

Education in a Rural Context: A Catalyst for Disappearing Villages?

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## **Introduction**

In the proposal for this ISP the basic hypothesis was that education would catalyze an urban transition in Ogná. Specifically, it seemed as though people were leaving Ogná in pursuit of higher education, and eventually for a job in the city. It was posited that the eventual yet large migration to the city would have various effects on the social, economic, and structural stability of Ogná, and further, it was thought that with this migration a drastic change in Ogná's culture would occur. Thus it appeared possible that eventually Ogná as it is today might cease to exist. As a result the abstract stated that, "the focus will be on the perceptions of the residents in regards to the social effects that education has had on their village" and specifically what "the locals' perceptions in regards to the effect that an increasingly educated populace may have on the current village dynamic." It was the expectation of the above changes as related to education that inspired this ISP. However, the situation in Ogná is not how it first appeared, and it seems as though at this point education has *not* fueled Ogná's urban transition but in actuality has served to negate many of the reasons that would cause such.

To detail this finding I will present the subsequent discussion in the following manner. To begin, I will provide a brief background detailing how the initial hypothesis seemed to be within the realm of possibility for the future of Ogná. Next, I will detail the field methods used and the limitations thereof. Then, I will divide the remainder of this report into the following sections.

The first will attempt to answer the question of, what does education entail in Ogná? Though this question is seemingly straightforward, it is necessary to understand what type of education is being given in Ogná, and thus what type of possible influence may exist as a result thereof. In section two I will explore the

perceptions surrounding how education can influence Oгна's society. This will help establish the perceived utility of education and thus implicitly show to what extent they will use it as a means of change. Next, in section three, I will provide a limited account of Oгна's development. Specifically, I will describe of Oгна's recent past in regards to the physical features. By doing so, a contrast with the current state will be able to be made. In section four I will describe Oгна's current physical state. This will provide yet another means of understanding the influence that education has had on Oгна. In section five, I will directly discuss how education counters an urban transition, and finally in section six I will discuss the reactions in Oгна regarding the changes that have occurred. To close, I will present a commentary on how the above findings relate to the larger notions of urban transition, societal change, and specifically the future of the Oгна village. Ultimately, it will become clear that although education would seem to fuel an urban transition in Oгна, in reality this has not been the case.

### **Background**

Close to all of the children in Oгна receive their primary<sup>1</sup> and secondary<sup>2</sup> education within the village limits. The senior secondary school was opened in 1992 thus any student wishing to receive an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> standard education before this date would be required to attend a school in either Jadrol or Udaipur. The closest colleges and universities are also in the same places.

Udaipur is approximately 75 kilometers away from Oгна, and Jadrol is approximately 30. The one hour commute to Jadrol is short enough that many students who go to schools there live at their home in Oгна. However the three hour

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<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> standard

<sup>2</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standard

commute to Udaipur makes the possibility of living at home unrealistic. Due to this, it seemed somewhat unlikely that students going to school in Jadrol would eventually migrate there in hopes of a better job. However, if a student were to choose Udaipur for school and thus not live at home for the better part of three years, this possibility seemed extremely real. Ultimately, it was posited that as more people in Ognā desired higher education and thus gained access to better paying jobs in the city, Ognā would go through an urban transition.

### **Methods Review**

To place the subsequent discussion within the specific context and parameters of the fieldwork that was done, it is essential to provide a brief discussion on the methods used during this ISP. More broadly this will provide insight as to what the following observations, discussions, and conclusions are based upon.

There were three research methods used during the 24-day field work period in Ognā. The main one was an informal interview. The various interviewees were selected through a snowball sampling method,<sup>3</sup> and the total number of people interviewed was 11 (8 male, 3 female). Of these twelve, three only worked in Ognā, eight both worked and lived in Ognā, and one only lived in Ognā. Each interview was approximately one hour long. Ten out of the eleven interviewees did not speak English, thus for a majority of the time a translator was necessary. Two different translators were used throughout the 24-days. For the first three interviews, the translator was proficient in English,<sup>4</sup> and for the subsequent interviews, the translator was fluent in English.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A Snowball Sample is one in which the interviewee recommends to the researcher a person(s) who may be willing to participate in the project.

<sup>4</sup> This was Naresh Nayak. He also served as my ISP advisor.

<sup>5</sup> This was Rajesh Kumar. Rajesh was initially an interview subject, but due to his fluency in English, I further requested his assistance.

Due to the informal nature of the interviews, the questions asked were not identically phrased. However, the basic question structure was the same for each interviewee. During the interviews, rough handwritten notes were taken, and afterwards were neatly re-written and commented on if necessary. The informal interview was used due to various difficulties surrounding scheduling, and specifically because it allowed the interviewees to provide a fuller response than a written survey etc. may have allowed.

The second method used was an oral survey and included 102 shop owners (97 male, 6 female). This sample represents approximately 60% of the total shop owners in Ogná<sup>6</sup>. None of the survey participants spoke comprehensive English, thus a translator was again used. Each question was phrased in the same way for all of the participants.

