good fortune or has a smooth life of his own, the future of the village will definitely be good. Such a belief symbolically equates the *Naik* with the whole village. This belief is not applicable to those *Naiks* selected by the people themselves. Such *Naiks* have been chosen because the empirical social situation demanded it. Their selection has practical utility in the sense that he provides a helping hand to the *Naik*. When the *Naik* is absent he can also take decision, and when the *Naik* is present, he always consults the second *Naik* while taking a decision. The *Naik* selected by the people derives legitimacy from the natural/practical world.

The *Disari* also selected Suti Hantal, the brother of Donguru Hantal, who was *Barik* of Paraja Pandi as the new *Barik* of Batasana colony. But, after a few months, the wife of Suti Hantal died and he left the colony and went to Jeypore. After his departure, the villagers selected Dulabh Benia as *Barik* in 1989.

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

At Paraja Pandi the economic activities were characterised by great diversity. In addition to cultivation, the villagers were engaged in secondary occupations such as fishing, basket making and making of leaf plates, ropes, collection of fuel wood, making char-

coal out of such wood and selling them in the Market. In Paraja Pandi fishing was an important alternative source of livelihood. The people used to fish and sell them in the nearby Koraput town. The income from fishing supplemented the household budget which periodically is affected by decreasing production or crop failure. After dislocation, the nature of physical environment and availability of limited economic opportunities in the rehabilitation colony has acted as a constraint on their economy. The fishing nets became redundant because there was no opportunity to use them. The Paraja who had learned and developed the skill of fishing over generations have been suddenly thrown out of this occupation. They nostalgically remember the good old days - when they could fall back on fishing at the time of contingency.

The economic ventures based on food and general fuel collection have also experienced a set back because of rehabilitation. Traditionally the Paraja women engaged themselves in collection activities, such as *piri* and *balni* (grass for making brooms), fuel wood and edible roots. They also burn the wood to make charcoal and sell them in nearby market. Thus women in the traditional village could generate little funds for buying certain personal items such as jewellery, cosmetics, hair bands, ribbons, etc. for themselves. They never depend on their husbands who usually resisted such moves. But in the rehabilitation colony such little incomes by Paraja women were virtually absent. As a consequence the relative economic independence of Paraja women was affected. The women started using some portions of their household funds for their personal consumption. Diversion of funds has often led to misunderstandings between the couples.

A number of cases were recorded where the crux of conjugal conflict lay in the relative dependence of women on men. When women could earn independently, no one had any right over their income; they could spend it in the way they desired. Once the source of these incomes ceased, the women had no option but to ask for money from their husbands, or irregularise the household budget. Because of this,

the conjugal discords became an everyday affair. If the men scolded women for fancying personal items, the women retaliated by drawing attention to habits – such as drinking liquor – to which their men were enslaved. The Paraja women feel that the upper Kolab Project has been detrimental to the relative freedom they enjoyed in the past.

EMERGING SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CONSEQUENT EXPLOITATION

Of various changes in several social relationships, the changes in the moneylender and borrower relationship is worth mentioning. In Paraja Pandi, the money lenders were from their own community; for instance, Raghunath Jani and Jaganath Machadi were rich landlords and used to give loans i: cash or kind. This was possible because of the large land holding and their entrepreneurial capability. Some of the Paraja were able to generate little surplus through hard work and the available resources – both human and material. Thus they were in a position to help their fellow tribals whenever the latter needed money or food grains. Though the rich Paraja were giving money on loan, it was not the sole business. The practice of money lending was carried out because the social situation demanded it and such an activity was surcharged with empathy and a sense of fraternity rather than any profit motive. The money lender and the borrower both being from the same community the relationship was that of a paternalistic type. The rate of interest charged by the Paraja money lenders was also very low and the method of loan recovery was neither exploitative nor forceful.

