

Structural-Political Approach and Methodology of Study

1 INTRODUCTION

The DCRC team had studied the Kalahandi experience in 1997-98 on the basis of which it had formulated its basic approach to the study of poverty (The Kalahandi project was supported by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India). In the current project the team decided to take up three case studies in three States: **Kalahandi-Nuapada** (Undivided Kalahandi) in Orissa, **Bhojpur** in Bihar and **Chittoor** in Andhra Pradesh covering three regions of India in the East, North, and South. At the end of the study, we have realized the significance of this comparative study even more.

Table 1.1 District Profile

Item	Kalahandi	Bhojpur	Chittoor
Geographical Area	7,920 Sq.Kms	3962.03 sq. Kms.	15188.56 sq. Kms.
Population	1,334,372 persons (2001)	1792771 persons (1991)	32,61,118 persons (1991)
% of Scheduled Caste	17.01 (1991)	14.88 (1991)	18.4(1991)
% of Scheduled tribe	28.88 (1991)	0.29 (1991)	3.2(1991)
Density of population	168 persons per Sq. km. (2001)	725 persons per sq. km.	215 persons per Sq.km
% of Urban population	7.51 (2001)	10.54(1991)	19.80(1991)
% of Rural population	92.49 (2001)	89.46(1991)	80.20(1991)
Sex Ratio	1000 (2001)	909(1991)	966(1991)
% of Literacy	46.20 (2001)	37.5 (1991)	42.41(1991)
Number of inhabited villages	2068 (1997)	933 (1991)	1481(1991)
Infant Mortality Rate	108 (2001)	74 (1991)	72(1991)
%age of BPL Families (1997 Survey)	62.71	46.7	36.1

Source: Census of India 1991

Bhojpur, District at a glance, 1995-2001

District Census Handbook, Kalahandi, 2001

Almas Ali, 2002

Census of India 2001, Orissa, Rural Urban Distribution of Population

District Census Handbook, Chittoor 1991

1.1 COMPARING THREE DISTINCT AREAS: Kalahandi, Bhojpur and Chittoor

With respect to **natural resource base** and physical background, the Kalahandi region of Orissa presents contrasting situations in relation to Bhojpur in Bihar and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. Within Kalahandi itself, the South and East are largely characterized by moderate forest cover, low water potential, poor soils and hilly terrain while, the Northern and Western parts of the district are primarily plain and less forested. Only Tel river basin has good water potential and fertile soils. Considering the slope, soils, vegetation cover and water potential the district is less vulnerable to physical constraints; however it suffers from **frequent droughts due to erratic rainfall**. In contrast, **Bhojpur**, another sampled district in the North Gangetic plain, is characterized by plain topography, alluvial to loamy soils, no forest cover and is **prone to heavy flooding**. **Chittoor** district is identified with **less fertile red loamy soils**, plateau type undulating terrain, **low water potential**, and high value open forest cover. The three districts therefore present varied resource base, ecological setting, and physical constraints that have bearing on poverty. Understanding of poverty prevalence in such contrasting situations presents an interesting sample of comparative study of poverty.

Table: 1.2 Numbers of Households below Poverty Line with landholding size

Land Holding Size	Kalahandi	Bhojpur	Chittoor
Landless	24(25)	31(47)	34(79)
< 2 acres	27(29)	16(25)	12(14)
2-5 acres	28(32)	0(17)	1(3)
5-10 acres	8(12)	0(7)	1(1)
> 10 acres	2(2)	0(4)	0(3)
Total	89(100)	47(100)	48(100)

Figure in parenthesis shows a number of households

Source: Primary data collected from household survey.

Table: 1.2(A) Incidence of Poverty 1973-74 to 1999-2000

People below Poverty Line (%)

States	1973-74	1977-78	1983-84	1993-94	1999-2000
Orissa	66.18	70.07	65.29	48.56	47.15
Bihar	61.91	61.55	62.22	54.96	42.60
Andhra Pradesh	48.86	39.31	28.91	22.19	15.77
India	54.88	51.32	44.48	35.97	26.10

Source: Planning Commission (2002)

The **landholding pattern** in the three areas has one common factor in so far as the existence of a large section of landless households is concerned. However, the magnitude of landless varies enormously (25% in Kalahandi, 47% in Bhojpur and 79% in Chittoor in our sample). Though in Kalahandi there are less number of landless in our sample in comparison to Bhojpur and Chittoor, yet it has the highest number of households below poverty line (89% in Kalahandi, 47% in Bhojpur and 48% in Chittoor). Even the middle and big farmers are below poverty line despite having landholdings of the size 2-5 acres or 5-10 acres as they lack the infrastructure to cultivate the land. **Majority of the landless in Kalahandi are tribals.** Nearly half of the surveyed households are landless in Bhojpur and in Chittoor landless is as high as 79% and in both the districts they are **concentrated in OBCs and SCs.** For our analysis, thus land emerges as the most critical resource and land relations determine the nature and intensity of poverty.

The **social profile** of the three areas had distinct features. **Kalahandi had a large proportion of ST population** (75% of the sample). Both in Bhojpur and Chittoor the **SC and OBC population** has a considerable presence (36% SC and 39% OBC households of the sample in Bhojpur & 34% SC and 40% OBC households of the sample in Chittoor) and poverty is striking among them. Thus, the sample presents **insights into class, caste and ethnic dimensions of poverty** in the three regions together.

Our original consideration behind the choice of the three cases was based on the nature of anti-poverty initiatives taken in each area. This was largely vindicated in the course of our study. **Bhojpur has been a well-known area of land struggle** since 1930's and the naxalite movement since 1970's. Poverty persisted despite political struggle in Bhojpur. **Chittoor**, (home district of Chandrababu Naidu), sustained anti-poverty initiatives through **“Velugu” and “Janmabhoomi” programmes which were conducted through the TDP cadres together with the bureaucracy.** There has been an overall development in the area but poverty remains concentrated among the dalits and some OBC. Kalahandi has experienced neither the kind of political mobilization seen in Bhojpur nor the development initiative launched by the state government through the local agencies of the ruling party as in Chittoor. After Kalahandi attracted world attention for its recurrent famine-like conditions with occasional reports of sale of women and children, the Central Government launched a **bureaucratic initiative in the name of KBK (Kalahandi-**

Bolangir-Koraput) Long-Term Action Plan. In all the three cases there have been signs of economic growth but high magnitude of poverty persists in the area, especially among the adivasis, dalits, backwards and women. We have some interesting findings on this issue.

In the **scale of political mobilization and institutional activism**, the three areas present different pictures. Bhojpur is politically most volatile but has the least number of NGOs even though it has easy accessibility being only 60 kms from Patna, the State capital. Bihar had no panchayat elections till 2001. The previous one was held in 1978. Chittoor is accessible, the district headquarters being about 80 kms. from Tirupati (but B.N.Kandriga about 120 Km.). Andhra Pradesh has had panchayat elections at the level of Mandals. Notably it has very large number of NGOs. Kalahandi is in the remote area of Orissa, nearly 400 km from the State capital and about 150 kms from Raipur in Chhatisgarh, the nearest big town. Orissa has had regular panchayat elections and also there is a high degree of NGO activity.

