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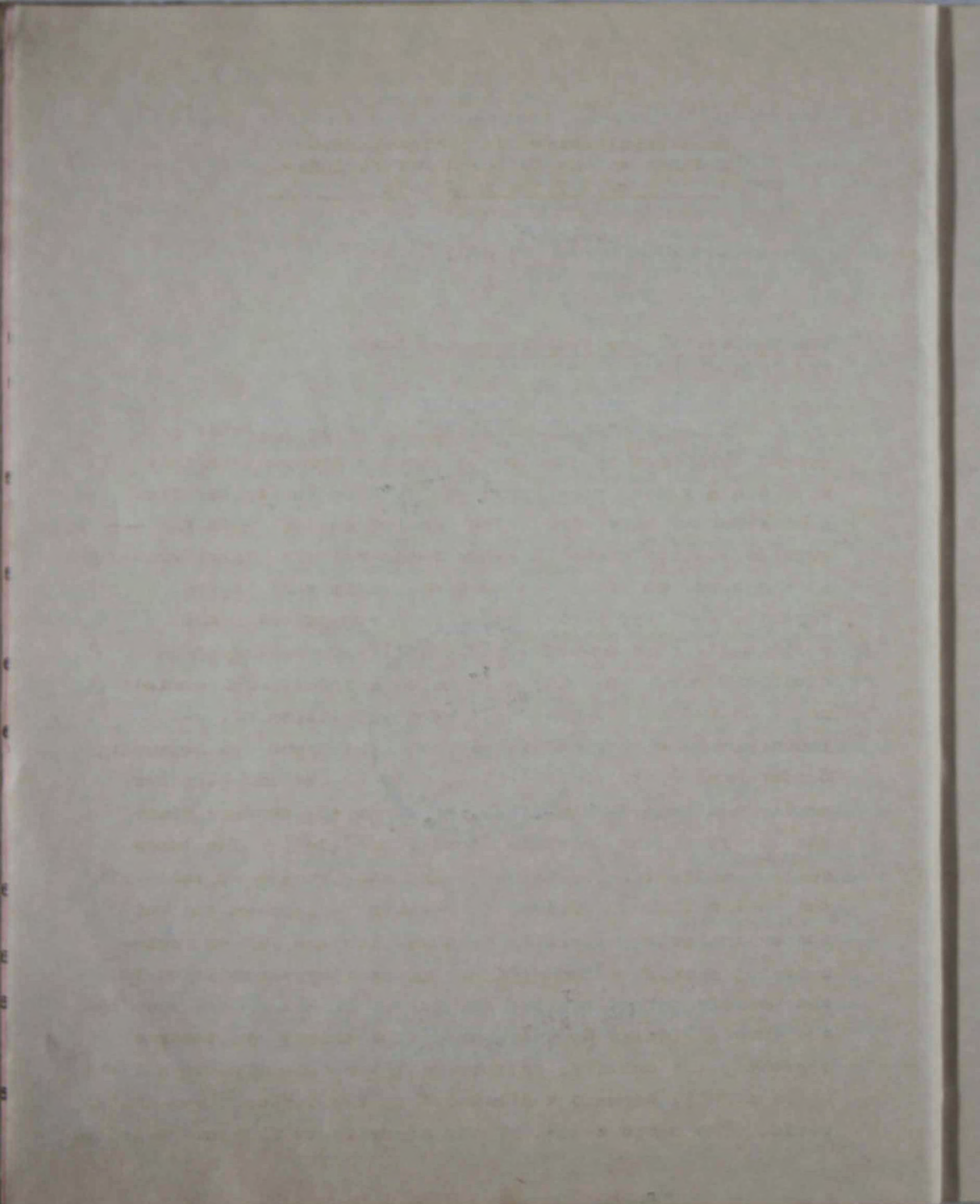
INDUSTRIALIZATION TO INDIGENIZATION : A STUDY  
ON CULTURAL REFORMULATION OF A TRIBE IN ORISSA

by

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I

The Content of the Transformation Scene  
and Introduction

A large scale industrialization in a remote and tribal dominated region brings about a frequent contact with the migrated non-tribal people whom the tribe often identifies as outsiders. The massive contact with the --- outside society causes a rapid socio-cultural transformation in the encysted group who concedes their rank to the superior society, whose members are economically and politically more powerful and identify themselves as a civilized one. How does a tribe or a traditional society react to sudden changes due to the imposition of industrialization in their midst ? The Orams<sup>1</sup> in Rourkela, Sundergarha District of Orissa, came to the industry for employment towards the middle of twentieth century since the advent of the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). The large scale urbanization in one way, and the massive contact with the dominant Hindu society in another way, paved the way for assimilation of tribal culture with the larger socio-cultural matrix of the Hindus. Increasingly sensitive to the beliefs, practices and criticisms rendered upon them by the general Indian Society, they (the tribe) aim towards upgrading the cultural pattern of their community to a level where it will command the respect of the dominant non-tribal world. The basic thrust of the study is to show how a tribal

society is remoulding its traditions by selectively borrowing and adopting dominant Hindu elements within an industrialized environment.

## II

### The Indigenization and Related Concepts

According to Vidyarthi (1970) the thesis of inevitable integrative changes as results of the industrialization does not seem to be true of all cases. Studying the industrial complex at Hathiya, he concludes that the traditional style of life has disintegrated due to industrialization. The tribals have to struggle hard in order to adjust with the rapidly changing situation. No more could they rely on their traditional occupation. Land displacement has taken place. One could even envisage loss of the traditional ways of compensation and unemployment with the migrants in the labour market, high aspiration and great frustration. Contrary to the views of Vidyarthi, Orans' study of the Santals of the Janshedpur industrial complex indicates that the Santal continues with his attempts to remould Santal culture to his own liking rather than abandon his social identity (Orans, 1975 : 238). The tribe has adopted some planned and reconstitutive measures to get such ends. Their planned and reconstitutive efforts for absorption of the selective exogenous elements and to express them in the endogenous pattern are analysed under the process of 'indigenization'.

The concept 'indigenization' involves some degree of complexity. Sahaya (1976) has brilliantly highlighted this concept in the context of the influence of Christianity on the 'Sarna' (Sacred Grove) style of life. According to him 'indigenization' refers not only to the process by which an element belonging to any type of tradition or culture becomes fused with analogous elements in another tradition or culture, it also indicates the replacement of Sarna elements with functionally similar Christian elements" (Sahaya, 1976 : 30). Sahaya defines the process of cultural combination "at the mixing up or combination of the retained Sarna elements with newly introduced Christian elements" /ibid: 287. But in the process of indigenization the partial replacement of a Sarna belief or practice by functionally similar Christian elements which fulfill indigenous needs have also taken place. Such a specialized type of replacement of Sarna beliefs by a combination of Christian elements does not seem to disturb the framework of the indigenous belief or practice in question, rather the new elements get integrated in it and are thus indigenized.

