

7.1 Three Practical Approaches That Have Emerged

In the rest of this chapter we will survey a large number of practical approaches adopted by livelihood promotion organizations and try to draw general lessons from them. Organizations that work directly to promote the livelihoods of the poor have primarily adopted three approaches:

- a. Opportunities based approach
- b. Ensuring access to entitlements approach
- c. Approaches for the highly disadvantaged groups

The **opportunities based approach** seeks to primarily improve the economic returns of the target group by helping them leverage existing forms of capital (natural, social, human, etc.) and enhancing them through productivity enhancement and market linkages. This approach therefore necessitates a certain pre-existing degree of awareness within the target group, and availability and access of resources.

The **ensuring access to entitlements approach** on the other hand seeks to primarily improve the social and political situation by creating awareness, ownership and access to and control of-

- a. Social, economic and political entitlements, and
- b. Different resources of land, water, forest, human and livestock

This is because net economic gains made by a family pursuing economic activities in a 'low entitlements environment' are insufficient and unsustainable and the livelihood activity itself is highly prone to risk of being lost. These rights and entitlements are experienced at an individual level, and at household and community levels. For example, within a household, women and men may or may not enjoy the same kind of rights, while within a community different caste groups may have different access rights to the same resource such as a water source or forest resources.

Figure 20: Mapping the Economic and Socio-political Situation to the Economic Pyramid

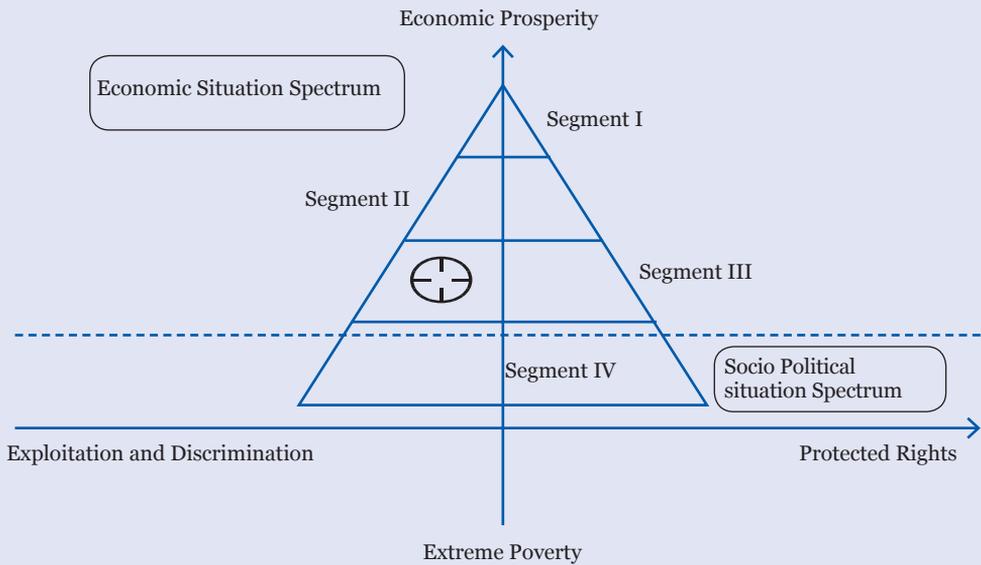


Figure 20 above illustrates the economic situation and the socio-political situation mapped as two axes, superimposed over the economic pyramid, which as we know, can be viewed as four segments. Segment I, being the Middle and High Income segment, which is neither poor, nor vulnerable, Segment II is the Vulnerable segment, Segment III, the Poor and Segment IV, the Extremely Poor.

As the name suggests, the **Approaches for the Highly Disadvantaged** groups are methodologies specialized and customized to the needs of the target group- the disadvantaged, poorest of the poor, women, those affected by natural disasters and people with disabilities.

Livelihood interventions are the deliberate and conscious efforts by an agency or an organization to promote and support livelihood opportunities for a large number of people (other than those directly or indirectly employed by them).

In the subsequent section, diverse types of efforts are described, in detail.

7.2 Opportunities Based Approaches

7.2.1 Natural Resource Regeneration Approach

India abounds in such efforts both by the government and by NGOs. The major government programs in this field began as part of the Drought Prone Area Program, which then transformed into the National Watershed Development Program. The government programs are large but they have incorporated (and many time ignored) the lessons from NGO efforts in watershed development.

There have been numerous NGO efforts led by charismatic leaders, such as the Social Center (now WOTR) led by Jesuit Fathers, AFPRO led by Late Col. Verma in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, Anna Hazare's celebrated work in his village Ralegaon Siddhi, the early work of MYRADA in Gulbarga district supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and led by Aloysius Fernandez, who linked this work with that of self-help groups.

Later generation of NGOs active in this field include the AKRSP (India) and the Development Support Center, in Gujarat, both initiated by Late Anil Shah after retiring as a development civil servant, PRADAN's work in several tribal districts in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh and in Mewat, Rajasthan, and the influential work of Action for Social Advancement (ASA) at Jhabua and SPS at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh, with the founder of the former serving on the National Advisory Council (along with Deep Joshi of PRADAN, among others), and Mihir Shah of SPS serving as a Member of the Planning Commission.

We present a case study of Dharampur Utthan Vahini (DHRUVA) an NGO promoted by the Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation, founded by the Gandhian, Late Manibhai Desai and currently led by Girish Sohani, who personally led the DHRUVA program and built it into an integrated livelihoods development program based on natural resource regeneration.

Box 18: Learnings from the DHRUVA Experience

DHRUVA is an NGO working in southern Gujarat. It is promoted by Bhartiya Agro-Industries Foundation (BAIF), of which it is also an associate organization. BAIF works in eight Indian states through several NGOs that it promoted. In 1975, the late Manibhai Desai; who had worked closely with Gandhiji during the Freedom Struggle, set up the BAIF in Pune. Since then

its focus has been on creating gainful self-employment opportunities for disadvantaged rural communities, in order to ensure sustainable development. To achieve this, BAIF works directly at the grassroots with the NGOs they promote, through development, research, effective use of local resources, extension of appropriate technologies and by upgrading skills and capabilities with community participation.

In 1995, BAIF established DHRUVA as an independent NGO after working in the southern Gujarat region for over 15 years. DHRUVA did some pioneering work with the tribals with the able support of Mr Arvind Mafatlal, a philanthropist and industrialist. Today DHRUVA works in 200 tribal villages in the districts of Valsad, Navsari and Dangs in south Gujarat and also in the Silvassa district of the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

The Context

DHRUVA selected Vansda block based on a study conducted in 1975 by IIM Ahmedabad. The study highlighted the low nutritional status of the block, where tribal families could manage a square meal in only 200 days of a year. Slowly the operations of DHRUVA were expanded to the Dharampur, Kaprada area of Valsad District and subsequently the Vansda block was delimited under Navsari district.

The operational area of DHRUVA, comprising of Ahwa taluka of Dangs district, Dharampur, Kaprada taluka of Valsad district, and the Vansda taluka in the Navsari district of south Gujarat is mainly inhabited by tribals. The region is characterized by steep, undulating, inaccessible terrain, with heavy rainfall (up to 2500 mm) and high run off. The habitations are scattered and remote and only a third of the area is cultivable with limited irrigation facilities. A typical tribal family has three, or five acres of land, of which only two acres may be cultivable. The soil conditions are poor, and therefore even with heavy rainfall the productivity is pretty low.

A typical annual livelihood cycle of the tribals of this region begins with the cultivation of one rainfed paddy crop and finger millets during the monsoons. After this spell of subsistence farming is complete, they migrate to nearby towns- Vapi, Surat or Ankleshwar, for six to eight months. The income from the work done in the course of migration is meagre, with high overheads. Migration also destabilizes their family life, and creates many social problems. Therefore, DHRUVA's

intervention was aimed at reducing migration by creating self-employment avenues in their native land. They started the *Wadi* program with this objective.

The Intervention

The program has a core activity in the form of the *Wadi* – a horti-forestry orchard of one to two acres raised by the tribal family on sloping uplands. In this model, the central focus is on the *wadi*. The other development interventions are built around the *Wadi*. The other programs that converge on this intervention around the *Wadi* are: agri-business development, water resources development, soil and water conservation, dairy husbandry promotion, development finance, and improving quality of life (health and sanitation, education, and provision of potable drinking water).

Wadi in Gujarati means a small orchard covering one to two acres. The *Wadi* may be of mango, cashew, or amla, or any other fruit suitable to the region, or a combination of these fruits. In the south Gujarat region, a typical *Wadi* on one acre of wasteland has 40 cashew and 20 mango trees bordered by a peripheral plantation of forest trees and bamboo, providing timber, fodder and Minor Forest Produce (MFP). Two or more varieties of trees are selected in the *Wadi* program to minimize biological and marketing risks. The program started in the year 1984 with only 44 farmers.

The *Wadi* program is implemented through a Four-Tier Commodity Cooperative system. The fourth-tier, which was recently added, is the consolidation of all the co-operatives of BAIF into a producer company that takes care of the trade channels in the pan-Indian market. The first tier consists of the *Wadi* owners, who are the primary members of the cooperatives. Unlike any other cooperative, the landless are also the primary members of the cooperatives.

The second tier in the system is made up of the *Gram Vikas Mandals* (GVMs) at the village level. All the *Wadi* owners are members of the GVMs. The GVMs are responsible for planning and executing the *Wadi* program in their villages. The planning and execution group (*Ayojan Samiti*) made of 6 to 11 members, is part of each Gram Vikas Mandal. GVMs are instrumental in running the *Krishi Sewa Kendras*, and are the procurement points of cashew and mangoes from the *Wadi* farmers. The produce from the villages is supplied to the cooperatives. However, the GVMs also buy food grains from the open market and the SHGs,

and sell it to the cooperatives. The credit facilities are also devolved through 201 GVMs that have a membership of 2676. The responsibility of generation of needs, appraisal of credit requirements and recovery of loans lies with the GVM. The accountant is paid on the basis of a performance-based incentive system for recovery of loans. The GVMs are also responsible for mobilizing farmers to take up the *Wadi* programs with its assistance of subsidy and credit products.

The third tier has *mandal or taluka* level co-operatives where post-harvest, part-value addition is done locally. It then goes to the Vasundhara Co-operative, which is the marketing body of all cooperatives. Twelve co-operatives with primary membership of 18,000, and with 3000 non-members, transact with Vasundhara. Advanced processing and packaging is done by Vasundhara, which has a retail outlet as well. Vasundhara operates as a 'mother co-operative' in the cashew processing value chain. Cashew procured from all the co-operatives is processed and packed, and marketed under the brand name Vrindavan, through the network of retail outlets. While the operating structure in case of cashew and its processing is as described above, the Vasundhara Agri-Horti Producer Company Limited (VAPCOL) pitched for marketing of fresh mangoes. However, processed mango products such as pickles, mango pulp and so on, are marketed by Vasundhara under the same brand 'Vrindavan'.

All together there are 12 co-operatives operational in the intervention area. Each co-operative has an entry level fee of Re 1, with a share of Rs 50 for the members. The co-operative has an Advisory Committee and a Management Committee in which the DHRUVA staff are nominated as members. DHRUVA extends capacity building support to the cooperatives towards developing self-sufficiency. Vasundhara has planned a new setup in Lacchakhadi with a plan outlay of Rs 1.8 crore, which has been leveraged from the Bank of Baroda.

The fourth tier has a producer company that has been registered at Pune under the name Vasundhara Agri-Horti Producer Company Limited (VAPCOL). It has three operational, licensed branches. One of the branches is located at Lacchakhadi, and the other two are at Udaipur in Rajasthan, and at Peth in Maharashtra. All the co-operatives formed by DHRUVA have been federated to VAPCOL with one member from Vasundhara on its board. The Producer Company was floated with the idea of enabling inter-state transactions and to help re-route profits to the farmers, irrespective of the state to which they belong.

The program is directed towards involving the masses following the Gandhian approach- 'Not mass production but production by the masses'. Therefore, there has been an overriding emphasis on decentralized and well-disseminated activities with adequate centralized efforts for providing technical, financial and managerial support and inputs for capacity building-whether it is for raising nurseries, or for processing cashew-nuts or mangoes.

An Integrated Model

The *Wadi* program of DHRUVA aims at creating employment opportunities at the local level while strengthening the local economy. The *Wadi* approach is essentially a land based intervention and therefore would have only benefited the landed farmers, if it were not carefully planned. Since developing the local economy necessitates retaining more and more of the value-addition in the local area, it calls for involving the entire rural community-landed and landless, women and vulnerable classes, within its intervention strategy. For this to work, it entails building linkages within the context of the local economy. These linkages have been built very strategically in DHRUVA.

Both the landed and the landless are members of the cooperatives. While the landed farmers manage the orchard and also toil there, the landless inhabitants are also employed as laborers on the orchards and for post-harvesting value-addition. This kind of a unique arrangement of having both the landed and the landless in the same cooperative with equal rights suits the landed too, as they understand the importance of the contributions from the landless in value-addition. For example, one kg of raw cashew-nut only fetches Rs 35-37 (depending on its quality) to the farmer. The same cashew-nut fetches a market price of Rs 390-430 per kg after processing and packaging.

Likewise mango fetches an average of Rs 10-15 per kg, whereas mango pickle fetches a rate of Rs 80 per kg. Thus the actual value-addition takes place only in the post-harvesting period. Owing to the cooperative system, much of this value-addition is retained within the community, and both the landed and the landless benefit. Again, the landless are involved in providing inputs for the orchards. The women SHGs of the intervention area make vermi-compost, which the farmers in turn use as inputs.