The party confrontation in **Bhojpur between RJD, CPI (ML), Samata, Congress and BJP** dominates social and political life leaving little space for the NGOs. In **Chittoor, the TDP confronts the Congress** (Republican Party of India and BJP also have a presence). The TDP has brought in a lot of resources into the district, which it utilizes through its cadres in the Mandals and together with NGOs through the “Janmabhoomi” Programme and the Self-Help Groups. In Kalahandi the alternating ruling parties, namely Congress, BJD and BJP participate in the routine political process without focusing on the issue of poverty and drought in their election campaigns. However, each one of them takes advantage of the KBK resources for their respective political and personal interests. Kalahandi experiences neither, the intensity of party competition of Bhojpur nor the cadre mobilization at the grassroot as in Chittoor level.

Table 1.3: Survey Area: Important Indicators

	ITEMS	KALAHANDI	BHOJPUR	CHITTOOR
DEMOGRAPHY	Sex Ratio (Females per 1000 males) in the survey area	992	828	1041
	Total population in the 100 sampled households	498	817	451
	Total deaths in last two years (family number)	40	38	-
	Death Rate	4.01	2.33	-
	Total out migration	14	34	3
	Dependency ratio (age groups) Below 15 and above 55	239:259 (48%)	353:464 (43%)	-
ECONOMIC	Average weekly expenditure on food /household in rupees.	154	280	-
	Total borrowings	59	24	80
	Total number of landless labourers	24	47	79
	Total number of BPL card holders	89	47	48
	Total number of pension card holders	59	42	47
	Number of household having pucca houses	03	42	10
	Number of household having saving accounts	21	43	00
SOCIAL	Nature of family:			
	• Joint	18	51	50
	• Nuclear	79	48	50
	• Extended	02	01	00
	Social category:			
	• SC	10	36	34
	• ST	75	00	06
	• OBC	13	39	40
	• GEN	02	25	20
	• WHH	08	01	00
	Religion:			
	• Hindus	98	92	95
• Muslims	00	06	05	
• Christians	00	00	00	
• Others	02	02	00	

	ITEMS	KALAHANDI	BHOJPUR	CHITTOOR
	Education:			
	• Illiterate (>5 yrs)	202	220	161
	• Primary	141	118	136
	• Middle	27	124	44
	• Secondary	30	137	44
	• Higher Secondary	02	30	02
	• Graduate	01	54	06
	• Postgraduate	00	10	02
	• Professionals	00	02	00
	• Others	02	21	07
	Enrolments in last 2 years	40	43	36
	Dropouts between 6-14 yrs.	15	14	05
HEALTH	Sources of drinking water:			
	• Well water (protected)	01	05	03
	• Well water (unprotected)	20	09	00
	• Hand pump	13	86	34
	• Piped water	24	00	59
	• Lake/river/canal/ponds etc	11	00	00
	• Mobile tanks	00	00	00
	• Tube wells	29	00	01
	Common diseases in the village	Malaria, T.B, Polio	-	Malaria, Typhoid
	Status of child birth:			
• Low birth weight	37	14	08	
• Normal	41	71	36	
• Healthy	03	06	52	
• Still born	01	00	00	
• Premature	00	00	01	
Child immunization:				
• BCG	67	70	04	
• DPT	67	63	05	
• Polio	71	87	75	

Source: Primary Survey Data

1.2 METHODOLOGY

We selected 100 households in each district-17 to 31 households from a village, which formed 10% of the total households in the village, 5% in case of a big village in Bhojpur (Annexure III). The sample was purposive in terms of a) distance from a major town, b) extent of irrigation, c) natural resources, d) landholding size and e) SC, ST and OBC population. While selecting the districts and the villages, the available information on the operation of anti-poverty programmes was taken into consideration. We specifically looked at programmes of poverty alleviation by the governments and panchayats in terms of their impact on lower castes, poor peasants and landless households with special attention to women among these categories. We looked at the role played by local institutions in the current situation.

Structured questionnaires were administered to generate information related to the perception of poverty eradication programmes among the rural people (Annexure IV). Through our questionnaires, we have constructed the profile of poverty from the perceptions of the rural people. We have tried to analyze that in reference to the macro-picture at the block and district level presented by the government data. The survey was conducted during the period from October 2002 to March 2003.

Our methodology by and large is based on social survey of households. The quantitative data is collected on the basis of the structured questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of 53 questions with many sub sections. It focused on various important determinants of measuring poverty such as education, health, landholdings, assets, employment, income, consumption expenditure, savings, indebtedness, migration etc. Besides it also touches upon the elements of human and social development and political affiliations and preferences of the respondents. In addition to the quantitative data, our methodology is based on qualitative data collected on the basis of ethnographic research, unstructured interviews and group discussions with government officials, public in general, the social activists, political party members, staff and members of NGOs, members of the PRIs and experienced informants at all levels – district, block and panchayat/village level.

These are some limitations of our study. Firstly, the sample size of 100 households from the four villages in each of the three districts is rather small though statistically permissible as it normally represented 10% of the households of a village and 5% in case of a large village. Our sampling procedure was partly purposive to take representative samples of landholding classes and groups. In actual practice however, we discovered some deviation from this norm. In the analysis of data this has been pointed out in respective places. Secondly, we did not have the chance to repeat the survey after a gap of time. Thus, there was no opportunity to verify the data and observe the changes in the situation. Thirdly, the comparative exercise no doubt presented interesting commonalities and differences, but the overall characteristics of each situation determined the orientation of the local study namely administrative initiative in Kalahandi, agrarian struggle in Bhojpur and party-state intervention in Chittoor.

Despite these limitations the comparative findings have been extremely valuable, especially when poverty discourse faces new questions in the face of globalization.

1.3 POVERTY DISCOURSE AT A TURNING POINT

Even though this study does not focus on definition of poverty or measurement of poverty, it is necessary to locate our study in the context of the evolving discourse on poverty. Conceptualizing poverty as lack of access to basic human needs has been the common thread in the national and international policy documents. But the discourse has gone through **three phases** associated successively with the concepts of **Income Poverty, Human Poverty and Poverty as denial of Human Rights** .

During the first phase the focus was on minimum food requirements for human subsistence; hence, the calorie based identification of the poor and the head count ratio which the Planning Commission has followed. Its use of minimum consumption expenditure anchored in an average (food) energy adequacy norm of 2400 and 2100 kilo calories for rural and urban people per capita per day has put the focus on income is poverty.(NHDR 2001 p.38) What kind of income can ensure access to minimum level of food varies from State to State. In case of Orissa for example an annual household income of Rs 12,000/- for urban areas and Rs 11,000 for rural areas. Poverty line was determined

in each State keeping the required income for subsistence in view. Thus, the concept of income poverty remains the norm for measurement of poverty in most policy documents.

In the second phase when the UNDP launched the discourse in Human Development in 1990 the concept of measurement of poverty underwent major re-conceptualization. Basic human requirements were now measured in term of life expectancy, literacy, and IMR to be further extended in a comprehensive perspective in the late 1990s. Mahbub ul Haq sharply distinguished between **economic growth** which focussed exclusively on income on the one hand and **human development** which embraced “enlargement of human choices – economic, social, cultural or political. (Haq 1996) Amartya Sen’s stress on ‘capability building’ based on the concept of development as freedom forcefully articulated this line of thinking. (Sen 2001)

Those human conditions, which resulted in positive achievements in this respect were now brought to the definition of poverty. Income poverty gave way to the concept of human poverty. This conceptual advance converged with another intellectual trend regarding the meaning of security. While traditional notion of security had emphasized on military aspects, new elements were added with equal seriousness, such as economic and environmental security and all these leading towards a new concept of human security. For guaranteeing human security, literacy, shelter and employment were considered as basic necessities.