Sahaya's analysis on this term tends to show "the impact of Christianity on the 'Uraon'<sup>2</sup> from the advent of the Christian Missionaries in Chhotonagpur (ibid : 21)" along with other four cultural processes such as Oscillation, Scrutinization, Combination and Retroversion which do not need explanation here. His study basically focuses on the 'Uraon's' move towards the model of Christianity and it, however, remains completely silent on their move towards the model of Hinduism. The data collected from Raurkela region shows that both the converts and the non-converts of the

ethnic group are moving further through the process of indigenization although their ways and aims of it are obviously different. While the convert Orans are susceptible to Christian cultural elements to indigenize them in order to gain better status within the Christian frame, then the non-convert Orans indigenize some Hindu cultural elements for gaining a reverential distinct tribal identity. In this paper, I will lay emphasis on the explanation of the process of indigenization which would effectively express the fusion of tribal tradition with that of the non-tribals in the present situation of Raurkela region.

Before going for details of "indigenization" we should have to clarify our position as regards the choice of this term. Because, there are a lot of similar terms of "indigenization" in scientific literature. Singer [1955 : 237], while emphasizing the cultural continuity with the past in his study of the cultural pattern of Indian civilization, talks of the "traditionalization" of apparently modern innovations. Though a useful term, to speak of the "traditionalization" of revised Sarna elements in the local Oran culture may not help me to express my ideas clearly in the present context. According to Seligman the word "tradition" is used in the sense of "transmission of all elements of social life" through the ages [Seligman, 1935 : 627]. But my intention to use the term "indigenization" is absolutely different from traditionalization, if I follow Seligman. For, as we see below, the present situation in Raurkela could not be explained by Seligman's concept of tradition. All the socio-cultural elements of the Orans here are not in a Static Way transmitted from one generation to another. Rather some distinct foreign cultural elements have

been incorporated into their original culture in both implicit and explicit way. The concept "traditionalization", therefore, is illegitimate to interpret accurately the tribe's contemporary social situation.

The concept of "parochialization" /Marriott, 1955 : 159-200/ covers a somewhat similar process of change and makes a pointed reference both to the process of incorporating foreign cultural elements into a local culture and to the nature of transformation that takes place in the process of this adaptation. Marriott has used it in the context of the "little and great traditions" of Indian civilization. But the Gram's "Sarna or Adi Dharam" tradition can not be viewed in this light.

Here "indigenization" refers to fusion of the elements of one tradition or culture with the analogous elements of other tradition or culture with the aim of consolidating one's own tradition. This process does not seem static rather it moves forward with fluctuation. Often the tribe leaves the indigenized foreign cultural elements for short period after its initial adoption and retains them again while he feels their necessity. For instance, the Grams did not call the Mahalis, one of the low caste Hindu groups to play drums on the occasion of marriage due to restriction on such a move imposed by their formal social organization, the Parha<sup>3</sup>. The Parha has laid restriction on it because it does not belong to their own tradition. But the former only called the latter when they began to be Hinduized or Sanskritized. Presently they are calling this Hindu lower caste to play drums on this occasion again. Thus, the entire fluctuated motion of the process of indigenization apparently indicates that it goes through

various phases in order to modify their traditions. The basic phases are Sanskritization, Conflict and the Climax of Indigenization. It would be worthwhile to note here that the process of indigenization along these three phases is the hallmark of cultural reformulation attempted by the non-convert Gams of the Rourkela region.

The encysted tribal society and the low Hindu castes have conceded rank to the dominant Hindu castes throughout Indian history and still it continues to occur. Surajit Sinha has thrown light on the emulative attempts of the Munda, Ho, Santal and the Bhumij of Purulia and Singhbhum who are far more comprehensively integrated with the Hindu peasantry and even they virtually operate as Hindu castes (Sinha, 1959, 1962, 1965). In similar manner, Srinivas has defined the process of Sanskritization by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently "twice-born" caste (Srinivas, 1984 [reprinted] : 6). Thus, analyses of Sinha and Srinivas reveals how the changes in one's mode of life followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community.

The Gams in pre-industrialized Rourkela have come in contact with the caste hierarchy of the Hindu tradition since a long period. The administrative records of the A.D.M. office in Rourkela tell about the living of the Brahmins and other Hindu castes such as Toli, Sahoo, Routia, Mahato and Kansari with the various tribal groups there. These Hindu castes migrated to this tribal dominated areas from the heart of Orissa, and subsequently started to occupy the tribal lands. It was reported to me by the officers of the A.D.M. office of



Raurkela that the landholding of a non-tribal person in Raurkela region reached around seven to eight acres and compared to that a tribal household has only five to six acres. Needless to say that cultural dominance due to textual and modern learning of the Hindu upper castes might have also made the tribal community feel subordinate in status compared to that of the later settled Hindus. In the process of interaction they started to transplant selective Hindu traditional elements in their own style of living. By the time their social organization the "Orissa Padda Parha" was constituted in 1964, they had already accepted Hindu Gods Viswakarma and Ganesh, stopped the lowly habit of eating pigs, and had been abiding by the Hindu notions of purity and pollution. One can say that the main intention behind these adoptions was acquisition of a status in the Hindu caste hierarchy. But such efforts of the tribe to be Sanskritized did not succeed in obtaining recognition of high status from the dominant Hindu society. Rather the Hindu mass continued to look down upon them and drew a line of obvious demarcation between themselves and the Orams. They did not and could not even accept prasad (offerings) of Lord Viswakarma which was distributed by the Orams. Thus the sustenance of the indigenous cultural system of the tribals was in a way threatened by the dominant Hindu groups and in another way, they were deprived of the social sanction of the Hindu mass in order to acquire social position in the Hindu society. Thenceforth although the process of Sanskritization was not completely abandoned but its intensity declined. Then the Orams were exposed to the phase of conflict. During the conflict situation which was the outcome of individual stress and cultural distortion, the Orams could not make up their mind whether they would totally give up the acceptance of Hindu

culture and restore the importance of their indigenous tradition. They came to realize the fact that the dominant Hindus had been looking down upon them and their culture, and also, would not support their efforts. Such realization later became the base of "conscious affirmation" of the Oram tradition.

Wallace (1956) in 'Revitalization Movement', Krader (1956) in 'Nativistic Movement', Sinha (1972) in 'Solidarity Movement' and Ekka (1972) in 'Revivalist Movement' have mentioned about the appearance of charismatic/messianic leaders in the dawn of highly intense individual stress and cultural distortion, for the task of reformulation of the total cultural system. In the Oram society the appearance of such prophets is not a new phenomenon. Ethno-history has recorded the evangelistic role of the prophets who have emerged in the various moments of social crisis and moved to reconstitute the usual pattern of tradition. Two decades ago, in 1964, the Guru Bikram Bhagat brought about the 'conscious affirmation' of the tradition among the Orams in Raurkela region. I call the consequences of this 'conscious affirmation' as the "Climax of Indigenization". I call it so because the initial phase of indigenization begins with the incorporation of the non-tribal cultural elements through the process of Sanskritization and its outcome flows the phase of conflict. The experience in the course of conflict provided a great impetus to the consolidation of Oram identity at periphery under which **the** indigenized non-tribal elements are subsumed. Before going in detail, it would be better to throw a light on the relevant historical facts of the Oram cultural movements which will help us for clear understanding of the 'Climax of Indigenization'.

