

Industrialization, Protest Movement and Tribal Women: Challenges and Issues

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Abstract

Women are the greatest gift of God for the Society. She is held as the incarnation of *Shakti*. She is identified with *Prakriti*. She has the power of creating, constructing, sustaining and destroying. They have been glorified in Indian epics, scriptures and folklore. But ironically today they have become the victims of evil forces. Like other social groups, women are accorded an inferior status in tribal society also. As a matter of fact, acute poverty, malnutrition and starvation death have come to be associated with the life of many of the tribal people, living in different parts of the country. The problems which threaten them all in common are illiteracy, ignorance, economic backwardness and recent crisis of displacement due to development. This study, thus, makes a humble attempt to describe the challenges and issues faced by tribal women during protest movement arising out of development-induced displacement. For the purpose of this paper, condition of the tribal women in Kalinganagar and Kalinganagar has been chosen as the case study to establish the linkage between mindless industrialization and security threats to human beings in general.

Keywords: Industrialization, Protest Movement, Tribal Women, India

Statement of the Problem

Development is often a mask for extracting resources in a way that destroys communities and ecosystems. So, the present study leads to questioning industrialization as the basis of development. If industrialization causes poverty, environmental pollution, social upheaval and does not solve it, then “it is illegal to use poverty to legitimize the uncritical continuation or acceleration of industrial development policy” (Lohmann, 2006). Since the onset of new economic policy, the Government of Odisha is in a hurry to invite national and multinational corporations to set up industries, to develop the socio economic condition of the people, on the other hand, local people, mostly tribal and dalits, the most neglected section of our society are resisting these development/industrial projects fearing displacement and loss of a secured livelihood. In every step, industrialization has proved to be security threats to their lives. Kalinganagar is the best testimony to this fact.

Tribal women happen to be among the most disadvantaged and unprivileged communities in India. Even after five decades of planning and development, they still remain outside the pale of any form of visible change. Thus, the effects of displacement, in case of tribal whose very survival is already at stake, are disastrous. However, socially and legally it is agreed that the land-oustees should be rehabilitated to new locations with an improved economic, social and cultural environment, which is, however, not happening in reality. Hence, development-induced displacement entails loss of habitats, traditional organisations and cultural ethos, with total disturbance in the socio-economic status of the affected population. Displacement forces people to start life afresh, often leading to the loss of their socio-economic conditions. Development-induced displacement is problematic at best, even when a state has the best interests of the entire population at heart. The effects can be catastrophic when such displacement occurs in the midst of conflict and human rights abuse, or when a state deliberately or

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arbitrarily targets some of its people to bear a disproportionate share of the costs of development and denies them a proper share of the benefits. Development is a right but it also carries risks to human life, livelihood, and dignity.

The development project puts tribal women in an extremely disadvantageous position when they are faced with displacement and its unsettling effects (Basu, 2006). It limits the ability of women to adapt to new circumstances and to secure improved living conditions. Reconstituting livelihood after relocation is particularly problematic for women, mainly because of their dependence on common property resources. For planners, the easy way out is to side track these issues, as these do not affect as profoundly. It is not wonder then that most relocation plans do not compensate for the loss of common property assets such as forested lands, water bodies and grazing lands, which provide tribal women with a major source of their earnings. The lack of literacy and skills also makes their absorption into the labour market more difficult. Newly introduced schemes for women such as tailoring, spinning, file-making and candle-manufacturer were unrelated to ground realities, and failed to generate much gainful employment (Mehta 2000).

Study Area

Kalinganagar, covering 83 revenue villages, 10 Gram Panchayats of Sukinda and Danagadi blocks in Jajpur district. To set up Steel plants and Ancillary product plants in Kalinganagar, 7818 Acres land allotted to different companies (IDCO, Bhubaneswar and ADM Office Kalinganagar) and 16 million tons crude steel will be produced per annum by a dozen of Mega, large and medium industries in the area. Simultaneously, Kalinganagar will have definite stress on the natural environment which will seriously impact on human security. Table 1 shows land allocation to various corporate houses in Kalinganagar, year of arrival and investment in Crore Rupees.