This is undoubtedly, an important extension of the understanding of poverty in terms of its original focus on food subsistence. A multi-dimensional notion of dignified human existence now entered the poverty discourse with three components composing it namely – material condition, political condition and cultural conditions of basic human life.

Even though human poverty became the reference point for policy- makers, income poverty remained the practical tool for identifying targets. The UNDP adopted those below US dollar 1 a day as being in **absolute poverty** and those with less than 2 dollars a day on being in poverty. At the time of the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals a priority was fixed to reduce by half in 15 years the number of people living in “absolute poverty”. (UN 2000) Thus a distinction was made between absolute poverty

and poverty. In fact, this showed the helplessness and the admission of defeat on the part of the policy makers worldwide to take poverty as one serious line, below which everybody needs to be helped to cross that line.

While the global discourse on poverty has helped national and local policy makers to relate income poverty to dimensions of human poverty, still, income poverty has dominated the thinking of the administrators and political elite at all levels. The concept of the **poverty line** has become the mythical “Lakshman Rekha” in reverse of all development policies in India. Below poverty line (BPL) has entered the common parlance of rural India in every language, besides being the standard policy marker for the central as well as the State government. Rural development policies, credit policies, housing and other employment related policies identify targets in terms of BPL and APL (Above Poverty Line).

However, the Planning Commission initiative to have a National Human Development Report for India and recently, also for a number of States has brought into focus a special endeavor to relate income poverty with human poverty. Attention is drawn to specific issues of health, education and ‘governance’ as well as some social indicators. In practice however, at the ground level they remain separate. **Human Development perspective is yet to become the shared understanding of the state functionaries of India.**

At the onset of the 21st century, the poverty discourse necessarily got integrated not only with the human development discourse but also more importantly with human rights discourse. The UNESCO has declared that “Poverty is a violation of human rights”. This reflected the discourse of the radical social movements all over the world that poverty eradication has to be part of the fulfillment of human rights by every regime. As Pierre Sane declared, “As long as we consider poverty as a quantitative, natural deficit to be made up, the political will to reduce it will not be energized. Poverty will only cease when it is recognized as a violation of human rights and as such, abolished....Fundamentally, poverty is not a standard of living or even certain kinds of living conditions: it is at once the cause and the effect of the total or partial denial of human rights.” (Sane 2003)

Much of the violence in third world countryside and tribal areas are connected with pursuit of such basic human rights as food security, shelter and land rights as well as rights over local resources and safeguards for cultural identity. To underline the expanding meaning of human rights it is common to find the use of the term **people's right**. (Mohanty 2002). The human rights approach represents the third phase of the poverty discourse which takes it to a new level. People's right perspective takes both individual and groups as its reference points. It comprises of civil liberties and as well as socio-economic and cultural rights within its preview. Above all, it defines **rights as political affirmation in course of struggle** and therefore proposes re-articulation of rights in reference to both state as well as the historical process of social struggle. The traditional liberal notion that defines rights as claims recognized by the state or law is considered too narrow in this context. From the peoples right vantage point the historical process and the socio-political causes of poverty arrive at the centre of the poverty discourse. What colonialism did to the process of disempowerment of local people to resources, and the role of class and caste structures in society in the issue of the landed and the landless become relevant to the study of poverty. Hence in the people's right perspective we take up issues of structure and politics. Politics because political power defends existing structures and poverty eradication that involves changing the agrarian structure and other socio-economic structures necessarily involves alteration of power structures. That is how we arrive at the structural political perspective.

From a structural political perspective, poverty can be defined as a **systemic deprivation of minimum human needs**. The nature of deprivation itself is put in a historical and structural perspective. What is the basic minimum for living a dignified human life would always be a point of debate at a given moment of history. The certain number of calories, a definite quantum of annual or daily income, and ranking of economic needs in terms of food, shelter, education and employment will continue to be debated. The manner of linking and quantifying the economic with social, cultural, environmental and political needs will always be a point of discussion. But structural conditions such as landlessness, lack of access to various forms of capital have to be brought to the poverty discourse. While Sen's perspective on "Entitlement and capability building" came close to this formulation, it fell short of a structural political perspective. It was in the right direction in defining poverty as lack of entitlement or absence of right to certain

conditions such as food, health and education. However, , it did not lead us to investigate as to why such rights were absent or denied.

The capacity building approach correctly highlights the basic significance of such human resources as health and education which are needed for employment, as well as increasing political participation. But there are instances where despite positive results in health and education, poverty and inequality persists as in parts of coastal Orissa. (Mohanty, 2002 Orissa Supercyclone: Politics and People) Hence, it is important for us to take up simultaneously issues of structure and issues of politics, the latter focusing on the affected people's political capacity for making demands through social movements, people's organizations and a variety of other means.

Thus, the present exercise is focused on assessing prevailing approaches to poverty eradication as they operate on the ground in three different areas of India. It takes into account the existing definitions underlying poverty eradication policies of the central and the State governments. It takes note of the prevailing method of preparing the lists of people Below Poverty Line. All this shows that high magnitude poverty persists in India as a whole and in some State severely. When we take up an investigation into land right and other structural issues in the sphere of relations of production in a framework of class, caste, ethnicity and gender the differentiated picture becomes even more glaring. In what sections of society has poverty been concentrated and who have benefited more out of the anti-poverty programmes become serious questions to study. In our samples these issues have been given salience.

This shift of approach has important implications for alternative strategies of poverty eradication. We first moved from the era of poverty eradication as a matter of charity by kings and temple establishments and the wealthy performing missionary activities for helping the poor at the calling of god, to an era of welfare state. We are still in the era of welfare state where state performs an important role in reduction of poverty. During the last 100 years in world history and 50 years of the history of the post-colonial countries, the rulers of these states performed these roles primarily for gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the poor. This was considered necessary to maintain the system and continue to be in power.

But there was an economic reason as well. Unless the poor acquire purchasing power the economy cannot grow steadily. Their demand will energise the economy as a whole creating an expanding market for manufactured goods and services produced by the entrepreneurs.

Currently the states of the third world are reconsidering the welfare framework under the pressures of the World Bank and IMF. On the one hand, the forces of globalization and liberalization insist that the states practice a strategy of fiscal discipline cutting down welfare functions of the state and reducing investment in education, health, housing and cutting down employment in public sector. On the other hand, the third world state confronts awakened masses of the poor, especially the agrarian and tribal poor who are more conscious of their human rights. They demand power to alter the present order so that they can overcome poverty and move in the direction of fuller human development.

The coming years will see intense struggle over these two trends on the transformation of the welfare state. One – cutting the welfare functions of the state, another demanding the state to play an active role in poverty eradication in response to people's demands. (Prabhat Patnaik, 1997, 2003)

While charity would continue to be relevant in any civilization in the form of social service and compassionate activity, it can never be a substitute for concrete policies by state, civil society groups and social movements. For the state there are many policy options. Welfare options today appear to be grossly inadequate. Often welfare policies have taken the form of relief measures in distress conditions, whether under natural calamity or routine distress. It should be noted that poverty eradication policies till today have been in the shape of relief policies. Most of the employment schemes and credit programmes and even the so called asset building schemes have the character of programmes to provide some immediate relief. A few of them may have been oriented towards capability building but on the ground their implementation has been meager (See Figure 1.I). At the current environment which demands focus on structural measures by the state, a strong force in the form of a techno – managerial state which is fast becoming the corporatist state is taking charge. This silicon leviathan armed with strong coercive tools seems to be less and less interested in land reforms or for that matter

redistributive structural measure. This is likely to generate more tensions in society. To avert that we need a new approach.