III

Sequence of Socio-religious Movements among the Oraon<sup>4</sup>

Roy has clearly explained the Oraons cultural reformulative movements in his book 'Oraon Religion and Customs'. We may classify such movements into two broad categories depending on the paths which the movements follow. The first category of the movements follows the path of Hinduism. These are known as (1) Nema Bhagat, (2) Hinduised or Bachhidan Bhagat, (3) Kabirpanthi Bhagat and (4) Tana Bhagat Movements. The second category of the movement goes forward with the development of Christianity which is not so relevant to the discussion. Only we will take into account here the first category of the movements.

I. The Nema Bhagat Movement

The Nema Bhagat Movement among the Oraons probably began in the second half of the eighteenth century of the Christian era. Bhairo Bhagat was the prophet of this movement who appeared in the village Tumba Purio of the Ranchi Thana. The Predecessors of the Nema Bhagats were the Bhuiphut Bhagat. Originally the Bhuiphut Bhagat believed that they acquired power through the special grace of God or Mahadeo. In order to augment their occult powers, the Bhagats had to lead a life of active devotion to their Deity. They had to make daily offerings of flowers, arua rice and molasses, and if available, a little ghee or clarified butter to Mahadeo, represented by the stone which had issued out of the ground (Bhuiphut) or otherwise found. As regards social relations, the Bhagat may take home as a wife either for himself or his son a maiden of a madua (liquor drinking) Oraon family, but

after the marriage the girl must not eat food cooked by her parents or other Madua Oraons, and when she visits her parents place, she will have to cook her own meals. A Bhagat may marry his daughter or sister to a Madua Oraon, but after the marriage the girl may not cook for her people nor serve cooked food to any of them nor even touch the cooking pots of her parent's place. Thus the Bhagat cult had compartmentalized the total social system between the Bhagats and non-Bhagats of the Oraon ethnic group. A Bhagat generally lived a life of ceremonial purity, abstention and religious devotion according to his own lights. The Bhagat family did not take liquor and meat (except goat) and observed certain rules of ceremonial purity and began to lead a 'better life than the average liquor-drinking and spirit worshipping Oraon's'. The Shui-phut Bhagats too generally came to adopt the faith of their Mahadeo-inspired relative (father or uncle, husband or brother) in the beneficent Deity-Mahadeo or Dharmes with his female counterpart (Sakti, or energy as the Hindu would say), Parvati or Devi-Mai and Dharti-Mai as the Divinity and source of all good. The Nema Bhagats were the descendants of Shui-phut Bhagats. They had been nominally initiated by Brahmans or Gosains and observed the same rules of ceremonial purity in diet and habits. And, above all, although the Nema Bhagats observed some of the outward rules of purity in food and habits which had been practised by them, and even adopted certain usages including initiation from the mercenary Hindu Gosains, they soon degenerated into low class hundrum Hindus and came to imbibe some or most of the vices of that class. Yet, the influence of the Mahadeo-inspired Bhagat on the religion and habits of the people was not altogether effaced from the community.

## II. The Hinduised or Bachhidan Bhagat Movement

The descendants of the indigenous Oraon Bhagats and other Oraons who have been attracted to the Bhakti cult by the purer modes of living of the Nemha Bhagats have nominally accepted as their gurus or spiritual guides Gosains who are either degraded Brahmans or in some cases Vaisnav-Vairagis belonging to the lower Hindu castes. "Such Bhagats as have since accepted the nominal ministrations of itinerant Hindu gurus or Gosains or Brahmans are popularly known as Bachhidan (lit, calf-giving) Bhagats because they are required to make a gift of a calf-(bachhi) to their Gosain or Guru by way of expiation for their past sins and ceremonial impurity" (Roy, 1984 : 317-18)". Some of these semi-Hinduised Bhagats who take Vaisnav Gosains as their Gurus, call themselves Vishnu Bhagats as they adopt Vishnu or Sri Krishna as their tutelary deity and abstain from fish and flesh of all kinds including goat's flesh" (ibid : 318). All Bhagats, both ordinary Nemha or Sada Bhagats as well as Vishnu or Bachhidan Bhagats, are required to maintain the rules of ceremonial purity in food, drink and other habits that the Bhuphut Bhagats introduced; and all retain most of the social customs and observances of the tribe which do not militate against the Bhagat's ideas of ceremonial purity.

## III. The Kabirpanthi Bhagat Movement

The Kabirpanthi religion was promulgated in the later years of the fifteenth and the earlier years of the sixteenth century by the great North Indian saint Kabir. He condemned the worship of idols and the use of other visible symbols of divinity and preached that God is one by whatever name called or abored, and that real happiness can be attained

not by sacrifices and rituals but by Bhakti or a passionate adoration of the Deity. The Oraons had been attracted towards this cult in the last century due to increasing dissatisfaction of the better minds among them with their old ways of living and their old cult of spirits, and due to growing aspiration for a cleaner life and a higher spiritual ideology. I think the doctrine of abolition of all caste differences and sectarian barriers of Kabirpanthi cult might have induced the Oraons to imbibe the notion of this cult. Upright and just conduct, regard for truth, kindness to all living beings, and earnest meditation on the Deity were laid down as the cardinal duties of a Kabirpanthi Bhagat (ibid : 525). Most of the Oraon converts to this faith were found in the Gumla subdivision in the west and south-west of the Ranchi district, and in the Simdega subdivision in the south-east of the district. From Roy's view it appears that the earliest Oraon converts to the new faith in the Ranchi district was Dhola Bhagat of the village Jorea in the Sisani thana who accepted it shortly after the suppression of the 'Kol insurrection' in 1832-33.

The Kabirpanthi Oraon was permitted to preserve much of his social customs as did not militate against the cardinal tenets of the new faith. In addition to the innocuous tribal customs and observances at birth, marriage, and death, the peculiar Kabirpanthi religious service known as the Chawka was required to be held on such occasions or as soon afterwards as the Guru can be called into officiate. All animal sacrifices were forbidden by the Kabirpanthi and so were cremation of the dead and offerings or libations to the spirits of the dead. But the flesh of the coconut was ceremonially broken by the Mohant at a Chawka service and

distributed to the congregation along with consecrated betel leaves which serve the purpose of the sacrificial flesh and sacramental meal. Thus, the Kabirpanthi Bhagats maintained a saintly life. Some well-to-do Oraon Kabirpanthi Bhagats like well-to-do Oraon Nemha Bhagats began to employ Brahmans at their weddings. They were hardly distinguishable from the average Hinduised Nemha Bhagats except by their omission of certain old tribal observances. However, the Kabirpanthi movement had long ceased to make any perceptible progress among the Oraons.