Table 1: Plants and land allotted in Kalinganagar

Sl. No.	List of plants	Years of arrival	Investment in Crore Rs.	Land allotted
1	Mideast (MESCO)	1993	530	530 Acres
2	Orion	2004	100	150 Acres
3	Maithan Ispat	2004	324	100 Acres
4	Uttam Gala	2004	1179	370 Acres
5	NINL	1997	1510	2500 Acres
6	Maharastra Seamless	2004	450	500 Acres
7	TISCO	2004	16000	2400 Acres
8	Rohit Ferrotech	2004	100	50 Acres
9	JINDAL	2003	4764	678 Acres
10	VISA industries	2003	400	390 Acres
11	Dinabandhu	2004	85	100 Acres
12	K.J. Ispat	2005	75	50 Acres

Sources: ADM office, Kalinganagar and IDCO, Bhubaneswar

Objectives

Objectives of the present study are:

- To identify the potential sources of threats to human security.
- To map out the socio-economic condition of the tribal women in-road of industrialization.

Research Methodology

The methodology used in the present research work is interdisciplinary based on a collection of primary data and secondary data. Modern methodologies like techniques of questionnaire, interview and survey method have been followed. Direct interview with the victims have been conducted. Apart from this, secondary data like books, articles, magazines, reports, newspapers, journals and unpublished writings have also been consulted.

Protest by Potential Displaced Tribal

When you are transferred from one place to another place for a short time of one to two or three years, and in case it is not to your choice one. You are doing all possible means either to cancel or to change the place of transfer. When we are leaving our birth place and being snatched away from all social and economic means, will we not raise our voice against this forced eviction? This was the simple truth asked by the displaced person to the officials in Kalinganagar. By all account, initially the local people welcomed the idea of the industrial complex, with hope that, the new industries would usher in development of the area, give employment to the local populace, and improve their standard of living. So when land acquisition took place between 1992 and 1994, undertaken by IDCO, people accepted the compensation at the extant rate without a murmur. They believed the verbal assurance given by government officials that jobs would be provided to them when the industries would start. They continued cultivating the acquired land as before, till around 1997 when the first batch was displaced. A significant number of people have gradually refused to become silent sufferers of the ill effects of development and are now raising their voices collectively to counter development plans that they feel go against their interest and existence. In the process, they are profoundly influencing the emergence of an alternative development paradigm for India (Hussain 2008). Trouble started when, at the time of being shifted to the Gobarghati Colony, the displaced demanded jobs before they would leave their hearth. When nothing of the sort was forthcoming, the villagers sat on dharna, refusing to leave. Matter took a cruel and ugly turn when, late in the evening, police was used to forcefully evict the people. Reportedly, bulldozers were used and 60 people were arrested. The trust of the people in general was shaken (PUCL 2006).

Government collects from the company Rs. 3,50,000/- per acre of tribal land, but pays only Rs. 37,000/- to the tribal

Tata Steel Limited (TSL) has been allotted 2400 acres in Kalinganagar for the construction of a six million tonne plant. The land that the government purchased at the rate of Rs. 37,000/- per acre in 1994 from some of the affected families (not all affected have been yet counted for project impact and rehabilitation) was sold to the Tata company for Rs. 3, 35,000/- thus making for the state a net profit Rs. 715,200,000/- and at the same time giving the Tata company a saving of over Rs. 87,600,000 over the market price. The current market price ranges between Rs. 5, 00,000/- to Rs. 7, 00,000/- per acre. It was this dispute over compensation that was on the negotiation table till 2nd January and was the reason why the people had assembled to prevent the bull-dozers from destroying their houses and taking over their lands that fatal day.

Source: South Asian, 30th January, 2006 (<http://www.thesouthasian.org>)

In 2004 an organisation to protect the interest of the people affected by the industrial complex was formed; it called itself Sukinda Upatyaka Adivasi-Harijan Ekata O Surakshya Parishad, which was later renamed, and remains such till date, as Visthapan Virodhi Jan Mancha (VVJM), Sukinda. In October 2004 they had issued an open letter to the Chief Minister, expressing their concern and grievances about the hardships faced by them due to the emerging industrial complex, and spelt out several demands; five demands meant for the people to be displaced, and six demands concerning the people already displaced. The salient features of the demands included:

- Stop further construction in agricultural land
- Giving patta to the people settled before 1980
- Land acquired, but unused, be returned to the original owners
- Stop deliberate targeting of Tribal/Dalit villages for land acquisition
- The homestead land to be raised to one acre per displaced family
- The Parishad to have a say in rehabilitation matters
- One job per displaced family (Nayak, 2007).

During 2005, the Visthapan Virodhi Jana Mancha (VVJM) resisted all kinds of activities like land-survey, bhumi-puja, levelling, and boundary wall construction etc. — relating to setting up of industries in the Kalinganagar Complex. They organized protest meetings and sit-in demonstrations in

front of construction sites. People told that, government had issued notice to do a family survey. But the Manch decided not to cooperate with the government to do this survey as their demand for patta of their land was not met (ibid).