1.4 THE STRUCTURAL-POLITICAL APPROACH

In course of the first Kalahandi study in 1997-98, the DCRC team had formulated its understanding of socio-economic and political dimensions of poverty and formulated its *Structural-Political* approach to poverty eradication. Our analysis of the anti-poverty programmes brought us to believe that unless long-term measures are taken to provide access to productive resources to the poor, the anti-poverty programmes will have only marginal results. Thus, structural measures such as land reforms including giving land to the landless and making inputs available for cultivation, access to water and other forms of infrastructures are essential from this perspective. For bulk of the poor access to land, water, forest and infrastructure are primary steps for poverty eradication. Education, health and technology are other forms of capital that are equally important.

Even though such structural measures have been talked about in the past they have been only marginally incorporated in the anti-poverty programmes. Land reforms mainly meant implementing ceiling laws and symbolic distribution of land. In some States, however, protection of Tenant rights has yielded positive results. As far as water is concerned, irrigation projects have by and large favored the middle and the rich peasants.

Tribal people's access to forest resources has continued to shrink. Education and health facilities did expand but their commercialization and privatization in the recent years has adversely affected the poor and has been even worse for women. The only way to reverse these trends and pursue structural measures is to locate the political initiatives in the hands of the poor themselves. The existing political right to vote and formal delegation of some powers to the panchayats to work for the welfare of the rural people has proved to be grossly inadequate. Even though they provide valuable political opportunities for everybody including the poor, but they have worked in such a way that the alienation of people continues to grow. Rural development has some visible results but mostly in the form of a thin new stratum of beneficiaries who are part of the nexus between contractors, bureaucrats and politicians.

Poverty alleviation was, for long a relief activity of the welfare state. Later, it became part of the tension management framework of IRDP to meet the challenge of agrarian violence in rural India. Statutory Panchayat Raj was another major intervention. At the turn of the century micro-finance became the new mantra to give a feeling of capital ownership and possession of private poverty in the name of capacity building of the poor. From trickle-down theory to 'achieved-growth' and 'Market will take care', such assertions are far away from structural-political imperatives.

The poor people's resentment to the ongoing process manifests in the form of increasing violence, caste and ethnic conflicts, atrocities on women, distress migration and criminalization of society. Unless alternative political channels are created beyond the panchayats and NGOs, these trends will only be accentuated. Through people's committees at the village level, the landless and the poor peasants, dalits, adivasis and women can initiate structural measures and orient the institutions of state and civil society towards fulfilling their interests. That may lead to a long-term change in the situation. Thus, the poor can exercise their political right to initiate and monitor structural transformation in a substantive way. It would involve innovative organizations and people's movements, which would seize political initiatives for making poverty eradication a part of the larger process of social transformation (See Figure-1.II).

In sum, the structural-Political approach is located in the framework of people's rights. It envisages not only individual rights to land, etc, but also oppressed group's right to alter the production relations and secure right to land, and other structural conditions. The people's right perspective overcomes the individual-group dichotomy. It also sees social, political and economic rights in an interconnected framework. The structural conditions such as land relations, caste relations, gender relations, and ethnic relations are sought to be transformed in the direction of gender justice through political struggles.

This is the perspective with which we have looked at the poverty eradication experience in Kalahandi, Bhojpur and Chittoor. Before we move to the specific case studies, it is important to grasp the natural resource profile of the three regions and understand how their transformation and efficient utilization have been thwarted by the inequitous social structure.

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Appendix

Sampled Villages and Households

State: Orissa

District	Block	Village	No. of Households
Nuapada	Nuapada-Boden	Kirejhola	30
		Chikelchuan	<u>20</u>
		Total:	50
Kalahandi	Thuamul Rampur	Sapmundi	25
		Taragaon	<u>25</u>
		Total:	50

State: Bihar

District	Block	Village	No. of Households
Bhojpur	Barhara	Galchour	16
		Sinha	<u>28</u>
		Total:	44
	Sahar	Chouri	25
		Baruhi	<u>31</u>
		Total:	56

State: Andhra Pradesh

District	Mandal	Village	No. of Households
Chittoor	Pakala	Chinnagorpadu	25
		Balamvaripalli	25
	Gangavaram	Bommanapalli	25
		Buchinaidu	<u>25</u>
	Total:		100

Households selected keeping in view:

- a) Extent of irrigation
- b) Location/distance from a major town
- c) natural resources
- d) landholding size and
- e) SC ST and OBC population.

Major Findings and Recommendations

7.1 Land and Poverty

The findings of the study have been clearly stated and explained in the various chapters. When we look at them together, the most striking point that emerges is the relationship between land and poverty. The institutions of the state especially the local institutions have failed to alter this structural condition adequately. The fieldwork in the three areas substantiated this finding. As many as **96% of the landless in Kalahandi, 65% in Bhojpur and 43% in Chittoor are below poverty line**. As much as 93% of those having less than 2 acres in Kalahandi, 64% in Bhojpur and 92% in Chittoor are BPL (See Table-1.1).

It is noticeable that even though 79 out of 100 households in Chittoor are landless in our sample only 34 of them they are below poverty line. The explanation for the rest of the household being above the poverty line can be found in the fact that they have access to other sources of livelihood. Bulk of them gets work as agricultural labourers (See Table 7.2). Many of them have livestock. (Table 5.16). This shows that the landholding pattern is skewed and some people have enough land for productive agricultural activity to employ wage labours. The upper backward castes and some upper castes own this land. At the same time due to micro credit and other state programmes some assets have been made available to the landless in terms of cattle and other livestock. Thus, the Chittoor experience presents a model under which agricultural development and rural development policies have uplifted the status of the many landless households. But it consolidates social inequality in the process because the lower castes benefit only marginally out of these programmes. **If a natural resource management policy can create new infrastructures for agricultural development as well as dairy farming besides providing other resources of livelihood, then the landless and the poor can**

have autonomous sources of livelihood and would not depend on the landed upper castes.

In Bhojpur too, some landless also find some wage labour both in agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Many of them also earn as migrant workers. As against this all the landless in Kalahandi are poor because they do not have alternative sources of employment. The opportunities for agricultural labour are seasonal and the wages are low. Even the government programme such as '*food for work*' are for a limited period during the year and only a few get opportunity to work e.g. only 4 of the landless benefited from SGSY and 3 from EAS according to our survey in Kalahandi (See Table 3.23).

Those who have more than two acres are generally not below poverty line in Bhojpur or Chittoor. Whereas, in Kalahandi the situation is extremely severe. As many as 86% of those who own 2-5 acres of land and 67% in case of those with 5-10 acres of land are below poverty line. What is even more striking is that the two households surveyed in the sample in Kalahandi who have more than 10 acres of land are also below poverty line. The quality of land and the frequent drought condition along with lack of irrigation facilities may explain this situation.

7.2 Castes, Tribes and Poverty

As mentioned earlier, there is a direct relationship between land, caste, ethnicity and poverty. In Kalahandi, majority (79%) of the landless are from ST and 16% are from SC. In Bhojpur 53% of the landless are from SC and 43% are from OBC. In Chittoor, 35% of landless are from SC and 44% are from OBC. As for marginal farmers (less than 2 acres), STs in Kalahandi account for 72% of them and 19% are from SCs. In Bhojpur 40% of the small farmers are from SCs and 52% are from OBCs. In Chittoor, 38% of marginal farmers are SCs and 31% are from OBCs and 31% are from General Castes (See Table-7.1).