#### IV. The Tana Bhagat Movement

From the above three movements the tribes had already got much experience about the Hindu Culture. According to Roy better minds among them had for a long time felt the need for a comparatively higher ideal of spiritual life and moral conduct than that provided by the old tribal faith. I may mention here that conversion to Christianity had begun among the Oraons towards middle of the last century before the commencement of the Tana Bhagat Movement. By the crystallization of the Christian movement the old tribal deities and spirits had already lost much of their hold on the tribe. "Now the Oraons saw that whereas their old gods and spirits could afford no relief or protection against their manifold economic miseries nor could the Bhakti cults (whether Mahadeo Bhakti, or Vishnu Bhakti or Kabir Bhakti) be of much help to them in their worldly struggles, here were the converts to the foreign faith and the proteges of the foreign missionaries who secured more or less protection from future molestation, though not always relief from existing troubles" (ibid : 337). So as the path of the movement for Christian conversion was totally indifferent to their indigenous society, the Oraons

constituted a new religious movement of the old Bhagat pattern but of a more distinctive Oraon cultural type. "The Originators and followers of this new Bhakti cult called it the "Kurukh Dharam" or the (real or original) religion of the Kurukh or Oraons" (ibid : 340). The special characteristic of the movement was the combination of a strong desire for delivery from the bondage of capricious and blood-thirsty tribes spirits with perhaps a still stronger desire for delivery from the burden of what they regarded as an oppressive and iniquitable land-system and land-laws. The prophets of the movement promised and followers that through Bhakti to Bhagawan they would be able to raise the present degraded social position of their community to the higher level of status occupied by the Hindus and Christian converts amongst their tribe-fellows and obtain relief from their long-standing agrarian grievances and the present wretchedness of their economic condition. Thus social and economic aspects of the movement were subsumed under its religious aspect.

Twenty five year old Jatra Oraon of the village Chepri Nawatoli in the Ranchi District was the first prophet who proclaimed the doctrines of the new religion in April 1914. In his dream he got the order of **Tharua** (the Supreme God) to give up Matiao (ghost-finding and exorcism) and the belief in 'bhut' (ghost) or spirits, to abjure all animal sacrifice, animal food and liquor, and to give up ploughing their fields which entailed cruelty to cows and oxen but failed to save the tribe from famine and poverty, and no more to work as coolies or labourers under men of other castes and tribes. In the first stage of the movement the attempt was taken to destroy the dominance of the bhut or evil spirits from the land and to abandon the old habits and usages. In the second stage they tried to consolidate the promulgated rules and regulations of the followers' conduct and introduced definite doctrines and beliefs. But the movement did not become popular and almost died later, because the religious motive was only one of the multiple causes that excited it. The contemporary consequences of the war in Europe added to the tribe's manifold agrarian and other economic grievances and from



there grew up the popular uprisings in the area. They uttered "German Baba" for hours in order to create a heroic spirit among them. According to Roy, "the Tana Bhagats at their hymnsinging, sometimes protracted for hours, can doubt the genuineness and intensity of their religious fervour, the movement was in origin largely economic" [ibid : 402]. When the excitement died down and people came to realize that the new faith could not secure the longed for restoration of the lost right in land, the religious motive by itself was not sufficient to keep it alive as a popular movement.

The history of these tribal religious movements reveals the inherent emulative and cultural reconstructive tendency of the tribe in order to raise their social rank and to establish social coherence in the contemporary tribal society. In the initial phase of the movements they emulated the cultural elements from the dominant Hindu society and in the later phase induced a planned effort to consolidate the indigenous frame of culture. The middle phase of the movements indicates the situation of conflict. During the two early movements (Nema Bhagat and Hinduised or Bachhidan Bhagat) the Oraons had adopted the gods of the Hindus, their pattern of worship, notion of purity in food, and had also been nominally initiated by Brahmans or Gosains. Such activities categorically point to their desire to acquire a higher social position in the Hindu society. But in that context, their unexpected move to the anti-caste doctrine of the Kabirpanthi religion distinctively expresses their reaction against the Hindus' attitude of looking down upon them and for their reluctance to grant social sanction to the tribe's emulative efforts. Since the period of adoption of the Kabirpanthi religion, we have seen, the tribe could not go back again to the Hindu type of religion. Rather they followed the Christian religion which is totally indifferent to the indigenous frame, and then later they formed a new Oraon religion known as 'Kurukh Dharam' in the light of so far indigenized cultural elements.

The above historical movements also tell about the tribe's long-efforts to reach the stage of the newly formulated Oraon religion 'Kurukh Dharam'. In the course of the movements the most valuable idea that the tribe learned was the notion of striking a socio-cultural balance with the encysted societies. It makes them aware of the long-drawn process of naturalizing the foreign elements. But one may raise questions regarding the link of these historical religious movements with the present process of indigenization among the Oraons in Raurkela. For its relevant response we should have to compare the overall consequences of these earlier historical religious movements with their presently affirmative activities engineered towards a reconstitution of the distinctive tribal identity.

#### IV

#### The Parha Organization in the Rourkela Region and the Climax of Indigenization :

The Parha, social organization of the Oraons has been attempting to harmonize the cultural pattern and social norms of the Oraons of one region to another since its emergence in 1964. This hierarchical organization is the agency of social control. It brings about social integration in the Oraon society and extends its horizontal solidarity. Whatever new rules or regulations are introduced by the head office of the Parha located in Ranchi, they are more or less carried out by every member of the ethnic group irrespective of the regional variations. As earlier stated, all the previous broadly religious movements had taken place in Ranchi District of Bihar. The relics of the past experiences derived from these religious movements are still preserved in the mind of the Oraons of Bihar and they direct the present socio-cultural activities and transmit them to the other parts of the Oraon's settlements through the far flung Parha Organization. Above all, the Parha organization is basically constructed on the earlier doctrines of the Tana Bhagat Movements. The present socio-cultural reformulative activities

amongst the Oraons in Raurkela, therefore, may not be considered in isolation from its history.

The Tana Bhagat movement, the finale of the religious movements in historical consciousness of the Oraon, has left a remarkable impression on the contemporary and recent generations. Their present socio-cultural activities are to some extent similar to those of the Tana Bhagat movement. Some of the socio-cultural norms which were instructed by Jatra Oraon, the prophet of the movement, are still observed by the Oraons of Raurkela and some of these norms are still being carried out though in an altered form. They have already given up some practices which they find are obviously close to the Hindu tradition. Today the Oraons of Raurkela maintain the ceremonial purity; they have abandoned the fowl sacrifice; they observe Thursday as Sabbath and bury the dead body which were preached by Jatra Oraon in the course of the movements carried out in 1914. Earlier no one initiated to the Tana Bhagat movement took liquor on any occasion. But today they entertain their guests by Harria (rice beer) instead of offering them Sherbet (syrup) prepared by diluting molasses in water. According to the doctrine of the movement no musical instrument made of animal-hide should be used on any occasion. But today the Madala and Nagara are beaten in every festival and ceremony which are made of animal-hide. And also they have already given up the practice of Homa (an offering of oblations of clarified butter (ghee) into fire) which is close to the Hindu tradition.