When the whole village of Paraja Pandi was dislocated and the villagers came to the new area they had to find a place in the existing social system of the region. It needs to be mentioned here that though the Paraja were relatively self-sufficient they always needed other communities on whom they depended economically. But the kind of economic dependence that existed between the Paraja and non Paraja in Paraja Pandi was of a different nature. They needed earthen pots, 'Kumbhars'

were there to provide. They needed oil, the 'Telis' of neighbouring region fulfilled this need. They needed country liquor, the 'Doms' provided them. Such kind of economic transactions were paid instantly. The same kind of economic dependence among Paraja and other communities has also been obtained in the new setting. Along with this, a new kind of dependence relationship has surfaced in Paraja society involving them and the 'Sundis', a money lending and trading caste of the region. The Sundis migrated from the plains and they are famous for being very miser, calculative and cunning in their business. Such a social stereotype characterising the nature of the Sundi caste is not only found among the Paraja but also among the other tribes and castes of the region. The Sundis buy paddy, ragi, alsu and other crops cultivated by the local tribals and sell them in the nearby towns of Koraput, Jeypore, Kotpad and Boriguma. Some of the Sundis own rice mills, oil mills and cloth shops. The Sundis are called *Sahukar* or *Mahajan*. The Sundi *Sahukars* or *Mahajans* give loans in cash or kind to the poor Paraja and other tribals with a very high rate of interest. The rate of interest often touches nearly 150 per cent. If the Paraja is unable to pay the loan the Sundi *Mahajan* forcibly recovers the amount by using various unscrupulous means. It needs to be mentioned here that Sundi *Sahukar* enter into such a relationship due to their own interest. On the contrary the Paraja money lenders of Paraja Pandi enter into such a relationship mainly because of the need of the borrower. The profession of Sundis that is the trading of agricultural produce – and the practice of money lending went on very well with each other. In other words there was a structural congruence or fit between these two kinds of activities. The Sundis were the traders but the Paraja were the producers. For selling the agricultural produce in the nearby towns the Sundis had to buy them from the Paraja. Because of the unproductive nature of the soil, unpredictable rain fall and low level of technology the Paraja were in a state of perpetual economic hardship. They produce very little which would have been just sufficient for their consumption. Then they would not have

sold a substantial part of the agricultural produce at the cost of their very survival. But the empirical situation is very different where the Paraja are bound to sell a substantial part of their agricultural produce to the Sundi Sahukars five/six months before the harvest. It needs to be mentioned here that in the rehabilitation colonies the Paraja could only cultivate the kharif crops. The complete absence of irrigation facility has ruled out any possibility of rabi crops. Whatever they produce in the month of November and December feeds them till March or at best till April. The season of starvation and borrowing starts from May onwards. Some of the Paraja go to work with the building, road and forest contractors on daily wage basis. But to get a regular income from such work is not only difficult but also rare. In such a situation of economic hardship the Paraja were quite vulnerable to falling in the trap of the money lenders. The Sundi Sahukars take advantage of the situation and lure them to borrow money. The Sahukars project themselves as the well wisher of the tribals. Magha Jani, the Naik of the Batasana Rehabilitation Colony recalls how the 'sahukar' visited the colony in 1989 and asked each and every household about their domestic requirements. The terms and conditions of the loans were very simple, easily intelligible for the local Paraja.

If a Paraja is unable to repay the loan the amount gets doubled in the next year and after second year if he still does not pay, the 'Sahukar' can forcibly take some of his belongings or can force him to work on his behalf in the rice mill or in his field. Such an exploitative relationship was absent in the village of Paraja Pandi and it was a product of displacement and rehabilitation. Displacement of the community has led to complete destruction of economy and rehabilitating them in a social space full of the tentacles of 'Sundi Sahukar' has further worsened their condition of living. The rehabilitation officers or the authority often ignore such social dimension of rehabilitation by confining their attention to geographical, material and infrastructural aspects. When a society is relocated, it is not only the internal structure which gets dis-

turbed but also the fringe relations or relations linking it to other societies also get disturbed. Thus the community has to find an anchor in the new social space by entering into new relationships on different planes. In this case the Paraja community has entered into a new relationship of perpetual indebtedness with the local Sundi Sahukars.