Table: 7.1 Social Categories and Landholdings

Category	Kalahandi		Bhojpur		Chittoor	
	Landless	< 2 acres	Landless	< 2 acres	Landless	< 2 acres
SC	4	5	25	10	28	6
ST	19	21	0	0	6	0
OBC	1	3	20	13	35	4
General	0	0	2	2	10	4
Total	24	29	47	25	79	14

Source: Primary data collected from household survey.

Poverty is concentrated among SC/ST and lower OBC, who also are mostly landless or poor farmers. Whereas in Kalahandi poverty is especially concentrated among STs and SCs. In Bhojpur and in Chittoor it is concentrated among SCs and OBCs. This section happens to be landless or marginal farmers. The three together represent much of the poverty stricken area of the country.

7.3 Gender and Poverty

Gender inequities are explicit in statistics on **food in-takes, health, literacy, landholding, employment, incomes earned (wages), consumption expenditure and migration in all the three districts of Kalahandi, Bhojpur and Chittoor.** Gender dimension of poverty explains the multi-dimensionality of the problems of poverty. Discrimination against women in terms of food-intakes cuts across regions, caste, and class in all the three districts. The survey reported that men take a disproportionately higher share of household food resources, at the expense of other members. Women and children get less than adult men and in fact less than what they need physiologically. The consequences of getting less are serious in households with insufficient assets. That explains the phenomenon of starvation deaths.

In terms of health facilities we found that the benefits of ante-natal care and post-natal care are insufficient in the three districts studied. Women are vulnerable to various diseases and health problems due to less nutritional in-takes as well as the nature of their

work especially agricultural work, which exposes them to particular health hazards. The percentage of illiterates is higher among women in all the three districts (65% in Kalahandi, 63% in Bhojpur and 59% in Chittoor). In Chittoor we find that school dropouts after the level of high school are much more in case of girls (See Figure 3.II, 4.II and 5.II)

Women are much more disadvantaged in their access to employment than men because of less job mobility due to their primary and sole responsibility of child care. Women play a considerable role in agriculture as well as agricultural operations like transplanting and weeding. But the irony is that both transplanting and weeding, which is largely based on women's energy is considered unskilled and less productive than men's work. Therefore, they are invariably paid lower wages as compared to men despite working for longer hours. (See Table 3.8, 4.8 and 5.8) In all the three districts, the women are paid less wages than men, but in case of Bhojpur, it was found that the wage of women is half that of men. In Barhara Rs. 40 to Rs 50 for men and Rs 20 to Rs 25 for women. In Sahar Rs 25 to Rs 30 for men and Rs 12 to Rs 15 for women. In Chittoor Rs 45 for men and Rs 35 for women and Rs 40 for men and Rs 25 for women in Kalahandi. Women are not recognized as farmers. In neither case did we observe women possessing land rights. It was interesting to note that there were 8 female headed households in Kalahandi in the sample. This was however, mostly due to the death or migration of the male member of the households. The women of these households did not own land and the economic burden as well as social burden on these women is much more. Though the various income generating activities in which the women are engaged under the SHGs have been of help to the poor women but their coverage is poor. The overall gender differentials in control over assets, employment and wage earnings together with illiteracy and poor health conditions exemplify the phenomenon of 'feminization of poverty'. Even though many schemes are specifically targeted to women they do not go far enough. Women's representation in panchayats has no doubt created greater awareness of women's condition in this regard but there are few evidences of structural changes to reverse the current trend.

7.4 Employment, Income and Poverty

Most of the landless households are engaged in agricultural labour (54% in Kalahandi, 43% in Bhojpur and 74% in Chittoor). Even the marginal farmers (<2 acres) are agricultural labourers (31% in Kalahandi and 35% in Bhojpur and 9% in Chittoor). In case of Kalahandi, even the small farmers (2-5 acres) are engaged in agricultural labour to some extent (31%) (See Table-7.2). However, in Bhojpur and Chittoor, none having 2 acres or more land are engaged in agricultural labour. In Bhojpur the provision of canal irrigation facilities has made the difference for the land owners (fig. 2.19), and tank and lift irrigation in Chittoor. This once again underlines the severity of the distress situation in Kalahandi.

Table: 7.2 Occupational Pattern

Size of Landholding	Kalahandi		Bhojpur		Chittoor	
	Agricultural Labourer	Cultivator	Agricultural Labourer	Cultivator	Agricultural Labourer	Cultivator
Landless	(24)14	0	(47)20	0	(79)74	4
< 2 acres	(27) 9	24	(25)11	4	(14)9	10
2-5 acres	(28)10	24	(17)0	10	(3)0	3
5-10 acres	(8)1	12	(7)0	7	(1)0	1
> 10 acres	(2)1	1	(4)0	3	0	2
Total	35	61	31	24	83	20

Source: Primary data collected from household survey.

Figures in the parentheses show the Total No. of households in each category.

Paradoxically, the number of owner cultivators in Kalahandi is higher in proportion than in Bhojpur and Chittoor. But the condition of land is so bad that it does not help them to earn a living out of it. Non-agricultural activities such as weaving, handicrafts, construction work provide some employment in Kalahandi but only for marginal income.

The average annual household income as well as per capita income of the landless is the lowest in Kalahandi (Rs. 1140/-), Bhojpur having a higher level (Rs. 1367/-) and Chittoor still higher (Rs. 1840/-). This is also true of the marginal farmers. In case of small

farmers, Bhojpur does better than Chittoor. But it seems to do still better in case of middle farmer. However, the number of middle farmer households in the sample is 12 in Kalahandi, 7 in Bhojpur and only 3 in Chittoor. It should be remembered that those below Rs. 11,000/- per year are considered to be under poverty line. The small and middle farmer's annual income in Kalahandi is much less than in Bhojpur. In case of Chittoor however they are comparable. As far as the large farmers with more than 10 acres of land are concerned the figure is too low in case of Kalahandi which can be explained by the fact that the two such cases in the sample have either underestimated their annual income or the land in the area has been chronically drought affected. In case of Chittoor the reason behind the marginal farmers having more income than small farmers is the fact that non-agricultural activities provide them additional income.

Table: 7.3 Average Annual Per Capita Income in Rupees

Land	Kalahandi	Bhojpur	Chittoor
Landless	1,140	1,367	1,840
< 2 acres	1,344	1,883	3,578
2-5 acres	2,883	3,259	3,162
5-10 acres	5,070	8,865	5,000
> 10 acres	1,691	20,264	10,143

Source: Primary data collected from household survey.

If the Chittoor situation gives a pointer towards non-agricultural activities providing sources of livelihood for the landless and the marginal farmers, the existing situation is not very encouraging. Engagement in household industry is as low as 7 in Bhojpur and 1 in Chittoor and none in Kalahandi. Government jobs account for 5 in Kalahandi, 4 in Chittoor. In Bhojpur however as many as 38 are employed in government jobs (See Table 3.8, 4.8 and 5.8). Bulk of the adult population works as labourers, 144 in Bhojpur and 225 in Chittoor. In Kalahandi only 75 are employed in such work, which shows that employment opportunities are extremely limited in Kalahandi despite many poverty alleviation programmes. On the other hand Chittoor presents more employment opportunities for the labourers. It should be noted that Bhojpur study area has almost twice the population of Chittoor, but has much less employed labour.

