

# Formation and Evolution of Odia Identity through Social Movements (1936-1976)

Dr. Susmita Mohapatra

Associate Professor & HOD,  
Dept of History, YBN University, Ranchi.

**Abstract:** This review article delves into the intricate evolution of the Odia identity in Odisha, India, shaped by diverse social movements spanning linguistic, cultural, political, and social realms. From the linguistic movement of the early 20th century to cultural renaissance, regional autonomy demands, and social reforms, each movement contributes distinctively to Odisha's cultural, political, and social tapestry. The article navigates through historical contexts, emphasizing the resilience and dynamism of the Odia identity. In exploring the diversity of social movements, it underscores their multifaceted impact, from linguistic and cultural revival to political and social reforms, revealing the rich layers that form the Odia identity.

**Keywords:** Transnational Peasant Movement, Economic Sociology, Social Media Activism, Participatory Design

## I. Introduction

The evolution of the Odia identity, rooted in the rich cultural tapestry of the Indian state of Odisha, has been profoundly shaped by a myriad of social movements spanning linguistic, cultural, political, and social spheres. These movements, each with its unique contours, have not only fortified the distinctiveness of the Odia identity but have also been instrumental in fostering a sense of unity, pride, and resilience among the people. The linguistic movement, which gained momentum in the early 20th century, sought the recognition and promotion of the Odia language, playing a pivotal role in shaping a linguistic identity. Concurrently, cultural renaissance movements worked towards the revival of traditional art forms, literature, and customs, contributing to a vibrant and distinct cultural identity. The demand for regional autonomy and the subsequent creation of the separate state of Odisha in 1936 marked a significant chapter in the region's history, shaping a political identity that emphasized local governance and development. Social reform movements addressing caste discrimination and social inequalities have further contributed to the inclusivity and diversity of the Odia identity. Against the backdrop of political movements advocating for development and the rights of the people, and the resilience demonstrated in the face of natural calamities, the Odia identity has emerged as a resilient and dynamic force. This introduction sets the stage for a nuanced exploration of the formation and evolution of the Odia identity through the intricate interplay of various social movements that have left an indelible mark on the cultural, linguistic, and political landscape of Odisha.

### 1.1 Diversity of Social Movements

The formation and evolution of the Odia identity have been deeply influenced by a diverse array of social movements, each contributing to different facets of the region's cultural, linguistic, and political identity. Firstly, the linguistic movement that gained momentum in the early 20th century played a pivotal role in establishing Odia as a distinct language. This movement aimed at securing recognition and promotion, fostering a linguistic identity that continues to shape communication, literature, and cultural expressions. Simultaneously, cultural renaissance movements focused on reviving and preserving traditional Odia arts, literature, dance, and music. These efforts not only conserved cultural heritage but also strengthened the unique identity of the Odia people, fostering a sense of pride in their rich cultural tapestry. The historical context includes movements advocating for regional autonomy during the British era, ultimately leading to the creation of Odisha as a separate state in 1936. This historical chapter solidified the political identity of Odisha, emphasizing self-governance and autonomy within the broader Indian nation. Political mobilization in Odisha has addressed governance, development, and people's rights. These movements have significantly influenced the political landscape, shaping the identity of Odisha in the national context. Social reform movements have been instrumental in addressing issues like caste discrimination and promoting social equality. These movements have contributed to the social fabric of Odisha, fostering inclusivity and a sense of justice within the Odia identity. Environmental and tribal movements within Odisha advocate for sustainable development and the rights of indigenous communities. These movements highlight the region's commitment to environmental conservation and the preservation of cultural diversity. Labor movements, particularly in industrialized regions, have focused on the rights and working conditions of laborers. These movements contribute to the economic and social dimensions of the Odia identity.

Movements for women's empowerment challenge gender norms, contributing to a more egalitarian Odia identity. These movements emphasize the importance of gender equality and the active participation of women in shaping the region's future. Educational movements have played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual landscape of Odisha. By focusing on education and literacy, these movements contribute to the development of a knowledge-centric identity. In summary, the diversity of social movements in Odisha reflects the multifaceted nature of the Odia identity. From linguistic and cultural revival to political and social reforms, each movement has left a distinctive mark on the cultural, social, and political tapestry of Odisha, shaping the collective identity of its people.