MAINTENANCE OF THE 'BASA'

In the colony the Paraja are finding it difficult to maintain and repair their *basa* (houses). In the traditional village, the houses were usually repaired after every three to four years. Repairing involved changing of the roof along with the bamboos which supported them and minor alterations in the mud walls which would strengthen the existing structure. Since the Batasana Rehabilitation Colony was an uninhabited forest land, the area is full of termites and other insects which cause great damage to the roof and as a result it needs to be changed at every alternate year. For building the rehabilitation colony, soil was brought from nearby upland areas and the ground was made even. Since this activity took place only a year before the actual shifting, the ground was not ready to sustain the weight of the structures like houses. As a result it was often noted that some portion of the houses sank downwards causing unevenness in symmetry and in height. This in turn also affects the longevity of the roof. Thus, the Paraja have to rebuild the walls and roof of the houses every year or at least every alternate year which has resulted in wastage of money and manpower.

Another area where a lot of money and manpower were needed was converting the allotted barren land into cultivable land. It needs to be mentioned here that even though the rehabilitation policy entails some additional payment for the act of first ploughing, the people never received it. So to make the land cultivable most of the people sold out some of the household goods and cattle. Kesab Rana sold the cows and bullocks for Rs. 9,010/- out of which Rs. 6,000/- was spent on reclaiming the land for agricultural purpose. Since the land is not very fertile and moreover it in-

volved heavy initial expenditure, agriculture has not remained a very profitable economic activity during the time when fieldwork was conducted.

IMPACT ON KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Displacement and rehabilitation have differential impact on the institutions of kinship and marriage. The rule of patrilineal descent has provided the solidarity to various kin groups, such as: *kuda*, *bauns* and *kotar* (lineage, clan and the domestic group respectively). These groups were usually dispersed over the region, but the members used to meet one another on periodic *kuda* rituals. These rituals latently served the purpose of reinforcing and renewing the *kuda* solidarity. It needs to be mentioned here that one should live within a reasonable geographical distance for a comfortable participation in such rituals. Uprooting of the village implied severing of its kin ties with the neighbouring villages. The displaced villagers suddenly find themselves in an environment, to a great extent, devoid of the broader kinship space relations. The village became cut off from the wider kinship networks. It is not argued that the kinship ties which were over flowing the territorial boundaries of the village ceased to exist. Ideally speaking, these relationship existed in the normative cognitive plane but empirically speaking they lost their meaning. *Kuda* relations are characterised by mutual cooperation, understanding and extension of help at time of emergency. When the *kuda* solidarity is affected, the *kuda* relations could not have remained unchanged. Dislocation of the village has resulted in weakening of kin ties, if understood in this perspective. There has been a close association of Paraja kinship with territory. *Kuda* is a patrilineal local group. It is territorially defined. Members of the same *kuda* occupying a particular territory (a geographical space which can be easily travelled) constitute a local group. Local groups are the most important ones in the consideration of marriages. Displacement has effected these local groups and thus has deeper consequences for

the institution of marriage. The institution of marriage has become a costly proposition in the rehabilitation colonies. The neighbouring communities of the villages surrounding the rehabilitation colony belong to different tribes. Therefore matrimonial alliance with them was ruled out. The displaced Paraja had to travel a long distance to seek a spouse.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR AND THE DOMESTIC GROUP

