

5.

The Political Economy of Livelihoods in India

The political economy of livelihoods has perhaps been the most underexplained yet critical aspect that people/organizations engaged in promoting livelihoods should understand and integrate into the livelihood interventions of the poor.

“Political economy was the original term used for studying production, buying and selling, and their relations with law, custom, and government, as well as with the distribution of national income and wealth. Political economy originated in moral philosophy. It was developed in the 18th century as the study of the economies of states, or polities, hence the term political economy”.⁹⁶

Another definition of political economy was, “the study and use of how economic theory and methods influence political ideology. Political economy was the interplay between economics, law and politics, and how institutions develop in different social and economic systems, such as capitalism, socialism and communism. Political economy analyzes how public policy was created and implemented”.⁹⁷

For the purposes of this Resource Book, we define political economy as “the pattern of control over resources, the reasons thereof and the dynamics of change in the pattern over time”. Resources – land, water, forests, and capital are not evenly distributed. Some persons control significant parts of these scarce resources and by that token, acquire power over those who do not have these but need them, to make a living. The control over resources may be customary, as in the case of all land in the village being owned by hereditary chiefs in Meghalaya, or may be law-based as ‘forest land’ belonging to Forest Department is, or may be illegally acquired, as in the case of urban land controlled by a slumlord.

To the extent livelihoods have been examined from the point of view of political economy, the focus had largely been on land as a resource which was unequally distributed.

⁹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_economy

⁹⁷ <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/political-economy.asp>

Thus, agrarian relations and the problems of farmers, tenants and landless agricultural laborers, have been viewed through this lens. But there are a large number of others, such as tribals, pastoralists, and forest produce gatherers, whose livelihoods are threatened and yet it takes a lot for this to come into the 'political' view. To actually understand the situation, it is necessary to look at the ground situation pertaining to the key resource bases of livelihoods, namely land, water, forests and capital. We examine them one by one.

5.1 Land

Land is the major basis of livelihoods for cultivators, landless laborers, livestock rearers and forest dwellers, in rural areas and for industry and habitation-based services in urban areas. India has a total land mass of 320 million ha and of this, data for 305.6 mn ha was reported in 2009-10.⁹⁸ In that year, 140 mn ha

Table 27: Population and Agricultural Workers (1951-2011) (in millions)

Year	Total Population	Average Annual Exponential Growth Rate (%)	Rural Population	Agricultural Workers		
				Cultivators	Agricultural Laborers	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1951	361.1	1.25	298.6 (82.7)	69.9 (71.9)	27.3 (28.1)	97.2
1961	439.2	1.96	360.3 (82.0)	99.6 (76.0)	31.5 (24.0)	131.1
1971	548.2	2.22	439.0 (80.1)	78.2 (62.2)	47.5 (37.8)	125.7
1981	683.3	2.2	523.9 (76.7)	92.5 (62.5)	55.5 (37.5)	148
1991	846.4	2.14	628.9 (74.3)	110.7 (59.7)	74.6 (40.3)	185.3
2001	1028.7	1.95	742.6 (72.2)	127.3 (54.4)	106.8 (45.6)	234.1
2011*	1210.2	1.64	833.1 (68.8)	na	na	na

Figures within parentheses in column 4 are percentages to the total population.

Figures within parentheses in columns 5 and 6 are percentages to column 7.

Source: *Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, 2012*⁹⁹

⁹⁸ <http://data.gov.in/dataset/pattern-land-utilization>

⁹⁹ *Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, 2012*. Govt. of India. Ministry of Agriculture. Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

was cultivated, 15.7 mn ha was currently fallow; 70 mn ha was under the Forest Department (though not all of it forest covered); 10.1 mn ha was permanent pastures and grazing land; 3.3 mn ha was under tree crops; 12.8 mn ha was cultivable waste; and 42.9 mn ha was barren and uncultivable land or under urban and industrial uses. According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, nearly 47 percent of India's land is used for agriculture, followed by 22.6 percent as forested and 13.6 percent as non-cultivable (roughly 41 million ha). The Central Statistical Organization (CSO) data also puts the percentage distribution of the country's total land area at nearly the same (46.3% net sown area, 22.2% forests, 13.3% uncultivable; 3.3% as permanent pastures and other grazing land, 1.2% under tree crops included in net sown area, 5.1% cultivable wasteland and 8.2% fallow-land).

According to the India Rural Development Report of 1992, nearly half of the country's rural population was absolutely or near landless. Landlessness has been steadily rising among the SC and ST. According to NSSO data (2003-04), about 41.63 percent of HHs do not own land other than their homesteads. The data also shows that while one third of the HHs are landless, those near to landlessness add up to one third more. The next 20 percent hold less than one hectare.

In other words, 60 percent of the country's population has right over only five percent of country's land; whereas 10 percent of the population has control over 55 percent of the land.¹⁰⁰

Table 28: Distribution of Ownership Holdings of Land, India

Category	Households (%)	Area Owned (%)
Landless	31.12	0
Less than 0.4 ha	29.82	5.11
0.4-1 ha	18.97	16.89
1 -2 ha	10.68	20.47
2-3 ha	4.22	13.94
3-5 ha	3.06	16.59
5-10 ha	1.6	15.21
More than 10 ha	0.52	11.77

Source: (NSSO 2003-04)

¹⁰⁰ Draft National Land Reforms Policy, 24th July, 2013, Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Accessible at: http://dolr.nic.in/dolr/downloads/pdfs/Draft_National_Land_Reforms_Policy_July_2013.pdf

The situation gets worse as we socially disaggregate the land-ownership pattern. As Table 29 below shows, between 1980 and 2000 for STs and SCs in Odisha,¹⁰¹ a process of dispossession drove a larger number into the landless category.

Table 29: Decadal Change in Landholding among Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes (1980-2000)

Type of holding	Scheduled Tribe		Scheduled Caste	
	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)
Marginal	64	-	95.55	-
Small	40	-	38	-
Semi-medium	-	10.25	-	0.6
Medium	-	37.22	-	28.42
Large	-	55.25	-	71

Source: Analysis Table 12, Report on Agriculture Census 1981, 1985/Agriculture Census Commissioner, Board of Revenue, Cuttack, Odisha

The stark implication of landlessness can be inferred from Table 30.¹⁰² About half of the landless reported going hungry some days of the year (1993-94) and the proportion was one-third for those with less than half a hectare of land. Of course, numerous State and Central food security and employment guarantee programs have since then corrected the hunger situation to a large extent, but it still does not address the question of livelihoods on a sustainable basis, particularly for the next generation, as they would suffer the effects of malnutrition and most likely would also be educationally disadvantaged. Another important aspect of social development— health and nutrition—has, despite its importance, received very low public spending and attention. Child and maternal mortality rates in rural areas are high and the alarming malnutrition levels have shown little improvement. There is also large social stratification, with STs and SCs having much higher rates of malnourishment, child mortality, and lower healthcare access.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Status Report: Land Rights and Ownership: Orissa, 2008. UNDP, New Delhi. Accessible at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/land_rights_ownership_in_orissa.pdf

¹⁰² Status Report: Land Rights and Ownership: Orissa, 2008. UNDP, New Delhi. Accessible at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/land_rights_ownership_in_orissa.pdf

¹⁰³ India Rural Development Report 2012-13, IDFC Rural Development Network, (IDFC Foundation, IRMA, CESS, IGIDR)

Table 30: Hunger and Poverty by Farm Size in Rural India

Land Class	% of population	
	Hungry	Poor
Land less	49	54
<0.5 hectares	32	38
0.5-1 hectares	24	27
1.0-2 hectares	17	19
2.0-4 hectares	12	14
>4 hectares	12	13

Source: IARI FAD/RAP study based on 50th NSS Round (1993-94)

To bring home the consequence of landlessness, we cite just one case study.

Box 10: Consequences of Landlessness

Grazing Land Dispute Turns Violent, 15 Hurt¹⁰⁴

AURANGABAD: The long-standing dispute between villagers of Sindhi Sirajgaon on Aurangabad-Mumbai highway and the Pardhi community settlers over the possession of grazing land turned violent on Sunday night. Eight people arrested on early Monday, for assaulting and setting the huts inhabited by the Pardhi community on fire on Sunday, were sent to police custody till Thursday. The village is around 18 km from Aurangabad.

At least 15 people of the Pardhi community including women and children were injured in the assault. One of them identified as Sunil Rajat Kale (30) sustained serious injuries and is struggling for life, the police said. The Pardhi community and the villagers have had a long-standing dispute over *gairan* land (grazing ground owned by the Government). The area is spread over 110 acres of which 60 acres fall under the jurisdiction of Sindhi Sirajgaon, while the remaining 50 acres fall in adjoining Fatulabad. The Pardhi community has been visiting and staying on a portion of the 60 acres of grazing land for generations, said police sources. The State Government had regularized 29 acres of the grazing land, following which the community began to occupy it for grazing. During their absence, some villagers who had been eyeing the land, tried to illegally take possession of the land.

¹⁰⁴ http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-11/aurangabad/35750365_1_police-custody-villagers-huts

There are, of course, thousands of such cases of dispossession of the weak by the strong, irrespective of customary or conferred rights to use of land. Indeed, only in states or regions, where the marginal and small farmers and the landless became militant and took to violence, has this tendency been curbed to a large extent, as in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh, the Marathwada region of Maharashtra and the central districts of Bihar, like Gaya. In Kerala and West Bengal, the elected Communist governments took steps to recognize the rights of tenants. ‘Operation Barga’¹⁰⁵ was carried out between 1978 and 1980 in West Bengal to recognize the rights of ‘bargadars’ or tenants and benefited millions.