BAIF launched its *Wadi* program in 1987 in some of the villages around Chondha in Navsari district of South Gujarat. Encouraged by the good results from the *Wadi* program, the village community joined the Cattle Development

Scheme introduced by the government. Seventy five crossbred cows were purchased under this scheme and a Milk Co-operative was formed in 1989 with the active cooperation of the *Wadi* holders. Dairy promotion happens through the provisioning of credit facilities, which are channelized through the GVMs to its members and the SHGs for rearing cattle. The District Milk Co-operative Federation (Vasundhara) has fixed its milk routes for procurement of milk and some of the SHGs have come forward and bid for managing milk collection points on behalf of Vasundhara.

NABARD refines DHRUVA and the beneficiaries avail the loan through the GVMs at the rate of 12-15 percent. DHRUVA charges 3.5 percent for its services to the beneficiaries. As of 30th March 2008 Rs 481.95 lakhs were disbursed as loans under the program, and the net outstanding was Rs 86.11 lakhs with a cumulative recovery rate of 92 percent. The beneficiaries of DHRUVA's credit program are both individuals and groups. Individuals are mostly *Wadi* owners, landless people, or people not owning *Wadis*, while groups such as groups of *Wadi* owners (GVM members), SHGs (members of GVM), GVMs and cooperatives, also take loans from DHRUVA.

The GVMs also act as financial intermediaries between end-users and DHRUVA, for the GVMs also lend internally to its members at an interest of 12 percent. This program is an attempt to pave ways for inclusion of large number of people, with a simple pre-requisite that the person should be a shareholder in the cooperative and must be a *Wadi* owner. The program also is an attempt to create a platform at the village level for financial intermediation and for fostering linkages with mainstream financial institutions in the future.

The *Wadi* Program Today

Over these years-BAIF since 1982, and DHRUVA from 1995- DHRUVA's *Wadi* program has been implemented on approximately 12,000 acres of land covering more than 13,000 families. All the products of the *Wadi* are either sold in the local markets such as Chondha Bazaar, or through the Vasundhara Cooperative under the brand name Vrindavan. The Vasundhara Cooperative has been able to sustain its brand image in the market over the years and now has a good distribution network in Gujarat and Bombay.

The produce from the villages are collected at the GVM level and the farmers are paid at the source. If a competitive price is obtained, mangoes generally go to the local mandis (markets) or they go to the Vasundhara Cooperative for processing into mango pulp and pickle. Cashew-nuts are semi-processed

and graded at the local cooperative level and then it comes to Vasundhara for labeling and marketing. Marketing is still done only through Vasundhara as the other cooperatives are yet to mature into independent bodies.

It is now known that one acre of Wadi gives a farmer an additional income between Rs 15-20,000 after the sale proceeds by his GVM to the cooperatives. The farmer also gets a share of the profit made by the cooperative after it has processed the produce and completed its sale. In addition, the farmer can get more yields from other crops as well as increased quantity of fodder. Some farmers get additional income by raising nursery beds. Cashews produced by the Wadi owners are collected by the GVMs at Rs 35-37 per kg. The GVMs sell it to the *mandal or taluka* cooperatives at Rs 38.50 per kg where the processing and grading takes place. From the cooperatives, the cashews are sent to Vasundhara, which sells it for Rs 390-430 per kg, depending on the cashew grade.

Vasundhara redirects the profit margins to the producers in the form of second payment during Holi. However the rate list for the season is supplied to all the players in the value chain, well in advance. Fresh mangoes are marketed by VAPCOL. In the financial year (2007-08) Vasundhara Cooperative made a profit of Rs 2.20 lakhs from processing and other activities. Vasundhara is also the trade channel in *amla* and honey for the Gujarat Forest Development Corporation. VAPCOL earned Rs 3 lakhs as profit in 2007-2008 and it is estimated that it will earn a profit of Rs 12 lakhs in the present year (2009). A profit of Rs 3 lakhs was earned by selling 1500 tons of fresh mangoes to ITC Ltd.

DHRUVA Staff and Structure

The organogram of DHRUVA has an Executive Vice-Chairman from BAIF, a Chief Program Coordinator and an Apex Co-ordination team of eight that takes care of institutional development, member's centrality and gender integration. The work force is flanked by 21 engineers and technologists, a 24-member training team, 14 finance specialists, 46 agriculturists, 12 health and sanitation staff, and 9 administrative staff.

The team facilitates the operations of 11 co-operatives. One official has been deputed from BAIF for the operations of VAPCOL and is also the manager for Vasundhara. The deployment of the project implementation staff is based on cluster basis, which is demarcated on a geographical basis. Each block has about five-nine clusters with a Cluster Incharge and six support staff. The

beneficiary coverage ranges from 12-15 GVMs and 1200-1500 Wadi owners, 45-50 SHGs and one-two co-operatives. Likewise every block - namely Dharampur, Kaprada, Dangs and Vansda has a key Resource Person for each block.

At present, there are 201 GVMs with 2676 members, covering 288 villages and 22,675 households. Acreage under plantation is 8843 hectares- approximately one acre per household. Soil and water conservation work has been undertaken and watershed treatment has been implemented on 6040.9 hectares. 476 springs or rivulets have been developed benefiting 2191 households and over 1898 temporary check dams are built every year.

Investments Details

The Wadi intervention of DHRUVA has so far been largely on grant basis. In the initial years, most of the funds for this program had been allocated from DRDA (under its NREP/RLEGP), CAPART and the National Watershed Development Board (mid-1980s). Subsequently funds were leveraged from The Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Tribal Affairs, Government of India, German Development Bank (KfW), NABARD, State Government of Gujarat and from UNICEF. A major funding is channelized through BAIF and re-financing is through NABARD. The funds from the state government of Gujarat are directly devolved through DHRUVA. The operations of DHRUVA are being grounded with a corpus of Rs 939,000 and at present, DHRUVA is implementing 32 projects in South Gujarat and Dadra & Nagar Haveli. At prevailing rates, the cost of cultivation per acre comes to Rs 35,000. The list of 19 loan-cum-subsidy products with asset insurance ranging from a sum of Rs 250-1.5 lakhs bundled with it caters to the productive and consumptive needs of the Wadi farmers and the landless.

Impact

The most distinct impact of the *Wadi* program is seen in the increased employment due to farms providing an average yield of 500 kgs of mangoes and 50 kgs of cashew, which are sold to GVM at the rate of Rs 12/kg and Rs 37/Kg respectively. As a result of this, migration has reduced and in many family now the wives and children stay back home. As a result, the children are able to go to local schools, thus improving the educational levels.

Over a 15-year period, the villages have undergone many changes. The various interventions have helped in raising the income levels of the people. This was evident from the number of motorcycles owned by the villagers, the number of *pucca* (proper) houses and children benefiting from higher education; if required, even outside the state.

There is a substantial rise in employment opportunities for landless in activities around procurement and marketing of farm produce, processing of cashew and mango and other income generating activities in the non-farm sector. A significant contribution of the Wadi program has been in terms of replication in other states of Rajasthan, UP, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

7.2.2 Value Chain Based Interventions

The interventions discussed in this section involve a large number of small and medium farmers, dairy farmers or other producers, all having independent livelihoods. They act as the supply base for the commodity that is to be processed – such as sugarcane, soyabean, milk or organic vegetables. The higher stages in the value chain require more capital and are more complex to manage and thus are not necessarily owned by the farmer. In some cases, as in sugar and milk, cooperatives were organized to integrate up the value chain. In other cases, these stages are privately owned.

7.2.2.1 Sugar Cooperatives

The sugar cooperatives emerged from the struggle of cane growers who often faced dearth of buyers and un-remunerative cane prices. In the early 1940s, sugarcane was the chief cash crop sown in the Ahmednagar canal tracts. Rich peasants farming sugarcane mostly utilized co-operative credit to finance their working and fixed capital requirements. They got the cane processed into gur and collectively marketed most of this crude sweetener at outlets that were run cooperatively.

Given these circumstances, the setting up of a co-operative sugar factory by rich peasants would have basically called for only a large fixed capital outlay on a technologically superior plant required for processing cane juice into sugar. In fact, some rich Mali peasants of Sholapur district took this step from gur to sugar manufacturing in 1933, when they set up their own sugar factory.

In December 1945, a conference of cane growers of the Kopergaon—Belapur region, convened at Shrirampur, resolved to sponsor attempts to establish their own sugar factories. Two years later, i.e., in the independence year, leading local cultivator co-operators began collecting share capital for the venture. Eventually, their factory, the *Pravara Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana* commenced its cane crushing in 1950, at Loni, in the canal tracts of Ahmednagar district. The leading organizer of this peasant venture was V. E. Vikhe Patil, a prominent local Maratha leader, who later served as its chairman for several years.

There were two chief advantages that cane cultivators enjoyed by processing their cane into sugar rather than into *gur*. First, in the late 1940s, the price of sugar was evidently higher than that of *gur*. Next the quantum of sugar that can be recovered from a unit volume of sugarcane juice is roughly twice the amount of *gur* that could have been processed from the same volume of cane juice. This is because sugar manufacturing is technologically superior and also more efficient in its extractive process than gur processing factories. Hence, the higher price of sugar coupled with a greater recovery would have meant a larger return per unit quantum of cane to cultivators setting up their own sugar factory.

Thus a number of factors worked together to facilitate establishment of co-operative sugar factories in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, in the early 1950s¹⁶⁸ : (a) the existence of a rich peasant strata belonging to numerically large, and therefore politically powerful cultivators from the non-Brahmin upper castes, (b) the extensive and intensive cultivation of sugarcane by rich peasants, made possible by the spread of canal irrigation, (c) a co-operative infrastructure serving the credit and marketing needs of rich peasants farming sugarcane, (d) the attraction of high profits to be earned by processing sugarcane into a higher valued commodity like sugar and (e) the favorable changes in the political arena. The sugar co-operatives became politically powerful, at least till the period prior to liberalization of the 1990s.

7.2.2.2 Milk Processing - AMUL and NDDB

The Anand Milk Union Ltd (AMUL) was successfully established as dairy co-operative in the 1950s. It involved a two-tier structure wherein the village level Primary Milk Producers Cooperative Society collected milk at the villages, which was then processed at the district level Milk Union. Initially these were marketed directly by the district Milk Union under the brand name of AMUL. This two-tier structure helped in the following way: the village level cooperative addressed the challenge of marketing faced by small producers with no bargaining power and lack of access to safe storage, for better price realization. The district level cooperative union provided value addition through standardization and processing into miscellaneous products.

Over time, the 'Anand Pattern' spread to several other districts of Gujarat and now there are 17 District Milk Unions in Gujarat with 3.2 million member farmers. They formed a state level Federation for producing higher

¹⁶⁸ Ignatius Chithelen *Origins of Co-operative Sugar Industry in Maharashtra* Economic & Political Weekly April 6, 1985

end products such as skimmed milk powder, flavored milk, ice-cream and chocolate. The Amul brand name was adopted for all dairy products marketed by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, irrespective of which district union the products came from. The marketing efforts at the Federation level aimed at retail markets enabled continuous demand for cooperative products and higher price realization. The realization of remunerative and stable prices by milk producers ensured stable incomes and access to necessary inputs for milk production. The employment generated through processing and marketing activities is substantial. An estimated 15 million producers are associated with the milk cooperatives.¹⁶⁹

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was incorporated in 1965 with the specific charter of replicating the Anand Pattern milk cooperatives across the country. By 1968, NDDB had formulated the first phase of Operation Flood which aimed to capture for public dairies a 'commanding share' of the milk market in four metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. These dairies were, in turn, to be supplied with liquid milk from modern processing dairies to be located in rural areas with high milk production potential (called milksheds) or they could in addition, or solely gifted skimmed milk powder and milk fats for re-combination. The rural dairies also helped balance seasonal fluctuations in milk production through the separation of milk into fat and other solids in the surplus season and their storage for subsequent use in the lean season.¹⁷⁰ In total there were three phases of Operation Flood (OF) from 1970 till 1996.

Under OF-I, through a multidisciplinary team consisting of veterinarians, dairy technologists, agricultural scientists, and extension specialists, the NDDB went ahead with the task of creating co-operatives. This approach was later popularly known as the Spearhead Team (SHT) approach. Dairy plants up to a processing capacity of 4 lakh liters per day were built up. The financial support was provided by the NDDB using proceeds from the sale of imported milk powder and butter oil. Initially the NDDB played a crucial role in conceiving and implementing turnkey projects in Gujarat, and later in other states. NDDB also took up the responsibility of planning, erecting, commissioning, and monitoring dairy projects through the Indian Dairy Corporation. The OF-II extended the coverage of the NDDB activities to many other states. Class two milksheds were also taken up under the Anand Pattern of cooperatives. Large metro dairies (Mother Dairy complexes) were commissioned.

¹⁶⁹ www.Amul.com

¹⁷⁰ Ajit Kanitkar, *Vikalpa* Vol. 21, No. 2, April - June 1996

The OF interventions have been widely debated. The evaluation of the work by World Bank, World Food Program and Government of India has been criticized by scholars on account of its (a) relative exclusion of the poorest (hence not fit as a poverty reduction intervention), (b) marginal impact on milk production (the increase in milk production during 1970 to 1996 cannot be significantly attributed to Operation Flood, hence other models of dairy development need to be promoted), (c) excessive focus on creation of processing infrastructure while productivity achievements are inadequate, and (d) focus on marketing aspects neglecting the production and productivity challenges.

7.2.2.3 Soybean Cultivation and Processing

With the rapid spread of the high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice in India during the early 1970s, farmers used even marginal lands for these crops, and a question arose as to where soybean would fit in the cropping system. M. S. Swaminathan, the then Director General of ICAR, had pointed out that unless a crop is grown in one million hectare and produces at least a million tonnes each year, it would not make much of a difference to the Indian economy. Indian soybean scientists then started looking for possible niches where soybean could be grown, including intercropping, relay cropping, rotation, and utilizing fallow lands.