This survey served two purposes. First, a count of the shops in Ogná provided useful information in regards to some of the job opportunities available outside the more traditional realm of farming. Second, the survey was designed to provide extremely basic information on educational achievements and sources of income for both the shop owners and their parents.

Finally, a casual participant-observation method was used. More accurately, this third method can be understood as merely 'cultural immersion'. By living in Ogná, many insights were gained that could not have been otherwise. This aspect of the field study was particularly useful in grasping what Ogná is like in the present. Since little in this regard was specifically notated or written down, its relevance to this project is different than the above mentioned methods. Thus, the experience of cultural immersion did not yield hard facts, but instead was useful in helping to get a

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<sup>6</sup>This number is derived from dividing the 102 participants by the 171 total stores in Ogná.

feel for the current milieu and overall social dynamic of Ogná. Ultimately, this was extremely valuable because it allowed for everything that took place during the 24-days to be put within a tangible context that was specific to Ogná.

### **Limitations**

Before moving on, it is important to briefly discuss the limitations of the methods employed. First and foremost, the lack of female input in the entire process was a constant issue of concern. Ideally, an equal number of men and women would have been surveyed and interviewed; however, this did not happen for a number of reasons. In regards to the interviews, few women were willing to participate. The few who did participate were still somewhat timid and reserved in their answers. Often times, if a man was in the room during the time of the interview, he would interject or cut her off mid statement. While interviewing the women it was constantly necessary to make sure they were able get out a full response regardless of the various sources of interruption.

In the oral survey, another large disparity between the number of men and women participants can be seen. In almost every case the person working in the shop, and thus participating in the survey, was also the owner. Further, about 94% of the shop owners were men.<sup>7</sup> The remaining 6% of the owners were woman. The larger number of men who own shops in Ogná can be attributed to the various norms that exist in the village, which in the most general terms place the women in the domestic realm and the men in the business realm. Regardless, a more equal sex ratio in this survey would have been preferable.

Another limitation of the various methods employed, was the language barrier. Although, the translator for the majority of the interviews was fluent in English,

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<sup>7</sup>This percent is drawn from the numbers mentioned in the Methods Review

interpretation most definitely affects meaning. By virtue of the fact that the interview data has already come through one level of interpretation, the accuracy is slightly diminished. However, based on the high skill of the interpreter this point of concern is not very large.

Since the snowball method was used to find further interviewees, another limitation in the methods can be seen. With the exception of two, all the rest of the interviewees were teachers. Although this fact proved extremely helpful in regards to discussing various topics relating to education, it has most likely caused the data to be somewhat biased.

Moreover the sample size due to time constraints was likely the biggest limitation of the various methods used. The fact remains that in a village of 2879 people,<sup>8</sup> the amount of data collected is not representative of the whole populace. Ideally a larger and thus statistically representative number of participants would have been sought out.

Ultimately, the reason for providing the above discussion is not to undermine or attempt to discredit the following, but rather it is intended to show the limitations of the data from where the following discussion has been generated.

### **What is education?**

In the book, *Tribal Education: New Perspectives*, Manmatha Kundu provides an in depth analysis of the tribal education and the deficiencies he finds therein. His main tenet is that “tribal cultures can be used as positive educational resources” (preface, 1). His book critiques tribal education on a number of points including who writes the text books, the various expectations of assimilation that often come with tribal educational schemes, and even the deficiencies that a traditional classroom

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<sup>8</sup> Udaipur District Panchayat Census: 2001

setting may have for tribal learners. He continues to explore how many of these educational policies and methods affect the various cultures in which they are employed. The overall point that Kundu makes is that the problems regarding tribal education “lie not with these learners or their environments, but with the dominant culture based educational institutions” (81). Kundu is keenly aware of the fact that education not only affects the learners’ level of intellect, but also has farther reaching effects on society at large. Although, the education in Ogná is of a different nature than that which Kundu is referring to, many of the larger issues he raises are extremely relevant.

By understanding the interviewees’ theoretical notion of education it will become clear as to what type of societal influences education may have. Rajesh Meghwal (20, M) said that “education makes life more pleasurable and enjoyable. Education helps [people] to earn money and to get jobs” (Apr. 22). By this definition, a vast array of activities could be called education, and in fact, there is not one absolute definition of such. However, if the general understanding of education was oriented around hands-on agricultural practices, the impact of such would be profoundly different in Ogná, than if education was understood to be more along the lines of providing literacy, math skills and the ability to critically analyze the world. Thus, in order to understand the influence education has had on Ogná, it is first essential to understand what education in Ogná entails.

During the various interviews, one of the questions asked was “what is education?” Although, somewhat blunt, and non-descriptive, the intent was to allow for any type of response to be made. It was clear that the interviewees often sensed the somewhat ambiguous nature of this question, and also seemed to feel as though the answer to the question was somewhat straightforward and obvious. Regardless,

the same question was used repeatedly and as it turned out, each time similar answers were given.