Unrecorded tenancies, in particular, leave tenant farmers exposed to eviction and without institutional support such as credit or subsidies. To date, the process of land acquisition based on the 1894 Land Acquisition Act, has been fraught with difficulties, with many HHs losing access to lands and livelihoods as a result of poor compensation and inadequate resettlement.

The new Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act is also trying to redress the power imbalance by providing the displaced with better compensation and, in addition, resettlement and reallocation in the form of land-for-land, housing and employment or annuity payments. The Act also provides for those who may not own the acquired land but depend on it for their livelihoods. This is indeed a ‘land’mark Act!¹⁰⁶

5.2 Water

After land, water is the next important resource affecting livelihoods. Since in India, the main use of water is for agriculture which is tied up with land issues, we will not discuss the numerous conflicts related to irrigation water.¹⁰⁷ Instead, we will focus on other livelihood uses for water, such as fisheries, and also the conflict between water for traditional livelihoods (agriculture, livestock-rearing and fisheries) and the demands of the modern sectors – industrial and urban use.

¹⁰⁵ Bandyopadhyaya, Nripen (1981). ‘Operation Barga’ and Land Reforms Perspective in West Bengal: A Discursive Review. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 16, No. 25/26 (Jun. 20-27, 1981)

¹⁰⁶ Excerpt from India Rural Development Report (ibid)

¹⁰⁷ For an excellent overview on this, visit www.waterconflictforum.org

Box 11: Draft National Water Policy (2012)¹⁰⁸

India has more than 17 percent of the world's population, but has only four percent of the world's renewable water resources with 2.6 percent of the world's land area. There are further limits on utilizable quantities of water owing to uneven distribution over time and space. Public policies on water resources need to be governed by certain basic principles, so that there is some commonality in approaches in dealing with planning, development and management of water resources. These basic principles are:

- (i) Planning, development and management of water resources need to be governed by a common integrated perspective considering local, regional, state and national context, having an environmentally sound basis, keeping in view human, social and economic needs.
- (ii) Principle of equity and social justice must inform use and allocation of water.
- (iii) Good governance through transparent informed decision making is crucial to the objectives of equity, social justice and sustainability. Meaningful intensive participation, transparency and accountability should guide decision making and regulation of water resources.
- (iv) Water needs to be managed as a common pool community resource held by the state, under public trust doctrine to achieve food security, support livelihood and ensure equitable and sustainable development for all.
- (v) Water is essential for sustenance of the ecosystem, and therefore, minimum ecological needs should be given due consideration.
- (vi) Water, after meeting the pre-emptive needs for safe drinking water, sanitation and high priority allocation for other domestic needs (including needs of animals), achieving food security, supporting sustenance agriculture and minimum eco-system needs may be treated as economic good so as to promote its conservation and efficient use.
- (vii) All the elements of the water cycle, i.e., evapo-transpiration, precipitation, runoff, river, lakes, soil moisture, and ground water, sea, etc., are interdependent and the basic hydrological unit is the river basin, which should be considered as the basic hydrological unit for planning.

¹⁰⁸ Draft National Water Policy (2012), Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India. Accessible at http://mowr.gov.in/writereaddata/linkimages/DraftNWP2012_English9353289094.pdf

- (viii) Given the limits on enhancing the availability of utilizable water resources and increased variability in supplies due to climate change, meeting the future needs will depend more on demand management, and hence, this needs to be given priority, especially through (a) evolving an agricultural system which economizes on water use and maximizes value from water, and (b) bringing in maximum efficiency in use of water and avoiding wastages.
- (ix) Water quality and quantity are interlinked and need to be managed in an integrated manner, consistent with broader environmental management approaches inter-alia including the use of economic incentives and penalties to reduce pollution and wastage.
- (x) The impact of climate change on water resources availability must be factored into water management related decisions. Water using activities need to be regulated keeping in mind the local geo climatic and hydrological situation.

5.2.1 Fishery as a Livelihood

Table 31: Fishery as a Livelihood Option

Fishermen population (as per Livestock Census, 2003)	
a) Number of family members	
Total	14,485,354
Males	4,696,158
Females	4,033,963
Children	5,755,233
b) Engaged in fishing operations	
Full time	933,124
Part time	1,072,079
c) Engaged in fishing related activities other than actual fishing	
Marketing of fish	391,000
Repair of fishing nets	245,100
Processing of fish	46,200
Other activities	334,700

As can be seen from Table 31,¹⁰⁹ in 2003, around three million people were engaged in fishery related livelihoods: fishing, processing, marketing and support services. In 2003, around 14.5 million people (including family members), were dependent on this livelihood. The case study below illustrates how the elegantly articulated precepts of the National Water Policy actually plays out. These include the ‘need for safe drinking water, sanitation and high priority allocation for other domestic needs (including needs of animals), achieving food security, supporting sustenance agriculture and minimum ecosystem needs’, (principle vi).

Box 12: Water Conflict: Case of Kolleru Lake

Conflict between traditional and ‘modern’ livelihoods: Kolleru Lake, Andhra Pradesh¹¹⁰

Kolleru, one of Asia’s largest fresh water lakes, is located in Andhra Pradesh and is a famous habitat for a number of resident and migratory birds. Situated between the Godavari and the Krishna river basins, it is an invaluable wetland ecosystem. The lake spans 90 to 100 ha and the water shrinks or expands depending on the rains; many rivulets drain into the Kolleru and surplus waters runs off into the Bay of Bengal. Abutting the lake, there are about 75 villages spread over nine mandals in Krishna and West Godavari districts with a population of 3.5 lakh as per 1991 Census. Twenty-five years ago, the water surface of the lake was 918 sq km. At the Ramsar Convention held in Spain in November 2002, Kolleru was designated one of the 11 new Indian wetlands of international importance.

Rich in aquatic life, Kolleru has for a long time, provided a habitat where there is a harmonious coexistence of birds, people and life-supporting water. The resources of the lake – many rivulets such as Tammileru, Ramileru and Budameru – that brought in the floodwaters necessary to sustain it were being used by the local communities for fishing, agriculture, catching birds and so on. Records of fishing licences exist since 1956. People from Odisha and other nearby places used to migrate to the region to make a living. The government had assigned lands in the lake area to scheduled and backward castes (SCs and BCs respectively); while the BCs, who are mostly fishermen converted their lands to fish tanks, the SCs used their lands for agriculture.

¹⁰⁹ Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2008, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Government Of India, New Delhi

¹¹⁰ J Rama Rao, Jasveen Jairath, P Umesh, Pollution through Aqua Culture: Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary, *Economic and Political Weekly* February 18, 2006

There are various small islands in the lake that were inhabited by fisher folk from lower castes. The fishermen would fish during the rains and take up seasonal cultivation of paddy on the land vacated by receding waters around the islands and the edge of the lake during the winter and the summer seasons.

During the late 1970s, under the chief ministership of J. Vengal Rao, the fishermen were encouraged to form registered cooperative societies and loans were sanctioned to members for seasonal cultivation of one ha dry land per family. There were repeated floods and the banks and government encouraged them to convert agricultural land into fishponds and tanks. The beneficiaries were to practice collective cultivation and their remuneration was in proportion to their share. At this point, the better-off sections of the community entered the scene and took the land or water area on lease from the society members for periods ranging up to five years.

This continues till date. It means that the land is actually in the name of the poor 'beneficiaries' – but is in fact used by the well-off sections of society while the real fishermen work for a salary of Rs 20 a day for women and Rs 40 for men. Ironically, those legally entitled to the benefit have been reduced to wage earners on their own land and water. The rich have not only taken over all the cooperative societies but have also started illegal encroachments. Till 1990, this influential class, also comprising political leaders and policy-makers who successfully did away with the real beneficiaries, were only involved in fishing – an activity that requires sweet water.

Aqua Boom, Induced Death

The fishermen, who were dependent on traditional fish capture until the lands were assigned, were encouraged by the government to go in for aquaculture. Some rich enterprising farmers, taking advantage of the government policy, reaped rich harvests through the scheme and their success and prosperity in the 1990s encouraged the outsiders to invest in fish tanks leading to an aquaculture boom and overexploitation of the lake. From 1992-93, aquaculture has been practiced in a big way. The problem is, it needs saline water to flourish and borewells have been sunk in the lake bed to pump out saline water for the aqua ponds; the lake bed level has sunk, the tides bring in more and more saline water into the lake since the banks have also sunk. Prawn seed is cultivated for one month in small ponds and then transferred to larger ponds with saline water. Both fish and prawn cultivation require use of chemical fertilizers, farmyard manure, chicken waste, etc. Once the harvest is over, this water stagnates and pollutes the surrounding water.

Unscientific and illegal aquaculture coupled with agricultural runoff from the area that also contains chemical residue, untreated water from neighboring industries and domestic sewage from areas like Vuyyuru, Hanuman Junction, Gudivada, Eluru, and Tadepalli Gudem, etc., flow into the lake and contribute to its pollution. At present, aquaculture is carried out in over 80,000 ha producing more than seven lakh tons of products with an annual turnover of Rs 4,000 crore.

When Water Is Poison

The degradation of the Kolleru has many implications for the weaker sections of the community. It is ironic that the main problem is to do with dearth of drinking water in the neighborhood of the largest fresh water lake in the country! It has been found that:

- (a) The government does not supply drinking water to the island villages and no investments have been undertaken to rectify this situation. The few taps that exist supply polluted water. Till almost 15 years ago the villagers used to drink only lake water and now they walk three to six kilometers to get water for domestic use. Many buy sachets of water – a thriving local industry – but there are no quality checks; there is no expiry date on the packets and no treatment of water before packaging. But the illiterate villagers have no idea about the risk they incur and suffer from various water-related diseases such as diarrhea, typhoid, amoebiasis, etc.
- (b) During the last two years, prawn and fish became prone to diseases and some farms have been abandoned. These lands are useless for agriculture as well since the soil and water have been contaminated.
- (c) Young men from the area have migrated elsewhere in search of jobs while old people have taken to begging. This when ‘prawn dons’ earn up to Rs 22.5 lakh per ha in four months.