### 1.2 Historical Context

The historical context surrounding the formation and evolution of the Odia identity is crucial for understanding the region's intricate journey. One pivotal period in this narrative is the early 20th century, marked by the fervor of the linguistic movement. During this time, there was a concerted effort to establish Odia as a distinct language, seeking recognition and promotion in various spheres. The linguistic movement laid the foundation for a linguistic identity that transcended geographical boundaries, influencing literature, education, and cultural expressions. An equally significant historical chapter unfolded during the British era when movements advocating for regional autonomy gained momentum. The demand for a separate state, distinct from the combined Orissa-Bihar province, highlighted the region's aspirations for self-governance. This period of political activism ultimately culminated in the establishment of Odisha as a separate state in 1936. The creation of the state marked a transformative moment in the historical landscape, shaping the political identity of Odisha and emphasizing its autonomy within the larger Indian context. These historical undercurrents were not only confined to political and linguistic spheres but also manifested in cultural renaissance movements. During this era, efforts were directed towards reviving and preserving traditional Odia arts, literature, dance, and music. The cultural revival contributed significantly to a distinct cultural identity, fostering a sense of pride among the Odia people. The historical context surrounding the Odia identity is characterized by key milestones, including the linguistic movement and the demand for regional autonomy. These historical chapters have left an enduring impact, shaping the cultural, linguistic, and political dimensions of the Odia identity that persist and evolve to this day.

### 1.3 Social Reform

Social reform movements have been integral to the intricate tapestry of the Odia identity, contributing significantly to the region's social fabric and fostering inclusivity. During various periods of Odisha's history, movements aimed at social reform have addressed issues such as caste discrimination and social inequalities. One noteworthy facet of these social reform movements is their commitment to challenging entrenched caste norms. Leaders and activists within the Odia community have championed the cause of dismantling caste-based discrimination, advocating for social equality and justice. These efforts have not only sought to eradicate discriminatory practices but also foster a sense of unity among diverse social groups within Odisha. Moreover, social reform movements have played a pivotal role in promoting inclusivity and breaking down societal barriers. By addressing social inequalities and advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, these movements have contributed to the emergence of a more egalitarian Odia identity. Initiatives to uplift the underprivileged and ensure equal opportunities have become integral to the region's social consciousness.

The impact of social reform movements is not confined to theoretical advocacy; it extends to tangible changes in societal attitudes and structures. Efforts to provide educational opportunities, economic empowerment, and social justice have left a lasting imprint on the collective identity of the Odia people, emphasizing the values of fairness, justice, and compassion. The social reform movements in Odisha have been instrumental in shaping a more inclusive and just society. By addressing issues of caste discrimination and social inequalities, these movements have played a pivotal role in fostering a sense of unity and equality within the broader Odia identity.

### 1.4 Cultural Renaissance

The Cultural Renaissance within the context of Odisha has been a transformative force, intricately weaving the threads of tradition and heritage into the fabric of the Odia identity. Emerging as a response to the changing socio-cultural landscape, these movements sought to revive and celebrate the rich tapestry of traditional Odia arts, literature, dance, and music. At the heart of the Cultural Renaissance were endeavors to resurrect and preserve classical and folk arts that had, over time, faced the threat of neglect. Cultural luminaries, artists, and enthusiasts played a pivotal role in breathing new life into ancient art forms, ensuring their continuity and relevance in contemporary times. This revival not only preserved cultural treasures but also laid the foundation for a distinct cultural identity that resonates with the people of Odisha.

Literature, a cornerstone of cultural identity, witnessed a resurgence during this period. Writers and poets embarked on a mission to explore and showcase the beauty of the Odia language. This literary revival not only enriched the literary landscape but also contributed to a sense of linguistic pride, reinforcing the Odia identity through written expression. Dance and music, intrinsic to the cultural soul of Odisha, also experienced a renaissance. Traditional dance forms like Odissi, with its roots deep in the state's history, were revived and adapted for contemporary audiences. The revival of traditional music and instruments further enriched the cultural tapestry, creating a harmonious blend of the old and the new.

The impact of the Cultural Renaissance extended beyond the artistic realm, influencing societal perceptions and fostering a collective pride in Odisha's cultural heritage. Festivals and celebrations became not just occasions for revelry but also opportunities to showcase the vibrancy and uniqueness of Odia culture. The Cultural Renaissance in Odisha served as a dynamic catalyst, breathing new life into traditional arts and cultural expressions. This movement has not only preserved the cultural heritage of Odisha but has also played a pivotal role in shaping a distinct and vibrant cultural identity that resonates with the people of the region.