A major niche was found in Madhya Pradesh, where a large area used to be left fallow in the rainy season to conserve moisture and fertility. Williams et al.(1974) estimated that if all the fallow and marginal lands were brought under soybean, Madhya Pradesh alone would have over two million hectares under soybean. This eventually came to be true, thanks to the concerted efforts of the Madhya Pradesh Government and the M P State Cooperative Oilseed Growers Federation, in promoting soybean cultivation and marketing in the state.

Consequently, the total area under soybean in Madhya Pradesh rose to 808,000 hectares by 1983–84 compared with 102,000 hectares in Uttar Pradesh, 30,000 hectares in Rajasthan, 12,000 hectares in Himachal Pradesh, and about 6,000 hectares in Bihar and Gujarat, bringing the national total close to about one million hectares! With a total production of about 723,000 tonnes, this was a very impressive achievement and it further catalyzed the allocation of more funds for promoting soybean cultivation.¹⁷¹ By 2010-11 the area under soybean had gone up to 9.3 million hectares with an estimated production of 10.13 metric tonnes.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Success of Soybean in India: The Early Challenges and Pioneer Promoters B B Singh

¹⁷² Estimates from Directorate of Agriculture, GoI, SOPA

During the 1980s India faced a severe shortage of edible oil along with a very difficult situation on the foreign exchange front. It was in this context that NDDB and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) with the support of the European Union, initiated the soyabean expansion program in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. A vertically integrated intervention addressing production, processing and marketing involving primary producer cooperatives and regional processing plants with state level marketing Federations was launched in the early 1980s.

In Rajasthan the intervention also included mustard and groundnut besides soybean. A large number of primary producer co-operatives were mobilized and appropriate package of practices were introduced for oilseed production at the farm level. The co-operatives operated village level purchase centers for purchase of oilseeds from farmers, which ensured remunerative rates thus enhancing production at the farm. The procured oilseeds were transported to the processing plants. At that point of time, soyabean de-oiled cake was a much demanded export commodity earning valuable foreign exchange while oil production saved on the import bill for edible oil, saving foreign exchange. The large scale of operations offering remunerative prices led to a large area under oilseeds.

With the economic liberalization regime, the edible oilseeds co-operative sector lost its special status and along with it many other private processing units closed down, due to financial non-viability. Today a few big private processing units (170) dominate the trade with nearly 50 percent in MP alone. Allegedly, these units have remained financially sustainable, primarily due to the rather nebulous tax practices of these units.

7.2.2.4 Organic Farming

The growth of organic agriculture¹⁷³ in India has three dimensions and is being adopted by farmers for different reasons. The first group, in this category of organic farmers, are those in no-input or low-input use zones. Organic farming is a way of life for them and they continue practicing it as a tradition (quite possibly under compulsion, in the absence of resources needed for conventional high-input intensive agriculture). The second category of farmers are those who have recently adopted the organic farming way, in the wake of ill-effects of conventional agriculture - may be in the form of reduced soil

¹⁷³ Taken from National Project on Organic farming Deptt of Agriculture and Cooperation, Govt of India National Center of Organic Farming, Ghaziabad

fertility, food toxicity or increasing cost and diminishing returns. The third category comprises of farmers and enterprises that have systematically adopted commercial organic agriculture to capture emerging market opportunities and premium prices. While the majority of farmers in the first category are traditional (or by default organic farmers), they are not certified. The second category farmers comprise of both certified and un-certified farmers. However, a majority of the third category of farmers are certified and engage in commercial farming. It is this category of farmers who are the focus of attention. The entire data available today on organic agriculture, relates to the activities of these commercial organic farmers.

Emerging from 42,000 hectares under certified organic farming during 2003-04, organic agriculture has grown almost 29 fold during the last 5 years. By March 2010, India had more than 4.48 million hectares under the organic certification process. Out of these 4.48 million hectares, 1.08 million hectares are cultivated lands, while collections from 3.4 million hectares of wild forests are the source remaining organic harvests.

For quality assurance, the country has an internationally acclaimed certification process in place for export, import and domestic markets. National Program on Organic Production (NPOP) defines the regulatory mechanism and is regulated under two different acts for export and domestic markets. NPOP, notified under Foreign Trade Development and Regulation Act (FTDR), oversees export requirements. The NPOP, notified under this act, has already been granted equivalence by the European Union and Sweden and USDA has also accepted the conformity assessment system of NPOP. Due to this, the product certified by any Indian accredited certification agency under NPOP can be exported to Europe, Sweden and USA without the need for recertification. Eighteen accredited certification agencies oversee the requirements of the certification process. Of these, four are public sector agencies, while the remaining fourteen are under private management.

With the phenomenal growth in area under organic management and growing demand for wild-harvest products, India has emerged as the single largest country with highest arable cultivated land under organic management. India has also achieved the status of single largest country in terms of total area under certified organic wild harvest collection. With the production of more than 77,000MT of organic cotton lint, India had achieved the status of largest organic cotton grower in the world a year ago, producing over 50 percent of the world's total organic cotton.

Although world over, commercial organic agriculture with its rigorous quality assurance system is a new market controlled, consumer-centric agriculture system, it has grown almost at the rate of 25-30 percent per year during the last 10 years. In spite of the fears of recession, the growth of organic agriculture has been unaffected. The movement that started in the developed world is gradually picking up in developing countries. However, the demand is still concentrated in developed and most affluent countries. Local demand for organic food is growing and India is poised for faster growth with a growing domestic market.

The success of the organic movement in India depends upon the growth of its domestic markets. India has traditionally been a country of organic agriculture, but the growth of modern scientific, input intensive agriculture has pushed it to the wall. Nevertheless, with increasing awareness about bio-safety and quality of food, long term sustainability of the system and accumulating evidence of the organic approach being as productive as conventional methods, organic farming has emerged as an alternative system of farming that not only addresses quality and sustainability concerns, but also ensures a debt free, profitable livelihood option.

One such initiative is the Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) introduced in Andhra Pradesh in 2004 to address low profitability resulting from the high cost of fertilizer and pesticides, with subsequent indebtedness, even leading to suicides in desperation. CMSA encourages a shift to non-pesticide management, based on understanding the crop ecosystem, adopting suitable cropping practices, including multi-cropping, understanding insect biology and behavior and adopting suitable preventive measures. CMSA, which is largely driven by farmers' SHGs, also engages the local community in building and sharing knowledge and skills. A farmer who has successfully adopted CMSA becomes a community resource person who then promotes and advises on these methods and provides extension services in neighboring villages.

CMSA has shown impressive results. It has substantially reduced cultivation costs without reducing productivity significantly, resulting in a net increase in farmers' income as well as health and ecological benefits (United Nations Environment Program (UNEP 2012); see also Kumar et al. 2009). Since men tend to migrate for work and women undertake farming responsibilities, these health benefits have a gendered significance. By 2012–13, nearly 2 million farmers adopted CMSA on over 1.5 million hectares or over 10 percent of Andhra Pradesh's net cropped area (SERP 2013).

7.2.3 The Integrated Livelihoods Promotion Approach

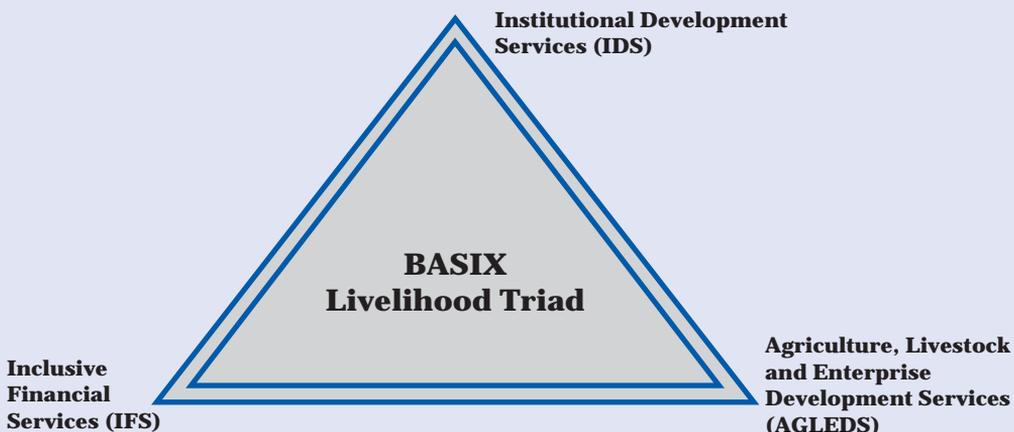
Several organizations have attempted integrated livelihood promotion for the poor. The most notable amongst these is BRAC in Bangladesh, which in addition to providing microcredit, insurance and input supply, and output marketing services in poultry, silk and handicrafts sectors, also provides primary health and education services. Technoserve, USA, which works in Latin America and Africa, takes a commodity sub-sector development approach and organizes the producers into cooperatives. In India, SEWA organizes women into occupational cooperatives and then provides them banking services through the SEWA bank, insurance through Vimo SEWA and marketing through the SEWA Trade Facilitation Center. Likewise, Indian NGOs like ASSEFA, BAIF and PRADAN have adopted integrated approaches in sub-sectors such as mango, cashew, dairy, poultry and tasar silk, combining producer organizations with the system for provision of financial services.

7.2.3.1 The Basix Livelihood Triad Model

Learning from all these integrated approaches and its own experience since 1996, Basix evolved the Livelihood Triad model after a decade of experimentation with various livelihood promotion methodologies. It is designed to provide a comprehensive set of livelihood promotion services to rural, poor households, through a network of collaborating organizations.

The rationale behind the livelihood triad strategy is as follows: micro-credit, by itself, is helpful for the more enterprising amongst the poor in economically

Figure 21: The BASIX Livelihood Triad



dynamic areas. Less enterprising poor households need to start with savings and insurance before they can benefit from micro-credit, as they need to cope with risk. The poor also need services such as money transfer either from family members who have migrated to cities for work, or from the government, providing social security payments. Farmers can also benefit from specialized products such as warehouse receipts that help finance the retention of harvested produce, thereby reducing distress sales.

All these services lead to the financial inclusion of the poor and hence are called Inclusive Financial Services (IFS). Additionally producers in economically backward regions, and poor people in all regions need a whole range of Agriculture, Livestock and Enterprise Development (AGLED) Services such as input supply, training, technical assistance, local value addition and market linkages. Since most small farmers find it hard to make a living with just agriculture, they also need support for livestock rearing, such as dairy buffaloes or poultry chicken. Then, there are landless, poor households, who need assistance with starting non-farm micro-enterprises.

Table 43: Services Available under the BASIX Triad

Inclusive Financial Services (IFS)	Agriculture/Livestock & Enterprise Development Services (AGLEDS)	Institutional Development Services (IDS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings (either directly, where regulations permit, or on behalf of regulated banks as correspondents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity enhancement – increase in yields and reduction in costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual level awareness and, self-confidence building, vocational skill and entrepreneurship development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit: agricultural, allied and non-farm, short and long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk mitigation (other than insurance, such as vaccination of livestock) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of groups, federations, cooperatives, mutual benefits, of producers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance, for lives and livelihoods – life, health, crops, livestock, assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local value addition (washing, drying, cleaning, sorting, grading, packing, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and management information systems, using IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money transfer, for migrant workers • Warehouse receipts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate market linkages for input supply & output sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building collaborations to deliver a wide range of services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial syndication and dealing with capital markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-farm enterprises – agro- processing, small industry, services, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector and Policy work – analysis and advocacy for changes or reforms

It is not possible to work with poor households individually if these services are to be offered in a cost-effective manner. As most poor people are isolated and dispersed, it is necessary that they come together for better bargaining power at the marketplace. Provision of necessary livelihood promotion services in a cost effective manner becomes easier when the poor are organized into groups, informal associations and sometimes co-operatives or producer companies. The formation of such groups and their effective and sustainable functioning at a scale, requires Institutional Development Services (IDS). Once the poor are organized into groups, they can also persuasively bargain for better inputs (fair prices, good quality and timely supply), services from governments (extension, infrastructure, etc.) and output marketing (better prices, and refusal to accept cheating or exploitation by middlemen).

BASIX adopted the BASIX Livelihood Triad Model (BLTM) in 2003 and it has been used to serve over two million rural poor households all over India. The model has undergone several evaluations and though these have revealed many areas of improvement, on the whole, BASIX feels that the model is superior to any other integrated approach. Though many NGOs and government development agencies offer livelihood promotion services, those are mostly confined to only one or two main services or sub-sectors. These services are mostly subsidized, with producers paying nothing or certainly not the total costs. It is in this aspect that BASIX Livelihood Triad Model clearly stands apart from the others. Every service that is provided is charged for, and together these services constitute a revenue model for the organization, particularly where there is a sizable cluster of fee-paying users.

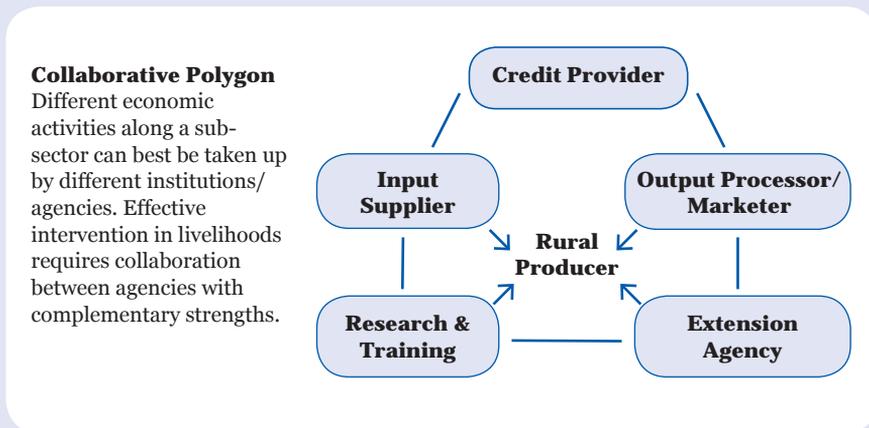
It took BASIX several years to build these revenue models and even now it is work in process. The revenue model for inclusive financial services (IFS - credit, insurance, savings and payments) was the easiest to build and scale up and with these, BASIX covered over 4 million persons. The agriculture, livestock and non-farm enterprise development (AGLED) services model has proved to be most successful in dairy, followed by vegetables, pulses, oilseeds and paddy but is hard to break even in areas where there are no clusters of at least 300-400 farmers within a 10 sq km radius. Thus it is difficult to break-even in case of non-farm activities. IDS cannot seek upfront payment as it is hard to go to a group of unorganized people and say, “pay us a fee to help organize you better”. By the time producers get organized into viable business groups, it can take two to three years. Thus, IDS can work only when third parties pay all or at least part of the cost.