According to a World Bank report,¹¹¹ the total fish production in India was about 7.6 million tons, of which 61 percent was from inland fisheries and the rest was from marine sources. The situation of livelihoods in the marine fishery sector is no different. As ‘modernization’ has brought in the need to induct more and more capital, the traditional fishermen are reduced to mere wage laborers, eking out a more and more uncertain living as can be seen from the excerpts of the report:

¹¹¹ India Marine Fisheries: Issues, Opportunities and Transitions for Sustainable Development. August 2010, Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Unit South Asia Region, The World Bank. Report No. 54259-IN. Accessible at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/3002/542590ESWwhitoriesoReporto0PUBLICo.pdf?sequence=1>

Box 13: *The Lives and Livelihoods of Marine Fishermen*

The current condition of marine fishing is affecting fisher folk in the form of declining catches, reduced incomes, and increasing conflicts. This is particularly true for smaller boat owners and their crew who are unable to protect access to their resources effectively, or shift to newer and more distant fishing waters in the Indian EEZ. The rapid growth of the mechanized trawler fleet, often buoyed by the benefit of public subsidies, has increased competition for those fishing with smaller inshore vessels. Trawlers now account for an estimated 20 percent of the fishing labor force but haul in 60 percent of the catch.

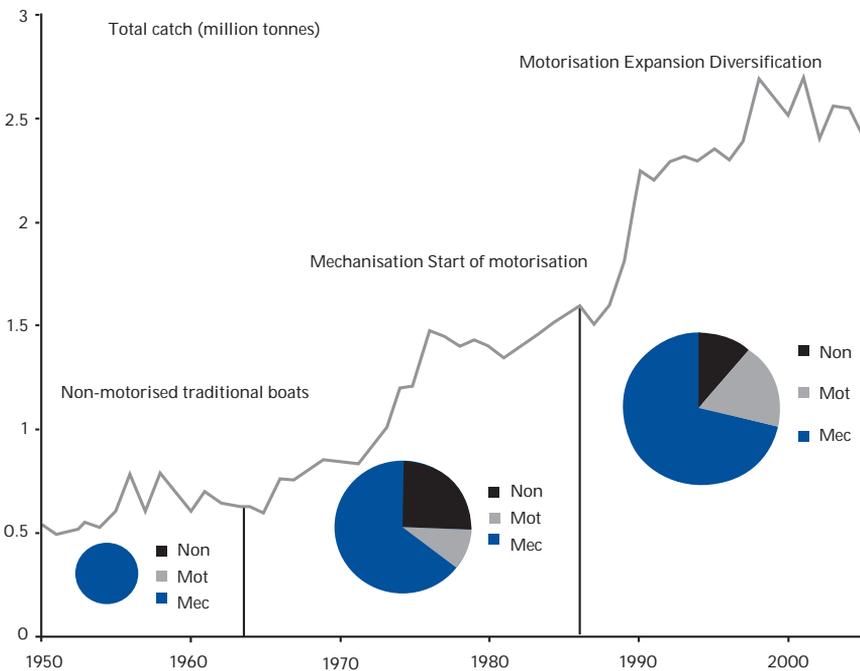
These issues appear to trap the poor inshore fisher folk and processors into a cycle of perpetual low profits and debt. Rising world fuel prices (until recently) put even more pressure on the viability of motorized vessels and increased calls for further subsidies from the government. Small-scale fisher folk have few points of entry into the broader state or national policy debate on marine fisheries, nor do they have easy access to programs that could sustain their livelihoods both from fishing and non-fishing sources. Education levels tend to be low, making it difficult for fisher folk to take advantage of alternative employment opportunities in the expanding national economy. Fishing communities are characterized by high levels of illiteracy, and only six percent of the fisher folk have education above secondary level. There is poor access to piped water and efficient sanitation services.

Since fishing (as well as processing and trade) are labor intensive, age is an important criterion for carrying out the activity. Factors such as hard working conditions, poor living conditions, early marriages and child birth, alienation, lack of insurance and healthcare, force these people out of productive work at a relatively early age (about 50 years). The absence of old age insurance and pension adds to their problems. On the other hand, poverty and the fact that the resource can be openly and easily accessed forces children to take to fishing at a very early age, reducing opportunities for education and/or diversification.

In general, all laborers without assets, working in motorized and non-motorized sectors (constituting about 60 percent of the producer's workforce as fishing crew) are poor. The boat owners, by virtue of their assets are relatively better off, but face more risks than their workers. The crew can always move on to another activity (where these exist) or a different boat, which the boat owners cannot do so easily.

There is a heavy dependence on the informal money market for almost all stakeholders in the fisheries sector, except the large boat owners and traders who often double as money lenders to other stakeholders further down the supply chain. Smaller fisher folk rely on informal money markets to meet almost all of their consumption and life cycle needs. This dependence on the 'informal' and 'internal' money market is largely on account of cumbersome procedures of taking loans from the formal money market.

The Three Phases of Development of Indian Fisheries



Source: CMFRI 2003. Note: Non=non-motorized; Mot=motorized; Mec=mechanized

The phenomenal growth of the fisheries economy in the modernization phase was accompanied by the entry of new fishing methods, players, and trading systems that have had long-lasting impact on the life and livelihoods of the fisher folk, especially the small-scale fishermen. Mechanized trawlers now account for 20 percent of the labor force in primary fishing, yet they corner 60 percent of the catch. Smaller scale vessels (motorized and non-motorized) account for 80 percent of the labor and account for 40 percent of the catch. These changes have affected the terms of access to resources for the poor, the focus and organization of production, new systems of preservation, new market intermediaries, altered terms of trade and access to markets.

An FAO study in Tamil Nadu (Neiland et al 2006) indicated that of 212 small scale fisherfolk surveyed, 59 percent indicated that the viability of their principal livelihood had declined from the previous year. Of these individuals, 85 percent said that it was a matter of concern because of a greater risk of starving. Major reasons for the downturn in livelihoods were decreased fish catches and scarcity of fish during poor fishing seasons; low fish prices, especially during supply gluts, increased input costs and poor access to more distant and lucrative markets.

Field results suggest that the options chosen by men under pressure from poor catches, weather patterns, etc., frequently stem from the nature of their occupation. The options chosen include shifting to another location or shifting from fishing to shore-based trade activities related to fishing and so on. One conclusion that can be drawn is that many of the alternative activities that these people take up may be no more sustainable than the ones they have left behind. This is because, the availability of alternative options as well as improving access to credit requires concerted efforts by the Government, private sector links, and long-term strategic thinking to assure the viability of the options promoted.

One possible strategy to improve fisheries and non-fisheries-based livelihoods is to consider coastal dwellers within the wider economy. Salagrama and Koriya (2008) suggest that programs need to address vertical diversification (move the producer higher up the fisheries value chain) and horizontal diversification (invest in livelihood alternatives outside fishing). The new livelihood opportunities could of course be created either within the sector (e.g., new fish processing and value-added product development) or outside the sector (e.g., fisher folk developing new skills and trades in small business development, coastal forestry, agriculture, or handicrafts), or some combination of the two.

5.2.2 Alternate Demand for Water – from Industry

Fisheries are not the only place where there is conflict over water as a resource for livelihoods. Increasingly, the demand from industry is becoming an important competitor to the traditional uses of water – mainly subsistence agriculture. There are hundreds of cases where water is being drawn from rivers for industrial use and this has been privileged by more recent contractual arrangements than the traditional uses. The case study below of the Sheonath River water from Chhattisgarh illustrates this conflict.¹¹²

¹¹² Binayak Das, Ganesh Pangare: In Chhattisgarh, a River Becomes Private Property. *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 18, 2006

Box 14: Water for Traditional Livelihoods or Industries?

Sheonath River flows through Borai in Durg district, Chhattisgarh. This case is about the handing over of a stretch of the river near Borai to a private firm for supplying water to the region lying between two district headquarters, Durg and Rajnandgaon. Borai is a newly developed industrial hub, promoted by the Chhattisgarh State Industrial Development Corporation (CSIDC). It is 45 km from the Raipur airport, on the National Highway 6 and the main Mumbai-Howrah railway line. The region is rich in natural minerals and Borai is at a reasonable distance of 10 km from the Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP). Surplus power is available at a reasonable cost. Surrounding the Borai region is a cluster of villages that traditionally used river water for irrigation and fishing.

Sheonath River, a semi-perennial tributary of the Mahanadi had been contracted to Radius Water, a division of Kailash Engineering, for a period of 22 years. Radius Water is based in Rajnandgaon near Borai and had been managing the water distribution from the river. The build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) project was commissioned in 2001 by the Chhattisgarh government.

Under the scheme, water from the river was supplied to the industries in bulk as part of an agreement with the CSIDC. Most of the industries located here are water-intensive— distilleries, sponge iron units and thermal power plants – and CSIDC attempted to make it the hub for all water-based industries. Radius was not only responsible for supplying water but also for operating a common effluent treatment plant (CETP). Radius Water built a 4 m high dam through a technique called the Flood Regulating Barrier System along a 3.5 km stretch of the Sheonath river at a cost of Rs 4 crore. The total cost for the project was Rs 9 crore for 30 million litres per day (mld).

The conflict did not start immediately. Initially, the locals were not aware that a private firm managed the new barrage that had sprung up across the river. No prior information was provided about this contract. After a few months, however, Radius Water informed the local fishermen that they were no longer permitted to fish in the 200 m zone from the barrage (on both sides) for safety reasons. There were a few skirmishes and employees of Radius Water allegedly destroyed some of the fishermen's nets. The latter complained that their catch had dwindled after the construction of the barrage. Farmers who owned land near the river were also barred from lifting water from the river with motor pumps. This ban had the endorsement of the district administration, which also banned the installation of tube wells.