## II. Literature Reviews

**Torres et.al., (2010).** The origin and evolution of the transnational peasant movement La Vía Campesina were analyzed through five evolutionary stages. In the 1980s, the withdrawal of the state from rural areas simultaneously weakened corporatist and clientelist control over rural organizations, even as conditions worsened in the countryside. This gave rise to a new generation of more autonomous peasant organizations, which saw the origins of their similar problems as largely coming from beyond the national borders of weakened nation-states. A transnational social movement defending peasant life, La Vía Campesino, emerged out of these autonomous organizations, first in Latin America and then at a global scale during the 1980s and early 1990s (phase 1). Subsequent stages saw leaders of peasant organizations take their place at the table in international debates (1992–1999, phase 2), muscling aside other actors who sought to speak on their behalf, take on a leadership role in global struggles (2000–2003, phase 3), and engage in internal strengthening (2004–2008, phase 4). More recently (late 2008–present, phase 5), the movement has taken on gender issues more squarely and defined itself more clearly in opposition to transnational corporations. Particular emphasis was given to La Via Campesino's fight to gain legitimacy for the food sovereignty paradigm, its internal structure, and the ways in which the (re)construction of a shared peasant identity was a key glue that held the struggle together despite widely different internal cultures, creating a true peasant internationalism.

**King et.al., (2010).** While much of economic sociology had focused on the stabilizing aspects of markets, the social movement perspective had emphasized the role that contentiousness played in bringing institutional change and innovation to markets. It was acknowledged that markets were inherently political, both because of their ties to the regulatory functions of the state and because actors contested markets, expressing dissatisfaction with outcomes and utilizing the market as a platform for social change. Research in this area had focused on the pathways to market change pursued by social movements, encompassing direct challenges to corporations, the institutionalization of systems of private regulation, and the creation of new market categories through institutional entrepreneurship. Much contentiousness, while initially disruptive, had worked within the market system by producing innovation and restraining capitalism from destroying the resources it depended on for survival.

**Harlow, S. (2012).** In May of 2009, a posthumous video surfaced wherein prominent lawyer Rodrigo Rosenberg was seen blaming Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom for his alleged murder. The accusations triggered the creation of numerous Facebook pages that called for Colom's resignation and sought justice for Rosenberg. Through interviews and a content analysis of Facebook comments from the two most active Facebook groups, this study found that the social networking site had been utilized to mobilize an online movement that transitioned into offline actions. Users' comments related to the protest and their motivational expressions, coupled with their use of links and other interactive elements on Facebook, played a crucial role in organizing massive protests that demanded justice and an end to violence.

**Björgvinsson et.al., (2012).** Participatory design (PD) had become increasingly engaged in public spheres and everyday life and was no longer solely concerned with the workplace. This had represented not only a shift from work-oriented productive activities to leisure and pleasurable engagements but also a new milieu for production and 'innovation'. What 'democratic innovation' entailed had often been defined by management and innovation research at that time, claiming that innovation had been democratized through easy access to production tools and lead-users as the new experts driving innovation. An alternative 'innovation' practice, more in line with the original visions of PD, was sketched based on the experience of running Malmö Living Labs – an open innovation milieu where new constellations, issues, and ideas evolved from bottom-up long-term collaborations among diverse stakeholders. Three cases and controversial matters of concern were discussed. The fruitfulness of the concepts 'agonistic public spaces' (as opposed

to consensual decision-making), 'thinging', and 'infrastructuring' (as opposed to projects) were explored in relation to democracy, innovation, and other future-making practices.

**Lim, M. (2012).** To deepen our understanding of the relationship between social media and political change during the Egyptian uprising of early 2011, events in Tahrir Square had to be situated in a larger context of media use and the recent history of online activism. For several years, the most successful social movements in Egypt, including Kefaya, the April 6th Youth, and We are all Khaled Said, were those that had used social media to expand networks of disaffected Egyptians, broker relations between activists, and globalize the resources and reach of opposition leaders. Social media had afforded these opposition leaders the means to shape repertoires of contention, frame the issues, propagate unifying symbols, and transform online activism into offline protests.