BASIX works with other collaborating organizations such as insurance companies Aviva and Royal Sundaram for life and non-life risk, Pepsico for potato marketing and ITC Ltd for livestock services. In addition, BASIX has its own subsidiaries such as BASIX Sub-K, for enabling banking transactions without going to branches, BASIX Krishi for providing agricultural and livestock services to farmers and the BASIX Academy for building Lifelong Employability (B-ABLE) for providing vocational skills to youth.

The BLTM has been widely adopted by many organizations with variations. The major influence of BLTM has been on the design of the various government rural livelihood programs. Outside India too there is a widespread acceptance of a more holistic approach to livelihood promotion for the poor. In 2012, BASIX was invited by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation to spread the Livelihood Triad model in Africa and it is now working on it in Tanzania, Cameroon and Mozambique, under the rubric of African Livelihoods Partnership.

Collaborative Polygon for Livelihood Promotion: Over the years, the economy has become specialized, dynamic and complex. While on one hand the services required for supporting large numbers of livelihoods have become more diverse, on the other, it has necessitated that agencies providing these services become more specialized. This stems from our understanding that different sets of interventions are required based on the nature of the critical bottleneck at that point in time. These can be very diverse: from organizing the producers to establishing market linkages, or arranging finance. It is not feasible for any one agency to arrange all of these. As a result, BASIX evolved a strategy of the Collaborative Polygon (See Figure 22).

Figure 22: Collaborative Polygon



Mahajan and Dichter (op. cit.) argue that promoting enterprises for the poor depend on multiple factors such as market demand, infrastructure, availability of skills, and government policies, to name a few. Hence, it is a complex process and a better approach is to identify the bottleneck and work to either eliminate it or minimize its damaging effects. Though a large variety of services are required in such situations, not all of them are required at the same time and in every case. Thus, the offering should be contingent upon the requirement of the situation. For supporting livelihoods, services are required in input supply, output marketing, infrastructure, technology development, research, training, community organization among others. Only a specialized type of organization can offer such services, and as it is difficult to build in-house competencies to address all these factors, collaboration becomes indispensable. Collaborative arrangements between various agencies help address this problem to some extent.

7.3 Approaches Ensuring Access to Rights and Entitlements

Some believe that poverty is not just an economic phenomenon, but results from structural inequalities bolstered by a feudal, caste-based social and political structure. They want to address poverty and inequity by goading the poor to demand their rights and entitlements, engage in militant struggles and also use constitutional mechanisms such as the courts, human rights commissions to obtain their rights. The *Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh*, led by the late Sankar Guha-Neogi, is one such example.

The inspiration for this was the Naxalite movement, which began with an armed uprising of peasants in the North Bengal village of Naxalbari in 1967, and became entrenched in parts of the Bengal and Bihar country side. It attracted many well-educated individuals, who were disenchanting with the system and were inspired by the work and ideas of Mao Zedong, Che Guevara and Indian proponents of the armed struggle - Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal. Thus Dr Vinayan worked with the Maoist Coordination Center in South Bihar, and CP Reddy with the *Ryutu Kuli Sangam* in Andhra Pradesh.

Those continuing to engage in armed struggle, even in the late 1990s are broadly referred to as the People's War Group, which is active in northern Andhra Pradesh and the neighboring districts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. It is also active in Bihar and Jharkhand. The ideological inspiration of the PWG is now questionable and it is seen as an outlet for disgruntled adventurist youth, much as 'terrorist' groups such as the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in Assam and others elsewhere. Determining the stage at which a legitimate struggle against the state is tagged

'secessionist' or 'terrorist' depends on many factors, including the handling of grievances in the early stages by the political leadership and the law and order machinery, the motivational mix of persons who assume leadership roles in such struggles and the extent to which disruptive foreign influences get involved.

Each of these narratives described below share a common thread of deep personal commitment towards securing basic rights of the poor and a protracted struggle often in the face of animosity and political vendetta. Yet, the fact that they stood by their conviction come what may, is a lesson that each one of us should learn. What better tribute to their indomitable spirit than this poem by Shri Harivansh Rai Bachchan!

लहरों से डर कर नौका पार नहीं होती,
कोशिश करने वालों की कभी हार नहीं होती।

नन्हीं चींटी जब दाना लेकर चलती है,
चढ़ती दीवारों पर, सौ बार फिसलती है।
मन का विश्वास रणों में साहस भरता है,
चढ़कर गिरना, गिरकर चढ़ना न अखरता है।
आखिर उसकी मेहनत बेकार नहीं होती,
कोशिश करने वालों की कभी हार नहीं होती।

डुबकियां सिंधु में गोताखोर लगाता है,
जा जा कर खाली हाथ लौटकर आता है।
मिलते नहीं सहज ही मोती गहरे पानी में,
बढ़ता दुगना उत्साह इसी हैरानी में।
मुझे उसकी खाली हर बार नहीं होती,
कोशिश करने वालों की कभी हार नहीं होती।

असफलता एक चुनौती है, इसे स्वीकार करो,
क्या कमी रह गई, देखो और सुधार करो।
जब तक न सफल हो, नींद चैन को त्यागो तुम,
संघर्ष का मैदान छोड़ कर मत भागो तुम।
कुछ किये बिना ही जय जय कार नहीं होती,
कोशिश करने वालों की कभी हार नहीं होती।

Others established militant movements, but stayed away from ‘armed struggle’. Thus, Sankar Guha-Neogy organized the highly exploited iron ore mine workers through the *Chhattisgarh Mazdoor Sangarsh Samiti* in Madhya Pradesh, while Nalini Nayak and Fr. Tom Kocherry worked with coastal fishermen in Kerala. In Uttaranchal, Chandi Prasad Bhatt organized villagers to protect their forests from felling by contractors by hugging trees, in what became known as the *Chipko* Movement. In Gujarat, the Behavioral Science Center worked with Dalits to ensure that they got minimum wages and also the right to till their own lands. Since the mid-1980s, Medha Patkar led the struggle for the rights of tribal inhabitants of the areas displaced by a series of large dams to be built on the Narmada river. Though some of these movements have withered away and may not have achieved their end objective, they made a big impact on the way the nation has thought about issues of peoples’ rights, environment-development trade-off and the role of commercial interests in forming state policy.

We provide below three detailed case studies of struggle for the rights and entitlements of the poor to livelihoods.

7.3.1 Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh

Sankar Guha Neogi was a remarkable trade union activist. He started off as a worker in the Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) in the 1960s, and pursued his studies while working to complete his B.Sc. He was so active in the militant wing of the trade union at BSP that he was dismissed, however he continued his work. In 1975, he was arrested during the Emergency and was jailed for a year and a half. On his release, he formed the *Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha* (CMM), which became an umbrella organization, under which both miners and local farmers were organized. The miners were under the banner of the Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh and the local farmers under the *Chhattisgarh Gramin Shramik Sangh* (CGSS). The fact that he organized both workers and farmers showed his unorthodox and superior approach to trade union work that was unmatched anywhere else.

Sankar Guha-Neogi succeeded in sustaining the Mine Worker movement for 14 years from 1977 till his death in 1991. Thanks to the struggle he led, the wages of mine workers went up from Rs 3 per day in 1977 to Rs 60 per day by 1991- a five to six-fold increase, even if we take inflation into account. But Guha-Neogi was not just a trade unionist. He was a social activist and he noticed that liquor consumption went up as the wages rose, so he organized the women in the workers’ families for an anti-liquor campaign.

The participation of women workers helped develop the campaign and ensured its effective implementation. Initially the movement faced the wrath of liquor contractors and their political patrons. He also led the CMM to set up a dispensary, which later became a 15 bed hospital, and is now a big establishment called Shahid Hospital, in Dalli-Rajhara. The CMM also set up six schools in the area. He worked with farmers to increase their productivity and get them better prices. He organized workers to counter the destruction of the environment and carried out a tree planting program, another program for cleaning up streams and rivers, and a third for ensuring garbage collection and disposal in the miners' *bastis*. He even worked against excessive noise pollution caused by excessive use of loudspeakers! The quote below describes the destructive transformation of the area and shows his concern for the environment:¹⁷⁴

“The entire area is rich in iron ore and now has one of the most productive mines in Asia. But just 35 years ago when people went from Kusumkasa to Dondi or Bastar, they had to cross dense forests. On the way they would encounter small villages of Gond *adivasis*. Under the lush green canopy of trees, lived numerous species of birds and their songs filled the air. Little streams and rivulets roamed and rippled across the miles creating yet another kind of music. Children played freely. Young men and women frequently gathered to dance in the forest through the night”.

“Then one day some officers of the Geological Survey of India arrived in the forest. They were soon followed by a team of Russian and Indian engineers. Then there was a sudden, unexpected, thundering blast. People, birds, animals and trees alike trembled from the shock. That first blast was followed by many, many more. After this the jarring noise of the bull-dozer came to dominate over all that was before. Who knows where the *koyal* and peacock fled to? The drums fell silent and young people no longer danced in the forest, for there were no forests left. One by one, lakhs of trees were cut and carted away. In their place sprang up scores of sawmills. The once crystal clear, bubbling streams all turned blood red from the iron ore particles which now flowed in them”.

“Finally the day came when no trace of the green canopy was left. Instead, from Rajnandgaon to Durg and Raipur, grand palaces of the saw-mill owners

¹⁷⁴ From “Sankar Guha Neogi – His Work and Thinking” www.doccenter.org/JVA/His_Work.pdf

and traders came up. The iron ore from Rajhara was smelted to make steel at the plant in Bhilai and the swirling smoke from its chimneys heralded 'development'. Upon foundations tainted by destruction, came to stand the edifice of 'new development'. Then the cement plant was installed and the powder dust shower of cement, which spread over the field's destroyed the agriculture of lakhs of farmers. Meanwhile the putrefying molasses at the newly opened distillery created an all-pervasive odor. Eventually all the rivers were polluted. A vile itching spread among the people who live beside these rivers. The mortality rate of cattle became unnaturally high. More and more people began flocking to the townships and cities. There amid the ceaseless noise of machines, the stink of chemical pollutants and filth, hutment colonies proliferated where people were compelled to live like insects. The protection of the environment is now the central issue. It is the new challenge-to which we must rise".

"This world is beautiful and I certainly love this beautiful world, but my work and my duty are important to me. I've to fulfill the responsibility that I've taken up. These people will kill me, but I know that by killing me none can finish our movement".

What an integrated view of livelihoods, development and the environment!

Just so that we also draw the right lessons about the political economy of activism, it is necessary to see how the vested interests reacted to this activist and what the Indian State did or did not do to protect him or at least to prosecute those who conspired to assassinate him. Sankar Guha-Neogi was shot dead on the night of 28th September 1991, while he was asleep.

7.3.2 Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)¹⁷⁵

MKSS is a people's organization and part of the growing non-party political process in India. A rough translation of the name is: "Organization for the empowerment of workers and peasants". As the name indicates the MKSS works with the rural poor - workers and peasants from the central districts of the north western Indian state of Rajasthan. In 1990, the people of the area set up the MKSS to strengthen participatory democratic processes and to collectively fight exploitation. Formed on the twin slogans of justice and

¹⁷⁵ www.mkssindia.org/about-us/story-of-mkss

equality, the immediate focus of the MKSS was satisfying the minimum needs of the family and the community, so that ordinary people could live their lives with dignity and participate as citizens with a sense of equality.

Later, as the organization grew in strength and experience, its constituents began to see the links of their own local struggles with wider ongoing national or even global processes. The Right to Information (RTI) struggle, for which the organization is best known outside, is one such example. However, the MKSS retains its commitment to broad-based work at a local level, and it is therefore important to understand the organization and the role it sees for itself, in order to better perceive the context of a particular campaign.

Therefore, this note first explains the emerging positions and structure of the organization, and then examines the MKSS and the RTI Campaign. The MKSS describes itself as a 'people's organization'. In India today, there are a number of efforts outside Government acting on behalf of the people. These vary from organizations of charity, at on one end of the spectrum, to non-party political organizations at the other. Amid these lie the (foreign and Indian) funded (large and small) development organizations. All of these are clubbed under the descriptively deceptive category of 'NGOs'.

The MKSS considers itself a political organization, with an understanding of this term in its broadest connotation, including an examination of the norms for power sharing and distribution. The organization has a commitment to challenge the inequality and inequity of distribution of power in the socio-political structure. The poor cannot get a greater share, unless they understand and operate the political structure. This means operating the democratic process to their benefit.

It is therefore important that the MKSS works with issues that affect people and impact the mainstream, both politically and economically. The MKSS does not work in a tribal area, but with people who are part of a caste ridden society. The area reflects the socio cultural ethos of the mainstream, and the organization has to therefore address those issues. There are a range of issues related to equality and justice from communalism, Dalit atrocities, caste factors in electoral politics, corruption, gender issues in a feudal society, human rights violations, to the co-option of development paradigms; in particular, in the context of "economic liberalization". These are all issues that affect large numbers of people, in a similar manner, all over the country. It is in this

context that the work on transparency and right to information has been widely accepted and seen as an issue of empowerment and governance.

