

**FOOD INSECURITY IN THE MUSAHAR COMMUNITY IN BIHAR:
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

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DECLARATION


This is to certify that the dissertation titles "Food Insecurity in the Musahar Community in Bihar: A Sociological Study" is submitted to the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in partial fulfilment for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy is my original work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other University.

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TO
MY REVERED MUMMY AND PAPA
WHO HAVE MADE ME
WHAT I AM

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

MGNREGA:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NREGA:	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PDS:	Public Distribution System
MDM:	Mid Day Meal
ICDS:	Integrated Child Development Schemes
THR:	Take Home Ration
NDA:	National Democratic Alliance
NOAPS:	National Old age Pension Schemes
SC:	Schedule Caste
ST:	Schedule Tribe
OBC:	Other Backward Caste
EBC:	Extremely Backward Caste
HUNGaMA :	Hunger and Malnutrition
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
NFHS:	National Family Health Survey
BMI:	Body Mass Index
WFS:	World Food Summit
IFPRI:	International Food Policy Research Institute
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
MNC:	Multinational Corporations
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
WTO:	World Trade Organization
FCI:	Food Corporation of India
PRI:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
SHG:	Self-help Groups

NABARD:	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
KCC:	Kisan Credit Card
RIDF:	Rural Infrastructure Development Fund
MSP:	Minimum Support Price
AAY:	Antyodaya Anna Yojana
SGRY:	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
NFWP:	National Food for Work Programme
CACP:	Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices
FPS:	Fair Price Shops
TPDS:	Targeted Public Distribution System
BPL:	Below the Poverty Line
APL:	Above the Poverty Line
IHDS:	India Human Development Survey
NSS:	National Sample Survey
NFSA:	National Food Security Act
AWC:	Anganwadi Centres

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The history makes it abundantly clear that at no phase was human civilisation fully endowed with the dietary resources it needed. As the human knowledge progressed, many problems found solutions and, thanks to the recent innovations in the field of science and technology, the world today has reached a stage where the very source of natural production is subjected to artificial modifications. But none of these developments, however, seems to have brought us closer to solving the problem of feeding a large chunk of the world's poor, whose number is staggering at alarming rate. The irony, however, is that our modern practices are only pushing the food insecurity to its heights, rather than offering any solace. It is worth mentioning here that the world's food production is certainly increasing in absolute terms, but not to the extent required to meet the increasing levels of consumption. The latest estimates suggest that the modern world today has a dubious distinction of hosting Around 795 million undernourished people. A vast majority of them — 780 million to be specific — live in the developing world. To put it in other words, one in every nine people in the world does not have adequate food to conduct active and healthy life. It is at this crucial juncture that the present study intends to explore the problem of food insecurity among the most marginalised community in one of the most backward states of India.

A report on hunger and malnutrition in 112 districts across nine states of the country has revealed that 42.3 per cent children under the age of five years are underweight, 58.8 per cent are stunted and 11.4 per cent are “wasted”. The HUNGaMA (Hunger and Malnutrition) report covered 106 worst-performing districts as per the UNICEF child development index and six best-performing districts across three states. An interesting finding of the report was that while girls started with a nutritional advantage over boys, they lost out as they grew older, to the point that by the age of four, they had fallen behind.(HUNGaMA Survey Report-2011)

The nutritional status of children is strongly related to maternal nutritional status. Undernutrition is much more common for children of mothers whose body mass index is

below 18.5 than for children whose mothers are not underweight. All of the measures decrease steadily with an increase in the wealth index of the household. Children from households with a low standard of living are twice as likely to be undernourished as children from households with a high standard of living. (NFHS-3, 2005-06:272) The mean BMI for women age 15-49 in India is 20.5 (varying within the narrow range of 19-23 for the different groups shown in the table). Chronic energy deficiency is usually indicated by a BMI of less than 18.5. More than one-third (36 percent) of women have a BMI below 18.5, indicating a high prevalence of nutritional deficiency. Among women who are thin, almost half (45 percent) are moderately or severely thin (Ibid. p. 305).

Using household survey data from 1999, it is estimated that 17 per cent of people in India survive on less than 1600 kilo calories a day, a condition classified as being 'ultra-hungry' (Ahmed et al. 2007). Nutritionists suggest that people need 1600 kilocalories only to keep the body functions going even with almost no activity. If a person does nothing except lie down all day, he/she still needs 1600 kilocalories to sustain her body metabolism. If he/she eats less than that, he/she is starving. Therefore, the stark truth is that 17 per cent of our people grapple with starvation as an element of daily living.

The average intake of food by Indians is much lower than that in other countries. In 2004-05, Indians consumed an average per capita of 175.1 kg cereals annually, compared to 316 kg globally, and 288 kg in China. The consumption of meat and eggs is even lower at 5.3 kg and 1.8 kg respectively, compared to 40.2 kg and 9.7 kg globally (Chand, 2008). This can be partly explained by difference in cultural eating practices; however, India's poorest communities- the scheduled castes and tribes, and Muslims- do eat meat.

The World Food Summit in Rome in November 1996 invited the world's attention to the chronic problem of hunger and malnutrition as well as the potential for increasingly acute food shortage in South Asia. A widely accepted definition of food security was agreed upon at the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996, proclaiming: "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy

life.”¹ Although unable to fully comprehend the reality in a big way, this definition of Food Security for the first time brought about a dimensional change by rightly emphasizing the socio-political-and-cultural causal relationships that have a larger impact on the food security of a society. This, in turn, paves a way to understand the problem of food security altogether from a different perspective, crossing the historical hurdle of restricting the subject to mere economic analysis. As a consequence, this historic event provided an opportunity for the academicians to research on this prominent aspect of human life and suggest ways and means to improve the food scenario in the world. The present research gets its stimulus from the same line of thought and provocation. Its main objective is to try and understand the food security/insecurity as it exists rather than what is represented in the economic policy circles.

One of the less attractive features of the existing literature on food security, poverty, hunger and destitution is the set of preconceived notions, which dominated their methodologies (Swaminathan, 2004; Sen, 1981; Radhakrishna and Ravi, 2004; Loganathan and Sakthivel, 2009) Most of these studies, for instance, depict the concern of food security as something external to the individuals and communities who go hungry on daily basis. In the process of such analysis, they seem to be neglecting the core of the problem and disassociating the real from the normative.

Poor nutrition is a key outcome of food insecurity and has adverse impact on all groups of men/women/children. The impact of undernutrition can be transferred from women to their children because malnourished mothers have a higher risk of giving birth to low-birth weight children, as women whose own growth is stunted by malnutrition often do. Hence, maternal health and food insecurity are closely interconnected, and the harmful effects of hunger are passed from one generation to the next with malnourished mothers having low-weight babies who face a high risk of stunting during childhood. In a dialectical sense, this again leads to a reduced work and earning capacity of certain groups of adults who were born to ill fed mothers and puts them at a higher risk of giving birth to low-weight children themselves. Even children who are only moderately

¹<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM> as accessed on. 20.02.2010.

underweight have been found to be twice as likely to die of common infectious diseases as children who are better nourished. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that of the 90million children under age five—one in seven childrenworldwide—remain underweight. Being underweightputs children at greater risk of dying from commoninfections, increases the frequency and severity of suchinfections and contributes to delayed recovery. Poornutrition in the first 1,000 days of life is also associatedwith impaired cognitive ability and reduced school andwork performance. Two regions account for nearly 90per cent of all underweight children in 2015—half live inSouthern Asia and one third in sub-Saharan Africa (The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015:22).

The Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action laid the foundations for diverse paths to a common objective - food security at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels.² In this regard, concerted action at all levels is overtly emphasized. Each nation is alerted to adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security. This is meant to be an appropriate strategy for a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies where coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential.

The most astounding aspect of food insecurity situation in India is that there is virtually no discussion of it outside specialized circles. Election manifestoes of all major political parties clearly reveal that basic needs of the people remain at the periphery. Analysing the democratic functioning in India, Jean Dreze(2004) points out that the Indian democracy is trapped in a vicious circle of exclusion and elitism.Since underprivileged sections of the population are excluded from active participation in democratic politics, their aspirations and priorities are often left unrepresented in public policies. The elitist orientation of public policy, in turn, perpetuates the deprivations (poverty, hunger,

²<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM>, accessed on 20.2.2010.

illiteracy, discrimination, etc), preventing people from participating in democratic politics and thereby disempowering them in the usual development regime.

Amartya Sen (1981) emphasises the fact that food insecurity is not so much because of lack of food availability, rather it is because of lack of exchange entitlement. While examining the economic, social and political relationship impacting food security, Sen writes that 'market forces can be seen as operating through a system of legal relations (ownership rights, contractual obligation, legal exchange, etc.). The law stands between food availability and food entitlement. Besides, for ensuring exchange entitlement, the role of the state is paramount and therefore Dreze and Sen highlighted state's role in 'growth-mediated security' (Dreze and Sen, 1989).

Like any social ill, food insecurity affects certain vulnerable communities more than others, thereby creating further inequality in a given society. The best instance is the implementation of various schemes world over to arrest the food insecurity faced by certain groups, and dismal outcome they bring out. In India for instance, it is often the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) members, together constituting almost one fourth of the total population, who suffer from chronic food insecurity.

It is largely because of their historic marginalization that members of these communities fall in the lowest rank of socio-economic ladder of society and are therefore unfavourably disposed towards access and entitlement to food. The members of these communities, more often than not, fall into lower economic classes and work as landless labourers, informal sector workers and are quite often excluded from the ambit of right to secure stable livelihood. The undernourishment and starvation of entire households and communities have a direct correlation with the processes of economic exclusion in the society.

It is at the above backdrop that the present research makes an attempt to undertake a sociological inquiry into the issues of food security/insecurity among the Musahar community in Bihar.

1.1: Social and Economic Background of Musahars in Bihar

The case of the musahars of Bihar, a largely landless caste referred to as the “dalits among dalits”, who continue to work as bonded labourers highlights the axiom that denial of development to certain groups has been an inexplicable part of the nation's culture of development. In explaining the dismal failure and collapse of many imaginative development schemes, it is the role of state-driven development paradigms led by local elites and former landlords that needs to be squarely addressed.

Hindi film ‘Manjhi The Mountain Man’, Directed by Ketan Mehtasquarely highlights the politics of caste and class relationship in India. Dashrath— the protagonist in the film— is born in Musahar community, one of the most marginalised social groups to have suffered every possible discrimination in the country, including the heinous form of untouchability. As a young child, Dashrath runs away from his village to escape the bondage labour destined for him and returns home after a gap of seven years when untouchability is declared illegal. On his return, Dashrath receives a warm welcome from none other than the village zamindar himself, but only as a short-lived celebration. The moment the zamindar comes to know that boy he is greeting is the son of one of his bonded labourers, he feels panicked instantly as if struck by a sudden shock.

Ketan Mehta’s graphic narration in his monumental film is nothing less than an extraordinary depiction of an ordinary life in Bihar. The portrayal on the screen syncs perfectly with the day-to-day practices religiously followed in one of the backward parts of India, a reality which often escapes a serious consideration. Most important of all, it reveals an epitome inherent in the developmental story of India.

Musahars in Bihar share their origin with the Kol tribe of Chhota Nagpur. They began to migrate to the paddy-growing plains of Bihar probably from the 12th century onwards, and have been the single largest source of agricultural labour in the region ever since. Of late, they also started migrating to Punjab during the harvest season. A good number of them are employed for breaking stones in nearby quarries. While some work as daily wage labourers in the neighbouring towns, others migrate to as far as Allahabad only to be employed in brick-kilns. They are largely concentrated in Gaya district, amounting to

around 17% of the scheduled castes who in turn constitute 25% of the total population there (Singh, 1999). According to the census 2011, the literacy rate among the Musahar community could reach only 6.88% (a mere 3.09% with respect to women among them). Socially considered "untouchables", musahars entered the Hindu caste fold around 300 years ago. Even now the majority of musahars live in makeshift huts or one-room mud-houses on lands they do not own.

Given their dismal living conditions and low social status, the Musahars are unquestionably considered as the most oppressed community, backward in all respects. The so-called progressive academic debates place them strategically either as subjects of the modern productive process or objects defined by the land relations in which they are located. This necessarily implies that the identity of the Musahars is imprisoned within the boundaries of bonded labour.

A common perception about Musahars, shared by the upper strata of villagers, is that they eat rats. Rats cannot be a substantive food for a large size population group like the Musahars except being occasionally available to them as supplementary meat.

In fact, rats are known accumulators of grains, which they cut from ripe crops and deposit in long tunnels that they dig extensively under crop-fields. Once the fields are harvested, the Musahars start working at locating rat-tunnels and digging out all the accumulated grain. This particular form of food gathering traditionally associated with Musahars seems to have long overshadowed the other forms they follow in equal measure, resulting in the others being almost entirely overlooked. For example, in Nagarnausa region they are found gathering onions in the post harvest season; in Bihar Sharif they gather 'leftover' potatoes after the harvest digging is over. During the dry months, they either fish for crabs and small fish in the wetlands or gather forest roots in jungles. Similarly paddy and wheat is reportedly swept over for gathering but this mode has also acquired some changes in the sense that not all of their 'harvest' is consumed - part of it is also sold. Interestingly, Musahars seem to have some inner drive for such food gathering practices, for in post-harvest periods they prefer extensive wandering for food gathering to any lucrative wage-work available for them otherwise (Bhushan, 2002:15-16).

Relying on the practice of rat-eating, Suresh Singh makes an attempt to trace the name of the community, “Musahar”, which he does not seem to be fully satisfied with. When our country had a vast forest coverage with a variety of flora and fauna, there were number of hunter tribes all over the country. The *Kakmara* and *Chidiamar* tribes belong to Midnapore. Similarly there were other tribes all over the country who killed rats and birds and hunted tigers. Those who hunted tigers were known as *Baghmara*. Those who killed elephants were known as *Hathimara*. So one of the conclusions scholars like Suresh Singh arrive at is that the terminological nomenclatures like this (Musahar in the present case) should not be taken to mean nothing more than the titles implied to denote the relationship between man and his immediate environment. The titles of this kind simply reflect the way of life lived in full-blown relationship with the nature. The Musahars can, therefore, be described as a group primarily involved in hunting and food gathering at some point in history. One can still find similar communities in the country even today. The hunters and food gatherers are said to constitute almost 10% of the population, besides another four per cent who are involved in catching birds and animals (Singh, 2002:137).

In a typical setup, Musahars live in villages without necessarily participating in the social milieu of the village. This social twist apart, Musahars are highly valued for such toughest labour intensive tasks as soil-cutting and land-levelling— the essential ingredients of agriculture — but are never accorded the status of agricultural workers, let alone being considered as part of the agrarian labour force. At best, they are only be considered an additional class to the village labour available at a cheaper wage for performing the toughest tasks. Musahars are also not seen to share the basic peasant ethos that innately believes in keeping grain-reserves as food security (grain stored enough for period extending from three months to two years, depending on the size of cultivation or sharecropping or supplemented through harvest time wages).

The present socio-economic-and-cultural status of Musahars seems to rely mainly on the location of their caste, occupation and place of their living, which historically acted as the fundamental signs of their identity. Today however, some of these signs are getting dislocated and are vanishing. Their previous identity as untouchables and rat-seekers is

shifting into the periphery. More visible today are issues of their survival, their economic and social aspirations, their demands and struggles for a better life. At the same time, this new image represents more of an aspiration, and less of an achieved entity (Sharma, 2002:39).

Musahars work as agricultural labourers for land holding castes and undertake weeding and harvesting work. Though their labour is as valuable as that of others, perhaps most wanted at times, the Musahars are always paid less than other agricultural workers. At the time of this researcher's field work, their daily wage was much below Rs.100/-, an average wage paid usually for other labourers. The nature of the labour work they are generally employed in is such that they get employment hardly for three months in a year.

As pointed earlier, a majority of Musahars work in the brick-kilns and earn Rs 120/- a day, but here too their incomes are relatively insignificant as none of them is skilled enough to be employed as a fireman— a highly specialised, well-paid job in the brick industry. In the lean agricultural season, Musahars migrate to other parts of the country traveling up to Delhi and Punjab where they work as casual labourers in construction industry and agricultural work earning not more than Rs 120/- to Rs 150/- a day, and barely manage their survival. It needs no reiteration that all these jobs are part of the unorganized and underpaid sectors. Consequently, it becomes almost impossible for members of the community to come out of the labour bondage they have been trapped in for generations together. The irony, however, also is that most of the men in Musahar community are addicted to alcohol, perhaps because of the hard labour they are supposed to engage in on daily basis.

Shri Dasrath Manjhi confesses that the Musahars have in the recent past started earning decent wages, but they spend their money for offering meat and taari (liquor) to their deity. In a conciliatory tone, He further asks his community, “the doctor would give you medicines for the money when you fall sick; .but what can the deity give you in return for Rs.10,000/- to Rs.12,000/- that you unsparingly throw on the offerings?” (Joshi, 2002:104)

The education system, the literacy mission and other developmental projects have not empowered people, perhaps in the absence of community participation. It seems that these development projects have not made any significant attempt to understand the culture and communicative patterns of this community. Orality is dominant mode of communication in marginal communities like the tribal. Many other forms of folk and traditional communication also exist. Except for KabirPanthis, not many have tried to established contacts with this community through such forms, though (Joshi, 2002: 104-105).

The community left behind tends to find itself at the tail end of all the government schemes. As one of the poorest groups havingno sustainable livelihood options whatsoever, facing the severe food insecurity, they should have been entitled to receive the maximum benefits of food schemes. But here,too, they are found to be at the receiving enddespite both the Union and State Governments implementing a multitude of schemes/programmes targeted at the marginalised groups.

Central and state governments have long been implementing several schemes for the socio-economic & cultural development of Scheduled castes. Certain sections of scheduled caste have been able to take the best advantage of these schemes and improve their living conditions, while a large number of others among them still remain socially and economically backward. The State Government after a careful thought conceptualized specific projects and earmarked special funds for the overall development of the most deprived sections within the Scheduled castes. State Govt. The State Mahadalit Commission constituted by the State Government in the year 2007 identified 18 of the 22 Dalit sub castes, including Musahar, Bhuiyan, Dom, and Nat as Maha Dalits. It is estimated that these Maha Dalits constitute 31 per cent of the Dalit population in the State. The other four Dalit castes, not classified as the Maha Dalits, include Paswan, Pasi, Dhobi and Chamar. These four groups constitute 69 per cent of the total Dalit population in the State.

Poverty is a major cause of food insecurity, making the sustainable progress in poverty eradication critical to improve access to food. A vast majority of the undernourished can neither produce nor afford to buy enough food for themselves and for their families.

Their inadequate access to means of production such as land, water, inputs, improved seeds and plants, appropriate technologies and farm credit is often a grave concern.

Poverty, hunger and malnutrition are some of the principal causes for accelerated migration from rural to urban areas in developing countries. These migrant workers suffer from hunger and malnutrition in their migrant land because they are often unable to avail the benefits of the existing programmes/schemes related to food security, partly because of their non-residential status and partly because of lack of voting rights which impairs them from getting any real support from the local political parties.

It is on the premise stated briefly above that the present study will make a sociological attempt to understand and explain theoretically, the problem of food insecurity in independent India. Before doing so, however, an attempt is made to understand different terms like food insecurity, famine, hunger and malnourishment/undernutrition.

1.2: Food Insecurity

The Rome declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action defined food security in unambiguous terms as, “when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.³ This definition of food security, which is comprehensive enough, brings out at least five aspects of food security for discussion:

- a) Food Security is as much a matter of physical access to food as it is of economic access or ‘entitlement’ to food;
- b) It relates to all the people, irrespective of their income levels, age, education, gender.
- c) Food has to be available to everyone at all times, be it a period of war, civil strife or any natural calamity;

³ World Food Summit, 13-17 November, 1996, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM> accessed on 20.02.2010.

d) Food has to be available in adequate quantities in line with the consumption preferences of the people;

e) Food has to be safe and nutritious so as to lead to a health and active life.

In the same spirit, the Planning Commission of India also defined food security as a situation where everyone has access, at all times, to food needed for an active and healthy life. Thus, the essential elements of food security are (a) adequate availability of food, (b) efficient distribution through trade and/or public distribution system, and (c) availability of adequate purchasing power in the hands of the people. Further the Planning Commission says, “The basic food security consists of, apart from policies to promote domestic foodgrain output, minimum support prices, procurement and storage, public distribution, maintenance of buffer stock and open market sales” (Jha, 2002:5160).

Swaminathan argues that “Sustainable food security involves strengthening the livelihood security of all members within a household by ensuring both physical & economic access to balanced diet, including the needed micro- nutrients, safe drinking water, environmental sanitation, basic health care and primary education” (Swaminathan, 2009).

The concept of food security can also be expressed at three different levels: national, household, and individual (intra-household). At the national level the meaning of food security is understood more in terms of physical availability and that too through domestic production rather than imports. At the household level, food security is viewed more in terms of economic access to food. It is presumed that food will always be physically available in the country. More important is the price at which it would be available, and whether the households have enough purchasing power to buy that food, i.e. whether they have economic access to it. At the individual or the intra household level, besides the ‘economic access’, ‘social entitlement’ to food also becomes an important issue. It is quite possible that the household as a whole has economic access to food, but the social set- up may be such that it discriminates against women or girl children or particular social groups in their ‘social entitlement’ to food.

1.3: Famine

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines famine as shortage of total food so extreme and protracted so as to result in widespread persisting hunger, notable emaciation in many of the affected population, and a considerable elevation of community death rate attributable at least in part to deaths from starvation (Sills, 1972:322).

A famine is usually “a well-defined event with a definite time span”, but it is rooted in the lives of people over the long term. It often tends to occur in premodern, colonized or third world societies, where ordinary hunger and poverty are considered ‘normal’ phenomena. The most common elements used in defining the famine include the mortality effects of famine, and inability of communities to gain access to food (most often manifested in high food grain prices). In other words, famine can also be defined as crises of ‘mortality’ and of ‘subsistence’ (Sami, 2002:2593).

Amartya Sen conceptualises famine as a sudden collapse in the entitlement to food of particular groups in society i.e. famine mortality results from a failure to be entitled to an endowment/exchange bundle with enough food to avoid starvation (Sen, 1981). The point being made here is that the suddenness of famine masks its continuity with chronic hunger, which may be specific or more pronounced among groups that are socially marginal or vulnerable.

Famine has many causes, which can broadly be divided into two categories: The first category relates to natural causes beyond human control, and the second one pertains to artificial causes within human control. Natural causes include drought, excessive rains and flood, unseasonably cold weather, typhoons and high winds, tidal waves, and plant diseases. They tend chiefly to reduce production of food and to destroy stocks. The artificial causes are commonly political and include warfare that involves siege or blockade; destruction of food stocks or growing grain; wartime strains on economies that diminish manpower, machines, or fertilizers, thus reducing cultivated acreage, yield, and production. Sometimes economic or demographic situations like prevalence of poverty including unemployment; peasant agriculture of the bare subsistence type; or

demographic high density concentration of the poor, can also turn out to be causes of famines (Sills, 1972:323).

The connection between famine mortality and chronic hunger was evidently clear to nineteenth century administrators. Writing about the Madras famine of 1876-78, W. Cornish, the then Sanitary Commissioner of Madras in British India observed: “the sickness and mortality (of famine) was almost entirely the result of chronic starvation” (Sami, 2002:2596).

Famines are always divisive phenomena. The victims typically come from the bottom layers of society - landless agricultural labourers, poor peasants and share-croppers, pastoralist nomads, urban destitutes, and so on. Contrary to statements that are sometimes made, there does not seem to have been a famine in which victims came from all classes of the society (Sen & Dreze, 1989:48).

1.4: Hunger

There are multiple ways of seeing hunger. The dictionary meaning of the term “discomfort or painful sensation caused by want of food” takes us in a particular and extremely narrow direction of a demand for ‘ending hunger’. the concern is not merely about making it possible to avoid that discomfort or pain (even though the suffering involved is often underestimated by people who have never really experienced this pain), but also to conquer food deprivation in general, seen in terms of its manifold consequences. These consequences include undernourishment, debilitation, fatigue, morbidity, and possibly mortality, with obvious effects on human well-being and productivity (Sen & Dreze, 1989:7).

Hunger can essentially be of two kinds: the first is overt (or raw) hunger, or the need to fill the belly every few hours. Overt hunger has to be addressed in a chronically underfed child. It is his or her primordial cry for food, or the “macronutrients” (calories and proteins), which provide energy. The second type of hunger is “hidden hunger” for micronutrients (e g, vitamins, iron, iodine, zinc, calcium) that are required in tiny amounts. Hidden hunger is not felt, recognized or voiced by the child or parents. The reason for this is that micronutrients deficiencies do not translate into pangs of hunger,

but into subtle changes in the way the child behaves. For instance, if the child is deficient in vitamin A, he or she will not be able to see properly at dusk (“night blindness”), and respiratory ailments may also occur. In severe Vitamin-A deficiency, the child may go totally blind. In the case of iron-deficiency anemia, the child will slow down both mentally and physically, perform poorly in school and experience chronic tiredness (Gopaldas, 2006:3671-74).

Hunger typologised above can also be categorised broadly into another two models: Acute hunger which is largely sensational, emotive and apparent; and Chronic hunger which is ‘insidious sabotage’ wrought on millions of children, women and men in several places around the globe. Many may not be ‘dying of hunger’ but they live their whole lives at the edge of hunger. It shows itself in malnutrition, illness and expectation of life that remains obstinately low (Jha, 2002:5159).

According to Millman and Kates, “hunger is simply an inadequacy in individual dietary intake relative to the kind and quantity of food required for growth, for activity, and for the maintenance of good health” (Millman and Kates, 1995:3). Millman and Kates try to understand hunger in various perspectives; prominent among these include: hunger as food system breakdown, hunger as entitlement failure; hunger as a hazard; population and production. They discuss scarcity of food at three levels: the bounded region, the household and the individual. First, they define food shortage as the insufficient availability of food within a bounded region. Second, they suggest that food scarcity is a condition in which a particular household cannot obtain food supplies adequate to meet the needs of all members given the customary pattern of allocation within that household. Third, food deprivation refers to the inadequacy of individual intake relative to individual need. In the final analysis, if there is no food deprivation there is no hunger. Food poverty generates hunger only to the extent to which it translates into the individual deprivation of some or all household members. Similarly, food shortage leads to hunger only if it first pushes certain household into food poverty and thus some individuals within these households into food deprivation.

According to Lappe, “the root cause of hunger is not a scarcity of food or land; it is a scarcity of democracy” (1998:3). Lappe opines that democracy should have everything to

do with hunger. Structures of democracy are such that people in them have a say in decisions that most affect their well being. Leadership can always be made accountable to the needs of the majority. Antidemocratic decision - making robs people of power over their lives at every level — family, village, national and international.

First, within the family women are responsible for growing at least half of the world's food. The resources women have to grow staple foods largely determine their family's nutritional well-being. But many women today are losing authority over land use as a result of the privatization of land ownership and a focus on export crops that began under colonialism. This dynamic within the family helps explain the growing hunger. Second at the village level in most of the countries, a consistent pattern emerges: fewer and fewer people control more and more farm and pasture land, and more people none at all. Third at the national level, these antidemocratic governments answer only to elites, lavishing them with credit, subsidies, and other assistance. At the fourth level, democracy is scarce—the international arena of commerce and finance. A handful of corporations dominate world trade in those commodities that are the livelihood of third world economies. Efforts by third world governments to bargain for higher commodity prices have repeatedly failed in the face of the pre-eminent power of the giant trading corporations and the government trade policies of the industrial countries (Lappe, 1998:4-5). Lappe also makes an attempt to conceptualise the antidemocratic roots of hunger, a link between the level of the individual, or the family to that of international commerce and finance (Ibid. p. 6).

The Global Hunger Index (2014:12) was developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and combines three indicators, each of which are given equal weight: 1) the proportion of undernourished persons as a percentage of the population, 2) the prevalence of underweight children under the age of five, and, 3) the occurrence of child mortality under the age of five. According to this index, India has shown a satisfactory progress in reducing maternal and child mortality over the past decade. In addition, India achieved a significant decrease in child underweight. There is, however, still much room for improvement. India now ranks 55th out of 76 countries, before Bangladesh and Pakistan, but still trails behind neighbouring Nepal (rank 44) and Sri Lanka (rank 39). Despite an improved 2014 Global Hunger Index ranking (55th), and

an upgrade from the “alarming” to the “serious” category, India continues to be a home to the highest number of chronically malnourished (stunted) children under five, Nearly every second child being found stunted (Ibid. p.32).

1.5: Malnourishment/undernutrition

Malnourishment denotes a deprivation of the basic aspect of well-being: the lack of freedom to lead a minimally healthy life. Malnutrition is a general term for a medical condition caused by an improper or inadequate diet and nutrition and has far-reaching consequences. According to the World Health Organisation, hunger and malnutrition are the single gravest threats to the world’s public health, and malnutrition is by far the biggest contributor to child mortality. The implications women’s malnutrition can have on human development are multiple and cumulative. For instance, maternal malnutrition tends to increase the risk of maternal mortality. Maternal iron deficiency anemia, which increases the risk of death of the mother at delivery, accounts for at least 20 percent of the maternal mortality (Jose and Navaneetham, 2008:61).⁴

There are two major criteria for examining malnutrition. The first is body mass index (BMI) and another is anthropometric measures. BMI which measures the ratio of weight to height (w/h) and below 18.5 BMI indicates undernutrition, referred to as chronic energy deficiency. In contrast, BMI above 25.0 and 30.0 refers to overweight and obesity respectively, which are also indicative of poor nutrition (Ibid. p.62).

Anthropometric measures, weight-for-age (wasted), height-for-age (stunted) and weight-for-height (underweight) are used for the assessment of nutritional deprivation among children. Stunted is an indicator of chronic deficiency, wasted is an indicator of acute undernutrition and underweight is a composite measure of both chronic and acute undernutrition (Radhakrishna and Ravi, 2004:671).

Since the time of Malthus, various new theories and approaches have developed for

⁴Iron deficiency anemia, one of the most widespread forms of women’s malnutrition in developing countries, is indicated usually by 11.9 grams/deciliter of haemoglobin in the blood. Haemoglobin below 9.0 and 7.0 gram/deciliter denotes moderate and severe anaemia, respectively (Jose and Navaneetham, 2008:62).

understanding the truly complex mechanisms and underlying causes of malnutrition. Most notable among the recent theorists on hunger, poverty and economic development is the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen whose breakthrough 1981 book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* goes beyond the Malthusian argument that lack of food production leads to hunger. He demonstrates that malnutrition (and even famine) is more related to problems of food distribution. A person's entitlements, according to Sen, are "commodity bundles that a person in society can command using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces," and malnourishment can then be described as a collapse of entitlements for a certain segment of society and the failure of the state to protect those entitlements (Sen, 1981:8).

The problem of chronic undernutrition is closely related not only to deficiency of food intake, but also to deprivation of other kinds, particularly those of education, healthcare, basic facilities, and social environment (including water supply, sanitary provisions, etc.). The effects of these deficiencies can be seen in such elementary features as low longevity and high morbidity, in addition to clinical undernutrition. While life expectancy at birth is more than 75 years in many of the prosperous countries of the world, the corresponding figure is estimated to be below 60 years in most poor countries, below 50 for a great many, and even below 40 years for some (Sen & Dreze, 1989:9).

Amartya Sen argues that such social and economic factors as declining wages, unemployment, rising food prices, and poor food-distribution systems lead to malnutrition, and in severe cases to famine (Sen, 1981). For Sen, "no matter how a famine is caused, methods of breaking it call for a large supply of food in the public distribution system. This applies not only to organizing rationing and control, but also to undertaking work programmes and other methods of increasing purchasing power for those hit by shifts in exchange entitlements in a general inflationary situation." This prescription holds equally true of chronic malnourishment.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the proportion of population that is undernourished in India has declined marginally from 25 percent in 1990-92 to 24 percent in 1998-2000 while the absolute number of malnourished persons has risen from 215.6 million to 233.3 million over the same period. India today accounts for 29 percent

of the hungry people in the world. There is ample evidence to show the persistence of chronic hunger and nutritional deprivation on mass scale in India (Swaminathan, 2003:58-59).

It is on the basis of the preliminary discussion briefly presented above that the present thesis draws its research questions. In particular, questions related to the worsening food insecurity in post-1991 India and how this scenario is principally different from the pre-1991; the innate relationship between globalisation and food insecurity; whether there are any systematic features embedded in globalization that led to mass-poverty and food insecurity in India in particular and other developing countries in general; the issues of various social groups which are more prone to food insecurity than others.

1.6: Research Questions

What are the sociological factors responsible for making dalits more vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition vis-à-vis rest of the community?

How is Musahar community positioned in relation to the institutional spaces of the state?

What is the level of awareness among Musahar community about the government schemes related to food security?

Why has the Public distribution System (PDS) not been able to ensure food security of most deprived community like Musahar?

How far PDS and other food security schemes are successful in providing food security to the most deprived communities of society in general and the Musahar in particular?

Apart from women, girl children, old age people and disabled, does occurrence of hunger have something to do with particular section of society like the Musahars?

Both in quantity and quality, what is the proportion of Musahar facing hunger vis-à-vis rest of dalits.

What are the specific dimensions and features of hunger and malnutrition prevalent in and among Musahars?

1.7: Research Objectives

To understand and explain the mundane socio-economic-and-cultural spaces that contributes to the systemic marginalization of dalit communities in general and Musahars in particular.

To find out the actual impact of various government welfare schemes and development programmes aimed at improving the livelihood conditions of dalits in general and the most marginalised among them (like Musahars) in particular.

To study the problem of unemployment, indebtedness and non-payment of minimum wages to the scheduled castes in the state of Bihar.

To conduct a sociologically driven, Comparative inquiry into the proportional disadvantages Musahars face vis-à-vis the rest of dalits.

To understand and explain the degree of accessibility/inaccessibility to the institutions of power/state the Musahar community has.

To find out the role of migration and the day-today impact it has on the food security/insecurity of musahar community.

1.8: Methodology

For the purposes of the present study, three villages, i.e., Lodipur, Gazipur and Brew of Akbarpur Block in Nawada District of Bihar have been surveyed intensely for a period of ten months. The researcher found out during the fieldwork that Musahars are largely engaged in the occupations of stonework, agriculture, brick making, etc. Despite the big urban talk on affirmative action by the state, very few members from the Musahar community seem to be getting into the public sector employment.

It is into this never explained terrain that the researcher ventured out with a strong determination to decipher the day-today realities of life through a sociological gaze. The present study had been largely successful in deploying the research techniques of sociology and social anthropology. An intense fieldwork grounded in the principles of

structural functionalism and other theoretical frameworks on development was taken up, and the analyses presented later in these pages are the result of such an enterprise.

Given the constraints of a limited time and a vast array of space to be covered, the present study used structured interview schedules to collect the experiential data from the residents outside the fieldwork location, and the selection of fieldwork locations was made using the stratified random sampling. This is in addition to the method of participant observation deployed effectively by the researcher as far as feasible. As an on-site learning, the open-ended questions were used in the interview schedule. Besides, the researcher also conducted open-ended conversations with certain respondents who were found to have been equipped with appropriate information. Given an indelible need to comprehend the social milieu of the field site, the researcher also went ahead and conducted the focused group discussions with the respondents. The field work had been carried using a multitude of research methods and techniques of data collection.

1.9: Organisation of the Study

Chapter 1: An Introductory Analysis — the chapter will provide a brief background to the study and the prime hypothetical intentions behind it. A short overview of the concepts, the problem area and a theoretical premise of the study is also presented as a forward to the study.

Chapter 2: Sociology of Development: Concepts and Approaches—the chapter has a detailed discussion on various developmental theories, with a particular focus on non-growth models dominant in sociology of development.

Chapter 3: Food Security in India—the chapter brings out a historical overview of the food insecurity in India throughout various phases up to the modern times.

Chapter 4: Food Insecurity in Bihar— the chapter sets out to examine the concerns of food insecurity in Bihar. The major areas of inquiry include structure and land reform, Agriculture and Food Security, measurement of the determinants of food security, Malnutrition, and evolution of food security schemes.

Chapter 5: Hungry Voices on the Ground: Lessons from the Field — the chapter will explain in detail the field setup, the methods of data collection, the researcher’s field work experiences and the analyses arrived thereunder. The empirical data obtained through the field work is presented in a systematic fashion conducive for theoretical inferences and analytical conclusions.

Chapter 6: Food Security in Musahar Community: A Critical Scrutiny in The Light of Theoretical Debates on Development —the chapter will analyse the impact of state policy on the social practices of Musahar community. An attempt is made to provide a comparative outlook of Musahars in relation to other social groups. Such dominant issues as: agricultural land ownership, starvation conditions among Musahars, the state of migration, the status of various schemes and programmes implemented by the State and Central Governments for the upliftment of poor and the marginalised are fully presented with rigorous analyses.

Chapter 7: From Sociology of Development to Sociology of Economic Life: Theorising Food Insecurity among the Musahar in Bihar — the chapter is in some sense a rigorous theoretical exercise to unravel the debates on the subfield of economic sociology or sociology of economics. The attempt is to draw specific references on hunger, deprivation and food insecurity discussed in the general theories of economic sociology, either implicitly or otherwise.

Chapter 8: ‘Conclusion’ — the chapter will summarise the study and suggest pertinent areas for future research.

Chapter 2

SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

Somewhere down the line, beginning roughly from the second half of the twentieth century, the project of development — both as a theoretical notion and as a practical guide — was built around a great optimism. The global experience over the last five decades, however, has a different tale to tell. Despite billions of dollars of money and precious time invested in the so-called developmental activities, many parts of the world today look far worse than they were fifty years ago. Hunger and disease inflicting almost the entire part of the African continent, food insecurity corroding the social fabric of South Asia (quite invisibly though), malnutrition, chronic hunger and drought, etc. are proof enough to say with empirical evidence that the much touted development model has failed miserably beyond doubt. This failure is now compelling the intellectual crowd, who made a dispassionate plea for the neo-liberal model of development in the first place, to turn the model into one of problem in itself rather than a solution to a problem it is supposed to address. One, therefore, supposes that the sooner this ideology is demythologized the better it would be. This becomes all the more important, perhaps, to counter the heightened tendency of elevating the myth of development to a state of natural law, objective reality and evolutionary logic.

Further unearthing of the current development model makes it crystal clear that it is often used as a hegemonic tool to dominate the global poor, to shape their destinations essentially in ways of western worldview and interests. The neoliberal development project currently in dominant practice today is indeed a symbolic representation of the imperial discourse brought back in a different structure after the decolonizing effect. In this sense, it is essentially a process whereby the ‘developed’ countries manage, control and even create the Third World economically, politically, sociologically and culturally. This discourse is often turned into an essentially desirable proposition, perhaps the human destiny itself. In a logical analysis, the socio-political-and-economic transformation in the third world countries becomes an inseparable ingredient for preserving and sustaining the current track of industrialization.

In the present chapter, the discussion on various theories of development will make it abundantly clear that these theories lay greater emphasis on non-economic factors than the earlier theories which regarded purely economic considerations as central to their concern.

Dramatic changes in the material and human condition have created new forces of production. Consequently, the reorganization of economic life has taken place. Thus a shift in social life from rural to urban may be observed from the point of industrial revolution. It emphasized in fact, a change from agricultural to commercial production which resulted in a general change from relative scarcity to relative abundance. The social scientists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were much concerned with the conditions of economic progress in Europe during the 'Industrial Revolution'.

Thus, development is a subject which has been widely discussed in the sociological literature. It has not only been examined in the context of Britain, but also in the context of Europe and even in that of the whole world. A large number of sociologists and social scientists have approached the problem of development in both substantive as well as theoretical formulations. Major approaches which have been identified in the context of development are as under.

3.1: The Sociological Version

The idea of a transition between two polar types of society has a long tradition within the social sciences which goes back to the nineteenth century. Rationalistic and evolutionary social theories proposed in various ways dichotomies which made reference to two societal ideal types. The distinction made by Tonnies' between *Gemeinschaft* (community or association) and *Gesellschaft* (society or organization), Spencer's dichotomy between homogeneous and heterogeneous societies and Durkheim's opposition between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity are examples that spring to mind. The transition between the two poles- in other words, development- was understood in terms of some stages within which key processes of specialization and differentiation occurred which increased the complexity of society. Traditional societies were supposed to be 'simple' by comparison to an industrial society. As Eisenstadt has put it, differentiation 'describes the ways through which the main social functions or the major institutional spheres of society

become dissociated from one another, attached to specialized collectivities and roles, and organized in relatively specific and autonomous symbolic and organizational frameworks....' (Eisenstadt, 1964:376)

The theory which influenced the post-war modernization theorists the most was probably Max Weber's, especially through Parson's interpretation and reworking of it. Without proposing a specific evolutionary scheme or simple dichotomy between two types of society, Weber's systematic analytical distinctions, elaborated to classify and account for a variety of historical societies and social institutions, showed at different levels the contours of a process of rationalization and disenchantment of nature which affected increasingly wider aspects of social life and which implicitly pointed to the same polarity. Thus, to give an example, by following Weber's classification it is not difficult to construct an ideal type of a traditional society, where one can find for instance the predominance of a traditional type of action (action determined by a well-rooted custom) and a traditional type of authority (whose domination is based on 'the belief in the everyday routine as an inviolable norm of conduct' (Weber,1970:296). Similarly it is also possible to construct the ideal type of a modern or rational society where there is a predominance of goal-oriented rational action and a legal authority based on impersonal norms, whose purest type is the bureaucratic rule, and so on.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), while closely examining the societal transition from 'traditional' to 'modern' in Western Europe, adopted some form of naturalism in his approach. Despite his formalistic approach, he did not agree in principle with the widely prevalent view that humans were unable to exercise agency. Rather, Durkheim argues that societies are constructed by a set of moral and ethical norms into which individuals are born. For him, social constraints such as forms of punishment or control helped maintain equilibrium in the society. To speak in a precision, Durkheim used naturalistic formalism to justify the social constructivist approach, a methodological experiment any scholar before him hardly deployed.

Durkheim's seminal text the *Division of Labour* (1966) presents the traditional society as one in which its members (the individuals forming it) live as tight-knit communities, necessarily consisting of their own kin and clan. Any attempt by members of these

traditional groups/communities was punished by severe forms of retribution. The modern society, on the other hand, is presented as one in which its members enjoy greater individualism, which is perhaps necessitated by the division of labour.

As societies grow complex — which is one of the prime characteristic features of modern industrial societies — it becomes almost unmanageable for a single individual to carry out all the functions himself/herself in order to remain profitable enough in a labour market. So the individuals are assigned multivaried tasks, allowing the specialisations to flourish, and the economy to expand. Structurally, for Durkheim, such a highly concentrated economic model compels individuals to stay disengaged from one another, unable to cope up with an unregulated change which is too quick to occur. This ultimately leads to what he calls a state of “anomie”.

According to Durkheim, anomie implies “a feeling of rootlessness and aimlessness which, furthermore, was characterized by a lack of moral guidelines. The breakdown of the traditional orders, which were supported by religion, would result in many people feeling that their lives had lost meaning; they would feel isolated without guidelines for moral behavior” (Martinussen 1997: 26).

This was regarded as detrimental to the continued functioning of the society, so various institutions should be set up to encourage social interaction. In certain situations anomie could be associated with conflict.

The concept of harmonious society acting as an organism was also used by Talcott Parsons, an American sociologist who built on the work of Durkheim in his analysis of social development (Parson, 1951). His understanding of society were very technocratic, in that he saw the harmony and continued flourishing of society to be ensured through appropriate institutions. He argued that over time, societies adapted and evolved to become complex. (Parson, 1966) These changes could be triggered either by external influence introducing new technologies or cultural forms, or internally. He viewed societies, as Durkheim did, as moving from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ and identified a number of ‘pattern variables’ to distinguish between the two. These, ‘pattern variables’ (Parson,1951:58-67) help to describe the ideal typical social structure of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ societies. The first is affectivity versus affective neutrality. Some roles are

affectively rewarding and others are neutral; or rather, a role can have immediate gratification in the very performance or its expected activities or these activities are affectively neutral and purely instrumental for an ulterior goal. The second is ascription versus achievement. Some roles accrue to actors and provide status according to their physical and non-achievable social attributes (class, sex, age, family, and so on); others are accessible and provide status according to and depending on performance.

A third pattern variable opposes diffusion to specificity. Some relations are functionally diffuse in that they cover a series of unspecified dimensions (friendship, family roles, say). Others are functionally specific in that their content is clearly definable and delimited (bureaucratic roles). Fourth, there is particularism versus universalism. Role expectations can be defined for specific actors in terms of their particular situation, which cannot be transferred (friendship, family relations). Other role expectation can be defined for a number of persons according to objective criteria (salesman-client relation). Finally, in fifth place, orientation towards collective interests versus orientation towards private interests. Some roles are exclusively oriented towards the collective interest (public servant) some others entail the pursuit of private interest (entrepreneurs).

In the Parsonian scheme of things, traditional societies require that roles are ascriptive, diffuse, particularistic and affective. Industrial societies, on the other hand, design the roles to be performance oriented, universalistic, affectively neutral and specific (Ibid. pp. 176-7).

Surprisingly enough, Parsons leaves out the last pattern variable, most likely because of the difficulty in making a clear-cut argument in either direction. Generally speaking, what is often argued in the literature of economic sociology is that while the members in a typical traditional society tend to work for the collective interests, their counterparts in a modern society work for their private interests. Of late, there is also a counterargument suggesting that: "In economically less advanced societies there predominates an attitude of self-orientation with relation to economic goods, at least on the part of those actors who occupy positions in national or group elites, whereas in more highly advanced economies attitudes of collectivity-orientation predominate, or at least are highly valued" (Hoselitz, 1965).

The social structure of a traditional society Parsons calls 'ascriptive particularistic' while the social structure of industrial society is called 'acquisitive universalistic'. The transition from traditional society to industrial society supposes, in general, a progressive expansion of the sphere of application of roles of the latter type and a contraction of the sphere of application of roles of the former type. But specific parts of the social structure will continue to require specific arrangements of roles which may be at variance with the general trend. For instance, family and kinship, even in industrial societies, will continue to be characterized by ascription, particularism, diffusion, affectivity an orientation to collective interests.

3.2: The Economic Version

While this chapter focuses on post- 1945 development theories and policies, it is important to recognize that these ideas did not appear in an intellectual vacuum, but rather were rooted in the tradition of economic, political and sociological theorizing which developed in Europe from the eighteenth century onwards.

Adam Smith came to have a considerable influence on the later ideas about economic development. Smith's epic text, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776 was a direct response to the mercantile trade, which was the focus of economic policy at that time in Western Europe. During the eighteenth century, as it is in the most part of the European industrialization, trade continued to remain the major force for economic growth; merchants, particularly the large trading companies like the East India Company enjoyed predominance in relation to national governments. Using their newly acquired power, these merchants pressed for protectionist measures needed to safeguard their trading interests. They largely succeeded in creating a business climate without competition.

Sensing the impending danger, Adam Smith rang the warnings early enough, grossly protested the protectionist measures being put in place at the behest of powerful merchant groups. Calling the regulating environment of the day as detrimental to the economic growth of the country and greater wealth for all citizens, Smith mints no words in pointing out bluntly that the only segment to benefit from these protectionist measures are large

merchants. He then went on to make a strong case for the need to remain attentive to production, rather than trade, in economic development. He also suggested that division of labour would help improve productivity and therefore economic growth and wealth creation. For him, division of labour implies the breaking up of the production process (for example making cloth) into number of stages; instead of one person completing all stages, different people concentrate on one aspect of the process at a given stage. This way, the workers would have a chance to become specialized in a given skill and would be able to effectively produce more in a lesser time.

Adam Smith presupposed, quite correctly indeed, that it would be the invisible hand of the market, not the State, which was going to regulate the operations of the proposed system. He made an impassionate argument that individuals are prone to act in their self interest. When the customers find a particular product in the market too expensive, for example, they either defer their plan to buy it to a further date or simply give up the idea of buying it at all. In such circumstances the seller would have to either reduce the price of a given product making it affordable for the customers to buy it or simply move to another business model where he can make profits by selling things the customers can buy. Using this logic, Smith goes on to suggest that if the wages are low, workers would move on to other jobs where they can earn decent incomes.

Running the argument on the lines similar to Adam Smith was another influential classical economist, David Ricardo. Ricardo is known for his theory of comparative advantage. The theory of comparative advantage prescribes that countries should invest in producing the things they have advantage in producing and then sell them to the outside world. This would allow them to make the best use of their assets such as land, mineral resources, labour, technical and scientific expertise. Ricardo calls such a model as the global division of labour.