Another important change perceptible within the domain of agricultural cycle is the employment of hired labour for cultivation during the initial period of ploughing. The institution of hired labour was not completely absent in Paraja Pandi. In traditional villages it is the rich farmer who used to hire labour and employ them in his agricultural field. The payment used to be always in kind: either two full meals a day or a fixed amount of food grain per harvest. These labourers could be from the same community/village or from the neighbouring community or village. In case of the Batasana Rehabilitation Colony it was observed that even the poor farmers are taking the help of hired labourers to cultivate the land. It seems quite surprising that how a family which could not feed itself with the existing resources could afford to go for hired labour. It needs to be mentioned here that the Paraja men found it difficult to cultivate the barren land with the available labour force existing within the family. Labour was never in short supply in the traditional Paraja society where the members used to rely on the labour force available within the domestic group. The domestic group usually comprised four or five nuclear families tied by the bond of patrilineal kinship. A bigger kin group was definitely more functional for exploitation of natural resources including cultivation of land. When the Paraja were enumerated in Paraja Pandi, the individuals with their own nuclear families were included in the list of beneficiaries. And when they were shifted it was observed that there was a perceptible dispersion of the members which often comprised one domestic groups. Some of the in-

dividuals belonging to the same domestic group preferred to stay back on the hill tops of Paraja Pandi. These individuals engaged themselves in cultivation of those lands which were never submerged.

It was observed that economic factors were of paramount importance for the people and the ties of kinship could not sustain the group as a unified entity. Thus, the *Kotar* (domestic group) has undergone temporary changes at the time of displacement but it is likely that over a period of time new *Kotar* would emerge taking up the roles it once played in the social life of Paraja Pandi.

Finally, it can be said that since the *Kotar* as an economic unit is being replaced by nuclear family as an economic unit (at least temporarily) the availability of labour force within the nuclear family is scarce. As a result they go for hired labour which do not come from outside the village but the fellow villagers supply this labour. The payment is either in terms of provision of food during the agricultural cycle or a fixed amount of food grain. The relationship between the employer of the labour and the employee is marked with existence of greater degree of acquaintance, sentimental attachment, humanitarian concern and a sense of fraternity. Such elements are absent from this relationship when the Paraja go to work as daily wage earner in the nearby urban centres and towns.

INVISIBILITY AND VISIBILITY

Change in the Institution of *Basaghar*

When the Paraja of Paraja Pandi came to the rehabilitation colonies the institution of *basaghar* (dormitory) disappeared completely. It was quite natural on part of the members of the uprooted society to pay attention to those areas of social life which were of critical importance for their very survival. Institutions such as family, kinship, economy and religion, never became invisible though they underwent certain perceptible changes and modifications. Entertainment was not the major issue before them and therefore the institutions pertaining to merry making were

relegated to the backdrop and remained underground for quite a few years. When the fieldwork was conducted in 1987-88, there was no *basaghar* in the colony. However, the boys of the Batasana Rehabilitation Colony used to visit the *basaghar* of Lalmunda, the only Paraja village in the vicinity. So, the choice of marriage partners for the uprooted people became limited as the area is inhabited by Bhatra and Gadaba tribes. The situation for the Paraja girls of the rehabilitation colony was even worse. It was customary among Paraja girls not to visit the *dhangadabasa* of any other village. The Paraja girls can only greet and treat the boys in their *basaghar*. Since the Batasana colony never had any *dhangidibasa* for the initial few years, the Paraja boys of Lalmunda could not visit them in a formal way.

It was only in January 1992 when the last phase of fieldwork was conducted, emergence of two *basaghar* was noticed. The second house of Magha Jani was being used as *dhangidibasa* and the house of Bandhu Kirsani was being used as *dhangadabasa*. Though the boys and girls assemble together, sing and dance and involved themselves in all kinds of merry-making, the general dissatisfaction pertains to the lack of any deep jungle around, which can provide them privacy for closer and intimate interaction. According to the informants, the *basaghar* came up only three-four months before i.e. tentatively around September-October 1991. The institution of *basaghar* is still at an incipient stage of development as there is no distinction in the sleeping place in terms of the age of the members. It is said that the *basaghar* at Paraja Pandi used to have different areas marked for sleeping of members belonging to different age groups.