The MKSS is a non-party, people's organization. It is an argued position within the MKSS, that in India today, solutions to the prevalent lack of ethics in governance will have to be sought in the context of people's rights and responsibilities. The Indian Constitution says that the sovereignty of India vests in its people. The people have to understand that they are not merely vote banks, but shareholders in the country's future and collectively have a right to decide for themselves the nature of their own development. We will have to evolve systems of control and accountability, whereby the elected representative can govern only in the interest of the collective that he or she represents. For this, it is essential that the MKSS work with people to evolve modes by which political parties and their representatives are made constantly accountable to the people themselves.

Nevertheless, a matter of concern stems from the fact that they are unable to have the right kind of impact on the key centers of mainstream decision making. This is particularly true for organizations that concentrate on a couple of issues and do not work with the objective of seizing State power. Questions posed about using the space and energy generated by electoral politics have not been adequately answered.

The MKSS directly addresses the issues of survival for the poor peasants and workers of an area roughly covering 5 *tehsils* in 4 districts. About 300,000 people live in the geographical area where the MKSS works. However, the MKSS is involved in larger ongoing processes and campaigns at a state and national level with an objective of helping these processes of participatory democracy spread and mature. While there are many people who contribute to MKSS efforts and activities on a voluntary basis, only a small number of people are involved with the MKSS on a full time, and day-to-day basis.

The poor have not had a chance to shape and express their ideas of an egalitarian society. The MKSS has given them a voice. The issues raised by the MKSS – including the Right to Information – have been ideas shaped by people who have been damned: the 'illiterate and uneducated'. The MKSS believes that workers and peasants should not be limited to only battling for survival issues, where they are relegated to the fringes of policies created by others. They must also aim to raise fundamental issues of governance and polity. In a functioning democracy, questions raised at a small, local level can and must impact the larger fabric of governance, because the governing principles are the same. It

also seems clear that a majority of the Indian middle class is bankrupt of ideas, and is caught up in the mirage of consumerism.

Unlike an urban trade union, the MKSS has to be involved in all sorts of issues of empowerment and oppression that people may face. They cannot draw theoretical lines of concern. Therefore, all germane, collective issues have to be taken up. They may be related to land, gender, health facilities, education, wages, employment, housing, communalism, market prices, common property issues, alcoholism and governance. The concern for human rights is fundamental to many of the struggles of the MKSS.

The MKSS has resisted the defining and classifying of its work as per various external categories. It engages with development issues, but is not a registered society – so superficially classified as an ‘NGO’. It engages with issues of labor, and has been in the process of fostering formation of labor unions for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) workers. However, the MKSS itself does not fall within the parameters of a labor union. It has had people stand for election at the panchayat level. It sees many of its activities as being political in nature, but it does not see itself as a political party. That is why it has said that it is a non-party, people’s organization.

Amongst other things, it finds the classification and separation of State and non-State efforts as limiting. This includes the concept of the State being the perpetrator of all exploitation.

“The concept of the State being outside ourselves, we felt, had to be perceptually turned around. The State is ours, usurped by a ruling elite. Some of the slogans that have come out of their struggles are indications of this changed perception. *‘Hamara paisa- hamara hisab!’* (Our money and our accounts’) and therefore, *‘Sarkar hamare aap ki...nahin kisi ke baap ki!’* (The State is ours not the inheritance of a feudal few)”.

Most of the people in the MKSS come from the local area, and from poor families. At the time the MKSS was formed, there were only two people from urban and privileged backgrounds. Since then the majority of MKSS full timers have been drawn from the people of the area. There is an ideological commitment in the MKSS to try to match the lifestyle and work ethics with the community to which it belongs. The lifestyle in the MKSS is subjected therefore to the same restrictions and facilities that exist in the community around it. This is not to say that there are no additional facilities available for its use.

However, thought is given to using only those facilities that are felt practical, and do not contradict with the basic working norms of the organization.

Even the language of such an ideology must emerge from those who are seeking to bring about change. Not defining a pre-set ideology has been both a strength and a weakness. For the people it has been easier to understand and adjust to a theory that has evolved through their immediate needs, never seen in isolation and always related to larger political, social and other values in society.

“For those of us who see the links before others do and also seek comfort in logically worked out world views within pre-defined ‘isms’, the non-conformity has denied comfort of working within an easily understood and accepted paradigm. But at the same level, it has been a challenge to balance the principles and values that underlie people orientated political ideologies, action and the contradictions that do surface, may arise from within the paradigm itself, or from happenings outside of it. It has of course made us sensitive to timing and action that will make the best use of opportunities”.

Many of the strengths of the MKSS are also causes for its constraints. There are two kinds of constraints that one cannot easily overcome the first is the socio-political environment, which obviously is unavoidable and the other set of constraints comes out of the nature and structure of the organization. Since this is a result of deliberate choices made, it is obvious that these constraints or weaknesses would only go if the choices were to change. Nevertheless, we touch upon them below:

The discourse of the mainstream on the political system defines democracy in very narrow terms of casting votes once every five years, and guarantees accountability of elected representatives only in terms of voting people out in the next election. This narrowing down of the meaning of democracy has been of great advantage to the ruling elite. Despite the fact that now the elite has got a multi caste or class face, the moment privileges come, the character of the ruling class dominates. It has been essential therefore to define democracy in its broadest terms. The problem arises when the MKSS has to define its position about the electoral process itself. While it cannot deny the immense importance of it, it also cannot offer solutions or choices between candidates as they are today. This befuddles both the community and the MKSS. The MKSS has been trying to understand when, where and how, the other democratic processes the MKSS has been working on can converge with the electoral process.

The MKSS also has to work within the context of a colonial bureaucracy, which is largely inaccessible and accountable only to superior officers. Working till very recently in secrecy (under the umbrella of the notorious Official Secrets Act – a problem for all of South Asia that was under British rule), and riddled by increasing amounts of corruption at all levels; the basic bureaucratic structure itself requires an overhaul. The RTI Campaign, (discussed in detail later) grew from a series of local struggles, into a national campaign, and eventually into a people's movement that ensured the passage of a strong national Law. This is an example of how strongly rooted local struggles can eventually have a fundamental impact on the whole paradigm of governance. This potential for impact at a much wider level has been seen in the MKSS experience of being a part of a campaign for a National Employment Guarantee Act also.

The RTI Campaign was born out of a poor people's need to survive. The need has been expressed and demands were made many times before, but this time it was both seen as a fundamental right of all citizens and as a right for survival for the poor. The need for this right, transparency of all public operations including, but not limited to the operations of the government, has enabled the MKSS to communicate with a large number of people. That a government or any institution dealing with public life should be accountable to the people has been accepted as a primary democratic principle. This accountability helps in effectively dealing with corruption and arbitrary exercise of power.

The mode of public hearings is not new, but the village based '*Jan Sunwai*' as an open democratic platform to verify information and entitlements was a breakthrough in people's action. The MKSS has used it with people to share information, and to examine the validity and details of official records. The Public Hearings have been both social audits of work done and a kind of forum for ascertaining the (truth) about the nature of democratic functioning at the most tangible and immediate level: the village *panchayat*. It has allowed for the expression of genuine people's opinions and has empowered them, leading to an understanding of both the machinations of corruption and the way it can be fought.

The MKSS has fought the encroaching and crippling domination of the so called 'free market' at the only level where it can have an immediate impact on people's lives: by running fair price grocery shops. These shops began with the financial support of the people themselves, to influence the prices of commodities at the local market. The tremendous reaction of shopkeepers against the shops and the popular support from consumers allowed the

community to understand methods of exploitation in price and quality, and the kind of price manipulations that were taking place in the name of the free market. The shops also provided the MKSS with a forum to communicate with small urban centers from which they are otherwise isolated.

While struggling for implementation of their legal right to the statutory minimum wage, the members of the MKSS realized that to enforce their economic rights and exercise democratic controls, they needed the right to access the documents, which constituted the basis for granting or denying them their rights. This information was stashed away by the Government and had been kept secret from the people.

They began by demanding transparency of financial records of expenditure in the *Panchayat*, the village council. Their demand for transparency, accountability, social audit (public audit by the people) and redressal (including the return of stolen public money), began with the first Public Hearing organized by the MKSS in 1994. The first set of Public Hearings was preceded by unofficially accessing the documents, as there was no legal entitlement. The contents of these documents were then shared and verified with the residents of the area. People came together on the date of the public hearing to testify and audit the work executed by their village council, and government officials.

The revelations of these few, initial public hearings led to an immediate and sharp reaction from government officials, who refused to share information and made it clear that in their view people had no right to access such documents. The MKSS made a declaration of beginning a prolonged struggle till the citizens were given open access to the records of expenditure and governance at a local level. The Rajasthan Chief Minister and the Government responded to the pressure by making assurances, which they did not keep.

The MKSS began a sustained struggle that was to last for three years, before they could get the assurances implemented- changing the Panchayat Raj Rules and widening the scope of their demands to the People's Right to Information from all bodies that had an impact on public interest. Their first set of demands was met in July 1997 when the *Panchayati Raj* Rules were amended by the Government of Rajasthan. The public hearings held after these amendments have had a dramatic impact. Elected representatives and officials found guilty of corruption have publicly returned money and ordinary citizens have seen how the right to access documents gives them an opening to ask questions and receive answers from those who rule. Today, people are grappling with working

out the modes by which the public can effectively audit the decisions of those who rule in their name.

In a democracy, without the right to know, there can be no real right to exercise power and to make the Government and the State machinery accountable to its people. The Constitution of India acknowledges that the people of India are the sovereign powers of independent India. To exercise their sovereignty, and participate in governance in a responsible and ethical manner, the people must have a right to know. In 1996 the National Campaign for the People's Right to Information (NCPRI), was created with the twin objectives of drafting and campaigning for legislation to be passed at the Center (Parliament) and the States; as well as supporting grass root struggles for access to government records and information critical to people's lives.

India has inherited a colonial bureaucracy and a Westminster model of democracy, in which today both the elected government and the bureaucracy are riddled by corruption. Corruption has a bearing on the survival of poor people and the right of the citizenry to decide on issues that would benefit the nation as a whole. Right to Information is an effective tool to control corruption and the arbitrary exercise of power. It helps establish that the Government has to be accountable to its people. This can bring about a basic change in the relationship between the people and the Government. It can enable and empower people to exercise control over governance. Hence it has now become clear that it is critical to the struggle against the implementation of anti-people policies by governments who have become puppets in the hands of transnational financial powers.

If national Governments have to work with the people's mandate, then links with the world outside cannot derail the poor and the citizen's right to live, to know and decide on matters that affect their lives. People in different states have begun to use the right to probe and question decisions related to education, health, power projects, displacement, environment, and nuclear policies. The Right to Information is not a right that will independently solve all problems of corruption or the misuse of power. It is nevertheless a vitally important enabling campaign for all struggles for development rights, human rights and democratic rights.

The NCPRI, has been able to lobby both in the states and at the Center, and today there are Right to Information Laws that have been enacted in the States of Tamil Nadu (1997), Goa (1997), Madhya Pradesh (1998), Rajasthan (2000), Maharashtra (2000), and Karnataka (2000), Delhi (2001), Jammu

and Kashmir (2003) and Assam (2003). The demands by citizens across the country helped bring forth a greatly improved National Bill, which was passed by Parliament in 2005, replacing the much weaker Freedom of Information Act passed in 2003. The RTI Act, (2005) came into effect across the country in October 2005.

It is characteristic of the personal philosophy of Aruna Roy, the founder and the main spirit behind the MKSS, that her name is not mentioned even once in this major excerpt from the MKSS website. Aruna joined India's elite civil service, the IAS in 1976 and served for several years before quitting to work with the people. Though she hails from a well-off family and has been showered with awards, she chooses to live a very hard and modest life in Dev Doongri in the Bhilwara district of Rajasthan among the people she works with.

7.3.3 Narmada Bachao Andolan - History of the First Decade of Struggle

Medha Patkar was a 30-year-old social activist and researcher when she came to the Narmada Valley in 1985 to study the villages to be submerged by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. As her work progressed, Patkar grew increasingly horrified by the treatment of villagers at the hands of the project authorities. Soon she gave up her survey and joined activists working to secure fair compensation for the dam's 'oustees'. Over the next few years, Patkar traveled by foot, bus and boat throughout the nearly 200-kilometer-long submergence zone, living with the people to be displaced, listening to their fears for the future, and urging them to organize to force the government to respect their rights.¹⁷⁶

Patkar spent most of her time among the *adivasis* in the remote and rugged Satpura hills of Maharashtra. Over the years, her oratory and organizing skills helped build the trust of many local people and also attracted a committed coterie of young activists from outside to come to the valley. These activists, who included engineers, social workers, and journalists, were to play a vital role in the Narmada movement. Early in 1986, the activists and villagers from Maharashtra set up the NDS (Committee for Narmada Dam-Affected People). The NDS villagers refused to be moved out or to cooperate with dam officials in any way until their resettlement demands were met.

¹⁷⁶ A History of The Narmada Bachao Andolan - Extracted from Patrick McCully, *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams* (Zed Books, London, 1996). Accessible at http://www.narmada.org/resources/books/silenced_rivers.html

Similar organizations have been formed to improve resettlement policies in Gujarat (where the dam is located) and the upstream state of Madhya Pradesh (where most of the reservoir would lie). Several of these groups began to investigate the official claims of the benefits the project would provide. Among their findings were that crucial environmental studies had not been conducted, that the number of people to be displaced was not known, that estimates of the amount of land to get irrigation water were wildly optimistic, and that while the supply of drinking water to some 40 million people in Gujarat was supposed to be one of the project's main benefits, the massive sums needed to build the pipes and pumps to deliver this water had been left out of the estimated project costs. These findings led the oustee groups to conclude that the claims of project benefits were fraudulent and just resettlement impossible and so at six rallies held simultaneously in the three affected states on August 18, 1988, the NDS and their allies announced their total - but strictly non-violent opposition to the dam.