The tribe's socio-cultural reconstitutive orientation under the process of the 'climax of indigenization' is more conscious and rational today. In the course of the Bhagat movement, we have seen, the socio-cultural discriminations had emerged among the various sects of the Oraons. The Tanas did not accept water and food from the non-Tanas. Matrimonial relation between them was strictly prohibited. This narrow socio-cultural compartmentalization within the same reconstitutive movement for indigenization has been essentially disastrous to tribal social solidarity. Today the process of compartmentalization is more visible between the

indigenous patterns and western patterns of the social movements within the same tribal group. But there is no differentiation amongst the people at the individual level whether one is involved in a particular indigenous pattern or in a western pattern of socio-cultural movement. But compartmentalizations often work against the members involved in the western-style movement for getting any special advantage to improve their social, educational, cultural and religious conditions.

The causes of the Tana Bhagat movement appear to be quite clear to us. The wretchedness of economic condition, long standing agrarian grievances and their degraded social position had been subsumed under the religious upsurge. But the intention of the public participation in the movement was not so much directed to the rational solution of these problems. Although the movement was in origin largely economic, but it completely lacked planned efforts for the solution of the crisis. They emotionally attached themselves to the supernatural being, seen as a benevolent protector; they greatly inclined to maintain ceremonial purity and also to drive out the malevolent bhuts. It appears to me that due to lack of rational orientation the movement could not continue for a long period and also could not end with successful consequences. But the Parha organization is very alert and active today. It has already taken some organized measures to improve the rate of literacy and to get back the unused lands which were previously taken by the Raurkela Steel Plant (RSP) from them. For the improvement in economic condition they are essentially aware of the constitutional concessions provided by the Government of India and of the special provisions made by the Five Year Plans. For example, the demand for employment in the RSP and other Government services is being discussed by the participants in the Parha. Above all, the mass participation today is no longer directly based mainly on the religious factors only, rather they emphasize on the concurrent secular needs of life. They do not express these needs through a religious framework but they treat them independently. In contrast, the participants in the Tana Bhagat movements searched for the way of relief from the wretchedness of economic condition and agrarian grievances thro

the light of the supernatural being. Thus, the planned efforts for the solution of the socio-economic problems under the guidance of the Parha Organization today are more rational.

During the phase of the 'climax of indigenization' the attempt has been taken to make necessary changes in the 'real' system in order to bring 'mawey' <sup>5</sup> and 'reality' into congruence. The higher individual stress which is the ultimate consequence of the phase of the 'conflict' has to require a change in 'mawey' and 'real' system together so as to permit more effective stress reduction and to maintain social order. In order to bring about essential reformulation in traditional culture the Gram leaders from the large number of villages became united under the banner of the "Orissa Padda Parha" in 1970. Since then the Parha organization has become more and more active and pragmatic. Restrictions were imposed on some traditional customs like fowl sacrifice in the Karama festival, arbitrary demand of bride price and using of excessive alcohol in marriage ceremony. The leaders of the organization preached observing ceremonial purity, maintenance of distance from the Hindu untouchable castes and avoiding worship of Hindu gods. Above all, they tried to keep them far away from the Hindu identity and to preserve the distinctiveness of their own culture. The name of the tribe was consciously analysed by them as "O + Ram" which they claimed as indicating that once they were close to Lord Ram who was later incorporated into the Hindu Tradition. Thus the term 'Oran' used by Roy (1985) in the book "Oran Religion and Customs" and by the earlier British Scholar - administrators was significantly modified and given a new connotation,

The cultural transformation meanwhile the progress of these three phases (sanskritization, conflict and the climax of indigenization) varies from one phase to another in accordance with the social situation. The incorporated elements in the course of Sanskritization may not be transmitted to the phase of 'Climax of indigenization' - in unchanging form.

During this period they started to explore the means of comparison of their encysted low position with that of the dominant group. In the initial phase, for instance, the Orans of Kukua<sup>6</sup> became susceptible to the worship of Lord Shiva and continued to go to the temple complex of Vedavyasa located on the bank of the river Brahmani. They even started to observe fast on the special occasion of Shivaratri, the prime festival of the Lord Shiva celebrated by the Hindu people of the region. A Brahmin Pundit of Bihar who used to come into the village several times a year. He used to explain them that the holy Hindu scriptures, specially the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, comprised ample evidences to indicate the tribe's close connection with the Hindu tradition. According to the Pundit the 'Uttarakhanda' of the "Ananda Ramayana" described the Oran's service to Lord Rama Chandra during his banishment for fourteen years. Being pleased with the honest devotion of the Kurukhs (Oran) Lord Ram allowed the ethnic group to be called after His name, and since then the tribe was known as ORAM. The content of the "Uma Maheswara Khanda" of the Mahabharata also revealed the tribe's origin from a Kshyatriya dynasty. The Great Pandava hero Bhimasena had married Hidimbi who he got a son called Ghatotkacha. The Orans were the descendants of Ghatotkacha.

These mythological explanations made the Orans aware of the necessity of wearing sacred thread. A Shiva temple was erected by them at their village and was established on 29th February 1984. They started to worship Him on the various special Hindu sacred occasions such as Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja and Janmastami. Apart from these Hindu festivals the tribal festivals were attached to the Hindu god, and the tribal goddess Sarna Mata lost her importance at the appearance of Lord Shiva in the tribe's heart. The new crops were offered to the Hindu god on the occasion of Nawakhani (the festival of new crop eating) instead of offering it to their ancestors. The betterment of the village was expected from the grace of Lord Shiva and the propitiation to Sarna Mata was discarded. Thus the adopted Hindu elements during the phase of Sanskritization transformed into the phase of "Climax of Indigenization".

But the Oram cultural activities in the industrial complex present themselves in a different pattern compared to that of the preceding villages. Here the non-tribal elements in the phase of Sanskritization start to shift into the phase of 'Climax of indigenization' with absolute modification and that modification takes place within the indigenous frame of culture. Initially they, for instance, used to worship Hindu god Ganesh but the Padda Parba organization later made restrictions on the practice. The members of the ethnic group stuck to these practices which were originated from their tradition. In the mean time they did not totally give up the practice but they carried on those involving selected elements without mixing them in those of their own culture. They, however, treated the indigenized non-tribal elements differently from that of the 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' tradition. As we observe, the Hindu priests called in on the occasion of Ganesh Puja are not permitted to officiate on the tribal occasions and, on the contrary, none of the tribal priests namely 'Kalo' or 'Pahan' are allowed to officiate the Hindu festivals which tribals observe. Thus the tribe put the absorbed Hindu cultural elements in one side, and under its shadow they remould their own tradition or culture in the course of the 'climax of indigenization'.