### **Preschool**

Preschool education in Ognā was by no means out of touch with what could be considered typical. A scheme in which children of the preschool age learn basic pieces of information that serve as a foundation for higher learning can be understood as typical. However, the question still remains, what does this mean in Ognā?

During an interview with Savita Rajput (19, F), a preschool teacher at the Balwadi school in Jambua,<sup>9</sup> she answered the question “what is education,” by detailing the curriculum they used in the school. She said they used charts to teach the English and Hindi alphabet, body parts, and the names of fruits (Apr. 16). In an interview with another preschool teacher, Sita Gardsia (19, F), at the Balwadi school in Galder, she too answered by detailing the curriculum. Specifically, she explained they use poetry, games, educational songs, as well as various charts for teaching the English and Hindi alphabet, numbers, body parts, names of vegetables, types of birds etc. However, she also explained that part of the curriculum was “behavior knowledge.” She further explained that this meant teaching the children how to sit in their specific arrangement, how to be clean, and how to interact with the other students (Apr. 18). In other words, they also try to socialize the students to the norms of a classroom.

It is immediately clear that both Savita and Sita’s notion of preschool education is one that not only provides the students with knowledge that is useful and relevant in their immediate futures, but also prepares them to continue on to higher levels of study. In essence, preschool education is the foundation upon which all

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<sup>9</sup> Savita lives in Ognā

subsequent education will be built. It is clear that they both implicitly realize that in the structure, curriculum and overall nature of the preschool setting, the students are being prepared academically and socially for further studies.

### **Primary and Secondary Education**

As an educational scheme is generally understood to be of a linear and progressive nature, it is not surprising that the primary and secondary school teachers interviewed had views regarding education that were along the same lines of the preschool teachers. Specifically, the headmaster of the Biroti government primary/secondary school,<sup>10</sup> Poonan Chand, defined education along the lines of the curriculum used in his school. In his response were included Hindi, English, Math, Science, Social Science, Sanskrit, Art and Health (Apr. 22). At the Avishkar School in Onga, Heeralal Jannawat, the headmaster, also had an almost identical response. However, he further said that even working in a farm could be considered education; however, that type of education only allows the student one option in life: farming (Apr. 24).

It is clear that both Poonanji and Heeralalji believe education should provide the students with a broad knowledge base and thus many options. It seemed as though as long as the students got educated that both Heeralalji and Poonanji would have been satisfied. Even if later in life they did decide to do farming, a job that arguably can be done with out much book knowledge, this would have been ok since they were able to have chosen otherwise.

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<sup>10</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> standard

**Senior Secondary School**

At this point it seems somewhat redundant to make mention of the response from Himmat Singh at the senior secondary school in Onga; however, it will none the less be done. In talking with Himmatji, an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard Hindi teacher, his notion of education turned out very similar to the previously mentioned interviewees. Specifically, Himmatji explained that in his class there was an in-depth focus on grammar, famous texts, books, essays, and poetry, as well as emphasis on writing skills such as letter drafting and resumes. He too made mention that the senior secondary education was something that prepared students to go to college or universities (Apr. 25).

This part of his response was similar to the other teachers; however, due to the fact that continuing from senior secondary school to a university or college would require the students to leave Onga, it was of particular interest to this ISP. Specifically, it showed that there was at least some expectation put upon the students to go to college and thus at least temporarily leave Onga.

**Relevance of Responses**

The intent of the above three sections was not at all to be redundant; however, due to the nature of the responses it was entirely unavoidable. The above responses were similar on many different levels, and in this fact lay an extremely important point. Amongst the various teachers interviewed, continuity in the basic tenets of education's definition could clearly be seen. Granted, in the senior secondary school, fruit and bird charts are not used, but the skills that the children gained from their pre, primary, secondary, and senior secondary school education were all based on the same fundamental definition that education is a linear process. Further, in this case it is also clearly one that is founded on the desire to provide the students with a comprehensive knowledge base, and in all the responses there was at least an implicit

understanding that education can provide the students with a greater amount of choice in life.

Ultimately, if the entire educational system were based on attempting to provide a working knowledge of farming and agriculture, the people receiving the education would surely be able influence Oгна; however, the nature of such influence would be drastically different than it actually is today. Thus, it was necessary to establish what education in Oгна entails because without doing so proceeding into a discussion regarding the influence of education on Oгна would be entirely meaningless. Now, the potential impacts that Oгна's educated may have on the social dynamic can be much better understood.

### **Perceptions of Educations Influence on Oгна**

Clearly, the educational scheme in Oгна is providing its students with a comprehensive knowledge base, thus their ability to influence Oгна is increasing daily. However, it is now important to detail how the interviewees perceive the education to be influencing Oгна. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, depending on what this perception is, either support or disapproval will be given for further educational endeavors. Secondly, by exploring to what extent the people in Oгна believe education to be influencing their society, the potential for change that can come thereof is also able to be seen. In other words, if the people in Oгна don't see any merit in education they will most likely not support it, and thus the potential that lies in an educated populace could remain entirely unused. It is this second reason that is of most importance to this ISP and will be explored further in the following discussion.