The argument that the *basaghar* is only an institution for merry-making and entertainment is not absolutely correct. The role of *basaghar* in instilling certain values and morals of the society into the minds of younger generation cannot be ignored. The members learn how to sing, how to dance and how to go for a hunting expedition etc. from the elders who usually visit the *basaghar*. Therefore, *basaghar* definitely contributes in reproducing the

system. But when the whole system was at stake reproduction of *basaghar* was not of much relevance to them. Therefore, even though the *basaghar* had an important role towards reproducing the system, it disappeared for a few years and came into existence only recently after certain aspects of the social life has settled.

FORMAL EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATED FRUSTRATIONS

Though formal education has never remained a source of attraction to many Paraja boys and girls, it did influence the social life of Paraja Pandi. There was a primary school at Paraja Pandi with classes upto fifth. There were two teachers in charge of the school. One of them was residing in the village and the other used to come from Koraput. The teacher who was staying in the village was very co-operative, committed and helpful. He was taking much pain to persuade the parents to send their children to school. He was also trying his best to convince the children of school-going age to come and attend classes. The teacher was posted at Paraja Pandi in June 1980, seven years before the actual displacement took place. During these seven years, the teacher could generate some degree of consciousness among the villagers as a result of which some Paraja boys and girls started attending the school. Arjun Deodia nostalgically remembers the concern, care and incentive provided by the teacher when he used to attend the classes. Whenever he came up with an achievement by solving a pattern or answering a difficult question the school master provided reward in form of small chocolates. Once he was ill and could not attend the classes for three consecutive days. The school master enquired about his absence and when came to learn about his illness he visited him at his place.

When the Paraja left Paraja Pandi and came to the rehabilitation colony, they not only missed the services of a committed and caring master but also the facility of having any educational institution. Though in the rehabilitation plan a school building was construct-

ed it never functioned as a school. The nearest school was the 'Batasana Government Primary School' nearly four kilometers away from the colony. After coming to the rehabilitation colony most of the school going children stopped going to school as there was no facility. After two years, in 1989, two ambitious Paraja boys decided to take admission in Batasana Government primary school for their education. Here the case of Arjun Deodia will provide us an insight into the condition of humiliation they faced in the new environment.

Case 1

Arjun Deodia, a young boy of 12 years, was the son of Dhanarjoy Deodia. At Paraja Pandi he was in class IInd and going to school regularly. After coming to the rehabilitation colony, he went to Batasana Government primary school in 1989 with Lalit Jani, son of Kamudu Jani of the same colony. Both of them enrolled themselves in the school. It was a residential school with boarding facility. But they could stay there only for two days. The total number of students were nearly 30 to 40. They were mainly from Bhatra, one of the Scheduled Tribes of this region, famous for the elaborate skill of bird trapping and other caste groups.

On the first day when he was attending the classes the Bhatra students ridiculed him as he could not keep academic pace with the rest of the class. It was quite natural on his part as he never went to school in the last two years. The period from 1987 to 1989 was the period of trauma for this young boy as he saw the dispersal of his friend circle, his relatives, his classmates and close kins. He was also a silent witness to the brutal act of dismantling his house by police men and the consequent traumatic experience faced by him along with his other family members.

He did not get any kind of moral protection from his teachers against such ridicule. Since he was a committed and serious student at Paraja Pandi, the incident did upset him to some extent. However he had dinner that evening and went to bed. Next day morning the same thing again happened in the class room. In the afternoon he was playing football. He could not play well. Therefore he was

subjected to more humiliation and even scolding. The Bhatra students - who were in his team scolded him by saying "You Paraja are good for nothing. Neither can you read nor play. You are inferior. You fools get lost".

He was very depressed. He told his teacher about these incidents. The teacher tried to curb the mischief of Bhatra students but they continued to harass him. Therefore, he left the school disappointed and came back.