Equally important, but a contrary theoretical argument comes from Walt Rostow, who is known for his famous publication, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960). Walt Rostow's primary focus was on economic growth, not so much development per se. Rostow believed that his work was necessarily a complete departure from, and an effective alternative to, Marx's theory of history. Taking clue from Marx

himself, but only to measure him by his own standards, Rostow proposes that Human societies tread through five stages: traditional society, precondition for take-off, take-off, road to maturity and the age of high mass consumption. The traditional society is supposed to be primarily an agricultural one, characterized by low productivity and a pre-Newtonian attitude in respect of the physical world. “Low growth” may not necessarily mean “no growth”, but only a sealing to growth. Consequently, then, power would remain concentrated in the hands of the landowners, and the value system would prove fatalistic.

The second stage —preconditions for take-off — gives rise to the process of transition. England can be said to be the first country to have developed these preconditions, followed by Western Europe. But in most parts of the world, this particular stage is externally induced by the advanced countries which were originally accelerated through the destruction of the traditional societies within them. The expansion of trade, increase in the rate of investment, setting up financial institutions, etc., come as a package in the external inducement. But the decisive element in the whole process is the political formation of a national state.

The take-off is a particular state of affair where growth translates into a permanent feature of society. This firmly constitutes a new climate of business, where the rate of investment goes up like never before, new industries expand at a faster rate, industry and agriculture are brought face to face with new and innovative technologies/techniques, with a sole aim of securing constant growth. At the end of the day, all that quickens the whole metrics of transition is a simple economic mechanism:

“The essence of the transition can be described legitimately as a rise in the rate of investment to a level which regularly, substantially and perceptibly outstrips population growth; although, when this is said, it carries no implication that the rise on the investment-rate is an ultimate cause.” (Ibid. p. 21)

The road to maturity is a long drawn one, where all elements of economy need to be modernized purely based on new technologies. Imports are substituted with the expanding exports. All those industries which were strategically used to promote the take-off are now substituted with more sophisticated ones, paving the way for industrial diversification.

Finally, the stage of high mass consumption comes to be characterized by a selective tilt the economy makes towards the consumer durables and services. The rising levels of per capita incomes allow the consumption to expand beyond basic needs. The irony, however, is that welfare and social security measures are made to compete for resources. Meanwhile, military expenditures surge to historic levels, symbolizing the search for influence and power on the world stage.

Rostow's thesis about the relationship between the stages of economic growth and the situation of the newly developing countries fits exactly the premises of modernization theories. He typically argued that:

“It is useful, as well as roughly accurate, to regard the process of development now going forward in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America as analogous to the stages of preconditions and take-off of other societies, in the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.” (Ibid. p. 139)

It is not that Rostow does not recognize the existence of some historical differences between the situations of these two types of countries. His point is rather that although some differences may hinder the contemporary process of take-off, the most crucial of them tend to facilitate it. The biggest difficulty is provoked by the greatest advantage: access to modern technology, including medicine, lowers mortality rates and increase population thus creating problems of chronic unemployment and poverty which require bigger investment and growth rates just in order to avoid then getting worse. Another difficulty is the cold war in so far as developing countries are sucked into this conflict and are obliged to distract time and resources from development tasks. Still, Rostow argues that there are two major advantages which nations that took off first did not have: on the one hand the existence of an already developed modern technology which is available to underdeveloped countries; and, on the other hand, international aid and technical assistance provided by developed countries.

3.3: Marxist Theories of Development

The Marxian theory of development bears similarities to that of the linear stage models. Examine, for example, Karl Marx's introductory remarks in the first volume of his capital,

‘the country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future’ (Marx 1909:xvii). The end point between the Marxian theory of development on one hand and linear stage models on the other, however, is very different in terms of social and political changes they provoke. To recall briefly: Capitalism is just one stage in a transition; pre-capitalist societies, which Marx classifies as ‘Asiatic’, ‘ancient’ or ‘feudal’, would be replaced by capitalism, which would in turn be usurped by socialism. Under a socialist or communist regime, there is going to be communal ownership rather than private property, wherein individuals work according to their abilities and are provided in accordance with their needs. While Marx’s ideas have often been interpreted as describing the transition that would happen in all societies, he recognized the European bias of his work and accepted that the process may be different outside Europe (Sheppard *et al.* 2009: 61-3).

The central thesis of Marx’s analysis is to do with the relationship between capital and labour. The stages outlined above are characterized by a ‘mode of production’ and ‘relations of production’ — the theoretical elements unique to Marxist theory alone. As Marx tells us, individuals under pre-capitalist forms of production worked to provide for themselves and their families; Subsistence agriculture was more often than not their main occupation; the amount of labour put in by the individual members was just enough to provide food, shelter, clothing and other necessities.

Capitalism brings about altogether new relationships. Thanks to the new technologies which make the exploitation of natural resources a lot easier than before, new forms of work ethic and human labour assume significance. According to Karl Marx, the human society under capitalism is sharply divided into two groups: the ‘bourgeoisie’ who own the means of production and the ‘proletariat who do not own anything but their own labour. In such an unequal system of relations, Marx quite logically argues, the only way for the proletariat to survive is to sell their labour. So the proletariat sell their labour freely for a daily wage. The major difference, however, is that this work is not the same as that which was carried out in the pre-capitalist system. In the capitalist mode of production, not only do workers labour so as to be able to provide the basics for their families, but also to provide for the bourgeoisie. So the workers under capitalism constantly work beyond the

wages paid to them. It is this extra amount of work by the proletariat which creates profits for bourgeoisie. Since the workers are never paid the full value of the goods they produce, there is always a surplus labour which the bourgeoisie go on accumulating for themselves. The wealth generated through the surplus value of the labour is reinvested for further profits, and this runs as a never-ending cycle as long as capitalism is kept alive.

Marx considered capitalism as a necessary stage in the transition towards socialism. Interestingly enough, he recognized that the modern capitalist social order is much better than pre-capitalist societies which he characterized as irrational and backward. But he predicts that capitalism is inherently unstable and prone to crisis. Eventually then, in his own prediction, capitalism will be overthrown, leading to the establishment of socialist forms of organization and production.

As one can readily decipher, the Marxian theory of capitalism came to be founded on European development in the nineteenth century. Such a focus specific to a particular region and a limited time frame could not in any way preclude the theoretical possibilities Marxism came to enjoy in the subsequent times. Marxist ideas were expanded and applied to other parts of the world. With the growth of European empires and colonies in Africa and Asia, as well as continued relations of exploitation with independent Latin American countries, Marxist theories of imperialism focused on the way these different parts of the world helped defuse or delay crises in capitalist development in Europe (Peet and Hartwick 2009). Lenin argued that imperialism was the 'highest stage of capitalism'. Marxist theory suggests that capitalism needs ever increasing opportunities to create profit in order to survive, and colonies provided excellent possibilities for further profit generation through the creation of new markets, new sources of raw material, and cheap labour (Webster 1990:82). Lenin predicted that once these possibilities are exhausted, capitalism would collapse.

3.4: New-Marxism

Classical Marxist theories came under critical scrutiny largely because of their excessive focus on the European experience and for assuming that the entire world can be modelled on similar lines. Neo-Marxist approaches in the 1950s and 1960s questioned the

interpretations of classical Marxism. The experiences of newly-independent states in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia proved once for all that Lenin was misled in his prediction that imperialism being the highest stage of capitalism was bound to collapse (Roxborough 1979).

Leading the circle of 'neo-Marxism', Paul Baran (1960) made an attempt to draw on Marxist ideas and apply them to world conditions in the mid-twentieth century. He along with Paul Sweezy made a dispassionate case arguing that capitalism was now in a period of 'monopoly capitalism' (Baran and Sweezy, 1968). Large companies virtually run the global economy, and as such they often exploit poorer parts of the world. Baran, therefore, argues that the State machinery in these poorer economies should intervene and prevent funds, that could be used otherwise for development, from being siphoned out of their countries as profits. The problem, however, is that most of these governments are either corrupt, or lack the power to prevent the underlying exploitation. Baran, thus, recommends that poor countries leave the world capitalist system in favour of a state-socialist system.

In *The Political Economy of Growth* (1957) Baran put forward the concept of neo-colonialism, drawing on earlier theories of colonialism and imperialism as well as his observations on the state of the world in the 1940s and 1950s. Neo-colonialism posed a major challenge to economic development in newly independent countries, since the advanced countries' need for raw material and investment outlets meant that they would bitterly oppose the industrialization that was essential for development in the newly independent countries. (Baran, 1957:14) Baran argued that underdevelopment resulted not simply from the lack of capital but also from outdated political, social, and economic institutions and these could not be taken as a given, as done in neo-classical economics, since economic development would involve changing these. (Ibid. pp. 2-4) Such transformation was opposed and resisted by the West, which allied itself with local retrograde forces which benefited from the status quo and also facilitated the presence and profit repatriation of Western multinationals. (Ibid. p. 14)

Baran defined actual economic surplus as the gap between society's output and its essential consumption. Potential economic surplus is the gap between output and essential

consumption in a rationally structured society. (Ibid. pp. 22-23) Essential consumption was defined in terms of meeting what later came to be called basic human needs. (Ibid. p. 30)

Colonialism was identified as the cause of backwardness in underdeveloped countries. The forcible shift of colonial production to a focus on export crops destroyed the self-sufficiency of agrarian pre-capitalist societies, while the withering competition from exported manufactured goods destroyed rural handicrafts. Infrastructure was established to serve colonial exporting interests. (Ibid. pp. 142-43) Capital accumulation by locals was restarted and surplus was transferred to the colonial countries by manipulating terms of trade, direct transfers, and taxes. As pointed out by Rosa Luxemburg, pre-colonial society was destroyed by colonialism. (Luxemburg, 1951)

Explaining British colonialism in India, Baran summarized that land and taxation policy ruined the village economy, while commercial policy ruined the artisan and generated massive labour surplus. Finally, economic policy ruined incipient industrial development. The local beneficiaries of colonialism included rent-seekers like landlords, money lenders, petty merchants and businesses, middlemen, and speculators. In his words, “Sharks of all description proliferated whose interests were tied to the British”. (Baran, 1957:149)

Post-colonial societies inherited a system of low-productivity peasant agriculture in which landlords appropriated the surplus and engaged in the kind of luxury consumption that classical economists railed against. (Ibid. p.164) Agricultural improvements yield slow returns and, in any case, imperfect capital markets made loans for such investments prohibitive. Thus money lending was found to be more rewarding than productive investments and the purpose of land acquisition was status. (Ibid. pp.166-7) Surplus was also appropriated by other rentiers, merchants, and intermediaries who did not provide a dynamic impetus to the economy.

Baran also documented the evolution of capitalism from its competitive phase during the era of the twentieth century. A vast amount of investable surplus was generated in this monopoly capitalistic phase and with government backing unutilized surplus was invested abroad to secure materials and markets in the underdeveloped countries while they were in their weakened, post-colonial condition. (Ibid. p.113) Tied loans and grants and technical

assistance, backed by potential military force, became an important mechanism for securing advantage. (Ibid. p.122)

Foreign capital investment in material was highly mechanized and most of the inputs and equipment for extraction were imported. Relative to the profit generated and repatriated, this capital infusion was modest. The “enclave” nature of the operations meant that even many of the consumer goods for local workers were imported. The investments in plantation perpetuated food security relative to what would be forthcoming from a diversified agriculture. (Ibid. p.187)

Baran challenged each element of the case for foreign direct investment (FDI): namely, that the surplus transferred is created by FDI, some is locally retained, and infrastructure development facilitated. He argued that FDI only exploited the resource that generated the surplus. Also, the mechanics of surplus creation, such as in the case of Brazil, was based on exploitation, pauperization, and annihilation of large parts of indigenous production. Rich and fertile land that was abundant in forests and fruit tree was stripped. The subsequent shortages of fruits, greens, and vegetables created food insecurity. Much of Latin America, Africa, and Asia suffered from such “one track” exploitation, which resulted in depletion and impoverishment. Baran argues that in due course local resources extraction would have been possible and all the surplus created locally retained. (Ibid. pp.186-88)

As was true of the colonial infrastructure, much of the FDI- induced infrastructure only served the purpose of exploiting natural resources. In any case, Baran argued that articulated infrastructure does not lead to industrial capitalism, but vice versa.(Ibid. pp. 192-93)Local beneficiaries of the FDI were mostly a handful of “comprodores” (local business associates). He argued that the principal effect of multinational corporations (MNCs) in underdeveloped countries was to strengthen the sway of feudalists, merchants and monopoly capitalists to the exclusion of indigenous industrial capitalists. (Ibid. pp.194-95) Competition from the latter would raise wages and other input costs and hence negatively impact MNC profits (Ibid. p.197).

In “On Political Economy of Backwardness”, Baran elaborated on why underdevelopment persisted in underdeveloped countries. He noted that in underdeveloped countries, the middle class attempted to secure privileges by aligning with feudal, monopolistic business and obscurantist forces, rather than opposing these groups, as had the middle classes in developed societies. The threat of socialism in the Cold War era reinforced this accommodation.(Baran, 1973:93-94) This alliance preserved social stability but also backwardness. The backwardness was reinforced by the class behavior of the ruling elites.

Conspicuous consumption, including foreign travel, by the feudal class matched by that of the monopolistic business class left little surplus for capital accumulation. The incentive for the latter was in any case blunted by the massive wealth and income inequality that curbed effective demand and by the latent political instability implied by the high degree of social injustice. Because monopolistic business with a colonial merchant mentality sought quick returns, these business avoided building the industrial base that would improve agriculture by providing the needed utilities, machinery and materials, and would also absorb the surplus labor released as agriculture modernized. Primary exports were an avenue for investment but this was left to MNCs which possessed the capital for large scale operations, the ability and willingness to assume the risk entailed in long term projects and the requisite marketing knowledge. (Ibid. pp.196-98)

A possible alternative route to industrialization that Baran considered was the state using progressive taxation and channeling the surplus to productive physical and human investments to crowd in the private sector, as recommended by the developmentalists. Baran doubted that this could happen. The lack of a competent, honest civil service in underdeveloped countries added to his doubts. The main issue was that the fundamental reforms needed would be opposed by the political and social structure of the government in power. Progressive agrarian reforms, progressive taxation, curbs on capital flight and luxury consumption, and curbing monopolistic practices by extending the industrial base would be opposed by the vested interests of the governing elites.(Ibid. p.100) Baran’s pessimistic summation was that the “Keeper of the past cannot be the builder of the future”. His dire warning was that if the capitalist middle classes did not opt to reward the “efficient, able, and industrious” by supporting progressive, competitive capitalism, they

would instead face a social revolution leading to authoritarian planning and social collectivism. (Ibid. p.102)

Despite their significance, Baran's theses, elaborated soon after the Second World War, remained marginal to the academic world for quite a while. It was A. G. Frank who in the late 1960s expanded on and popularized Baran's views and adapted them to the analysis of the Latin American situation. Frank's historical analyses and theoretical conclusions quickly became well known all over the academic world and gave intellectual currency to dependency theory. Frank starts from the idea that capitalism expanded from Europe and managed to incorporate the whole world in a single international system. This world system is divided into 'a whole chain of metropolises and satellites, which runs from the world metropolis down to the hacienda or rural merchant who are satellite of the local commercial metropolitan center but who in their turn have peasant as their satellites.' (Frank, 1969:146-47)

The whole system has a monopolistic structure which entails the misuse and squandering of resources all over the system. A particularly important form of misuse is 'the expropriation and appropriation of a large part or even all of and more than the economic surplus or surplus value of the satellite by its local, regional, national or international metropolis.' (Ibid. p.147) Ultimately, it is the main imperialist power that appropriates the resources extracted all along the metropolis- satellite chain.

The relations between metropolises and satellites entail the following aspects. First, the economic, social and political structures of the satellite are closely connected with those of its metropolis. Second, a national metropolis which is at the same time an international satellite cannot have autonomous development. Third, the weaker the ties between metropolis and satellite, the more possibility there is of local autonomous development. Fourth, the stronger the ties between metropolis and satellite, the more will be underdevelopment in the satellite. Therefore, satellites can never develop properly. They can only underdevelop in various degrees. Hence, underdevelopment is not a phase which predates development nor can it be confused with lack of development. Underdevelopment 'developed right along with economic development- and it is still doing so.' (Frank, 1969:242) This is what Frank calls the 'development of underdevelopment', a thesis which

he tries to illustrate with his historical analyses of Chile and Brazil. Basically, Frank seeks to show that these two countries, like the rest of Latin America, became peripheral satellites of the Iberian and European metropolis from the sixteenth century and that, therefore, as fully capitalist economies, they have underdeveloped since the day they were colonized.

Frank also described the different modes of production (*encomienda*,¹ Yeoman farming, slave plantation, etc.) created in the various colonies, but still insists that their analysis ‘must begin with an examination of the historical process of capital accumulation on a world scale since that was the driving force of the various processes in the New World’. (Frank, 1978a:43-69) A subtle change in the model seems to have occurred. It now appears as if these various modes of production, instead of being dissolved into the world capitalist system, can keep their identity and be simultaneously a part of the capitalist process of accumulation:

“There is a variety of modes or, at least, of relations of production and of combination among them and between them and the capitalist mode of production. Many of them are preserved or even created by the incorporation into the capitalist process of capital accumulation of the production that is organized through this variety of ‘noncapitalist’ relations or modes of production.” (Frank, 1978a:254)

In describing this process of capitalist accumulation Frank also introduces the idea that it is partly ‘based on a superexploitation of labour power through excess-surplus value, which... denies the labourer even the minimum necessary for subsistence... this less-than-subsistence superexploitation occurs both through wage labour and through other relations of production...’ (Ibid. p.240)

Frank’s approach to pre-capitalist modes of production has important political consequences because the struggles for development cannot be based on the erroneous strategy of abolishing pre-capitalist structures or feudalism, a system which either does not exist (first version) or exists as a part of the capitalist process of accumulation (second

¹ The *encomienda* was a servile system whereby a group of Indians was allocated to a Spanish conquistador who had the right to extract tribute from them, in goods, money or personal services in his lands or mines during part of the year.

version). If underdevelopment is in any case the result of capitalism, then it is capitalism that needs to be abolished. So Frank declares himself in fundamental opposition to bourgeois author who want the same course of development to be followed as in European countries, but also to ‘the Communist parties in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, which establish their programs and alliances with the bourgeoisie on the premise that the bourgeois revolution has yet to be made.’ (Frank, 1969:270) In fact, in the preface to his first book he argues that most important conclusion of his studies is that ‘national capitalism and the national bourgeoisie do not and cannot offer any way out of underdevelopment in Latin America.’ (Ibid. p.xv)

In practical political terms this means, first, that development is possible only under socialism; second, that because of that, the United States is inevitably opposed to the development efforts of underdeveloped countries; (Frank, 1970:127) third, that the immediate enemy of development is tactically the native Latin American bourgeoisies, but the principal enemy is strategically the United States; (Ibid., p.371)and fourth, that the destruction of both the neo-colonial dependence and the resulting internal class structure ‘cannot be done through reform but requires a revolution’. (Frank, 1984:92) Frank argues that a revolutionary process entails two necessary aspects: on the one hand an internal transfer of power and expansion of popular participation, and on the other, the achievement of external independence by means of a process of delinking. (Frank, 1983:194-95) According to Frank neither of these two aspects can on their own produce good results:

“To try neither delinking nor popular participation get you nowhere. To try only external delinking without internal participation also gets you nowhere and leads back to rapid relinking. To try only internal participation without external delinking is extremely dangerous, very difficult to do, and likely to lead to disaster. External delinking and internal participation, social and political mobilization, reinforce each other and are necessary in order to be able to pursue rapid structural change to a threshold from which one would not immediately slide backward.” (Ibid. p.195)

Frank’s ideas about the world system and especially his conviction that the development of the metropolises has been sustained by the underdevelopment of the satellites (through a

process of surplus transfer) have been supported and further elaborated by the work of Wallerstein. For him a capitalist world economy was created in the sixteenth century with the expansion of European capitalism. This expansion involved

“unequal development and therefore differential rewards, and unequal development in a multilayered format of layers within layers, each one polarized in terms of a bimodal distributions of rewards... there was the differential of the core of the European world-economy versus its peripheral areas, within the European core between states, within states between regions and strata,...” (Wallerstein, 1974:86)

This differentiated world economy subsumes a variety of kinds of workers, from slaves working in plantations and serfs working on large domains to wage labourers working in factories. The different modes of organizing and controlling labour are in operation because each of them ‘is best suited for particular types of production’. (Ibid. p.87) But, and this is the crucial thing, they do not constitute the base of different modes of production coexisting with some articulation between them, because, unlike the old pre-capitalist modes which produced for the local economy, they produce for and are integrated into a capitalist world economy, hence they are all equally ‘capitalist’:

“It is not the case that two forms of social organization, capitalist and feudal, existed side by side, or could ever so exist. The world-economy has one form or the other. Once it is capitalist, relationships that bear certain formal resemblances to feudal relationships are necessarily redefined in terms of the governing principles of a capitalist system.”(Ibid. p.92)

Wallerstein seeks to generalize the Frankian model; he also introduces some modifications which tend to make it slightly more flexible. Instead of keeping the metropolis-satellite dichotomy, Wallerstein distinguishes three structural zones of the world economy which are the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery. (Wallerstein, 1974:15-16) What is important about them is that they are by no means fixed once and for all because the economic activities of some areas progress while in other places they deteriorate. However,

“The fact that particular states change their position in the world-economy, from semi-periphery to core say, or vice versa, does not in itself change the nature of the system. These shifts will be registered for individual states as ‘development’ or ‘regression’. The key factor to note is that within a capitalist world-economy, all states cannot ‘develop’ simultaneously by definition, since the system functions by virtue of having unequal core and peripheral regions.” (Wallerstein, 1975:23)

The relationship between core and periphery are understood, as in Frank, as relations of exploitation whereby the core appropriates the surplus produced by the periphery. This is the reason why ‘by definition’ not all states can develop. Wallerstein argues that all empires in the past were mechanisms for collecting tribute and that the modern world economy with its purely economic mechanisms offers ‘an alternative and more lucrative source of surplus appropriation’:

“It is the social achievement of the modern world, if you will, to have invented the technology that makes it possible to increase the flow of the surplus from the lower strata to the upper strata, from the periphery to the center, from the majority to the minority, by eliminating the ‘waste’ of too cumbersome a political superstructure.” (Wallerstein, 1974:15-16)

The flow of surplus from the periphery to the core is secured both through the international division of labour and political power. The core gets a concentration of the ‘tasks requiring higher levels of skill and greater capitalization’ (Ibid. p.350) and consequently the increased rewards for it. Additionally, the core develops ‘a strong state machinery’ which serves ‘as a mechanism to protect disparities that have arisen within the world-system.’ (Ibid. p.349) The natural consequence of the transfer of surplus from the periphery to the core is the underdevelopment of the former and the development of the latter. As in Frank, development and under-development mutually cause each other and are the necessary result of the operation of the same capitalist system.

A frequent criticism of Frank’s and Wallerstein’s positions avers that they have displaced class relations from the centre of their analyses of economic development and

underdevelopment. (Palma, 1981:45) Frank himself acknowledges the fact that class has not been the focus of his analysis:

“The attempt to spell out the metropolis- satellite colonial structure and development of capitalism has led me to devote very little specific attention to its class structure and development. This does not mean that this colonial analysis is intended as a substitute for class analysis. On the contrary the colonial analysis is meant to complement class analysis to discover and emphasize aspects of the class structure in these underdeveloped countries which have often remained unclear.” (Frank, 1969:xv)

One such aspect which Frank finds crucial is his conclusion that the Latin American national bourgeoisies have no positive role to play in the Latin American process of development. However, further below, and also in another book, (Frank, 1972) he presents a different and more theoretical argument which instead of constructing his approach as a complement to class analysis proposes an explanation of the role of classes which has strong structuralist overtones and which one can find in other deterministic forms of Marxism. In effect, in the context of a discussion about the main interest groups of the ruling class in Chile and their role in Chilean underdevelopment, Frank argues that it is not enough to say that these various groups of landowners, mineowners, merchants and industrialists hindered Chilean development because of the pursuit of their particular interests. The question is why this combination of interests did not lead to underdevelopment in England, Japan or the United States. His answer is that the interests and actions of classes are determined in particular ways by the underlying structures of the world capitalist system:

“My thesis holds that the group interest which led to the continued underdevelopment of Chile and the economic development of some other countries were themselves created by the same economic structure which encompassed all these groups: the world capitalist system... It was in the nature of the structure of this system to produce interests leading to underdevelopment... The most powerful interest groups of the Chilean

metropolis were interested in policies producing underdevelopment at home because their metropolis was at the same time a satellite.” (Frank, 1969:94)

A similar thesis is developed with more historical detail for Latin America as a whole in his book *Lumpenbourgeoisie: Lumpenddevelopment*. Here a sequential three-fold process is described in the following terms. The starting and founding event is the subordination of Latin America to the world capitalist system by means of the Hispanic conquest and colonization. The second and sequential occurrence is the formation of the class structure and culture of Latin America as an effect of the colonial relationship. In third place, the colonial and class structures determine the class interests of the bourgeoisie's ruling fractions which thus follow various policies that generate underdevelopment. The first event alludes to the basic and determining structure of dependency, the second aspect defines the class structure and normative values in terms of the necessary primacy of the *lumpenbourgeoisie*, and the third aspect determines the policy of underdevelopment or *lumpenddevelopment* (Frank, 1972) The causal sequence goes rather mechanically from the world system to the political activities of Latin American bourgeoisies.

Barner has shown that there would be a very good case for maintaining that the early European world economy, to the extent that 'it was defined by the interconnected systems of production based on coerced cash crop labour in the periphery and based on free labour in the core', 'remained fundamentally "pre-capitalist": a sort of renewed feudalism, with a somewhat wider scope'. (Branner, 1977:72) The reason for this is, according to Brenner, that most of Europe after the abolition of serfdom was dominated by an economy based on peasant freeholders and therefore lacked the indispensable class structure which, by securing technical progress and the continuous advance of productive forces, characterizes capitalism, namely, that which is based on free wage-earners. This is why the early European economy could not provide the bases for continuous industrial growth in most of Europe any better than could the Middle Ages. But of course Wallerstein cannot see this point because he ignores the connection between the specific class system of capitalism and the progress of productive forces. He simply has a different concept of capitalism which instead of focusing on production relations emphasizes the profit motive and the orientation to the world market. Thus for Wallerstein the technical progress characteristic

of capitalism is not the result of a particular structure of class relations of free wage labour, but the result of competition in the market and the impulse to profit maximization.

Palma has maintained that the only part of Frank's analysis which is valuable is his critique of the theories which stress the supposedly dual character of Latin American societies.(Palma, 1981:44) The assessment does not seem very generous but it is true to say (a) that dualism, in so far as it propounds the idea of a lack of connection between the modern and traditional sectors of the economy, is a mistaken interpretation; and (b) that around this issue Frank makes a valuable contribution by showing, historically, how even the poorest and most remote parts of Latin America were linked to the world economy and how this connection did not necessarily bring economic development to them. However, even in this context Frank makes two serious mistakes. First, he seems to affirm that to accept the feudal nature of the agricultural relations of production in Latin America is necessarily to accept a form of dualism. But obviously this is not so because as we have seen above, the very connections with the world market may accentuate the servile nature of the social relations. Second, instead of cautiously restricting his theory to claiming that the international links do not necessarily bring about development to colonized areas, he goes further and claims, rather mechanically and without foundation, that the insertion in the capitalist world system necessarily precludes development and causes underdevelopment.

At any rate, Frank's and Wallerstein's very conception of capitalism makes it more difficult to understand why socialism should be the cure to dependent underdevelopment. If capitalist underdevelopment is defined in terms of the incorporation to the world economy, then severing the links with the world market must produce development. Would this separation of itself bring about the destruction of capitalism in a socialist manner? It does not seem to follow necessarily that this should be so. As Branner rightly remarks, if the world economy of itself breeds underdevelopment, 'the logical antidote to capitalist underdevelopment is not socialism, but autarky.' (Branner, 1977:91) True, Frank has made the point that a genuine revolutionary process must couple external delinking with internal participation and mobilization. But apart from a brief review of some historical failure and disasters (Allende's Chile, Ghana of N'Krumah, Nasser's Egypt,

Sukarno's Indonesia, etc.), which according to him show the need to have both aspect together, there does not seem to be an internal logic which unite them. In fact he even detects a worrying tendency to reintegration and relinking of socialist countries into the capitalist world system. (Frank, 1983:197)

Banaji points out that:

“The whole theory of dependency is still today fundamentally a petty bourgeois theory which is inherently incapable of breaking loose from the platform of national capitalism... it has become fashionable to advocate ‘disengagement from world capitalism’. But this is tantamount to a program of isolationist state capitalism, and has nothing at all to do with the revolutionary interests of the working class, which at all sages are bound up with the World market and its further development..” (Banaji, 1983:109)

Arghiri Emmanuel extended Marxian analysis to explore international trade. He contended that this task was one that Marx had planned but was unable to get to. Emmanuel launched a comprehensive challenge to Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage by arguing that prices were determined by factor costs rather than by productivity, and that specialization was not premised on natural advantage. Most importantly, he showed that international trade between developed and underdeveloped countries represented unequal exchange or exploitation via a transfer of surplus from the latter to the former. He did not view this surplus transfer to be dependent on what is produced by underdeveloped countries i.e. primary rather than manufactured commodities. (Emmanuel, 1972:xxx) He argued that, as far as examining the dynamic of trade, the most realistic premise was that, as far as examining the dynamic of trade, the most realistic premise was that capital is mobile and labor is not. This premise differs from the factor immobility premise of mainstream trade models, including Ricard's theory of comparative advantage. Emmanuel reasoned that if capital is mobile, profit rates are equalized but wages are not. (Ibid. p.xxxiii) This reversed Ricardo's premise of international trade being based on equal wages but unequal profit rates. (Ibid. p.266)

Wage inequality led to exploitation or a net transfer of surplus value from underdeveloped to developing countries. Emmanuel showed that, at prices that equalize profits, underdeveloped countries exported products that embody a large number of labor hours in return for imported products that embody far fewer hours of equivalent skill. (Ibid. p.61) This resulted in a vicious cycle since poor countries were deprived of the ability to accumulate and continued to stagnate. Wages stayed low while the narrow market created a disincentive to invest leaving a pool of surplus labor. (Ibid. p.131)

Emmanuel went on to discuss a number of ways of breaking out of this vicious cycle, such as by pursuing regional integration. Trade between countries with similar wage structures would reduce exploitative unequal exchange. (Ibid. p.147) Export taxes in underdeveloped countries would also reduce unequal exchange by limiting trade (Ibid. p.233) Regional trade agreements among underdeveloped countries that enabled industrialization and diversification would also help; by reducing dependence on imports from developed countries, underdeveloped countries could reduce unequal exchange and improve their terms of trade. He realized that the adverse terms of trade and adjustment costs thus imposed on developed countries would produce ferocious resistance. Indeed, he argued that trade rules are set, monitored and enforced by international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, and GATT (later the WTO) in order to prevent this situation, and to protect developed country interests. (Ibid. p.268)

Emmanuel defined underdevelopment as the gap between what the means of production could potentially deliver, given the current state of technology, compared to what was actually produced. (Ibid. p.270) He argued that wage increases can precede development. For example, colonies in temperate zones like the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand inherited Britain's high wage structure, which proved to be an advantage in creating an internal market, and development followed later. He concluded that the solution for the initial lack of competitiveness in international trade was protection, and the US had shown the way in this regard. (Ibid. p.123-26)

Based on the Marxist concept of developing productive forces, Emmanuel actually welcomed the possibility of technology transfer from MNCs. Low wages could actually be a deterrent since they resulted in shallow market, but if a way around this problem was

production for export, “it is rather matter for rejoicing”. (Emmanuel, 1976:766) Thus, technological progress was to be welcomed as a means of developing productive forces. In this regard, then, Emmanuel viewed appropriate or intermediate technology as antidevelopment since it would relegate underdeveloped countries to backwardness. (Ibid. p.764) Ultimately, then, the problem was not that MNCs created dependency and underdevelopment, but rather that they engaged in too little FDI in underdeveloped countries.

Emmanuel argued that notwithstanding claims by dependency theorists MNCs could be agents of development rather than underdevelopment. In fact, countries like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Brazil had developed by working effectively with FDI. He argued that the dependency theorist response was to call this phenomenon “growth” and development, since they had painted themselves into a corner by arguing FDI could not induce development. Emmanuel’s response was the more growth the better for underdeveloped countries, notwithstanding his nod to ecological constraints. (Emmanuel, 1975:87&66)

In *Accumulation on a World Scale*, Amin accepted Emmanuel’s analysis of international trade in principle, seeing it as a mechanism for the transfer of surplus value from the periphery to the center. Yet Amin saw the conflict as one of class struggle in the context of the world system rather than as one between nations as Emmanuel did. On one side of the conflict was the world bourgeoisie, which was based in the “center” (developed countries) but included partner elites in the “periphery” (underdeveloped countries). On the other side was the world proletariat. In the periphery, the proletariat included the industrial wage workers, the peasants, and the surplus labor, all of whom were integrated into world markets. Understanding this conflict required an analysis of the social formations in the center and periphery. (Amin, 1974: 24-25)

The capitalist mode of production was prevalent in the center where the international market was pivotal. The periphery was subjected to external markets, which facilitated primitive accumulation on a world scale based on the exploitation of the periphery by the center. (Ibid. pp. 37-38) This primitive accumulation on a world scale facilitated reproductive accumulation in the center. Amin considered two cases. Labor productivity was the same for the modern sector in the periphery and the center, but wages were much

lower in the periphery, so trade represented a transfer of surplus value to the center, much as Emmanuel suggested. This was even more pronounced in the traditional sector since direct labor represented most of the value of the products. While the surplus transferred was not insignificant as a percentage of GDP in the center, it was a large portion of the combined periphery GDP. (Ibid. pp. 57-59)

Amin differentiated his analysis of the center-periphery wage gap from Emmanuel's by emphasizing the different social formations in the center and periphery. The trend towards monopolies in the center ensured a resistance to a fall in prices. It also enabled a rise in wages, hence creating a labor aristocracy in the center. While labor in the center continued to be exploited, the exploitation of the periphery proletariat was "much more violent". Unlike in the center, where most income was in the form of profits from expanded reproduction (reinvesting of saving), the predominant income in the periphery was in the form of rent drawn from agrarian-based exports to the center. The increased rents were spent on luxury imports and hence did not increase the domestic demand for labor. The excess labor supply in the periphery resulted from two mechanisms: first, from the initiation of agrarian capitalism which drove peasants off the land; second, from the decimation of crafts due to global manufacturing.

Crafts in the periphery were bypassed, since food and materials continued to go abroad and so the sector became irrelevant to the economy. In developed countries, crafts were gradually displaced by local manufacturing that absorbed the labor released. (Ibid. pp. 151-52) Some in the crafts sector move back to cultivating their small plots but, because this type of cultivation was mostly for household consumption, Amin viewed this shift to be retrogressive in terms of the development of productive forces. Most of the surplus labor ended up in the informal sector. (Ibid. p.157)

The main obstacle to articulated (non-distorted) industrialization in the periphery was the competition from the center. Such competition caused local commercial capitalists to invest their profits for land acquisition. (Ibid. p.177) However, as production became more sophisticated in the center, and the "organic composition of labor increased", (the proportion of highly skilled workers grew in the labor force) low wages drew capital to the periphery to start light industry. However, while local manufacturing was initiated, the

borrowed technology was capital intensive and unable to absorb the labor surplus. (Ibid. p.151,176)

Exporting capital from the center to the periphery served primarily to offset the falling rate of profit in the center. (Ibid. pp. 225-28) Amin argued that while some countries in the periphery might experience growth spurt, the transition to full-fledged, articulated, auto-centric (sustained) capitalist development for countries in the periphery was blocked by serving the needs of the center. This meant investing extensively in infrastructure and increasing imports of capital and balance of payment respectively. In this way, peripheral countries were held back. According to Amin, this explained why no country had moved from underdeveloped to developed status at the time of his writing in the 1970s. (Ibid. pp.299-302)

In *Unequal Development* (1976), which covered much the same ground, Amin speculated that the East Asian countries hosting the light industry shifted out of the center were unlikely to “take off” into autocentric development. This prediction was premised on his observation of balance of payment problems, as well as structural weaknesses such as capital and technological dependency.(Amin,1976:213) The periphery’s balance of payment problems were compounded as capital flowed from the center to finance light capital industry, because this inflow was less than the backflow of profits to the center.

Recent work of Wallerstein predicts four interrelated, long-standing contradictions that, as they work themselves out, will eventually bring about the downfall of world capitalism and ultimately transform human social life. The first contradiction is that capitalism depends on a significant portion of the world labor market that it can exploit through long working hours and low pay. The cost of labor, Wallerstein reports, is set through both supply and demand and the political power of both capitalists and workers (Wallerstein, 1999:79). In the past, capitalists have met the demands of workers in the core states by drawing new worker from rural areas to offset these high wages and bring down the overall costs of production. Paying a portion of workers higher wages and benefits had the added function of creating consumers with the resources to purchase menu of the products that the system produced. However, because of its very success in expanding throughout the world, capitalism is rapidly losing the easily exploitable portion of its labor market (Ibid. pp.30-

31). More and more people in peripheral areas (as well as in the core) are moving to urban centers in which worker concentration leads to greater bargaining power and higher expectations of a living wage and other benefits (Ibid. p.31). This “deruralization” leads to increasing labor costs and thus must necessarily cut into the long-term accumulation of capital.

The second internal contradiction that runs counter to the accumulation of capital is caused by the “ecological crisis”. Wallerstein believes there has been serious ecological degradation over the course of capitalist development, this despite the significant scientific and technical advances over the course of the centuries (Wallerstein, 1999:76). Companies are expanding their markets; more people around the globe are demanding entrance into consumer culture, population is still expanding (Ibid. p.79). As the crisis intensifies the budgets of national governments are increasingly stretched to provide for the cleanup. This, predicts Wallerstein, will cause governments to try to force companies to internalize these costs, which will cut deeply into their capital accumulation (Ibid. p.31). These steps, Wallerstein believes, will prove costly and must seriously erode capital accumulation (Ibid. p.81).

The third trend that is hindering the continued operation of the capitalist world-system is the spread of democracy around the world. Wallerstein sees this spread as both real and significant for the political economy of the world-system. The spread of democracy brings the demands of the masses for decent jobs, medical care, education, consumer goods, and housing more directly into the political calculations of the state (Wallerstein, 2000:385-386). In the beginning the demands for a living wage, welfare, health care, education, and other social amenities were confined to the core states (mainly Europe and North America) and could be met with modest expenditures. “Today, workers everywhere expect it, and the level of their demands is significantly higher than it was even fifty years ago. Ultimately, these moneys can only come at the cost of accumulating capital” (Wallerstein, 1999:31-32). The demands for income, health care and education, in particular, seem to be insatiable.

The fourth internal contradiction that is weakening the accumulation of capital is the decline in the power of the state. Wallerstein points out that the power of the nation-state

had been increasing in the world since the establishment of the capitalist world-system, but that this trend has recently been reversed (Wallerstein, 1999:32). State power has been critical for capitalism, serving to keep internal order, sponsoring national and international monopolies, and taking other steps to promote and protect the accumulation of capital. The state creates monopolies and supports profits through purchasing, trade, and tax policies (Ibid. p.65). It directly assumes some of the costs of production by building infrastructure (roads, sewers, and such) and indirectly through environmental policies (Ibid. p.63). In addition, the nation-state restrains labor unions through labor laws as well as to “soften discontent” of the “dangerous classes” through the expansion of the welfare state (Ibid. p.74).

We are now in a period of transition; the next twenty-five to fifty years will be a period of struggle in which the new system (or systems) will be born. Wallerstein predicts that we will see escalating local and regional violence, as well as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons proliferation (Wallerstein, 2000:384). The end of the Cold War, and the decline of American hegemony, Wallerstein has long claimed, has led to a certain amount of instability in the world.

Another factor that will add to world unrest is the increasing rate of migration from peripheral regions to core countries. This includes the south-north migration as well as the eastern-Europe to western-Europe migration. These rates of migration are growing, Wallerstein asserts, because of the labor needs of capitalist enterprises in core states, improvements in transportation, the increasing economic and demographic polarization between core and periphery, and because of the spread of democratic ideology. This ideology, he says, makes it more politically difficult for the wealthy states to control their borders (Wallerstein, 2000:384).

Also contributing to the world disorders, Wallerstein submits, are the increasing urbanisation, rising levels of education, and improved communications which promotes political awareness and mobilization. This makes it ever more “difficult to obscure the degree of disparities and the role of governments in maintaining them” (Wallerstein, 2000:430). Yet another factor contributing to the disorder is the fiscal crisis of governments caused by the increased costs of subsidies to capitalism and expansion of the

welfare state while at the same time being constrained by tax revolts and a loss of faith among the citizenry. The battle between aware citizens and corporations over the state's resources will be the focus of class struggle (Ibid. p.430).

Geopolitical alliances are almost as unstable as the market. The United States has lost its unquestioned hegemony of the world system and we have moved into a multipolar world. US decline started not recently but 1968. It was for a long time a slow decline, but it became precipitate after 2003 as a result of the disastrous attempt to reverse the decline by the invasion of Iraq.

The multipolar world today, perhaps, consists of 10-12 powers strong enough to pursue relatively autonomous policies. Given the humongous size and nature of the world, this is too small a group to enjoy such a privilege. Simultaneously, however, 10 to 12 is too large a number for any one of them to ensure that their view can prevail. As a thumb rule of diplomacy, then, these powers always shuffle their alliances in order not to be outmaneuvered by the others.

The preceding discussion makes it clear that the world around is becoming increasingly complex day after day. The solutions to fix this complexity, too, are no less insignificant, the only caveat being that it is quite often easier said than done. One of the useful interventions in this regard comes from Wallerstein,. According to him, "The world system is self-destructing. It is what the scientists of complexity call a bifurcation." This implies that the present system cannot survive for long hereafter, and the real question is, "what is ahead of it?" What is going to replace/substitute the present system? Would it be any better than the one it is going to take over? And, in the final analysis, how can we be sure that the present system is going to be replaced by a better model? As an answer to some of these questions, Wallerstein suggests that "While we cannot predict what kind of new system will emerge, we can affect the choice between the substantive alternatives available." The real mantra to affect such a choice lies in our ability "to do this by a realistic analysis of existing chaotic swing and not hide our political effort behind delusions about reforming the existing system or by deliberate attempts to obfuscate our understanding" (Wallerstein, 2016:271).

Wallerstein goes on further to suggest that in the event of the United States of America (USA) declining as a hegemonic power, the world now seems to have been settled as a multipolar system in which not one but a multitude of national states claim supremacy. Given such a scenario, the BRICS² can definitely be considered part of the new picture. By attempting to forge the new alliances on the world scene, say the interbank structure inaugurated recently in order to sit alongside, and substitute for, the International Monetary Fund, they are certainly contributing to the further erosion of the hegemonic power of the United States and other segments of the old North in favour of the South, or at least of the BRICS themselves. In Wallerstein's understanding, if one's definition of anti-imperialism is nothing but "reducing the power of the United States, then the BRICS certainly represent an anti-imperialist force" (Wallerstein, 2016:272).

Claudio Katz argues that the periphery is made up of economies which have suffered the greatest impoverishment. The accumulation of capital on the global scale always involves an international division of labour which leads to the transfer of resources from the periphery to the centre. In its neoliberal stage, this polarising dynamic continuously modifies how this process takes root in various localities. The expansion of growth in certain areas is consummated at the expense of others through unequal exchanges and processes which recreate underdevelopment. Polarisation can be verified in a dramatic form by looking at the worsening of hunger. This social tragedy has been on the rise since 2003, powered by a cycle of rising foodstuff prices. Until 2008, shortages were mostly concentrated in grains and certain cooking oils. But it then extended to affect all products. In December 2010, the Food and Agriculture Organisation price index surpassed its all-time high. Hopes for decreasing prices based on a global slow-down have not been realised. Hunger affects around 1.2 billion people, but its threat extends to 2.5 billion people living in poverty. We need only recall that food shortages influenced the opening stages of the Arab uprisings ('an uprising for bread') in order to understand the social impact of this problem. (Katz, 2016:85-86)

²BRICS is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The BRICS members are all developing or newly industrialised countries, but they are distinguished by their large, fast-growing economies and significant influence on regional and global affairs.

There are three explanations for the persistence of food-price inflation. The first attributes the upward trend to the formation of bubbles, produced by speculation over future grain prices. This dynamic channels the excess liquidity generated by the lack of investment opportunities in developed countries into the foodstuff markets. The second explanation argues that the increase in food prices stems from activities which indirectly affected these basic products. These developments increase the cost of inputs and accentuate soil exhaustion. Food prices also rise along with oil, transportation and irrigation, and the same general effect emerges from the expansion of supermarkets, which inflate demand by introducing new consumer habits. The final explanation asserts that increasing food costs are a structural problem, driven by demand from new Asian consumers. And although supply has expanded because of productivity improvements, these analysts believe that change in diets for millions of new consumers has impacted all prices. (Katz, 2016:86)

Taken together, these three explanations point to complementary aspects of the same phenomena. In the coming years, it may become clear which of these three has been the main determinant in causing food shortages. But whatever the most important cause, be it financial manoeuvres, competing activities, or structural gaps between production and consumption, the results are the same: and exacerbation of the tragedy of hunger. (Ibid. p.86)

Neoliberal globalisation provides the backdrops for this scourge. It mandated that agriculture be converted to focus on exports at the expense of traditional crops. This transformation benefited agro-business, undermined food security, destroyed the peasantry, and accentuated a rural exodus. Free-trade standards pushed by the WTO forced export specialisation onto many peripheral economies, converting them into net purchasers of basic products. They lost their national food reserves and found themselves unprepared to face the current cycle of rising costs. This vulnerability favoured several developed economies that subsequently offloaded their surpluses onto ruined communities who had previously been self-sufficient. Malnutrition constitutes the sharpest end of the stick when it comes to the regression suffered by the Third World as transnational corporations covet and prey on their natural resources, with oil, minerals, water and forests being the major targets for this theft. (Ibid. pp.86-87)

To sum, the relations with the center resulted in underdevelopment and distorted development in the periphery. Distorted development was characterized by export orientation to serve the needs of the center, a bias towards light industry, and the hypertrophy (expansion) of the tertiary sector as explained above. Aid flows from the center enabled it to control the nature of development and perpetuate dependence. Labor migration from the periphery was engineered to weaken the leverage of labor in the center and also represented a transfer of surplus from the periphery, which had invested in building labor skills. Thus, the only way to move out of underdevelopment and end distorted development was by breaking away from the world market or by severing relations with the center.

Chapter 3

FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

Food is the most important means for survival. Its insecurity is fraught with serious ramifications for the socio-economic development of a society and also for its sustainability. No civilized society can afford to ignore them. Pangs associated with an empty stomach are defined as hunger. Everything else can wait, but not hunger. A hungry person listens neither to religion nor reasons, nor is bent by prayers, rightly remarks the Roman philosopher Seneca. Death due to starvation is the logical culmination of the persistence of these pangs. Right to Food from this perspective is understood as the right to have two square meals. This is critical, but not sufficient. Broadly speaking, it encompasses not only hunger but also the basic needs. In a way, nutrition security is broader than food security. Moreover, availability of food at the macro level cannot be equated with its availability at the individual/household level or vice versa. Availability, access, utilization, and vulnerability are important determinants of food insecurity at various levels of aggregation. Availability, in turn, is determined by quantum and quality of sources of food. Access hinges on purchasing power. Dietary patterns, preferences, nutritional knowledge and caring practices directly influence utilization of food. Vulnerability encompasses exchange, entitlement failures resulting into starvation, and at times, starvation deaths.

This particular chapter looks into all these issues and is divided into three sections. The first section looks into famine in different historical periods and responses of the society and the state towards it. The next section explains poverty alleviation policies since independence. India was suffering from poverty and hunger during the independence period and failed to produce enough food to feed the hungry. Development of agricultural infrastructure, poverty eradication programme, land reforms and green revolution were the major policies of independent India. Next section tries to explore the changes after globalization. The discussion will also include some of the current international developments, especially in the sphere of trade and agriculture, which affect food security in India. How globalization leads to agrarian crisis, it will be discussed in the next section. The last section will elaborate on the various food security schemes.