The long standing efforts of the Orams, specifically of those who are not converted into christianity, go through the process of indigenization with a general knowledge of the dominant culture. So as the tribe's range of communication with the encysted group varies from location to location, so also the processes and patterns of absorption of the cultural elements from the dominant society has to vary accordingly. However, the tribals who live at the heart of the industrial complex in RSP region get in touch with the Hindu people more frequently than the tribals who live at the village level. As the result, one segment of the Oram has little knowledge of Hindu traditions, while another segment has considerable experience of the Hindu culture. I label the two categories of the tribe's experiences of the Hindu culture as 'explicitness' and 'implicitness', respectively. In the category of 'implicitness' we may say, the tribe has been intensively involved in the boundary maintenance with the

untouchable castes, oriented to the notions of purity and pollution, and also absorbed the Hindu's customs and rituals consistently. On the contrary, the tribe only identifies himself as Hindu in outward form when he indulges in the notions of 'explicitness' without sharing the depth of the Hindu's doctrines of life. In other words, we may say, the tribe's such experience of the 'explicitness' is merely symbolic one and it does not move forward through the process of internationalization of the adopted elements to reinterpret the tribal culture. But his experience of the 'implicitness' of the Hindu tradition helps to mingle the desirable foreign elements with those of the tribe's culture during their solidarity movements.

The proportional variety in the notions of 'explicitness' and 'implicitness' causes disparity with the tribe's concurrent position on the phase of Sanskritization, Conflict and the Climax of indigenization. In short, the greater the extent of the 'explicitness' the tribe has, the greater is his orientation to the phase of Sanskritization. In similar way, wide and deep extent involvement in the notions of 'implicitness' shows the tribe's position on the phase of 'climax of indigenization'. The tribe possesses both the notions of 'implicitness' and 'explicitness' of the "Sarna or Adi Dharam" tradition and has only the notions of 'explicitness' of Hindu culture while he is on the stage of conflict. But specifically on the phase of transition, from 'Conflict' to the 'Climax of indigenization', the tribe has consistently the notions of 'implicitness' of Hindu culture, but only the notions of 'explicitness' of both the tribal and the Hindu cultures are fighting each other to lay dominance on the 'tribalism' which is on the moment of bewilderment. Now we should have to see how the preceded phases of indigenization move further with the help of both the notions of 'implicitness' and 'explicitness' of the above cultural sets at the different locations.



The Grams in Kukula (impacted village) use to call the lower castes namely, the Lohar and the Ghasi, to take the dead cattle away from their yards. They have Hindu notions of pollution in this regard, and, even they insist on not touching the dead-animal anymore. But in their bones they know that such practice was not in their forefathers' age and it is the outcome of their frequent social contact with the Hindu Society in present time. The flourishing multi-ethnic industrial situation at Raurkela brings the Grams into touch with the caste Hindu's treatment meted to the untouchables and that specifically encourages them to underestimate the lower castes. We may deduce from such activities that to call a lower caste for taking the dead cattle away is only a 'fashion' for them. Neither it has any traditional or mythological background nor do they also follow the caste Hindu's treatment of the untouchables in every aspect. We may, therefore, place their such activity in the category of adoption of 'explicitness' of the Hindu tradition. On the other hand, the notions of 'implicitness' of that tradition is very weak among them. It has been observed that the underestimated untouchable castes use to take Harria [Rice beer] in the pots used by the tribals and, surprisingly, these are also cleaned by the tribal women, which would have been treated as polluting in the Hindu society. Thus, in one way they used to take service from the lower castes on the pollutant occasion and also treated them as a pollutant caste, but in an other situation they do not systematically follow the way of discrimination of polluting element of the behaviour of the untouchables according to appropriate Hindu norms. Moreover, the notions of 'explicitness' of the Hindu tradition is so effective in this situation that it even decries that core value of the notions of the 'explicitness' of their original 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' tradition. As the result, the orientation to absorb the non-tribal elements through the process of Sanskritization has been increasing steadily, and that steadiness refrains the Grams from thorough reinterpretation of their old culture.

The Grams in Dandiapali<sup>7</sup> have been come into touch with the Hindu people and with their concomitant culture in the advent of rapid industrialization in Rourkela. They, have, therefore, both the notions of "implicitness" and 'explicitness' of the Hindu tradition. If we go through the entire process of indigenization thoroughly, we will see that the tribe absorbs the non-tribal elements selectively from the Hindu culture in the first phase of Sanskritization. Eventually these are integrated with the original culture placing the tribal identity at its periphery. In other words, we may assume, to re-interpret the culture with the help of the process of indigenization, the essential point is to implement large amount of the notions of "implicitness" of the Hindu culture and the notions of 'explicitness' of the own 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' culture. But in Dandiapali, the tribe has the considerable amount of the notions of 'implicitness' of the Hindu culture. They intensively observe, for example, 'boundary maintenance' with the lower castes as the caste Hindus do with them (the untouchables). They use the sacred letter 'Om' ( ) which is the root of the core doctrine of the Hindu Philosophy for the purpose of making their tribal habit more purity oriented. They also take fast on the occasion of Shivaratri (the great celebration of the Hindu God Shiva) like the Hindu devotees. But the notions of 'explicitness' of the Hindu and 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' culture broadly divide the entire ethnic group into two different generations. It was indeed a great surprise for me to know that the middle and upper middle aged people support the Hindu's symbolical identity as the important asset of their cultural manifestation. On the contrary, the youths oppose this view strongly and believe in the indigenous practices as the real essence of reconstituting a commendable tradition. They therefore oppose the social support provided by the middle and upper middle aged villagers to the person who decides to give his daughter's marriage with the boy of a Christian converted Gram family. And also none of the former group intends to identify himself as a member of the Hindu sects, whereas most of them in the latter group do not find any disparity between the Hindu and the Gram cultural sects. These individuals

identify themselves as Hindus. The indigenous based cultural spirit among the youths is obviously manifested while their youth association and a newly made canal are called, namely, the 'Sarna Yubaka Sangha' and the "Sarna Canal", respectively after the name of the tribal goddess 'Sarna Mata'.

Thus they have an intensive knowledge regarding the Hindu culture which probes into their possession of its "implicitness" irrespective of any age group. But the notions of 'explicitness' of the Hindu and 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' tradition are not on a balanced stage the outcome of which is that neither the tribal tradition may be identified as a 'revitalized tradition' nor we can call it as a 'revivalistic tradition'. We may call their notions as transition. For instance, the sacred letter 'Om' ( ) is used to ward off the fear of ghosts and other bad omens instead of using their own tribal verse. The 'boundary maintenance' with the other ethnic group such as the Munda and the Kharia is now identical with their social isolation from the Hindu lower castes especially from the Ghasi and the Mahali. But their notion of 'explicitness' of the tribal identity has not yet stabilized; it is still in a flux.

