WORLD CSS
World Conference on SOCIAL SCIENCES

4th World Conference on Social Sciences

03 - 05 June 2022 Oxford, United Kingdom

A Study of Industrialization and Social Inequality: A Case Study of Oraons of Rourkela, India

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Abstract

Social interactions are manifestations of power relations within the community. These power relations may get effected by a change in the modes of production. The present paper tries to study the impact of displacement and industrialization on the social interaction within a tribal community. The objectives of the paper is to explore the current inter-tribal and intra-tribal interactions among the Oraons of Rourkela who were displaced from their villages in the 1950s to make way for a steel plant. The displaced were then resettled in area which have experienced industrialization in varying degrees. The case study had a sample size of 300 and data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions from rural, semi-rural and urban areas. The data showed prevalence of the practice of untouchability between Oraons and other tribal groups in rural areas, while significant decline of the same in more industrialized set up owing to spread of education and diverse population in workplaces. Thus there was a negative relation between industrialization and practice of untouchability. However, while industrialization had checked inter-tribal discriminations based on ascribed status, the data indicated perpetuation of income disparity due to industrialization among the members of Oraon tribe resulting to breakdown of intra-tribal kinship bonds between families resettled in different locations in Rourkela.

Keywords: Disparity; Displacement; Income; Tribes; Untouchability