Among all these the incident of 9th May 2005 assumes greater significance, in terms of signifying a culmination of simmering discontent against the administration and the companies under their protection. On 9th May, hearing that the bhumi-pooja for Maharashtra Seamless was going to be performed; people had assembled at the site to protest and obstruct the proceedings. That people were not carrying any arms was corroborated by one of the officials present at the site. The ADM of Kalinganagar came to the site to negotiate with the people. The local police was already present, though not in very large numbers, to provide security to the officials of Maharashtra Seamless. The people reiterated their demands to the ADM and did not move from the place. It is alleged that the ADM, Shri Santanagopalan, in his enthusiasm, ordered lathi-charge and rushed towards the protestors, pushing some of the obstructing women to the ground. At this sudden action of his, which the people saw as a provocation, clashes ensued. People resorted to stone pelting and the vehicle of the ADM was damaged. The ADM was beaten up in the melee, and when the IIC of Kalinganagar PS tried to save the ADM he too was beaten up; both of them sustained injuries. Seeing the peoples rage the police retreated from the scene that afternoon, to return later with more reinforcements. They entered the villages and went on a rampage. Fearing retaliation, most of the men folk had fled the villages and taken shelter in the surrounding hillocks. Therefore the brunt of the police fell on the women folk and children. They were roughed up and at least 25 women were arrested. Hearing of the police terror, people from nearby villages also fled their villages and took shelter in the nearby forest. It is alleged that the privations caused the death of two children. Also, an old man, who was severely beaten up by the police, died later (Pandey, 2008).

On 2nd January 2006, with the help of the administration, the Tata Company undertook the programme of levelling the land where their plant was to come up. Top district officials, including SP and DM, were present. People of the area had assembled to protest. Coming sporadically from several villages, their numbers had gradually swelled to 300-400, including women and children, some of them carrying bows and arrows, tangias (a kind of pick axe) and other traditional weapons, customarily carried by tribal people. They were assembled on the adjacent fields to the site, close to Champakoila village. By all accounts, the mobilization of the police was massive, around 10 platoons that are around 300 policemen, requisitioned by the SP for overseeing the levelling of a piece of land. They had come prepared for combat, for a decisive show of strength, armed and battle ready. They had taken positions, according to unofficial police sources, divided in three contingents on three sides of the Tata site, which was temporarily fenced by long ropes. Some of the policemen, while chasing the demonstrators, had tripped on the uneven land around the site. This in turn encouraged some of the fleeing crowd to return. (Anyone, who has followed the resistance of the weak against the mighty administration, would understand the dynamics and psychology of such conflagration). The police had started fire, ostensibly to give cover to its fallen colleagues. But, inexplicably, they fired to kill, and some of the agitators fell victim. In the melee one of the policemen, an unarmed Havildar, Gopabandhu Mohanty, slipped and fell in the hands of the fleeing tribals. He was killed by the disoriented crowd. After this, the men in uniform and gears ran amok, the officials present did nothing to restrain them. They were baying for blood, seeking revenge, using the death of a colleague as an alibi. The people, frightened out of their wits, ran, as the police shot unrestrainedly from behind. Bodies, dead and injured, including women and children, lay strewn on the ground. The villagers carried some of their injured and dead people to the villages and admitted the injured into the hospital. The others, dead and injured, were taken to the hospital by the police. The final count, that emerged were shocking: 1 policeman dead and 4 injured; 12 tribals dead (table -2) and 37 injured, the dead, as well as the injured, included women and children (PUCL Report 2006).

These were the six who were taken alive into police custody. They were returned dead with bayoneted stab marks on their bodies, with bullet wounds on their chest with both wrists cut off, with their genitals chopped off and the two women with their breasts chopped off. Below is the list:

- Ms. Ati Jamuda , Age – 32, Unmarried, Village- Chandia, Killed by Police custody.

- Sri. Bana Badara, Age- 35, Married, with 5 children, Village- Gadpur, Killed by Police custody.
- Sri Rama Gagarai, Age- 35, Married, with 5 children, Village- Gadpur, Killed by Police custody.
- Sri Landu Jarika, Age- 29, Married, two daughters, Village- Bamiagotha, Killed by Police custody.
- Sri Bhagaban Soy, Age- 25, Unmarried, Village- Gobarghati, Killed by Police custody.
- Ms. Mukta Bankiri, Age- 40, Unmarried, Village- Chandia, Killed by Police custody (PUCL Report 2006).