But the relevant evidences from Durgapur<sup>8</sup> provide ample substance to our assumption of cultural reconstitution under the emerging pressure of the notions of 'implicitness' of Hindu tradition and the notions of 'explicitness' of the 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' tradition which affect the tribe's indigenous socio-cultural dimensions. The massive contact with the multi-ethnic groups in the industrial complex make the Orams realize necessity of preservice of the old culture with the desirable modification. The notions of 'implicitness' of the Hindu culture has been very concretely rooted into their habits of life, customs and ritual practices. But these concretely rooted Hindu elements are so obviously manifested under the domain of the indigenous tribal identity that no one can pin-point them easily as the non-tribal originated. To purify the old tribal practices, for example, they adopted the Hindu's inclination to the vegetarian principles on the occasion of great celebration of Lord Jagannath and Shiva,

and in the same light, they banned the fowl sacrifice for the tribal god on the celebration of Karama festival. And more evidently they have probed that they are superior to the caste Hindus, and especially in the context of purity, their tradition is greater than the Hindu Great Tradition. In addition, it has been seen that the present Padda Parha house in Rourkela has some photo of Lord Rama Chandra whom they believe as a benevolent god instead of having any symbol of tribal god/goddess there. They even utter the verses from the holy Hindu scripture Ramayan, and in some relevant contexts, they present burning examples of passion, sympathy, justice, law and order situation during the reign of Rama Chandra in Ayodhya. But they never admit that Lord Rama is a god of the Hindu Great Tradition. Moreover, they claim that he belongs to the Oram's traditional culture alike Lord Jagannath is known as a great essence of a tribal culture. And they also added that there was a time in the past when their forefathers had played with him, and since then the ethnic group was called as "O + Ram"<sup>9</sup> after the name of Lord Rama Chandra. I may note here that perhaps due to this reason only none of them in Durgapur has changed his surname from 'Oram' to clan names like 'Kujur', "Lakra" etc. as it happens in the village level.

The preceding evidences presented in the different locations reveal the continuity of the notions of 'implicitness' and 'explicitness' of the Hindu tradition side by side, and the notions of 'implicitness' and 'explicitness' of the 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' tradition respond to them frequently in accordance with the concomitant social environment. Specifically, in the industrial milieu where the tribe is more reactive to the dominant society, it institutionalizes the essence of 'implicitness' of the Hindu tradition more intensively and expresses them under the domain of 'explicitness' of the own 'Sarna or Adi Dharam' identity. Eventually the essence of 'implicitness' of the Hindu tradition loses its importance and goes down under the surface of the tribal tradition. Consequently, the tribe moves on to the phase of 'Climax of indigenization' and thenceforward their effort for reinterpretation of culture creates a consolidate base for its further amelioration.

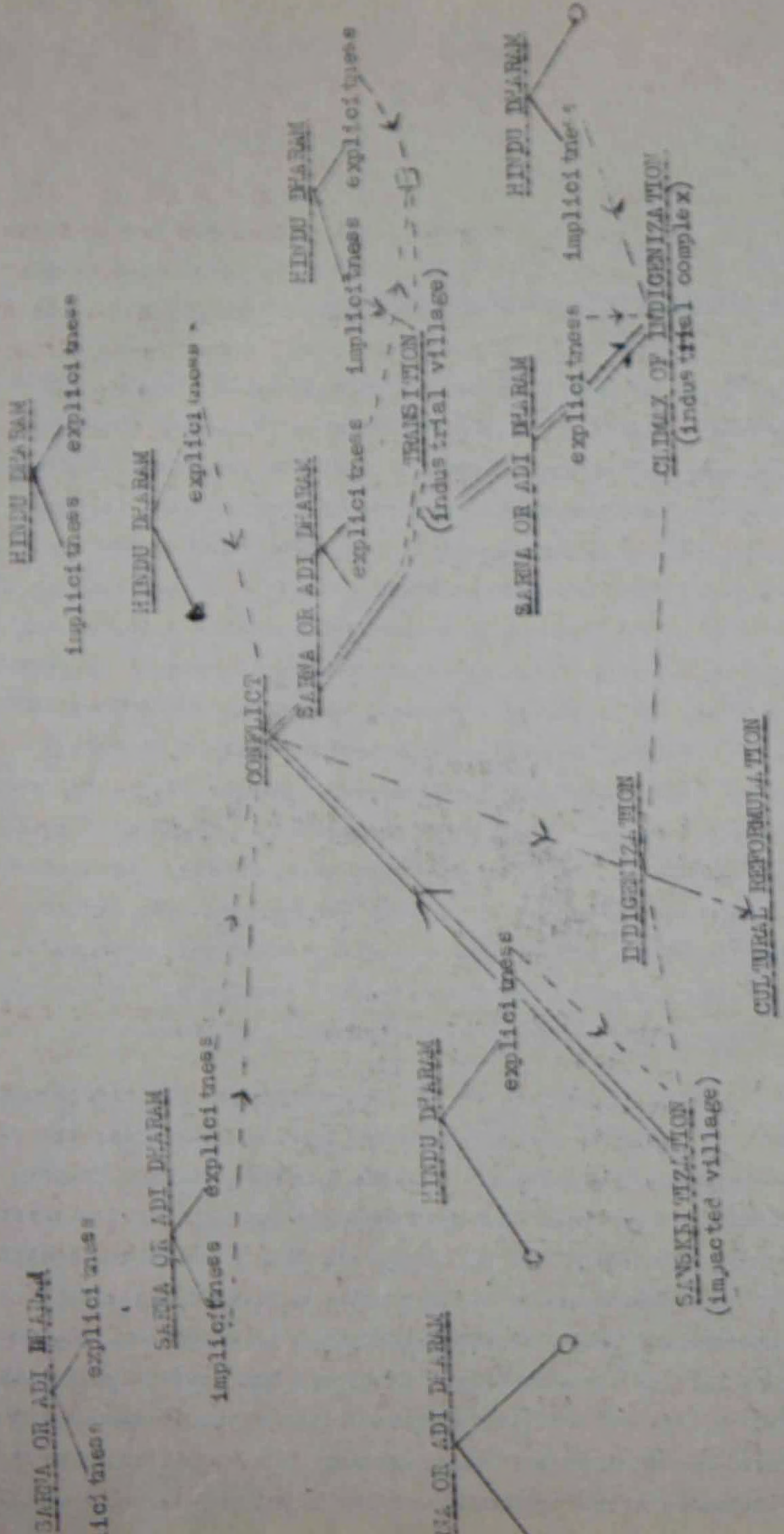
Conclusion :

Implication of the Process of Indigenization :

The theory of Rank Concession Syndrome (RCS) (Orans, 1965), the concepts of revitalization movements (Wallace, 1956) and 'tribal solidarity movements' offer conceptual tools for the study of indigenization. In his theory of "rank concession syndrome" Orans studies the socio-cultural processes generated within an encysted Santal community which had been surrounded by larger dominant community. In a situation of rank concession, the encysted dominated community seeks to raise status either by emulating the cultural symbols of the dominant group or by asserting ethnic solidarity as a political group. Assertion of ethnic solidarity concomitantly demands the creative cultural process of 'boundary maintenance'. This invariably involves selective assertion of traditional boundary markers and re-interpreted incorporation of selected symbols of the dominant community. The society that has conceded rank thus has an emulation-solidarity conflict of various proportions. An intense emulation-solidarity conflict may generate a 'cultural movement'. During the movement the emulative practices are not abandoned. Rather various emulative characteristics previously absorbed are naturalized.