In speaking with the various interviewees it was commonly mentioned that without education, nothing could be the way it is today in Oгна. One participant

expressed the fact that education has helped to foster local resource knowledge, provide social mobility, and ultimately allow people to make their own decisions (Apr. 16). During another interview it was pointed out that education has influenced peoples living styles and thus levels of health. Specifically, it has provide people in Oгна with the knowledge on how to have smaller families, keep a clean home, and separate people and animal living areas (Apr. 17). Further, by children physically being in a school, they are prevented from having to labor in fields or shops for a good portion of the day (Apr. 18). Another way that education was said to be influencing Oгна is by negating various superstitions. In doing so, people are able to live with a greater sense of freedom. Along the same lines, education was believed to allow different arguments to be formed, and ultimately it was said by one participant to be “the way to make a man’s mind fully developed” (Apr. 22). Another participant pointed out that education has helped people in Oгна to address various issues such as early marriage and alcoholism (Apr. 22).

Overall, it was clear that the understanding of educations influence on Oгна was virtually limitless and most definitely positive. The interviewees truly had a deep conviction of the many benefits that a solid education has to offer on countless levels. There was a clear understanding of not only the intrinsic benefits that education has to offer, but also the long term and wider reaching social and economic benefits.

With this established it is now possible to move on and begin discussing what these actual influences have been. This will be done in a broad way and with the understanding that education, as detailed above, has not physically changed anything. Rather, in this ISP the way to understand educations influence will be in a more holistic sense. Education is one of the most powerful forces of social change, and on a micro scale one of the most commanding ways to provide a person with greater

social mobility and capability to change the world around her/him. Although, many other social forces are at work in Ognā it will be assumed that fundamentally education has made them all possible, and it is this reason that the changes which have taken place in Ognā will be attributed to education.

### **Ognā in the Past**

The following section will be primarily used to give a rough idea of what Ognā's level of infrastructural development was like in the past 20-30 years. The purpose of doing so will be to provide a baseline notion of Ognā in the recent past and thus make a comparison with the current state possible.

The non-governmental organization, the Gandhi Manav Kalyan Society (GMKS) was created in Ognā in 1982.<sup>11</sup> In speaking with Madan Nagda, the founder, he explained that when they first began to establish the NGO, the roads in Ognā were all unpaved, largely without signs and their overall connectivity to surrounding areas was partial at best. For example, traveling to the nearby village Biroti in a car was not an easy task, and even for a motorcycle the journey was somewhat rough. During flood season, many of these unpaved roads and even bridges were entirely washed out leaving them impassable. In fact, during the monsoon season, Ognā actually becomes an island by virtue of the two rivers that swell and thus encapsulate it. In the event of a medical emergency, this was extremely problematic seeing that the nearest medical facilities were in Udaipur.

Sometimes monsoon season would even destroy many peoples' primary means of making a living: farming. Heading out into the farms, it would not have been uncommon to see many fallow fields. This would be due to a number of factors. First off, drought is not uncommon for this area of the country. Second, 20-30 years

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<sup>11</sup> Discussion with founder of MKS, Madan Nagda.

ago, various water and soil conservation practices were not being employed. Thus, during monsoon season, much of the potentially storable and later useable water would be lost to runoff, and further much of the nutrient rich upper layer of soil would be swept away as well. In combination, these three factors would often time leave farmers without food or means of income.

During an interview with a teacher named Omprakash Purbia, he explained that Oгна has only had electricity for the past 24 years (Apr. 17). Even after there was electricity, it still took some time before various electrical devices were used. For example, Bahrat Jain<sup>12</sup>, who is now 26 years old, said that his family bought their first T.V. when he was 10 years old (Apr. 28). That would place the purchase of their first T.V. 8 years after electricity was available.

On the topic of schools, Omprakashji explained that when he was a child<sup>13</sup> Oгна did not have any private schools or senior secondary schools. In fact, up until 1992 the highest education one could receive in Oгна was 10<sup>th</sup> standard. To gain any higher education it was necessary to attend a school in either Jadrol or Udaipur (Apr. 17).

Further, through various conversations with members of the community, it was made clear that almost all of the homes and buildings were *kucha*.<sup>14</sup>

This description of Oгна could potentially touch upon many more aspects. However, the general idea is that Oгна's recent past was one in which many of the comforts that were being experienced in urban areas at the same time, were largely not available. With this said, it is now appropriate to provide a description of how Oгна currently looks and in doing so create a meaningful contrast.

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<sup>12</sup> A building supplies store owner

<sup>13</sup> Omprakash is now 40 years-old.