National press coverage and awareness of the anti-Sardar Sarovar campaign burgeoned in the late 1980s and support for the Narmada activists mounted among environmental, human rights, religious, landless, and *adivasi* organizations around the country. Within the valley, the activists built alliances across class and caste boundaries and between *adivasi* and 'caste Hindu' areas. Villagers evicted in the 1960s to make way for the town built for the dam workers, and farmers who would have lost land to the massive canal network also joined the opposition groups. In 1989, this growing movement was united into an alliance of the directly affected villagers and their local and national supporters - the *Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)*.

The International Front: Interest in the growing Narmada controversy within the international environmental community was boosted by two trips Medha Patkar made to Washington in 1987 and 1989. Lori Udall from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in Washington was inspired by Patkar to take the lead role in raising the NBA's concerns with the World Bank. Udall also helped build a network of committed and informed activists in North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia who become known as the Narmada Action Committee.

Medha Patkar met with some World Bank executive directors during her 1989 visit. 'When I hear what NGOs say about this project and then what the operations staff say', one director remarked afterwards, 'it sounds like they are talking about two different projects'. Patkar also gave testimony at a congressional subcommittee hearing into the World Bank's performance on

Sardar Sarovar. Congressional staff, journalists and environmentalists broke into spontaneous applause after her impassioned, hour-long presentation. A number of Congressmen later wrote to Bank President Barber Conable urging that the project be suspended.

The next foreign success for the NBA was a symposium in Tokyo in April 1990. Influencing opinion in Japan was vital for the Narmada campaign as the Japanese government was lending some \$200 million for the turbines for Sardar Sarovar. NBA and international activists joined Japanese NGOs, academics and politicians at the Tokyo symposium, which received considerable national press coverage. The activists later met Japanese government officials. Within a month of the symposium, the Japanese withdrew all further funding for the dam. This was the first time that a Japanese aid loan had been withdrawn for environmental and human rights reasons.

The Long Road to the Indian Review: Back in India, the NBA had dropped its straightforward ‘no dam’ position in March 1990 and instead proposed the project be suspended pending a comprehensive and open review. In an attempt to pressure the government into holding the review, the NBA organized the most spectacular action of its campaign. On Christmas Day 1990, 3,000 oustees and NBA supporters set off for the dam site from the town of Rajghat in Madhya Pradesh which came to be known as the Long March. Eight days later the marchers reached the village of Ferkuwa on the border with Gujarat and found their way blocked by the police and a counter demonstration organized by the Gujarat government.

An angry month-long stand-off ensued. At first, the NBA attempted to break through by sending forward groups of volunteers, their hands tied in front of them to symbolize their commitment to non-violence. The police repeatedly forced back the volunteers. Some were beaten and around 140 were detained. Patkar and six others then began a fast by the side of the road. The days passed by but the government remained unresponsive. On the 22nd day, the hunger strike and march were called off. Although the Long March failed in its immediate objective, it gained massive press coverage throughout India and made Medha Patkar a national celebrity. The Ferkuwa stand-off and fast also jolted the World Bank - some months later the Bank-funded Independent Review was established.

By 1991, full-scale construction on the dam had been underway for four years. Submergence was clearly possible during the upcoming monsoon, which hits the Narmada Valley between June and September every year. At a ceremony in Manibeli, the Maharashtra village closest to the dam, a group of oustees and activists vowed to be the first to face the rising waters. An NBA compound was set up at one of the lowest parts of Manibeli with a house where the *Samarpit Dal*, or 'Save or Drown Squad', would sit and prepare to drown. In response, the government banned Patkar and other activists from the villages during the monsoon, and prohibited the villagers from holding anti-dam protests.

The NBA defied the bans, and hundreds of their supporters were arrested during the monsoon months. Members of the *Samarpit Dal* went into hiding to avoid detention and to be able carry out their vow. A weak monsoon, however, meant that the water stayed several meters below Manibeli in 1991. The following year the water rose during one monsoon storm to within a meter of the lowest house behind the dam. Patkar was among 11 people in the house at the time. Also in 1992, police shot dead an *adivasi* woman while evicting her community from forest land which was to be given to resettled oustees.

The report of the Independent Review was released in June 1992. The NBA and its international supporters were delighted that it vindicated so many of their claims and they used it to step up pressure on the World Bank. Environmentalists wrote an open letter to World Bank President Lewis Preston, which they published as a full-page advertisement in the London Financial Times. It warned that if the Bank refused to withdraw funding for Sardar Sarovar, then NGOs would launch a campaign to cut government funding of the Bank. The letter was endorsed by 250 NGOs and coalitions from 37 countries. Full-page advertisements placed in The Washington Post and New York Times by US environmental groups made similar demands.

The World Bank Withdraws: The Bank finally announced its withdrawal in March 1993. The authorities' initial reaction was to step up their use of violence and intimidation. In November police shot to death an *adivasi* boy. Street demonstrations against the killing were met with *lathi* charges and yet more arrests. Without World Bank funds, work on the canal system soon ground to a halt. Available financial resources were poured into raising the dam wall - the most visible symbol of the project and the most intimidating

to the people refusing resettlement. With the dam wall 44 meters high, large-scale submergence began during the 1993 monsoon. The lands of hundreds of villagers were inundated and the homes and possessions of 40 families washed away. Police arrested the occupants of the lowest houses and dragged them to higher ground to prevent them carrying out their pledge to drown. Similar scenes were repeated during the 1994 and 1995 monsoons. In 1995 some villagers braved water which rose to chest height before receding.

With the World Bank out of the way, the NBA stepped up pressure on the Indian government to commission a comprehensive review, one which would look at all aspects of Sardar Sarovar - the terms of reference for the Morse Commission had covered only resettlement and the environment. In June 1993, Medha Patkar and Devram Kanera, a farmer from Madhya Pradesh, began a fast in downtown Bombay. After 14 days, the government agreed to start the review process - but once the fast was called off they reneged on their promise.

Ever more frustrated with the government's duplicity, the continuing arrests and beatings of activists and the submergence of homes in the valley, the NBA decided once again to use the strongest weapon at their disposal - their own lives. In July 1993, the NBA announced that unless the review process began by August 6, seven activists would throw themselves into the monsoon-swollen Narmada. Less than 24 hours before the deadline, the central government told an NBA delegation that they would establish a five-member group to 'look into all aspects of SSP'. The jal samarpan - 'self-sacrifice by drowning' - was called off.

The review committee heard submissions from the NBA, affected people, central government ministries and the relevant state governments - except that of Gujarat which boycotted the review. Scientists and engineers presented detailed suggestions for alternative methods of supplying water and power. In May 1994, the NBA opened another front in its campaign by filing a comprehensive case against the project with the New Delhi Supreme Court. The case moved forward at a painfully slow pace with numerous postponements, delays and cancellations.

New hope for the campaign came in late 1994 when the Madhya Pradesh government announced that it had neither the land nor resources to resettle the state's huge numbers of oustees and that it wanted the planned dam height to be reduced. In an effort to pressure the upstream government to force Gujarat to halt the dam, the NBA decided to muster its resources for yet another round of fasts, this time to be held in Bhopal, the Madhya Pradesh

capital. On November 21, 1994, Patkar and three men from the valley stopped eating. Twenty-six days later, the Madhya Pradesh government agreed that it would demand a halt to construction pending progress on resettlement. The NBA called off the fasts. Three days before the end of the fasts, the Supreme Court ordered the government-commissioned review to be made public. The report questioned the basic data used to design the project and criticized the resettlement effort. The court asked the review team to investigate further the viability of the project. The NBA received a significant boost in January 1995 when the central government in New Delhi forced Gujarat to suspend raising the dam wall with its lowest point 63 meters above the river bed, just under half the planned final height. The suspension order came because the project was violating a court ruling that oustees must be resettled six months before their land is submerged.

It is unlikely that the Bank will ever fund another river development project on such a scale in a democratic country. It is also unlikely for the foreseeable future that the Indian dam lobby will succeed in pushing through any projects involving such large-scale displacement. “We are not going in for large dams anymore,” Indian power minister, N.K.P. Salve, told International Water Power and Dam Construction in late 1993. “We want run of the river projects and to have smaller dams, if they are necessary at all, which will not cause any impediment whatsoever to the environmental needs.”

To continue the story, we cite from another source:¹⁷⁷

Pressuring major member governments to block World Bank loans in 1992 did not work out the way transnational advocacy coalition hoped. The campaign did call attention to severe problems with World Bank lending and lead to changes in its policies and practices. It did not lead to stopping or significantly scaling back Sardar Sarovar Dam or the larger Narmada Project. The Indian and state governments remained sufficiently committed to fund the project out of their own resources, resources that have become more plentiful as the pace of India’s economic development picked up in the 1990s and 2000s.

The continuing severity of demand for water in Gujarat meant that as soon as the Supreme Court handed down its judgment in 2000, construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam resumed. It quickly reached the authorized 90 meters; and

¹⁷⁷ Peterson MJ with research assistance from Osman Kiratli and Ilke Ercan, Version 1; September 2010. Narmada Dams Controversy – Case Summary. Accessible at <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=edethicsinscience>

permission was sought to raise it further. It stood 95m high by the end of 2002 and 100 meters high in 2003. The 100-meter height created a reservoir high and long enough to fill the irrigation canal. By the end of 2005 that canal was complete almost to the Gujarat border, with construction of the extension into Rajasthan under way. As construction of Sardar Sarovar's additional height and of upriver dams in Madhya Pradesh proceeded, more disputes broke out about treatment of oustees from those projects.

Allegations that Madhya Pradesh was failing to provide 'land for land' were rife; the state government claimed that many oustees preferred money to land. Villagers from Jalsindhi petitioned the Supreme Court for a review. The question of how many people are affected has been controversial from the start, with NBA and others citing higher numbers and the state governments lower ones. In 2006, NBA complained that Madhya Pradesh was persisting in ignoring the land for land principle and failing to provide resettlement in advance of construction. Madhya Pradesh officials contended in return that most of the oustees wanted money rather than land.

Finally, the GoI, introduced a new Land Acquisition Bill in Parliament in 2013, which recognized the right for adequate compensation and resettlement for any project affected person whose land is taken away or who is made to move.

7.4 Approaches for the Highly Disadvantaged

7.4.1 The Diversified Portfolio of Subsistence Activities (DPSA) Approach

As we saw in the **Chapter 2** of data on poverty, the poor in India are almost always working or available for work. They work, but often earn very low incomes (if self-employed) or at low wage rates (if wage employed). The poor are engaged in a 'Diversified portfolio of subsistence activities' (DPSA) for earning their livelihoods. A typical household maybe engaged in:

- Cultivation (on own land, or leased or encroached land) – except for the truly landless
- Agricultural wage labor
- Non-farm wage labor (construction, services, etc.)
- Livestock rearing or fishing
- NTFP collection
- Non-farm self-employment (weaving, crafts, services)
- Migration, etc.

The challenge for livelihood promotion here can be expressed algebraically as follows:

- If the number of activities a household is engaged in is n ,
- Gross revenue per day from each activity j is g_j
- Cost per day of each activity j is c_j
- Risk of each activity j is r_j
- Days of employment in each activity j is d_j

Then total household income is

$$Y = \sum_{j=1, n} (g_j - c_j) * (1 - r_j) * d_j$$

Thus to increase income, there are only five alternatives:

1. Either increase g_j , gross revenue per day from each activity
2. Or reduce c_j , cost per day of each activity
3. Or reduce r_j , risk of each activity
4. Or increase d_j , days of employment in each activity
5. Or increase n – increase the number of activities or diversify.

Many livelihood practitioners instinctively try to take up the 5th alternative, whereas it should be the last resort, as it is the most disruptive alternative for the poor household.

7.4.1.1 DPSA Intervention by IGS in Bandhavgarh

Bandhavgarh is one of the popular National Parks in India. It is located in the Umari district of Madhya Pradesh. Bandhavgarh, which has a rich biodiversity and one of the highest known tiger populations in India in an area of 105 km², was declared as a National Park for Tiger Reserve in 1968. There were 14 villages located within the reserve forest and 70 villages in the forest peripheral area. The resident tribes in the villages are predominantly Gonds, and Baigas, who primarily practice agriculture while the *Yadav* community is into cattle rearing. The human and cattle population exert pressure on the forest resources as it meets their requirements food, fodder, fuel, water, etc. This triggered conflicts between forest officials and villagers. The constraints of the displaced communities due to rehabilitation are as follows.

Agriculture is the main source of income and the landholding ranges between one-two acres. The agricultural land is undulating and the predominant crops are paddy, maize, jawar, wheat etc. Farmers do cultivate vegetables on a small scale such as potato, tomato, onion, chilli, cauliflower, *palak* (spinach),

dhaniya (coriander), ladies finger, cabbage and so on. Their farm produce and vegetables are normally sufficient for their own consumption and very few farmers sell paddy, wheat and gram. Irrigation is a major issue and the farmers cannot afford to create the infrastructure required for irrigation. As a result, agriculture is rain-fed dependent. In the year of good crops, there is always a problem of crop damage by herbivorous animals such as spotted deer, wild boar and others. This is a source of tension between the Park Authorities and village communities, as the villagers are ultimately deprived of a good harvest.

Dependency on forest produce such as collection of *mahua* (flower used for preparing local liquor) and *tendu* leaves is a seasonal activity that engages them for two months. Threat from wild animals, decline of *mahua* trees and restrictions from the forest department on entry constrains the people dependent on these activities. Cattle rearing also faces numerous problems due to non-availability of good quality breeds, feed and fodder and primary healthcare services, and susceptibility to predators. The absence of a market in the vicinity does not help the milk producers in generating additional income.

People living in the village are significantly dependent on wage labor. The wages through agriculture work is available for couple of months in a year and partly through the NREGA program. Though the Forest Department provides wage earning opportunities, the distribution of wage days is found to be skewed with a couple of households receiving work in the range of 90 to 180 days in a year, while many households struggle to find work for not more than 20 days in a year. Fencing and digging are the major wage-earning activities offered by the Department for which they pay Rs 80 to Rs 90/- per day. Therefore, many households from the villages migrate seasonally to nearby towns and cities in search of employment.