3.1: Famines in Historical Perspective

Famines are spoken of even in the ancient Vedic literature, and in the ancient ages when the Jataka stories were composed. The Jatakas are of great value because they stretch from the pre-Christian era to the Mauryan period and contain a general picture of social and economic conditions of those times, including descriptions of famines. In later literature, namely after the Jatakas, we see a gradual evolution of an elaborate system of precautions against famine and for grappling with the food problems, some of which are remarkable for their modernity. The imperial Mauryas under whom India received its first unity- both cultural and political- laid down elaborate instructions for the higher officers with respect to the measures for dealing with famine and other natural calamities. Kautilya has mentioned them in detail in *Arthashastra* -“In the first place, it was ordained that half of the stores in the State warehouse should always be kept in reserve for times of famine.” When famine occurred, the state distributed relief from this reserve, provided seed grains for the next harvest and started public works to keep people remuneratively employed. He further says that when famine visits the country, half of the annual revenues in kind should be reserved for famine relief. If the state granaries fail to suffice, the ordinary laws of property should be promptly suspended, and the government should force the rich to yield up their hoards of grain and levy heavy taxes on them. Relief should be sought from friendly neighbouring states as well. (Acharya, 1983:16-17)

Authentic evidence is available to show that regulation of prices were preventive as well as relief measures against famine emerged during Ashoka’s reign as an important branch of Hindu polity. *Arthashastra* contains copious references to the effect that the surest guarantee against famine commended to every ruler as the first lesson of statecraft was an enlightened revenue policy. Loans of provisions and gratuitous relief were distributed by royal, private or corporate endeavor. (Ibid. p. 17)

3.2: Famines in Medieval and Moghul Times

The subsequent history contains extensive references to the famines occurring in the country. Kalhan’s *Rajtarangini* contains graphic description of famines and measures adopted by the kings to provide relief to people. In the medieval times and later during

the Moghul rule, history is replete with instances of famines sweeping through the country and the then government fighting them. Sher Shah Suri (1486-1545) was the first Muslim ruler to put the revenue administration on a rational and sound footing. Having regard to the regularity and severity of famines that plagued the country in those days, he established a famine relief store to which each peasant had to contribute grain at the rate of 200 *Bahloli Tankas* in weight per *bigha*. The grain thus collected was preserved in local government stores and was distributed among people through cheap grain shops when famine conditions prevailed. (Ibid. p. 18)

The first famine in Akbar's reign almost coincided with his accession to the throne (1555-56). We learn from Abul Fazl that it was Akbar's policy to make arrangement for relieving the distress stricken people. In 1595 he appointed Sheikh Farid as a special Officer to supervise relief measures. During Shahjahan's reign there was a great famine in 1625 when "a good Emperor distributed food but he was unable to prevent man eating man". There was another famine in 1630 and 1631 when the monsoon failed almost completely over the tract comprising Gujarat and Ahmednagar with portions of Bijapur and Golconda, and before the end of the year the local stock of food was exhausted. It was recorded by historians that supplies were available elsewhere, but it was impossible to bring them to the heart of the affected region, because transport animals need food and water along their routes, while the country was bare of grass, and the streams and ponds were dry. The emperor directed the officials of Burhanpur, Ahmedabad and Surat to establish soup kitchens or alms houses for the benefit of the poor. It was further ordered that so long as his majesty remained at Burhanpur and Golconda Rs. 5000 should be distributed among the deserving poor every Monday, "that day being distinguished above all others as the day of the Emperor's accession to throne...thus on every Mondays rupees one lakh was given away in charity. His Majesty ordered the officials to distribute Rs. 50,000 among famine stricken of Ahmedabad...Under the direction of the Queen of the generous Emperor, taxes amounting to nearly Rs. 70 lakhs were remitted, amounting to an 11th part of the whole revenues." (Ibid. pp. 18-19)

History goes in to record a number of famines that occurred during the 17th century and the measures adopted by the Moghul emperors to provide relief to the people. During

Aurangzeb's reign alms houses were opened, taxes were remitted and those already collected were used for the purchase of corn which was distributed among the poor. He spent large sums of money conveying grains by land as well as by water into the interior of the provinces. The grains were purchased at any price with the public money and it was re-sold at a very moderate rate. (Ibid. p. 19)

3.3: Famines in Colonial India

There was a disconcerting increase in the incidence and frequency of famine in India after 1860. In the short span of fifty years for 1860 to 1909, there were twenty famine or scarcity years. Never before in Indian history had this record been equalled. The tragedy in Orissa in 1865-66 stands as a distinct case as at the height of distress, when the government was able to realize the gravity of the situation and had taken the decision to import supplies from Government account into the affected region, it still became impossible to import adequate quantities of rice quickly into the famine area to save life. A million and a quarter people perished due to starvation in this famine which was as much the result of "inevitable circumstances" as of administrative inefficiency and lack of forethought on the part of local official. But in all other famines during that period, it was short supply of food grains that was responsible for a steep rise in prices thereby making food inaccessible to the poorer section of the community. In the drought of 1896-97, for instance, the loss of crop was estimated at one-third the average annual production or "18 to 19 millions." Against that, the total imports from Burma that year were 6 lakh tons. There were little accumulated reserves from previous years available in the country. And yet there was "no absolute dearth of food" and throughout the famine period food was "always purchasable though at high, and in some remote places, excessively high, price." There was a loss of 4.25 million lives due to starvation during this famine. This clearly showed that famine was no more a matter of complete absence of foodgrains from the market; under modern conditions, it was the sharp rise in prices which rendered food beyond the reach of the poor that caused starvation and death. Frequent famines and high prices of food during the last four decades of the nineteenth were a clear indication of growing shortage of food in the country. (Bhatia, 1970:20, 2-3)

The Bengal Famine of 1943 must be regarded as a land-mark in the long history of food and famine problems in India. In thirty years from 1910 to 1940, there were eighteen scarcities but no major famine involving loss of life due to starvation. The insignificance of the famine problem during this period may be judged from the fact that the total expenditure on famine relief relied during this was Rs. 4.61 crores which is less than half the expenditure on one single famine of 1899-1900. This comparative freedom from famine helped to lull the country and its leaders into sense of complacency which was unwarranted by the real shock to all those who had not realized till then how precarious was the balance between demand and supply of food grains before the war. The Bengal famine is best described as a “tragedy in unpreparedness.” (Bhatia, 1970:20)

The famine of 1943 is of special interest for the present study for another reason also. It marks the end of the era of the masterly inactivity on the part of the Government in the matter of food supply in the country and the beginning of the policies of control over prices and distribution of foodgrains by the state which have continued ever since with short interruptions. Though India attained freedom four years later, the Bengal famine provided the most convenient starting point for a study of Indian’s food problem and policies since Independence.

In spite of the frequent and many visitations of famine in the 19th century, India did not develop a food policy till 1943. There was no attempt at increasing food production even when a famine occurred; any suggestion to prohibit the export of food grains at least for the duration of famine was frowned upon. The distribution of available supplies even in times of scarcity was left to the market forces. This gave free play to the market practices of hoarding and speculation to the great detriment of poor consumers. While supplies were distributed by traders widely and in a sense, efficiently, in every famine year, prices rose four-fold over the preceding year. This rendered foodgrains beyond the reach of the poor masses and exposed them to starvation. Millions of deaths from starvation during those famines must be attributed to the lack of a positive policy of the Government on production and distribution of foodgrains. Laissez-faire is all right in conditions of normal demand and supply. But in times of stress and strain, it can rely upon only at the cost of unnecessary suffering of the consumer. The history of famines in India in the

nineteenth century proves that in a period of increasing demand and rising prices, free trade in foodgrains is a disastrous policy. In such a period if mass starvation and suffering are to be avoided, the state must intervene actively in arranging distribution of available supplies. Food controls are inevitable in such a situation; no responsible government can escape this obligation to the people. But whether these controls should continue even in normal years when adequate supplies to feed the population becomes available is another question. (Bhatia, 1970:25-26)

At a time when the British regime set up in India, the socio-economic organization in the rural areas was still predominantly communal. The alien rule forced the pace of change. Two factors which profoundly affected the agrarian structure of the country was:

- a) the destruction of indigenous industry and trade
- b) latter half of the 18th century and early 19th century and the British land revenue system which created the proprietary rent-receiving interests in land that came to be freely bought and sold.

England resorted to heavy tariff duties on Indian imports to protect her textile industry. Similarly, export trade in Indian manufactures was destroyed by deliberate acts of discouragement and by the imposition of heavy import duties. Because of the cheap cloths and other items were available to the people, many craftsmen were left without jobs. The number of landless day labourers increased.

The new value attached to the land led to the development of a new class relation which affected both production and distribution. The labourers had to depend on wages, and the cultivators had to pay the heavy amount as land-revenue. As R.C. Dutt wrote, "the real cause is that in Bengal and a few other tracts, the land assessment is so heavy that the cultivator is not able to save in good years enough to meet the failure of harvests in bad years. (Dutt, 1986:124)

All these cumulatively led to a loss of purchasing power. Foodgrains were available, but people could not buy it. The speculative force of trade made more acute the shortage of food. The stocks disappeared from the market which consequently led to a sharp rise in

prices with the corresponding decrease in the income of the people which place food beyond the reach of the common man.

3.4: Poverty Alleviation Policies since Independence

After independence, to combat the hunger, malnutrition and to increase food production, from the 1950s to the 1970s the Indian state- the major parties of which had support from peasants because of their advocacy of agrarian reform- to elimination of the intermediaries, grant long-term lease to tenants (or secure permanent access to land), and set ceiling on the size of landholding do as to redistribute excess land and establish a more equitable land holding system. The abolition of the intermediaries was relatively successful, but land distribution and tenancy reform met with much less success.

Community Development Projects was launched, which have been sponsored by the government of the Indian Union to assist the reconstruction of the agrarian economy and the rural society. The Planning Commission in their First Five-Year Plan have described the Community Development Projects 'as the method through which Five-Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the village.' The Community Development Projects are of vital importance, according to Pandit Nehru, 'not so much for the material achievements that they would bring about, but much more so, because they seem to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter the builder of his village centres and India in the larger sense.'

The Community Development Programme was inaugurated on October 2, 1952. Fifty-five Community Projects were launched. Each Project Area comprised about 300 villages. The second Five-Year Plan proposed to bring every village in India under this scheme, 40 percent of the area being brought under a more intensive development scheme. An imposing list of activities has been prepared by the sponsors of the Community Development Projects. They include various items connected with the following eight categories of undertaking:

- (1) Agriculture and related matter;
- (2) Communications;
- (3) Education;
- (4) Health;
- (5) Training;
- (6) Social Welfare;
- (7) Supplementary Employment;
- and (8) Housing.

The impact of the Community Development Projects has been subjected to analysis and evaluation by some scholars and organizations. Prof. Wilson, Prof. Carl Taylor, Prof. Oscar Lewis, Prof. Opler and his team, Prof. Dube, Prof. Mandelbaum and many others have attempted to assess the nature of the impact of the Community Development Projects on the life of rural people. According to these evaluators, the failure of the Community Development Projects, in essence, is due to one or more of the following factors: ignorance, lack of will on the part of the personnel, faulty organizational principles, fatalism of the vast bulk of the people, lack of technical and social skills, or wrong choice in selection of items. According to Prof. Dube, the main obstacles are: “(i) the general apathy of a considerable part of the village population, (ii) suspicion and distrust of officials and outsiders; (iii) failure on the part of the Project to evolve effective and adequate media of communications; (iv) tradition and cultural factors.” (Desai, 1984:620)

The Balwantrai Committee Report is critical of the structural foundation of the Community Administration. The report suggests that the elected village Panchayat Samiti at the block level act as agencies to execute the Community Development Programme and the Present Block level and village level bureaucratic machinery by wound up.

The advantages of the improvement, as pointed out by the Community Evaluation Reports, are taken by larger cultivators. As Prof. Dube points out:

“Although the ideal of the Community Development Project was to work for the many-sided development of the entire community, from the foregoing account of its work...it is clear that it's significant and best-organized activities were confined to the field of agricultural extension, and consequently the group of agriculturists benefitted the most from them. A closer analysis of the agricultural extension work itself reveals that nearly 70 percent of its benefits went to the elite group and the more affluent and influential agriculturists. The gains to poorer agriculturists were considerably smaller...for the economic development of this group, as well as for that of the artisans and agricultural labourers, no programmes were initiated by the projects”. (as cited in Desai, 1984:618)

After a decade of planning, Nehru's government had to appoint a committee in 1960 under the Chairmanship of Professor P. C. Mahalanobis to study the distribution of income and levels of living in India. Even before this committee submitted its report in 1964, Pitambar Pant, then the head of the Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission, prepared a paper in 1962 (Perspective Planning Division 1964) outlining a 15-year perspective plan, the objective of which was to assure a minimum level of living for the entire Indian population by 1976. He argued that "the central concern of our planning has to be the removal of poverty as early as possible. The stage has now come when we should sharply focus our efforts on providing an assured minimum income to every citizen of the country within a reasonable period. Progressively the minimum itself should be raised as development goes apace." (Dev, 1994:290)

It is sometimes maintained, and with some reason, that Indian plans have ignored issues relating to the distribution of incomes. 'with some reason,' because the central analytical models, as we have seen, pertained largely to issues relating to capital accumulation under conditions of structural backwardness. But to say this is not the same thing as saying distributional issues were not articulated at all in the planning documents. In fact, neither Nehru nor Mahalanobis had forgotten to address themselves to issues of distributional manure. In his famous 'Approach' paper, Mahalanobis mentioned three major issues of policy as deserving of serious attention, even if short-run productivity gains were not particularly great: education, health, and land redistribution (Chakravarty, 1987:27). On the issue of land distribution he had written, 'such redistribution would not necessarily lead to an increase in productivity, but it may still be worthwhile because of the social and political benefits which would accrue from it.' Further, he was worried about the premature mechanization of agriculture as well as of light consumer goods industries, at least in part from distributional considerations. In the Third Five-Year Plan, whose first chapter, 'Objectives of Planned Development' was at least partly written by Nehru himself, distributional considerations were even more strongly emphasized. Thus, there were sections in it dealing with disparities of income, concentration of incomes, and so on. A key to the distributional thinking which underlay the Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy is to be found on page sixteen of the document: 'The essential problem here is to

reduce the spread between the higher and the lower incomes and to raise the level of the minimum' (Ibid. pp. 27-28)

Two successive major droughts struck in 1965 to 1967. To meet the challenge of food shortages, the government resorted to the import of foodgrains and its distribution through a strengthened public distribution system (PDS). It also set up a procurement system so as to create a buffer stock for the operation of the PDS and stabilisation of the food price. Surplus producing areas were zoned to facilitate procurement of the surplus by the Food Corporation of India. Procurement was to be at a minimum price that would be remunerative for the farmers so as to encourage them to grow more.

India had started receiving food aid under PL 480 in the 1950s, and this came in handy during the severe drought of the mid-Sixties when large quantities of grains were received. It was then said that India lived from "Ship to mouth" (Kumar, 2013:92). As Sridhar (2008:22) writes, "Lord Boyd-Orr remarked after independence in Bombay that, "so long as a country depended for its food on other countries, it was not independent even though it may be free politically."

The country went in for Green Revolution technology in agriculture to step up production in wheat and later in rice and other crops. This technology developed in the West required capital and other inputs, such as assured irrigation, mechanisation, chemical fertilisers, and pesticides. Hence, it was only feasible where the infrastructure existed, and the farmers were prosperous enough to adopt the technology, such as in Punjab and pockets of Andhra Pradesh. Further, over time, there was greater casualisation of labour in agriculture and the gap between the landed and landless in green revolution areas grew. Even though it was clear that rural disparities would grow, the need for self-sufficiency was paramount, and the country went ahead (Kumar, 2013:93). As Sridhar (2008:23) writes, it led to "... dramatically increased foodgrain yields and reduced the dependency on food imports, this aggregate self-sufficiency masked a substantial extent of individual food insecurity,..."

Experience with the Community Development Programme of the fifties showed that centralised programmes, however well conceived, did not produce desired results in

terms of development at the grassroots when implemented through the bureaucracy. It highlighted the importance of people's involvement and participation in local development. This realisation led to the appointment of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee which came out strongly in favour of entrusting the responsibility for planning and implementation of local level development programmes to the democratically elected village and block level bodies and largely ex officio one at the district level. (Vaidyanathan, 2013:242)

The recommendations of this committee were implemented with varying degrees of zeals across the country, but by the late 1970s, signs of stagnation were visible. Due to this fatigue as well as to other significant political changes at the macro level (including the Emergency and its after effects), there developed a feeling that the question of decentralisation required a fresh look. And this resulted in the constitution of the Ashok Mehta Committee, which gave its report in 1978. This committee went further and explicitly envisaged a political role for local level institutions. It is a reasonable and plausible, conjecture that this triggered the idea of changes in the law that would give PRIs as well as urban local bodies a formal status in the governance structure of the country with mandatory provisions for regular elections, specifying local development functions to be entrusted to them along with authority and resources. This was the purpose of the 73d and 74th amendments to the constitution.

The most overt use of the rhetoric of poverty in post-colonial Indian Politics was seen in this period, under the premiership of Indira Gandhi, who declared a 'direct attack' on poverty. The poor now became located at the heart of an emerging politics of populism and patronage. Mrs. Gandhi came to power at a time of significant political unrest, economic difficulties, industrial stagnation, public-finance problems, food shortage, and inflation. Most importantly, her ascent to power was a highly contested process (Gooptu, 2014:50). To shore up her power and position within the party, she embarked on a path of authoritarian centralization and personalization of power. At the same time, to out-manoeuvre the opposition and to create her autonomous base of political support, she sought to reach out to the poor directly, with a strong populist rhetoric of socialism and redistribution, coining the term *garibihatao* ('abolish poverty') to rally the masses. She

claimed to rule in the interest of the poor masses of the country, and even justified the declaration of an authoritarian state of internal emergency, suspending the constitution and civil liberties, as a measure to combat those putative forces that were said to be in conflict with her policies to benefit the poor common people (Guha, 2007:493). She undertook a few high-profile policy initiatives, such as the nationalization of banks and the abolition of the privy purse of the Indian princes, in order to prove her redistributive and socialist credentials, as well as to demonstrate her determination to tackle India's economic problems. It appeared that after a long wait, the moment had arrived for fulfilling the dreams of Swaraj by creating an egalitarian social order based upon economic self-reliance and democratic social transformations. (Kumar,n.d.:156)

One of the aims of the nationalization of the Imperial Bank of India and its incorporation soon as State Bank of India in 1955 was to extend credit to rural areas. Since the era of social control over banks in 1968, commercial banks were required to provide banking access to sectors hitherto excluded. In fact, in the early years following the Bank nationalization of 1969, the phrase 'neglected sectors' was used to refer to agriculture and small-scale industry and businesses. In subsequent years, anti-poverty development programmes for generating livelihood were implemented through credit-linked subsidy schemes. While the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a rapid expansion of rural credit, the 1990s was characterized by extension of microcredit through Self-help Groups (SHGs) linked to commercial banks, actively encouraged by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). (Reddy and Thorat, 2013: 152-53)

Five Year Plan and several poverty-alleviation initiatives were launched during Indira Gandhi tenure, ranging from rural employment schemes, mid-day meal provision for poor children, and supply of subsidized food through the public distribution system, to rural electrification programmes and an explicitly stated commitment to ensure the basic needs of health and education (Vaidyanathan, 2001:1808). The 20 Point Programme of Development that she launched as her distinctive flagship initiative was projected as 'a direct assault on poverty,' which focused attention on the poor themselves. State policy now focused on the poor, and it privileged direct instruments of attacking poverty through targeted policy interventions, as opposed to indirect instruments of growth,

development, or general welfare, as favoured by Nehru. Rather than being the subjects of a developmental state, the poor now came to be unequivocally cast as clients of a bureaucratic government through the extension of multiple targeted policies that vastly expanded the nexus of patronage politics and further entrenched transactional, clientelistic relations between the poor and politicians as the central features of political life, reaching down to the local level. While some of the new schemes were more in name, there have also been significant changes in substantive aspects of their scope and content and organisation.

The case of adopting Wage Employment Programmes at the national level was strongly advocated by Dandekar and Rath. They highlighted the fact that the large majority of the poor are from rural households with very little or no land, who depend exclusively or mostly on wage labour. Their poverty is due to lack of adequate employment opportunities and low wages. Neither of which is likely to be addressed adequately or soon as a result of overall growth and diversification of the economy. Therefore, it was argued, effective and speedy reduction of poverty would be possible only through a massive programme of rural public works on a scale that would meet the gap between their current incomes and the minimum desired level. (Vaidyanathan, 2013:117)

Minhas (1972), while not supporting the idea of an employment guarantee, emphasised the potential of large-scale rural works programmes to solve the employment problem in a manner that would also help to raise agricultural production. He was critical of the belief current at the time that radical redistribution of land (even if it were feasible), or through ill-planned works programmes of the make-work variety could solve the problem. He argued that a speedy progress towards this goal required effective measures to provide all sections free basic education, vocational training, basic health facilities, water supply and sanitation to remove disabilities from which the poorer segments of the community suffer, along with an integrated programme designed to address structural constraints to rural economic growth, and at the same time utilise idle labour in such a way that "... employment and income opportunities for the poor and the productive capabilities of economically weak producers can be significantly increased" (Srinivas and Barddhan, 1974:402)

Sixth Plan (1980-85) included a number of poverty eradication measures such as a programme for rural works and self-employment and schemes for increasing the productivity of small and marginal farmers and rural artisans. The Seventh Plan (1985-1990) envisaged a continuation of the various programmes of rural development but proposed enhancement in coordination and rationalization of various programs. Midday meal programs were introduced in a number of states under which school children were provided free meals at lunch time. The approach to the Eighth Plan (1990-1995) formulated by the Janta Dal Planning Commission recognizes employment creation as the major remedy for poverty and proposes a much greater decentralization of program planning and implementation.

In the 1980s under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi leadership, India entered the phase of liberalisation. The year 1991 was the beginning of an explicit phase of rolling back of the state due to the imperatives of liberalisation. It recorded a relatively higher growth during 1980-2000, particularly during 1990s as this was the decade of structural economic reforms. There was a decline in poverty while improvement in health and literacy levels of the people of India can also be seen. India still suffers with high levels of illiteracy, high rate of infant mortality, high incidence of disease, disability, and malnutrition even after half a century of freedom and democracy. (Kumar, 2011:165-166)

The sociological consequences of the liberalisation-globalisation drive have been summarised by Yogendra Singh as state vs. Market dilemma-

“The extent to which the power of market increases and expands, the significance of the state as a supreme political institution undergoes major alterations. Idealistically, some protagonists of the market even anticipate the end of the notion of sovereignty. For societies such as India, where nation-building has still not reached the level of integrative maturity, such fear of the end of the sovereignty or a threat to it due to the unhindered play of the global market force causes not only an acute anxiety but also poses a challenge.”
(Cited in Kumar, 2011:166)

The poor performance of agriculture was, in fact, an important feature of the slowdown in economic growth during 1990-2004, while GDP growth in agriculture averaged 4.2 per cent per annum during 1992-97, the corresponding figure for 1997-2004 was only 1.1 percent. The sharp slowdown in agricultural growth may in its turn be traced to two sets of factors, one autonomous and relatively minor and the other major and policy related. Three out of the seven years constituting the reference period were characterized by below normal monsoon- a deficiency that was somewhat above the long-term average (of one out of three). However, the more important source of decline in agricultural growth lay in, firstly sharp fall in fixed investment in agriculture and secondly constraint faced by farmers, especially small and medium ones, in securing production loan. The decline in fixed capital formation in agriculture was due primarily to change the government's fiscal policy stance, reflected in sharp fall in public investment in agriculture, especially in investment in irrigation and other rural infrastructural projects. This triggered off a slowdown in private investment as well, given the positive impact of irrigation, soil conservation, and other infrastructural facilities on the productivity of private capital in agriculture. Curiously enough, the cutback in public investment in agriculture (as also in other sectors) was intended to reduce the fiscal deficit; but through its negative supply side effect, the policy turned out to be counterproductive. (Rakshit, 2007:78-79)

The other growth inhibiting factors in agriculture, viz., credit constraint, was the fallout (albeit indirect) of policy initiatives. Following wide ranging financial sector reforms there has been considerable improvement in efficiency and shock absorptive capacity of the sector. However, the drive toward raising the capital adequacy ratio and reproducing non-performing assets (NPAs) has tended to make banks, especially public sector ones, extremely risk averse and cut shows their exposure to agriculture (as also small and medium enterprise in the non-agricultural sector). (Rakshit, 2007:79)

Contrary to general impression, a number of initiatives were taken in the post-liberalization period in relation to a credit for agriculture. Banks were required to prepare Special Agriculture Credits Plans under which they set targets for themselves for disbursements taking into account the overall increment in credit indicated by the Reserve Bank. Innovative credit products were also introduced during this period with a

view to improving products and to improve the reach of institutional credit. The self-help group (SHG)- bank linkage programme, launched in 1993-94 for providing micro-finance to the rural poor, had facilitated linking of banks with more than 16.18 lakh SHGs by March 2005. It is heartening that 90 per cent of these are exclusively women's group. The introduction of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was a step towards simplifying the procedures for timely and adequate short-term institutional credit to farmers as well as for reducing the transaction costs to bankers. The number of cards issued has increased in each successive year since its inception and has reached a total of over 510.8 lakhs cards by the end of March 2005. Finally, there was the introduction of the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) (in the 1995-6 Union Budget) which may not provide any direct finance to farmers but help to improve rural infrastructure. (Rangarajan, 2009:23-24) Recently launched agricultural development policies are: Gramin Bhandaran Yojana (GBY)¹, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)², Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana etc.

The debate among economists is a paragon of civility compared with the one taking place in the streets. Anti-globalisers' central claim is that globalisation is making the rich richer and the poor poorer; pro-globalisers assert that it helps the poor. But if one looks at the factual evidence, the matter is rather more complicated. On the basis of household survey data collected by different agencies, the World Bank estimates the fraction of the population in developing countries that fall under the \$1-a-day poverty line (at 1993 prices)- an admittedly crude but internationally comparable level. By this measure, extreme poverty is declining in the aggregate. (Bradhan, 2015:5)

But although the poorest are not, on the whole, getting poorer, no one has yet convincingly demonstrated that improvements in their condition are mainly the result of

¹ Government of India has launched 'Grameen Bhandaran Yojana' w.e.f. 01.04.2001. Main objectives of scheme include creation of scientific storage capacity with allied facilities in rural areas to meet out various requirements of farmers for storing farm produce, processed farm produce, agricultural inputs, etc., and prevention of distress sale by creating the facility of pledge loan and marketing credit.

² Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) launched in August 2007. The RKVY aims at achieving 4% annual growth in the agriculture sector during the XI Plan period, by ensuring a holistic development of Agriculture and allied sectors.

globalisation. In China, the poverty trend can be attributed to internal factors such as the expansion of infrastructure, the massive 1978 land reforms (in which the Mao-era communes were disbanded), changes in grain procurement prices, and the relaxation of restrictions on rural-to-urban migration. Similarly, rural poverty reduction in India may be attributable to the spread of the Green Revolution in agriculture, government anti-poverty programmes, and social movements- not the trade liberalisation of the 1990s. In Indonesia, the Green Revolution, macroeconomic policies stabilisation of rice prices and massive investment in rural infrastructure played a substantial role in the large reduction of rural poverty. Of course, globalisation, by expanding employment in labour-intensive manufacturing, has helped to pull many Chinese and Indonesians out of poverty since the mid-1980s (though not yet as much in India, for various domestic institutional and policy reasons). But it is only one factor among many accounting for the economic advances of the past 25 years. (Bradhan, 2015:6)

3.5: Commercialisation and Corporatisation of Indian Agriculture: Threats to Food Security

India started a process of economic reform in June 1991, which involved major policy changes in the country. In the case of agriculture, two major changes were brought about. One, restriction on imports, export licensing, minimum export prices and canalization have been gradually reduced, and the private sector has been allowed and encouraged to participate in the import and export of major agricultural and mineral products. Two, the domestic prices of cereals through government intervention in minimum support prices and open market operations were raised to reduce protection to agriculture because of domestic prices being lower than the international prices of several commodities.

Utsa Patnaik predicted in 1992 that given the deflationary climate, food security would be undermined with trade liberalisation in India. Within a few years of liberalisation of trade, 8 million hectares of food-growing land was converted to exportable crops which lead to a fall in per head foodgrains output. However, farmers did not benefit since their exposure to steeply falling primary global prices from mid-decade had plunged them into spiralling farm debt and insolvency. Since 1998, nearly nine thousand farmer suicides have been recorded. And this was just the tip of the iceberg - there is a pervasive agrarian

crisis, and foodgrains absorption in India is back to the level prevailing fifty years ago. (Patnaik, 2008) This situation is due to a relative decline in basic food production. This is because irrigated and fertile land, as well as capital, is restricted, and there is competition for its allocation between different types of crops. Thus, the success of the non- staple crops has necessarily to be at the expense of the staples; the 'success' of the non-staples is in turn related to the whole complex of profitability conditions and government policies in operation at various times.

In the observation of Vandana Shiva, trade liberalisation of agriculture has not been guided by the need for providing livelihood security for two-thirds of India's people who are farmers, for the food security of the poorer half of the Indians, or for India as a whole. (Shiva and Bedi, 2004) Thus, the livelihood base of millions at regional and national levels is severely threatened by the globalisation of agriculture. Trade liberalisation is generally responsible for food insecurity in four ways: It is leading to i) a transfer of resources from peasant to industry; ii) a shift of land use from the production of staple food to luxury and non-food crops (cash crops) such as shrimp and flowers for export; iii) diversion of cereals from domestic markets to exports, creating domestic scarcity and rising prices; and iv) removal of food subsidies, thus reducing domestic consumption and increasing food exports. As a result of trade liberalisation, cereal exports increased from 12 percent of total agricultural export in 1991-92 to 27 percent in 1995-96, and the per capita cereal consumption has declined from 17 k.g. per capita in the 1990s. (Ibid. p. 24)

According to Patnaik, during the five-year since trade liberalisation in agriculture, food grains growth slowed down.³ The gross area under foodgrains declined by about 4 million hectares over the reform period, coarse grains declined markedly by about 3 million hectares and combined with a decline in the pulses area account for the 4 million hectare decline, which is quite substantial. (Patnaik, 1996:2429-2449) Vandana Shiva

³ Within food grains while wheat and rice have an average percentage growth of 3.48 and 2.53 the pulses growth rate has averaged only 1.1 per cent while the coarse grains show the most alarming picture with lowest average growth rate of a mere 0.37 per cent. (Patnaik, Utsa, 1996: 2429-2449)

argues that the major threat of food insecurity in the age of globalization is the cultivation pattern shift from staples to cash crops.⁴

The commodities which are expanding today and are likely to grow in future to meet metropolitan demand - rice, cotton, vegetable oils, animal feeds, vegetables, flowers, ornamental plants and orchids, prawns and other seafood, and hardwood timbers for luxury furniture and house fitting. All of them precipitate complex problems like displacement of food growing land, displacement of hired labour, and in addition, there is irreversible forest and land degradation caused by some of these changes. The minor capitalist farmers, who enter into these areas for short-term profits, are often phased out to meet metropolitan demands. (Patnaik, 1996:2447)

Further, large industrial houses have been acquiring agricultural land in the traditionally paddy growing coastal areas of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu for conversion to prawn fisheries. The rapid growth of prawn fisheries in coastal and paddy producing land during the last five years is generating enormous tensions between the companies and individuals engaged in this lucrative export business on the one hand and environmentalists, fishermen and the local labourers displaced from paddy production, on the other. Illegal and semi-legal land-grabbing by the exporters; prawn raising leading to salination of soils making them unfit in the long run for paddy; depletion and salination of groundwater resources by the prawn fisheries affecting neighbouring farmers; diseases caused by effluents; loss of traditional access by local fishermen to the coast and beaches with privatization -- these are some of the many issues involved, and they deserve our close attention. (Ibid. p. 2448)

The visual evidence of the impact is also very clearly visible in millet-growing areas of peninsular India such as Telangana, parts of Marathwada and Gujarat. Fields of sunflower (promoted by ITC and other companies) have replaced millet. In northern

⁴“Since the new economic policies were introduced in 1990-91, the area under food grains has declined by 2 per cent, area under the coarse grains has declined by 18 per cent, area under non- food cash crops such as cotton and sugarcane increased by 25 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. During 1999- 2000- 2001, food production has gone down from 208.9 million tons to 196.1 million tons, a 12.8 per cent decline.” (Shiva, Vandana :2004)

India, the growing of horticultural products promoted by Pepsi-Cola Co., amongst others, is the newest avenue of investment for some capitalist farmers facing a recent squeeze on returns from foodgrains production. In North Bihar, eucalyptus for timber has reportedly replaced fields of food crops, and in Tamil Nadu fruit is displacing paddy in some areas. (Patnaik, 1992:36) These trends are of great concern from the point of view of foodgrains self-sufficiency, especially given the tightness of the foreign exchange situation which makes large food imports difficult: such imports would, in any case, negate the goal of achieving external balance in payments. (Ibid.) Under the new economic policy, the agri-business sector has emerged as an important area for export and employment promotion and enjoys the maximum government support. The assumption is that it is crucial to provide marketing and processing facilities to the agricultural production sector for its viable growth and development. In reality, the penetration of market into the rural areas, especially the land market, started affecting the asset base of the small and marginal farmers who started increasingly selling or leasing out land to the agri-business corporations. (Acharya, 1995) This is very likely to have led to the alienation of land from the owner-producers and convert them into wage workers.

Besides, changes in cropping pattern due to the entry of agri-business firms lead to a decline in production of cereals, which constitute main food for the rural poor. Thus, they become dependent on the market for their food, which may not be available at reasonable prices. Even the promise of employment generation is an empty one, as the employment generated in the processing factories is nowhere near the number of jobs lost in the crop sector due to changes in cropping pattern.

According to Panini in Karnataka, a significant change can be noticed in the rural areas affected by agribusiness. (Panini, 1999) The peasants have now become farmers, and traditional subsistence agriculture has yielded to agribusiness. The farmers found it profitable to grow commercial crops like mulberry, and with the money, they earned from the commercial crop they bought food from the market. The new agribusiness firms have encouraged this tendency by increasing the range of 'cash crops' and by introducing new varieties of hybrid seeds and tissue culture plants. The farmers now find horticulture, floriculture and seed production attractive alternatives to foodgrain cultivation. In

drawing inferences on the impact of agribusiness, it is important to keep in mind the fact that the trends that are contributing to the rapid expansion of the market can also easily get reversed leading to rapid contraction of economic opportunities.

With over 300,000 farmers have been committed suicides in the past 17 years. If given a choice, another 42 percent farmers want to quit agriculture. Despite the grave situation, the deliberate effort to keep agriculture starved of public sector funding, and thereby help the exodus process is finally becoming clearly visible. With no efforts to remove the burden of growing indebtedness, and with over 58 per cent farmers sleeping hungry, there is not much that farmers can do but migrate. The recent Census 2011 tells us that more than 2,400 farmers quit agriculture and migrate to the cities every day. Many independent estimates hold the number of people migrating to the cities to be around 50 lakh a year. (Sharma:2014) Jayati Ghosh argues that the proximate cause of such suicides is usually the inability to cope with the burden of debt, which farmers find themselves unable to repay. In most (but not all) cases, the debt was contracted to private moneylenders, as the massive decline in agricultural credit from banks and co-operatives has reduced access, especially of small cultivators, to institutional credit. Further, large numbers of farmers – tenants, tribal farmers, women farmers and those without legal titles – have no access at all to formal credit and are forced to rely entirely on private lenders. (Ghosh, 2005)

The suicides mentioned above reveal the darker side of the impact of agribusiness and corporatisation of agriculture under globalisation. As markets are opened up, it appears as if job opportunities and choices for making profits have increased, thereby creating an atmosphere of prosperity. Suicides by thousands of cotton farmers, however, reveal that the mood of the market may soon swing to the other extreme of depression and gloom.

The decline in cereal consumption during the reforms period is associated with changes in prices of cereals and other foods. During 1993-1994 to 1999-2000, the growth rate in cereal prices was 50 percent higher than the rate of growth in general prices. Cereal prices also showed a higher growth than any other agricultural commodity group during this period. The increase in prices of cereals, which account for more than one-third of total food expenditure, definitely caused an adverse impact in their consumption. The

increase in price, in turn, was caused by the raise given by the government to rice and wheat prices during the reform periods. Some decline in cereal consumption is also attributable to change in lifestyle, tastes preferences, etc. (Chand, 2008:129)

For the country as a whole 29.2 per cent, population consumed less than the recommended calories from all sources during 1987-88. Economic reforms initiated during the year 1991 resulted in a sharp increase in procurement and market prices of cereals, which are the basic food for the Indian population. During 1993-94, the undernourished population increased to 33.5 percent. There is a small reduction in the year 1999-00 but the undernourished population remains above 30 percent. A comparison of 1987-88 and 1999-2000 indicate a sharp increase in the undernourished population in rural areas and a decline in urban areas. (Ibid, p. 131)

Reduction in poverty among cultivator and rural labour households during reforms has not helped in reducing undernutrition and malnutrition. Contrary to the expectations there has been an increase in the incidence of undernourishment and malnourishment. The main reason for this turns out to be a reduction in per capita intake of cereals which has not been compensated in terms of energy and protein by an increase in consumption of horticultural and livestock products. The reason for this is the difference in the nutritive value of important foodstuffs. One kg of cereal contains about 3460-3610 kcal of energy and 64 (rice) to 116 (small millets) gram protein. Most of the leafy vegetables and fresh fruits contain less 1000 kcal and less than 60gm of protein per kg. Similarly, one litre of milk contains less than 1170 kcal of energy and less than 45 gram protein. Thus, to compensate for energy due to a one kg decline in cereals, fruit and vegetables or milk intake needs to be increased by more than 3 kg. Similarly, to compensate for protein, an increase in fruit/vegetable or milk needs to be much higher than the reduction in cereals. Because of these differences in nutritive value, it has been found in the case of Indians that a decline in cereal consumption over time has not been adequately compensated by an increase in other food stuff. It is only in some states like Punjab that very high levels of consumption of milk and milk products are taking care of energy despite a low intake of cereals. Similarly, it is found that in a poor state like Orissa, undernutrition is relatively

less compared to other states because of a high level of per capita consumption of cereals. (Ibid. pp. 133-34)

Cereals are the predominant source of calorie and protein for nutritional requirements of the rural masses. They are also the cheapest source of energy and protein in the country. Due to the low level of per capita income, the rural masses are not in a position to compensate for a nutritional decline to a decline in cereals by increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables, milk, meat, etc. to get adequate nutrition. Thus, the prices of cereals play an extremely important role in determining food and nutrition security of India's population. Any increase in the real prices of cereals results in their reduced consumption, which might help in building up a grain surplus but is determined to household food security. Dietary diversification away from cereal requires a much bigger increase in intake of non-cereal foods to maintain the same level of nutrition. This does not seem to be affordable at the present level of income in the country. Due importance should continue to be accorded to cereal and pulses for food and nutritional security in India.

After the corporatisation of agriculture, the essential subsistence crops were replaced by cash crops, thereby reducing the chances of self-sufficiency in food grain cultivation. Hence, food security for the present and future generations becomes an important concern not just in India but across the world. Unless and until the agrarian economies of the developing countries like India are protected against the onslaught of the profit motive and the market regime, the crisis is likely to escalate, and millions of landless laborers will be excluded from the market and pushed to the social margins. What is needed is a socio-political consensus in the areas of the corporatization of agriculture and on the issue of entitlement of the landless by redistributive land reforms and security of tenure to all.

3.6: Agrarian Crisis

Agrarian crisis and distress among farmers and agricultural labourers are very much linked to agrarian transition and other unresolved agrarian questions. Agrarian transition entails the transformation of the rural and agrarian economy, which is necessary for the

overall economic development of the economy with a particular mode of production and national social transformation. The historically observed pattern of economic transformation shows a shift in income-generating sectors from agriculture to industry. The workforce also received similar movement of transformation with some time lag.

The agricultural operations are increasingly becoming more and more capital intensive. The adoption of biological and mechanical innovations has been considered as a necessity for raising output and productivity of the crop sown. The application of these innovations has reduced the use of labour in the production process of agriculture and availability of work for labour except in the peak season has declined substantially. On the one side, the availability of work for the agricultural workforce has declined in general, and on the other side, it has increased the financial needs of conducting agricultural operations. Due to non-availability of regular work for agricultural labourers and growing intensity of finance for agriculture, this, in fact, has increased the dependence of the rural workforce on borrowing financial resources. In the near absence of availability of institutional finance, the agricultural labour and small and marginal farmers usually resort to borrowing in terms of rate of interest all, the borrowing requires collateral and surety. There is growing tendency of the emergence of interlinked agrarian markets, which are exploitative. This process culminates into increasing burden of debt in the absence of capacity to repay back. This is how agrarian distress originates and deepens over time, especially among small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers.

A major area of concern highlighted by S.L Shetty (2009) is the sluggish growth of institutional credit. The share of agriculture in the institutional credit, at about 10-11 per cent, was far below the stipulated target of 18 per cent. Till 2003, half of the farmers had no access to institutional finance. Moreover, the institutional agencies accounted for 57.7 percent of the outstanding loan amount of farmers. It was further followed by moneylenders (25.7 per cent), and then by traders (5.2per cent). These data suggests heavy dependency of farmers on informal sources of finance. The picture is adverse for small and marginal farmers. High-interest rates charged by informal sources are unaffordable, given the low productivity levels in agriculture. In this regard, Reddy and

Mishra (2009) raise an important question- without public infrastructure support and social security covering health, education, employment and old age, is it sustainable to do small and marginal farming? Further, the public funding for research and education is low in dry land states with harsh environments. The increasing capital intensity of new technology and institutional bias in the delivery of technology restricts access to technology for small marginal farmers. (Pal, 2009:87-88)

S. S. Jodhka broadly identifies two-to-three different sets of perspectives on the crisis of agriculture. Firstly he describes “the thesis of neglect”. He explains that the crisis of agriculture is directly derived from the shift in priorities during the early 1990s. The new found obsession with the “new economy”, information technology, media and the urban consumers usher a complete marginalisation of the “rural” and agrarian sector. The policies of economic liberalisation accordingly require the state to open up all sectors of the Indian economy to the global market. (Jodhka: 2006:1534) Furthermore, he links the rise in farmers’ suicides to “the crisis of ecology” and “disintegration of community”, mainly caused by the new technology, and globalisation. (Ibid.)

Vandana Shiva, while commenting on the crisis of militancy in Punjab, argued that the green revolution was not merely a technological innovation meant to increase the productivity of land and bringing prosperity to farmers but its negative social consequences surpassed its benefits. The green revolution introduced a commercial culture in rural Punjab and destroyed the community. It changed social relations, from those based on a mutual obligation to those based purely on the market principle.

“Atomised and fragmented cultivators related directly to the state and the market. This generated, on the one hand, an erosion of cultural norms and practices and on the other hand, it sowed the seeds of violence and conflict” (Shiva 1991: 171).

Recently, Shiva along with some others argued that there is a direct link between the suicides by farmers growing cash crops with that of the ecological crisis caused by the introduction of new economic policies that are associated with the globalisation process.

“The tragedy of farmers committing suicides for a couple of years in some states highlights some of these high social and ecological costs which are linked to the globalisation of non-sustainable agriculture and which is not restricted to the cotton growing areas of various states but have been experienced in all commercially grown and chemically-farmed crops in all regions. While the benefits of globalisation go to the seeds and chemical corporations through expanding markets, the cost and risks are exclusively borne by the small farmers and landless peasants.” (Shiva et al 1999)

Vandana Shiva and Afsar H. Jafri argues that on the flip side green revolution or chemical agriculture has resulted in an increase in weed, pest, and disease occurrence. Herbicides and pesticides are toxic chemicals aimed at controlling weed and pest problems in crops. However, such reductionist ‘solutions’ have also proved non-sustainable over the long period. Residues of herbicide in soils have led to a decline in yields, while on the other hand, use of pesticide has led to an increase in pest occurrence through the emergence of pesticide resistance in pests and through killing of predators. Genetic engineering is now deepening the reductionist paradigm of controlling pests through the creation of herbicide resistant and pest resistant crops. More than 80 percent of the biotechnology research in agriculture account for this application. The evidence is already available that rather than controlling weeds, pests, and diseases, genetic engineering will create super weeds, super pests and super viruses. (Shiva and Jafri, 2002: 169-170)

For every suicide, there are thousands of farmers trapped in mounting debt owing to the shift to irregular export crop from local food grains. Others have taken the path of selling vital bodily organs, for example, a kidney in 1998 would fetch Rs. 40,000, but the rates have declined as agrarian distress intensifies. Touts working for the large private super-speciality hospitals are in look out for these vulnerable farmers and lure them into the illegal operation after which they find it difficult to do a full day’s work. Under such circumstances, families who had been sufficiently viable earlier for the women not to work for wages, women are seeking wage-paid work, any work which would be able to meet their ends. Such a crisis of mounting indebtedness and despair is unprecedented in

independent India. It is the direct result of trade liberalization, exposure to the global volatility and resulting price crashes. (Patnaik, 2003:53-54)

Apart from the above-mentioned scholars, there are several other scholars who have tried to establish a link between the increase in farmers' suicides with the breakdown of the ecological balance, kinship support system and disintegration of "community". It also includes the rise of individualistic orientations brought under the light of the new technology and development philosophy to the Indian countryside (Ahalawat 2003; Vasavi 1999).

Devinder Sharma further criticizes the agricultural economist's view who in turn blame low crop productivity as the chief reason behind the continued agrarian distress. It is often stated that farmers can only survive if they become globally competitive. Thus, who are unable to match the higher crop yields in countries like America or China are left with no option but to commit suicide. (Sharma, 2016a)

Punjab has the highest annual per hectare productivity of cereal crops (like wheat, rice and maize) with 7,633 kg. With the entire crop matrix in its favour, Punjab leads the productivity chart leaving behind US (7,238 kg), UK (7,008 kg), France (7,460 kg) and 5,920 kg in Japan. But if raising productivity is a major concern there is no reason for Punjab farmers to commit suicide. Punjab is the latest to join the farming graveyard. But the fact that economists don't want to acknowledge is that it is the low price that farmers being deliberately paid that is the primary reason for the terrible agrarian crisis that prevails (Ibid.).⁵

Farmers have been systematically kept impoverished all these years. In 1970, the minimum support price for wheat was Rs 76 per quintal. In 2015, wheat MSP was fixed

⁵ "With 70 per cent of the farmers owning less than one hectare of land, and with over 40 per cent of the farmers in possession of a MNREGA job card, it only shows how uneconomical farming has become over the years. According to the survey report, an average household of five people earns Rs 3,078 a month from crop cultivation, and another Rs 765 from dairy. Add to it an average of Rs 2069 from wages/salaries and Rs 514 from non-farm activities, the total monthly income for a household stands at Rs 6,426. In other words, crop cultivation and livestock rearing brings a monthly income of Rs 3,843 to a family which means that agriculture brings only 60 per cent of the monthly income for an agricultural household." (Sharma, 2014)

at Rs 1,450 per quintal, an increase by 19 times. In the same period, the basic salary (plus DA) of the government employees was raised by 120 to 150 times; of college/university lecturers by 150 to 170 times; of school teachers by 280 to 320 times; and of corporate employees by 300 to 1,000 times. If the farmers' income (measured through MSP he gets) were also raised in the same proportion in the past 45 years, rural India would be a vibrant and progressive economy. In other words, farming has deliberately been rendered uneconomical. (Sharma, 2016b)

The discrimination against agriculture is also sometimes seen in the disparity in per worker income in the agriculture, and non-agriculture sectors—per worker income in the non-agriculture sector has reportedly risen at a much faster rate than per worker income in agriculture (Chand 2008). The reason for this has been a much higher decline in the share of agriculture in national income compared to the decline in the share of the agricultural workforce in the total workforce of the country. Some studies have stretched this inference to conclude that farm income is very low (Narayanamoorthy 2006) and not rising, and this is said to be one of the reasons for rising agrarian distress and farmers abandoning farming (Chand et al. 2015:139).

As Shah and Harris-White (2011) rightly point out, what we witness in India is not the classic agrarian transition. Rather than moving from agriculture to become factory hands in the city, rural livelihoods have to combine both forms of work, “tilling their small plots of land and now, dependent on migrant wage labour, on working in the rural non-farm economy and on petty commodity production and trade in the capitalist economy to reproduce their household” (Shah and Harris-White 2011: 17). This kind of a labour transformation has made rural life much more complex.