<sup>14</sup> Literally this means "unsure." In regards to the homes and buildings it is used to mean they were generally not very sturdy. In many cases, buildings with mud walls and clay tiles for the roof are considered *kucha*.

### **Ogna in the Present**

After gaining an understanding of how Ogna's recent past was, it became immediately clear that a lot has changed. From infrastructure, to facilities, to even the type of shops that are now open in Ogna, in the past 30 years much of what used to comprise "old Ogna" is now long gone.

Ogna's economy has traditionally been based on agriculture and many people still farm either for subsistence or as a supplement to another source of income. However, this is starting to change. Of the 102 shop owners who participated in the oral survey, 41 of them (40.19%) had parents whose primary source of income was from farming but whose own primary source of income was through some form of shop. Of these 41 shop owners, 38 (92.68%) of them also had achieved higher education than their parents. Further, out of the 102 surveyed, only 22 shop owners (21.56%) achieved higher education than their parents, but still have the same primary source of income as their parents. Although this data is insufficient to draw any statistically sound conclusions, it seems to suggest that the more education one receives, the less likely it is that her/his primary source of income will be from farming. However, it also seems to suggest that even in achieving higher education than one's parents, continuing in the same line of work is somewhat common. This could likely be attributed to the fact that often time children in Ogna will finish school and then enter into a family business, as a means to support themselves and their parents.<sup>15</sup> At the very least, this data shows that there are people in Ogna whose educational achievements are higher than their parents. Assuming that education generally provides people with more social mobility and capability, than education has clearly influenced Ogna by providing these residents with more of such.

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<sup>15</sup> This was exactly what Bharat Jain did with his families building supplies store.

In regards to the current physical conditions, entering Oгна in the rainy season or the dry season is equally as feasible. The main road that connects Udaipur to Oгна, as well as various smaller villages in the area, is not only *pucka*,<sup>16</sup> but it also includes various cement bridges which are designed to withstand the floods that come during the monsoon season. This is not to say that *kucha*<sup>17</sup> roads no longer exist, but many of the main roads are now paved.

There are also a number of road signs which inform drivers of how to get to the surrounding villages. In fact, while conducting this field study, a new sign was installed at the main crossroad in Oгна.

Generally speaking the roads in Oгна and the surrounding areas are now well kept and for the most part provide a quick, efficient, and smooth means of traveling. The use of these roads is endless, but ultimately with such a crucial element of infrastructure established many subsequent changes have been able to take place.

Another negative effect that the monsoon season used to have on the farms in Oгна has now been considerably lessened. Through the implementation of various catch dams, water channels, mud walls, and various other water conservation techniques, much of the water that used to be lost to run off is now being absorbed into the soil and collected in various tanks. Further, due to this lower amount of run off, much of the nutrient rich topsoil is not lost during flooding, and thus farmers are able to grow crops on a more regular and consistent basis.<sup>18</sup>

Though electricity has been available for the past 24 years, its use has rapidly grown from the time it was first available. After having visited a number of homes in Oгна, it was abundantly clear that, blenders, fans, lights, and especially TV's have

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<sup>16</sup> This literally means "sure," and thus is the opposite of the term *kucha*. It also means paved in regards to the roads.

<sup>17</sup> This also means unpaved.

<sup>18</sup> As discussed with Naresh Nayak

become extremely common. Of every house that was visited, not a single one was without a television. It is obvious that the influence of electricity on Oгна extends well beyond providing more material comforts, thus the above is only one of many possible examples that could be used. In a larger sense, electricity has also influenced the economy of Oгна.

Specifically, it has given rise to approximately eight electronics repair stores, as well as two photo shops, both of which have photo copying machines. There are many more shops that have arguably opened as the result of the available electricity, but at the very least it is clear that without electricity there would be no need for shops that repair electrical appliances. Further, the two photo shops use digital cameras and computers to process and edit their photos. Clearly without electricity this would not be possible.

Upon entering the bazaar, a few things are immediately noticed. To begin, all of the buildings and many of the surrounding houses are *pucka*;<sup>19</sup> however, this has only been the case for approximately the past 15 years.<sup>20</sup> Also, there are a wide variety of shops, including jewelry stores, barber shops, shoe stores, restaurants, tailors, mechanics, corner stores, liquor stores, a movie theater, cooking supplies stores, as well as homeopathic and allopathic doctors offices. The list goes on, but again, this wide variety of shops was not available 20-30 years ago.<sup>21</sup> The selection in each is more limited than the same types of stores in larger urban centers, but this is not at all surprising. The point is that, the variety as well as number of stores has increased, and is yet another way that Oгна is different today than it was in the recent past.

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<sup>19</sup> This means the buildings are made of either cement or brick. They are more permanent than a *kucha* (see foot note 16) building and have a solid and fixed roof.

<sup>20</sup> This was said by Madanji the founder of GMKS.

<sup>21</sup> As concluded from various informal conversations.