The pattern of contact of the Orans with the non-tribal world intensified and expanded as they migrated in large number in the region around the industrial complex of Raurkela for employment. In this changed situation they have been increasingly involved in the process of evaluating their social status vis-a-vis the dominant non-tribal groups. As a result they discovered a big gap between their own position and that of the non-tribals. They, therefore, started to adopt some elements from the dominant society (consciously, as well as unconsciously) keeping in mind to draw a line of equilibrium between these two unequal interacting social statuses. Similar to Orans' assumption, I have observed that a cultural movement (Sarna or Adi Dharam Movement) has taken place in the

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Oram Society immediately after the phase of unresolved conflict of adoption of exogenous elements. A new association, the Orissa Padda Parha emerged which continues to provide vitality to the movement of recreation and re-definition of Oram tradition. Some of the adopted elements were left out during the movement, while some of the elements which could be interpreted as analogous to the Oram culture were naturalized within the framework of indigenous identification of the periphery. I call this phase as "Climax of Indigenisation".

Wallace (1956), in his concept of "revitalization movements", has been concerned with the total re-organization of the cultural system of a group in an acculturative situation of extreme stress which threatens the entire cultural system. More specifically a 'revitalization movement' has been defined as "a deliberate, organized conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (Wallace, *ibid.*, p.265). The beginning of these movements may be traced to a threat to the sustenance of a cultural system by a group of people in a situation of cultural contact with a dominating group. An initial period of increasing individual stress and "cultural distortion" is usually followed by an active phase of revitalization.

The Oram's cultural reformulative movement in Rourkela region is similar to Wallace's revitalization movement. While the tribe's culture is underestimated by the Hindu people who refuse to recognise their aspiration to get a respectable position in the Hindu Caste hierarchy, they searched the alternative path of reviving and restructuring their endogenous cultural heritage. In Rourkela region, the prophet Bikrama Bhagat who was the follower of the Tana Bhagat principles (Roy 1985 [Reprinted], 339-403) made the Orams aware of ceremonies, purity, etc., and to get involved in changing their socio-cultural life in terms of their pure original tradition. The Oram leaders of the various villages gathered under the roof of the Padda Parha Organization in order to spell out and implement socio-cultural norms and restrict or prevent the undesirable practices such as heavy drinking, arbitrary demand of bride price etc. Above all, they

were concerned about reconstituting the social values which could be an asset to build a more satisfying culture.

The main thrust of the Orans for revitalization of culture vis-a-vis the dominant Hindus is to consciously assert that they are not only not lower than the Hindus in their quality of culture, they should be regarded as superior. In their reconstituted myths they have incorporated Hindu cultural heroes like God King Ram and, as I have mentioned earlier, they also claim that Lord Rama represents an epitome of the tribal culture, and is the source of superiority of their culture. Apart from such mythological innovations, the emergence of the secular Padda Parba organization has greatly helped the Orans in expanding their horizontal solidarity.

I have used the concept of 'indigenization' as a tool for analysing the social situation of the Orans' massive contact with the non-tribal world around Rourkela region in the present situation. In words, while Orans' theory of RCS and Wallace's 'revitalization movement' are regarded as universal, the process of 'indigenization' obviously keep track of particular specificities. The process is confined even to a certain segment of the ethnic groups whose members are not converted into Christianity. Due to socio-cultural variation from society to society, it is difficult to generalize the implementation of the process of 'indigenization' with the identical pattern.

The post-industrial set up in Rourkela has brought about a large scale change in the outcome of the tribe's contact with the non-tribal world. Complete exposure of the encysted ethnic group to the dominant Hindu Society is not the only optimum consequence of that contact, but through such exposure the tribe absorbs the desirable selective elements from the Hindu culture and internalize the to consolidate the base of endogenous way of cultural manifestation. This cultural process is interpreted through the term of 'indigenization'. In another words, the process of 'indigenization' means 'cultural reformulation' among the tribals (Orans) in Rourkela. It develops mainly



through three phases namely, Sanskritization, Conflict and Climax of Indigenization. The notions of 'implicitness' and 'explicitness' of the Hindu Great Tradition which are grasped by the Orama during their contact with the dominant groups, provide an impetus to the continuity of the process in the course of cultural reconstitution. The cultural absorption, internalisation and its expression of the endogenous heritage have occurred more intensively among the Orama of industrial complex than among them at the village levels. But the Orama's active participation in the present socio-cultural reconstitutive efforts at the village level reveals implicitly their continuous activity towards the reinterpretation of tradition. In addition, the operation of the Parba organization in the different tribal regions brings the Orama individuals together for over all improvement of the community. It specifically offers them its whole organisational apparatus for political mobilization and socio-cultural efflorescence. Moreover, the high proportion in socio-cultural awareness, political mobilization and the reconstitutive efforts of the Parba organization make the tribe aware of the needs to remould the Orama culture to rejoice in a higher Kuruk Dharam, a true Orama religion suited to his own distinctive culture.

#### FOOTNOTE

1. Different names are used for the ethnic group in different areas. Generally the researchers have used the name for the group which is locally recognized. Roy (1985), for example, has used 'Orasa' and Sahaya (1976) has used Oraon for the ethnic group in Chhotanagpur, Bihar. But in Raurkela, the ethnic group is identified as 'Oram'.
2. Sahaya has used such term for the ethnic group in his book "Under the Shadow of the Cross" (1976).
3. The Parha is a short form of the "Orissa Padda Parha". It is the present form of previously existed form of the Dhunkuria (the dormitory of the Oras). The "Orissa Padda Parha" is a social organisation of the Oras which regulated the socio-cultural pattern of their life. Generally it operates in State-level. Hierarchically organized this Parha Organization is operated in different levels, such as the Dara Parha in the Panchayat level, Muli Parha in the district levels, the Padda Parha in the state level and Raji Parha in the country level. The head office of the Raji Parha is at Gumla in Ranchi district of Bihar and the Padda Parha in the state level of Orissa is located in Raurkela, Sundergarh district of Orissa.
4. Here I have used the term 'Oram' because the ethnic group identified themselves under it during the period of Roy's field study. The 'Oram' which is used by me, is the recent interpretation made by the ethnic group in Raurkela region of Orissa.
5. A person in the society has to maintain a mental image of the society and its culture, as well as his own body and its behavioural regularities, in order to act in ways which reduce stress at all levels of the system. Wallace (1956) calls this mental image as "the mazeany".
6. Kukuda is the name of a village which is located at 11 km. away from Raurkela. I treat it as an industrial impacted village.
7. Dandiapali is a tribe dominated village located at five to six kilometers away from the Rourkela industrial complex. I treat it as an industrial village.
8. Durgapur is located in the heart of Rourkela industrial complex. This location is dominated by the Oras. Except this location the other tribal villages have already been shifted to other resettled colonies during the foundation of Rourkela Steel Plant. It is interesting to know that none of the Oram community in Durgapur has been converted into Christianity.

9. Some of them also interpret the meaning of 'O' as a symbol of sorrow. According to them while Rama Chandra came back to Ayodhya, to own kingdom, after fourteen years of banishment, the members of the ethnic group who were his friends became distressed in his departure and uttered the word 'O! Sam' again and again with deep sorrow. To remember their friend the group was called as Oram thence forward.

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