3.7: Food Security Schemes in India

Ever since independence, ensuring equitable access to food has been one of the unresolved issues both for the government and for civil society groups. At the policy level, successive governments, from time to time, have been implementing a number of schemes for the purpose, at times the same practices under a new name and at other times with slight modifications. The schemes can be broadly divided into three categories:

1. Entitlement feeding e.g. Mid-Day Meal Scheme [MDMS]; Integrated Child Development Services [ICDS],
2. Food subsidy programmes e.g. Public Distribution System [PDS], Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Annapurna Scheme.
3. Food security through employment programmes e.g. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana and National Food for Work Programme (NFWP).

There are other social security programmes e.g. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [NREGA], National Maternity Benefit Scheme, National Old Age Pension Scheme and National Family Benefit Scheme, which have also led to the improvement of food security, but have been purposefully left out to focus on the above-mentioned ones.

3.7a. Public Distribution System (PDS)

Partly because of natural disasters, but massively due to a wrongful state policy of food grain distribution, there were frequent famines in British India. The British government in India introduced the rationing system in 1939 in Bombay, and it was subsequently extended to at least four more regions Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madras. In addition to the introduction of the rationing system, price control measures were also adopted.

In 1943, the first food grain policy committee set up by the food department recommended the continuation of rationing, its extension to rural areas and the maintenance of the reserve stock. By the end of 1943, 13 cities were covered under the scheme, and the number of these cities was substantially added by covering 103 cities in 1944, and 771 cities and towns in 1946. Besides the towns, some rural areas facing chronic deficits were also included in the system. (Bapna, 1990)

At the end of the Second World War, several countries abandoned the rationing system, and India also joined this club by abolishing the system on the recommendation of the second food grain policy committee of 1947. The price of foodgrains after the war was more than four times the pre-war level. After that, the rise in prices continued and, as a result, rationing was reintroduced in 1950. (Ibid. 105)

When the policy of planned development was introduced in the fifties by independent India, the PDS was continued as a welfare measure. Under the First Five-Year Plan, the PDS was extended to those rural areas where the food grain deficit was most prominent. The scope of rationing was widened to include both urban and rural areas. However, the implementation of the PDS in rural areas remained a marginal phenomenon. (Ibid. p.106)

With the setting up of two important organisations, viz. the Agricultural Prices Commission now called the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the sixties saw major organisational changes in food distribution. While the former imparted advice on support price and procurement, the latter was to implement the government's policy on procurement, storage, transportation and distribution of food grains and other commodities through Fair Price Shops (FPS). (Ibid. p.107)

Because of the programme of encouraging highly yielding varieties, growth in foodgrains production and virtual self-sufficiency in foodgrains was achieved by the late seventies but the fluctuation in production and instability of prices were the major concerns. Therefore, it was decided that the development of an integrated system of PDS was necessary. Several features were considered such as extending the PDS to rural and backward areas, ensuring adequate stocks and supplies to retail outlets, and developing proper monitoring and information system. The commodity coverage was increased to more food commodities, and consideration of viability of retail outlets was emphasised in the seventh plan. (Ibid. pp. 108-9)

The PDS in India has always worked alongside a free market. It makes available fixed quotas of foodgrains through ration shops at subsidised 'ration' and 'issue' prices. The role and working of the PDS have undergone several changes since its inception. Initially, its objective was to stabilise prices and consumption in the light of fluctuation in foodgrain output. Later, it also assumed importance as one of the government's most significant anti-poverty programs. The changes witnessed in the nineties were a result of the liberalisation process underway and the structural adjustment programme undertaken by the government since 1991, the year of economic crisis. The reform in the system focused on removing existing inefficiencies, particularly in costs.

In the year 1997, the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was introduced. It is the largest safety net program in the country which operates by providing a price subsidy for essential commodities to consumers. Among them, rice and wheat are of chief importance. A 2-tiered pricing structure has been introduced for TPDS—one for below the poverty line (BPL) and the other for above the poverty line (APL) households. However, what is most lacking under the current system is the very fixation of below and above poverty lines. Since the choice of these definitions is often left to the state governments, political prescriptions overplay in deciding the real beneficiaries, leaving the deserved individuals and groups aside. It is, however, important to point out that the shift to the TPDS marked a major milestone in the GOI's food security strategy. When it was adopted in 1997, a larger price subsidy was targeted to the BPL families. This was later adjusted to provide a small subsidy to APL households.

The government set up a high-level committee in November 2000 for formulating a long-term grain policy with special reference to minimum support price, functioning of PDS, buffer stocking and international trade in foodgrains. The committee submitted its interim report in May 2001, and the final report in July 2002. Here both short-term issues concerning the reduction of excess stocks, and long-term measures for attaining the basic objectives of food policy were discussed, keeping the government's budget constraint in view. (Rakhit, 2003: 1777)

The high-level committee documents in detail how the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), introduced in 1997, has failed to provide the intended support to the poor or to reduce the government's food subsidy bill. The reason lies in exclusion of a large number of deserving families from the below poverty line (BPL) category; difficulty of checking corruption in the face of significant gap between the APL and BPL prices; and erosion of viability of fair price shops as also of the entire PDS system, with APL families not lifting their quotas and FCI's accumulation of excess stocks assuming enormous proportions. Add to that (a) the endemic nutritional deficiency of a significant part of families not qualifying as BPL under the official criterion, and (b) the near impossible task of tracking frequent, often year-to-year, changes in both the scale and

composition of the BPL group, and it is not difficult to appreciate the inefficacy of any targeted PDS for attaining the basic objectives of food policy. (Ibid. pp. 1777-78)

Madhura Swaminathan argues that in any targeted welfare programme, there are two types of errors that occur due to imperfect measurement. Errors of wrong exclusion refer to the exclusion of genuinely poor or deserving households from a programme, while those wrong inclusions refer to the inclusion of non-eligible persons of households in a programme. To put it more explicitly, very narrow targeting is likely to lead to the exclusion of some genuinely poor households from the programme and create divisions among the poor. Such divisions can exacerbate existing forms of caste and gender oppression. Lastly, any programme which targets the poor is likely to get less political support than a universal programme resulting in lower allocation for a targeted programme. (Swaminathan, 2003:388-90)

The AAY was initiated in the year 2001 to provide food security to the poorest of the poor. Initially, the provision was for one crore families, but by 2004 the coverage under the scheme had been doubled, mostly under pressure from the Supreme Court. Gram sabha are involved in selecting families in each village. The selected families are given a special Antyodaya card, with its help, they can claim grain from the Fair Price Shops (FPS) or ration shops, the local outlet of the Public Distribution System (PDS). This card entitles the selected family to 35 kgs of grains each month at Rs 2/kg for wheat and Rs 3/kg for rice. The combination of rice and wheat varies from region to region, even district to district, depending on local diet priorities.

The Annapurna Scheme was launched by the ministry of rural development in 2001. Indigent senior citizens above the age of 65 years, who do not receive the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), are covered under the scheme. The Annapurna Scheme envisaged supply of 10 kg. Of food grains every month free of cost to destitute old age persons.

3.7b. Evaluation of Public Distribution System

The performance of the TPDS so far does not seem to be satisfactory. Although the ration quota for the poor (the BPL population), has been increased, they are unable to make full

use of this quota due to their limited purchasing power. (Moji, 1999) The overcharging and poor quality of grain is also found in some of the study (Khera, 2011a). Another problem is that the diversion of grain from the public distribution system. A study by the Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO, 2005) of the Planning Commission is quite relevant in this regard. The study undertook a survey to evaluate the performance of TPDS and defined diversion/leakage as the excess of grains off-taken from the government granaries over what was consumed by the BPL families. Based on the survey results, the report concluded that 58 percent of the subsidized food grains issued from the Central Pool failed to reach the intended beneficiaries (BPL families). It also concluded that to deliver Re 1 of an income transfer to a BPL family, the government had to spend Rs3.65.

In another study, Khera (2011) estimated the proportion of grain diverted from TPDS during the years 1999-2000 and 2007-08. It defined diversion as grains off-taken by the states but not delivered to the PDS beneficiaries. It was found that while only 24 percent grain leaked in 1999, by 2004-05 the leakage had more than doubled to 54 percent. Jean Drèze and Reetika Khera (2015) summarises NSS-based and India Human Development Survey (IHDS)-based leakage estimates at the all- India level for 2004–05 and 2011–12, the reference years of the two IHDS surveys. Both series point to a significant decline in PDS leakages between 2004–05 and 2011–12, though the decline is larger in the IHDS-based series — from 50% or so to 30% or so.

The main weakness of the TPDS is that it is restricted to certain categories of households and that there are large exclusion errors. Until recently, the PDS was targeted mainly at BPL households in most states. The data from the 61st round of the National Sample Survey, in a report titled *Public Distribution System and Other Sources of Household Consumption 2004-2005*, show that targeting has led, in rural India, to *high rates of exclusion of needy households from the system and a clear deterioration of coverage in States like Kerala where the universal PDS was most effective.* (Swaminathan, 2008a:5)

In the report titled *Public Distribution System and Other Sources of Household Consumption 2004-2005* (GOI, 2007), presented data from the 61st Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS), shows that in the rural areas of Assam, Bihar, Himachal

Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh 70 percent or more of Scheduled Caste households had no card or an APL card. Among these only Punjab is a cereals-surplus State. Further, it was found that almost 60 per cent of the Scheduled Caste households in rural areas were effectively excluded from the PDS at the all India level. States with a lower degree of exclusion of Scheduled Caste households were Karnataka (27 per cent excluded), Andhra Pradesh (31 per cent), and Kerala (38 per cent). (Swaminathan, 2008b)

Turning to households belonging to the Scheduled Tribes, again, large numbers of households do not have access to the PDS: 90 per cent of rural Scheduled Tribe households in Assam, 79 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh and 68 per cent in Chhattisgarh were excluded from the PDS. Surprisingly, the North Eastern States did not perform too well on this count (though again there may be a problem of data quality). There were only four States — Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat and Maharashtra — where more than 50 per cent of rural Scheduled Tribe households had received a BPL or Antyodaya card. (Ibid)

One relates to the extent of hunger, in terms of the frequency of skipping meals. The proportion of below poverty line (BPL) households who had to skip meals sometime during the three months preceding the survey was as high as 70% in Bihar, but only 17% in Chhattisgarh. This is quite striking considering that the levels of rural poverty are much the same in both states, in terms of standard poverty indicators (according to Planning Commission estimates, the headcount ratio of rural poverty in 2009-10 was 56% in Chhattisgarh and 55% in Bihar). This contrast highlights not only the substantial impact of the PDS on rural poverty in states with a well-functioning PDS but also the misleading nature of official poverty estimates that effectively ignore the PDS factor. (Dreze and Khera, 2013: 56)

Focusing for now on the national poverty line approach, the estimates of the PDS-induced reduction of rural poverty at the all-India level in 2009-10 was around 11% based on the headcount ratio, and 18% based on the poverty-gap index. At the state level, the impact of the PDS on rural poverty varies a great deal, as one would expect. In states like Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, where the functioning of the PDS was very poor at that

time, the impact is very small. But in states with a well-functioning PDS, the impact of the PDS on rural poverty is substantial, especially in terms of the distribution-sensitive poverty-gap index: 61% reduction in Tamil Nadu, 33% to 41% in the other southern states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala), 39% in Chhattisgarh, and around 35% in Himachal Pradesh as well as Jammu and Kashmir. (Dreze and Khera, 2013: 58)

The impact of the PDS on rural poverty is well above the all-India average in Odisha, a state where the PDS has significantly improved in recent years. The improvements seem to have continued after 2009-10, with a correspondingly larger impact, hopefully, on rural poverty and economic insecurity. In Rajasthan, on the other hand, the poverty impact of the PDS is below the all-India average. It is worth noting, however, that Rajasthan initiated significant PDS reforms in 2010, with positive results. Finally, the state where there is the least evidence of any impact of the PDS on rural poverty is Bihar. This is not surprising since Bihar seems to have the worst PDS in India. The impact of the PDS on rural poverty is also small in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, two other poor (and large) states where PDS reforms have barely begun. (Ibid.)

To reduce the exclusion and diversion of PDS grain and become more inclusive Himanshu and Abhijeet Sen (2011) suggested the universalisation of PDS. The correlation between access to PDS and extent of leakage is strongly negative, both across states and over time. In other words, the more universal the PDS system is, the less likely it is to suffer from leakages. Higher participation almost certainly makes it more difficult to divert supplies from PDS shops and also puts pressure on state governments to carry out governance reforms. But restricting numbers entitled to PDS is no solution since this reduces access, not the leakage ratio. It is more efficient to allow wide access, monitor actual PDS participation, and allocate supplies accordingly. A dynamic response to self-selection is also more suited to a rights approach than BPL targeting. To address some of above-discussed gaps, National Food Security Act has been introduced in 2013. Given that cash is also being discussed as an alternative to the PDS.

3.7c. National Food Security Act, 2013

On 10th September 2013 National Food Security Act was notified by the government with the objective to provide food and nutritional security by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act covers up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thereby covering almost two-thirds of the population. The eligible persons will be entitled to receive 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains. The existing Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households, which constitute the poorest of the poor, will continue to receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.⁶

The Act lays its special focus on the nutritional support to women and children. Besides meal to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after the childbirth, such women will also be entitled to receive maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000. Children up to 14 years of age will be entitled to nutritious meals as per the prescribed nutritional standards. In the case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals, the beneficiaries will receive food security allowance. The Act further contains provisions for setting up of grievance redressal mechanism at the District and State levels. Separate provisions have also been made in the Act for ensuring transparency and accountability. (Ibid.)

It is clear from the recent development that there is an accelerated push to replace transfers of foodgrains through the public distribution system (PDS) with cash transfers. The High Level Committee (HLC) on Reorienting the Role and Restructuring of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) (known as the “Shanta Kumar Committee”) went beyond its mandate and recommended that the PDS must be progressively replaced by cash transfers, and that the coverage under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) must be reduced from 67% to 40% (GOI 2015a). A shift to cash in place of foodgrains was

⁶ Department of food & Public Distribution (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, food & Public Distribution), web: <http://dfpd.nic.in/?q=node/955> accessed on 29.3.2015.

argued for on the basis of data showing high leakages in the transfer of grains through the PDS. Using the same argument of leakages and inefficiencies, the Economic Survey for 2015–16 also recommends a shift to direct benefit transfers (DBT).

It is important to note that the idea of cash transfers will reduce the involvement of physical grains and will provide greater autonomy to the beneficiaries to choose their basket of consumption. Also, cash transfer necessarily doesn't replace the physical grain distribution as still there will be need for stocking of grains for strategic reserves and for supplying food to some mountainous, remote and difficult areas, which are food deficit (such as Jammu and Kashmir, north-eastern hill states (NMMT etc.) and/or identified by the State governments. The idea is to link the benefits transfer with the Aadhar card based identification so that in the food surplus region a choice can be given between cash and grains and to people living in major cities with a more than a million (53 cities at present have a population greater than 1 million). Next, the offer can be extended to include areas which are food deficit. (Gulati and Saini, 2015:16)

A Recent study has shown that over two-thirds of the respondents favoured in-kind food transfers rather than cash. The survey findings suggest that choices made by respondents are context-specific—if the PDS functions poorly (e.g., in Bihar), respondents were open to the idea of cash transfers; where the PDS delivers foodgrains regularly and without much embezzlement, most respondents voiced an emphatic preference for food (Khera, 2014: 118).⁷

Studies have also shown that the PDS does contribute to increased consumption of not just cereals, but that it allows saved income to be used to buy better foods such as pulses. Himanshu and Sen(2013b) show how the additional income of the same amount raises

⁷ “The relief that the grain (and other food items in some states) brought came through very clearly in people's statements. Rani (Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu) said, ‘Money will give us happiness one day, but food will help us sleep peacefully throughout the month. It makes us less insecure’. Some respondents became anxious upon hearing of the hypothetical alternative. Vijayshankar Bhoi, Chhattisgarh said that 10 years ago, when the PDS did not function well, they were forced to sleep hungry. ‘Not anymore! We want rice. What will we do with money? Savour it?’ Thirty year old Pandit (Bihar) put it quite plainly, ‘If we get food, why do we need money?’ Note that it was in Bihar that the PDS Survey found serious issues of diversion (i.e., respondents getting less than what they are entitled to).” (Khera, 2014:121)

calorie consumption by only half as much as an equivalent amount of PDS foodgrain does. Given that the levels of food consumption in India are still so low, there is still a need for a direct food programme such as the PDS.

3.7d. Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS)

The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (or the mid-day meal scheme) was started by the government of India in 1995. The aim of the programme was to introduce cooked mid-day meals in all government primary schools within two years. Since many states have been very lax in this regard, the Supreme Court has been forcing them to make sure that they all provide these meals. (Dreze and Goyal, 2003:4673) To illustrate, one basic contribution of mid-day meals to educational advancement is to boost school enrolment. Going beyond that, mid-day meals may be expected to enhance pupil attendance on a daily basis (and not just annual enrolment). School meals may also enhance learning achievements, insofar as ‘classroom hunger’ undermines the ability of pupils to concentrate and perhaps even affects their learning skills. Finally, a well-organised school meal can have intrinsic educational value, in addition to what it contributes to the routine learning process. For instance, school meals can be used as an opportunity to impart various good habits to children (such as washing one’s hands before and after eating), and to educate them about the importance of clean water, good hygiene, a balanced diet, and related matters.

The programme has been studied extensively for its effects on education and nutrition. The studies show that it has a significant impact on enrolment of children, especially those from disadvantaged groups. Afridi(2010) found positive nutrition effects among children in Madhya Pradesh – comparing nutrient intake on a school day with a non-school day, she finds that “nutrient intake of programme participants increased substantially by 49% to 100% of the transfers”. Deficiency in protein intake is reduced by 100% and iron deficiency by 10%, for a very small cost – “3 cents per child per day”.

Increasing enrolments of SC and ST girls indicate a significant contribution of MDM programme. As described before, in India, there are multiple socio-economic disadvantages that members of particular groups experience which limit their access to

education and nutrition. The vulnerable groups that face discrimination include girls, children from SCs and STs, and those from the lower economic background. Members of these groups face structural discrimination that influences their access to development resources like education and nutrition. Girls face double discrimination, being members of specific caste or class, apart from experiencing gendered vulnerabilities. (Chatterjee and Sheoran 2007) The MDMS also aims at generating livelihood opportunities for poor women in rural areas, and at breaking caste prejudices by giving preference to women from disadvantaged communities as cooks.(Khera, 2002)

Many studies reported the prevalence of caste discrimination in MDM (Macwan 2010; Menon 2003; Nambissan 2009; Thorat and Lee 2005). Students from SC and ST groups were made to sit away from upper castes; in some cases, they were not given food, or they were served leftover food. Other examples depict discrimination against SC and ST cooks and throwing away of food when cooked by women of these groups. All these and others depict the hegemony of better-off sections, and their continuous efforts to disable the policy structures.

MDM in Delhi is implemented by the directorate of Education (DOE), the Delhi municipal corporations (DMCs), and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), and the Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). The DOE has a provision to test four samples of MDM food from each NGO per month, two collected from their kitchen and two from schools (the receiving end). Only five (1.0%) of the 466 MDM samples tested in 2010-11 satisfied the prescribed nutritional norms, while it was 27 (5%) of 541 MDM samples in 2011-12, and 50 (17%) of 288 samples in 2012-13.⁸ (Shukla, 2014:52)

⁸“The problem of poor quality of food is not just limited to Delhi as the same NGOs have MDMS contracts in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, and the situation at the school level seems no better. Replying to RTI queries, 11 state governments and union territories– Haryana, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Sikkim and Goa – submitted that there is no testing of protein and calorie value of MDMS food samples in their jurisdiction. However, Karnataka stated that in 2009, MDM samples from six schools in the state were collected for nutritional analysis. The average protein content in the six samples was 3.2 gm per 100 gm, with a minimum of 0.8 gm and maximum of 4.6 gm. In addition to the MDM, eggs and milk are supplied in Karnataka, and eggs and bananas are supplied in Tamil Nadu as nutritional supplements, claimed the states. None of the states has a system to assess the impact of the MDMS on the health of their children, revealed an RTI reply.” (Shukla, 2014: 56-57)

Low-quality MDMs are surely filling the hungry stomachs of poor children. But are they helping the nation to fight malnutrition and anaemia? The number of failed MDM samples seen alongside the high percentage of anaemic primary school students in Delhi indicates that food is a non-starter in the fight against malnutrition-related diseases.

3.7e. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme was started in 1975 in 33 development blocks and a few urban areas in India. Currently regarded as the world's largest community-based child development programme, it aims at the holistic development of children below the age of six years, expectant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls. This involves providing a package of services comprising supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, pre-school education and nutrition and health education. The ICDS is aimed particularly at the most vulnerable sections of the population and at disadvantaged areas such as backward rural areas, tribal tracts, and urban slums.

The only institution at the village level that is responsible for the health and well-being of mothers, children and adolescent girls is the Anganwadi centre created under the ICDS programme, which started in 1975 with the following objectives: to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group 0-6 years; to lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child; to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school drop-out; to achieve effective coordinated policy and its implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development; to enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.

The evidence on social exclusion in the ICDS programme is at best mixed and has been summarised by Gill (2012). Three studies of exclusionary bias in the delivery of ICDS (Mander and Kumaran 2006; Thorat and Sadana 2009) conclude that locational factors underpinned, and perpetuated such bias. First, there was a relative lack of AWCs in scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribe (ST), and Muslim habitations; second, even in mixed-caste villages, the village AWC was usually not located in the part where the

deprived groups lived. Although the location of *Anganwadi Centres* (AWCs) is an ostensibly neutral factor, Mander and Kumaran (2006) in a study of 14 villages across four states (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh) argue,

“It is not a mere accident that in none of the surveyed mixed-caste villages was the AWC located in the Dalit or Adivasi hamlet. The decision to locate not just the AWC, but also other valued institutions and services, in the upper caste so-called ‘main’ village, is influenced by the upper caste and class [sic] and politically powerful groups in the village.”

However, as FOCUS (2009) shows, ST children in certainly sampled districts comprised 27% of the total number of children, but as much as 40% of the total enrolled in the districts’ AWCs. So, even though locational factors might militate against inclusive, the utilisation of ICDS, as measured by enrolment in AWCs, would suggest that while better location could improve inclusivity, this itself is not a problem per se. On the other hand, Mander and Kumaran (2006) claim that in addition to the locational factor,

“A large number of eligible children from impoverished and food deprived households did not access ICDS services, including supplementary nutrition for infant and small children ... and that the denial of these services is not random or accidental but is frequently the outcome of active social discrimination, based on caste, gender and disability.”

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) in four states – Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal – covering 895 respondents, corroborates this finding by showing that compared to upper-caste Hindu mothers, ICDS participation was higher among SC and ST mothers but lower among Muslim mothers. According to this study, 69% of Muslim mothers, compared to 78% of Hindu mothers, utilised ICDS provided for children up to three years of age and 76% of Muslim mothers, compared to 83% of Hindu mothers, utilised services provided for children in the three to six years age group. (cited in Borroan, 2014:55)

However, overlaying these difficulties faced by mothers from all the vulnerable groups in accessing ICDS, patriarchal restrictions on the mobility of Muslim women outside the

family home if unaccompanied by another household member were a specific reason for the poor utilisation of ICDS by Muslim mothers. Although SC mothers also had difficulty in accessing AWC services –for example, the reluctance of AWC workers to visit SC hamlets. SC mothers did not experience any familial restraints on their mobility outside the home. By going out of the family home (perhaps, for work), SC mothers were able to acquire information for themselves about ICDS without the intermediation of AWC workers. On the other hand, Muslim mothers, who lacked this mobility, were much more reliant on visits by AWC workers for such information, and this restricted their access to ICDS. (Ibid. p.55)

3.7f. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) National Food for Work Programme (NFWP)

Food has remained a contentious issue, both politically and socially, in independent India. Several schemes have been launched, re-launched and integrated from time to time by the parties in power. But what seems obvious is the ubiquitous nature of the issue, which seems to have left no government untouched. The current Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is an attesting fact to this. Besides other provisions, SGRY intends primarily to facilitate the free supply of food grains by the Union government to the states to take up Food for Work Programme (FWP). (Karalay, 2005:81-82)

Some of the objectives of the programme include a provision for additional wage employment in rural areas to ensure food security, alongside the creation of a durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructure development in these areas, providing 100 crore man days of wage employment every year. The programme is implemented on a cost-sharing basis between the Centre and State in the ratio of 75:25 respectively. The centre provides its share in the form of foodgrains. 50 percent of the funds earmarked to the Gram Panchayats are to be utilised for infrastructure development work in SC/ST localities. Five kg of foodgrains will be made available per man-day to the workers, and the balance of wages will be paid in cash. (Ibid. p. 82)

The programme is self-targeting in nature with provisions for special emphasis on women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and parents of children withdrawn from

hazardous occupations. While preference is given to BPL families for providing wage employment under SGRY, poor families above the poverty line can also be offered employment whenever National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)⁹ has been launched.¹⁰

Food for work Programme was started for the first time in 1977 in order to save the hungry masses in the country and, at the same time, to create in rural area the durable, productive capital assets like roads, bridges, minor irrigation projects - construction of tanks/ponds/canals etc. the workers under this programme were paid partly in cash and partly in foodgrains by utilizing the surplus stocks of foodgrains.¹¹ Although the initial response was good, it gradually began dwindling because of pertinent shortcomings which saw the light in the implementation of the programme. In view of the fading public response, food for work programme was reshaped into a broad-based programme called National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) in 1980. (Karalay, 2005:83)

NREP was intended to provide employment to rural workers particularly at a time when they were struggling to find gainful employment, and at the same time to create durable community assets thus strengthening rural infrastructure. It was a centrally sponsored scheme on 50:50 shared basis between Centre and State and the Centre would provide its share in the form of food grains. With a view to improving the nutritional level, it was decided that the food grains would be provided at the rate of 5 kg per man-day. (Ibid.)

Food for Work Programme has since been redesigned in November 2004 and renamed as National Food for Work Programme (NFWP). The major objective of this programme is to provide additional resources apart from the resources available under the SGRY to 150 most backward districts of the country so that generation of supplementary wage

⁹The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was launched in 2005. An Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

¹⁰ http://india.gov.in/sectors/rural/sampoorna_garmeen.php Accessed on 9.2.2010.

¹¹ *Food for Work Programme: A Guideline*, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Dept. of Rural Development, New Delhi, 1978, pp.1-2.

employment, and providing of food security through the creation of need-based economic, social and community assets in these districts is further intensified.¹²

Distribution of foodgrains as part of wages under the NFWP was based on the principle of protecting the real wages of the workers besides improving the nutritional standards of the families of the rural poor. Equal wages were paid under the NFWP to both men and women workers and foodgrains given as part of wages to the rural poor at the rate of 5 kg per man-day.

More than 5 kg of foodgrains were given to the labourers under this programme in exceptional cases subject to a minimum of 25% of wages to be paid in cash. The State Governments took into account the cost of foodgrains paid as part of wages, at a uniform BPL rate. The workers were paid the balance of wages in cash, such that they are assured of the notified Minimum Wages. (ibid.) Distribution of foodgrains to the workers under the Programme was undertaken either through PDS or by the Village Panchayat or implementing agency or any other agency appointed by the State Government. Foodgrains were distributed to the workers, most preferably at the work site itself.

The programme (NFWP) has since been subsumed in National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which has come in force in 200 identified districts of the country including 150 NFWP districts. The Act provides 100 days of work guarantee to every rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.¹³

Concurrent audits of performance have highlighted several deficiencies in the operation of the programme. Notable among these are: poorly designed and fragmented projects; widespread leakages and corruption, failure to meet the commitments on the scale of employment provided and payment of minimum wages; the nature and quality of works undertaken; and the lack of transparency and accountability to check these deficiencies. In effect, they have created a situation in which the additional employment and incomes are accruing to target groups fall much short of expectations, and a large part of the resources get diverted to the benefit of the relatively well-to-do and powerful local elite.

¹²<http://rural.nic.in/nffwpguidelines.htm>, accessed on 9.2.2010

¹³ http://india.gov.in/sectors/rural/national_food.php, Accessed on 9.2.2010.

Concerted measures to address these deficiencies are imperative. But it would be wrong and short-sighted as an influential section of opinion suggests that creation of employment and incomes for the poor can be a permanent solution to their problems. It is important to recognise that NREGA cannot provide an enduring solution to the poverty of landless and land-poor, who depend on wage employment for their livelihood. Nor can the exchequer afford to fund it (alongside numerous other subsidies being justified in the name of benefitting the poor) on the present scale indefinitely. (Vaidyanathan, 2013:105-106)

Expanding programmes for increased employment and incomes for the poor, social protection schemes for the disadvantaged and programmes to improve health and nutrition of children and women are important for improving conditions of the poor. Their effectiveness is, however, less than expected because of unevenness of coverage and numerous deficiencies in their implementation. Even as the scale of outlays on these programmes is increased, measures to correct these deficiencies are imperative. The strategy of subsidised supply of food grains through PDS has not worked well. The extraordinary complexity of organising and managing procurement and distribution to reach all parts of the country and the inherent difficulties of identifying the poor have been highlighted.

Deficiencies in the programme arise in part from the way the programme is structured; in the distribution of resources, authority and responsibility between the centre and the states, between elected representative bodies at different levels and the bureaucracy; the manner in which it's planning, and implementation is organised; and the lack of effective mechanism to ensure accountability.

Based on experience with earlier centrally sponsored poverty alleviation programmes, the political classes in the states knew they could manipulate the way the programmes were designed and managed to serve their interests. The fact that such schemes had a significant component of subsidies and comprised a large number of spatially dispersed construction works gave politician in power and the bureaucracy who managed them, much discretion in deciding the content of the programmes and the modalities of their implementation. The multiplicity of schemes implemented through bureaucracies of

parallel agencies made effective monitoring extremely difficult. Under these conditions, parties in power and their functionaries could have a significant role in the choice of locations, size, and content of schemes, selection of beneficiaries and award of contracts at all levels to the benefit of their and their personal advantage.

Kaushik Basu gives some suggestion to improve the food grain market in India. First, the government needs to have a set of transparent rules concerning how and when to release food grain from Food Corporation of India (FCI), a kind of standard operating procedure. If prices are rising, there has to be a rule about the automatic release of food. Moreover, the release should be in small batches- the reason for this becomes clear later. Second, after the food is released, the government should not try to monitor excessively what the buyer of the food does with it. As per present practice, the food that is released through open market operation by the FCI is sold to the miller, and only rarely to traders. These millers are then prohibited from selling the wheat to other buyers and making a profit from this. However, if the aim in releasing food is to lower the price, it is not clear why there should be a prohibition on further reselling of the food. (Basu, 2016:105-106)

The right policy is to place as little restriction of the buyers of food grains as we can and to permit them to make profits by selling the grain to the ultimate consumers. The profit of the trader and the Miller is of course not the aim of the government, but it is the instrument through which the government can direct food to the poor.

This does not mean that we should not have any strategy to limit the profit, but simply that this must not be done by creating disincentives for the trader or the miller for buying up grain and selling it to the ultimate consumer. The secret of keeping profits limited and delivering food to the ultimate consumer is to release the procured grain in small quantities to large numbers of traders and millers and to give them the freedom to make profits. The competition will drive prices down through natural market forces. The good policy consists of exploiting the laws of the market, not denying that they exist.

Kaushik Basu also suggested that subsidy should be directly handed over to the poor household instead of giving it to the PDS shop owner with the instruction that he or she transfer it to the poor. This can be done by handing over food coupons to BPL

households, which they can use as money to buy food from any store. The store owner can then take the coupon to any bank and change it back for cash. To allow for differences in preferences, we can allow individual households to buy any food items within a pre-specified range with these coupons. The subsidy does not have to be fixed amount for wheat and another for rice but a lump sum for a list of goods. (Basu, 2016:114)

A primary reason for poor delivery of public services at the ground level is believed to be due to over-centralization of administrative and governance powers in the hands of the central government *vis-a-vis* the state governments, which have the primary responsibility of delivering the services to the people. In order to improve the working of the present system, it has been suggested that it is essential to make 'systematic' changes in terms of transfer of administrative powers to the states in several critical areas, particularly agriculture, education, health and internal security. (Jalan and Balakrishnan, 2014:11)

When citizens are unaware of their rights and are denied information about the terms and conditions of their transactions with governmental agencies, the delivery of essential public services can become a fertile ground for corruption. When a service provider withholds such essential information from the citizen, the latter remain ignorant of her rights. (Paul, 2014:90)

The provider can exploit this ignorance and extract bribes from him or her. Grievance redressal is another area where citizens may have scant information. Public officials may resort to harassment and delay tactics that may force hapless citizens to pay bribes under these conditions. There are several examples of the use of technology that could empower people with the requisite information to access public services. But progress on these reforms has been rather slow. Resistance to such reform stems from powerful sections in government who benefit by withholding information. (Paul, 2014:90-91)

Under these conditions, it is impossible to devise effective mechanisms for monitoring operations of numerous, diverse and far-flung projects of local level development, ensuring efficiency and effective public accountability. Local communities are best

placed to assess the specific felt needs of their members, ways in which they can be met and balance the claims of different segments and resolve conflicts. But it is crucially important that tasks are handled by democratically elected representatives with periodic elections and appropriate local level organisations and procedures (transparency of operations, accounts, and rigorous audit) to ensure their accountability to the community. Periodic elections are constitutionally mandated although there may be 'defaulters.' In all other respects, observance of prescribed procedures leaves far more to be desired.

Chapter: 4

FOOD INSECURITY IN BIHAR

Bihar, situated in the eastern part of the country, consists of 3% of the total geographical area. According to 2011 Census, 9% of the total population, i.e., 102 million people living there making it the most densely populated state. However, with an urban population of just 11 percent, it is the least urbanized among the major states of India. However the GDP has considerably gained momentum in the past ten years with the economy growing at a steadfast speed of 10per cent per annum, still with one of the lowest per capita income and the highest incidence of poverty, Bihar is among the economically backward states in the country.

Health indicators also show Bihar lagging behind most of the other states. From the National Sample Survey, it can be incurred that 87% of the rural population and 61% of urban residents were found to be calorie deficient during 2009-10 in Bihar. According to the India State Hunger Index 2008 survey, Bihar ranked alarmingly at position 74th in the global hunger index of around 88 countries.¹ The situation is so worse that around 56% of children under the age of five years are stunted or too short which in a way indicates how undernourished they have been for some time now. 27% of the children, i.e., one in four are either wasted or too thin for their height which is the result of a recent illness or inadequate food intake. More than half of the children, i.e., 56% are thereby underweight, which considers both chronic and acute undernutrition. (NFHS-3, Bihar, 2008:18). The situation is so acute that babies during first six months of life when they are breastfed, 19% children are either stunted or more than one in three babies are underweight in Bihar. The situation is no different in the case of urban areas as well, almost 48% of children in the urban areas under the age five suffer from chronic undernutrition. Even in the wealthiest household, one in four children under the age of five years are stunted and underweight and around 17% are wasted. It is seen that girls are more likely to be stunted and underweight than boys, but girls are less likely to be wasted than boys. (Ibid, p.19) This persistent high level of poverty and malnutrition may be partly due to economic

¹ Bihar ranks 74th in global hunger index, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/Bihar-ranks-74th-in-global-hunger-index/articleshow/22530080.cms> accessed on 05.02.2015

stagnation, poor implementation of land reform, 'semi-feudal' agrarian relation, and poor implementation of poverty alleviation programme and food security schemes.

This chapter is mainly focused on Bihar and thereby divided into four sections: agrarian structure and land reform, Agriculture and Food Security, measurement of the determinants of food security, Malnutrition, and evolution of food security schemes.

4.1: Agrarian Structure and Land Reform in Bihar

The British had introduced three types of revenue settlement. These were permanent Zamindari: settlement in Bihar, Bengal and Eastern U.P. and parts of Orissa; Ryotwari: in Bombay, parts of Madras Presidencies, Berar and Assam; and the Mahalwari: in United Provinces except Oudh, Punjab and Central Provinces. The Permanent settlement of land in Eastern India, introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793, confirmed proprietary rights over the land with zamindars who were only conscious of their own interest and hardly took an interest in the improvement of agriculture. Various acts introduced by the Colonial State for dealing with tenant - landlord relationship till 1841, tilted in favour of zamindars only and worsened the position of tenants. (Sinha, 1968) The Acts of 1859 and 1885 introduced to consolidate the position of tenants hardly provided any relief to the tenants. (Ojha, 1977:35) There was a wide gap between land revenue paid by the actual tillers of land and the rent paid to the zamindars. A large numbers of intermediaries derived income from the landed property without making any productive effort. (Ibid. pp.46-47) Many of the zamindars marked by inability and incompetence created highly ramified set off middlemen for their estates, in turn, receiving from them proprietary share of the rent. These middlemen not only acquired degrees of rights on the land itself but also exploited poor peasantry leading to the perennial source of agrarian tension. (Das, 1983:24-27)

In brief rent enhancement, unauthorised exactions, evictions and other kinds of oppression against the tenantry continued, more or less, throughout the period. (Sinha, 1968:47) The landlords and their agent extracted maximum surplus in the form of extra-legal and illegal cesses or levying abwabs, Salami money paid at the time of transfer of occupancy holdings and vicious system of Corvee known as a beggar. This settlement was also marked by deterioration in agricultural production. (Ojha, 1968:45-68) As far as agrarian

classes are concerned, prior to 50's, there had grown up in Bihar an Intricately stratified system of relation of people to land: The Zamindar, the tenure holder, the occupancy ryot, the non-occupancy ryot, the under ryot and the Mazdoor.(Jannuzi, 1974:10-11)

On the basis of their purpose, land reform measures were of four categories/classes. The first category includes the acts related to tenancy reforms. It broadly aimed at abolishing tenancy and transferring ownership to the tenants. Secondly, acts are attempted to abolish intermediaries. The third category focused on ceilings on land holdings so as to redistribute the surplus land to the landless. Lastly, the fourth category of land reform measures aimed at consolidation of disparate landholdings. The various acts aiming at land reform measures passed by Bihar government at various times are shown in Table4.1 at next page.

Table 4.1: Bihar Land Reform Legislations

Year	Title	Descriptions	Category/ Class
1950	Land Reform Act	Abolition of Zamindari; Implementation of this act very slow	2
1957	Homestead Tenancy Act	Confer's rights of permanent tenancy in homestead lands on persons holding less than one acre of land	1
1961 (amended 1971)	Land Reforms Act	Prohibits subletting, preventing sublessee from acquiring right of occupancy	1
1961	Land Ceiling Act	Imposition of ceiling on landholdings of 9.71-29.14 hectares (1960-1972) and 6.07-18.21 hectare(after 1972)	3
1973 (amended 1982)	Act 12 (amendment to Land Reforms Act)	Introduced provisions relating to the voluntary surrender of surplus land	3
1976	Act 55	Providing for the substitution of legal heir; ceiling area shall be redetermined when classification of land changes; ordered that the landholder necessarily retained land transferred in contravention of the Act	3
1986	Tenancy (Amendment Act)	Provides definition of personal cultivation; provides for acquisition of occupancy rights by under-raiyats.	1

Source: Timothy Besley and Robin Burgess (2000)

It should be noted that immediately after gaining independence, Bihar was the first state to abolish zamindari system, thereby putting an end to the intermediaries between the actual tillers. As the state abolished the system, the tillers came in direct contact with the state. Even though Zamindari was abolished, the formerly disadvantaged zamindars were not deprived of their homestead and their private lands which were originally quite large. The Section VI of the Act stated that an intermediary can hold all lands in his khas possession, used for agricultural or horticultural purposes. Taking advantage of it, exintermediaries also evicted their tenants in a big way resulting in the process of depeasantisation of the already poor agricultural labourers. Apart from Section VI, other sections like V and VII had given permission to the zamindars to keep enough homestead land which includes house, courtyard, backyard, libraries, ponds, garden areas, place of worship which were connected with the household, land which were to be utilized for the purpose of trade, storage etc (Bhattacharya, 1986: 29-34). Huge monetary compensation given to the zamindars by the state for acquiring their land made the Act more dilute (Singh 2005: 27-28). These all acted as a buffer for the landowners from Zamindari Abolition Act.

Zamindari abolition was in a way complimented by the imposition of ceiling on large holdings, in order to remove the inequitable distribution of land. After many obstacles, the very first Land Ceiling Act was passed in 1962. Subsequently, some amendments in 1972 and 1973 came into effect in this Act, which removed many of the earlier loopholes, but it still had several shortcomings. In the wake of zamindari abolition act and land ceiling act, several lakhs of sharecroppers were removed illegally from the land in their possession (Sharma, 2005:963).

It is worth emphasizing here that, in Bihar's case, the large-scale removal of erstwhile tenants in the wake of the Land ceilings Act, has played an important role in swelling the ranks of agricultural labourers (Jha, 2001:43). The zamindars and better-off occupancy raiyats, cashing in on the loopholes and built-in safeguards of the land reform provisions, effected large-scale evictions. The Fourteenth State Conference of the All India Kisan Sabha, held in August 1954, reported that in the six years following the introduction of Zamindari Abolition Bill, "evictions occurred from no less than one million hectares of land throughout the state, affecting 7 million people" (Flaming Fields of Bihar, 1986).

According to a study done by G. Ojha, in a single year, 1962, “the year in which the ceiling act was effected, over 0.7 million transfers of raiyatwari holdings were effected all over the state” (Ojha, 1972:43). One of the earliest and most perceptive studies on this subject by Jannuzi, which included a case study of a village in Muzaffarpur district, provides a good illustration of changing land relations following the Zamindari Abolition Bill. Jannuzi notes that in the village studies by him, a number of tenant households comprising 16 percent of the total households in the village were evicted even from their homestead lands and were reduced to poor landless labourers (Jannuzi, 1974).

The Bhoodan movement entered Bihar in September 1952 with the pledge to collect 3,200,00 acres of land required to solve the problem of landlessness. However, despite best of the efforts by the workers, only 2,102,000 acres of land had been pledged till August 1954. This situation further bettered with the collection of 2,147,842 acres of land pledged till June 1956. After the departure of Vinoba Bhave in 1956 from Bihar, the movement gradually lost its momentum in Bihar. The all-India conference of Bhoodan workers at Kerala in 1956 changed the course of Bhoodan movement as it matured towards Gramdan i.e. whole village will be gifted to the movement as the consolidation of individually gifted land was not feasible. (Oomen, 1984:308) The Gramdan experiment was planned in such a way that in the longer term it will herald an age of rural transformation resulting in egalitarian social order.

By establishing variable ceilings and allowing the landholder to resume lands from his tenants for 'personal cultivation'; the act permitted the eviction of thousands of underraiyats or tenants from lands they had tilled for many years, sometimes for generations, without being accorded occupancy-raiyat status or rights. Legal and extra-legal eviction of countless under-raiyats was, therefore, an inevitable by-product of the act of 1961(Jannuzi, 1974: 82-83). About the size of state acquired 'surplus land' and its distribution, it has been commented that:

“on proclamation of the Land Ceiling Act, the government of Bihar set a target of acquiring 17.77 lakh acres of surplus land. Till the end of March 1967, only 3,34,000 acres of land had been acquired. Out of this only 2,27,000 acres of land

were distributed, and 10,000 acres of land had not yet been handed over to the allottees; the rest of the area is lying under litigation” (Prasad 2001: 81).

Subsequently, in order to furnish additional protection to the under-raiyats and sharecroppers, the Bihar Tenancy Act of 1885 was revised in 1970 to safeguard the interests of the tenants with regard to removal and also to ensure that lands were restore to those unlawfully ejected. For the purposes of Tenancy Reforms, Bihar was broadly divided into three areas namely a) 5 districts governed by the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 (modified up to 1969); b) Santhal Parganas district governed by the Special laws applicable to Santhal Parganas, Tenancy Act, 1949 (modified up to 1969) and c) 11 districts which are governed by the Bihar Tenancy Act 1885 (modified up to 1989).

The Bihar Tenancy Act fixed the maximum rent as below:

1. Where the under-raiyat pays money rent-

- a) not exceeding 150 per cent of the rent paid by the raiyat himself in cases where there is a registered lease or agreement;
- b) in any other case, 125 per cent;

2. Where the under-raiyat pays share rent, the rent shall not exceed 7/20th of the produce (the straw or bhoosa belonging entirely to the under-raiyat).

Bihar Tenancy Act, 1885 stated that a tenant will acquire occupancy rights of the land he has been tilling after 12 years of continuous possession. It added that nonoccupancy under-raiyats who hold land on written leases were liable to ejection on the expiry of the term of the lease. Those holding on oral leases are not liable to ejection except on ground of non-payment of rent or improper use of land. Various other legislations that were crafted by the then government to safeguard the interests of the labourers and peasants were: Bihar Privileged Persons Homestead Tenancy Act, The Bihar Money Lender Act, etc. The Act miserably lacked the protective provisions for the protection of under-raiyats and or non-occupancy tenants. Actually, these were the people who were in desperate need of reprieve as these were the tenants-at-will. Due to lack of their statutory status, these people lost the payment of rent option outlined in the Act.

Nitish Kumar after becoming the chief minister of Bihar was constituted Lands Reform Commission (LRC) under the chairmanship of D. Bandyopadhyay. The commission was submitted a full report in April 2008. The key recommendations of the LRC are threefold: (i) to do away with the present system of classification of land into six categories with ceilings varying from 15 acres for all kinds of land; (ii) to allot between one acre and 0.66 acre of ceiling surplus land to the lowest quintile of agricultural labourers consisting of 16.68 lakh households each and assignment of at least 10 decimals of land to shelter-less households of 5.48 lakh non-farm rural workers each; (iii) to enact a Bataidari Act to ensure secure and heritable right of cultivation to all tenants/sharecroppers with 60 per cent share of the produce (if the landowner bears the cost of production) or 70 to 75 percent of the produce (if the bataidar bears the cost of production). (Mainstream, August 1, 2009)

The agrarian social structure and agrarian relation, in post independent India, varies from region to region. Wertheim characterized the agricultural policy of the government as "*betting on the strong*" (Wertheim, 1969), which created a regional imbalance. There is capitalist type of farming in Punjab, Haryana and parts of western U. P while in Bihar and West Bengal there is semi-feudal, semi-capitalist mode of production. (Prasad, 1973) The feature of the semi-feudal mode of production in Bihar, according to Pradhan H. Prasad, can be categorised in three classes as follows. There are those who either cultivate land mainly with the help of their family labour and at the same time supply labour to the other cultivating classes or merely supply labour to the other cultivating classes. These are the poor peasants (inclusive of the landless ones). Another category consists of those who are self-employed in agriculture, cultivating land mainly with the help of their family labour. They are middle peasants. The third category is that of rich peasants who are self-employed in agriculture, cultivating land mainly with the help of labour from outside their own family but also supplying manual labour to their own agriculture. Some of the poor peasants own some cultivable land. Quite a significant number lease-in land mostly on crop-sharing basis but in some cases on terms requiring; payment in cash or labour services or both. But there are others who do not own even homestead land. A sizeable section is landless. (Prasad, 1975:931-937)

The bulk of the poor peasant households are deficit ones in the sense that their bare minimum consumption expenditures exceed their incomes. This forces them to take consumption loans from the landlords and the rich peasants. The stipulated rates of interest on these loans are sometimes very high. Leave aside the principal, even the full payment of interest is beyond their means. The creditors, however, do not always insist on full payment even in the long run. More often they force the debtors to sell their assets (mostly land) to them but rarely for complete discharge of the debt obligation. They use this debt obligation to force upon the poor peasants an informal bondage and, therefore, a system of unequal exchanges thereby deriving enormous economic benefits such as cheap and assured labour, better terms for leasing out land, acquiring poor peasants' land at a very cheap rate, benefits obtained through what is commonly known as "distress sales" and profits from trafficking and sale of women, etc. The informal bondage is also enforced by leasing out tiny bits of land and providing homestead lands to the poor peasants. (Ibid.)

The enormous economic power which gets concentrated in the process in the hands of the landlords and the rich peasants makes them politically powerful and thus allows them to dominate over the social and economic activities in the area. They claim the bulk of the benefits that flows in the area in the name of developmental activities of the government. They pay less to the poor peasants than what is legally due to them. It is so clearly reflected in the poor peasants invariably earning less at the place of the person from whom he regularly gets consumption loans or from whom he leases-in land or obtains some dwellings space, than at other places for the same kind of work, even when at the latter place the rate of payment remains less than the legally stipulated rates. It is no wonder that landlord and the rich peasant classes shun rapid development in the area because it is likely to improve the economic condition of the poor peasants who can thereby free themselves from the bondage.