People depend on informal sources for getting credit support. They depend on traders for consumption credit, while money lenders help finance agricultural activities. The interest varies from 36 to 60 percent per annum. For emergencies people rely on the support of friends and relatives. There are other informal village institutions such as SHGs. The forest department promotes Eco Development Committees (EDC) to carry out development activities and to maintain the ecosystem of the National Park. The other informal groups are Gram Samiti, Village Development Committee, *Nigrani Committee*, Forest User Group, *Nirman Samiti*, *Shikha Swastha Committee* and Watershed Committees etc. Due to various reasons, most of these groups are defunct and not able to contribute for the livelihood enhancement of the

village communities. An inherent absence of community initiative in the developmental activities is quite apparent.

In 2010, with the support of RBS Foundation, Indian *Grameen* Services (IGS), which is part of the BASIX Social Enterprise Group, initiated an Action Research Project in eight fringe villages of Bandhavgarh National Park. The core objective of the project is *'to promote sustainable livelihoods in eight fringe villages'* thereby minimizing the residents' dependence on forest resources and reducing the pressure on the National Park. The eight villages selected for this intervention are Rakhi, Bhijaria, Kathili, Lukanar, Damna, Deori, Gata and Ghagod. IGS made a detailed study and livelihood analysis of the 481 households of eight fringe villages and the study showed that the households do not have enough surpluses, and the financial institutions were unwilling to provide credit for all these interventions. Therefore, IGS planned to support these households financially based on the requirement for the livelihood activities.

Since 2010, IGS started intervening in the eight selected villages through Livelihood Financial Services (LFS), an extension of Technical Support Services for enhancing incomes from existing livelihoods. As part of institutional development, IGS formed 28 SHGs and by integrating these groups, an apex Self-Help group federation', *Charan Ganga Mahila Samruddhi Sangh* (CGMSS)', was promoted in 2011. LFS services are for farm and non-farm based livelihood activities that can contribute to family incomes. Purchase of pump house, bullocks, fencing, digging of bore well, land leveling, inputs purchase and so on are the activities associated with agriculture and allied activities.

The minimum financial support for agriculture and allied activities are as low as Rs 5000/-, while the maximum, Rs 25000/-. The financial support was also given for Microenterprise Development (MED) activities such as grocery shops, shuttering equipment for concrete slab work, setting up of mini flour mill, setting up of brick making unit, tent house, etc. Of all the MED interventions, establishment of two mini flour mills proved successful, both in terms of enhancing the income of individual entrepreneurs and also for serving people in the fringe villages of Bandhavgarh locally, thereby reducing the opportunity cost (daily wage). The interest rate of loans for agriculture and allied activities is 8 percent and for microenterprise activities it is 12 percent per annum on diminishing basis.

The Equated Monthly Instalment (EMI) for repayment is decided by CGMSS and fixed as monthly or quarterly or half yearly, depending on the cash flows of

the activity and repayment capacity of the members. The repayment period for the loans is fixed as short as 12 months and as long as 60 months depending on the purpose for which the loan was taken, amount given on loan and the members' ease to repay the loan. The loan products have been developed by the CGMSS level appraise the loans and disburse the same based on the decision. To create the revolving fund at the federation level, CGMSS resolved to repay back these loans to the federation so that the revolving fund thus created will be rotated further and used to support members of the federation.

The microenterprise activities supported during the course of intervention are: setting up grocery shops, shuttering equipment for concrete slab work, setting up of mini flour mill, setting up brick making unit, tent house etc.

Table 44: Role Played by Different Institutions during the Intervention

Self Help Groups	Federation (CGMSS)	IGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up norms for SHG and implementation of the same for better functioning • Mobilizing savings from members • Internal lending, monitoring and recovery of loans • Assist federation on implementing activities through SHGs • Participate in village SHG leader's meeting and build consensus for collective decisions and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the performance of cluster, and SHGs • Maintain books of accounts • Initiate various livelihood promotional aspects • Sanction loans, disburse, monitor and utilize revolving fund optimally • Pursue with executive committed for recovery of revolving funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building and provide need based support for strengthening of cluster and federation • Support federation to address village level issues • Implementation of Livelihood Triad Services • Educate community. Reduce dependence on forest and lower man-wild life conflicts through livelihood finance and technical support

7.4.2 The Ultra-Poor Program of BRAC

BRAC,¹⁷⁸ an international development organization based in Bangladesh, is the largest non-governmental development organization in the world, measured by the number of employees and the number of people helped, as of November 2012. Established by Sir Fazle Hasan Abed in 1972, soon after the independence of Bangladesh, BRAC is present in all 64 districts of Bangladesh.

¹⁷⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BRAC>

By 2012, it was offering services in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti and the Philippines.

BRAC employs over 100,000 people, roughly 70 percent of whom are women, reaching more than 126 million people. The organization is 70-80 percent self-funded through a number of commercial enterprises that include a dairy and food project and a chain of retail handicraft stores-Aarong. BRAC maintains offices in 14 countries throughout the world, including BRAC USA and BRAC UK.

What is unique about BRAC is its method of pulling people out of poverty. As one author said, “BRAC’s idea was simple yet radical: bring together the poorest people in the poorest countries and teach them to read, think for themselves, pool their resources, and start their own businesses” (Barber). This is exactly what BRAC did and continues doing in Bangladesh and 10 other poverty-stricken countries around the world.

BRAC has organized the isolated poor and learnt to understand their needs by finding practical ways to increase their access to resources support their entrepreneurial zeal and empower them to become agents of change. Women and girls have been the focus of BRAC’s anti-poverty approach for BRAC recognizes both their vulnerabilities and their thirst for change.

History: Known formerly as the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee and then as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (currently, BRAC does not represent an acronym), Sir Fazle Hasan Abed started BRAC in 1972 at Sulla in the Sylhet district as a small-scale, relief and rehabilitation project to help returning war refugees after the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. In nine months, 14 thousand homes were rebuilt as part of the relief effort and several hundred boats were built for the fishermen. Medical centers were opened and other essential services were ensured. At the end of 1972, when the first phase of relief work was over, BRAC turned towards long-term development needs and re-organized itself to focus on empowerment of the poor and the landless, particularly women and children.

By 1974, BRAC had started providing micro credit and had started analyzing the usefulness of credit inputs in the lives of the poor. Until the mid-1970s, BRAC concentrated on community development through village development programs that included agriculture, fisheries, cooperatives, rural crafts, adult literacy, health and family planning, vocational training for women and construction of community centers. BRAC set up a Research and Evaluation Division (RED) in 1975 to analyze and evaluate its activities and provide

direction for the organization to evolve. In 1977, BRAC shifted from community development towards a more targeted approach by organizing village groups called Village Organizations (VO). This approach targeted the poorest of the poor – the landless, small farmers, artisans, and vulnerable women. Those who own less than half an acre of land and survive by selling manual labor were BRAC’s target group. That same year, BRAC set up a commercial printing press to help finance its activities. The handicraft retail chain Aarong, was established the following year.

In 1979, BRAC entered the health field by establishing a nation-wide Oral Therapy Extension program (OTEP), a campaign to combat diarrhea, the leading cause of the high child mortality rate in Bangladesh. Over a ten year period 1,200 BRAC workers went door-to-door to teach 12 million mothers the preparation of home-made oral saline. Bangladesh today has one of the highest rates of usage of oral rehydration, and BRAC’s campaign cut down child and infant mortality from 285 per thousand to 75 per thousand. This initial success in scaling up propelled rapid expansion of other BRAC programs such as Non-Formal Primary Education which BRAC started in 1985 - a model that has been replicated in about a dozen countries.

In 1986 BRAC started its Rural Development program that incorporated four major activities – institution building, including functional education and training, credit operation, income and employment generation and support service programs. In 1991 the Women’s Health Development program commenced. In the following year, BRAC established a Center for Development Management (CDM) in Rajendrapur. Later, its Social Development, Human Rights and Legal Services program was launched in 1996 with the aim to empower women with legal rights and assist them in becoming involved with community and ward level organizations. In 1998, BRAC’s Dairy and Food project was commissioned and an Information Technology Institute was launched in the following year. In 2001, BRAC established a university called BRAC University with the aim to create future leaders and the BRAC Bank was started to cater primarily to small and medium enterprises.

Education: BRAC’s Non-Formal Primary Education program provides five-year primary education course in four years to poor, rural, disadvantaged children and drop-outs, who cannot access formal schooling. These one-room schools are for children between 8-14 years of age. Each school typically consists of 33 students and one teacher. Core subjects include Mathematics, Social Studies and English. The schools also offer extracurricular activities. As of June 2008, BRAC established 37,500

primary schools and 24,750 pre-primary schools, enrolling nearly three million children, 65 percent of whom are girls. The schools have a drop-out rate of less than five percent.

BRAC set up centers for adolescents called *Kishori Kendra* that provide reading material and serve as a gathering place for adolescents where they are educated about issues sensitive to the Bangladeshi society such as, reproductive health, early marriage, women's legal rights etc. BRAC has also set up 964 community libraries, 185 of which are equipped with computers.

Public Health: BRAC started providing public healthcare in 1972 with an initial focus on curative care through paramedics and a self-financing health insurance scheme. The program went on to offer integrated health care services. Its key achievements include the reduction of child mortality rates through a campaign for oral rehydration in the 80s and taking immunization from 2 percent to 70 percent in Bangladesh. BRAC currently provides a range of services that reach an estimated 31 million rural poor and include services for mothers in reproductive health care and infants. In Bangladesh, 78 percent of births occur in the home. BRAC has implemented a program in which midwives are trained to work in the homes of women to ensure that births are as risk-free as possible. As of December 2007, 70,000 community health volunteers and 18,000 health workers have been trained and mobilized by BRAC to deliver door-to-door health care services to the rural poor. It has established 37 static health centers and a Limb and Brace Fitting Center that provides low cost devices and services for the physically disabled.

Social Development: In 1996, BRAC started a program in collaboration with the *Ain O Shalish Kendra* (ASK) and Bangladesh National Women Leader's Association (BNWLA) to empower women to protect themselves from social discrimination and different forms of exploitation of which dowry, rape, acid throwing, polygamy, domestic violence and oral divorce are common in rural Bangladeshi communities. It also encourages and assists women to take action when their rights are infringed. The program has two components: the Social Development component and the Human Rights and Legal Services component.

The Social Development component focuses on building human and socio-political assets of the poor – especially women – through institution building, awareness raising, training and collective social mobilization. The Human Rights and Legal Services component seeks to empower the poor by increasing

their awareness of their rights (legal, human and social) and entitlements through participation in activities like the Popular Theatre and through Human Rights and Legal Education (HRLE) classes arranged by BRAC for its Village Organization members.

BRAC also offers external services such as access to lawyers or the police, either through legal aid clinics, by helping women report cases at the local police station or when seeking medical care in the case of acid victims. At the end of June 2006, 124,748 HRLE classes were held and 1,332 acid victim cases and 1,735 rape victim cases were reported.

Disaster Relief: BRAC conducted one of the largest NGO responses to Cyclone Sidr which hit vast areas of the south-western coast in Bangladesh in mid-November 2007. BRAC distributed emergency relief materials, including food and clothing, to over 900,000 survivors, provided medical care to over 60,000 victims and secured safe supplies of drinking water. BRAC is now focusing on long-term rehabilitation, which will include agriculture support, infrastructure reconstruction and livelihood regeneration.

ICT Development: Established in 1996, BRAC Net Limited is Bangladesh's one-stop ICT (Information and Communication Technology) solution provider. BRAC Net has built its nationwide network utilizing its licensed spectrum. Its network today is based on WiMax and fibre optics technology to serve hundreds of large corporations and thousands of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Educational institutions throughout the country. It serves tens of thousands of residential customers directly or indirectly (through resellers) and rural people through its cybercafé franchises, called 'e-hut'. For the first time in Bangladesh, the perennially poor can now avail the services available online to improve their quality of life. BRACNet is committed to establish such interconnected e-huts all over Bangladesh using its fixed WiMAX and optical fibre network. More than 70 e-huts operate in rural Bangladesh providing services in internet browsing, broadband connectivity, basic computer and IT training, web cam and digital camera service, computer composition and printing, computer servicing, graphics designing, and photocopying to the rural community. E-hut hopes to introduce digital services such as IP phoning, e-commerce, video conferencing, money transfer and courier services in the future.

Economic Development: BRAC's program includes microcredit wherein it provides collateral-free credit using a solidarity lending methodology, as well as obligatory savings schemes through its VO. Reaching nearly four million borrowers, VO provide loans to poverty groups. BRAC is considered the largest

micro lender in Bangladesh, the renowned Grameen Bank being a close second (Barber). BRACs lending typically gives loans to the poor to start raising chickens for eggs and meat.

Not only does BRAC lend money to a loanee, BRAC teaches the loanee how to care for and raise the chickens. Once again, the uniqueness of BRAC is its hand in self-empowerment, even in lending programs. BRAC's microcredit program has given over \$1.5 billion dollars in loans over the past 30 years (Barber). 90 percent of BRACs microloans have gone to women (Barber), which is astounding given the very traditional and passive roles women typically have in Bangladeshi culture. Repayment of the loan is over 98 percent. This is a testament to the success of BRACs micro lending program.

In addition to microfinance, BRAC provides enterprise training and support to its member borrowers in poultry and livestock, fisheries, social forestry, agriculture and sericulture. It provides inputs essential for some enterprises through its program. Support Enterprises include poultry farm and disease diagnostic laboratory, bull station, feed mill, broiler production and marketing, seed production, processing, marketing and soil testing, BRAC nursery, and fish and prawn hatchery. BRAC's Vegetable Export program started in 1998 is a venture that is aimed at bridging the gap between local producers and international markets.