Table 2: List of the people killed in police firing

Sl. No	Name	Village	Age	Male/Female
1	Landu Jarika	Bamiagotha	29	M
2	Ramachandra Jamuda	Bamiagotha	35	M
3	Junga Jarika	Bamiagotha	25	M
4	Gobinda Laguri	Bamiagotha	14	M
5	Rama Gagaraj	Gadapur	35	M
6	Bana Badra	Gadapur	35	M
7	Mukta Bankira	Chandia	40	F
8	Rangalal Munde	Baligotha	40	M
9	Ati Jamunda	Chandia	32	M
10	Deogi Tiria	Champakoila	35	F
11	Sudam Barla	Belhudi	25	M
12	Bhagaban Say	Gobarghati	25	M

Source: PUCL, Odisha

The above killings were the consequence of a series of acts of deceit, betrayal, injustices, which should give us an idea at what, level our democracy and standard of governance stands at. The issue of land rights, fair compensation, implementation of compensation packages, jobs, rehabilitation had become perennial issues between the tribals affected by the setting up of Kalinganagar, the Government and the Industry. The Government's all out support, encouragement, and open identification with Industry at the cost of being unjust to the tribals has been the thumb rule. It is not easy to summaries such a massacre, especially when committed by a democratically elected government, done to favour and facilitate a business house, Tata Company that is held by Indian mainstream society as one of India's most reputed monopoly houses. If the blood of these twelve martyred could give us a mirror image picture of our political and social progress as a democracy it would show: The tribal community comes out as a noble people, law abiding, peace loving, largest contributors in terms of free land, forest, minerals and labour to the national development agenda of Independent India. While on the other hand the Government of Odisha, the Industrialist who are operating in Kalinganagar come out as law-breakers, mafia like operators, concerned only with profits and not national development.

No difference between present Government and East India Company!

“By just reacting to the people clashing with police at Kalinganagar will obfuscate the paramount truth underlying the tragic massacre. What is happening now is just like what East India Company (EIC) was doing to Indians. The EIC was paying pittance to indigo and opium farmers to procure the produce to sell in China for exorbitant profits. The profits were shared among EIC stakeholders, viceroys and the Crown. Opposing Indians were subjected to cannon fire. At one stage, the Chinese refused to buy anything from the imperials. Then the British government used Indian soldiers to wage war against China!

Now the decision makers of the state (union and state government) are paying \$0.075 per tonne of iron ore to public exchequers. The miners get this iron ore for \$.075 to sell it for at least \$45 per tonne in international markets. The state disposes off at least 63 million tonnes of iron ore like this per year. The \$0.075 per tonne received by public exchequers is insufficient to even pay salaries and pensions of government staff. Do you see why our government employees are paid little and infrastructure is crumbling?

The \$45 x 63 million per year goes to palaces of Indian miners, decision makers and mafia, including police officials and district collectors. This is just from iron ore. We have to count all other ores bring exported away, public land usurped and development funds (printed/borrowed rupees) embezzled. This is why cannon fire is being unleashed against people who are opposing the robbery of even their personal possessions. The siren of industrialisation and development is bogus and humbug. India does not need to import exorbitantly priced coke to make steel/sponge iron for exports. One-sixth of humanity living in India has barely 2 percent of global deposits of iron ore. Our current steel production is sufficient to meet domestic needs.

Odisha’s CM has been recklessly transferring public’s iron ores to private parties for piddle royalty of \$0.075 per tonne, which is valued in market \$50-110, depending on various delivery terms. This is not economic justice to public as guaranteed by the constitution of India. The CM has thus subverted the constitution of India. He and perhaps all political parties in India have no consideration whatsoever that India has just 2 percent of iron ore reserves, but is exporting it away to other nations in raw or some finished form.

Now the Odisha CM has massacred Kalinganagar people opposing a takeover of their private lands and dwellings (their only wherewithal) to transfer the same to some private individuals, so-called industrialists. This is blatant injustice. Public and private wealth is being looted under the garb of industrialisation.

India has become a banana republic with such constitutional figures as the Chief Ministers massacring people to loot their private possessions and siphon off public wealth for pittance, in addition to being involved in other rackets and scandals, as per prominent newspapers”.

Excerpts from statement and letter to the President of India by Dr. S. Acharya, Citizens for Democracy, USA

Source: Kalinganagar Update, on Mines and Communities Website

Evidence of disparities faced by women in displacement

This paper argues that women are often forced to bear a greater burden through displacement than their male family members. It demonstrates that these realities and the gender specific impacts of displacement are rarely considered in resettlement planning, which often threatens women security. The study thus examines the indicators and substantiates the existence of disparity and disadvantage women face in their relocation in road of industrialization.