The various measures of land reforms, rural development, and green revolution benefited upper backward caste (or intermediate agrarian castes: Yadavas, Kurmi, and Koeri) in Bihar, Yadavas, Kurmis and Koeris were, in pre-independence period, mostly tenants. The most numerous and relatively affluent among backwards Yadavas and Kurmis protested against social oppression by upper caste during 1920's. Later on, Koeris joined the

movement. Triveni Sangh was their political outfit. (Mukherjee, 1980) The social movement started by these backward castes turned into an economic conflict between upper-caste landlords and lower caste tenants. In the post-independent period, they benefited from various land reforms measures, green revolution, and rural development. They improved and consolidated their economic position. They once constituted the leading core of the old Kisan Sabha movements, emerged as landlords, middle and rich peasants.

Now it will be pertinent to point out caste and class interrelationship in Bihar. Gail Omvedt felt that in India there are three classes: the rich peasants, the middle peasants and the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. The rich farmer, according to her, includes capitalist farmers, capitalist landlords, and feudal landlords. In caste term traditional feudal castes: Brahmans, Rajputs, and middle kisan castes such as Marathas, Jats, Lingayats, Kammas, Reddis, Vokkaligas etc. come under the category of rich farmers. (Omvedt, 1980) These Kisan castes are dominant in those areas where capitalist development has taken place in agriculture. The poor peasant and agricultural labourers include mostly dalits, adivasis, muslims and traditional middle castes. We must look at caste and class hierarchy in Bihar.

In caste terms, landlords included the upper castes and upper backward castes such as Yadavas, Kurmis, and Koeris. Rich peasants belong to both upper castes and upper backward castes. The middle peasants include not only upper castes, upper backward castes but also scheduled castes and tribes. The poor peasants and agricultural labourers have in their ranks the great majority of the backward castes and almost the entire harijan and Adivasi population.

In case of Bihar's rural society the fact of the marked difference in the attitudes of the 'upper caste' (Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs and Kayasthas) and the 'middle castes' (notably Yadavas, Koeris and Kurmis) vis-à-vis agricultural activities has often been emphasized by some researchers (Franel and Rao, 1990). Traditionally, the upper castes, even those owning modest-sized holding, displayed a strong preference for non-agricultural professions, and a relative lack of interest in agriculture compared to the middle castes who have enjoyed, for a long time, a formidable reputation as agriculturists.

Land reform measures, launched in the state in 1962, helped a section of the better off cultivating tenants in acquiring ownership/occupancy rights and in the subsequent years this section has gradually improved its economic position and is thus better placed now to go in for intensified use of modern inputs. Secondly, it is likely that 1960 onwards, substantial transfer of land has taken place from the upper caste households, particularly those owning modest-sized holding, to the middle caste households, either through mortgage or outright sale, necessitated by the need of the former category to finance their bulky expenditures such as higher education of their children in distant towns and cities, marriages and other social ceremonies which are typically far more expensive in their case. If indeed such inter-caste transfers have been substantial, as is my impression, it obviously implies strengthening of the economic position of the middle caste cultivators. (Jha, 2001:39-40)

To put it somewhat differently, the above noted changes imply a considerable weakening of the 'semi-feudal relations of production' (considered to be a key feature of Bihar; agriculture in the writings of Pradhan Prasad and number of other scholars, see Sharma and Gupta, 1987), and the advancement of capitalists relation of production. In our view, apart from addressing the unfinished business of land reform, determined policy efforts in areas such as power, irrigation, credit, land consolidation, etc. at this juncture, will be critical in sustaining the recent good performance. (Jha, 2001:40)

4.2: Agriculture and Food Security in Bihar

Several major arguments have been brought forward to explain the backwardness of agriculture eastern India in general and Bihar in particular. Bahaduri (1973) credited the agricultural backwardness to the 'semi-feudal mode of production relations'. He asserted that in the eastern India, the agrarian structure can be distinguished by the presence of a few big sharecroppers and landlords.

It is presumed that the sharecroppers are indebted to their landlords perpetually. Landlords provide consumption and production loans and in return earns income from land rent as well as interest generated from such loans. Under such circumstances of 'semi-feudalism', landlords are not ready to adopt new technologies that are readily available as that would

raise sharecropper's income and hence would lessen their dependency on consumption loans. Thus even if the use of new technologies income from the land rent would have increased but the income from interest revenue would dip, therefore the total mixed income of the landlords would actually decrease.

Bhaduri's statement attracted much criticism, from both theoretical and empirical points of view. Newberry (1974) argued that under the 'semi-feudal mode of production relations', landlords are able to extract all the benefits from the adoption of new agricultural technologies, such that the income of sharecroppers does not increase. While Srinivasan (1979) questioned the argument by calculating arithmetically and concluded that even if all the assumptions made by Bhaduri were true, the total mixed income would still increase and would benefit the landowners. On the other hand, Bardhan and Rudra (1978) went back to the basics and proved through their empirical research in a vast number of villages in eastern India that the major suppositions made by Bhaduri failed to even exist in the concerned region.

Nevertheless, despite all the criticism, Bhaduri's argument remained popular, even till today. In the eastern India, the 'semi-feudal mode of production relations', which has existed deep in the regions since the British colonial era, specifically the introduction of the Zamindari system in 1793, can be blamed for the economic backwardness of this particular regions. In the 1980s when agriculture in West Bengal started to grow rapidly, Bahaduri's argument got validated to some extent when the left-front government acceded to power and implemented radical land reforms.

On the other hand, Bardhan (1984), raised issues like why private tubewell irrigation, one of the prime factor in the promotion of the Green Revolutions in north western India, were not able to diffuse in eastern India, and in a way ascribed this to the small and fragmented farm structure in the region. He further argued that unlike Punjab, wherein the 1950s land consolidation programme was successfully implemented, eastern India was avoided by the Green Revolution due to the lack of private tubewell irrigation, which was mainly caused by the small and fragmented farms, as the economies of scale in tubewell irrigation could not be realized in the eastern part of India under such disadvantageous farm conditions. Some argues that this was mainly on account of the poor resource base of the farmers,

preponderance of small and marginal farmers, small land holdings and ineffective delivery system of inputs. That is the reason why during 1966-69 when the Green Revolution was taking place in Punjab, Haryana and western UP, the rate of growth of agriculture in Bihar was 0.03 percent and the rate of growth of the economy was negative at minus 2.24 percent. (Dubey, 2013:142)

Certain figures regarding Bihar's rural economy are heart-rending. The percent age of rural labour engaged in agriculture and a related activity was 89.3% in 1991 which came down to 81.1% in 2001. One component of this labour force was the "cultivator". This component was 43.4% in 1991, which came down to 34.9% in 2001, a fall of nearly 10 percentage points. Such a drastic change in the occupational pattern could not take place over such a short period. Unless there was a definitional change, the matter would require scholarly scrutiny. Even with such a drop, the figure remains high at 81.1%. This labour force produces, on average, 33-4% of the state GDP (the share of the primary sector in the total). The fact that 80% of labour force produces only one-third of Bihar's GDP, clearly indicates the intensity of poverty in the primary sector. On the other hand, only 19% of labour force produces the remaining 66% of the stateGDP. This shows how acutely iniquitous is the sharing of income among and between different sectors of the economy. (Bandyopadhyay, 2009:12)

The landownership pattern in Bihar remains acutely skewed even now. The National Sample Survey Organisation's (nss) Survey Report No 491, 2003, on landholding patterns reveals a disquieting picture. Marginal and small farmers who constituted 96.5% of the total landowning community owned 66% of land. Medium and large farmers who constituted only 3.5% of the total landowning community owned 33% of the land. Of the latter, the large owners (constituting only 0.1% of the total) own 4.63% of total land. In absolute terms, this 0.1% of the large owners owned a little over 8 lakhhec tares or 19.76 lakh acres of land - a colossal amount by Indian standards. Such a high concentration of landholding in the hands of a minuscule number of owners and with archaic production relations is a major roadblock against increased production and productivity in agriculture in Bihar. (Bandyopadhyay, 2009:13)

Though there is no comprehensive data regarding the bataidari (sharecropping) system, a conservative estimate is that about 35% of cultivable land in Bihar is under the batai system. The extortionist arrangement of crop-sharing gives negative impulses to the use of technology. A bataidar has no incentive to apply costly technology. In the first place, he cannot afford it. Second, even if he did so, a significant portion of the incremental production would be siphoned off as rent to the landowner. Thus, in about 35% of cultivable land, agronomy is practised in an indifferent manner thereby retarding growth in agriculture. In another one third of cultivable land owned by only 3.5% of landowners belonging to medium and large categories, it is the feudal syndrome of rent seeking which gives them both hassle-free income and social status. Land to them is not a factor of production. It is a symbol of power, influence and status. They cannot think of themselves as cultivating peasant farmer by applying the capitalist mode of production. Like sterile gold, it lends lustre to their position in the society. It is only the other one-third of the cultivable land which is being cultivated by the peasant-farmers where there are some signs of buoyancy. But where two-thirds of the cultivable land drags down production, only one third of the cultivable land cannot make up the loss. (Bandyopadhyay, 2009:13)

In the first half of the 1990s agriculture in Bihar had a negative growth rate of (-) 2% per year. Later, up to the early part of the first decade of the present century it grew at an imperceptible rate of (+) 0.8% per year. With all the technologies available in the market why is it that the actual tillers are not accessing them. "It is evident that there is a structural bottleneck in Bihar agriculture due to very queer pattern of land ownership and very extortionate system of tenancy-at-will which are causing great impediment to accelerated rate of agricultural growth". (Bandyopadhyay, 2009:13)

Recent data shows that in the last two decades, the use of fertilisers, hybrid seeds, tractors and pump sets have gained considerable popularity in Bihar. It has almost caught up with the rest of India in spite of poor agricultural extension and institutional credit infrastructure in the state. But the agricultural productivity continues to lag behind from the rest of India. The productivity is also highly sensitive to inter-annual variability in rainfall, much slow than the rest of India even though the state has rich resources of groundwater which in turn is considered the best protection against vagaries of

rainfall.(Kishore, 2013:1) Avinash Kishore states that One of the major reason as to why Bihar is unable to convert its abundant groundwater into livelihoods is mainly due to the lack of electricity and high price of diesel (Ibid.). According to Sharma, “on a conservative basis, the state was deficient in power in relation to total requirement to the extent of at least 40 per cent in 1993-94. Most parts of the rural area of the state go without power for days together...The farmers have largely changed over to diesel pumps which are costly in terms of maintenance and operating charges. The acute power crisis has affected not only the level of agricultural production, but also a whole range of rural activities – processing of grains, storage, production in small rural industries, etc” (Sharma 1996:16).

Seen from the long-term perspective, in the last five decades, agricultural growth in Bihar has been the slowest of all states in India. According to Bhalla and Singh (2009), the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in the value of agricultural output was a mere 0.7per cent from 1962-65 to 2003-06 (see Table 4.2). Though the total population and the population of agricultural workers grew almost three times as fast during the same period but over the last four decades, per capita (and per worker) value of output of agriculture has been shrinking.

Table 4.2: Compound Annual Growth Rate (%) in value of outputs (44 crops) in Bihar

State	1962-65 to 1970-73	1970-73 to 1980-83	1980-83 to 1990-93	1990-93 to 2003-06	1962-65 to 2003-06
Bihar	1.12%	-0.41%	2.07%	0.26%	0.7%

Source: Bhalla and Singh (2009).

Note: Here the state of Bihar includes both Bihar and Jharkhand of today. Agriculture growth after 2006 has slowed down due to three drought years in 2009, 2010, and 2012.

Bihar is rich in labour and water but lacks land. Compared with other states of India, Bihar has more cultivators and agricultural labourers per hectare of cultivable land.² It can be

² There were 3.8 cultivators and agricultural labourers/ha of net sown area (NSA) in Bihar in 2001. Today this number is close to 5 cultivators/ha of NSA. Providing full employment would mean creating at least 500

inferred that with the increase in population, the hidden unemployment problem is getting worse. This is one of the chief reason for the out-migration from the state has increased almost three folds between 1991 and 2001 (Gupta, 2009). Even though plenty of water is available at low depths still due to the low agricultural wages, instead of maximising return to land, farmers seem to be economising on irrigation, growing crops that require less water and also less labour. (Kishore, 2013:6)

On the basis of fieldwork evidence from central Bihar, Wilson asserts that the wake of a sharply unequal distribution of land and other resources, for the small and marginal cultivators' adoption of new technology has been the result of compulsion rather than choice. Further, their integration into a number of markets has strengthened their dependence on larger landowners there by confirming that they remain trapped in a cycle of poverty. Furthermore, these relations of dependence are a major factor with ruling landowning employers' strategies to resist the demands that are put forward by agricultural labourers for improvements in wages and conditions, and in maintaining their economic as well as social power. (Wilson, 2002:1229)

Nearly 92.5 percent of the farmers in the state are small and marginal. Their holding are fragmented and widely dispersed, which is highly disadvantageous for effective agricultural operations. It is hard to think of their irrigation and efficient agricultural operations with modern farm implements and machinery. Work on survey and settlement of land records is expected to be completed within three years and consolidation of land holding in another five years. This would help the government explore the possibilities of road construction, creation of waterbodies and building of canal and drainage system in the state. (Rai, 2013:288)

Mangala Rai suggested that government should focus on organic vegetable production, rejuvenation of old orchards and high-density fruit crop plantations, production and certification of quality planting material, popularizing tissue culture cultivation, establishing improved storage facilities, cold-storage chains and marketing innovations in support of farmers and entrepreneurs are expected to bring in a golden revolution in the

man-days of employment on every hectare of land in Bihar. The current rice-wheat system can provide at most around 160 days/ha of employment'. (Joshi et al, 2004)

vegetable and fruit sectors where Bihar does have inherent advantages. Green Manuring, vermin-composting, honeybee rearing, conservation agriculture and accelerated mechanization are expected to provide quality and cost cutting edge to the state's agricultural produce. Enhanced irrigation and drainage provisions would minimize the dependence on rains, minimize risk in production and enhance productivity, cropping intensity and job opportunity so essential to make agriculture in the state efficient, effective and productive. Various contemplated logistics in the road map would take Bihar to new heights in terms of enhanced profitability, competitive ability, job opportunities and environmental security. (Rai, 2013:284-85) Encouraged the performance of its crops-based road map of 2008, Bihar has developed a broad-based second road map, looking ten years ahead, setting specific year-wise targets, programmes, projects and activities that are monitorable for outcomes and impacts. (Ibid:282)

4.3: Measurement of the Determinants of Food Security

Food Security is a flexible concept and is usually applied at three levels of aggregation: national, regional, and household or individual. At the 1996 world Food Summit, "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996). This definition is well accepted and widely used.

The three core original determinants of food security are:

1. Food availability
2. Food access
3. Food utilization.

However, recently, the Committee on World Food Security (2012) adds the stability dimension to the above determinants and defines food security as follows:

"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security

are availability, access, utilization, and stability. The nutritional dimension is integral to the concept of food security.” (Babu et al., 2014:19)

4.3a: Food availability

The distress around the availability of food stems from production and other related aspects. Food production can largely be for subsistence. Foodgrain production is of paramount significance for household food and its nutritional security. The indicators shown below have been chosen to determine a broad picture of food availability: per capita value of agricultural production, rural connectivity proportion of forests and irrigation extent.

From Table 4.3, in terms of food availability index, it is evident that Jamui and Kishanganj are the two districts which have been classified as the extremely insecure districts of Bihar. There are other thirteen districts that fall into the category of severely insecure and require equal attention. Only four districts Rohtas, Buxar, Kaimur and Sheikhpura have been identified as the secure districts in terms of the food availability index. Bhojpur, Jehanabad, Khagaria, Begusarai, Munger, Madhepura and Nalanda are the seven districts that are categorised under moderately secure. Furthermore, there are eleven districts that fall under moderately insecure category.

Table 4.3: Status of District in Availability Index

Secure		Moderately Secure		Moderately Insecure		Severely Insecure		Extremely Insecure	
Districts	Index (Rank)	Districts	Index (Rank)	Districts	Index (Rank)	Districts	Index (Rank)	Districts	Index (Rank)
Rohtas	0.59 (1)	Bhojpur	0.498 (5)	Gopalgang	0.424 (12)	Saran	0.332 (23)	Jamui	0.198 (36)
Buxar	0.552 (2)	Jehanabad	0.489 (6)	Saharsa	0.424 (13)	Muzaffarpur	0.328 (24)	Kishangang	0.175 (37)
Kaimur	0.549 (3)	Khagaria	0.488 (7)	Nawada	0.422 (14)	Banka	0.324 (25)		
Sheikh-pura	0.543 (4)	Begusarai	0.474 (8)	Siwan	0.418 (15)	PurbaChampan	0.323 (26)		
		Munger	0.465 (9)	Patna	0.402 (16)	Bhagalpur	0.311 (27)		
		Madhepura	0.454 (10)	Aurangabad	0.4 (17)	Madhubani	0.31 (28)		
		Nalanda	0.45 (11)	PaschimChampan	0.387 (18)	Lakhisarai	0.309 (29)		
				Gaya	0.38 (19)	Sitamarhi	0.308 (30)		
				Samastipur	0.374 (20)	Katihar	0.302 (31)		
				Vaishali	0.366 (21)	Sheohar	0.288 (32)		
				Supaul	0.353 (22)	Purnia	0.287 (33)		
						Araria	0.274 (34)		
						Darbhanga	0.272 (35)		
	4		7		11		13		

Source: Food Security Atlas of Rural Bihar, 2009:50.

4.3b: Food Access

Access to food or food distribution has been regarded to be the most important factor determining food security. A household's access to food depends on its own production of food and the food it can acquire through the sale of labour power or commodities produced by it. These are linked to what Amartya Sen calls endowment and exchange entitlements: 'A person starves either because he does not have the ability to command enough food, or because he does not use this ability to avoid starvation. The entitlement approach concentrates on the former, ignoring the latter possibility'. (Sen, 1981)

In order to take into account the various aspect of food accessibility, following indicators have been considered: Proportion of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, Proportion

of Working Age Population, Rural Female Literacy, Per Capita Consumption Expenditure, Wage Rate of Rural Persons, Proportion of Agricultural Labourers.

There exist a direct relation between monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) on food and average income per capita. It exercises a positive influence on access to food. Consumption is directly affected by low-income levels. In rural areas, the per capita consumption expenditure in absolute terms is a good indicator of food security. Bihar lies at the bottom in terms of consumption expenditure with the value of per capita consumption expenditure (Rs. 270) is considerably lower than the national average (Rs. 307). From the table 4.4, it can be asserted that Bihar ranks 13 which shows the low level of MPCE.

Even though the state as a whole, has very low consumption levels but there are stark disparities in consumption levels within the state. Table 4.5 shows that six districts have an MPCE below the national average.

Table 4.4: Monthly Per Capita Expenditure in Rural Areas

India/States	Value (Rs.)	Rank	State	Value (Rs.)	Rank
India	307.60	-	Andhra Pradesh	323.15	9
Assam	358.44	4	Bihar	270.26	13
Chhattisgarh	29.08	16	Gujrat	345.46	6
Haryana	419.34	2	Jharkhand	263.22	14
Karnataka	283.04	12	Kerala	455.64	1
Madhya Pradesh	232.17	17	Maharashtra	293.29	11
Orissa	245.58	15	Punjab	416.45	3
Rajasthan	323.97	8	Tamil Nadu	315.49	10
Uttar Pradesh	345.88	5	West Bengal	329.93	7

Source: NSS 61st Round, 2004-05.

Above table shows that, the rank of Bihar in monthly per capita expenditure in rural areas are thirteen. And the monthly per capita expenditure is only rupees 270. The value of all India, in monthly expenditure is rupees 307.

Table 4.5: Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure by District, 2004-05 (in Rupees)

High		Moderate		Low		Very Low		Extremely Low	
District	MPCE	District	MPCE	District	MPCE	District	MPCE	District	MPCE
Madhepura	451	Purnia	386	Gopalgang	358	Gaya	336	Muzaffarpur	293
Supaul	435	Khagaria	384	Nawada	347	Nalanda	331	Jehanabad	289
		Lakhisarai	384	Katihar	343	Bhojpur	324	Aurangabad	282
		Munger	384			Darbhangha	323	PachimChamparan	267
		Sheikhpura	384			Vaishali	323		
		Sheohar	384			Patna	320		
		Sitamarhi	384			Bhagalpur	315		
						Begusarai	314		
						Banka	312		
						Jamui	312		
						Samastipur	310		
						Buxar	309		
						Kaimur	309		
						Araria	307		
						Kishangang	307		
						Saran	305		

Source: Food Security Atlas of Rural Bihar, 2009:54.

4.3c: Status of Districts on Absorption Index

Table 4.6 shows that on the basis of two indicators, chiefly, safe drinking water and access to PHCs, an absorption index has been calculated. From this it can be inferred that Madhubanidistrict emerged out as the most secure district, while Jamui is the least secure district. Whereas almost half of the districts are secure while a quarter of the districts in Bihar fell in three different food insecure categories (five moderately insecure, three severely insecure and one extremely insecure). Ten districts are found to be moderately secure.

Table 4.6: Status of Districts on Absorption Index

Secure	Moderately Secure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Extremely Insecure
Madhubani	Samastipur	Gaya	Lakhisarai	Jamui
Gopalgang	Araria	Kaimur	Banka	
Saran	Purnia	Patna	Sheikhpura	
Siwan	Rohtas	Nalanda		
Sitamarhi	Katihar	Munger		
Darbanga	Jehanabad			
Begusarai	Kishangang			
Khagaria	Aurangabad			
Muzaffarpur	Nawada			
Bhojpur	Bhagalpur			
Sheohar				
PurbaChampan				
Supaul				
Madhepura				
Buxar				
Vaishali				
PachimChampan				
Saharsa				
No. of Districts 18	10	5	3	1

Source: Food Security Atlas of Rural Bihar, 2009:75.

4.3d: Food Security Index (FSI)

In this section, an attempt has been made to discuss various indicators chosen to explain food insecurity. The indicators have been segmented into three sets— Availability, Access, and Absorption. They have been individually clubbed together into one index, called the Food Security Index (FSI). This particular index represents the combined effect of all the indicators. Furthermore, comparing the individual sets of indices would help in revealing

their relative significance in the Food Security Index. Table 3.6 represents the status of the districts in terms of Food Security Index (FSI).

The composite Food Security Input Index (FSI) which is based on all the indicators has been further classified into five levels of food security, as in the case of Food Security Outcome Index. From Table 4.7, it can be inferred that Rohtas and Buxar emerged as the two most food secure districts of Bihar, while the two districts namely, Jamui and Araria, emerged as the least food secure.

Table 4.7: Status of Districts on Food Security Index (FSI)

Secure	Moderately Secure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Extremely Insecure
Rhtas	Gopalgang	Sheikhpura	Purnia	Jamui
Buxar	Begusarai	Samastipur	Lakhisarai	
Bhojpur	Madhepura	Supaul	Kishangang	
Jehanabad	Kaimur	Sitamarhi	Katihar	
Siwan	Saharsa	Madhubani	Banka	
Khagaria	Nawada	PurbaChamparan	Araria	
	Aurangabad	Muzaffarpur		
	Saran	Gaya		
	Vaishali	Sheohar		
	Nalanda	Darbanga		
	Munger	Patna		
		PaschimChamparan		
		Bhagalpur		
No. of District 6	11	13	6	1

Source: Food Security Atlas of Rural Bihar, 2009:80.

Out of the six food secure districts, except Khagaria, rest are from the western part of Bihar. The indicators for irrigation, paved roads as constituents of food availability index are reported to be fairly good for the district. In both availability and absorption indices report, a relatively secure situation can be inferred for Khagaria.

4.4: Malnutrition in Bihar

There exist a correlation between health of a person and his or her economic status. A healthy person has a higher potential to work. There exist a number of indices through which health and nutritional status can be measured. Like infant mortality i.e., mortality under age one is an indicator of poor antenatal care and reproductive facilities while mortality under the age five is closely associated with the health and nutrition services which often includes immunization and overall poverty levels. The latter can be taken as a comprehensive indicator of the overall quality of life.

Table 4.8 presents the comparative mortality as well as nutritional status of children. This mainly represents those states with an under-five mortality figure which is higher than 80 per 1000 live births. The under-five mortality rate in Bihar is higher than the national average with 85 per 1000 live births. Further, Bihar also suffers from higher infant mortality rate with 62 per 1000 live births versus 57 per 1000 live births at the All-India level. Thus it can be incurred that for all malnutrition indicators, figures for Bihar remain consistently poor.

Table 4.8: Mortality and Nutritional Status of Children and Women

	Under-five mortality	Infant mortality	Under-weight Children (%)	Wasted Children (%)	Stunted Children (%)	Anemic Children (%)	Thin Women (%)
India	74.3	57	42.5	19.8	48.0	69.5	35.6
Uttar Pradesh	96.4	72.7	42.4	14.8	56.8	73.9	36.0
Madhya Pradesh	94.2	69.5	60.0	35.0	50.0	74.1	41.7
Jharkhand	93.0	68.7	56.5	32.3	49.8	70.3	43.0
Orissa	90.6	64.7	40.7	19.5	45.0	65.0	41.4
Chhattisgarh	90.3	70.8	47.1	19.5	52.9	71.2	43.4
Rajasthan	85.0	66.1	36.4	13.7	46.5	69.6	36.5
Assam	85.0	66.1	36.4	13.7	46.5	69.6	36.5
Bihar	84.8	61.7	55.9	27.1	55.6	78.0	45.1
Maharashtra	46.7	37.5	37.0	16.5	46.3	63.4	36.2
Best State	16.3 (Kerala)	15.5 (kerala)	22.9 (Kerala)	9.2 (Punjab)	24.5 (Kerala)	44.5 (Kerala)	18.0 (Kerala)
Worst State	96.4 (UP)	72.7 (UP)	60 (MP)	35.0 (MP)	56.8 (UP)	78.0 (Bihar)	45.1 (Bihar)

Source: National Family Health Survey III, 2005-06

Note: In this, only those states have been selected that have under-five mortality higher than 80 per thousand live births.

Table 4.9 shows that in terms of the nutritional status of children, Bihar is lagging behind the national averages as well as trends in all indicators.

Table 4.9: Nutritional Status of Children (NFHS II and III)

Variable	NFHS III (2005-06)			NFHS II (1998-99)
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Bihar				
Stunted (Percent)	50.7	40.2	52.0	58.4
Wasted (Percent)	32.9	3.6	33.1	25.4
Underweight (Percent)				
India				
Stunted (Percent)	44.9	37.4	47.2	51.0
Wasted (Percent)	22.9	19.0	27.1	19.7
Underweight (Percent)	40.4	30.1	43.7	42.7

Source: NFHS III and NFHS II Reports.

Bihar consistently remains at the bottom when compared with other states in India when number of anaemic children and thin women per thousand is considered.

Though high levels of malnutrition – coupled with high mortality among children – clearly points toward poor feeding practices in Bihar. But, the grave economic condition remains the chief reason for poor access to food in the state.

4.5: Evolution of Food Security Schemes in Bihar

Time to time the central and state governments has launched a number of schemes and programmes which are aimed at enhancing food security in the state. This section discusses the following programmes which are directly and indirectly related to food security: Public Distribution System (PDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MG-NREGS), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

Among Indian states, Bihar has the highest proportion of people living below the official poverty line (a line which is often considered akin to the starvation line: Mander 2012), with 53.3% of the state’s population classified as poor in 2009-10 (Planning Commission

2012). The deep-rooted incidence of poverty in Bihar implies heavy reliance on PDS allocations throughout the state. However, the state has estimated that the central government PDS disbursements fall far short of their needs. In the Economic Survey 2011-12, the Government of Bihar listed 1.35 crore households as BPL and a further 25.01 lakh households as Antyodaya whereas the central government allocated Bihar with foodgrains of 35 kg/month for only 65.23 lakh households. To make up for this shortfall, the state has allocated BPL households with only 25 kg of foodgrains per month. Antyodaya households are nominally provisioned with 35 kg monthly. Notwithstanding this reduced allocation to the large cohort of BPL households in the state, the Government of Bihar is still required to incur ancillary expenditure on the PDS. (Choithani, 2015:63)

On top of these problems, the PDS in Bihar is afflicted by woeful delivery inefficiencies. The PDS in Bihar has historically been riddled with huge problems of pilferage and leakage. In its 2005 nationwide performance evaluation of the scheme, the Planning Commission estimated that 75% of PDS foodgrains did not reach its intended beneficiaries in Bihar compared to the national average of 57% (Planning Commission 2005). Comparable National Sample Survey data analysed by Khera (2012) suggested that in the same year (2004-05), 91% of the PDS foodgrains in Bihar were diverted from their eligible recipients. Five years later, in 2009-10, while most major states had improved their PDS performance (the incidence of grain diversion in Chhattisgarh, for example, fell from 52% to 10% between 2004-05 and 2009-10), the progress in Bihar was much slower, and in 2009-10, 75% of the PDS foodgrains in Bihar still failed to reach their intended beneficiaries. The FPS-beneficiary interface is the core site where PDS leakage occurs. The Planning Commission (2005: IX) calculated (conservatively) that more than 50% of foodgrain diversion in Bihar occur at the FPS level.

To contain corruption and illegal diversion of foodgrains from the PDS, in 2007, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar, introduced a system of PDS coupons as a transparency measure. As noted above, eligible households are provided 12 coupons annually for each of the PDS commodities that include wheat, rice, and kerosene. Like the ration card, the coupons are colour-coded, with the colour of the coupons matching that of the ration card. The Antyodaya households are provided with the yellow coupons and BPL

households are given red coupons. Given much of the PDS leakages are found to occur at the FPS level (Planning Commission 2005), a guiding principle behind the introduction of the coupon scheme was that by tying the next month's supply of PDS commodities with coupons, it was considered that coupons will prevent the FPS owners to sell the PDS supplies in the open market as they will now need to have the requisite coupons to claim their stock. However, evidence of the effectiveness of these early reforms is somewhat mixed. NSS data suggest a dramatic reduction in PDS leakages in Bihar between 2004–05 (90.0%) and 2011–12 (24.4%), but field surveys suggest that in spite of some improvement Bihar's PDS remained one of the most corrupt as recently as 2011 (Dreze and Khera, 2015:41).

Indeed, a number of Antyodaya and BPL respondents we spoke to during the household surveys accused the FPS owners bitterly. Our fieldwork, however, also revealed that while culprits, the positions of the FPS owners are connected, in turn, to wider anomalies in the operation of the PDS in Bihar. For example, in one of the sample villages when the villagers united to demand from the FPS owner their full ration entitlements, he got his licence transferred to another village nearby because the bribes he was compelled to pay to the higher authorities in the PDS chain meant that distributing actual entitlements was not possible if he were to stay in the business. A gram panchayat mukhiya very candidly suggested: "All the dealers [FPS owners] have to pay bribes to higher authorities to keep themselves in the business. It is not the dealer's fault. He cannot possibly pay from his own pocket. These bribes then are ultimately passed on to the PDS beneficiaries." (Choithani, 2015: 66)

Most of the FPS owners we spoke to advised us that each 50 kg bag of wheat and rice obtained from PDS depots typically weigh around 44-46 kg. Furthermore, FPS owners alleged they did not receive adequate compensation for the costs of transporting rations from depots to village ration stores. In one village, even though the PDS supplies to a FPS owner were delayed by three months from the block warehouse, the owner was still required to deposit the money corresponding to his monthly offtake upfront, for each month. FPS owners advised us that the only way they could afford the average amount of Rs 50,000 that was required to be paid each month to acquire their grain was to borrow

money on interest. These deficits in operational costs were typically passed onto beneficiaries. (Ibid.)

The quality of PDS grain is also not well. A study by Reetika Khera shows that 38% of respondents accepted getting good quality grain at the time of their last purchase; almost half of the respondents (47%) agreed that it was of “fair” quality and only 15% reported that the grain received by them was of poor quality. In two states, namely, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, there were hardly any complaints about the quality of PDS grain. However, in Bihar, around one-third (33%) of the respondents accepted getting poor-quality grain at the time of their last purchase. (Khera, 2011:42)

To reduce the diversion of PDS grain, the government is thinking about conditional cash transfer. A study by Reetika Khera shows that most people did not want to hear of cash transfers in those states where PDS is functional. However in Bihar, the entire system of PDS is dysfunctional where the respondents have reported to receive their entitlements only three times in past twelve months, the idea of cash transfer seems to be lucrative. The general sentiment in these villages was, “give us something, so long as it reaches us” (Khera, 2011:36-50)

Moreover, in Bihar, there is a clear preference of food over cash as expressed by more than two-third of the respondents while only 18% were in favor of cash. Combining conditional and unconditional preferences for food, there is a clear rise in the proportion who prefer food which is around 73%. Even in other states where the proportion of respondents who preferred food over cash is comparatively low, the converse preference remains uncommon.

Interestingly, the responses of men and women were quite similar. Among female respondents, 71% opted for food compared to 63% among male respondents. While men were more disposed favourably to the cash option (21% said they preferred cash), the corresponding figure for women is only sparingly lower (15%). While among the social categories, Adivasis in the sample were most favourably disposed to food (83%) with only 8% in favour of cash. (Ibid.)

There are several reasons for preferring the PDS to cash transfer, some of them are as follows- food security, poor access to banks and post offices, unimpressive record of other cash transfer programmes, underdeveloped rural markets, apprehensions regarding possible misuse of cash, and familiarity with the existing system, among others (Ibid., p. 45). As argued by Basu, the best way to get more food to the poor is to give them direct benefits, in terms of cash or smart cards or biometric transfers. Of course, there is a risk that the poor will spend the money on clothing instead of food. But that is still better than the ration store owner spending it on clothing. (Basu, 2011)

4.5a: National Food Security Act, 2013

In Bihar, the implementation of the act officially began on 1 February 2014. Identification of eligible households is one of the main challenges in implementing the NFSA. The main issue is the identification of priority households, since a list of Antyodaya households already exists, though the act does not preclude revising it. In the initial scheme of things, priority households were to be identified by applying simple inclusion and exclusion criteria to the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC). Due to delays in the release of SECC data, this prescription was withdrawn from the final version of the Act, which simply leaves the identification problem to the state governments. The use of SECC data for this purpose is still an option, but it is not mandatory. Bihar is one of the few states that were able to secure SECC data early on, and follow the intended identification process.

A recent survey of 1,000 randomly selected rural households in four districts of Bihar (Banka, Gaya, Purnea and Sitamarhi), initiated by the Planning and Development Unit at Allahabad University, found further evidence of major improvements in the PDS. For instance, households with a ration card (74% of the sample) were able to secure close to 80% of their PDS entitlements during the month preceding the survey. There are still many instances of overcharging (e.g., Rs 4/kg for rice instead of Rs 3/kg) or underweighing (e.g., 4 kg per person instead of 5 kg), and even cases of rations being skipped in a particular month. Nevertheless, Bihar's PDS seems to be improving in a way that few observers would have thought possible five years ago. This experience, aside from being

important in its own right, suggests that effective PDS reform is possible even in the worst-governed states. (Dreze and Khera, 2015:41-42)

4.5b: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

Low-income families spent a substantial amount of their earning on food and by providing them income security by generating employment is one of the powerful means of providing food security among the poorer strata. Under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA, 2005), the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was designed as a public works programme by the Government to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a year, especially in the rural areas at a minimum wage rate prescribed by the state. In a way, the scheme plays an important role in improving access to assured employment for those who volunteer to take up unskilled manual work. It helps in improving access to income and hence ensures better levels of food security. The main objective of this particular scheme is to provide income security through employment guarantee there by checking distressed migration from rural to urban areas. In this process, it creates durable assets for the community in villages which in turn leads to overall development of the rural economy.

In 2008, a study was conducted by IHD to evaluate NREGA's performance in Bihar and Jharkhand which indicated that most of the beneficiaries of the scheme were spending nearly 67 per cent of the earning from NREGS on food items (See Table 4.10). In the case of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, who generally have low and irregular income, are the most vulnerable to food insecurity. From their earnings received through the NREGS work undertaken were found to spend more from their earnings on food much higher than the state average (IHD, 2008:113). Consequently from the findings of the study, it can be inferred that the NREGA can be a safety valve to the food insecure population, particularly in those districts which generally face the problem of food insecurity.

Table 4.10: Percentage Income from NREGA Spent on Food and Related Items

	Bihar	Jharkhand	Total
Upper Caste	51.29	89.16	73.31
OBC I	62.62	68.13	63.34
OBC II	72.62	68.69	71.28
SC	68.7	75.68	69.65
ST	84.94	66.24	66.85
Total	67.7	71.31	68.6

IHD (2008)

However, a major proportion of beneficiaries under the NREGS has been from the less well-off strata of the population. A comparative statistics of the proportion of beneficiaries from bottom sections – the SCs, STs and women –are given in Table 4.10 for Bihar and India as a whole. It can be seen that in respect of employment to SCs, the proportion of SCs who demanded jobs and were subsequently provided employment is higher in Bihar (44.54 percent) than for the rest of the country (26.33 percent). Moreover, in the case of STs, the employment provided is abysmally low at 2.91 percent than the countries average (28.96 per cent). Though the proportion of the ST population is quite low in Bihar. The scenario is no different in the case of women in Bihar in comparison with the all India figure (22.93 per cent versus 69.35 per cent). District-level information remains unavailable to draw conclusions about the relative district-wise performance of NREGA. (Food Security Atlas of Rural Bihar, 2009:113-114)

However, the ground reality about MGNREGA employment in Bihar is shocking and absolutely dismal. Of the 2500 sample households (Most of the sample households are Musahar community) surveyed for this audit, 892 households had not received even a single day of NREGS employment during six years of its implementation (2006-2011). If this figure is extrapolated for entire Bihar, over 35% of the extremely poor, eligible and most needy households in Bihar did not get any wage employment whatsoever under the NREGS during six years of its implementation. (Rai, 2012) Of the 100 villages surveyed,

17 had not received even a single day of employment under MGNREGA during the entire period of 6 years (2006-2011). 53 villages had not received even a single day job under MGNREGA during the previous one year (January 2011- December 2011). If this figure is extrapolated for entire Bihar, we can say that over 53% of the extremely deprived, eligible and desperately needy households did not get even a single day of job under the NREGS during the previous one year (January 2011-December 2011)(Ibid.) whereas every household must have been provided at least 100 days wage employment as per Section 3 (1)³ of MGNREGA.

4.5c: Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM)

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) is another central government programme is being implemented in the State since January 2005, nearly after four months of its launch on 1st September 2004 followed by the notification by the State Government on 18th December 2004 to implement the MDM in all primary schools in Bihar. Earlier in 2003-04, the State had experimented with the provision of cooked meal in about 2531 schools, spread over 30 blocks in 10 districts. It was later scaled up to all of 15,000 schools in these districts, covering about 30 lakh children. Further, the programme has been implemented in all the 38 districts of Bihar since the year 2007-08.

The main objective of the scheme is to increase enrolment, retention and attendance of children in primary & upper Primary Schools and to improve the nutritional level of such children through supplementary nutrition.

The perception of villagers (parents and pupils) with respect to the quality and regularity of the meals provided was collected at the village level. Results are given in Table 4.11, in 25 villages out of 36 (almost 70 per cent) respondents considered the quality of the meals provided to be 'adequate' or better. (Rodgers, Gerry et al. 2013:192)

In two-thirds of the villages, however, regularity in the provision of meals was poor. Some teachers faced difficulties to implement the scheme properly. Out of 91 teachers interviewed 35 reported insufficient supplies of grains, while another 18 referred to

³ Section 3 (1) of the MGNREGA provides that the State Government shall provide to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work not less than one hundred days of such work in a financial year.

corruption of one sort or another. Teachers also complained that their involvement in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme was often at the expense of their teaching duties. Though the scheme was experiencing significant problems, the availability of mid-day meals was commonly cited by poor households as an important incentive for the enrolment of their children in school. (Ibid. pp.192-193)

Table 4.11: Village perceptions of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, 2009-10 (Distribution of villages)

Village-level perception	Quality	Regularity
Very good	1	3
Good	5	2
Adequate	19	7
Poor	10	17
Very poor	1	7
Total	36	36

Source: IHD Bihar Survey, 2009-10, village scheduled

A study of 22 primary and 12 upper primary schools Patna (Rural) district of Bihar by Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow was found that in 90.91 percent primary and 91.97 percent upper primary schools, hot, cooked meal was provided to the students on a regular basis. The quality and quantity of MDM was examined, and it was found that either normal or good quality of food was given in all sample primary and upper primary schools of the district. Most of these schools are serving MDM in sufficient quantity to each student. It was found that all selected primary schools and all upper primary schools were providing prescribed quantity of mid-day meal to students. 22 primary schools and 12 upper primary schools were checked 75.00 percent primary school and 90.90 percent upper primary provided good quality of MDM while 25.00 primary schools and 10.10 percent upper primary school provide normal meals to their children. All students receive sufficient quantity of meals.⁴ Queue was observed for serving and seating arrangement for

⁴Ind Half Yearly Monitoring Report of Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow On MDM for the State of Bihar, Period: 1st October to 31st March 2014, p. 11.

eating of food in all sampled primary and upper primary schools of Patna (Rural) district. It has been observed that all primary and upper primary schools observe no gender or caste or community discrimination in cooking and serving or seating arrangement. (Ibid. p.13)

There have been several anecdotal reports of discrimination against children in the MDMS. The study by Thorat and Lee (2005) is among the few whose focus was on access among dalits. They find that, in Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, access to MDMs for dalit children is hampered by the fact that the meals are served primarily in dominant caste hamlets. In addition, they find that apart from outright exclusion (e.g., dalit children being denied access to the MDM), there are also instances of discrimination (e.g., segregated seating, or different food being served to children of different castes). In Bihar, plates were labelled with the initial of the child's caste; in Rajasthan, children from the "lower" castes had to be given water by other children, whereas the other children were allowed to help themselves to the water directly. (Drèze, J and A Goyal, 2003 & Pushpendra and T Sood, 2005)

4.5d: Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

The ICDS, the main outlet for public spending on child nutrition, has been in existence since 1975. The ICDS programme renders nutrition and health services for children under the age of six years and pregnant or breastfeeding women, also early childhood care or preschool activities for children age 3-5 years. These services are provided through community-based anganwadi centres. State governments are responsible for procuring food for the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP). However, since 2005, as a result of a Supreme Court direction, the GOI meets half the cost of the SNP.

Table 4.12: Norms for supplementary nutrition

	Number per day	Number of days per months	Number of days per year	Energy (KCL)	Proteins (grams)
Children 3 – 6 years	40	25	300	500	12-15
Children 6 months to 3 years					
Malnourished Children	28	25	300	500	12-15
Severely Malnourished Children	12	25	300	800	20-25
Pregnant/nursing mothers	16	25	300	600	18-20
Adolescent girls	3	25	300	600	18-20
Total	99				

Source: <http://www.icdsbih.gov.in/SupplementaryNutrition.aspx?GL=9&PL=8&SL=1>, accessed on 04.12.2015

Take Home Ration – Supplementary Nutrition is distributed in the form of Take Home Ration to pregnant and lactating women and children between 6 months to 3 years at each Anganwadi Center on 15th date of every month. Beneficiaries are getting Take Home Ration for the full month at one time.

Table 4.13: Quantity of Take Home Ration

Beneficiaries	No. Of Beneficiaries	Rice	Pulse
6 months to 3 years	28 malnourished children	2.5 kg per child	1.250 kg per child
6 months to 3 years	12 Severe malnourished children	4 kg per children	2 kg per child
Pregnant and lactating mother	16 women	3 kg per women	1.500 kg per women

Source: <http://www.icdsbih.gov.in/SupplementaryNutrition.aspx?GL=9&PL=8&SL=1>, accessed on 04.12.2015

Despite a three-fold increase in the GOI's budget and the contention of the Ministry of Women and Child Development that there are 1.5 ICDS centres per village now, according to the 61st round of the NSS carried out in 2005, the ICDS is reaching only 12.5 percent of children in the age group six months to six years. As each centre is likely to be located in the richer part of the village, it may be unable to reach vulnerable children in poorer households and lower castes and those living in remote areas. The programme targets children mostly after the age of three; when malnutrition has already set in. It does not focus on the critical age group of children under three years, the age window during which health and nutrition interventions can have the most effect. Finally, ICDS faces substantial operational challenges, such as lack of monitoring. (Saxena, n.d.)

In Bihar, the areas which are covered under the anganwadi center, only 1 out of 10 receive services from the centre which is around 88% of children under six years of age. The percentage of children receiving anganwadi service is much lower in Bihar when compared to any other state. (NFHS III, Bihar, 2008:17). The most common services that the children receive are immunization (8% of children under six years), early childhood care or preschool (5% of children 3-5 years) and supplementary food (4% of children under six years). Children of mothers with 10 or more years of education, children age 48-59 months, and children belonging to other backward classes are more likely than other children to take advantage of the services offered at anganwadi centres. (Ibid)

The provision of food supplements by Anganwadi centres is spread through the population. About 15 percent of all households report receiving these supplements “often”, and another 23 per cent “sometimes”, with some variation (from 29 percent in Gaya district, combining these two measures, to 45 per cent in Nalanda district). Table 4.14 shows that almost 40 per cent of all households benefit from the schemes, landless agricultural labour households benefit most (about half of them do) and large cultivators and landlords least. Female-headed and male-headed households do not show different patterns. (Rodgers, Gerry et al. 2013:192)

Table 4.14: Households receiving food supplements through Aganwadi centres by class, 2009-10 (%)

Class	Often	Sometimes	No	Don't Know	Total
Ag lab without cultivation	19.6	27.6	52.6	0.2	100.0
Ag lab with cultivation	12.2	27.2	60.4	0.3	100.0
Poor peasant	16.8	21.7	60.4	1.1	100.0
Middle peasant	10.6	22.7	64.9	1.8	100.0
Big peasant/landlord	13.7	12.9	70.9	2.5	100.0
Non-agricultural	11.5	21.5	64.5	2.5	100.0
Total	15.3	23.4	60.3	1.1	100.0

Source: IHD Bihar Survey, 2009-10, Household sample.

Datta et al. study found that all children in the eligible age groups do not go to the Aganwadicentre (AWC) in most of the visited *tolas*. In some *tolas*, none of the children went to AWCs. The most common explanation for this can be traced to caste issues in a variety of ways. They found that if AWCs were located in lower caste *tolas*, upper castes families did not send their children there. If they were located in upper caste *tolas*, lower caste children happened not to attend them. If they were located in Muslim *tolas*, it was very likely that Hindu children, from both upper and lower castes, did not attend. For instance, Brahmin women in Amarhi reported that their children did not go to the AWC because it was in the Harijantola. (Datta et al. 2012:44)

The above discussion clearly points out that India has been in forefront in implementing a number of programmes/schemes which are related directly or indirectly to food provisioning for needy people. But the poor outcome of the programmes and schemes being implemented by spending a handsome amount of GDP is quite depressing. As a consequence, even six decades after independence, India is still far from visualizing herself to be the hunger-free nation.

Draze and Sen argue that hunger is caused not so much by 'food availability decline' but by the 'failure of exchange entitlement'. This is an entirely preventable phenomenon and

can be avoided if there could be a stern 'public action' and the effective 'state action'.(Dreze and Sen, 1989:22) State action in the form of multiple schemes does exist but is in more or less disarray. Studies related to the functioning of state-sponsored food security schemes come to a conclusion that in many cases bogus ration cards, poor quality grains and short weighing of foods plague these schemes. In Thane district of Maharashtra, for instance, Swaminathan found that ration cards of scheduled tribes showed full offtake though the tribals have not purchased food from the ration shops and there is caste based discrimination in the government schemes. (Swaminathan, 2002 &Thorat and Lee, 2006)

The government has identified the four major pillars of the development in Bihar: (a) putting agriculture at the centre of the development process; (b) ensuring speedy human development through adequate educational and health services; (c) improving the delivery system of a large number of development programmes on which the state is already spending substantial resources; and (d) ensuring the connectivity of the traditional economy to the market economy through the construction of roads and other communication linkage. This is indeed a pragmatic priority setting, bearing in mind the fact that the economy of Bihar at present is a highly disadvantaged one. (Gupta, 2013:367)

This development agenda is very different from those of advanced states where industrialization, foreign investment or mega infrastructure projects are priority areas. Of those four priority areas, the present government has paid relatively more attention to the second and fourth, i.e., human development and connectivity of the rural economy. Some improvements can already be noticed in these areas, but the task has just begun, and it needs to be continued.