BRAC also focuses on the problem of youth employment, providing assistance for young men and especially women to join the workforce, for example, with programs such as the Adolescent Development Program. BRAC also has a number of commercial programs that contribute to the sustainability of BRAC's development programs since returns from the commercial programs are channelled back into BRAC's development activities. These programs include Aarong, a retail handicraft chain, BRAC Dairy and Food Project, and BRAC Salt.

In 2002, BRAC launched a program called Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction – Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR-TUP) designed specifically for those that BRAC defines as the ultra-poor - the extreme poor who cannot access conventional microfinance. BRAC has reached out to those who, due to extreme poverty, cannot access microfinance. BRAC defines such people suffering from extreme poverty as the 'ultra-poor', and has designed a program customized for this group that combines subsidy with enterprise development training, healthcare, social development and asset transfer, eventually pulling the ultra-poor into its mainstream microfinance program.

Box 19: Reaching the Poorest: BRAC's Graduation Model

One of the world's largest non-governmental organizations (NGOs), BRAC works in 70,000 villages and 2,000 urban slums in Bangladesh. BRAC has always had a strong focus on poverty - providing microfinance, schooling, healthcare, legal services, and marketing facilities. But in the 1980s, BRAC realized that its microfinance programs were not reaching many of the poorest. In 1985, BRAC partnered with the Government of Bangladesh and the World Food Program to add a graduation ladder to an existing national safety net program that was providing the poorest households with a monthly allocation of food-grain for a two-year period. BRAC worked with these beneficiaries and added skills training, mandatory savings, and small loans to accelerate livelihoods development. In less than 20 years, the program reached 2.2 million households.

In 2002, BRAC fine-tuned its approach both through better identification of the ultra-poor (defined as people who spend 80% of their total expenditure on food and cannot attain 80% of their standard calorie needs) and through a more intensive sequenced set of inputs.

By 2010, BRAC had reached around 300,000 ultra-poor households with this new approach termed 'Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction/Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR/TUP)'. BRAC estimates that over 75 percent of these households are currently food secure and managing sustainable economic activities.

BRAC's program for the poorest, CFPR/TUP, has been intensively studied since 2002. Three rounds of surveys were conducted with the same group of participants: the baseline in 2002, an end line in 2005, and three years after the program's end in 2008. Results indicate the following:

Graduation rate: 95 percent of program beneficiaries graduated on the basis of participants fulfilling six out of nine indicators, such as food security, diversified income sources, asset ownership, improved housing, and school enrolment.

Poverty: 85 percent of participants started on less than half a dollar a day. Three years after the program's conclusion, 92 percent of participants moved above half a dollar a day threshold (purchasing power parity adjusted).

Food security: Chronic food insecurity fell by 47 percentage points among participants. Annual food expenditure rose by 93 percent, and caloric intake

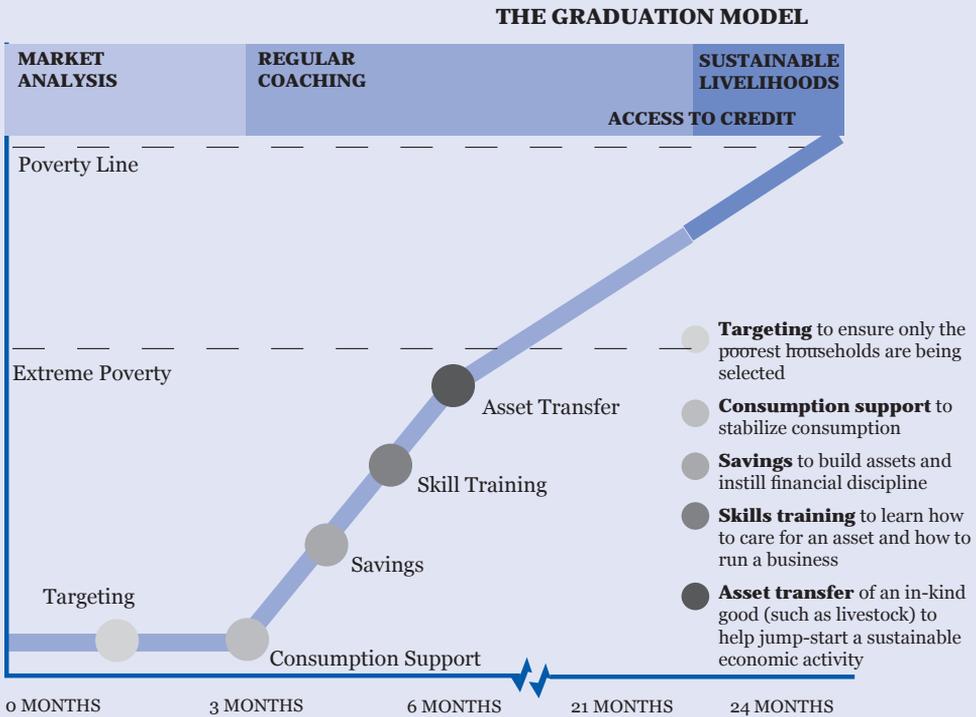
increased over 22 percent, particularly in the consumption of vegetables, eggs, meat, and fish. The upward trend continued a year after the program’s end, suggesting that beneficiaries were able to sustain higher consumption levels without program support.

Savings and credit: Participants save more than non-participants. Approximately 60 percent of beneficiaries also save informally—a practice that increased with program participation. The percentage of participants with outstanding loans increased from 27 percent at baseline to 77 percent in 2005.

Empowerment: By the end of the program, 83 percent of selected households felt more confident about coping with crisis and accessing resources from their communities.

Health and education: Spending on medical treatment among participants increased. Sanitary conditions also improved, with a majority of participants accessing latrines and wearing sandals when they use them (an important

The Graduation Model



hygienic practice). A larger number of boys were enrolled in primary school a year after the program ended; there was no change in girl's schooling.

Source: Hashemi, Syed M. and Aude de Montesquiou. 2011. *Reaching the Poorest: Lessons from the Graduation Model*, CGAP Focus Note 69. Accessible at <http://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/CGAP-Focus-Note-Reaching-the-Poorest-Lessons-from-the-Graduation-Model-Mar-2011.pdf>

7.4.3 Family Livelihood Resource Center, ARAVALI

Aga Khan Foundation with the help of ARAVALI, an autonomous society initiated by the Government of Rajasthan started a livelihood program named Family Livelihood Resource Center (FLRC) in 2008 to devise replicable livelihood approaches and models, for mainstreaming poorest families. Its main objective is to enable aggregation of support inputs, develop and deliver customized package and their delivery to the identified families; to ensure that the families become stakeholders of development and not just the beneficiaries.

In doing this, it creates space for including a wide range of livelihood options and supporting initiatives, for instance encouraging weaning away from narcotics, or by reducing the money spent on medicines, or reduction of expenses on social functions, or linking families with the state's beneficial schemes are vital for strengthening the ultra-poor's livelihood. It is the state of vulnerability and not 'on the Below Poverty Line (BPL) list' that is considered important for identifying and targeting the poorest families. For instance, a newly widowed woman with no income, living with her children in a 'half-pucca' house and having appropriate clothes is not likely to be considered a BPL, but she may be categorized as FLRC ultra poor (based on the vulnerability context), when aspects such as the likelihood of her ability to secure a future source of income, and liabilities are considered. Similarly, for FLRC a family living in a stone house because they can use waste-stones in that area does not necessarily mean that they are living Above the Poverty Line (APL).

Based on the socio-economic history of the family measured using an innovative tool called 'Instrument of Engagement', hand holding support is designed by FLRC. The tool helps identify critical poverty factors and potential of the family and it is also a tool for engaging the ultra-poor, so that they become stakeholders in the process rather mere beneficiaries.

The approach followed by FLRC to identify ultra-poor families, and the challenges faced show that identification of families by itself is not just a simple survey, as is conventionally held by the government when identifying BPL (Below-Poverty-Level) families. Almost a third, or possibly, close to half of the FLRC ultra-poor families were not under the central government BPL. FLRC helped develop an innovative tool the 'Instrument of Engagement (IoE)'. It not only helped examine the socio-economic history and critical factors affecting the families, but it also helped the FLRC fellows build a rapport with the families, which is crucial for a long-term intervention. In addition, FLRC successfully linked them to government entitlements. A total of 1300 ultra-poor families were linked to social security schemes, and their applications were put on a priority list, while several families got assistance when filing work applications for MNREGS. The applications of ultra-poor families, currently listed above the poverty line, will be submitted during the next round of the BPL survey. Some critical initiatives, piloted as interventions for providing livelihood options such as, rearing goats or poultry, silicosis and mining related advocacy, or even a de-addiction drive on Doda, have helped these destitute communities.

7.4.4 Livelihood in the Aftermath of Disasters

The role of livelihoods-based responses following natural disasters has been greatly debated within the humanitarian community, over the last decade. Increasingly, the importance of taking into account the livelihoods of disaster affected populations and, wherever possible, protecting and developing them, has been recognized and addressed by all key actors in disaster recovery processes.

More importantly, disaster affected populations have overwhelmingly identified livelihoods as their greatest recovery priority. An evaluation of the Disasters Emergency Committee involvement in the 2001 Gujarat recovery effort noted that, "People constantly emphasized the need to restore livelihoods rather than receive relief and expressed some frustration that outsiders did not listen to them on this point" (Humanitarian Initiatives UK, 2001, p.16). Similar findings in Indonesia and elsewhere, affirm; at a global scale, the importance given by people to restoring their capacity to earn a living.

Livelihood recovery, as a field of practice, is young and at an experimental stage. It is only now being formalized within disaster response and recovery initiatives. All the same, often there are not many shared insights and learning as to how one can comprehensively assess and implement 'livelihoods recovery'. Interventions often fall back on former modalities of providing food and

replacing physical assets. Programming and funding for livelihoods support is channeled through multiple sectors, and livelihood practitioners struggle to develop effective coordination mechanisms and tools to assess needs, evaluate impacts, and prevent overlapping and conflicting interventions.

Still, much has changed in the way that national and international actors respond to the livelihood needs of affected peoples. The growing recognition of the complex make up of livelihoods has resulted in many new modalities and more comprehensive programs that address not only the replacement of physical assets, but the restoration of crucial social networks, the provision of financial services, and the development of markets. Furthermore, there is an increasing emphasis on long term sustainability and the resilience of livelihoods to future disasters. Within this changing discourse of practice and learning, new approaches are continually defined and lessons drawn from experience.

CARE¹⁷⁹ recognizes that the ability of poor households to make a living is not static. A range of intervention options must be available to poor populations facing different trying circumstances. To enhance the livelihood security of vulnerable populations at different levels, a three-pronged livelihood systems approach has been conceived based on the Relief-Development continuum. This is based on the notion that relief, rehabilitation or mitigation and development interventions are a continuum of related activities, not separate and discrete initiatives. Household food, nutrition and income security can be enhanced by one, or a combination of the three intervention strategies described below.

7.4.4.1 Livelihood Promotion (development-oriented programming)

Livelihood promotion involves improving the resilience of household livelihoods so that food and other basic needs can be met on a sustainable basis (i.e. development). Interventions of this type often aim to reduce the structural vulnerability of livelihood systems by focusing on:

- Improving production to stabilize yields through diversification into agro-ecologically appropriate crops and natural resource management measures (e.g. soil and water conservation)
- Creating alternative income-generating activities (e.g. activities to develop small enterprises)
- Reinforcing coping strategies that are economically and environmentally sustainable (e.g. seasonally appropriate off-farm employment)

¹⁷⁹ An international humanitarian agency delivering broad-spectrum emergency relief and long-term international development projects

- Improving on-farm storage capacity to increase the availability of buffer stocks
- Improving common property management through community participation.

Interventions of the kind aimed at promoting livelihoods could also deal with meso-level development, where the linkages between food surplus areas and food deficit areas could be strengthened by investing in regional infrastructure and market organization. Such interventions help improve the terms of trade for the poor by improving local access to income, enhancing food availability and lowering food prices. In addition, livelihood promotion activities can focus on preventive measures that improve health and sanitation conditions and the population-resource balance to insure that any income and production gains are not lost to disease and unchecked population growth.

7.4.4.2 Livelihood Protection (rehabilitation/mitigation-oriented programming)

Livelihood protection involves protecting household livelihood systems to prevent an erosion of productive assets or to assist in their recovery (rehabilitation or mitigation). Such interventions entail timely food and income transfers, which can reduce long-term vulnerability resulting from the forced selling of productive assets to meet immediate food and other needs. The negative impact of livelihood insecurity can be reduced by detecting where livelihood and food insecurity are likely to occur, at the right time, and by establishing contingency plans that can be rapidly implemented, before a significant erosion of household assets transpires and other erosive coping strategies are activated. The capacity to detect changes in livelihood and food insecurity at an early stage and to respond promptly could considerably reduce the costs of dealing with a full-blown emergency.

Protection-type interventions would include infrastructure improvements or soil and water conservation measures, carried out through food- or cash-for-work or some other means, to enhance the long-term viability and resilience of the communities. Saving the child population from becoming more vulnerable to disease and malnutrition would also fall in this category of intervention approach. Recovery measures such as infrastructure repair and rehabilitation, distribution of seeds and tools, afforestation and repair of water sites would also be included in this set of interventions. The types of intervention to be pursued must be selected and implemented by the communities themselves.

7.4.4.3 Livelihood Provisioning (relief-oriented programming)

Livelihood provisioning involves providing food and meeting other essential needs for households to maintain nutritional levels and save lives. Such interventions usually entail food and health relief for people facing an emergency, or who are chronically vulnerable. Targeted food and health relief is critical and should be combined with promotional interventions, where possible, to phase out food transfers. In relief situations where people have left their homes (i.e. situations involving refugees and internally displaced populations), promotional interventions such as health and nutrition education and family planning initiatives would be naturally limited to those activities that can be conducted at the camps.