In Kalinganagar, researcher have documented that, the change of use in tribal land is bound to have many impacts on the tribal communities. Land in their economy is their sustenance, not primarily a commodity. So it loss forces them to change their lifestyle from their community based informal society to an individual based formal society. In displacement situations, tribal women often lose previous income-earning opportunities, and are consequently forced to the margins of the labour market. For women the sale of minor forest products and river resources are important sources of

income. Relocation robs them of access to these common property resources. Often such resources either do not exist or are too far from new settlements.

Threats to human security due to development, conservation, disasters or conflicts, often leads to tremendous alienation from common property resources such as forest, land, fodder or water. Women have traditionally enjoyed a higher status in production systems that rely on common property resources. Moreover, they depend more than men on common property resources for their economic wellbeing and social status due to the gender-based division of labour that makes them caretakers of the family. However, legal processes justifying displacement in the name of eminent domain do not recognise the importance of common property resources, and thus allow alienation processes to take place which have a very negative impact on the gender and power dynamics in the communities. Industrialization, not only threatens human security through displacement and relocation, there is also the problem of deforestation, loss of agricultural land, environmental degradation and marginalization of weaker section.

The so-called growth led development policy adopted by the government not only brings misery to the life of the tribal communities but also has handicaps them. Their aspiration to lead a life goes unnoticed. They are not only physically excluded from their land but also denied to live like human beings. The loss of traditional sources of income generation forces some women to enter into a labour market where they end up working as construction workers, agricultural labourers and domestic servants on very low wages. It has also found that, with the loss of their livelihood, many women find themselves confined to the domestic realm with additional worries of feeding the entire family on a very low budget.

During the field visit, it was found that, domestic violence in the form of beating up women is quite a common phenomenon in tribal families. This trend is mainly a consequence of drinking habits that have plagued the tribal society. In tribal society women normally performed more work than men. But at the same time, they admitted that women are still beaten up (especially after alcohol consumption by the men) on one or other pretext despite their valuable contribution in day to day work. Usually they become victims of male violence if they protest against their drinking habit or refuse to give them money for alcohol or on issues of food.

One understands it better when one realizes that tribal women enjoyed a slightly higher social status than women in caste societies did. But no tribal treated them as equal to men. That relatively high status was linked to their land and forests. As long as their sustenance was community owned women and some decisions-making power since in most tribal societies they were in charge of the family. These resources were thus the locus of their work that made them economic assets. That was the foundation of their relatively high social status. When the project alienates the resources from them, women lose access to work but do not get access to work in the project. But for exceptions, tribal women who want to work are forced to take up low paid unskilled daily wage jobs. Others are reduced to being house-wives alone living on the man's single salary. However, they have to continue to play their role of providers of the family even after losing the resources (Fernandes and Bharali, 2011).

As stated above, as a result of the loss of the Common Property Resources and the rest of their livelihood on which their status depended, tribal women are forced to remain at home to look after the household without any productive work outs While they are deprived of their sustenance, their role of catering to the nutritional, health and other needs of the family remains unchanged. Men become the only or main income earners since most jobs go to them. However, one is not certain that the woman gets all the income or enough money to run the household. Men and children often absorb the value system of the dominant culture to which they are exposed through the workers from outside the region coming to the new industrial townships. So they spend more than in the past on clothes, entertainment and other trivia, thus making a relatively small amount available for the woman to run the household. In other words, social factors like such cultural contact affect women more than men (Muricken et al. 2001).

The Kalinganagar industrial project displaced many tribal women, who were living comfortable with their limited agricultural land resources, fishing ponds and other available resources. Once the resources are gone, they lose the permanent sources of their livelihood income, which they have been using since generations. What will they do? How long they can survive in this situation? They will be virtually forced to work as daily labourers, industrial labourers or domestic labourers!!!

Summing Up

Development as a cause of displacement, it must be said that development is different. Some disasters may be inevitable just as some conflicts may be necessary but no one would view them as a good in and of themselves. Development, on the other hand, is seen as a right to which all people should have access. But just as people have a right to development, they have a right to be protected from development's negative effects, including arbitrary eviction and the loss of economic, social, civil and political rights. When displacement does occur as a result of development—even and especially before it occurs—international guidelines and evolving international norms affirm that its goal is to improve lives and livelihoods and require that it should be a transparent and participatory process. The study “*Industrialisation, Protest Movement and Tribal Women: Challenges and Issues*”, attempts to clarify that anomaly, and examine the manner in which industry has ripped apart the ecological, cultural and social fabric that holds tribal communities together. The study endeavours to illumine the dark corners of Kalinganagar's development corridor, and hopes to provoke debate and action against a system that allows the ruthless exploitation of defenceless women for the benefit of the privileged.

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