The question arises that why Arjun Deodia and Lalit Jani, the two Paraja inhabitants of Batasana Rehabilitation Colony were humiliated. The case latently highlights the relationship between the Paraja and Bhatra. The Bhatra are superior to the Paraja in the local hierarchy. In the domain of ritual purity and pollution, they are closer to the Hindu caste as they do not eat the meat of buffaloes and cows. The Paraja, on the other hand, are beef eaters. It was because of this food habit the Paraja are looked down upon by other tribals and castes of the region and occupy a very low position in the ritual scale. Here, the intension is not to convey that Paraja suddenly came to occupy such a low position, in the ritual hierarchy after displacement. The Paraja of Paraja Pandi were never regarded as superior by other Hindu caste groups and tribals including the Bhatra. But the Paraja of Paraja Pandi had their own social space of interaction, their own territory of discourse with in which they led a comfortable life of dignity, free from any such social impulses which instil a sense of inferiority and indignity. Moreover, displacement from the traditional habitat and their rehabilitation in the new environment generated a different kind of feeling among the earlier inhabitants of the new region. They look at the migrants as if the latter are poor and taking the advantage of Government facilities extended to them in terms of housesite, agricultural land and compensation amount. Immigration of the new comers may lead to new kinds of problems like theft and killing of cow thereby polluting the region. Thus the Paraja new comers were never greeted locally by the Bhatra and other communities of the region.

IMPACT ON THE BELIEFS AND RITUALS

The rehabilitation colony, as stated earlier, is completely devoid of any forests around it. The displaced Paraja find it extremely difficult to arrange fuel for domestic consumption. They collect dry herbs and grasses which are available scantily. The woman folk travel long distance and have to spent almost the whole day in collecting fuel required for daily consumption. Critical circumstances and special occasions demand a good amount of fuel. Fuel wood is necessary for many collective occasions varying from celebrations of the marriage feast to the burning of the dead body. The Paraja cremate the dead body in *masani* (cremation ground) after which the person becomes a *dumba* (ancestral spirit). The *dumba* comes, sits near the house and watches the behaviour of his descendants. If the *dumba* is satisfied it will not cause any harm. If dissatisfied it can cause diseases like Diarrhoea, blood vomiting, continuous fever, sleep disturbances due to severe anxiety, sometimes resulting in extreme weakness. The annoyed *dumba* can also create problems during agricultural operation resulting in decreased production or crop failure. The Paraja believe that the *dumba* comes and sit around the field watching the crop. The *dumba* are very closely and emotionally attached with the land which they had owned and cultivated in the remote past. The *dumba* become satisfied if the Paraja follow the principle of division of labour, give proper attention to the timely performances of the required agricultural operation and perform *dumba Puja* (ancestor worship) in the agricultural field before the crop is brought to the house. The people of the rehabilitation colony believe that the *dumba* are terribly annoyed with them because of many reasons. First of all they left those lands to which the *dumba* were emotionally attached. Secondly the *dumba* are annoyed because of the fact that the dead bodies are buried in the rehabilitation colony and not cremated. The only exception to this was father of Dasi Jani who died in the rehabilitation colony. Dasi Jani was a rich person, therefore he could arrange fuel wood

from Kotpad. Dasi Jani claims to have those pieces of knowledge which a *Disari* knows. On asking he says that he could not have afforded to bury his father because by doing so his *dumba* would have been annoyed.

There are several changes in the celebration of *Chait parab* (Spring festival). Traditionally the *parab* continues for almost a fortnight. The men go on hunting expedition and women wait for them in the village. This is also the period of merry making. In the absence of forest environment in and around rehabilitation colony, hunting has become an extremely difficult proposition. According to the Paraja the ceremonious *beto* can not go round the village. *Beto* refers to a group of hunters who moves around the village in a ceremonious way, worship the *Dongar devi* (Goddess of Mountains) and leaves the village in search of games. At present the Paraja celebrate *Chait parab* only for 3 to 4 days. The *beto* goes round the village, hunts *gundri* (locally available small birds) in the *dongar* (hilly) land and comes back. The period of merry making has also been reduced. The enthusiasm and zeal is absent to a great extent.