Many villagers from Pipalcheda, one of the surrounding hamlets, insisted that the water level in their wells had plunged since the construction of the barrage.

A huge rally took place on November 1, 2003 under the banner of the *Sheonath Nadi Mukti Andolan*. The protesters have been questioning the very concept of the privatization of the river. They wonder how the industries department signed a contract for a river that legally falls in the purview of the irrigation department. Activists and lawyers argue that the deal violates the Madhya Pradesh Irrigation Act of 1931 and the National Water Policy, which prioritizes agriculture over industries. Natural resources cannot be signed over to individuals without taking all the stakeholders into confidence. Radius Water on the other hand insists that the upcoming industries at Borai will boost the state's economy and that they were merely ensuring that water was supplied to them at a low price. According to them the industrial water tariff in Borai is the lowest in the country.

5.3 Forests

Starting with the Indian Forests Act, 1865, the colonial government began to stake to its monopoly claim over forests, recognizing only meagre customary ('*nistar*') rights of prior use such as grazing, collection of head loads of firewood, a little bit of timber and some minor forest produce. This Act was substantially amended with a much more repressive Indian Forest Act 1879, which among other provisions, permitted arrest without warrant of those seen to be encroaching on or stealing from forests. This converted what was a symbiotic relationship between communities living on the periphery of forests and the forest ecosystem, to an adversarial one. The Forest Act, though amended several times, basically continued in the spirit of the 1879 Act. To get an idea of how this panned out after Independence, let us look at the excerpts of a report from Andhra Pradesh.¹¹³

¹¹³ V. Ratna Reddy et al Participatory Forest Management in Andhra Pradesh: A Review. Working Paper No. 62, October 2004. Center for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad. Accessible at http://www.cess.ac.in/cesshome/wp_percent5Cwp-62.pdf

Box 15: Evolution of Forest Policy – A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh

About 19 percent of the 26,586 villages in Andhra Pradesh have ‘forest’ as land use. The forest area in these villages is 2.57 mha. With a total population of 10.67 million, they represent about 22 percent of the total rural population. Villages having less than 100 ha, between 100-500 ha and more than 500 ha forest area in each village, constitute 35 percent, 39 percent and 26 percent of the total villages respectively. The mean forest area per village is 506 ha. There are a number of ways land under Forest Department (FD) management may be reallocated to another use. For instance, area allotted for those rehabilitated due to projects, area occupied for different Government projects, area ‘alienated’ or ‘encroached’ by local people, irrigation projects, and so on. These kinds of activities increased over the post-independence period. For example, between 1950s and 1983-84, 2.07 lakh hectares of forestland were lost, of which, two-thirds were diverted for rehabilitation and agricultural purposes.

Much of the forest area lies in Schedule V areas of the state, in which the Constitution requires the protection of tribal rights, identity and culture through a different form of administration. However, the FD has not yet acknowledged the need to subordinate forest management practices to these constitutionally more important objectives. Neither has it acknowledged that much of what it classifies as ‘encroached land’ is actually land under customary tribal *podu* forest fallows management. *Podu* cultivation involves the clearance of small patches of hill forests for subsistence cultivation (e.g., various crops including sorghum, millet). After a few years, the cultivators move on to another area. A cultivator HH may have customary tenure to a long rotation cycle of plots over perhaps 10 years or more, and move between them.

A particularly significant change for local forest-dependent communities was the introduction of the AP Minor Forest Produce (MFP) (Regulation of Trade) Act, 1971, introduced with regard to *Tendu* leaves (used for making *beedis*) to ensure revenue to the government, creating a state monopoly in trading of forest produce in the state. Under this regulation, the government or an officer or an agent appointed for a unit was identified for sale, purchase, cure or otherwise process, collect, restore or transport any MFP. Penalty was to be imposed for the violation of the Act. The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas MFP (Regulation of Trade) Regulations, 1979, was introduced to make provisions for the trade of certain MFP by creation of a state monopoly in such trade in the scheduled areas of the state – the Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC). In a major change in policy, Joint Forest Management (JFM) was implemented in Andhra Pradesh from 1992, consequent to the issuance of the first Government Order (GO).

Later, this Order was changed several times to incorporate pro-people measures, resulting in the GO No. 173 of December 1996. In consonance with the National Policy, the Government of Andhra Pradesh framed a revised State Forest Policy in 1993. Under this, *Vana Samarakshana Samithis* (VSS) were established to protect the forest resources, mainly in the hill areas. Although JFM was introduced in early 1990s, the growth in numbers was very slow till 1995-96.

SD Mukherji, previously the Principal Chief Conservator in Andhra Pradesh, and an enthusiast for JFM, describes the initial scenario: “The most difficult part of JFM was to change the mindset of the foresters and restore trust between them and the people. Most foresters genuinely believed that due to their protection, JFM would bring an end to whatever little forest was left. They were also of the strong view that people’s need of forest produce, if any, should be met from Social Forestry (SF) plantations of fuelwood and fodder outside the reserved forest (RF) area. They were also afraid of losing their power and authority over the people. On the other hand, the people refused to come to the foresters even for a discussion. They would not believe the foresters because of their past experiences, where the latter mainly visited villages to book cases against the people for ‘forest offences’ such as collection of fuelwood, bamboo and timber and grazing of cattle.”

From a mere 133 VSS during 1994-95, the numbers had gone up to 6,726 VSS in 2001-02, managing 16.89 lakh ha of forest area, of which about 7.85 lakh ha of degraded forests had been treated through these VSS. Around 13 lakh people, including six lakh women were involved. By 2004, the official number stands at 7,245 VSS, managing 1,886,764 ha, (or over 29% of state forest land) and involving 611,095 families.

Andhra Pradesh’s benefit sharing policy is apparently the most liberal, thanks to the effective lobbying of the networks. Under the revised order of 1996, the VSS is entitled to 100 percent of the ‘net incremental value’ of timber and bamboo harvested after deducting costs. The VSS is entitled to all non-nationalized NTFP. This was further revised in January 2004 (G.O. Ms No. 4) to bring clarity into the ‘net incremental value’. According to this, the VSS shall be entitled to the following forest produce obtained from forests managed by them. i) All NTFPs, ii) all intermediate yields obtained from silvicultural operations in natural forests, iii) all timber and bamboo (including bamboo plantations) except in case of plantations, iv) in the case of teak plantations within the VSS area, whose age is known, twice the proportionate yield harvested (including yield from thinning) with reference to age of the plantation and the period of maintenance by the VSS.

There is, however, a total absence of mechanisms for addressing and resolving the serious conflicts related to people's rights over lands declared as state forests. A study undertaken by *Samata* (an NGO) in 1999 in North Coastal Andhra on the impact of JFM found that of the 1,500 acres of *podu* lands in 29 VSS, only 520 acres are with the people after the formation of VSS. The rest of the *podu* lands have been taken away under the JFM program, which some say exposes the government's hollow claims.

Struggles in many parts of rural India over forest rights are now redefining rural politics and the 'left-wing extremism' is partly a manifestation of this tension. These various conflicts have brought issues of resettlement of, and compensation for, people affected by development projects to the fore. Their challenges have slowly been recognized and their rights have been provided some legislative support. Recent legislation—such as the *Panchayats* (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (FRA)—has granted communities rights to live in forests and collect and use minor forest produce, and prevent alienation of land in Scheduled Areas. But the actual implementation of these Acts has been hesitant and incomplete. Yet, the success of tribal protests against bauxite mining in the Niyamagiri hills in Odisha, with all twelve *Gram Sabhas* (GSs) rejecting the mining proposal in August–September 2013 under PESA, is a sign of their empowerment.¹¹⁴

5.4 Capital

We saw in the earlier sections how lack of access to capital is a source of lasting weakness for the poor. The Indian banking sector is supposed to have been a developmental instrument, which while mobilizing savings from all HHs, would offer credit to those HHs with creditworthy projects. In 1967, Indira Gandhi put banks under 'social control' and then in 1969, nationalized the twenty largest private banks to ensure that banks served the needs of all-round socioeconomic growth. Following the economic reforms introduced in the 1990s, banks tried to veer away from the social banking mandate.¹¹⁵ But within a few years, it became clear that for reforms to work, growth must be inclusive. The realization that financial inclusion is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for inclusive growth, dawned soon.

¹¹⁴ India Rural Development Report 2012-13

¹¹⁵ This section is largely taken from a recent paper by Mahajan, Vijay 2013. *Call for an Inclusive Banking Structure for India by 2019, Fifty Years after Bank Nationalization*. DFID and SIDBI, New Delhi.

5.4.1 Four Dimensions of Financial Exclusion

Data released by the RBI indicates that 58.7 percent of HHs in India avail of banking (savings) services, with the figure being 54.4 percent for rural areas and 67.8 percent for urban areas.¹¹⁶ The number is much lower, at 21 percent, if one talks of credit. For over a century, the Indian state has tried to address the financial needs of the masses – both credit and savings. The RBI claims that, “The banking structure played a major role in the mobilization of savings and promoting economic development.” Yet, data shows that this is far from the facts.