**Taylor, V., & Whittier, N. (2013).** All social movements, to varying degrees, produced culture. The processes that made it possible for individuals and groups to come together to mount a concerted campaign for social change were recognized by scholars, who acknowledged that those challenging the status quo faced a formidable task. It was generally agreed by most analysts that the mobilization of protest was facilitated by a group's ability to develop and maintain a set of beliefs and loyalties that contradicted those of dominant groups. The spheres of cultural autonomy necessary for the rise of social movements were referred to by scholars as "cultures of solidarity" (Fantasia 1988), "social movement communities" (Buechler 1990), "submerged networks" (Melucci 1989), "oppositional subcultures" (Johnston 1991), "cultural havens" (Hirsch 1992), and "abeyance structures" (Taylor 1989). What all these concepts shared was attention to the ideas and beliefs—or the collectively shared grievances and unique frames of understanding—that drove protest.

**Pattnaik, B. K. (2013).** The article was a study of two tribal movements based on development-induced displacements in contemporary Orissa. Indeed, both micro-movement studies were resistance movements against mining-based heavy metal industries, such as the opposition to Utkal Alumina International Ltd. (UAIL) at Kashipur and the resistance against Vedanta Aluminium Ltd. (VAL) at Lanjigarh. Drawing on both primary and secondary data, the study became an exercise in new social movement theory. Within the analytical framework of the new social movement perspective, the article sought to explore the nature and extent of displacement and loss of livelihood caused by the projects. It delved into the issues of disappearing tribal culture and tribal identity with the advent of modernity and its corresponding alien culture. Additionally, the article examined the extent of politicization of the movements. Continuing its exploration, the article articulated the role of civil society, including intellectuals, mass media, activists' organizations, and NGOs, in shaping the course of the movement. Finally, it explicated the questions on development discourse and emergent policy issues arising from these micro-movements.

**Kraemer, R., Whiteman, G., & Banerjee, B. (2013).** Traditional models of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) and stakeholder management were unable to capture the nuances and dynamics of (counter-)organizing processes around anti-corporate mobilization. In the case of a resistance movement against a planned bauxite mine on tribal land in India, a process theory of interactions between local, national, and international actors within transnational advocacy networks was developed. These encounters were not always friendly and were often characterized by conflict between actors with disparate goals and interests. The importance of national advocacy networks (NANs) in anti-corporate social movements was highlighted, along with the description of conflicts and disruptions that resulted from ignoring them. The findings also pointed to the role of corporate counter-mobilization strategies in shaping resistance movements. The narrative revolved around a particular focal actor in the anti-mining campaign: a young tribal man who emerged as a passionate spokesperson for the movement but later became a supporter of the controversial mine. The findings contributed to a richer understanding of the processes underlying transnational and national anti-corporate mobilization.

**Mitra, S. (2014).** In the past, an article was written that analyzed the Kosala movement in western Odisha within the framework of a general model of sub-national movements in India. The popular agitation for a separate State had many of the ingredients of similar separatist movements in other parts of India. It drew on sentiments of discrimination and relative deprivation, for which the activists' held politicians from the more advanced coastal districts of Odisha responsible. Supporters of the movement pointed towards historical records of powerful kingdoms with all the ritual paraphernalia that went into the making of proto-states. Yet, the articulation of a strong sub-regional voice under the leadership of a political party comparable to the TRS in Telangana was absent. Detailed analysis revealed that "Kosala identity" lacked cohesion. It was more of a politically convenient label than a cohesive core capable of extracting the kind of sacrifice from participants. Finally, powerful countervailing, centripetal forces acted against the tendency towards separatism.

**Agudelo et.al., (2019).** There was a long and varied history associated with the evolution of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, in the academic literature, a historical review was missing that portrayed the evolution of the academic understanding of the concept alongside the public and international events that influenced the social expectations regarding corporate behavior. The aim of the paper was to provide a distinctive historical perspective on the evolution of CSR as a conceptual paradigm by reviewing the most relevant factors that shaped its understanding and definition, such as academic contributions, international policies, and significant social and political events. To accomplish this, the method used was a comprehensive literature review that explored the most relevant academic contributions and public events that influenced the evolutionary process of CSR and how they had done so. The findings showed that the understanding of corporate responsibility had evolved from being limited to the generation of profit to including a broader set of responsibilities, ultimately leading to the belief that the main responsibility of companies should be the generation of shared value. The findings also indicated that as social expectations of corporate behavior changed, so did the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. The findings suggested that CSR continued to be relevant within the academic literature and could be expected to remain part of the business vocabulary at least in the short term. As a result, the authors presented a plausible future for CSR that took into consideration its historical evolution. Finally, the paper gave way for future academic research to explore how CSR could help address the latest social expectations of generating shared value as a main business objective. This, in turn, might have practical implications if CSR were implemented with this in mind.