VOLUNTARY MIGRATION OF THE DOM TO PARAJA COLONIES

Traditionally the Dom, a Scheduled Caste acted as trader and mediator for the Paraja living in remote areas. As stated earlier, the Dom occupied an important position in the village organisation. Usually they acted as *Barik* or the messenger in the traditional Paraja villages. This role could also be played by other caste person occupying the same structural position as that of Dom. The Dom were economically dependant on the Paraja. In 1988 when the Paraja were living in the rehabilitation sheds there were thirteen Dom households who migrated to the nearby Jeypore and Koraput town. In 1990 the colony had three Dom households and in 1992 it rose to seven. Some of the Dom households had left the Paraja at the time of economic crisis. However in January 1992 it was noticed that some of the Dom families of the neighbouring region have migrated to the Batasana Rehabilitation col-

ony. The Dom have a symbiotic relationships with the Paraja. They take the cattle of Paraja for grazing and in return get food from every family. The Dom are often treated with sympathy and with a paternalistic attitude by the Paraja. The following case will substantiate the above point.

Case 2

Hari Dom's father lived in a village near Boriguma, a small town at a distance of 20 kms. from the Batasana Rehabilitation colony. He was a poor person without any source of income. In 1989 Hari got married to Gori, daughter of Raghunath Dom of Ghatarala, a village situated just one kilometer away from the Batasana Rehabilitation Colony. After marriage Hari was staying in the house of his father-in-law. After few months she started taking the cattle of some of the Paraja households for grazing. Gradually he became close to Chaitan Pitia, who allowed him to construct a small hut on a portion of the 0.5 acre allotted him by the Government for house construction. At present Hari Dom takes cattle of 8 Paraja households for grazing to the nearby *dongar* (hill). These households give him meals twice a day. Thus in the last two years he has been able to generate little income for himself because of the arrival of the Paraja. Traditionally the relationship between Dom and Paraja has been symbiotic one and such a relationship is again emerging in the present context.

The changes which have been discussed in the foregoing pages clearly reveal that due to displacement and rehabilitation the social fabric of the Paraja experienced upheavals and the local people adapted by bringing out several changes in the Paraja social structure. Organisation of any society crucially involves the environment and locale as important factors in determining the relationship between humanbeings and nature. The adaptations which humans make in order to adjust to a particular environment are clearly reflected in all the major institutions of the society. We have seen how different critical institutions of the Paraja have been differentially affected by displacement and what implications they have

for the people. It is important here to see that the relationship of the Paraja with their original territory was just not in physical or geographical terms rather their cognition and social ethos was determined by these ties with the land.

Resettlement significantly entailed a new life which is full of hardships for them. It is a struggle to adapt again to a new environment by improvising new strategies to eke out basic means of survival. The Paraja faced most important problem in terms of survival resources. Thus in order to make a living and sustain themselves they tried to make changes in certain social relationships. These changes as we have seen were made due to certain practical considerations. Therefore in place of kinship and local group affiliation, new relationships based on other consideration have emerged, may be temporarily, which are more utilitarian in nature. The Paraja have been almost thrown into a new environmental and social set up where they invariably find themselves exploited and marginalised.

However, there are rays of optimism which point toward the strength of traditions and people's belief in traditional social relationships as the base of their social structure. Even in adversity, the Paraja are trying to revive the traditional institutions and beliefs (though in modified forms) which are of critical importance to them.

Finally it can be said that anthropological studies on the impact of displacement and rehabilitation on the social structures of the tribal communities due to the construction of river dam projects and mega industries are not many. In the absence of such studies the perceived reality is always a view from without and the emic view is grossly missing in the developments policy and strategies. To fill this gap, the present study endeavours to understand the impact of displacement and rehabilitation on the social structure of the Paraja due to the construction of the Upper Kolab River Dam Project in Koraput district of Orissa.