In terms of consumption expenditure on food and non-food items, we find that more than 50% of the households in Kalahandi spend less than 25% of their weekly income on food items in a week. The annual expenditure on non-food items is: approximately 3-5% of their income on medicines, 2-3% of their income on shelter, 2% of their income on education and 13-15% on clothes (landless spend only 8-9%). The expenses on clothes in all the three districts are more than that on medicine, shelter and education. (See Table-3.19 a and b, 4.19 a and b and 5.19 a and b). In Kalahandi, the expenses on clothes are mostly during the festival 'Nuakhai'. In Bhojpur, 44% households, concentrated among the landless, marginal and small farmers, spend 28% of their income on food-items. Annual expenditure on non-food items is: 4-5% on shelter and approximately 6-7% on clothes and 6-7% on education. Expenditure on medicine is however, 8%. In Chittoor too, 65% of the households also among the landless, marginal and small farmers spend only about 21% of their income on food items. On shelter only 20 families are spending i.e. Rs.80.50 per head per annum. On education and medicine the expenses are around Rs. 59.30 and Rs. 62.50 per capita annually.

We notice a peculiar picture of a landless household in Kalahandi earning Rs 4750/- per year and spending only about 1820/- per year for food. This certainly does not mean that the rest is saved for other non-food items. It only means that more than half of their earnings are spent on items such as debt serving and repayment of festival expenses, which are customary compulsions. A certain amount is necessarily spent on maintaining their shelter and for clothes and medicines. Thus only less than half of the overall income is available for consumption of food. This forces them to supplement their food need by collection of the forest produce, besides suffering periodic hunger and starvation unless they are able to avail credit. Thus, the minimum income that is absolutely needed for providing the calorie intake is not available to the poor. The weekly expenditure data shows enormous intensity of poverty. The range of the expenses given in the individual chapter does not alter the basic picture. The middle and large farmers spend almost double the amount on food than the landless, besides having money for other expenses.

7.5 Indebtedness

The indebtedness profile of the three areas has some specific characteristics. A total of 59 households in Kalahandi had taken loans including 7 in kind. 25 households in Bhojpur, all in cash and the number was much higher in Chittoor. The **higher borrowing in Chittoor** may indeed indicate the credit facilities provided by the state institutions through the mediation of the NGOs. Banks accounted for the largest number of borrowings even though money-lenders continued to be active to a significant extent. **In Kalahandi, the maximum borrowings are from private money-lenders** even though they charge more than 50% as monthly interest.

Among the borrowers, the landless accounted for 32% in Kalahandi, 33% in Bhojpur and 77% in Chittoor. (See Table 3.13, 4.13 and 5.13) Borrowing was also noticeable in small and marginal farmers. Out of 25 households who took loans in Bhojpur 17 availed credit from banks, showing a higher degree of consciousness and perhaps political mobilization. In Chittoor 49 out of 100 households took loans from banks and 29 out of 100 from money lenders. In Kalahandi 59 out of 100 households took loans out of whom only 3 took loans from banks and 23 from money lenders and 26 took micro credits from SHGs through NGOs. In Kalahandi failure of public credit institutions is glaring.

Bhojpur doesn't seem to present any evidence of SHG in this study area. In Chittoor however 8 cases reported SHG activity. In two of the studied villages in Chittoor, which are considered as developed "Velugu" does not operate. It is well known that in some parts of Andhra Pradesh SHG has been a successful experience thanks to the initiatives of various political groups. The fact that 117 cases of multiple borrowings were reported in Chittoor among the 100 households, (59 in Kalahandi and only 25 in Bhojpur) shows increased economic activities in the area. Such a situation presents a number of possibilities for livelihood sources. In Chittoor the sources of credit include relatives and neighbours to a significant extent, 31 whereas it is only 1 in Bhojpur and none in Kalahandi. It shows a mutual support syndrome, which can also be a catalytic element in course of poverty eradication. (See Table 3.12, 4.12 and 5.12)

7.6 Migration

The trends in migration are not the same in the three areas. In Kalahandi 14 members (12 males and 2 females) had migrated. **Majority of the migrants are from landless households.** Their destinations were Bargarh and Rourkela in Orissa and Raipur in Chattisgarh and not to very distant places. In case of Bhojpur it was much higher, 35 with 16 people going to Delhi, many also to Punjab, Gujarat, Kolkata, and Uttar Pradesh. Chittoor recorded only 3 migrants going to Bangalore, Hyderabad and Tirupati, others mostly commuted daily for paid work in the neighbouring areas (See 7.4). Whereas migration in Kalahandi is within the region in case of Bhojpur it goes in all direction with a large proportion going to Delhi and in Chittoor however it is in the periphery.

Table: 7.4 Migrations

District	Total Migration	Place of Migration(Number of Migrants)
Kalahandi	14 (M-12, F-2)	Bargarh(3), Rourkela(1), Patna(2), Andhra Pradesh(5), Raipur(2), Sambalpur(1)
Bhojpur	35(M-35, F-0)	Delhi(16), Punjab(2), Chennai(1), Gujrat(5), Uttar Pradesh(3), Madhya Pradesh(3), Kolkata(3), Jharkhand(1), Arunachal Pradesh(1)
Chittoor	3 (M-3, F-0)	Tirupati(1), Hyderabad(1), Bangalore(1)

Source: Primary data collected from household survey.

Even though high magnitude of poverty persists, it seems that employment of one kind or the other has been made available in Kalahandi itself and distress migration which was widely reported in 1980's and 1990's has been reduced. This result goes contrary to the general impression that distress migration persists in Kalahandi. It may also be because of the fact that our sample was drawn from tribal areas where traditionally migration is rare.

7.7 Literacy and Poverty

High degree of illiteracy and low educational status is common to all the three areas. In the four villages studied in **Kalahandi, 50% of the population is illiterate.** Majority of

them come from landless and marginal farmers. Only about a quarter of the population has gone beyond primary education and only five persons have gone beyond high school. **In Bhojpur, the situation is better.** Even though about 31% of the population surveyed is illiterate nearly half the population has obtained school education. About 100 persons have acquired education beyond high school. Even though political consciousness may have contributed to this situation, persistence of illiteracy to such an extent is noteworthy. In Chittoor too, as much as 40% of the population is illiterate and nearly a third have only primary education. Only 17 persons have gone for education beyond high school. **From upper castes, while 19 persons in Bhojpur and 20 persons in Chittoor are illiterate.** In Kalahandi the enrolment in Primary School has increased. Perhaps this is due to the introduction of Mid-Day meals but the dropout rate continues to be high.

7.8 Poverty, Local Institutions and the Political Process

Political participation seems to be significant in all three cases going by the responses from the sample areas. Bhojpur has the highest percentage of political participation followed by Chittoor and Kalahandi. Number of respondents who participate in election was 66, 85 and 90 in Kalahandi, Chittoor and Bhojpur respectively. Parties which are active in the respective areas were easily identified in our sample survey. Interestingly enough, only a small number of respondents said that they had participated in active movements- 7 in Kalahandi, 8 in Bhojpur and none in Chittoor. It seems that the ML movements of Telangana (Andhra Pradesh) did not have enough presence in the sample area at the time of the survey. It is also possible that respondents deliberately refrained from talking about their political involvement in movements.