Heading out of the bazaar on the road to Jadrol, one will pass the private secondary school, the Avishkar School, and eventually the government Senior Secondary School. In fact, Ognā now has three government schools and four private schools. The fact that Ognā has a total of seven schools and is able to provide a means for achieving a 12<sup>th</sup> standard education without having to leave the village is extremely important in examining education's role in negating an urban transition. Its relevance will be discussed in depth in the next section.

### **Education: Countering Urban Transition**

In the following discussion, a number of social forces that may be helping to negate an urban transition will first be discussed. First, the notion of family cohesion will be examined. Second, the economics of leaving Ognā will be discussed. Third, and most importantly, the role that education has played will be looked at, and in doing so it will become clear how it has not fueled an urban transition but rather has strengthened Ognā against the possibility of one happening in the future.

#### **Family Cohesion**

Indian culture in general puts great value on the family. This not only means that there is a large amount of respect between each member, but it also means there is a great respect for institution of the family itself. During the course of a conversation with a restaurant owner in Udaipur, he said that he sacrificed a lot of his freedom in life in order to find a job that would allow him to support not only his own family but also his parents. He explained that the idea of not having his parents live with him was unimaginable and further would be very disrespectful. He also spoke of the fact that very little of his extended family has moved out of Udaipur because they don't want to be far away from each other. This type of family cohesion is not specific to

this one instance and it can even be seen in the attitudes of the interviewees in Ognā. Specifically, Bharat Jain held some similar beliefs.

Bharatji graduated from 12<sup>th</sup> standard in 2000. Later that year he moved to Badgav, a village just outside of Udaipur, in order to begin his work on a B.A. at the Udaipur University. Although, the government bus takes three hours in each direction, Bharat would almost always make the trip on either Saturday or Sunday in order to see his family in Ognā. This same routine continued for three years until in 2003 he graduated with a B.A. that was focused on Sociology, Geography and Sanskrit. With his degree Bharatji said that finding a decent job in Udaipur would not have been very difficult. However, with a little chuckle he continued to say that he needed to come back to Ognā to take care of his family, as though he couldn't have imagined doing anything else.

The relevance of this fact is extremely important because in positing how education influences Ognā in regards to an urban transition, this factor was not at all anticipated. Clearly Bharat had the ability to remain in Udaipur, but due to his family ties he decided to move back to Ognā. This one example does not definitively prove that an urban transition would be negated due to family ties because other students in Ognā might not make a similar decision. However, after looking at the oral survey data, it appears that there are a good number of people who have various college degrees yet are living and working in Ognā. Further, many of the shop owners who had a senior secondary school education appeared to be old enough such that they would have had to travel outside of Ognā to achieve such. Yet again, they are living and working in Ognā. The reason that these shop owners chose Ognā as their place of residence was not discussed, but it is likely that at least one factor was their strong family ties.

**The Economics of Leaving**

Bharatji further mentioned that financial constraints influenced his choice of where to live. He explained that living in Udaipur is extremely expensive. The cost of housing, transportation, food etc. is much more than it is in Ogha. He expressed the concern that he wasn't entirely sure if he could make enough money to comfortably afford the Udaipur lifestyle. In Ogha however, he knew he would be able to live with his parents, work at their family store, and thus without much uncertainty be able to live comfortably.

This seemingly simple fact was yet again an unexpected finding. Clearly, education can provide a person with access to a wide range of higher paying jobs, but often times those jobs are only available in expensive places. Thus, although the amount of money that Bharat could have made was likely much larger in the city, his overall concern about the comfort level he would experience there also helped influence his decision to move back to Ogha.

**The Role of Education**

It was earlier stated that education actually appears to be helping to negate an urban transition in Ogha, but now it seems as though in fact maybe it is being prevented by family ties and money issues. In part this is true, but more fundamentally it appears as though education has played a much larger role.

Clearly Bharat, a well educated student did not leave Ogha, but many might argue that had he been able to deviate from the norm of having such strong family ties, and further, had the money been available he would have left. In speaking with him, this seemed to be partially true. In actuality, he was drawn to Udaipur in part because he had more family there, but primarily because of the wide range of facilities that were available.

During all the interviews and countless informal conversations, it became clear that the main attraction of the city is its various facilities. By ‘facilities’ people were not only referring to the schools, stores, businesses, etc., but more fundamentally, they were equivocating the notion of ‘facilities’ with that of greater opportunity and capability and comfort.

It would seem as though maybe the desire for more facilities would in fact fuel an urban transition, but again this is not the case. To review, it is likely that many of the people in Ognā are not going to move to Udaipur due to family ties and economic constraints. However, if these two factors could somehow be overcome, it would seem as though many of Ognā’s children would eventually leave. Further, it was clear that the draw of the city is the perceived economic benefit and also the amount of facilities available. Still the question remains, why has the urban transition not happened, and how does education play a role?