The state should now pay more attention to the other two areas, particularly agricultural growth. If the state government is able to introduce even moderate land management, an agenda repeatedly postponed since Independence, the task of agricultural growth, or green revolution, can be easily achieved in Bihar. A self-sustaining growth process can start in Bihar only when its agricultural economy is able to generate some surplus, leading to higher local investment and diversification of the traditional agrarian economy.

Chapter: 5

HUNGRY VOICES ON THE GROUND: LESSON FROM THE FIELD

Fieldwork is an interesting way of putting up the actual work in the forefront. My interest in the particular field arose from being a part of the project where I had the chance to survey the impacts of various government-run schemes for the marginalized section of population in various districts of Bihar. I conducted a pilot study of ten districts (Katihar, Purnia, Begusarai, Muzafarpur, Vaishali, Nalanda, Nawada, Gaya, Ara, Buxar) of Bihar during my project on Performance audit of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid Day Meal (MDM), and Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS). The extensive study was undertaken in 10 districts which were randomly selected. In each district ten villages were selected and a conscious decision was made to select 25 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households from each village. By the end of the project, I felt that Nawada is one of the poorest districts of Bihar. There is no industry in this district and people depend on agriculture. Agriculture, which is the main occupation, solely depends on monsoon, but there were not enough monsoons for last five year, as a result of which people were forced to migrate to other cities in search of work.

Among the Scheduled Castes, Musahars were the most deprive community. National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government of Bihar particularly categorized Musahar Community under the rubric of Mahadalit. Mahadalit are the poorest of the socially marginalized people of Bihar who are living in utter starvation. Dalits living in rural areas economically depend on the farm land which belong to the upper caste people, and like the Dalits throughout India, are socially discriminated by the upper caste.

5.1: The Fieldwork Experience

For the purposes of the study being proposed, three suitable villages (Chotki Amawn, Gazipur, Barew) of Akbarpur Block in Nawada District were selected for a field observation. The selection of these three villages was made on the basis of the number of musahar residing in these villages. The accessibility to these villages was also one of the chief areas of concern. The number of Musahar residing in these villages exceeds the

other villages in the district. People of the Musahar community are largely engaged in the occupations of agriculture, brick making, daily wage labour, etc. Despite the big urban talk on affirmative action by the state, very few members from the Musahar community seem to be getting into the public sector employment.

As being able to decide the fieldwork and the actual villages, where the entire work is to conduct, the major hindrance was the entry into the field. In the beginning, I tried to identify few people of social importance in the village through whom it would be a little easy to approach the villagers. With the help of them, I was able to establish contact in the community. Familiarity is also an important aspect as people tend to not tell everything in the very first meeting. So I stayed over and ventured in their place of residence a couple of times to gain access to important information. As my study also included other caste people, so I try to strike a friendship with the other villagers as well. It is a common practice that Musahar community lives in the outskirts of the village, so the time of fieldwork kept on extending. Keeping a track of the daily lives of both, the Musahar community, and the other communities is a daunting task and takes a lot of time.

Initially I planned a pilot survey to gain a foothold and understand the basic nuances of the field and then I structured a long fieldwork of 6 months. I prepared the schedule and went back to the field. As there is no specific mention of how many months of fieldwork is necessary to understand the problem, so I maintained a healthy relationship with the field and kept on visiting it even after my original fieldwork was over.

Working in the field brings forward many problems. Being a male and working in the field raises many eyebrows. Sometimes I would be left alone to speak with the female member of the household in absence of any male member in the family. Apart from this, caste and class also plays an important role in the field especially when one chooses to work in a rural setting.

Not only building up a good rapport is important but also acceptance by the people whom the researcher wishes to study is of equal importance. Developing a tactful insight and maintaining a neutral approach is also of chief importance in the field.

It is in this never-explained terrain that the present researcher wishes to venture into and look at the ground realities with a sociological gaze. The proposed study would deploy the research techniques of sociology and social anthropology.

5.2: Research Methods

After obtaining permission to enter the field, the most challenging part was to find appropriate informants and access to them. This is the first necessary step in data collection, known as “sample selection”. The appropriate sampling strategy follows from the specific research problem, and should dictate the research boundaries. According to Manheim (1977:270), “a sample is a part of the population which is studied in order to make inferences about the whole population”. In defining ‘population’ from which the sample is taken, it is necessary to identify ‘target population’ and ‘sampling frame’. The target population is one which includes all the units (persons) for which the information is required. There are basically two types of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Stratified random is the form of probability sampling in which the population is divided into a number of strata or sub-group and a sample is drawn from each stratum. These sub-samples make up the final sample of the study. It is defined as “the method involving dividing the population in homogeneous strata and then selecting simple random samples from each of the stratum”. For this study three villages are selected and in each village 60 households are selected. 60 households are further divide in three parts, 20 households from Musahar community, 20 households from Non Musahar SCs (all SCs except Musahar) and 20 others households (all community except SCs).

Reeves, in her book, ‘A Difficult Negotiation’ stated: “Once physical access to a site or population has been agreed, the cooperation of people within the site, community or culture has to be established (Reeves, 2010:329).” This was done through various research techniques appropriate to the study. Mix method is to be used for better understanding of the field. Mixed method studies are those that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches in to research methodology of a single study or multiphase study. Mixed method use triangulation techniques. In 1978, Denzin applied the term triangulation in a book on sociological methods. Denzin’s concept of triangulation

involved combining data sources to study the same social phenomenon. He discussed four basic types of triangulation: data triangulation (the use of a variety of data sources in a study), investigator triangulation (the use of several different researchers), theory triangulation (the use of multiple perspectives to interpret the results of a study), and methodological triangulation (the use of multiple methods to study research problem). The methods used were interviews, group discussion, and participant observation, which were then systematically analyzed for key themes, patterns, and contradictions. (Denzin, 1978)

5.2a: Interview

In research field, Lindzy Gardner (1968:527) has defined interview as “a two-person conversation, initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him on the content specified by the research objectives of description and explanation”. Interview may be broadly divided into two types. In the first, the interviewer has a basic idea of the areas about which he would be interviewing the respondent. He carries with him a list of the topic- what may be technically called the ‘interview guide’- that would guide him during the interview, but he does not structure specific questions in advance. In such situation, an interviewer is more or less a ‘free floating’ conversation. The interview may cover a number of areas. Called unstructured, it is time consuming, but yield a lot of information apart from the topics in which the interviewers is particularly interested.

By comparison, the other kind of interview is structured, in which the investigator prepares a set of questions in advance and is specifically committed to seeking their answers. Vinay Kumar Srivastava argues that unstructured and structured interview may also be combined. The interviewer prepares an inventory of the topics of his interest in advance and then starts the interview in a conversational manner. Once rapport has been established, he may gradually funnel down his enquiry, making it structured. (Srivastava, 2014:30).

In survey research, the principal tool of data collection is the questionnaire, which may be defined as a set of questions (printed or typed) pertaining to a problem under study. When an investigator in an interview situation administers the questionnaire, it is called a schedule (or 'interview schedule'). The difference between interview and interview schedule is that the former is a 'specific conversational technique' with a lot of improvisations. In the later, the investigator simply reads out the questions as they have already been framed and records the responses *ad verbum*. The interview schedule does not have any scope for improvisation, but it assures a high response rate and answers to all questions. The respondent's environment is also controlled. It has been observed in many cultures that people find it onerous to write, however, they feel extremely comfortable in giving oral replies to the questions. This is particularly true of cultures where the oral tradition is valued. One of the greatest advantages of the schedule is that it can be used in non-literate societies, which is not the case with the questionnaire.

5.2b: Observation

Observation should be distinguished from mere seeing and looking. Observation may be defined as a systematic viewing, which is intentional and planned. One of the main techniques- in some cases, the only technique- social anthropologist and sociologist use is participant observation, which is sustain, intensive, extended, day-after-day, and of a broad range. He has a first-hand experience of sharing a people's culture in its natural habitat for a lengthy period of time. Malinowski (1922:21-22) wrote: '... it is good for the Ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, note book and pencil, and to join in himself in what is going on.' From such plunges in the life of the Trobrianders, Malinowski found that their behaviour and their manner of being became more transparent and understandable. In India, M. N. Srinivas had used this method in studying the process of 'sanskritisation' in Mysore while Andre Beteille had used it to study social inequality in rural areas (Tanjore village) on the basis of class, status and power.

5.3: Description of Field Data

The entire data is divided into three villages. Further data is segmented into two important segments: first is general profile of the sample households. For better understanding of sample household we categorised in six sections, namely: caste wise analysis of sample household, agricultural land ownership, education, type of work, destination of migration, drinking water.

Second segment explain the various food security schemes. I will explain five major food security schemes, in five sections which are directly or indirectly related to food security schemes. First section explain the integrate child development service (ICDS), it is divided in to two subsection: first, children who come at Aganwadi centre and second those beneficiaries, who received take home ration. First subsection further categorised in six categories to able to represent the problem properly: i) regular, adequate and satisfactory, ii) regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory, iii) Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory, iv) Once in a while, v) Never, vi) Not eligible. In Take home ration, we try to look whether eligible household are getting the benefit or not.

Second section focuses on public distribution system. To understand PDS in a way better way, further divided in to four sub sections: proportion received in month (PDS), discrepancy in ration entry, problems faced in availing food grain, cash or in kind transfer.

Third section analyse the mid-day meal schemes (MDM). The problem in MDM are categorised in six part i) regular, adequate and satisfactory ii) regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory iii) Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory iv) Once in a while v) Never vi) Not eligible.

Last section explains the national old age pension schemes (NOAPS). In this schemes we focus on whether eligible household are getting the benefit or not. If yes then, they are getting the benefit regularly or not.

5.4: The Field Setting

As per details from Census 2011, total population of Bihar is 104,099,452 of which male and female are 54,278,157 and 49,821,295 respectively. Literacy rate in Bihar has seen an upward trend and is 61.80 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 71.20 percent while female literacy is at 46.40 percent. In 2001, literacy rate in Bihar stood at 47.00 percent of which male and female were 59.68 percent and 33.12 percent literate respectively. Sex Ratio in Bihar is 918 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. Out of total population of Bihar, 11.29% people are living in urban regions.¹ Nawada district is one of the thirty-eight districts of Bihar state, and Nawada town is the administrative headquarters of this district. The district was part of famous Magadh, Sunga and Gupta empires. It is located between historical districts of Nalanda and Gaya and falls under Magadha Commissionery.

In 2011, Nawada had population of 2,219,146 of which male and female were 1,144,668 and 1,074,478 respectively. Average literacy rate of Nawada in 2011 were 59.76 compared to 46.83 of 2001. If things are seen from the gender perspective, male and female literacy were 69.98 and 48.86 respectively. With regards to Sex Ratio in Nawada, it stood at 939 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 946. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate. In 2011 census, child sex ratio is 945 girls per 1000 boys compared to the earlier figure of 978 girls per 1000 boys of 2001 census data.² Total Scheduled Caste population in Nawada district is 435,975 (three largest Scheduled Castes: Musahar 119,465; Rajwar 117,417 and Pasi 68,353).

¹<http://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/bihar.html> accessed on 10.05.2015

²<http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/89-nawada.html> accessed on 10.05.2015.

Map No. 5.1: Outline of Nawada District

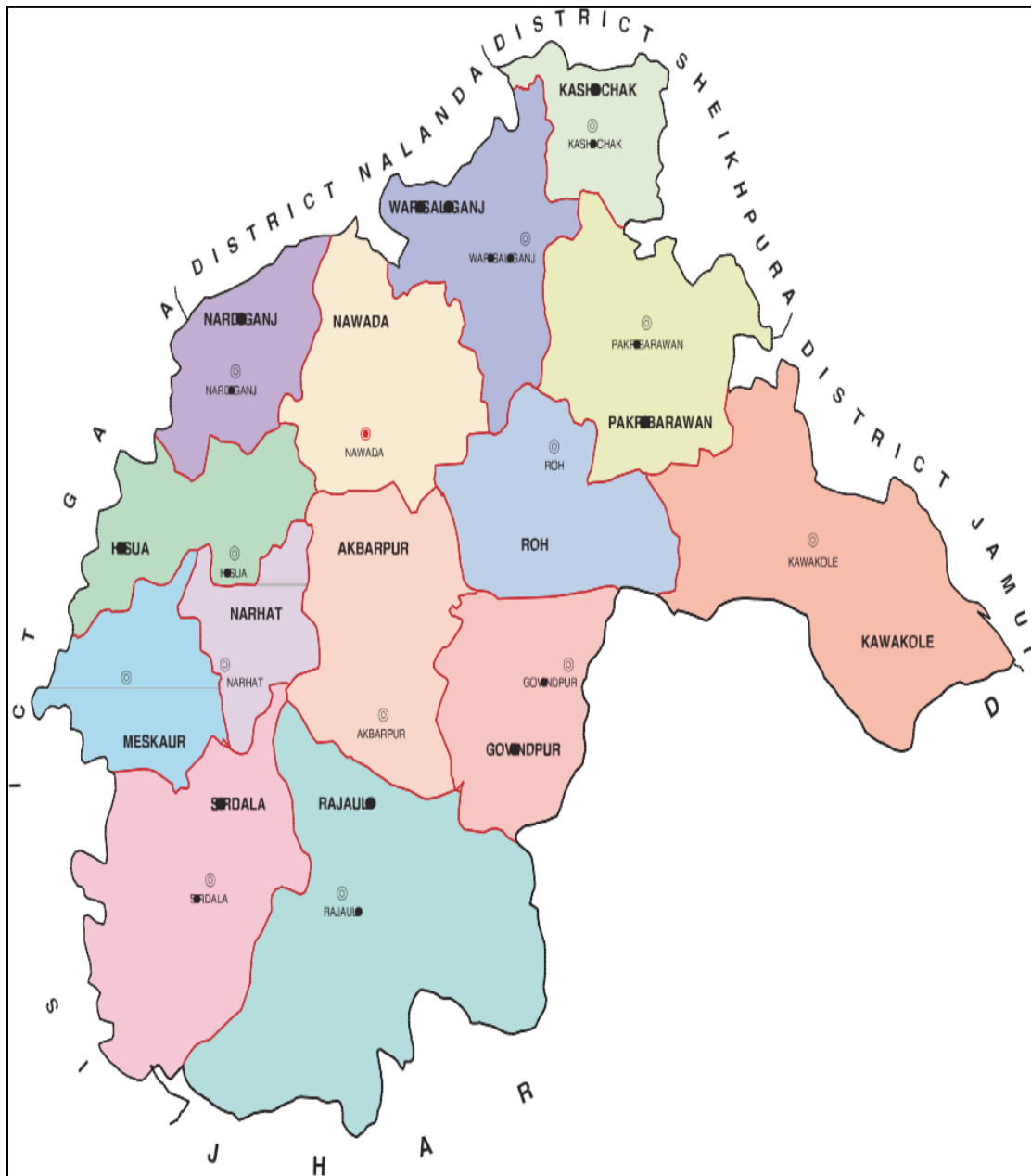


Table 5.1: Profile of Nawada District

Description	2011
Total Population	2,219,146
Males	1,144,668
Females	1,074,478
Rural (%)	90.29%
Urban (%)	9.71%
Scheduled Castes (%)	24.09%
Scheduled Tribes (%)	0.12%
Sex Ratio (females per 1000 males)	939
Average Literacy rate	59.76
Males	69.98
Females	48.86

5.5. Village: Barew

Village Barew is located in Akbarpur Block of Nawada district, Bihar. Barew village has a total population of 6713 of which 3469 are males and 3244 females (as per Population Census 2011). In Barew village, population of children with age 0-6 is 1206 which makes up 17.97 % of total population of the village. Average Sex Ratio of Barew village is 935 which is higher than Bihar state's average of 918. Child Sex Ratio for the Barew as per census is 974, higher than Bihar state's average of 935. Barew village has higher literacy rate compared to Bihar. In 2011, literacy rate of Barew village was 71.36 % compared to 61.80 % of Bihar. In Barew Male literacy stands at 78.45 % while female literacy rate was 63.72 %.³ Barew village of Nawada has substantial population of Schedule Caste. Schedule Caste (SC) constitutes 26.44 % while Schedule Tribe (ST) were 0.18 % of total population in Barew village.

³<http://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/258076-barew-bihar.html> accessed on 09.05.2015

In Barew village out of total population, 2075 were engaged in work activities. 61.40 % of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 38.60 % were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 2075 workers engaged in Main Work, 211 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 558 were Agricultural labourer.

Table 5.2: Profile of Barew Village

Caste/ Communities		Constitutional Status	No. of households	Household (in Percent)	Primary occupation(s)	Land (in Percent)
1	Bhumihar	General	90	21.22	Agriculture	70
2	Pandit	General	20	4.71	Agriculture	8
3	Rajput	General	4	0.94	Agriculture	8
4	Koeri	OBC	30	7.07	Agriculture	5
5	Chamar	SC	55	12.97	Agricultural labourer	0
6	Musahar	SC	100	23.58	Migrant worker and agricultural labourer	0
7	Mali	EBC*	35	8.25	Fruit seller	0
8	Muslim	Muslim	50	11.74	Migrant worker	2
9	Kahar	EBC	10	2.35	Migrant worker	1
10	Yadav	OBC	10	2.35	Agriculture	3
11	Others		20	4.71		1
Total			424	100		100

*Extremely Backward Caste

Source: Field Work

Figure 5.1 represents the caste wise analysis of sample households. The samples of Musahar and Ravidas community are thirty three and thirty two percent respectively. Twenty percent are from Koeri community and eleven percent is from Ravidas community.

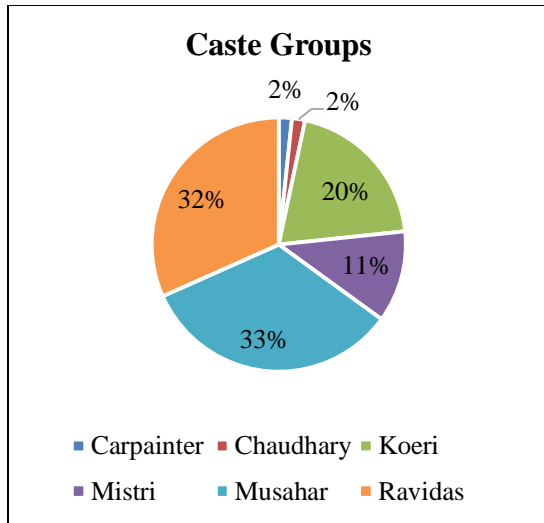


Fig. 5.1 Caste-wise Sample Households

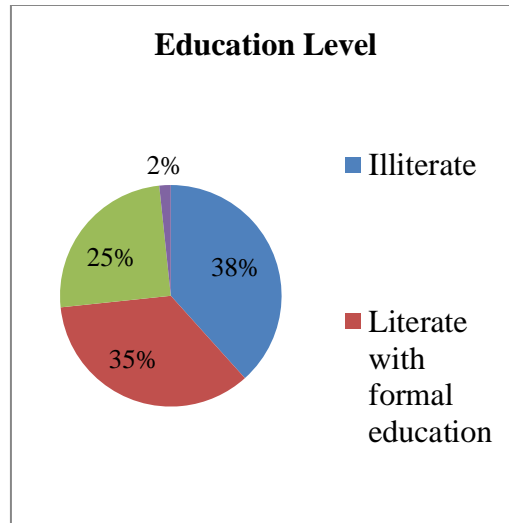


Figure 5.2: Level of Education Level

Source: Field Work

Figure 5.2 shows that 38% in our sample households are illiterate. Most of the illiterate households are from Scheduled Caste. 35% households are literate with formal education and 25% households are primary educated. Only 2% households are secondary educated.

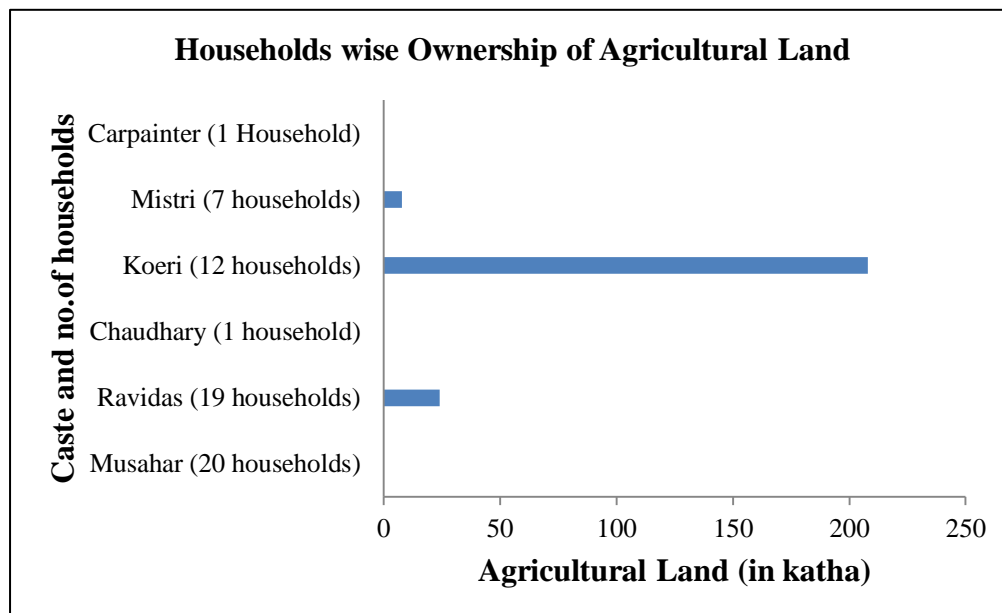


Figure 5.3: Household wise Ownership of Agricultural Land

Source: Field Work

Musahars are the landless community in Bareilly. In our sample, twelve households of koeries own the two hundred four katha land. In other word, an average landownership of every household is seventeen katha lands. Ravidas have some amount of land, but it is only an average one katha. Carpenter and chaudhary is also one household each but they don't have agricultural land.

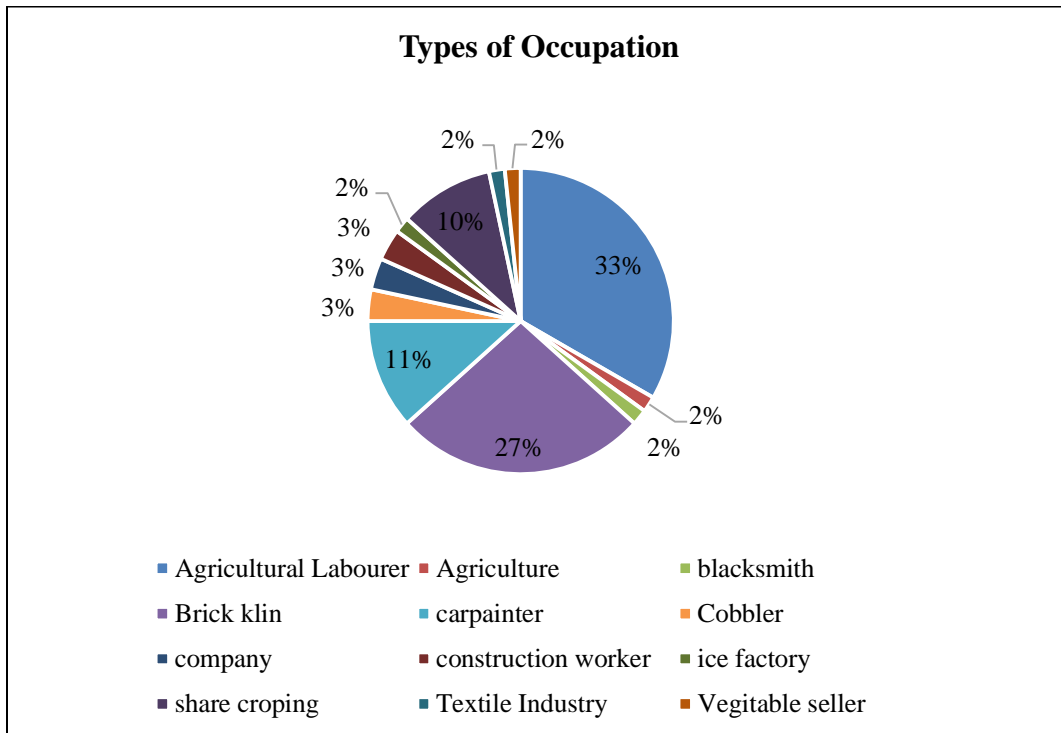


Figure 5.4: Types of Occupation
Source: Field Work

Above figure explain the types of occupation. Those households, who work in brick kiln industry, company, textile industry, ice factory, vegetable seller are migrant worker. One third of our sample households are agricultural labourer. Twenty seven percent households are worked in brick kiln industry, they are migrant worker. They go other state for work. Eleven percent households are carpainter and ten percent households are sharecropper.

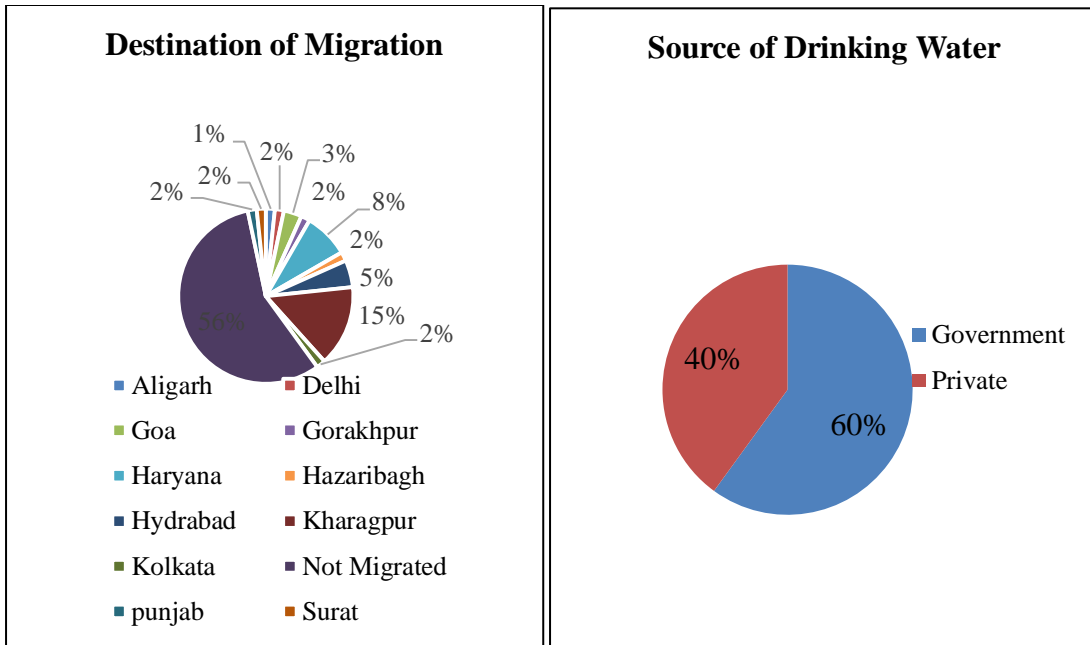


Figure 5.5: Destination of Migration

Figure 5.6: Source of Drinking Water

Source: Field Work

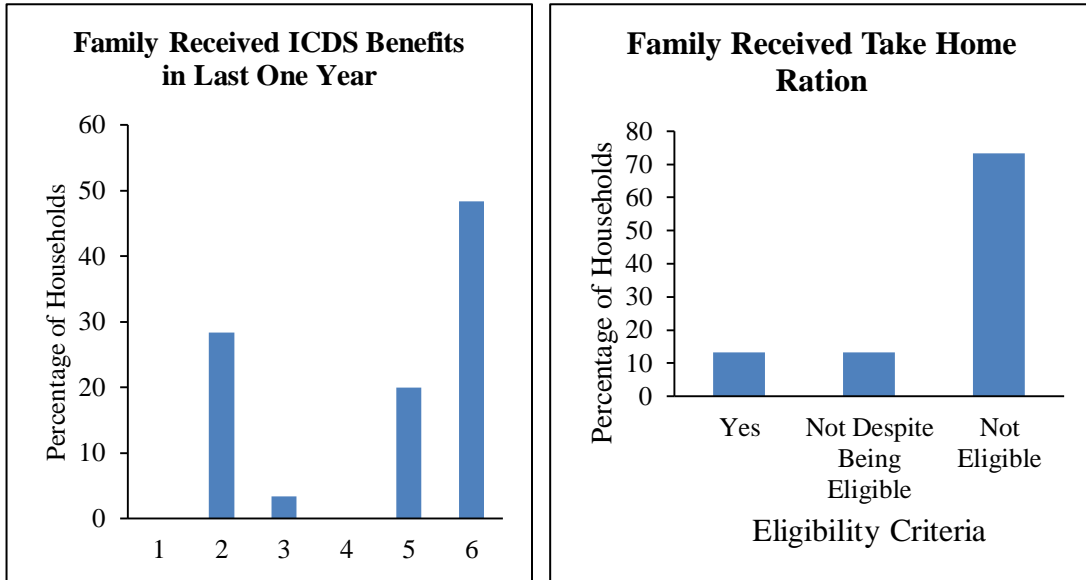
From Barew village, people migrate the above mention place. Fifty six percent households are non migrant; they are engaged in agricultural activities. Brick kiln industries are mostly situated in Aligarh, Haryana, Kharagpur, and Gorakhpur. Fifteen percent households are migrated to Kharagpur. Most of the households, who are migrated to Kharagpur are musahar and worked in a brick kiln industry.

Figure 5.6 shows the source of drinking water. Forty percent households have their own hand pump inside the home and other sixty percent households are so poor they don't afford their own hand pump. They fetch water from common hand pump and well.

5.5 a. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

Figure 5.7 shows that twenty eight percent households are getting the ICDS benefit regularly but the amount is insufficient. Children get cooked meal but quality of food is poor. Not a single child of musahar community is getting the benefit of ICDS because ICDS centre of musahar tola has been shifted to main village which is 2 km away. It is not possible for below 6 year children to walk 2km every day. Aganwadi worker told me the reason for shifting the ICDS centre from Musahar tola to main village; she said that

most of Musahar families get migrated to other city for work therefore concerned authority shifted ICDS to main village.



Note: 1: Regular, adequate and satisfactory, Ration
 2: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 3: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 4: Once in a while, 5: Never, 6: Not eligible

Figure 5.8: Family Received Take Home Ration
 Source: Field Work

Figure 5.7: Family Received ICDS Benefits in Last One Year
 Source: Field Work.

Only thirteen percent households are getting the benefit of THR and another thirteen percent households are not getting the benefit despite being eligible, as shown in the above figure. Those household are not getting the benefit despite being eligible belong to musahar community. In other word, not a single lactating mother, pregnant mother, malnourished child of musahar community is getting the benefit of Take Home Ration (THR). Those thirteen percent households are getting the benefits are not receiving the full amount of ration regularly.

5.5b. Public Distribution System (PDS)

Thirty eight percent households get their ration on every alternate month, as shown in the figure 5.9. Twenty seven percent household never get ration because either they do not have ration card or they have got ration card very recently. Not a single household get the

ration all through the year and full amount of ration is never received. Two and three households have been receiving ration seven and eight month respectively in last one year. Thirteen percent households have received five months ration in previous year.

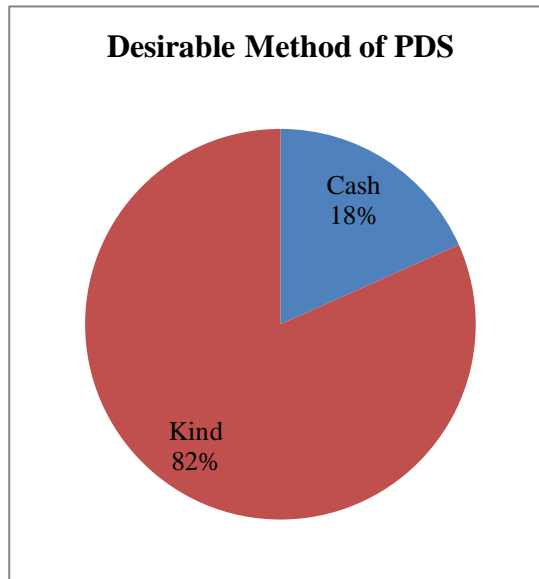
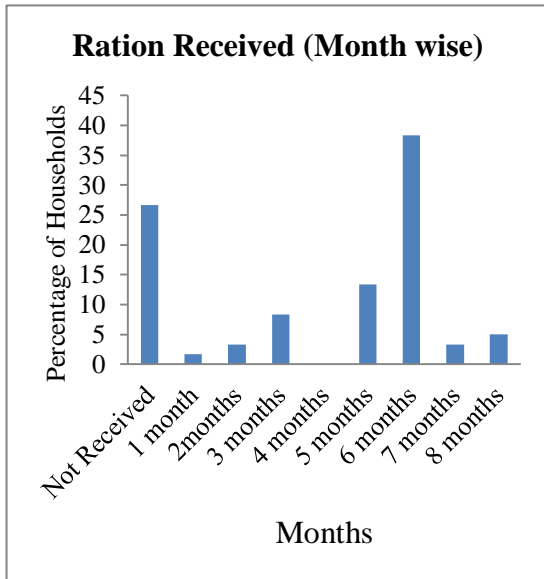


Figure 5.9: Ration Received (Month wise) PDS
Source: Field Work

Figure 5.10: Desirable Method of PDS
Source: Field Work

Compare to other two villages, in this village respondents are in favour of in kind transfer because most of the beneficiaries get ration on every alternate month and some households even get more than that, as shown in above figure. In Awan village, beneficiaries get 2 to 3 months and in Gajipur, PDS owner never distribute the grain so in both the villages, beneficiaries want cash transfer. Almost 82 percent households prefer grain in Barew village. Respondent said that grain is provided in village so we can easily access.

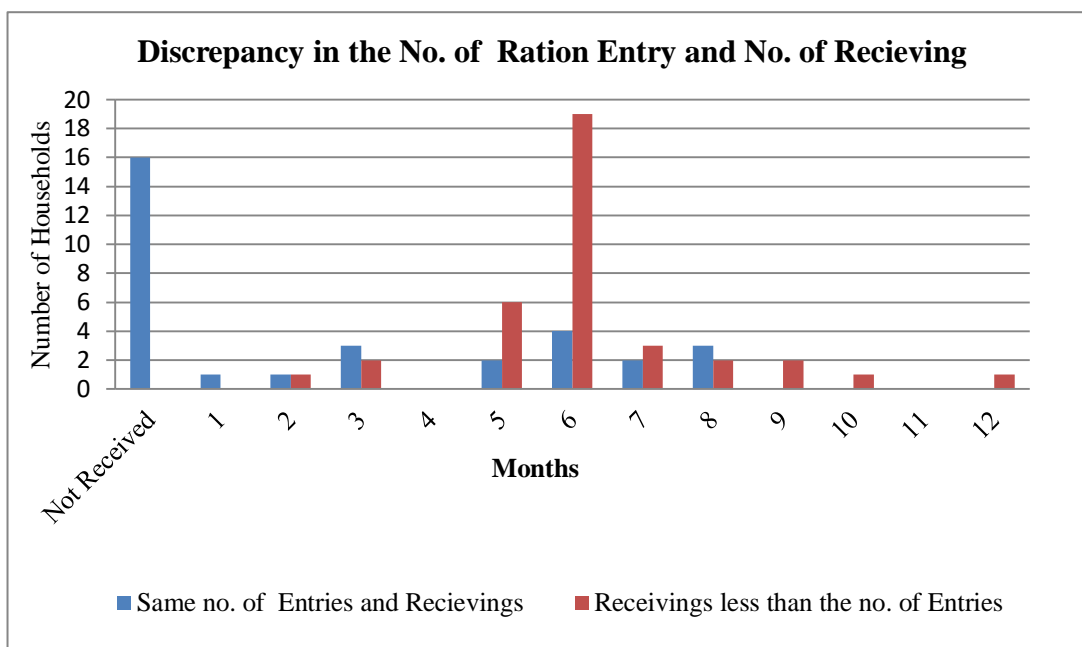


Figure 5.11: Discrepancy in the No. of Ration Entry and No. of Recieving
Source: Field Work

It has come out that there is a difference in the ration entry as well as the actual amount of ration received by the people. At times entry has been made but no ration has been provided to the people. Most of these cases are that of migration when the entire family migrates to a different place in search of work, they are forced to return their ration cards with the provider. The providers then make all the entries but actually no ration has been given to them in those months. Out of 60 sample household, 23 households received six month ration in last one year but only four household received the same amount of ration which has entries at their PDS card. The remaining 19 household said that they have not received the same amount of ration which is mention on PDS card. Only five households get more than six month of ration but ten household were found whose entries on PDS was more than six months. It shows a major loophole in PDS. Most deprived and marginalized Musahar and other Scheduled castes are deprived of the food security schemes.

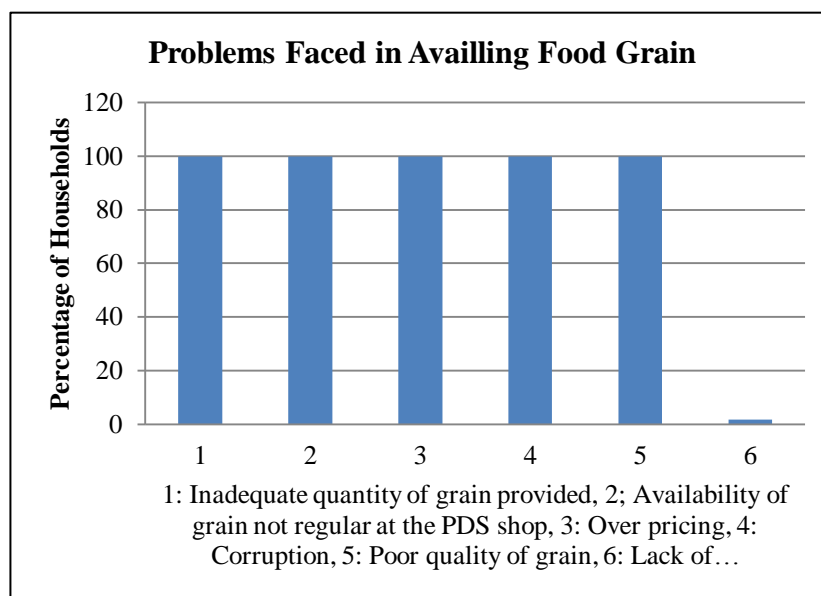
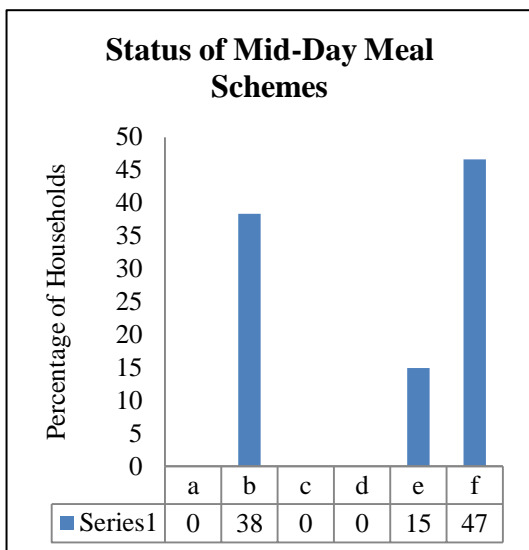


Figure 5.12: Problems Faced in Availing Food Grain
Source: Field Work

All the sample households said that full quantity of grain is not provided by the PDS. Respondent also said that in place of 2rs/kg wheat and 3rs/kg rice, PDS dealer charged 3rs/kg wheat and 4rs/kg rice. Only one household have talked about the lack of cash when grain was available at the PDS shop. Poor quality of grain is also a major problem. The entire respondent said that the quality of grain is not good.

5.5c. Mid-Day Meal Schemes (MDMs) and National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)

Figure 5.13 explains the status of MDMs. Thirty eight percent households get the MDM benefit regularly but amount is not adequate. Respondent said that quality of MDM is also poor. Fifteen percent households never get the MDM benefit because their children are not enrolled in school. These children are from musahar community. They said that school administration do not take admission of their children. They asked for birth certificate and bank account for admission. Our children are not born in hospital so we don't have birth certificate.



Note: a: Regular, adequate and satisfactory,
 b: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 c: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 d: Once in a while, e: Never, F: Not eligible

Figure 5.13: Status Mid-Day Meal Schemes
 Source: Field Work

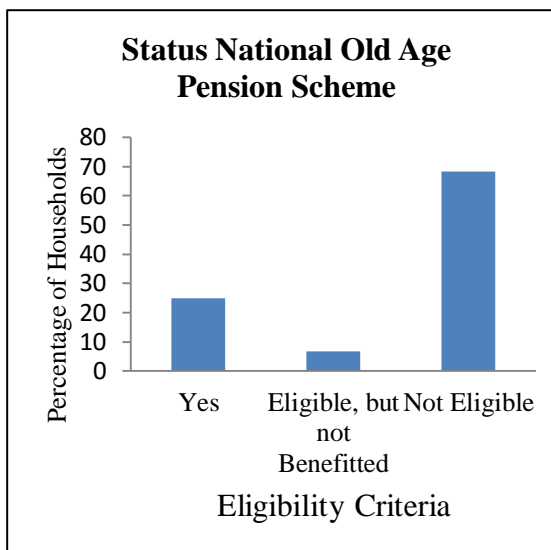


Figure 5.14: Status of NOAPS
 Source: Field Work

Those household cover under National Old Age Pension Scheme get full amount in every six month or sometime in a year. In other word, they do not get their amount in every month. Four households are not getting the benefit despite being eligible, as shown in the figure 5.14. They said that competent authority do not make NOAPS card due to not fulfilling the minimum age criteria.

5.6. Village: Ghazipur

Ghazipur is a village located in Akbarpur Block of Nawada district. The Ghazipur village has population of 1180 of which 617 are males while 563 are females as per Population Census 2011. In Ghazipur village population of children with age 0-6 is 195 which makes up 16.53 % of total population of village. Average Sex Ratio of Ghazipur village is 912 which is lower than Bihar state average of 918. Child Sex Ratio for the Ghazipur as per census is 789, lower than Bihar average of 935. Ghazipur village has higher literacy rate compared to Bihar. In 2011, literacy rate of Ghazipur village was 73.30 % compared to 61.80 % of Bihar. In Ghazipur Male literacy stands at 84.25 % while female

literacy rate was 61.64 %.⁴

In Ghazipur village, most of the villagers are from Schedule Caste (SC). Schedule Caste (SC) constitutes 40.51 % of total population in Ghazipur village. The village Ghazipur currently doesn't have any Schedule Tribe (ST) population. (Ibid.)

In Ghazipur village out of total population, 463 were engaged in work activities. 79.48 % of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 20.52 % were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 463 workers engaged in Main Work, 5 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 356 were Agricultural labourer. (Ibid.)

Gajipur is a mixed community village with 226 households in total, including 100 musahar households, and other community like Bhumihar (70 households), Rajvansi (25 households), Thakur/Barbar (1 household), Koeri (5 households), Kumahar (10 households) and Ravani/kahar (15 households). Musahar community is settled on periphery of the village.

The village is connected to Akbarpur, the nearest market, 4 kms away (1 km kuchcha road+3 kms Pucca road) and the means of transportation is auto or by foot. There is weekly market (Saturday) too in the Akbarpur. Major crops is grown in the village are wheat, rice, pulses (udadh, gram). Irrigation sources are a tubewell and the rainwater reservoir nearby village. Most households have some amount of cultivable land except Musahar caste. Only few musahars have some amount of land.

Most of household have their own hand pump, some household also use public handpump. But in Musahari tola, there is only one handpump. The village panchayat is held in Karahari and Mukhiya is from Pasi Caste and Sarpanch is from Musahar. There is only one Anganwadi in the village. There are only 40 children are entitled to get the benefit from one Aganwadi centre so that many children do not get the benefit. The most of beneficiary children belong to Musahar and Rajwansi community. But they do not get

⁴<http://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/258050-ghazipur-bihar.html> accessed on 10.05.2015.

the benefit regularly. ICDS centre open only 2 to 3 days in a month. Whenever it open children get biscuit and toffee.

The Public Distribution System (PDS) shop is in same village and villagers never get ration in previous year. MGNREGA is inefficient because of delayed money; irregular work (10-20days in a year); only few people get the job and wage is transferred directly to people's Bank account in Akbarpur. Because of less agriculture work and total failure of MGNREGA, people are forced to migrate to city for work. Most of Musahar population migrated to brick kilns in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal where they stay for 7-8 months in a year.

There is a Primary school in the village. Mid-day is served regularly in the school but quality of food is poor and amount is insufficient. Food is cooked by 'samooh' in the school campus.

The village is unclean. People defecate in open and there is no drainage system. Pet pigs roam around in the open drain and children play alongside them. Electricity supply is only for a few hours.

Table 5.3: Village Profile of Gajipur

Caste/ Communities	Constitutional Status	No. of households	Percent (household)	Primary occupation(s)	Percent (land)
1 Bhumihar	General	70	30.97	Agriculture	93
2 Koeri	OBC	5	2.21	Agriculture	4
3 Kumhar	EBC	10	4.42	Sharecropper	2
4 Musahar	SC	100	44.24	Migrant Worker	0
5 Rajwansi	SC	25	11.06	Migrant Worker	0
6 Kahar	EBC	15	6.63	Migrant Worker	1
7 Barbar (Thakur)	EBC	1	0.44	Barbar	0
Total		226	100		100

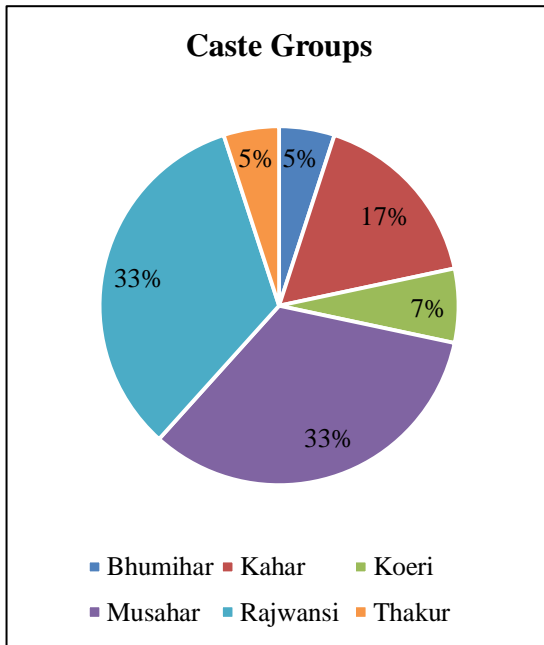


Figure 5.1: Caste wise analysis
Source: Field Work

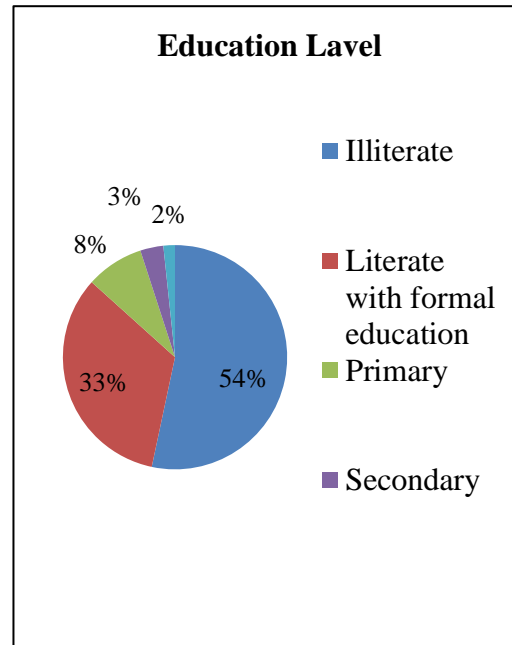


Figure 5.2: Education Level
Source: Field Work

Above figure represent the caste wise analysis of sample households. Sample has been divided into three categories: Musahar, Non-Musahar Scheduled Caste and General. Musahar, Non Musahar Scheduled Castes (Rajwansi) and General (Koeri, Bhumihar, Kahar, Thakur) are equal in number i.e. 20 households each. Out of total 60 households, Bhumihar-3 households, Kahar-10 households, Koeri-4 households, Thaker-3 households, Musahar-20 households, Rajwansi-20 households.

Figure 5.2 explains the educational level of the sample households. Fifty four percent households are illiterate and most of them belong to Scheduled caste. Thirty three percent households are literate with formal education, they only write their name. eight percnet are primary educated. two households are secondary educated and only one is graduate.