Irrespective of the responses in our survey the political environment in each of these areas has significant implications. In Bhojpur land struggle has been the main political issue in electoral as well as non-electoral processes. The CPI (ML) liberation has been in the fore front of the poor peasant and landless labourers movements leading the seizure of illegally occupied common property land for payment of minimum wage and fighting against social oppression of dalits and women. This has led to confrontation with

landlords and their armed groups ranging from Ranbir Sena to many other senas identified with various upper castes. As the Bhojpur study shows the state has been often identified with the landlord interests in this contradiction between the peasant movements and the landlords. There has been however a social assertion of dalits and lower backward classes in the recent years. Still, it has not resulted in pursuing land reforms or providing new opportunities and other structural reforms. This has led to a deadlock involving the contending parties. However due to the challenge of the movements some programmes of poverty alleviation have been implemented in these areas more effectively than others.

Chittoor presents a political environment that is different from both Kalahandi and Bhojpur. The Chief Ministers own district, has been especially chosen for World Bank /DFID's development programmes. It has attracted special attention to show results of both the 'Velugu' and 'Janmabhoomi' programmes. The TDP cadres and the bureaucrats work in tandem to fulfill the targets. Indeed there have been clear indicators of reduction in poverty as per our data. But there are important questions which arise.

The first set of questions relate to democratization and local institutions. The anti – poverty programmes are implemented only formally though the Mandal machineries through the panchayat system. The Mandals do not have the decision making power in any substantial way. The programmes are implemented mainly through the stake holders associations, like, the Water Users Associations for e.g. (Pani Panchayat) in some areas would be receiving funds for irrigation facilities. Vana Samrakshana Samiti (VSS) or Forest Preservation Committee looks after afforestation. Village Education Committee (VEC) looks after education and Mothers Committee looks after Aganwadi and ICDS. Watershed Development Committee constructs check dams etc.

These are no doubt important ways of involving civil society in economic development. But they are likely to be dominated by local interest groups particularly of upper class and upper castes and less subjected to control and supervision by democratic panchayats. Thus, the Chittoor framework of implementing rural development programmes through

the Party, Bureaucracy and Stake holders Association may infact consolidate the local power structure. The fact that poverty is reduced but concentrated among SC and OBCs in Chittoor can be explained in that context.

Kalahandi has neither the experience of political movement of Bhojpur nor the intensive party mobilisation as in Andhra. Even though PWG (People's War Group) presence has not been conspicuous in Chittoor as in other parts of Andhra, still the PWG challenge as a whole puts the state machinery on alert in implementing development projects.

After all both N.T. Ramarao and Chandra Babu Naidu, always claimed that they were committed to eradicating poverty and fulfilling the basic human rights of peasants and tribal and on that basis invited the naxalites to 'lay down' arms and join the main stream. At the same time there have been evidences in the different parts of the country showing that certain areas are neglected by the state governments because people of that area appear to be sympathetic to the naxalite groups.

The centrally initiated KBK programme has been mainly implemented by the administrative machinery with only marginal changes in the situation on the ground. That there is no local pressure or mobilization of political parties on issue of poverty can be explained in terms of the nature of the socio-economic and political environment in Orissa. Orissa has a political economy characterized by continuous exploitation of its natural resources and cheap labour for metropolitan capitalist development without providing adequate sources of livelihood to the local people. This has continued from colonial times till today. This process has produced an upper caste, middle class, which has emerged from an underdeveloped agrarian economy and which continues to serve the existing system. The permanent settlement areas created the stronghold of the landlord system and the princely state areas maintained parallel Gountia, Jagirdari and other intermediary systems. The social influences and political power of these elites were never completely eliminated in independent India.

The new institutional arrangements have not changed this socio-political environment in Orissa. Over half of the respondents recorded their involvement in Panchayat election

process in Kalahandi, However they said that their interest was not represented in Palli Sabha meetings. 66% of them cast their vote in the Panchayat elections of 2001 in Kalahandi. The rate of participation was 90% in Bhojpur and was as high as 97% in Chittoor's Mandal elections. Participation in Gram Sabha/Palli Sabha meetings was the lowest in Bhojpur indicating that these meetings are not considered important by the volatile political groups. In Kalahandi, nearly half the respondents said that they participated in the Palli Sabha meetings. The rate of participation was as high as 75% in Chittoor where the Janmabhoomi Programme and the active organization of the Telugudesam cadres may have led to a high turn out in Gram Sabha meetings. Though they attended the meetings, majority of the respondents did not participate in the discussion in all the three districts.

The Sarpanch is a crucial office in contemporary India at the grassroot level. He/She often holds this as the first office in a political career. This office is the fulcrum of party politics on the one hand and development activity in the village on the other. We looked at the role of Sarpanch in poverty eradication. Our general finding is that anti-poverty programmes do not figure prominently in the consciousness of the Sarpanch. He/She does bring projects to his/her village but it is through negotiation with the bureaucracy and higher political leadership. There is no evidence of his/her initiating people's planning at the grassroot level. Asked whether the Sarpanch visited their village during the last one year, less than 10% in Kalahandi, around 60% in Bhojpur and 80% in Chittoor responded affirmatively. In case of Chittoor, this may be due to more funds and more political mobilization under Chandra Babu Naidu's regime. However in some parts of each state there are instances of highly motivated sarpanches who have emerged as autonomous forces of change even though such cases did not figure in our area of study. Such catalytic sarpanches including women sarpanches have fought for the interests of their areas especially for the poor people.

Our general finding is that the political parties have other preoccupations than poverty eradication. Poverty and drought have never been an issue in Kalahandi elections. In Bhojpur, even though there had been land struggles in the past and periodic struggles for

higher wages even now, under CPI(ML) (Liberation) and other groups, alternative policies have not been suggested by any of the parties that would respond to the specific needs of the SC and OBC population in a substantial way. In Chittoor, the State government and the ruling party's cadre dominate the scene in the specific Janmabhoomi Programme, but it did not focus on the specific needs of the Scheduled Caste population. In the sample area in Kalahandi the support for Congress seems to have declined among the ST while BJD is leading among the parties followed by BJP. The support base for the different political parties is mainly because of caste and not for representing the interest of the poor across caste lines. In Bhojpur also, the support base for different political parties is caste (Majority of the OBCs voted for RJD, the SCs voted for CPI(ML) (Liberation) and the general (upper) caste voted for BJP). Responses to this question in Chittoor sample were too few to generalize. (See Figure 3.3, 4.3 and 5.3).

7.9 The Role of NGO's

NGOs have a significant presence, both in Kalahandi and Chittoor. In Kalahandi, 25 out of 100 households said that they had been beneficiaries of NGOs mostly in securing loans (See Table 3.24). In Chittoor only 12 said so. In Bhojpur none of the respondents was a beneficiary of any NGO conducted activity. In fact, there is only one NGO called 'Bhor' active in the area. Out of 25 beneficiaries in Kalahandi, 13 were from landless households. As for Self Help Groups, there seems to have been a clear trend in its expansion in Kalahandi and Chittoor, but the total coverage of families has been meager (See Table 3.23, 4.23, 5.23). SHGs in Kalahandi undertook various income generating activities such as broom, jute rope, leaf-plate making and bamboo work besides the collection of minor forest produce. In Chittoor it included additional trades. They are important channels of providing micro credit to the rural households. In Kalahandi both landless and the landed availed them- 11 landless households, 14 marginal farmers and 11 middle farmers. The effect of the SHGs on the totality of the rural situation remains marginal because it does not provide sustainable livelihood.