The proximate answer is that many of the facilities that cities have to offer are slowly popping up in Ognā. For example, before 1992 there was no senior secondary school. Before 1983 there was no electricity. Roads and buildings used to be entirely *kucha*.<sup>22</sup> Even the variety of stores used to be extremely limited. However, now all of these things have changed. There are seven schools in Ognā, and standards going up to 12<sup>th</sup>. The roads are paved. The houses are slowly being re-built in a more sturdy fashion, and the many benefits of electricity are being reaped. However, the fundamental reason is education.

It is not enough to simply say that fundamentally education or at the very least knowledge is required for any change in the world to happen. This is true, but is far too general and simplified. Education has had a much more direct role in helping to

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<sup>22</sup> See foot note 19.

negate the urban transition in Ogná. Specifically, it has done so by bringing the people of Ogná many more means to eventually achieving the end of having a greater range of capability, and thus it seems as quality of life in the village has increased the overall desire to leave has decreased. For example, various members of the past few generations have become educated enough to become teachers and pass on their knowledge to the new students. These new students will potentially be able to do the same. If they don't want to be teachers, there are other options in Ogná for using an education. As should be extremely obvious, there are a large number of people who run various types of shops. Granted, these shop owners might not need a huge amount of education to run their business successfully, but every interviewee agreed that most tasks in any realm can be done more efficiently and productively by someone who has received at least a basic education. Even a farmer could benefit from an education regarding water and soil conservation techniques.

Education can be useful in any number of ways. By virtue of the fact that many students eventually feel compelled to return to Ogná after their studies, the general resource of knowledge in Ogná is growing day by day. The educated in Ogná eventually return home and use their education to help strengthen their own community. Their level of knowledge makes a wider range of facilities available and indirectly creates countless opportunities for someone in Ogná to have a more comfortable life. Thus it would seem that eventually people will not want to transition to the urban areas, because life in Ogná will be as full of capability and comfort as it is in the cities.

## **Reactions to Change**

With new facilities coming into Ogná, societal change is constantly happening. In a sense Ogná is urbanizing. This is somewhat of an exaggeration, but all signs seem to point in this direction. It was discussed that many new facilities are continually becoming available, and it would not be surprising if in the next 10-15 years Ogná is similar to how Jadrol is today. However, what is of most interest to this ISP is how the people of Ogná actually feel about these potential changes.

### **The Positives**

In short, there was not a single interviewee, or person spoken to during casual conversation who had any major reservation regarding the prospect of Ogná becoming somewhat more urbanized to the extent that they wanted to actively try and stop it from happening. One of the questions that commonly came up inside and outside of the interviews was how do you feel about the possibility of Ogná turning into a small city? Again, there was seemingly no concern. Another question was how do you anticipate lifestyles in Ogná to change if that happens? Again, every response was primarily focused on the positive benefits of having access to more facilities etc. The only mention of potentially negative consequences was in the following three ways.

### **The Negatives?**

First, some people were worried about the possibility of economic competition. Second, some people were worried that many of the norms and values of Ogná might begin to change. Third, lowering social cohesion on both a family and community level was another point of concern. However, all of these things were seen by the interviewees as well as various other community members as inevitable and it was clear that the vast majority of people spoken with felt these potential costs were well worth the benefits that a more urbanized Ogná would to offer. Ultimately

the general attitude regarding the possibility of Ogná growing and thus potentially drastically changing in the future was clearly a positive one.

### **Conclusion**

Be it called development, growth, or maturing, the matter of the fact is that India is changing day by day. In many areas of the country there are urban transitions happening, and often times they happen because the people must leave their villages in order to survive. In other words, they leave their villages because they essentially have no other option. In these cases the main question becomes, how can these people be provided with more choice in the matter? How can these people possibly be able to remain in their village, and not only survive, but flourish and have a full range of possibilities? The answer seems to be through education. This does not mean that everyone needs to get their PhD in order to live a secure life, but it means that if a basic education is given to everyone, their overall way of existing in the world will be one of greater comfort and choice. Ultimately, education in a rural context has shown not to be a catalyst for disappearing villages. In fact, it seems to be a catalyst for growing and strengthening them.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

Assuming that in the future Ogná does become considerably more urbanized, the appropriateness of the term 'village' becomes questionable. Thus the central focus for a subsequent ISP could be on deconstructing the word 'village' and ultimately trying to place Ogná within the framework of such. Further, a discussion on cultural preservation and the discourse surrounding it could also be presented in order to possibly understand some of the changes that have taken place in Ogná. Ultimately, it is often argued that the village is a fundamental part of India's culture,

and it is important to make sure it is preserve. The question would thus become, who is the village being preserved for? If the people in Ogná are willing to accept the possibility of a cultural change in the future, it would seem as though the notion of cultural preservation is not being used for their sake. Answers to these types of questions would alone be extremely valuable, and further would be useful in supplementing this ISP.

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**Appendix A:**

This is the rough data of the oral survey taken. The levels of education reflect the highest standard the participant graduated from.