## 2.1 Systematic Reviews

Author (Year)	Key Exploration	Research Area	Findings
Torres et.al., (2010)	Origin and evolution of La Vía Campesina, a transnational peasant movement, analyzed through five stages.	Transnational Peasant Movement	La Vía Campesina emerged from autonomous organizations, evolving globally. The movement tackled gender issues, opposed transnational corporations, and fostered a shared peasant identity, showcasing true peasant internationalism.
King et.al., (2010)	Focus on the role of contentiousness in bringing institutional change and innovation to markets.	Economic Sociology, Social Movement Perspective	Contentious challenges to corporations, private regulation systems, and creation of new market categories by social movements contributed to innovation and restrained destructive capitalism.
Harlow, S. (2012)	Utilization of social media, specifically Facebook, to mobilize an online movement that transitioned into offline protests.	Social Media, Online Activism	Facebook played a crucial role in organizing massive protests against the alleged murder of Rodrigo Rosenberg, demonstrating the power of social media in shaping offline actions.
Björgvinsson et.al., (2012)	Exploration of participatory design's shift from work-oriented activities to leisure, focusing on democratic innovation.	Participatory Design, Democratic Innovation	Malmö Living Labs showcased bottom-up collaborations evolving new ideas. Concepts like 'agonistic public spaces', 'thinging', and 'infrastructuring' were explored, contributing to democracy, innovation, and future-making practices.
Lim, M. (2012)	Contextualization of social media's role in the Egyptian uprising within the history of online activism.	Social Media, Political Change	Successful social movements in Egypt used social media to expand networks, frame issues, and transform online activism into offline protests during the 2011 uprising.
Taylor, V., & Whittier, N. (2013)	Recognition of the cultural production by social	Social Movements,	Mobilization of protest facilitated by the development of cultures of solidarity, social movement

	movements, emphasizing collective beliefs and loyalties.	Cultural Autonomy	communities, and oppositional subcultures, shaping a collective identity against dominant groups.
Pattnaik, B. K. (2013)	Study of two tribal movements against mining-based industries in Odisha, exploring displacement, loss of livelihood, and politicization.	Tribal Movements, Development-Induced Displacements	Analysis within the new social movement perspective revealed the impact on tribal culture, identity, and the role of civil society in shaping movements. The study raised questions on development discourse and emergent policy issues.
Kraemer, R., Whiteman, G., & Banerjee, B. (2013)	Development of a process theory for interactions within transnational advocacy networks during an anti-corporate mobilization.	Transnational Advocacy Networks, Anti-Corporate Mobilization	National advocacy networks played a crucial role in anti-corporate mobilization. Conflicts and disruptions arose from ignoring these networks. The study highlighted corporate counter-mobilization strategies and the evolving role of a focal actor in the anti-mining campaign.
Mitra, S. (2014)	Analysis of the Kosala movement's lack of cohesion in articulating a strong sub-regional voice in Odisha.	Sub-National Movements, Kosala Movement	The Kosala identity lacked cohesion, acting more as a politically convenient label than a core for sacrifice. Countervailing forces acted against the tendency towards separatism.
Agudelo et.al., (2019)	Historical review of the evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concept, considering academic contributions and societal events.	Corporate Social Responsibility, Evolution	CSR evolved from profit generation to a broader set of responsibilities, emphasizing shared value creation. The concept remained relevant as social expectations changed, suggesting a continued presence in the business vocabulary. Future research opportunities were identified to explore CSR in addressing the latest social expectations.

### III. Conclusion

This review highlights the profound and dynamic evolution of the Odia identity, intricately interwoven with a myriad of social movements. The linguistic movement's role in shaping a distinct linguistic identity, cultural renaissance's impact on preserving traditions, and the historical demand for regional autonomy have collectively contributed to Odisha's unique identity. Social reform movements, addressing caste discrimination and social inequalities, emphasize inclusivity within the Odia identity. The political landscape, forged through demands for local governance, further solidifies the region's distinctiveness. Environmental, tribal, labor, women's empowerment, and educational movements contribute diverse dimensions, illustrating the multifaceted nature of the Odia identity. The Cultural Renaissance breathes life into traditional arts, fostering a vibrant cultural tapestry. This nuanced exploration underscores the resilience of the Odia identity, molded by the indelible imprints of social movements, shaping a narrative that continues to evolve within the cultural, linguistic, and political landscapes of Odisha.

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