One of the peculiar characteristics of the Indian economy is that while the savings rate is high as a percentage of GDP, running at well above 30 percent since 2000, the extent of savings in financial terms (bank deposits, bonds, insurance, mutual funds, pensions, etc.,) is usually only about half of the savings rate. The rest is saved in the form of physical assets such as gold and silver jewelery, land and buildings, livestock, durable goods and just hard cash. This dramatically reduces the possibility of utilizing the surplus of one HH or enterprise to meet the investment needs of another and, therefore, the growth prospects of the economy. To make matters worse, the banking system is able to attract only about 50 percent of the financial savings, the rest going into ‘contractual savings’ (like insurance and pensions and non-bank recurring deposits) and shares and debentures (very small proportion). Thus, we cannot conclude that the banking sector has played a major role in the mobilization of rural savings. In fact, the Post Office with 96.5 million savings clients and Rs 34,068 crore of deposits in March 2012, as also many so-called residuary non-bank finance companies were the mainstay of savings made by the lower income groups and the rural HHs, till they were barred a few years ago. Had the banks been more pro-active, a larger share of savings would have come to them.

We have identified at least four dimensions to financial exclusion and we will present data on each of them.

- Spatial – metro-urban-rural and across regions, states and districts
- Sectoral – agriculture, industry, services and sub-sectors within
- Segmental – sections of population – women, scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, minorities and the disabled
- Size and status – large and formal/organized vs small and informal

¹¹⁶ http://rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_SpeechesView.aspx?Id=813 consulted on 14 Jun 2013

The most obvious spatial inequality is across the rural-urban spectrum. Before we go into the detail of this, we hasten to add that ‘urban’ does not mean ‘included’ and indeed, there is a sizeable lower-income population in metropolitan areas that endures financial exclusion as much as the rural populace. Unfortunately, *urban exclusion is not measured since urban data gets aggregated across wards*. Generally, policy makers think of exclusion in terms of lack of access to credit but as can be seen from Table 32, even on the issue of savings, where the rural-urban differences should not be as stark, there is much lower deposit mobilization in rural areas. Thus, rural areas account for only 9.2 percent of the deposit amount, while metropolitan areas account for 56.9 percent of the deposit amount as on 31st March 2011.

A similar situation exists for credit – rural areas account for 9.6 percent of the outstanding loan amount, while metropolitan areas account for 60.4 percent of the loan amount as on 31st March 2011. The share of semi-urban credit was about 11.1 percent the share of urban areas was 19.1 percent, while metropolitan credit was about 60.2 percent. In terms of the number of loan accounts, again the inequality is less, with rural areas having 33.1 percent of the accounts, whereas all the others have 66.9 percent as on 31st March 2011. The CD ratio for rural areas at 79.6 percent is better than the system average of 75.6 percent in 2011. This is due to the expansion of rural bank branches and setting up of Regional Rural Banks (RRB) network.

There is a lot of inter-state disparity in availability of credit. Maharashtra, which accounts for more than one-fourth of gross credit by banks in the country, has one of the lowest shares of rural credit to total credit. The gross bank credit by banks in Maharashtra as on September 2012 was Rs 14,109 billion which is about 29 percent of India’s gross credit. However, the share of rural credit in the credit given by banks in the state was Rs 289 billion or just two percent of the state’s gross bank credit. In fact, it appears, the less urbanized a state, the lower is this inequality. Given is data on rural credit as a proportion of the total in the major states of India.

Table 32: State-wise Share of Rural and Semi-urban Credit to Total Credit

State	Percentage of rural credit of total credit	Percentage of semi-urban credit of total credit
Bihar	33	25
Uttar Pradesh	23	14
Madhya Pradesh	17	19
Rajasthan	15	16
Andhra Pradesh	13	14
Karnataka	11	10
Tamil Nadu	9	17
Gujarat	8	10
West Bengal	7	3
Maharashtra	2	2
New Delhi	0.87	0.07

Source: http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/only-8-of-gross-bank-credit-of-all-scheduled-commercial-banks-go-rural-areas-113061200564_1.html

As can be seen from Table 33 below, the industrial sector gets more than its proportion of the sectoral GDP, while agriculture gets less. Yet, agriculture is getting credit more or less in proportion to its GDP share (about 14% each). The share of credit to the services sector is far below the share of GDP. This is partly because a large part of the services sector, particularly health, education, public administration and defence services is government funded and does not use any bank credit. Also, the larger share of services is in the informal sector, where again credit, though needed, is not available.

Table 33: Sectoral GDP and Credit Availability

(in billions) (2011-12)

Sector	Availability of Credit	Sectoral credit as % of total	Sectoral GDP	Sectoral GDP as % of total	Credit as a percentage of GDP
Agriculture	5,225	14.9	7,395	14.1	70.7
Industry	19,675	56.1	14,425	27.5	136.4
Services	10,168	29.0	30,616	58.4	33.2
Total	35,068	100.0	52,436	100.0	66.8

Source: 1. Planning Commission 2. Central Statistics Office (CSO)

Within each sector, there is further inequality. The Micro and Small Industry (mainly small) accounts for only six percent of the 46 percent share of credit availed by industry. Within services, trade (wholesale and retail) and financial services account for a lion's share of the credit. Inequality of access to credit in agriculture is well-known. While large farmers grab a lion's share of the agricultural credit given by banks, marginal farmers, who constitute over 80 percent of the farmers by number, got less than 42 percent of the total agricultural credit in 2001-02. Until recently, share-croppers and oral (unrecorded) tenants had no recourse to formal credit.

Table 34: Percentage Distribution of Number of Accounts from Institutional Sources across Size and Class, 2001-02

Size and Class of Holding (hectare)	Share of Holdings	Proportion taking Institutional Credit	PACS	LDB	CB	RRB	All
Marginal, <1.00	60.6	14	67.1	8.2	10.8	16.8	102.8
Small, 1.00-1.99	20	27.7	65.5	8.6	12.9	17.4	104.3
Semi-Medium, 2.00-4.99	12.4	31.6	66.1	9.1	13.1	17.8	106.1
Medium, 4.00-9.99	5.9	33.1	67.2	10.4	12.5	19.6	109.7
Large, 10.00 and above	1.1	29.4	69.3	13.6	13.1	22.4	118.5
All Classes	100	20.2	66.5	8.8	12	17.5	104.8
(Numbers in lakhs)	1077.1	218	144.9	19.1	26.2	38.2	228.4

Note: PACS denotes Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society, LDB denotes Land Development Bank, CB denotes Commercial Bank, RRB denotes Regional Rural Bank. The % from all do not add up to 100 because some holdings have loans from multiple sources. Calculations are based on estimates of credit from Agricultural Census, 2001-02

Source: *Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, 2009, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.*

As per the Economic Census of 2005, there were 51 million enterprises in India in the non-agricultural informal sector. Only 4.2 percent obtained credit from formal institutions (banks, SFCs, SIDBI, etc.). There is a desperate shortage of financing for micro and small enterprises. Less than three percent of net bank credit goes to them. The amounts needed ranged from Rs 25,000 to 1 million, which was too small for most lenders.

There are certain segments of the population who are structurally excluded from participation in formal organized economy. These include the women of any community, the SCs, the STs, the minorities and the disabled.

As can be seen from Table 35, in 2007 only 0.21 percent of women had loan accounts and 21.2 percent had savings accounts, compared to 1.2 percent of men who had loans and 58.6 percent who had deposits. Even when women managed to get loans, they got one-fifth of what the men got.

Table 35: Loan and Deposit Accounts per 10,000 persons, for Women and Men

Year	Loan Accounts per 10,000 persons		Deposit Accounts per 10,000 persons	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2007	21	118	2,123	5,858
	(18)		(36)	
	Credit per capita Rs		Deposits per capita Rs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2007	1,139	5,652	5,310	17,721
	(20)		(30)	

Notes: 1. Figures in brackets indicate percentage share of accounts of women to those of men.
 2. Loan accounts for women for 2007 include individual loan accounts for women and loan accounts of SHGs.

Source: <http://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/Content/PDFs/4PCHBB060810.pdf>

As a community, Muslims suffered more than proportionate financial exclusion¹¹⁷ – partly due to a higher level of poverty in the community and partly as the *Shariah* prohibits the giving and taking of interest. On the basis of the difference in the CD ratio between Muslims and the general population, Syed Zahid has estimated that Muslims lost out on additional credit worth Rs 11,000 crore in March 2005. (For a detailed discussion, see the weblink below) But this understates the point that Muslims do not get loans proportionate to their number.

What this survey shows is that Indian policy making has not been able to equalize the playing field for access to capital and the small farmers, the small industrialists and the less developed regions and sub-sectors still have a hard time getting access to credit. The results can be stark. In a study on farmers' suicides in India, Navadanya¹¹⁸ cited lack of credit as the first of six reasons for farmers' suicides: "Study has shown that following are some of the reasons for the increasing suicides among farmers: (i) Failure of institutional credits for small and marginal farmers." This finds an occasional political echo, as follows:¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ http://www.aicmeu.org/Financial_Exclusion_of_Indian_Muslims.htm

¹¹⁸ Vandana Shiva and Kunwar Jalees, *Farmers, Suicides in India* Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, New Delhi. Accessible at http://www.navdanya.org/attachments/Organic_Farming10.pdf

¹¹⁹ Source: Press Trust of India, Gandhinagar, September 9, 2013

A Chief Minister attacked the Central Government on the issue of farmers' suicides, blaming it for non-facilitation of easy bank credit for the agriculture sector. "Because of cumbersome banking processes and under the burden of debt, farmers are resorting to suicide. Around 270,000 farmers have committed suicide in the past 20 years", he said. "The Central Government is merely talking about the banking sector, about National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), but it is very painful to state that even today, less than 30 percent of farmers are able to avail of bank loans. The rest are forced to take loans from private money lenders who are charging such a high interest rate that it destroys farmers."

5.5 Three Dimensional Approach to Power

We saw in the preceding sections how the livelihood bases of the rural poor have been consistently eroded by state policy and market forces and they are being forced to pursue less viable options of livelihoods. Will these people come together to fight for their rights? What is it that makes them acquiesce to their situation?