7.10 Resources and Vulnerability to Poverty

The availability of biophysical resources such as productive land surface and ground water, forests and its products, minerals and energy, determine a region's resource strength. The natural resources become useful for human beings only through their restrictive exploitation, sustainable use and open accessibility. It is the poor who are both victims and agent of environmental damage. Vulnerability is a pervasive socio-economic condition; it is the reason why the poor and disadvantaged are the predominant victims. The day-to-day vulnerable conditions comprising marginalization, poverty and deprivation is the context and outcome of vulnerability. Some of the major factors to vulnerability are social class and marginalization, illiteracy, political culture, government actions and social policies. Access to environmental capital is an essential condition for poverty alleviation and reduction in the rural context.

Land holding size is observed to have a positive relation with the terrain type, productivity and irrigation in both Kalahandi and Bhojpur. This relationship is truer in Kalahandi as compared to Bhojpur. It can be observed that size of land holding and its type is a constraint to agricultural development. In case of Bhojpur land productivity is more with higher size of land holding whereas land holding sizes do not have much bearing on productivity in Kalahandi. In case of Bhojpur it can be inferred that big farmers have more access to the infrastructural facilities and consequently they possess large extent of irrigated land whereas the small and marginal farmers are lacking the access to infrastructure. It is also observed that the level of poverty varies with the size of land holdings. In case of Kalahandi household possessing land above 5 acres also have BPL card, possibly due to prolonged drought condition and food scarcity. Landless and small farmers are more in all the districts, which explains the relation between poverty and land ownership. The per capita income is having a positive relation with the size of land holding.

Our field data in case of Chittoor show an overwhelming proportion of landless households. In case of Bhojpur 47% of the household belong to the landless class. Thus,

we can say that the landless and marginal farmers are more than the big farmers. In Kalahandi also number of small and marginal farmers is more than the big farmers.

This project presents a Composite Vulnerability Index (CVI) taking into account the Natural Resource conditions as well as the socio-economic conditions whose deprivation makes various areas and groups vulnerable to poverty and distress. Grass root planning for poverty eradication has to take into account the Composite Vulnerability Index in making concrete plans.

Our conclusion regarding access to resources (physical and human) and vulnerability to poverty reveals that Natural resource endowment and even its variety alone do not translate into economic growth unless accompanied with the development and access to socioeconomic and physical infrastructure. Absence of an essential resource, like water and lack of its proper management, undermines the potential use of other available resources that influence rural poverty. Prevalence of natural hazards like drought (e.g. Kalahandi) and floods (e.g. Bhojpur) have bearing on poverty despite the endowment of a good natural resource base. Vulnerability to poverty is higher in less varied resource base regions. Access to ownership of land resource is the most critical element in affecting the poverty syndrome. Areas with less physical vulnerability are relatively less prone to poverty prevalence. Declining common property resources, restricted rights to their access and changing ownership to influential groups makes marginal communities vulnerable to poverty and often leads to outbreak of violence.

7.11 Recommendations

In the light of the above discussions we make the following recommendations:

1. Because landlessness is the major cause of poverty *land reforms* needs to be treated as a major priority. Land Reforms should involve
 - *Distribution of ceiling surplus and government reclaimed land.*

- ***Protection of land*** of tenants and sharecroppers from arbitrary eviction and ***assurance of tenancy rights*** from generation to generation by providing legally recorded tenancy.
 - ***Registration of land rights*** both locally and centrally at State headquarters and availability of land record on computer for verification and adjudication with transparency.
 - ***Strict implementation of law governing prevention of alienation of tribal land*** and provision of support to tribals in distress who are often forced to sell and mortgage their land to repay loans to meet festival expenses, marriage expenses and other essential needs.
 - ***Women should be guaranteed succession rights and security of land tenure*** and should not only be recognized as farmers but also should be ***provided with the means of improved production*** which requires structural changes.
 - ***Maintenance of common property resources*** such as common land of the village, the village ponds, grazing land and forest area.
2. ***Land Development for economic viability*** has to be a priority. Each and every poverty stricken region should be surveyed from the perspective of ***Natural Resource Development*** and social profile so that plans can be formulated considering the soil condition, water availability and types of cropping pattern and the required technological inputs keeping in view the needs of dalits, adivasis, women and landless etc. should be planned.
3. Considering the Chittoor experience and possibilities which exists in Kalahandi and Bhojpur a serious ***planning*** must be undertaken for ***agricultural and non agricultural activities***. Agriculture has to be understood as more than grain production even though a certain quantity of grain must be produced under planning.
4. ***Rural economy*** has to be ***reconceptualised*** as more than agricultural economy involving agriculture as well as rural industries based on agriculture and forest,

commerce and many other production activities both of traditional and modern types. Thus the sources of employment need to be diversified in the rural economy itself.

5. The area planning has to be based on three considerations :

- **Composite Vulnerability Index** of the area.
- **Right to resources** which would mean right to land, water, forests, education, health, finance facilities and employment etc.(See Fig.2)
- The **concerned people** are **empowered to make plans** for the development of the area, **monitoring the implementation** and pressurize all government institutions and civil society groups, corporations and entrepreneurs, national and international agencies to respect their plans.

6. For the purpose of making grassroot plans a **people's committee** may be formed consisting of landless, small and marginal farmers, SC / ST and OBCs, half of them being women in order to ensure that their development plans actually help reduce poverty that is concentrated in these groups and enhance the realization of their rights.

7. All the interventions made by the institutions of state, the panchayats as well as NGOs and others have a definite role in the development process and poverty eradication. Our project proposes the concept of PDO (People's Democratic Organisation) to link these agencies with the suffering people themselves who are now conscious of their rights in the process of making concrete plans and achieving results.

PDOs are conceived as different from NGOs

- Firstly, A PDO unlike an NGO derives its support and resources from the people of the area where it works. The NGO on the other hand is an externally funded

professional organization, fulfilling the agenda of the donor organization and responsible to it.

- Secondly, the PDO is constantly assessed in terms of its goal achievements measured in terms of the realization of rights of the section of people with which it associates. An NGO on the other would, has to satisfy the criteria of implementation handed down from above and target fulfillment laid down by the donor organization.
- Thirdly, A PDO may go beyond the parameters of governance and institutional functioning of the panchayat, State and Central government agencies and associate with issues and action programmes that it may autonomously formulate in the field. On the other hand, an NGO is extremely careful about offending the local and national power structures or the ideologies and agenda of the donor agencies and their governments.

Hence, poverty eradication at this moment confronts a turning point both at discourse and at the level of politics on the ground. A Structural-Political approach applied to a situation understood in terms of concrete indicators identified by Composite Vulnerability Index pursued with the help of new catalysts like PDOs, working together with the existing state, corporate and civil society agencies may respond to the challenges of the contemporary world. Today poverty is indeed a violation of people's rights. Such a systematic deprivation of basic human needs requires a fresh and bold initiative.

7.12 CONCLUSION

The study clearly shows the limitations of the prevailing projects on poverty eradication which besides lacking a correct approach do not ensure substantive involvement of the local people in the process of planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and policies. In rural India access to land is key to socio-economic and political upliftment of the poor. This has to be part of a package that improves the quality of natural resources as well as human resources for securing the basic human rights of livelihood and social justice. This structural condition can be created only when local people themselves take political initiatives through innovative political organizations.

Instead of retreating from the welfare functions the democratic state has to play a positive role in the task of poverty eradication. The state agencies, Panchayats, NGOs, political parties, media and other social organizations have to be oriented to serve the poor with the PDOs playing the role of the catalyst. This is especially important when the top down approach has been strengthened under the forces of globalization.