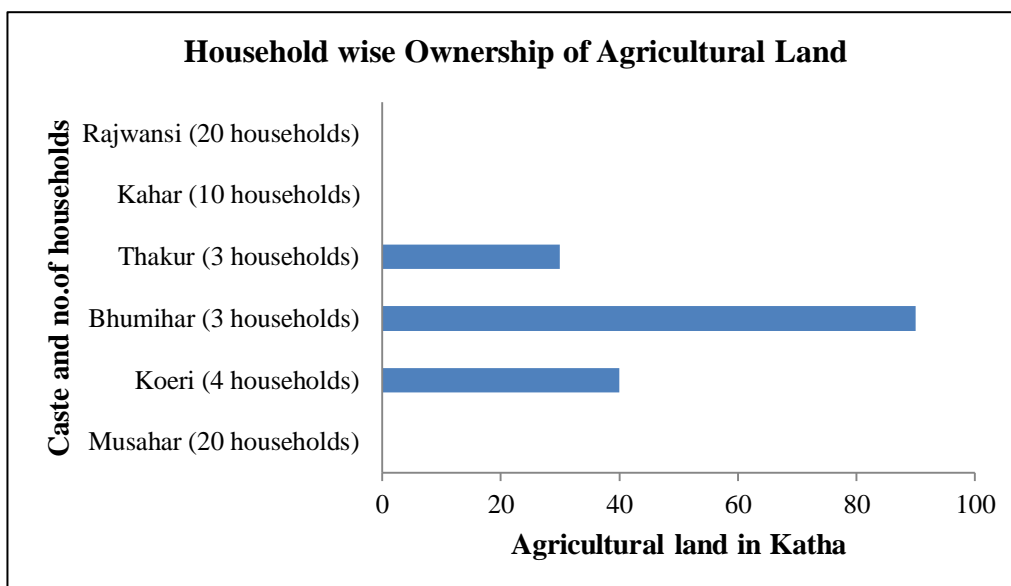


Figure 5.3: Household wise Ownership of Agricultural Land
Source: Field Work

Above figure represent the agricultural land ownership in different communities. Total sample households from Musahar communities, all sample household from ravidas communities and fifty percent from kahar communities are completely landless. Three households from bhumihar communities have ninety katha land. Bhumihar is land owner caste in Gazipur village. Almost more than 90 percent land is controlled by this community. Four households of koeri communities have 40 katha land and three household from thakur communities have thirty katha land.

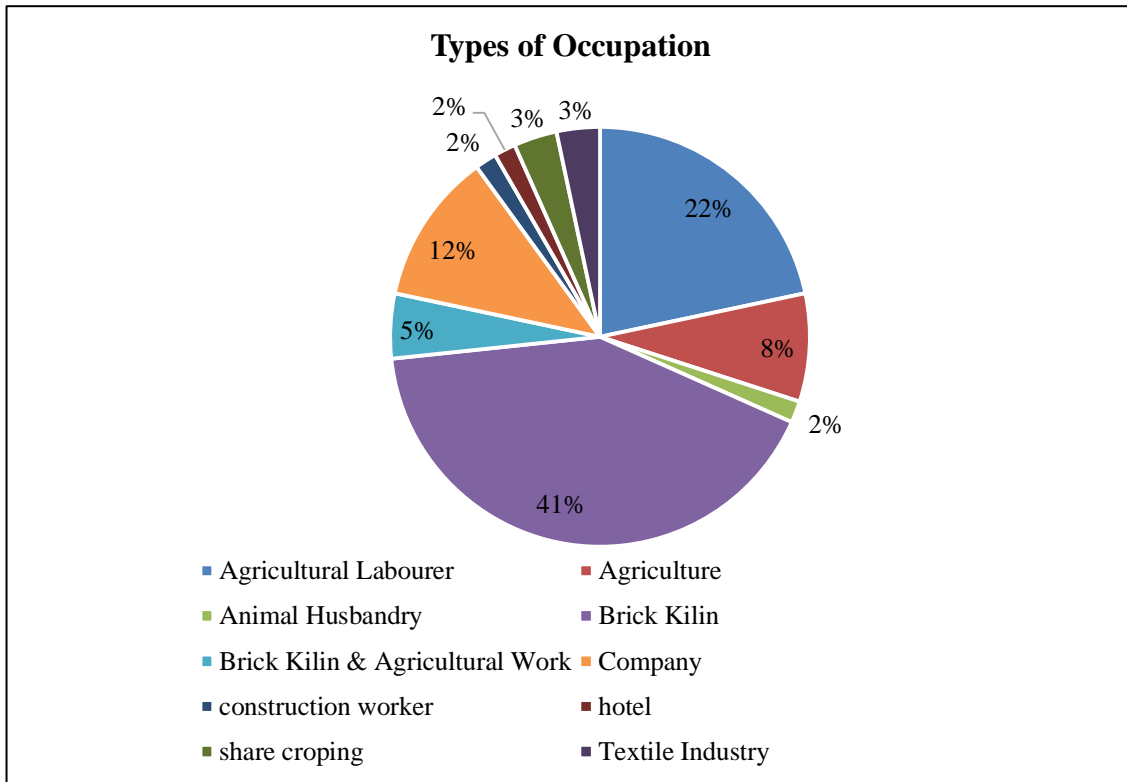


Figure 5.4: Type of Occupation
Source: Field Work

Above figure represent the type of work. Twenty five households which is around forty one percent work in brick kilin. Most of these household are migrant worker and belong to musahar and rajwansi community. Twenty two percent households are agricultural labourer. Twelve percent households work in company (various industries), these are from kahar community. Only five percent households engaged in agriculture. Because land is concentrated only in few hands so most of the family migrate to other places for work or work as an agricultural labourer. Remaining twenty percent work as a construction worker, share cropper, contract worker in textile industry etc. Two households engaged in share cropping because they do not have enough land to survive.

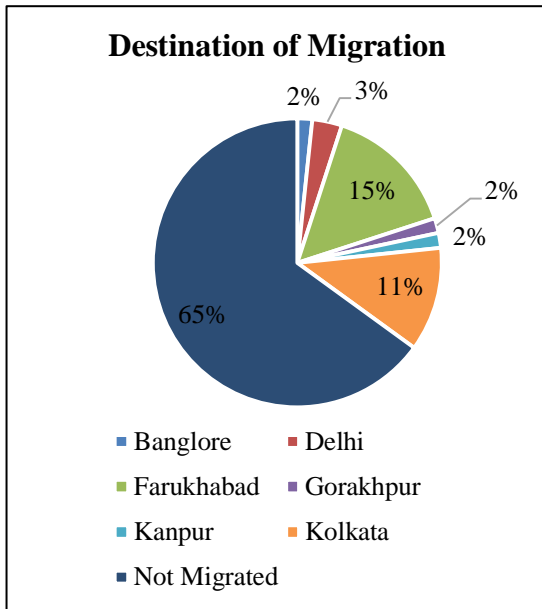


Figure 5.5: Destination of Migration
Source: Field Work

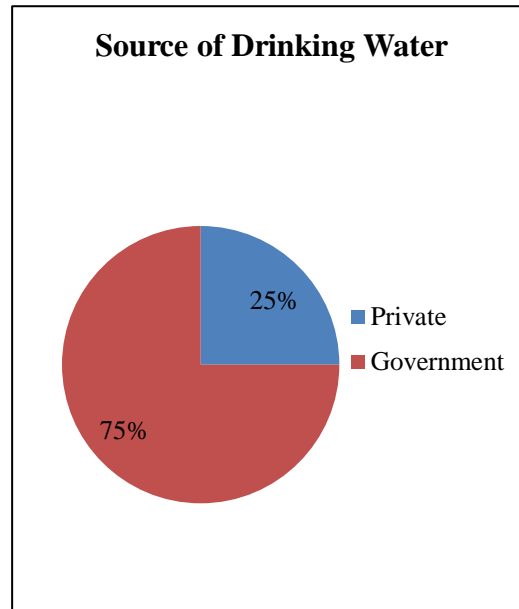


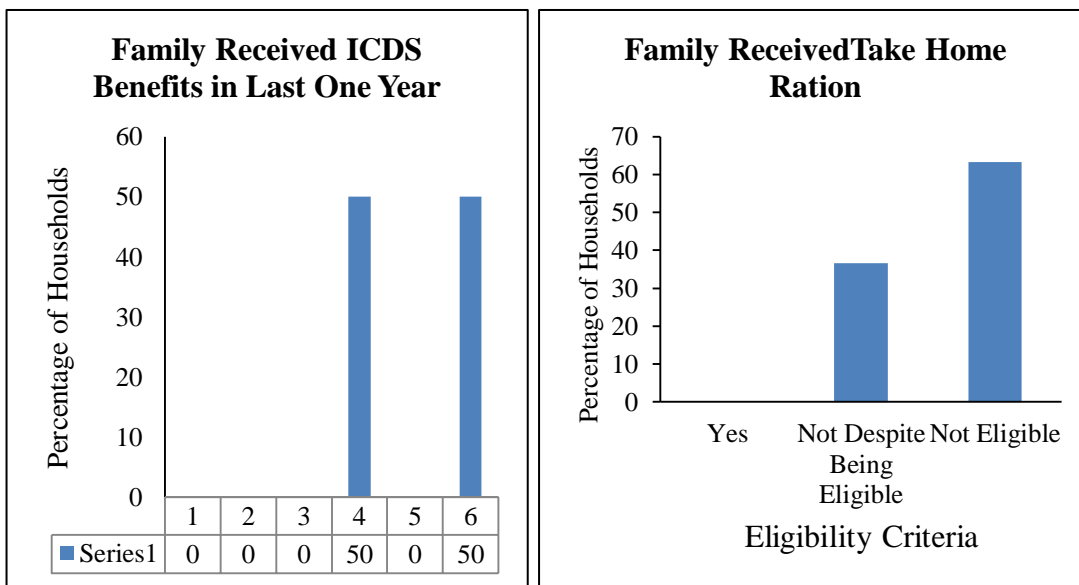
Figure 5.6: Source of Drinking Water
Source: Field Work

Sixty five percent households are non migrant, they work in agricultural field or in local brick kilin industry, as shown in the figure 5.5. Fifteen percent households are migrated to Farukhabad in brick kilin industry and most of these migrant are from musahar community and rajwansi community. Eleven percent households are migrated to Kolkata, they work in textile industry and in hotel and most of these migrant are from kahar community. Some people alsomigrated to Bangalore, Delhi, Kanpur, Gorakhpur.

Figure 5.6 represent the source of drinking water. Twenty five percent household have their own source of drinking water in other word these households have handpump in their home. Seventy five household use common source of drinking water. They bath and clean the cloth in river. 50 households from Muasahr communities and 30 households from rajwansi community, fetch water from one handpump and one well. Most of the repondent says that we have to wait an hour in morning time to fetch water.

5.6a. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

Figure 5.7 represents the family received ICDS benefits in last one year. Out of 60 households, fifty percent households are not eligible for a ICDS benefits, not a single households get regular, adequate and satisfactory benefit of ICDS. Those fifty percent households get the benefit of ICDS and informed that ICDS centre generally opens for 2 to 3 times in a month and sometime not even for a single day. Whenever it is open, children get only biscuit and toffee.



Note: 1: Regular, adequate and satisfactory, Ration

2: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory,

3: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory,

4: Once in a while, 5: Never, 6: Not eligible

Figure 5.8: Family Received Take Home Ration

Source: Field Work

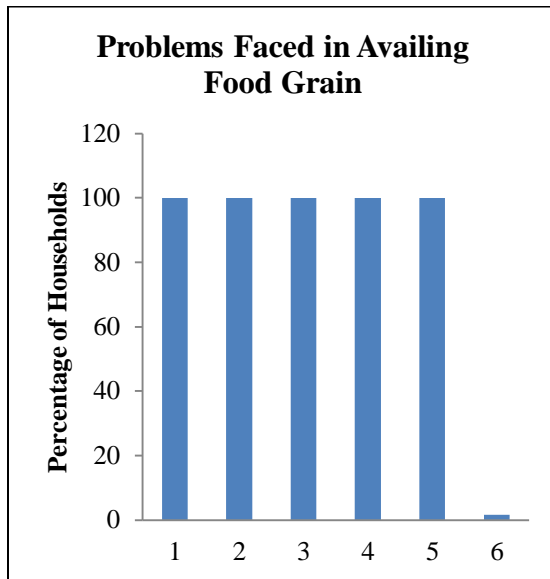
Figure 5.7: Family Received ICDS Benefits in Last One Year

Source: Field Work

Not a single household get the benefit of Take Home Ration (THR) in last one year, as shown in the figure 5.8. Out of 60 households, sixty three percent households are not eligible for for THR and thirty seven percent households are not getting the benefit despite being eligible.

5.6 b. Public Distribution System (PDS)

Figure 5.9 represent the problem faced by the sample households in availing food grain from fair price shop. Public Distribution System (PDS) in Gajipur village is a total failure. The ration card of all the respondent are in possession of PDS dealer but not a single household have received the grain in last one year. Grain was distributed only one day in march 2015 but no one had taken the grain due to very poor quality.



Note: 1: Inadequate quantity of grain provided, PDS
 2; Availability of grain not regular at the PDS shop,
 3: Over pricing, 4: Corruption,
 5: Poor quality of grain, 6: Lack of purchasing power

Figure 5.9: Problem Faced in Availing Food Grain
 Source: Field Work

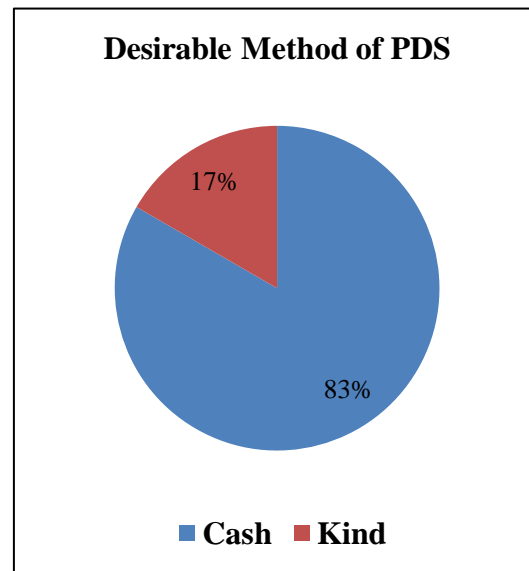
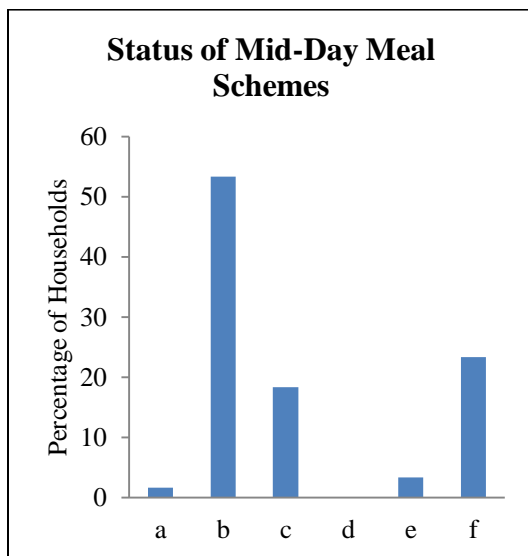


Figure 5.10: Desirable Method of
 Source: Field Work

Due to poor implementation of PDS, 83 percent sample household prefer cash. Respondent said that PDS owner distribute very poor quality of grain and did not distribute grain in last one year. Through cash, we can buy good quality of grain regularly. 17 percent households prefer grain said that we eat grain not money.

5.6c. Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM) and National Old Age Pension Schemes (NOAPS)

Figure 5.11 represents the status of Mid-day Meal Schemes. Children of the Gazipur get the benefit of MDM regularly. Fifty three percent households get the benefit of MDM regularly but the amount is insufficient and quality of food is also not satisfactory. Eighteen percent households are not getting the MDM benefit regularly because children also migrate with family. Two children do not get the benefit because their name is not enlisted in school. Twenty percent households are not eligible for MDM.



Note: a: Regular, adequate and satisfactory,
 b: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 c: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 d: Once in a while, e: Never, F: Not eligible

Figure 5.11: Status of Mid-Day Meal Schemes
 Source: Field Work

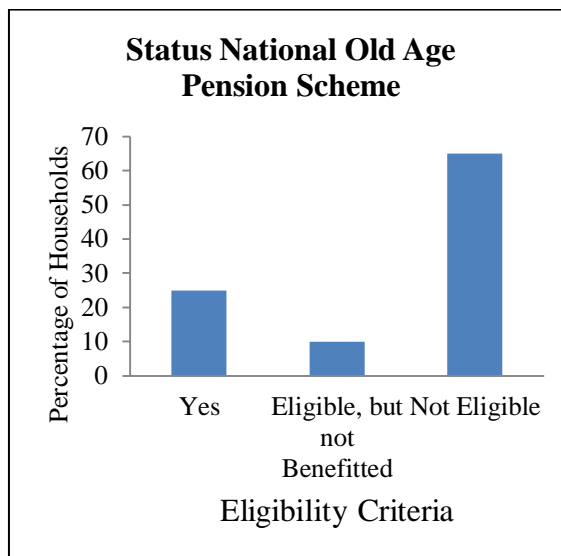


Figure 5.12: status of NOAPS
 Source: Fiel Work

National Old Age Pension Scheme is the only scheme, which is functional in the village. Those households cover under this schemes, get their amount twice in a year. Ten percent households are not cover under this scheme despite being eligible.

5.7. Village: Chhotka Amwan

Chhotka Amwan is a large village located in Akbarpur of Nawada district, Bihar. The Chhotka Amwan village has population of 3238 of which 1703 are males while 1535 are females as per Population Census 2011. Population of children with age 0-6 is 555 which

makes up 17.14 % of total population of village. Average Sex Ratio of village is 901 which is lower than Bihar state average of 918. Child Sex Ratio for the village as per census is 954, higher than Bihar average of 935.⁵

Chhotka Amwan village has higher literacy rate compared to Bihar. In 2011, literacy rate of the village was 71.45 % compared to 61.80 % of Bihar. Male literacy stands at 78.29 % while female literacy rate was 63.77 %. (Ibid)

Chhotka Amwan is a mixed community village with 466 households. Most of the Musahar caste settled 500 metre away from the main village and other Scheduled castes are settled in the periphery of the village. The village is connected to Akbarpur, the nearest market, by Pucca road (2 kms) and the means of transportation is by foot or personal vehicle. There is weekly market (Saturday) too in the Akbarpur.

Major crops now grown in the village are wheat, paddy, potato, onion, pulses (udadh, gram). The pattern of cultivation has undergone a change through the years. Earlier they cultivated wheat, paddy and pulses. The reason for the change is an increasing demand of cash crops in the market though the villagers prefer to grow cauliflower, onion, potato.

Irrigation sources depend on tubewell and the rainwater reservoir nearby village. Most households have some amount of cultivable land except Musahar and Ravidas households. Agriculture is the main occupation in the village. Landless labourers do not get work regularly in the field so they are forced to migrate in city for work.

Some household have personal handpump while others fetch drinking water from public handpump. In Mushar tola, there are 35 household but only have one hand pump. This is same with the Ravidas tola also.

There are three ICDS centre in the village. Two ICDS centers are located in main village and one separate ICDS centre for Musahar tola, which is 1km away from the main village. The ICDS centre in main village open regularly and children get some amount of food in most of the days only get toffee and Biscuit but ICDS centre in Musahar tola

⁵<http://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/258067-chhotka-amwan-bihar.html>, accessed on 31.10.2015

open once in a week and here also children get toffee and biscuit.

The Public Distribution System (PDS) shop is in same village and villagers get their ration only 2-3 months in a year and also do not get full amount of ration. MGNREGA is inefficient because of delayed money; irregular work (10-20days in a year); and is transferred directly to people's Bank account in Akbarpur. Because of less agriculture work and total failure of MGNREGA, people are forced to migrate to city for work. Most of Musahar population migrated to brick kilns in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal where they stay for 7-8 months in a year. Musahar take loan from the brick kilns owner and work for them like bonded labour until repayment of loan.

There is primary and secondary school in the village. Mid-day is served regularly in the school but quality of food is poor and amount is insufficient. Food is cooked by 'samooch' in the school campus.

The village is unclean. People defecate in open and there is no drainage system. Pet pigs roam around in the open drain and children play alongside them. Electricity supply is only for a few hours.

Table 5.4: Profile of Chhotka Amwan Village

Caste/ Communities		Constitutional Status	No. of households	Percent (household)	Primary occupation(s)	Percent (land)
1	Bhumihar	General	10	2.14	Agriculture	43
2	Koeri	OBC	200	42.91	Agriculture	42
3	Muslim	Muslim	50	10.72	Migrant worker	1
4	Ravidas	SC	20	4.29	Migrant worker	0
5	Yadav	OBC	25	5.36	Agriculture	5
6	Brahamin	General	15	3.21	Agriculture	3
7	Musahar	SC	60	12.87	Agricultural Labourer	0
8	Rajwar	SC	50	10.72	Agricultural Labourer	0
9	Barbar	EBC	7	1.50	Migrant Worker	1
10	Carpainter	EBC	10	2.14	Migrant Worker	1
11	Kahar	EBC	9	1.93	Migrant worker	1
12	Other Caste		10	2.14	Agriculture & Migrant worker	3
Total			466	100		100

Figure 5.1 represent the caste wise analysis of sampe households of Chhotka Amwan village. Thirty three percent from Musahar community, thirty two perrent from Ravidas community and twenty five percent are from Koeri community. Mistri and paswan communities are eight and two percent respectively.

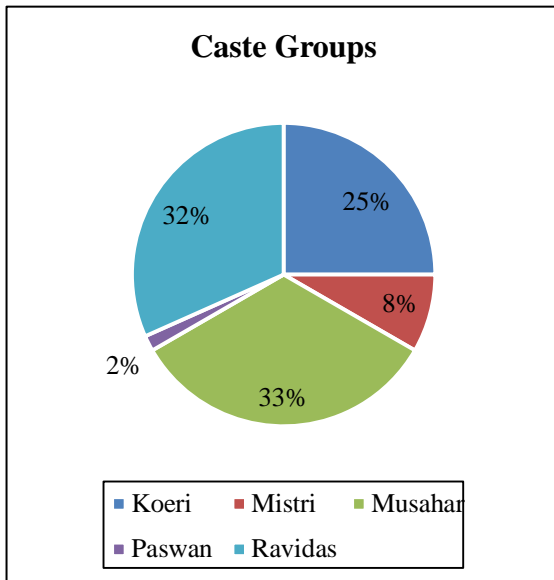


Figure 5.1: Caste wise analysis
Source: Field Work

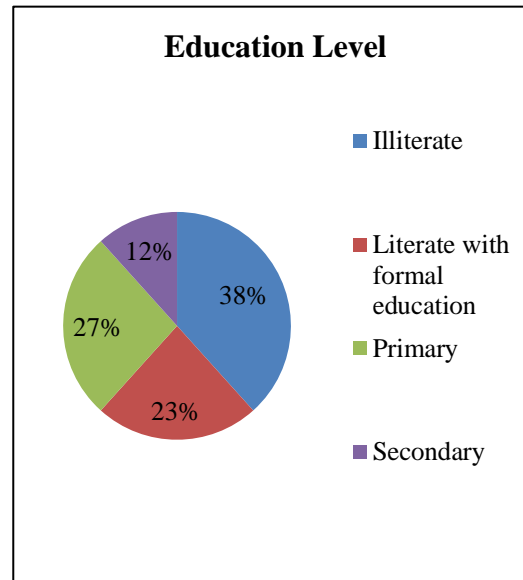


Figure 5.2: Education Level
Source: Field Work

Out of 60 sample household, 23 households are illiteate. In other word, 38% households are illiterate, as shown in the figure 5.2. Most of the illiterate households are from Scheduled Castes. 23% households are literate with formal education and 27% are primary educated. Only 12% are secondary educated.

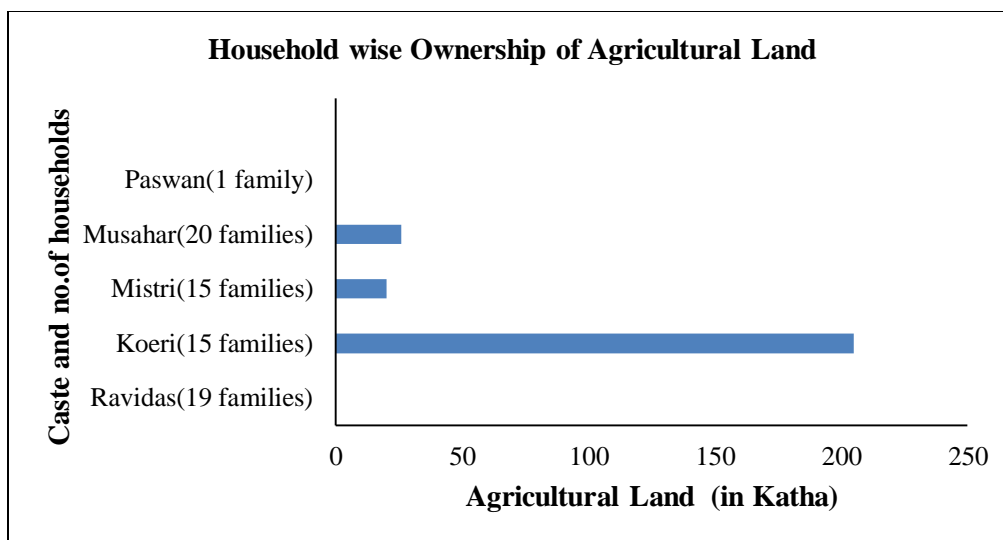


Figure 5.3: Household wise Ownership of Agricultural Land
Source: Field Work

Koeri is the main landowning household in our sample household. As figure shows that 205 katha land are in possession of 15 koeries family. It mean an average approx 14 katha land to every households. Ravidas don't have any agricultural land so they are forced to migrate for work. Some amount of land is also among the mushar and mistri, an average 1katha land to both community. This small amount of land holding is not sufficient for food security of all the communities so they very much dependent on PDS.

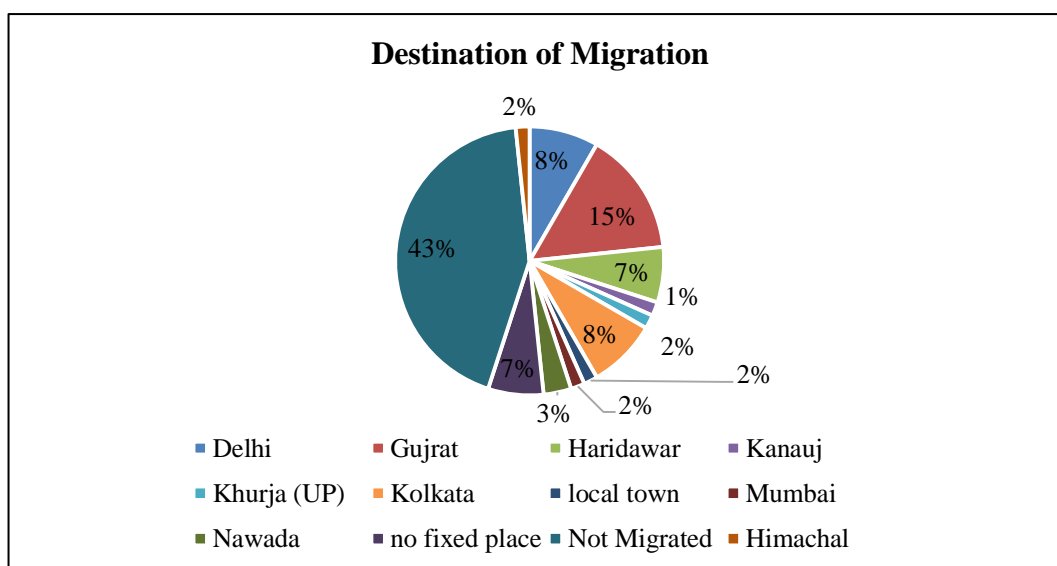


Figure 5.4: Destination of Migration
Source: Field Work

This particular figure shows the destination of migration of sample household. Out of 60 household under study, fifty seven percent are migrant worker and forty three percent are non migrant. Non migrant generally work in agricultural field. Out of 34 migrant households, seventy-nine percent migrated to other states, nine percent work in local town and twelve percent respondents said that where ever we get the job we migrate, there is no fixed place of migration. Fifteen percent households were migrated to Gujarat. Most of these migrant are from Ravidas community. Eight percent households were migrated to Delhi. The main reason of migration is unemployment in this village.

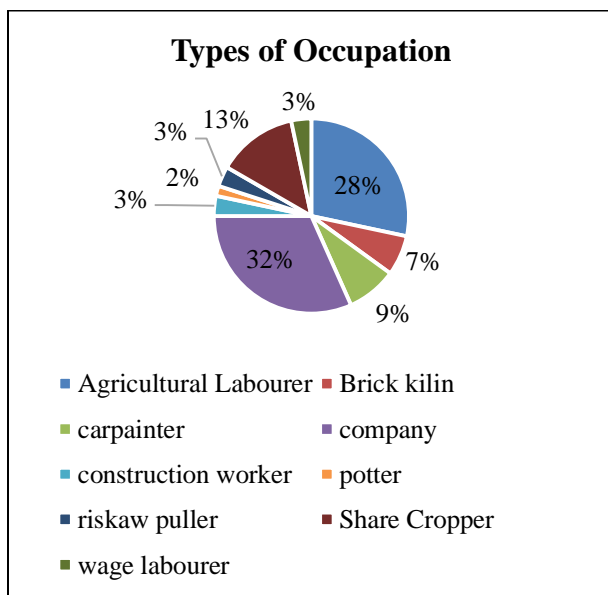


Figure 5.5: Types of Occupation Water

Source: Field Work

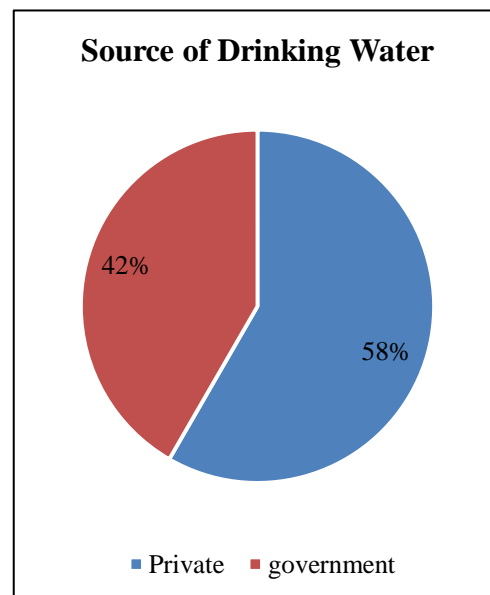


Figure 5.6: Source of Drinking

Source: Field Work

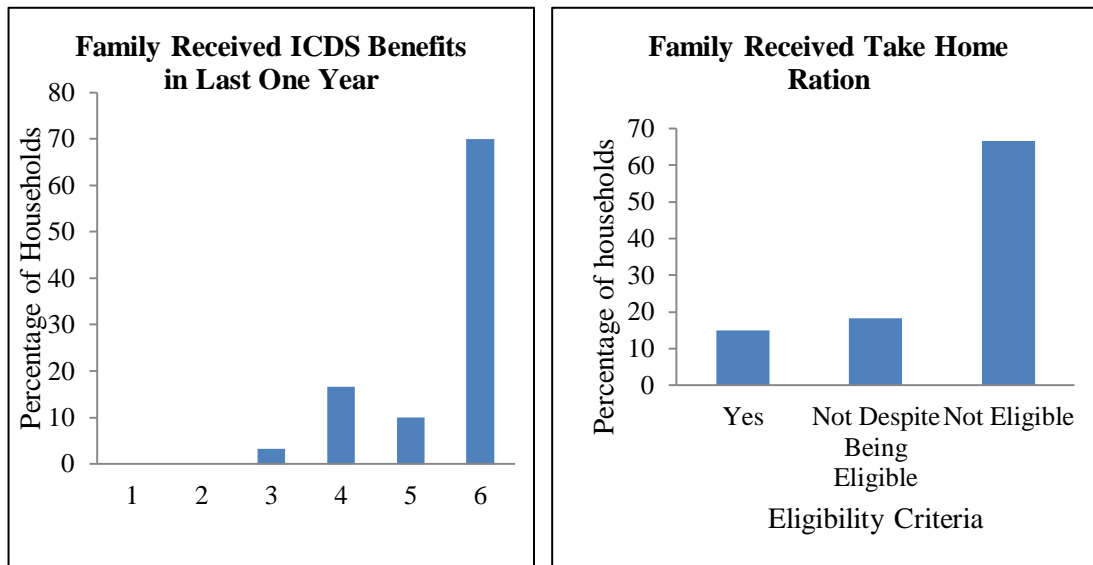
In the Chhoti Amwan village, twenty eight percent households work as a agricultural labourer. Thirty two percent households work in company, they are migrant worker. They work in different types of industry as a contract labourer. Share cropper constitute thirteen percent of the sample households. Nine percent household engaged in carpainter. Seven percent households work in brik kilin industry. Remaining elevenpercent are engaged in other work like riskaw pullar, construction worker, wage laobourer and so on.

Figure 5.6 represent the source of drinking water. Out of sixty households, thirty five households have own source of drinking water which constitute fifty eight percent

household. Forty two percent households depends on common handpump.

5.7a. Integrated Child Development Scheme

Figure 5.7 shows the family received ICDS benefits in last last one year. Out of 60 sample households, not a single household is getting the benefit regularly, adequate and in satisfactory amount. Seventy percent households are not eligible for ICDS benefits. Seventeen percent households get the benefit but once in a while because Anganwadi centre do not open regularly. Six eligible children never get the benefit of ICDS due to seat are not available at Anganwadi centre.



Note: 1: Regular, adequate and satisfactory, Ration

2: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory,

3: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory,

4: Once in a while, 5: Never, 6: Not eligible

Figure 5.7: Family Received ICDS Benefits

Source: Field Work

Figure 5.8: Family Received Take Home Ration

Source: Field Work

Supplementary Nutrition is distributed in the form of Take Home Ration to pregnant and lactating women and children between 6 months to 3 years at each Anganwadi Center. Only fifteen percent households are getting the benefit of Take Home Ration (THR), as shown in the above figure. Eighteen percent households are not getting the benefits despite being eligible. Those households are getting the benefit are not receiving the full quantity of ration on regular basis.

5.7b.Public Distribution System

Figure 5.9 represents the discrepancy in the no. of ration entry and no. of receiving. In this village, the discrepancy in the ration entry and the proportion received is higher as compared to the other villages discussed above. Here people have received their proportion maximum for 3 months but the record has been made for more than three months for most of the cases. Illiteracy and submission of their cards to the distributor while they are away in search of work are the two chief reasons for this discrepancy.

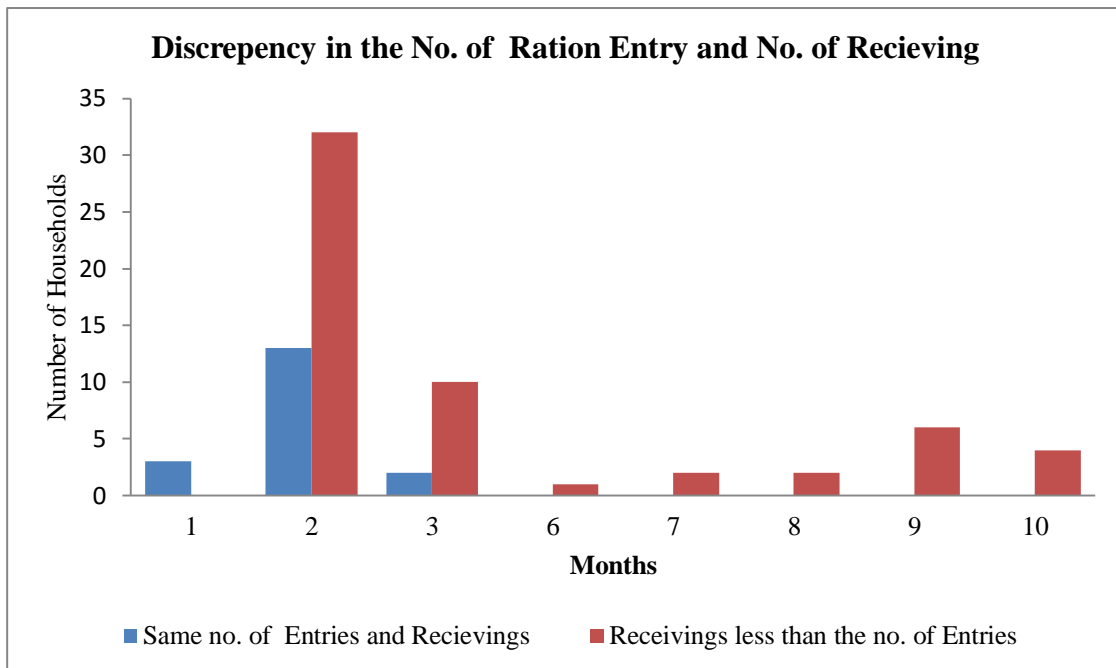


Figure 5.9: Discrepancy in the No. Of Ration Entry and No. of Receiving

Source: Field Work

Figure 5.10 represents the problem faced in availing food grain by the beneficiaries. All the beneficiary of PDS says that they are not getting the full quantity of grain. PDS dealer also charge extra charge for grain. The quality of grain is also poor. Most of respondents say that poor quality of grain is distributed by the PDS dealer and good quality of grain is sold in the open market.

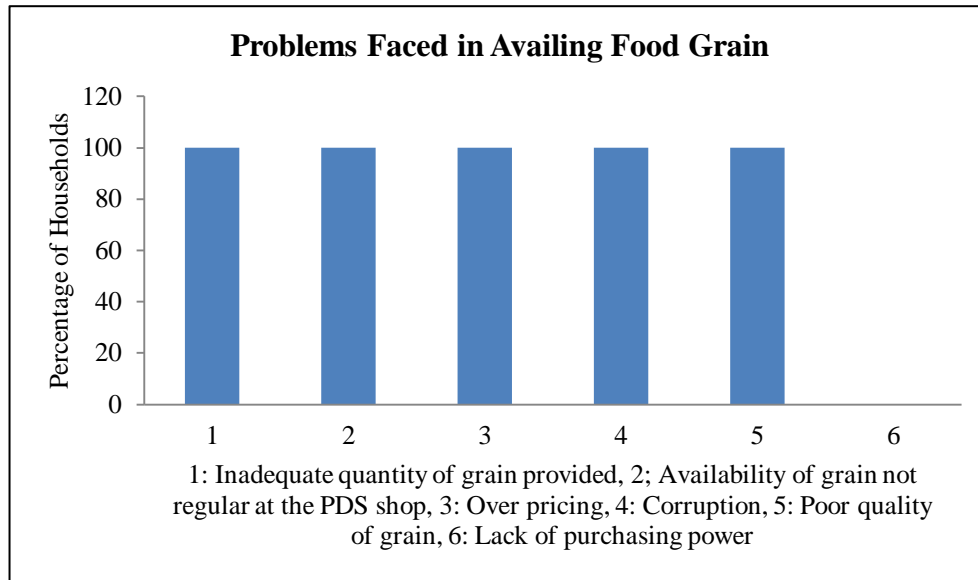


Figure 5.10: Problem Faced in Availing Food Grain
Source: Field Work

Figure 5.11 shows the ration received (months wise) by the sample households in last one year. Most of the sample household have received the grain only 2 months in last one year. Twenty percent households have received the grain for three months in last one year. Not a single household has been received the grain more than three months in last one year.

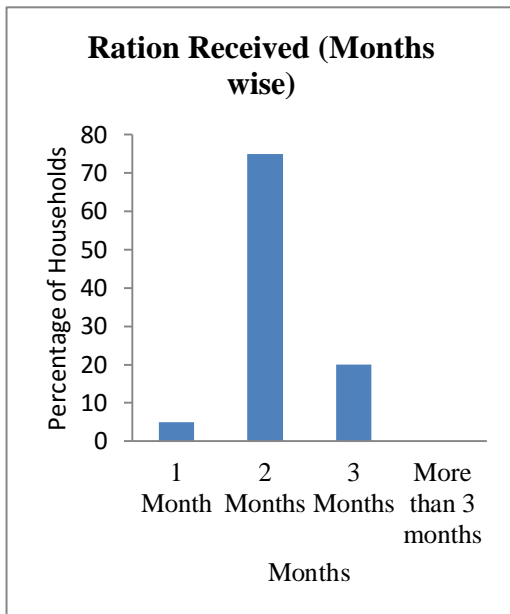


Figure 5.11: Raion Received (Month wise) PDS
Source: Field Work

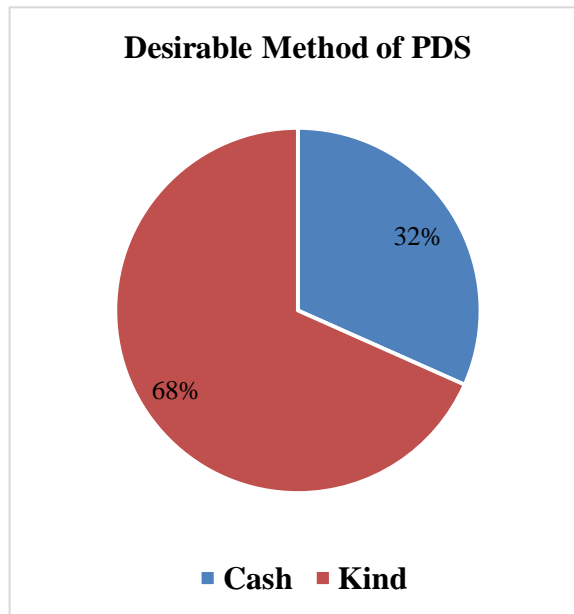
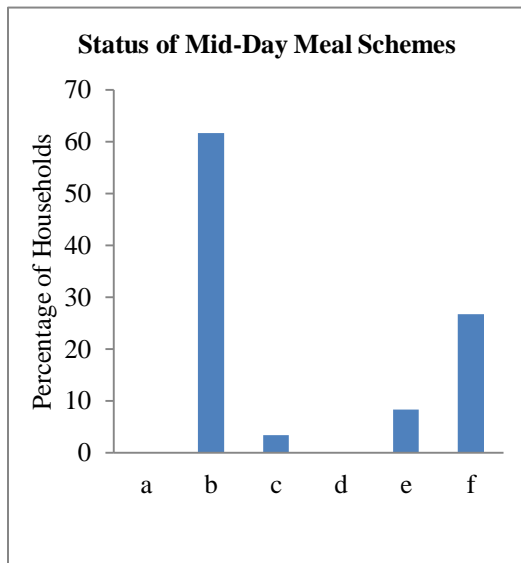


Figure 5.12: Desirable Method of PDS
Source: Field Work

In spite of poor delivery of grain, sixty eight percent sample households prefer kind in place of direct cash transfer. Most of the respondents say that we can cosume grain directly with the other family members but if we get cash instead of grain it may be spent in activites other than the purchasing of food. Manti devi says that if we get cash then husband will drink alcohool from that money and then whole family will sleep hungry so we prefer grain.

5.7c. Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM) & National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)

Figure 5.13 represents the status of Mid-day meal schemes. Sixty two percent sample households said that there children get MDM regularly but amount is inadequate. Two households said that they donot receive MDM regularly. Eight percent of sample households never get the benefit of MDM, the reason being their children migrate with parent. Twenty seven percent households are not eligible for getting the benefit of MDM because in these household there are no children, who study in class I to VIII.



Note: a:Regular, adequate and satisfactory,
 b:Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 c:Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory,
 d:Once in a while,e:Never,f: Not eligible

Figure 5.13: Status of Mid-Day Meal Schemes
 Source: Field Work

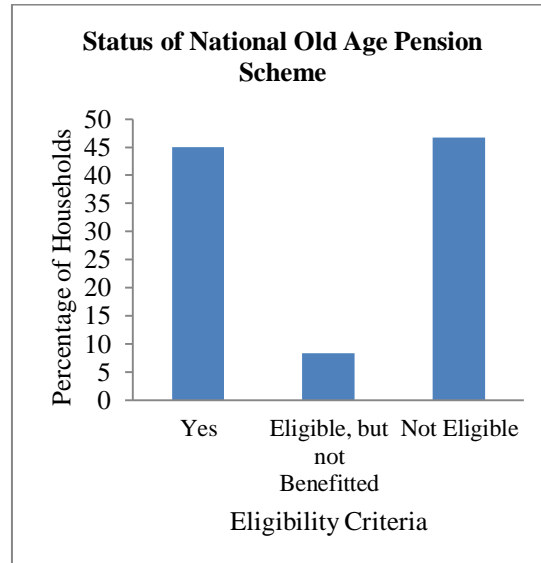


Figure 5.14: Status of NOAPS
 Source: Field Work.

Fourty five percent of sample households are getting the benefit of National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOPS), eight percent households are not getting the benefit despite being eligible and remaining fourty seven percent sample households are not eligible for scheme.

We discussed in this chapter several schemes of government of india to alleviate food insecurity. The poor and hungry remain victims of inhumane social values, social practices and social prejudices. In India, religion and caste system have laid the ideological foundation for accepting hunger as a normal life situation. It has supressed the impulse of the poor and the hungry to improve their situation by brining down the unequal and unjust system. India has the best law, rules and regulations. But their implementation is far from satisfactory because of the prevailing social system, social values and the social outlook. Education, formal and informal, is the most important instrument to bring about social transformation.

Chapter 6

FOOD SECURITY IN MUSAHAR COMMUNITY: A CRITICAL SCRUTINY IN THE LIGHT OF THEORETICAL DEBATES ON DEVELOPMENT

This particular segment will further enrich our understanding of the various food security schemes and in particular will look into the conditions of Musahar Community. This is in a way an extension of the discussion in the previous segment where an attempt was made to look at the various conditions of the three villages in general. The villages were briefly introduced and the various food security schemes that were running in these villages were also discussed. It further looked into the various success and the failures of the programmes and their affects on the different communities which has been divided into three segments for a better understanding of the problem- Musahar, Non SC and other. The reasons for their migration into various distant places and cities were also discussed. In this particular segment, the focus is on the musahars.

First section provides an explanation about the culture and the festivals which are celebrated by the musahar community. Second section has looked into the socio-economic conditions of Musahar Community in general and comparison with other communities in particular. In this section, an attempt has been made to analyse the agricultural land ownership, number of households in debt, debt's percentage, and migration among communities and source of drinking water. This will lead us towards a better understanding of the problems faced by Musahar community and the root causes of it. Third section explains the prevalence of starvation and hunger among Musahar Community. Here the main focus is on how the community is neglected in its attempt to acquire food for the family. Finally the last section evaluates the role of government/programmes in curtailing food insecurity. In this section, the study explains the two major food security schemes: public distribution system, integrated child development service/take for home ration. The beneficiaries are categorised into three: Musahar, Non musahar SCs and others. The study tries to look which communities are more benefiting from the various food security schemes and which communities are excluded from the benefit. This will deepen our understanding of the failures and successes of the various food security schemes and how Musahars have fared in them.

Finally the study will provide us with key links to strengthen the various schemes further at the grass root level and will pave roads for a better implementation of these programmes.

6.1: Culture and Festivals: Jitia, Dusheera, Holi

Jitia festival, completion of sowing and harvesting are the favourite festive occasions when they go for grand celebrations. And *jhoomar* is always at the centre of such festivity. A group of people, young and old, hold each other by hands and dance with hands on each other's waist or shoulder, sometimes with free hands. They move and dance in locked or unlocked circle. While dancing they sing collective and community compositions. The songs are reflections of their sorrow, happiness, aspirations and creativity.

While celebrating the festival of Jitiya, they worship their ancestors. This is known as *Manushdeva*. On this occasion, all the women of this community perform *Pinddaan*, by putting *Khalli* (residue left over after extraction of oil from seeds), mustard oil, vermilion on five leaves of *taroi* (ridge) and go over to nearby rivers, tanks, pools of water or canals to offer these to the gods. On the occasion of Jitiya in particular, they show more devotion to their symbolic objects of worship than all Hindus.