In order to answer this question, we shall rely heavily on a framework developed by Gaventa¹²⁰ in a study of the coal mining workers in the Appalachian Valley in the United States, where he found a remarkable degree of quiescence in the face of all-round exploitation. Gaventa talks about a three dimensional approach to understanding of power and powerlessness. Starting with Dahl¹²¹ who said, "A had power over B to the extent he can get B to do something that B would not do otherwise," Gaventa first describes the one dimensional approach, essentially that of American pluralists such as Polsby,¹²² in which power may be studied by examining "who participates, who gains and loses, and who prevails in decision making." The underlying assumption was that entry to the arenas of decision making was open. In a sense, this model was the equivalent of the economists' perfect competition model, where barriers to entry are non-existent and all the sellers and buyers compete from an equal standing.

¹²⁰ Gaventa, John Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian Valley, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1980.

¹²¹ Dahl, Robert A "The Concept of Power", Behavioral Science (2), 1957.

¹²² Polsby, Nelson, Community Power and Political Theory, Yale, 1963.

The two dimensional approach accepts this as only part of the explanation but goes on to add that “power was not just upon participants *within* the decision-making process but also *towards* the exclusion of certain participants and groups altogether. In other words, A not only prevails on issues raised by B but also decides what issues B may raise or whether B should participate at all. This approach, developed by Bachrach and Baratz¹²³ maintains that the study of politics must focus, both on who gets what, when and how, and who gets left out and how and the interrelationship between the two. The second dimension of power was generally exerted through the mobilization of bias in favor of some issues, to the exclusion of others. The media is extensively charged on this count now.

Finally, in the three dimensional approach to power, Lukes¹²⁴ deals with the ability of the powerful to influence and shape the perceptions of the powerless about their own interests, in addition to be able to prevail in decision-making arenas and in effectively controlling who participates. Not only might A exercise power over B, by prevailing in the resolution of key issues or by preventing B from effectively raising those issues, but also by affecting B’s conceptions of those issues altogether. The third dimension of power was largely exerted through the processes of myth-making, information control and manipulation of ideology. In addition, the calculated use of violence, including display of brutality, was regularly used to indoctrinate by intimidation and create deep psychological compliance.

The three dimensional framework of power and powerlessness is aptly applicable to the situation of the people with threatened livelihoods in India. It explains why the major issue of the eroding livelihoods in the rural sector have not gained due importance in the mainstream political process in India. If the Indian democratic system were truly a perfectly competitive arena, then the sheer numerical strength of the rural poor would have been able to ensure that their demands were acceded to by the political process. This has not happened over the last 66 years, since independence. In the early 1990s, an attempt was made to bring a disadvantaged group together as an electoral entity, when VP Singh of the Janata Dal promised reservations (quotas) in government jobs to the OBCs. (The SCs and STs already have such reservations.) But in the absence of working at the other two dimensions of power, such quotas may become only tokens and be appropriated by the powerful among the disadvantaged groups.

¹²³ Bachrach, Peter and Baratz, Morton S. *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1970.

¹²⁴ Lukes, Steven, *Power: A Radical View*, Macmillan, London, 1974.

At the level of the second dimension of power, we see that the real issue of declining livelihood possibilities had been systematically left out from the political debate by all mainstream parties. As pressure on the political parties increased over the years, they only indulged in token acknowledgment of the issue in one form or the other. Indira Gandhi did this for the first time in 1972 when she launched a series of poverty alleviation programs in line with her *Garibi Hatao* (banish poverty) slogan. Thereafter, the number and variety of such programs have increased steadily, but in the absence of a willingness to address the underlying issue of livelihoods, the programs have had very limited impact. The Janata Dal, in its brief rule in 1989-90, also skirted the issue of livelihoods by diverting attention to the debate on whether the right to work should be made a fundamental right. *Unlike the farmers, the poor in rural livelihoods have not been able to come together to break this 'mobilization of bias' by all the political parties in favor of issues not material to their real well-being.*

At the level of the third dimension of power, various mechanisms are being used to keep the people with threatened livelihoods in check. The first and foremost of this was the caste system, which ensured that people in a vast majority of manual livelihoods saw themselves in a socially inferior and subservient role, which was 'justified' by their birth in a low caste. In recent times, the oppressive power of caste system has reduced, only to be replaced by other beliefs. One of these was that the state was a benevolent protector of the interests of the poor against the rich. In the name of protection or conservation of resources, those are appropriated by the state. Thereafter, in reality, the resources of the state are made available to the industrial sector.

This may be done in the name of promoting economic development, industrial growth, developing the country's exports, conserving the environment, or guarding an all-encompassing 'public interest'. Millions of tribals and others in rural livelihoods have been evicted from their homelands or have seen their livelihoods destroyed because of submergence by dams, construction of hydroelectric and thermal power stations, mining projects, industries etc. The proposed series of dams on the Narmada River are an example of this. Forests were reserved to ensure their conservation, but in the hands of the state, the forest cover had come down drastically, to feed the timber needs of the urban-industrial complex, while simultaneously denying access to those whose livelihoods were based on the forests since prehistoric times. Modernization of the fisheries and the leather sector was done to enhance the country's export earnings, without paying any heed whatsoever to the harm that would be done to traditional fishermen and leather workers. Numerous examples of such exploitation of those on the periphery to meet the needs of the center can be quoted.

Another belief that was popularized was that the state must sanction all economic activity, as this would ensure a proper coordination of all efforts. This had resulted in a phenomenal amount of control over the livelihoods of millions of people by the state. Apart from licensing individual economic activity, only the state had powers to permit any form of group enterprise. Cooperative societies, ostensibly a people's structure, are subject to compulsory registration and stifling control by the state. Access to credit from the public sector banks also requires a lot of paperwork and certification of various sorts by petty officials.

Gaventa's framework is also helpful in explaining why, in the few cases that people have come together, this had been almost always catalyzed by an external activist group. The approach taken by a wide cross-section of such groups, irrespective of their ideological standpoint, had two essential components in it; awareness building and organizing. A graphic example of this comes from the work being done by the *Ekta Parishad*.¹²⁵ In the case study below, we see how an activist organization intuitively works to undo all the three dimensions of power one by one, to eventually achieve some justice.

Box 16: Long March to Assert People's Rights on Jal, Jangal, Jameen

Ekta Parishad (unity forum in Hindi) is an Indian activist movement founded in 1991 by PV Rajagopal. *Ekta Parishad* is a federation of approximately 11,000 community-based organizations and has thousands of individual members. It currently operates in 11 states. The two main activities of *Ekta Parishad* are: communicating with the government at the state and national level and mobilizing the villagers for struggle at the grassroots level. Yet both are interlinked: people struggle at the base and their struggle is supported by a formation of institutions giving them the tools to fight for their rights (using democracy) at the upper levels, through dialogue. On the other hand, there are supporters setting the discourse at the top level to give space for political action or struggle at the bottom level.

The grassroots struggle is centered on the struggle for land rights. Approximately 70 percent of India's population depends on access to land and its natural resources for their livelihood. Without any legal claim to these lands, thousands are forced to migrate to urban centers everyday where they are left with no choice but to become manual laborers without rights or financial and life security.

¹²⁵ Synthesized from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekta_Parishad and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Satyagraha_2012 and <http://www.ektaparishad.com/en-us/about/history.aspx#history2>

A vast number of people come together to free themselves from the oppressive hold of land policies of this country over their lives.

Ekta Parishad thus compels the top and the bottom of the Indian political and administrative system, which is mainly blocked due to corruption, to act. The latter engenders an inefficient distribution of information and inequitable distribution at the grassroots levels. The people at the bottom level don't receive what they need to live in a decent way and are powerless.

Ekta Parishad helps the people by empowering them to defend their rights and provides a platform for people to share their experiences and ideas with the confidence that their voices will be heard.

Ekta Parishad was formally established in 1991. Considering the large population of tribal communities, the initial emphasis of the movement was access to forest resources. Later, it became evident that due to displacement, right to land was the most critical issue. Without right to land, people were being constantly displaced, disenfranchised and uprooted.

Focus now shifted to forced evictions, indebtedness, alcohol trade, and *nistar* rights (usufruct rights related to the collection of forest produce). Gradually, *Ekta Parishad* developed its capacity to mobilize communities to speak on their own behalf and strengthened its base for the larger struggles for land and livelihoods rights that would be the future of its work. Here are some of the main events that occurred during this period:

1993-1994: Land problems were taken up for the first time at the state level and 7,000 applications were submitted to the Madhya Pradesh government for action.

1994: The voice of deprived communities was raised through many different rallies, demonstrations at the district and local levels, across the state of Madhya Pradesh by organizing Land Day.

1996: A big rally of 20,000 people was organized on the World Human Rights Day and applications were handed over in the form of a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. The *padyatra* becomes a main tool of social action. This period saw *Ekta Parishad* grow from a localized grassroots movement into a force that spanned all of Madhya Pradesh. By the end of the 1990s, *Ekta Parishad* had gathered a constituency of about 2 lakh (200,000) members.

In 1999-2000, the first *padyatra* (foot-march), which traversed from western to eastern Madhya Pradesh (before the partition of Chhattisgarh), was organized. *During this padyatra, Ekta Parishad discovered that 'walking' was an enabling tool, one that allowed the marginalized people to participate readily and with dignity, since it only demanded their physical prowess and not funds or political patronage. The foot-march, like Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha of 1931, was also a way for people to highlight their rights and become visible by attracting the attention of the media, policy-makers and the general public.*

Following that first foot-march, about a dozen marches took place in different states of India on various issues. However, they did not have the desired societal impact. It was then decided to hold a national march in October 2007 in the Declared Year of Non-Violence, starting on the UN day of Non-Violence, October 2nd, which is the birth date of Mahatma Gandhi. The march was named *Janadesh*, which means 'People's Verdict'. A total of 25,000 people came together in Gwalior, a city about 350 km south of the capital. For one month, the landless poor, tribals, poor women, bonded laborers, children and old people walked along the national highway, attracting the attention of people from all walks of life.