Type of Shop	Shop Owners Level of Education	Shop Owners Parents' Level of Education (Mom/Dad)	Is this shop your primary source of Income?	What was your parents' primary source of Income?	<b>Note:</b> Farming = F Same Shop = SS General Store = GS
Liquor					
	8	0/5	yes	F	
Shoe					
	6	0/0	yes	F	
	12	0/0	yes	F	
	12	3/8	yes	SS	
	6	0/0	yes	Oil Prod.	
	10	??	yes	SS/ GS	
	10	7/6	no	Hotel	
Electronic/ Electronic Repair					
	10	0/8	yes	F	
	9	0/8	yes	F	
	BA	0/11	yes	F	
	8	0/6	yes	F	
	10	0/10	yes	SS	
	10	8/12	yes	SS	
	12	5/8	yes	Taylor	
	10	??	yes	Food/Restaurant	
	8	0/0	yes	Bengal Store	
Barber					
	8	0/0	yes	F	
	10	0/0	yes	F	
	9	8/4	yes	F	
	5	0/0	yes	SS	
	7	0/0	yes	SS	
	7	0/0	yes	Trading	
Corner/General					
	2	0/0	yes	F	
	10	0/6	yes	F	
	10	0/0	yes	F	
	8	0/0	yes	F	
	5	3/3	yes	F	
	8	??	yes	F	
	8	0/0	yes	F	
	2yr. College	0/8	yes	F	

	10	0/0	yes	SS	
	11	5/9	yes	SS	
	10	5/8	yes	SS	
	BA	8/12	yes	SS	
	10	5/5	yes	SS	
	8	0/0	yes	SS	
	10	0/0	yes	SS	
	10	0/8	no	F	
	12	0/10	yes	Labor	
	12	0/5	yes	Taylor	
	12	??	yes	SS	
	10	??	yes	SS	
	8	5/10	yes	SS	
	6	0/0	yes	Labor	
	BA/MA/BED	2/5	Teach	SS	
	1yr. College	0/10	F	F	
	BCOM	??	yes	SS	
	10	5/8	F	F	
	7	0/0	Tailor	Pottery	
	8	0/0	yes	Pottery	
	8	0/2	yes	Grinder Shop	
	8	??	yes	SS	
Food/ Restaurant					
	10	0/0	yes	F	
	6	0/0	yes	F	
	8	0/1	yes	F	
	7	0/10	yes	F	
	BA	10/10	yes	SS	
	8	0/0	yes	SS	
	8	0/5	yes	SS	
	7	0/5	yes	SS	
	BA	0/0	yes	Gov./ Barber	
Fruit Stand					
	6	0/0	yes	SS	
	0	0/0	yes	F	
Textile					
	8	0/10	yes	F	
	12	0/0	yes	SS	
	BA	0/0	yes	SS	
	BA	??	yes	SS	
	12	5/5	yes	Jewelry	
Jewelry					
	0	0/0	yes	F	
	1 year BA	0/0	yes	F	
	10	0/0	yes	SS	
	BSC	0/0	yes	SS	
	8	?/10	yes	Shipping Service	
Tailoring					
	6	0/0	yes	F	
	8	0/0	yes	F	

	1	0/0	yes	F	
	10	0/0	yes	F	
	7	0/0	Christ. CF	F	
	0	0/0	F	F	
	5	0/0	yes	SS	
Mill/Grinder					
	12	?/?	yes	F	
	BA	0/8	yes	F	
	BA	0/0	NGO	F	
	12	0/0	yes	Ironsmith	
Kitchen Supply					
	9	0/0	yes	F	
	BA	5/12	yes	SS	
	12 (cont.ing)	BA/BAC	yes	Teaching	
	BA	0/10	F	F	
Vehicle Repair					
	10	0/0	yes	F	
	9	0/0	yes	F	
	12	5/10	yes	Ironsmith	
Iron Working					
	8	0/0	yes	F	
	8	0/0	yes	F	
Pottery					
	0	0/0	yes	SS	
	0	0/0	yes	SS	
Photo					
	BA	0/6	yes	F	
Hardware					
	7	0/8	F	F	
Post Office					
	BA (English)	0/5	yes	F	
Chemist					
	12	5/6	yes	F	
STD+Other					
	BA	5/8	yes	SS	
	10	5/5	yes	Hotel	
	BA	8/10	Teaching	Goods Transp.	

**Appendix B:**

This is chart shows both the type of store and the number of each in Oгна.

Type of Shop	Number in Oгна
Corner/General	45
Health Facilities	6
Vehicle Repair	4
Food/Restaurant	13
Liquor	2
Schools	7
Mills	6
Post Office	1
Tent Rental	3
Police Station	1
Movie Theater	1
Building Materials	4
Taxi Stand	1
Shoe Repair	3
Barber	6
Shoe	8
Fruit	2
Textile	7
Jewelry	8
Electronic/Elec.Repair	8
Cooking Supplies	6
Chemist	2
Photo	2
STD+other	4
Tailor	18
Metal	3
	Total = 171