The Paraja are a hill tribe inhabiting the mountainous ranges and dense forest of Koraput. Though the tribe has internal differentiation - in food habits, language and distribu-

tion - it exhibits unity in terms of a sense of belongingness to one group and certain common structural features.

Using the concept of 'Social Structure' the present study highlights the nature and degree of inter-connections among various parts of the Paraja society. Firth's concept of 'Social Organization' which is the operative counterpart of social structure has also been used for understanding the dynamism and variability of individual actions, taking place within the broad frame work of social structure, but at the same time affecting the latter. Further, emphasising on the process of change, an attempt is made here to understand the changes that have surfaced in the Paraja social structure. Throughout the study the focus has been on the comparison between the traditional social structure and the one emerging in rehabilitation colonies.

The construction of Upper Kolab Project was one of the major factors of cultural exposure for the Paraja. With the construction work underway, a small town emerged, which is called Kolab Nagar; bringing new cultural items and ideas to the tribal areas. Since the Project required a vast tract of land to be colonised, the Government formulated an apex body - Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) - to coordinate the programmes of displacement and rehabilitation. The working of RAC suffered due to the lack of coordination among various departments/agencies in charge of displacement and rehabilitation. Absence of a well formulated and clear-cut policy for rehabilitation further worsened the situation.

The target oriented approach of the Government officers has compelled them to adopt to unscrupulous methods such as bribing the influential Parajas who were reluctant to go to rehabilitation colonies, following the policy of divide and displace and use of physical force to evacuate the poor and helpless tribals. Such an approach of the Government Officials has created a serious psychological damage among the displaced Paraja. Collective frustration, trauma and the utter disgust and mistrust towards the 'sarkar lok' were expressed in terms of concrete activities of protest,

which mainly remain sporadic, unorganized and consequently fruitless.

In the rehabilitation colony, the Paraja faced several hardships of varied nature. It ranged from practical problems of the lack of fuel wood and water to interpersonal problems of conjugal adjustments and selection of life partner. Ex-post facto analysis of the cases of individuals and their families reveals the ineluctable connection between various social institutions. We have also seen how various social forces existing and emerging in rehabilitation colonies have percolated down to the level of the family and the individual. A Paraja is constantly manipulating the diverse fluid opportunities and concrete difficulties so as to cope with the new social situation.

In addition to several cultural changes such as change in dress pattern, hair style and use of certain items of cosmetics, there are certain important changes in the social structure. As observed earlier in this paper there has been important changes in the observance of *Kuda* ritual, celebration of *Chait Parab*, the economic independence of Paraja women, relationship of economic dependence on money lenders and changes in the system of beliefs and rituals. Besides these, there are other structural features continuing in the rehabilitation colony such as the patrilineal rule of descent, the worship of hundi, belief in the existence and influence of *dumba*, existence of mechanisms of social control through the institution of *Naik*, *Challan* and *Barik*, symbolic relationship with the Dom and the revival of *basaghar*, etc. The Paraja are still in the process of adaptation to the new setting. In the last five years (1987-1992) there has been emerging arrangements of structural features of Paraja society. Therefore the society is in a state of flux.

As stated earlier, India, seeking to realize Nehru's vision, has become the world's greatest dam builder. However, it only followed a part of Nehru's vision which treated big dams as 'secular temple' of modern India; but unfortunately it ignored his idea of tribal Panchsheel where the vision seeks to realize a modern and strong India by judging 'development' not in terms of 'statistics' but the 'quality of

human character that is evolved'.

KEY WORDS Tribe. Displacement. Rehabilitation. Social Structure and Change. Social Disarticulation and Rearticulation.

ABSTRACT The displacement and rehabilitation discourse has mainly centered around the political, humanitarian and emotional issues emerging from and affecting the entire process. This paper highlights the other but very important side of the displacement debate. Taking the concepts of social structure and change as key heuristic devices, the present paper seeks to contextualize the processes of social disarticulation and re-articulation in case of a displaced tribal community of high land Orissa.

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