After their arrival in Delhi, the government reacted swiftly and promised to meet their demands. It was one of the largest non-violent actions in human history.

Bhu Adhikar Satyagraha Padyatra 1999: A six months march beginning in December 1999 in Sheopurkalan and ending in June 2000 in Raigarh mobilized more than 10,000 villages and 300,000 people. Despite the challenges posed by marching in remote areas, the spirit of the people carried them through five regions (Chambal, Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand, Mahakoshal and Chhattisgarh, which is a state since 2000) of Madhya Pradesh, covering 8,000 villages and more than 3,800 km. The following were the results:

- A staggering 24,000 grievances were submitted to the State Government that dealt with hundreds of issues raised by the public.
- The State Government announced the formation of a two-tiered task force; the state level task force was responsible for land re-distribution policies and the district level task force dealt with the land re-distribution process.
- For the next four years, *Ekta Parishad* worked to establish task forces in each district of the state, and saw the distribution of about 350,000 land entitlements. The Forest Department dropped 558,000 charges for forest-violations against tribal people, significantly impacting the focus of the state's pro-poor agenda.

It helped to increase the pressure from village to district to state levels, with task forces acting as a monitoring mechanism. The *padyatra* forced the state government to work with *Ekta Parishad* in 30 districts of Madhya Pradesh and this success brought the strength of other states into the organizational fold. People sought *Ekta Parishad's* strength across the country, including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. The development of task forces became a priority in two other states (Odisha and Chhattisgarh) in order to monitor the work of district collectors and revenue officers. *Ekta Parishad* activists held a number of seats in each task force, helping to counter the highly lethargic and corrupt Revenue Department officials and to promote land re-distribution, as well as the redress of disputes between the Forest and Revenue Departments by exerting pressure at the state level.

Conflicts over classification of land - as Forest or Revenue land was a major stumbling block and is still a major issue today. These disputed lands, or “orange lands”, became an issue for the courts when *Ekta Parishad* took the problem to the Supreme Court (PV Rajagopal vs. the State of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, 2003-04. *Ekta Parishad* argued that the Forest Department had a huge quantity of “orange” land without actual tree cover that they had not de-notified to allow for redistribution as Revenue Land.

In October 2012, *Ekta Parishad* organized *Jan Satyagraha*, a 350 km non-violent foot march between Gwalior and Delhi. The march started at Gwalior on October 2, 2012, and arrived in Delhi on October 29, 2012. *Jan Satyagraha* means Keeness to Truth and is based on Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent resistance. The objective was to obtain a comprehensive National Land Reforms Act and effective implementation and monitoring institutions to provide access to land and livelihood resources to the poor landless, homeless and marginalized communities.

Ekta Parishad was also demanding implementation of PESA or *Panchayat* (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 in tribal areas so that the local population have a say in how the land and natural resources in their respective areas are used. They also demanded fast-track courts to settle thousands of pending land disputes and the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2008.

Between September 20 and 24, several meetings took place between the representatives of *Ekta Parishad* and Government Ministers, but no agreement was reached. On October 2, 2012, 50,000 landless and small farmers gathered in Gwalior on the Mela Ground.

Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Rural Development, Government of India, Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia, Member of Parliament from the Congress Party and PV Rajagopal, president of *Ekta Parishad*, gave speeches. Many other personalities were present.

On October 8, an *Ekta Parishad* delegation met Jairam Ramesh again in New Delhi. An agreement was reached and the march stopped at Agra. The two major points of the agreement were: (i) establishment of a draft national land reforms policy in the next six months, to be finalized soon thereafter and (ii) adoption of a legal provision to provide agriculture land to landless people and homestead land to homeless people.

As can be seen from the case of *Ekta Parishad*, first by working on the third dimension of power, making people overcome their deep psychological acceptance of the status quo, the ground was made ready for the second dimension of power: people demand that they be heard and the issues of concern to them be brought into the political agenda. In the final stage, the first dimension of power would also be addressed.

When people find that their livelihood related demands are not being given adequate priority by mainstream political parties, they may turn to actually participating in the political process themselves, by turning their bloc voting power to new political parties such as the Jharkhand *Mukti Morcha*, the party of tribals in Bihar which led to the birth of Jharkhand as a separate state in 2000 after decades of struggle and the Bahujan Samaj Party, the party of socially discriminated castes, mostly *Dalits*, which managed to come to power in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India with over 200 million inhabitants in 2011 and 16 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha, for the first time for a brief period of four months in 1995.

5.6 Three Options for the Poor - Exit, Voice or Loyalty

These are three options in front of citizens facing a repressive or unresponsive regime, articulated by Albert O. Hirschman.¹²⁶ He wrote that essentially three responses are possible – Exit, Voice or Loyalty. Exit implies leaving the membership (or citizenship) if that is a possibility, but could also be just behavioral – a substantial disengagement from their group and its activities to become passive members.

¹²⁶ Albert O. Hirschman. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. ISBN 0-674-27660-4 (paper).

Voice signifies the act of expressing resentment, protesting and agitating and this may sometimes take a violent turn. Loyalty connotes patriotism, when considering a nation, or feelings of solidarity towards a membership organization or a natural group like a caste or a clan, even if the personal circumstances of the citizen or member are pitiable.

Assuming that the starting position is 'loyalty' or at least passive loyalty, a member would opt for voice or exit only if the situation deteriorates so much that the cost of being quiet or of being a member exceeds the benefit. But to express voice – to protest or agitate – requires taking a risk, and thus, some courage. Not all members are able to cross the threshold. Most suffer quietly. But when the situation becomes unbearable or there is an external trigger, people do come together and give voice to their grievances. In the case of the tribals, this began in the British colonial period itself, which was dotted with a number of local tribal uprisings. The British brought peace by recognizing customary rights of tribals to forests in the Indian Forest Acts, 1865 and 1879 and also by enacting laws against land alienation by tribals. This prevented non-tribal traders and moneylenders from acquiring tribal lands.

But the problems of tribals getting dispossessed of their bases of livelihoods – mainly forests – remained and became exacerbated as the population grew after Independence. The Indian Constitution gave tribals a special status, and included them in a list or Schedule, while providing for separate reserved electoral constituencies and reservations in educational institutions and government jobs. But these measures benefited very few. Others joined in protests and agitations, which became more frequent, though those did not yield much result in the initial decades. Some tribals began to migrate from their homelands for several months a year in search of agricultural and other manual work. This was a form of exit.

Others took to militancy and eventually to armed struggle, inspired by the leftist ideology of Naxalites. A situation arose where the tribal heartland of India, particularly Chhattisgarh, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra became coterminous with the Naxalite dominated areas. The core of these regions has effectively 'exited' from the Indian state and in that sense is extra-Constitutional. The enactment of The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, by the government was in some ways, an ameliorative response.

Dalits too, after centuries of 'loyalty' to Hinduism, began to give voice to their situation, again despite the Constitution providing them a Scheduled Caste status, and electoral, educational and public job benefits similar to those for tribals.

The first major act of protest was ironically under the guidance of Dr Ambedkar, the father of the Indian Constitution, when he converted to Buddhism along with his about 5,00,000 followers on October 14, 1956. This was a symbolic exit from Hinduism and shocked many middle of the road Hindus into taking account of the genuine grievances of the *Dalits*, as they later began to call themselves. Another form of 'exit' for the *Dalits* was to escape from the villages and go to towns and big cities, where segregation on the basis of caste was much more difficult. Others exited from professions which were stigmatized like scavenging, dragging and flaying of dead animals, cremating the dead, and so on. The final exit was the formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

5.7 Livelihoods Agenda in Mainstream Politics

Let us examine to what extent have the mainstream political entities such as political parties incorporated these groups' demands into their agenda?

The Congress Party had historically devoted a fair amount of attention to rural livelihoods. This was the result of its legacy from the freedom movement, in which Mahatma Gandhi inter-wove the struggle for independence with 'constructive work' among the rural poor. After Independence, following Gandhiji's advice to disband the party, some constructive workers formally left the Congress, while their former colleagues who were in power, continued to support such efforts, mainly by extending state patronage to activities such as *khadi* (homespun cloth) and village industries. Along with state patronage, however, came state control and over a period of time, constructive work organizations such as the *Khadi and Village Industries Commission*, the *Harijan Sevak Sangh* and the *Adim Jati Sevak Samaj* became mere extensions of state governments.

The national development process unfolded later in the 1960s. However, the rural poor with lower castes and tribals constituting a significant proportion of this group were left behind. The constructive segment of former Congress workers, who had opted out of the politics of state power to work with the poor, became disillusioned with the Congress and by 1973, actively opposed it. Their leader, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), gave a call for 'total revolution' and the consequent turmoil led Mrs Gandhi to impose an emergency in the country and suspend civil liberties. The elections called after this 19-month long emergency led to the defeat of the Congress Party for the first time since Independence. The Janata Party, which replaced it in power in 1978, took a more favorable stand towards rural livelihoods. For example, it provided greater outlays to handlooms and handicrafts and created a formal category of industries known as the 'tiny' sector and reserved certain items for production by this sector.

Even before her defeat in the post-emergency elections, Mrs Indira Gandhi had sensed a certain degree of alienation among the rural poor with the ruling Congress Party. She attempted to counter this by the slogan '*Garibi Hatao*' (banish poverty), as early as 1972. A host of poverty alleviation programs were started by the government, including some directly targeted at the groups which constitute the core of threatened livelihoods, such as the Small Farmers' Development Agency (SFDA). Successive avatars of these programs gave the rural poor some access to credit from nationalized banks, capital subsidies and training and inputs for new livelihoods.

After Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party came back to power in 1980, it launched, what was perhaps the world's biggest poverty alleviation program — the Integrated Rural Development program (IRDP), which covered over 56 million HHs below the poverty line, in the ten year period till 1999. The loans given in the IRDP were for rural self-employment and it was a clear attempt to respond to the voters in this sector. In spite of these efforts, the Congress Party lost its grip over the rural poor, who increasingly drifted to other means of articulating their political demands. Some of the alternatives that people turned to were regional or caste-specific political parties.

An example of the emergence of a regional political party was the mobilization of the tribals in south Bihar who had long standing grievances related to the destruction of forests due to mining, hydroelectric and industrial projects in the area, without getting any benefits in terms of employment, or even compensation for lost livelihoods. Over a period of time, this was transformed into a demand for a separate tribal State 'Jharkhand' (literally, region of trees). This coalesced around a party known as the Jharkhand *Mukti Morcha*, which drew its following mostly from the tribal areas of South Bihar and also from the neighboring districts of Odisha, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. The fact that the Jharkhand movement had been slowly gaining momentum was evident from the increasing level of state repression in the 1980s.¹²⁷

The Subarnarekha-Kharkai dam project due to which 120 tribal villages of Singhbhum are going to be submerged, will displace over 8,000 tribal families. On April 2, 1982, Gangaram Kalundia an ex-serviceman and winner of the President's Medal, was brutally killed by the Bihar police for protesting against the construction of the said dam. On April 19, 1985 Father Anthony Murmu, an ex-member of Parliament and 14 of his associates were butchered by the Bihar police in Banjhi for demanding the traditional fishing rights of tribals.

¹²⁷ Das, Victor 'Jharkhand movement: From Realism to Mystification', *EPW*, July 28, 1990.

In spite of the repression, the Jharkhand *Mukti Morcha* and the All Jharkhand Students Union continued to rally around the tribals to protect their livelihoods and identity. In 1991, their demand for a separate state was partially conceded by promising them an autonomous district council and a separate budget. The then Chief Minister of Bihar also declared that the tribals traditional fishing rights would be restored. Eventually, Jharkhand was born as a separate state in 2001. What was the impact of this on the livelihoods of tribals in Jharkhand? As per NSS data, poverty in Jharkhand came down from 51.6 percent of the population to 41.6 in percent in 2009-10 versus fall from 42.0 percent in 2004-05 to 33.8 percent in 2009-10 for all-India. Thus, though poverty remained higher in Jharkhand at the end of the decade, it fell faster than in the rest of India.

As the mainstream parties the Congress and the BJP realized they had lost the support of the tribals, they tried to woo them using different strategies. The BJP tried first by extending to the tribals an invitation to the fold by saying that they were basically ‘Hindus’ and the missionaries had misled them using various inducements to convert them to Christianity. But the *Hindutva* card failed to attract tribals. The Congress then tried to address the issue of access to forests as a basis of livelihoods of the tribals. This they did soon after coming to power as United Progressive Alliance (UPA) I. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, was passed on 18 December 2006.¹²⁸ The law concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources, denied to them over decades as a result of the continuance of colonial forest laws in India. Supporters of the Act claim that it will redress the ‘historical injustice’ committed against forest dwellers, while including provisions for making conservation more effective and more transparent.

More than the tribals, it was the lowest caste, erstwhile ‘untouchables’ who constituted a traditional support base of the Congress Party. Mahatma Gandhi was the first major political leader to realize the plight of the untouchables, or *Harijans* (literally, Gods own people) as he named them. He made the removal of untouchability and restoration of the social standing of the *Harijans* a major agenda of the freedom movement. He took many steps towards this, from having a *Harijan* family live and eat in his *ashram* to leading numerous agitations for allowing entry into Hindu temples to *Harijans* (Chandra, et al 1988).¹²⁹

¹²⁸ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Scheduled_Tribes_and_Other_Traditional_Forest_Dwellers_\(Recognition_of_Forest_Rights\)_Act,_2006](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Scheduled_Tribes_and_Other_Traditional_Forest_Dwellers_(Recognition_of_Forest_Rights)_Act,_2006).

¹²⁹ Chandra, Bipin, et al *India's Struggle for Independence*, Penguin India, New Delhi, 1988.

After Independence, the founding fathers of the Indian Republic extended Constitutional protection to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes so-called because they are guaranteed certain reservations in legislative representation and public appointments under a schedule of the constitution. The Congress Party, however, steadily lost the support of these groups due to reasons similar to those outlined above.

In the 1980s, the SCs, who now refer to themselves as *Dalits* (the oppressed) were no more willing to be taken for granted as the docile vote bank of the Congress, as they had been, in the previous three decades. In certain regions, particularly Uttar Pradesh, they coalesced into a new party, known as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Though the BSP claims that its base is wider, in practice it began as a party of the *Dalits*.

“The ideology of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is ‘Social Transformation and Economic Emancipation’ of the ‘Bahujan Samaj’, which comprises of the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Religious Minorities such as Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Buddhists and account for over 85 percent of the country’s total population.”¹³⁰

This party did remarkably well in the assembly elections in 1989 as an alliance partner of the BJP. It first came to power when Mayawati became Chief Minister for a period of four months in 1995. This was followed two more spells in power – one lasting six months in 1997 and another of fourteen months in 2002-03. But in the 2007 elections, BSP came to power on its own and Mayawati served as Chief Minister for a full five-year term. Did it really impact the livelihoods of the *Dalits* is debatable. The current daily status unemployment rates for rural Uttar Pradesh,¹³¹ according to various rounds of the NSS, were as follows:

Table 36: Current Daily Status of Unemployment Rates (Uttar Pradesh)

UP Rural	Male	Female	Persons
2011-12	56	27	51
2009-10	61	28	56
2007-08	58	32	53
2004-05	43	17	37

Source: NSS

¹³⁰ http://www.bspindia.org/bsp_amazing_journey.php

¹³¹ <http://mospi.nic.in>

As it can be seen, throughout her five year tenure from 2007-12, Mayawati never managed to reduce the unemployment rate for rural UP even to the 2004-05 level. Though data is not separately available for SCs, it is unlikely that they fared any better and probably did worse than the population average. Thus political power did not help the *Dalits* economically.

5.8 Implications for Livelihood Practitioners

What is the implication of this study of political economy of livelihoods in India for livelihood practitioners? In a sense, we must acknowledge that almost all programmatic livelihood promotion efforts are an extended form of **Loyalty**, or at least meant to promote loyalty. Whether it was the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), now being recast for the second time as the National Rural Livelihood Mission, or it is the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), these are all ameliorative. Even NGO programs for livelihood promotion are in the same category.

Voice: There are NGOs or activists who do not directly promote livelihoods but help people to become aware of their rights to the bases of livelihoods and also claim their rights. (See box on the *Ekta Parishad* of PV Rajagopal earlier in this chapter). Some others are helping people assert their claims on entitlements – such as Aruna Roy of the *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan*, which was instrumental in pressuring the government to convert the National Rural Employment Program into the NREGS. The work of Medha Patkar with the *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, established once and for all, the right of ‘project affected persons’ to adequate compensation and rehabilitation. The *Chipko* Movement in the Uttarakhand Hills established the rights of people to the forests in their vicinity. These have reached a point where the last decade can be characterized as one of rights based legislation - from the Right to Information to the Right to Education, the Right to Work for 100 days a year to the right to food security. Indeed all that is left is to move Article 39(a) of the Constitution:

“The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing (a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood”

from the chapter on Directive Principles (which are not enforceable in a court of law) to the chapter on Fundamental Rights, which are enforceable in the court of law.

Finally, the Naxalites or the Left Wing Extremists are an example of **Exit**. Many of them are as concerned about the livelihoods of people they work with, particularly tribals and landless laborers. Indeed, one of the reasons for their popularity is that they are able to assure better wages and working conditions to farm laborers and better access to forests to tribals living in the areas they control.

The mainstream livelihood practitioners, though 'loyalist', need to learn from both the Rights Activists and the Left Wing Extremists and modify their program strategies to take into account incidents or processes where exploitation is taking place and confront and curb these. If necessary, this may require protests or agitations against vested interests and can, in some cases, be done with state assistance. In other cases, the focus on participation and equitable distribution, which characterizes the Left Wing Extremists, may have to be adopted as a norm till the long-oppressed people feel confident. Indeed, as poverty reduces in India and it becomes more difficult to uplift segments of the poor left behind, the means and some of the methods of Rights Activists and the sub-set of constitutional methods of the Left Wing Extremists may have to be incorporated in mainstream programs.

Any good livelihood practitioner, whether in the government or in an NGO, who has perceived that its cause lies in extreme poverty and exploitative structures and processes, will agree with this. The point now is to mould that into our practice, if we have to eradicate poverty. Thus, advocacy, social action and political mobilization will have to be inter-woven in the new generation livelihood programs. Advocacy is the active support of an idea or cause expressed through strategies and methods that influence the opinions and decisions of individuals and organizations alike i.e., those who either influence policy or those who impact people's lives through their actions.

The aims of advocacy are to create or change policies, laws, regulations, distribution of resources or other decisions that affect people's lives and to ensure that such decisions lead to implementation. Such advocacy is generally directed at policy-makers including politicians, government officials and public servants, but also private sector leaders whose decisions impact people's lives as well as those whose opinions and actions influence policy-makers, such as journalists and the media, development agencies and large NGOs. In the Tools Chapter we have included a note on the techniques for effective advocacy.