Mushar community worship their diety on the occasion of *Jitia*. They sacrifice pig and hen to the diety. They also make Laddu, Poori, Kheer, different types of vegetables to offer their diety. According to the people there are two types of God; one is worshiped inside the home and other is worshipped outside the home. The diety which is worshiped inside the home is the household diety, and the deity which is worshiped outside the home belongs to the wife's family home. We also try to ask if they don't have money to offer sacrifice of pig and cock to the God, can they then skip the Pooja. They told us that they go to other states in search of work and that their God save them from any problem. In case, they do not offer pig and cock to their diety, it troubles them. In morning time women make different types of food and men prepare for sacrifice of pig and cock. After performing the pooja, they have their dinner with alcohol.

In comparison to other communities, Mushars end up spending more money in celebrating this festival, which eventually lead to indebtedness for the rest of the year. So a festival celebrated for a couple of days proves to be yearlong economic burden (some time more than that). From the field observation, one could estimate that every musahar family spent around 8,000-10,000 rupees on an average during this festival week. The entire money spent on this festival is, in fact, borrowed from the Brick contractor under whom the musahar work through out the year. The money-lenders lay down their own conditions, but the borrowers (Musahar) neither have economic freedom nor are competent to bargain. Consequently, *Jitia*, therefore not only become an economic burden but also imposes substantial restriction on occupational mobility and labour movement. Celebration of *jitia* last no longer a week. Soon after, the musahar, given their obligation to their lender/employer, settled down for the work.

The irony however is that most of the lenders send these musahr labourers outside the state. So the musahar indebtedness literally produces a feudal-like economic order where the master not only commands the labour but also owns the labourer.

Other festivals which are celebrated by Musahar are *Durgapooja*, *Holi* and *Chathpooja*. In *chatpooja* they do not eat Non-vegetarian food. But in other three (*Durgapooja*, *Holi* And *Jitia*), they eat Non-vegetarian food. Here we want to emphasise that these three days only in a year, they eat complete diet. Most of the our respondent told that they make pulse only when either guest arrives in home or during festival season but intake of non-vegetarian food is only in above mentioned festivals.

Vivid culture, rich tradition, creativity and skills of this community have never been recognized and respected, rather they have always been seen as clichés as people who live in filth with pig and drink day and night. Today, their predicament is being blamed on 'living with pigs and drinking'. Who they are, what they are, how they live; no one cares to know, beyond the stereotypes. Traditionally, the people of the soil, today, they do not possess any. Thoroughly landless, usually settled on someone else's land, serving as attached labour to prosperous peasant families, they have always been considered efficient and excellent reclaimers and assessors of land and soil. Living a hand to mouth existence, they are hardly people, not just 'rat-eaters'.

6.2: Socio Economic Conditions of Musahar Community

The baseline survey, conducted by Mahadalit Ayog in 2007, on the socio-economic conditions of maha-dalits across Bihar, has brought forth some revealing data on the conditions of the poorest sections amongst dalits. The survey has highlighted the deplorable plight of Musahars in the marginalized category. Musahars, along with Bhuiyans in south Bihar, make up over 20% of all Scheduled caste population in Bihar. An overwhelming majority amongst Musahar were agricultural labourers- the highest among all dalit groups, much higher than Ravidas and Paswan. Work Participation Rate amongst them was found to be the highest amongst all dalits in Bihar, in fact the highest among any social group nationally. This over representation of musahars among the toiling masses has furthered their deplorability.

Table 6.1: Percentage Distribution of Workers

Eco category	All SC-India	All SC-Bihar	Chamar	Dusadh	Pasi	Dhobi	Musahar	Bhuiyan
Cultivators	20.0	7.9	7.9	10.3	12.3	14.8	2.7	6.6
Agrilabour	45.6	77.6	80.2	75.9	46.5	48.1	92.5	86.0
HHI*	3.3	3.3	2.1	1.6	12.2	9.6	0.8	1.0
Other Worker	30.5	11.2	9.8	12.2	29.0	27.5	4.0	5.6

*Household Income

Source: Mahadalit Ayog (2007)

The Mahadalits Mission study has found high incidence of poverty, food insecurity and chronic undernutrition among Musahars, often bordering on starvation. Associated with poor sanitation and hygiene, this resulted in high morbidity and mortality- encephalitis, meningitis, cerebral malaria and other diseases took their toll disproportionately on the community.

It is well known that dalits' bondage to subjugated labour has religious and cultural sanction, and hence has been difficult to undo. Castes and its relation with traditional occupations, provided by the *jajmani* system (whereby the kamins- the clients, usually

unfree agricultural labourers from the low castes, also *mazdoor*, are tied in hereditary patron-client relationships to *jajman*-patron, usually the landed proprietors from the upper and middle caste also called *grihasta*- to provide free labour and other specialized services to the latter), has led to the expectation of both, that is the upper caste population as well as Musahars themselves, that their work is to continue to be associated with agricultural labour. Village life may be undergoing dramatic changes. The current generation of Musahars may have the option of migrating out in search for alternatives, but their dependence on *grihastas* still continues to persist. Though it is unclear whether there has been weakening of the *jajmani* system or it continues perhaps in new forms of bondage.

Overall musahars seems, not to have escaped the traditional link to land and labour, in the caste occupational distribution in village. They are involved in very arduous physical labour, mostly on agricultural farms, but also construction sites and brick kilns, although migration is opening up more avenues, not available back in the village. There is significant difference in the wages provided to the male and female labourers. Wage rates, on farm, and especially for women, are very low. There is significant seasonality in work availability; agricultural work being available only for few months a year. Work on brick kilns is attractive monetarily, but is very disabling; in some cases entire families are involved in the work, including children. These of course come at cost of future prospects for children and access to food entitlements. Work in brick kilns, or those who work under contractors on farms in Punjab for example, are tied to money lending, and therefore, are on verge of semi-bondage. There is little saving at the end of the day. But agricultural employment being highly vulnerable, forces musahars to accept employment at very adverse terms, while dependence on moneylenders for loans to last out the lean season is high. The truth is much of agricultural land in the area are flooded most of the year which further means labourers have less work in their own villages- half the year the inhabitants of the village have to idle and do without work.

Tying into this economics of poor saving, is a culture associated, with Musahars wherein they consider themselves as “*kamaake khane waale log*” (people that spend away what they earn- ‘hand to mouth’), who have little urge to save for tomorrow. The assumption is

they will earn tomorrow to take care of tomorrow's need- why bother now? And there are occasions that requires hefty amount to be spend. Festivals like *chath* and *holi* and social events such as marriages and deaths, are occasions when Musahrs spend a great deal of money; much higher than those in the village with better incomes, and definitely higher than what their own meagre earnings could support. Why these spending are considered essentials draws a self-fulfilling reply from one of the respondents.

“this is what everyone does, this is what society does. If I do not spend, what will others think of me’?”

It is not uncommon for Musahars to take hefty loans from moneylenders, at high rates of interest, for these expenses. The result is high incidence of indebtedness because of the usurious interest charged by the moneylenders and provision shop owners. The interest is as high as 5-10 per cent per month. This results in debt which increases over a period of time. They are unable to invest on buying land what they could have saved or starting a small business or on education for their children.

Poor asset base, weak capability, and particular social and cultural norms, combine with low expectation among Musahars create a life norms that focuses mostly on the present- with little thought to the future. Interactions with Musahars across different locations, during the course of field study, demonstrated that they were unable and even unwilling to plan for longer than a day, spending away whatever they earned the same day. Given the precariousness of their lives, and the hopelessness of their situation, it is not difficult to see why not saving for the future is the most rational choice. Musahars perhaps do not see the point of investing in- better education, healthy life and a bank balance- in the future, something that comes naturally to others in less extreme situations. Further, their integration with the rest of the society- such that other dalit communities are managing although gradually- is limited. Musahars by and large live as separate communities, on the outskirts of the main habitations, that the rest of the village- including even other dalits- mostly avoids visiting. Being cut off from the ‘mainstream’ contributes to the sad plight of the Musahars who are unable to make use of newer opportunities, locking themselves into their own enduring exclusion.

Let us now look at the conditions of Musahars in various villages in Bihar.

6.2a. Village: Barew

Figure 6.1 represents the agricultural land ownership among three communities. Landlessness is a major cause of poverty among Dalits in general and Musahars in particular. Musahar is a complete landless community in this particular village. Non Musahr SCs have 8 % land. Musahar live on *raiya* (owned by the landlord) or *gairmajurwa* (public) land, in hazardous and unhealthy locations of river-beds and embankments. Other (Except SC) communities hold 90% land. Landlessness and less work in agricultural fields, aggravates their condition. Hence Musahar are often forced to take loan in order to fulfil their daily necessity.

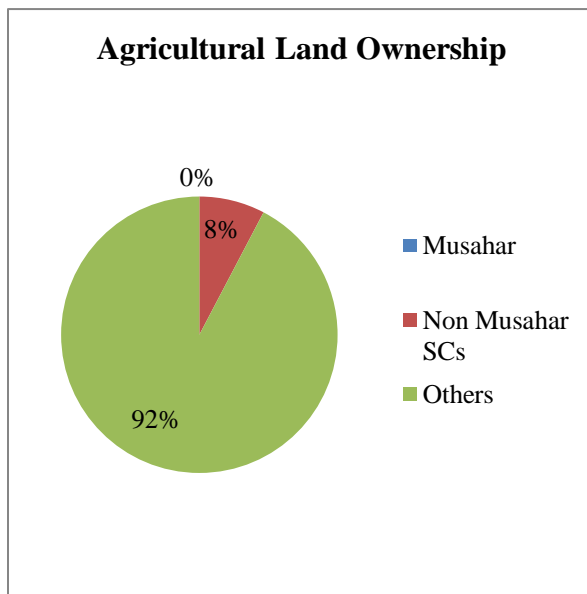


Figure 6.1: Agricultural Land Ownership
Source: Field Work

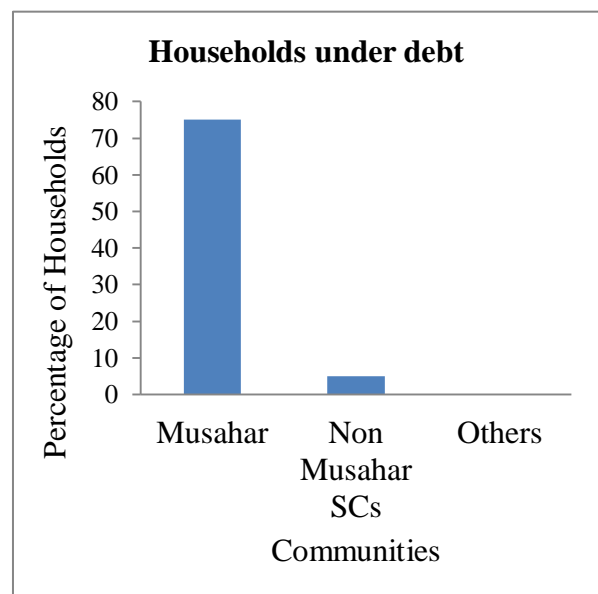


Figure 6.2: Households under debt
Source: Field Work

In this regard, Figure 6.2 is of much importance as it portrays the Musahar communities plight. This particular figure shows that 70% musahar household are in debt whereas only one non-musahar SC household is in debt. The other community are in no debt at all. It's a sad state of affairs that one particular community is under complete debt from time immemorial and the other communities take the benefit of their hard labour in the field.

With these two figures, one could see that the ownership of the agricultural land, which is an important source of constant earning all-round the year, is mostly in the hands of the upper castes.

Furthermore debt is a major setback in the way to move forward. It's a never ending vicious circle with high rate of interests catering to the needs of the lower section of the population who are constantly the victims of this vicious circle.

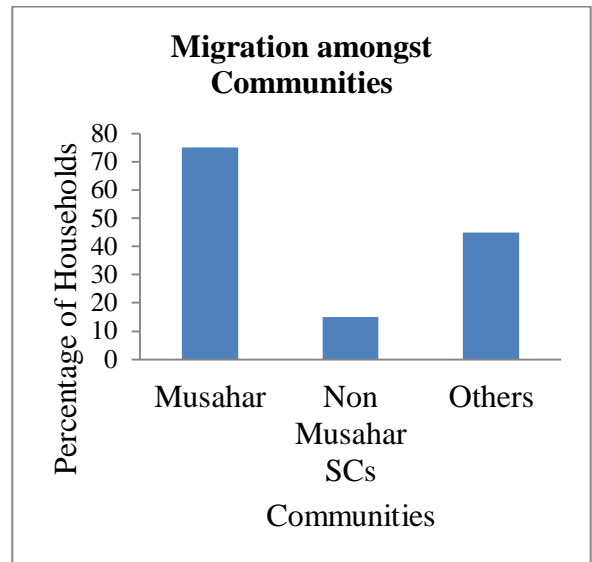
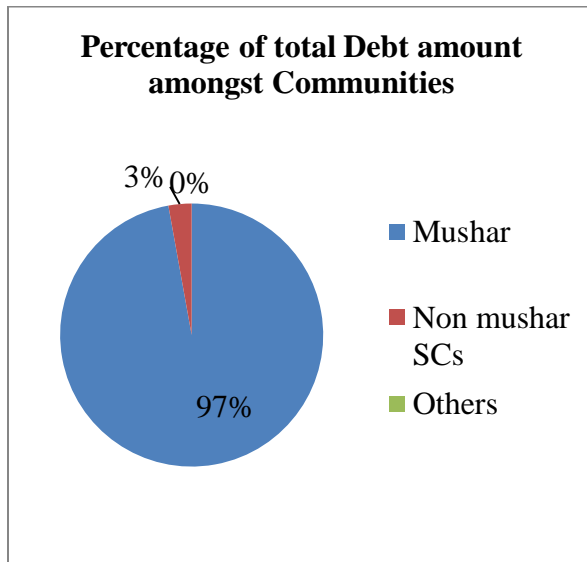


Figure 6.3: Percentage of Total Debt Amongst Communities
Source: Field Work

Figure 6.4: Migration Amongst Communities
Source: Field Work

Debt is highest among the musahar communities. One obvious consequence of landlessness and debt is migration. 75% musahar households are forced to migrate, as shown in the figure 6.4. And since the loan was usually much larger in relation to their income, their overall burden of indebtedness was comparably greater. In this village, musahar and other scheduled caste take loan from the brick kiln contractor. Contractors generally give ten thousand rupees for one working member in the family.

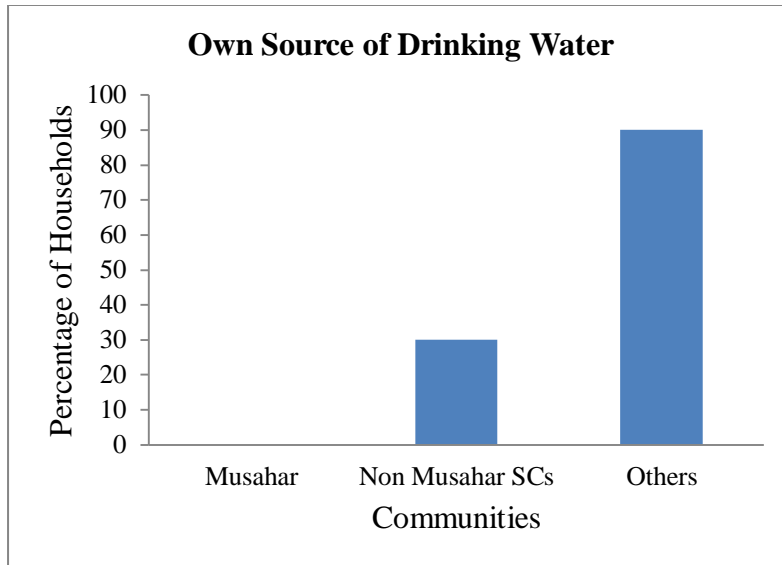


Figure 6.5: Own Source of Drinking Water
Source: Field Work

Musahars are landless community in Barew village. Their only source of income is to either work as agricultural labour or migrate to other place. Most of the musahar migrant work in Brick kiln industry. They work seven to eight months in brick kiln industry and remaining months live in the village. They take loan from brick kiln contractors for fulfilment of daily necessity and with an assurance to work in brick kiln till the loan repaid. This is a cyclical process.

One of the important components in food security definition is safe drinking water. Figure 6.5 show that none of the musahar households have a single source of drinking water inside their home. They depend on the government hand pump for their daily usage. Only 30% Non Musahar household have their own hand pump within the boundary of their home. While the other communities have their own hand pump and its only 10% general household that fetches water from government installed hand pump.

6.2b.Village: Ghazipur

Like the village Barew, musahar community is entirely landless in Ghazipur village. Non musahar SCs also fall under the same category of being landless. Entire land is controlled by the others communities. The scheduled castes generally work as agricultural labourers. As work is available only for few months, people are without work for a major period of

the year. The strict conditions on the agricultural fields and lack of reasonable amount of work throughout the year to sustain a family, forces these communities to take loan for daily necessities.

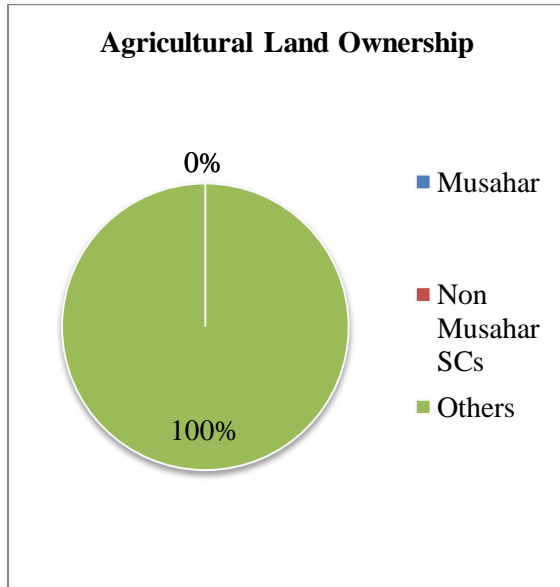


Figure 6.6: Agricultural Land Ownership
Source: Field Work

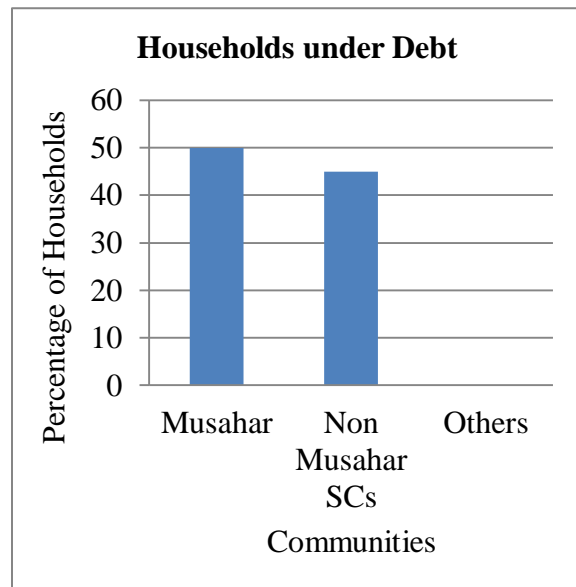


Figure 6.7: Households under Debt
Source: Field Work

Figure 6.7 shows that 50% of Musahar communities and 45% of Non musahar SCs community are in debt. Other communities are not in debt because either they own some amount of land or they receive remittances from their family members who are employed in cities/urban locality.

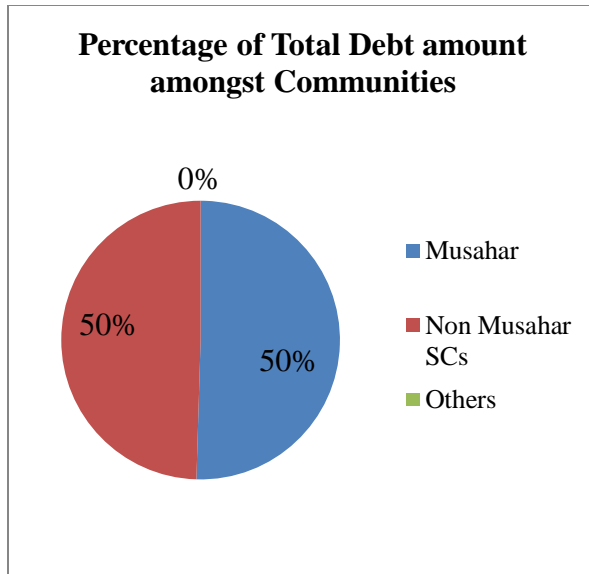


Figure 6.8: Percentage of Total Debt Amongst Communities
Source: Field Work

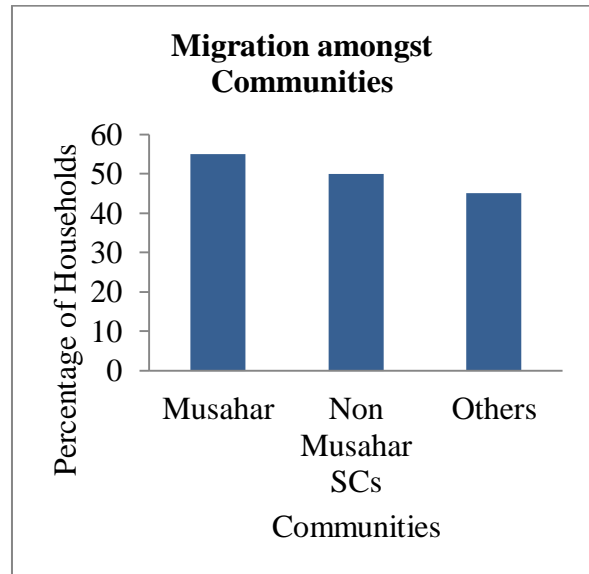


Figure 6.9: Migration amongst Communities
Source: Field Work

The distribution of loan among Musahar and Non musahar is equal. They take loan from the brick kiln contractor. Contractors send these labourers to other states to work in brick kiln industry, where they stay for a period of seven to eight months. Most of these scheduled castes are illiterate so they are unable to calculate the loan and the interest on loan. They work as a bonded labourer, and there is no escape. 55 percent musahar and 55 percent non Mushar households are migrant workers, as shown in figure 6.9. 45 percent others households are also migrant but they work in highly paid jobs and their condition is better off as compared to Musahar and Non Musahar SCs.

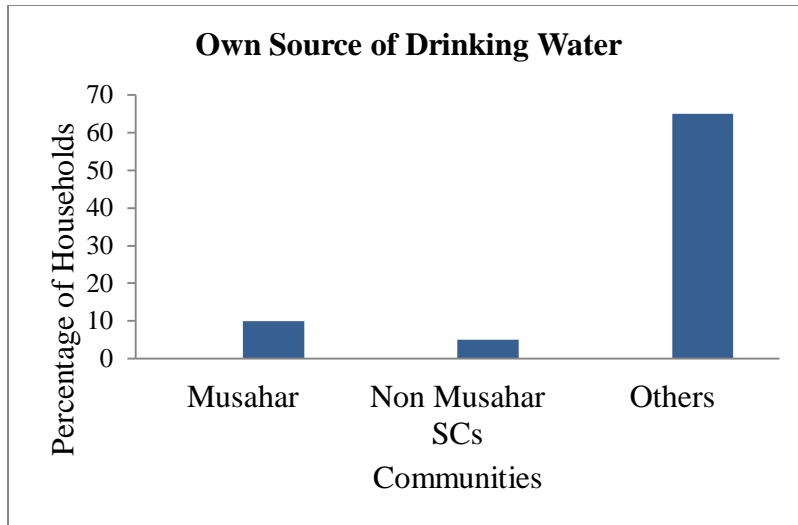


Figure 6.10: Own Source of Drinking Water
Source: Field Work

This particular figure represents the source of drinking water of sample households. Most of the Scheduled caste communities use common hand pump for drinking water. They wash their cloth and take bath in the river. Only two households of musahar communities and only one household of Non musahar SCs have their own hand pump. In other words, 90% of musahar communities and 95% of non musahar SCs don't have their own source of drinking water. 70 percent of others households have their own hand pump. Most of the scheduled caste wash their cloth and take bath in the river. There is only one hand pump in scheduled caste tola and people use this for drinking purposes as well. It shows that how musahar and non-musahar SC communities are deprived from the basic amenities which are essential for food security.

Entire scheduled castes in this village are landless. Some work as agricultural labourers and others migrate for work. The distribution of loan among Musahar and non musahar is equal.

6.2c. Village: Chhotka Amwan

Musahar is comparatively in better position than other two villages. They own few chunks of land, which is not sufficient for them. Hence they are forced to work as

agricultural labourer in the fields of general communities or work in brick kiln industry. Pradhan H.S. Prasad characterized this agrarian relation as ‘semi-feudal’. Semi-feudalism was a transformation of the zamindari system, which had left a legacy of a highly unequal distribution of land and political power. It involved not only through rent but also through usury and labour bondage. Indebtedness, tenancy and labour attachment reinforced each other as mechanism of social control. (Prasad, 1979 & Prasad, 1987)

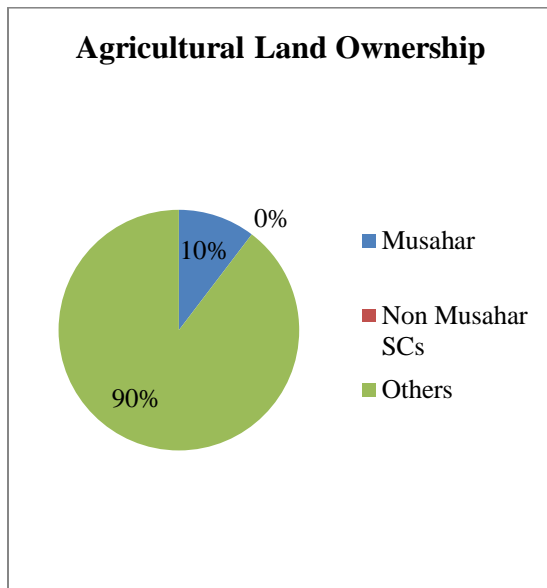


Figure 6.11: Agricultural Land Ownership
Source: Field Work

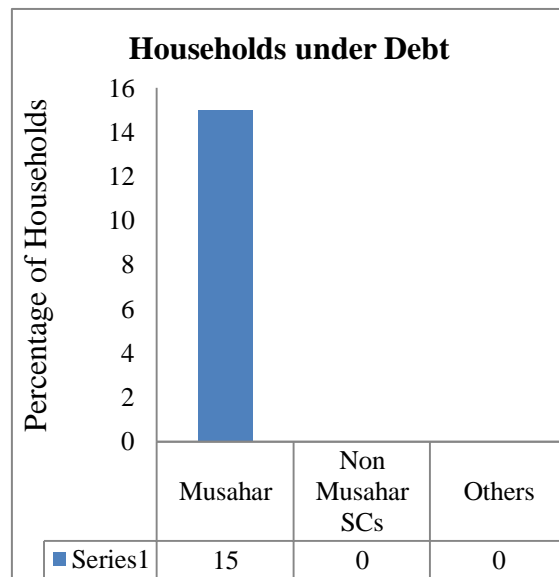


Figure 6.12: Household under Debt
Source: Field Work

Figure 6.12 shows that only musahar community is in debt. Out of twenty households from Musahar community, fifteen households are in debt. In other words, seventy five percent of musahar community are in debt. Musahar in this village mainly work in brick kiln where work is available only for six to seven months. Remaining months, they do not find any source of earning so they take loan for day to day necessity.

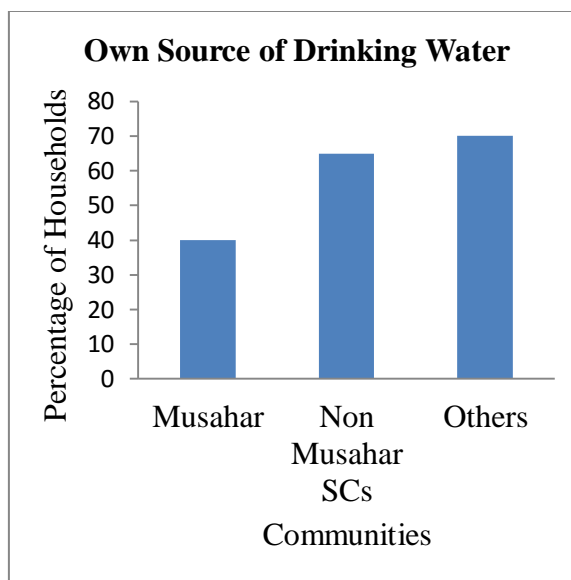
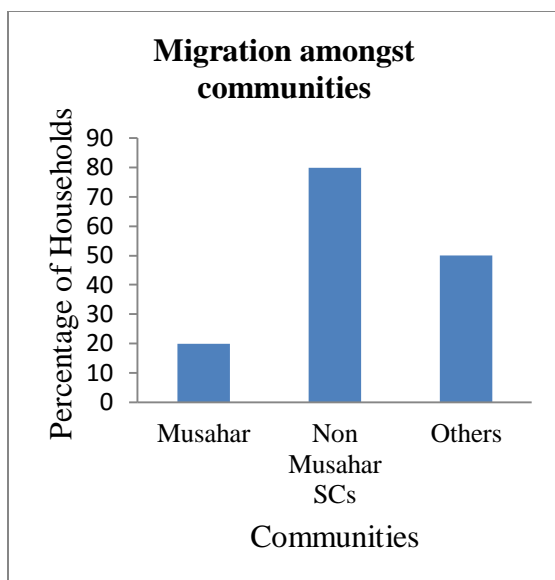


Figure 6.13: Migration amongst communities Figure 6.14: Own Source of Drinking Water

Source: Field Work

Source Field Work.

Mostly Dalits work as agricultural labourers, but wages are paid in kind, and the amount is not more than Rs 100-120/- for men and Rs 80-90/- for women. Bonded labour is common, especially if the Dalit labourer has taken a loan from the farm-owner or lives in the latter's land. Agricultural labour provides employment only for three-four months and for the rest of the year, the Dalits are either jobless or migrate to Patna to work in construction or road-building.

In this village, migration among musahar is comparatively less than the other communities because they work in local brick kiln industry and agricultural field. 80% non musahar SCs and 50% general communities are migrants. Unemployment is the major reason for their migration. Respondents say that after mechanisation of agriculture, the work available in agriculture has reduced. During harvesting season, crop is harvested by machine thereby reducing the workload on the labourers. Earlier the labourers used to get 40 to 50 days employment in every agricultural season but now they get only 15 to 20 days.

Drinking water is a major component of food security. Figure 14 shows the ownership of the source of drinking water. 60% of musahar household depends on common source of

drinking water. In this particular village, Musahar community is settled near the bank of river so they can take bath and wash their cloth in the river. 65% of non musahar SCs and 70% of general communities have their own source of drinking water.

Above explanation shows that scheduled castes are mostly marginalised community in Chhoti Amwan village. Most of the non musahar SCs are landless. Left with no other alternative, 80% are forced to migrate for work. Musahar work either as agricultural labourer or work in local brick kiln industry. Only few musahar migrate for work who have taken loan from brick kiln contractor. It shows that debt and lack of work during non-agricultural season constitute to be the two major reasons for migration among musahar community.

6.3: Starvation and Hunger among Musahar Community

The Musahar community is deprived to lead ordinary social lives with mainstream society or share the common amenities in the village. People from the Musahar community are also denied of property, source of livelihood and education. In order to survive, they work as labourers in the field or do other forms of hard physical labour in industries. However, the remuneration for their work is mostly given in kind, in form of food or grain. Thus they have no saving for themselves in times of need, and are forced to starve at times when they have no regular work.

Bhothu Musahar, aged 55, son of Sukhdev Musahar, residing at Belwa Musahar village, Varanasi district, said starvation is treated as normal in his village. Many people in his village have died of starvation, few from injuries suffered at workplace and some died from beatings. Musahar villagers never dared to complain to anyone. “Where could we complain? We had seen police officers staying at Tiwari’s (brick kiln owner and most powerful man in village) houses and having dinner with him. Tiwari also used to threaten us that if we ever dared to complain to anyone about this, he would get the police to arrest us. He threaten us that instead of the men, he would get the women arrested. So we had no other option, men, women and children worked for Tiwari. Every child was to work for him. The only concern was whether one could work or not. Young or old, all had to work. Rain or drought, every day we had to work. Even if somebody died and the

body was still at home, you still had to go to work or else they would beat us. We were fed up with this situation and the punishments were intolerable”. (Raghuvanshi, 2012:23)

“Hunger is accepted in our village. It is hard to manage the children. By night they start crying and refuse to sleep (due to hunger). We have no option. We beat them hard so that they cry for a while and are soon tired and that is how we put our children to sleep. Many have died of starvation here”. Bahru Mushars’s family is one example. His wife and two children died within four weeks gap. His daughter Reena died when she was five years old. Then his wife Kismati Devi died, followed by his other daughter, Hasna, who was only nine months old. All these happened within a span of about four weeks. Bahru has lost mental balance now. This is not strange for us. Every year in July, August, September and October, few children die here due to malnutrition and acute starvation. No one cares”. (Ibid. p. 24)

Meena is a widow; her husband had died of hunger a year before. Meena’s cold expression while narrating the incident could lead an observer to conclude that the constant struggle for life had made death a less emotional experience. This observation was substantiated by other, similar observations during the field study. There was almost no household that had not experienced the death of a sibling or a child. For some respondents, recalling and narrating the stories of starvation deaths in their families was a huge effort. In fact, dehumanised by hunger, they have accepted such events as a part of their lives. No space remains for emotional outbursts; their immediate needs are so pressing that they constantly look for solutions to save other family members from meeting the same fate. Meena is now the sole breadwinner in her family. Her entire day is spent arranging food for the family. With four empty bellies at home, there is no escape from the hardship she endures.

What does having food mean for a Musahar? Meena’s menu for the day speaks for itself.

“Today I have cooked this rice [a small pot stood on the chulha, half-filled with rice] and made “chutni” ... to prepare a chutni, we grind green or dried red chillies depending upon the availability with salt... that’s how we always make it and use it as a substitute for vegetables and dal.”

Their options are very limited. They have meagre amount to spend on food. The amount of money they have in hand determines the choice they can make. Meals are planned, keeping in mind the economics of everyday life; often, other genuine needs are postponed as hunger cannot be deferred. As mentioned earlier, there is uncertainty of work which renders the situation all the more precarious, and necessitates a rationing of food. There is preparedness to fast quite often. The choice is between food and no food than between food and food of one's choice.

Although it is difficult to rear children under these conditions, childlessness does not make things easier. Chandkali has no child and no land. There is no one to look after them. Old age has become a curse. For the old couple, it becomes all the more difficult to get work, as they have to compete with able-bodied young people in the labour market. They usually make their living by selling firewood. Moreover, there is no scope for sympathetic assistance from fellow community members due to widespread poverty. There is one persistent quandary: Whose needs are more urgent? It becomes important here to look at the role of the state in such circumstances. The occasional respite that the state provides is channelled through the pradhan, who is more of a feudal lord than a people's representative. His discretion is supreme. In this case, pradhan skilfully shirk off his responsibilities; as Chandkali said: "Many times we went to the pradhan for our old age pension...he said you will get it only when someone dies in the village...you will have to wait."

For her, the wait has become an endless one. The irony is that for their life to continue, someone else's life needs to end; poverty has bestowed a utility on death.

Similarly, in another case of Savitri's stola, everyone knows her to be an old widow with no means of support, but they are in no position to help her daily either. She admits:

"Today I had nothing to cook ... yesterday morning I cooked some rice, in the evening had nothing and slept ... in the morning had some bhuja [small broken pieces of rice and paddy fried in sand or salt]...if somebody gives me something to eat, things will be better, otherwise once again I will have to fast. Once I had to fast for four continuous days."

Her neighbour said, “When we didn’t see her outside for many days...we guessed that something must be wrong...I came inside to check on her and found her lying unconscious.”

In all the above narratives, we can see that in the Musahars’ language, the euphemism used for “hunger” is *upwas*, that is, fasting. This euphemism is to be understood as a way to hide the unpleasantness associated with hunger. The language used, here, is a potent signal of an internalisation of fasting as a normal/ usual occurrence, though there isn’t any spirituality attached. There is no criticism of the state or any other institutional factor held responsible for their suffering. There is not even a desire for any redress from the state.

6.4: The Role of Government Schemes/Programmes in Curtailing Food Insecurity

In this section, an attempt is made to explain the various government schemes/programme in curtailing food security. These are: PDS, ICDS, and THR which are of much importance for food security and at the same time bear many loopholes, which have been highlighted. The study has divided the beneficiaries in three categories: Musahar, Non mushar SCs and general. Also an attempt has been made to bring forward the main reasons for Musahar community to lag behind the others in entailing the benefits of food security schemes.

6.4a Village: Barew

Figure 6.15 provides a clear picture of how the discrepancy between Ration Received and Entry on Ration Card is only persistent on Mushar’s ration card. The major reason being, Mushar community in this village are largely migrant workers. They live only 4 to 5 months in a village. Whenever they migrate, PDS owner takes away their ration card, make fake entry on ration card and siphoned their grain. Furthermore it is found that there are no fake entries on non musahar SCs and general communities’ ration card. As these two communities are more aware of their right, hence the fake entry is restricted. They don’t submit their ration card to PDS owner and do not allow making fake entries on their ration card.

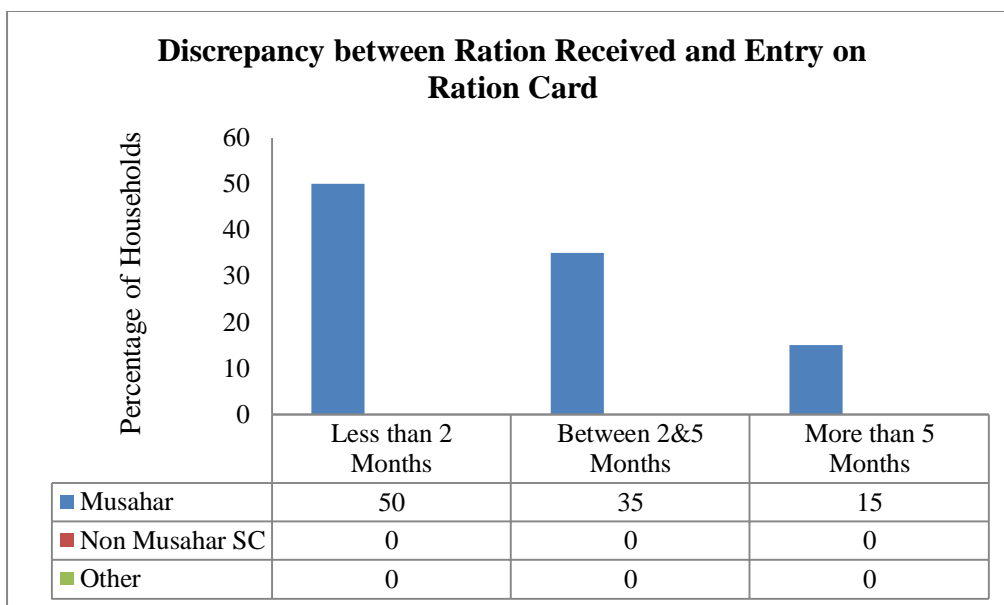
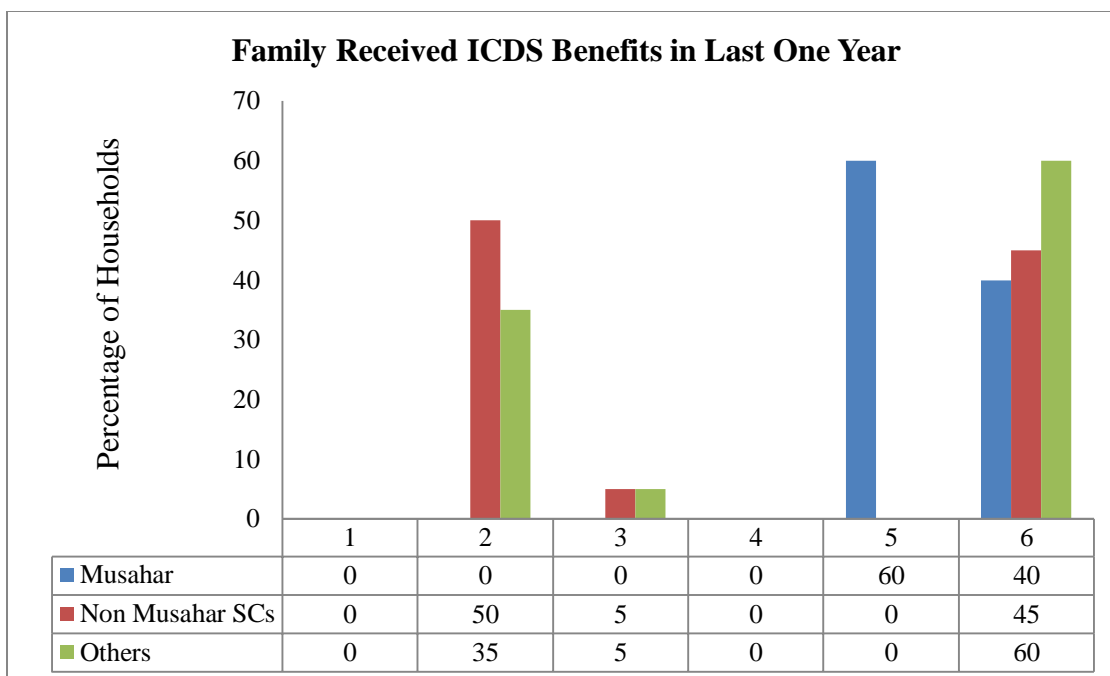


Figure6.15: Discrepancy between Ration Received and Entry on Ration Card
Source: Field work

Rajendra das said that “whenever ration is distributed by PDS owner, they distribute only 1-2 days and in case one fails to avail ration particularly on those days, they fail to get any ration as the owner states the ration to be over”.

While comparing the other two villages, in Brew village, most of the beneficiaries get their ration on every alternate month and some beneficiaries get even more than that. We saw that in Chhotka Amwan beneficiaries get ration only 2 to 3 months and in Ghazipur beneficiaries have not received any ration in previous year.

Ramdev Ravidas said that “earlier we have BPL ration card and used to receive 35 kg grain every month which was very supportive but from last year onwards, I have not got any ration from the PDS”. The assumption is that his ration card is withheld by the mukhiyaji who is not ready to give it to him.



Note: 1: Regular, adequate and satisfactory, 2: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory, 3: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory, 4: Once in a while, 5: Never, 6: Not eligible

Figure 6.16: Families Received ICDS Benefits in Last Year
Source: Field Work

Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS) is one of the important schemes for children between the age group of 0 to 6 years. It is clear from the figure 16, that musahar, which is most deprived community of society, remains excluded from the ICDS benefit. Musahari tola is one km away from the main village. There are 80 households of musahar and 10 households are that of other SC but no ICDS centre. Earlier there was ICDS centre but it is shifted to main village in 2005. From then onwards, not a single household are getting the benefit of ICDS because it is not possible for 3 to 6 years children to walk 1 km to reach ICDS centre. One separate ICDS centre is situated at Ravidas (Non musahar SC) tola so that their children can get the benefit. 50% Non musahar SCs and 35 percent others communities households said that they are getting the ICDS benefit regularly but quantity is insufficient and quality is poor.

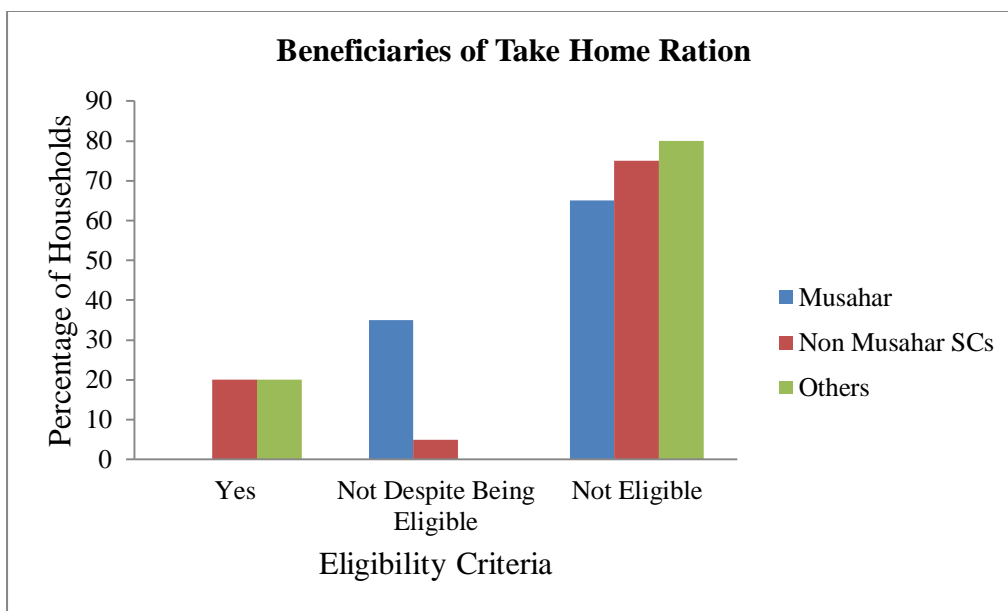


Figure 6.17: Beneficiaries of Take Home Ration
Source: Field Work

Take Home Ration is provided to Children between (6-72 months), severely malnourished children between (6-72 months), pregnant women and Nursing mothers. From the above figure 17, it can be inferred that not a single household of Musahars are getting any benefit of 'take home ration' (THR). 35% eligible households of musahar community are excluded from the Scheme. Only one household from the non musahar SCs is not getting the benefit. 20% non musahar SCs and general are getting the benefit. Not a single household from the others communities are excluded from the THR. In other words, all eligible households from the others communities are getting the benefit of THR.

6.4b. Village: Chhotka Amwan

Figure 6.18 represent the beneficiaries of ration under PDS system over a period of one year. It is clear from the table that only general community were able to avail the ration for a brief period of three months in last one year. Most of the households from the Scheduled caste get the benefit of 2 months in previous year. All 20 households from the musahar community received two months ration only in the last one year. 95% non musahar SCs and 30% others communities have received 2 months ration in previous one year.

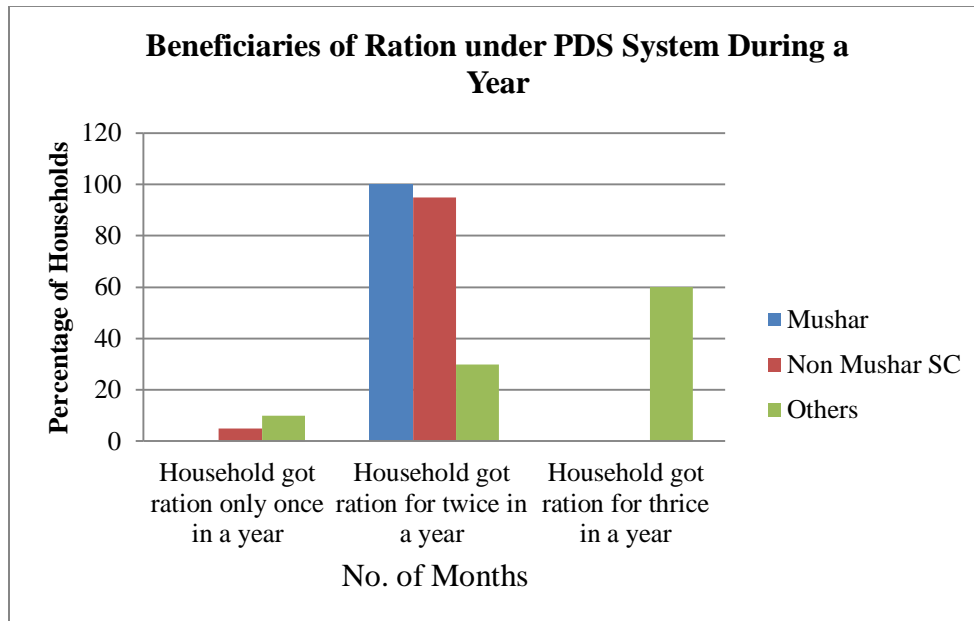


Figure 6.18: Beneficiaries of Ration under PDS System During a Year
Source: Field Work

Kamla Devi, a mushar women says that if we complain to the PDS owner, their response is “*ration nahi aaya hai jaha complain karna hai karo, tumahara hi ration bechkar case ladenge*” (Ration was not allotted to me, where ever you want to complain you do, I sold your ration and will fight the case by selling your ration only).

Devnarayan Ravidas said that “whenever we complained, PDS owner said that ration were not issued from the food corporation of India so we are not distributing, if you complain repeatedly then your quota will get transfer to other village”.

Keshri devi, another Scheduled caste women said that “PDS owner checked the quality of grain, if it is good then they sold in the open market whereas if the quality of grain is poor then only they distribute it. Some people even pay money to get ration card but still they fail to get the ration”.

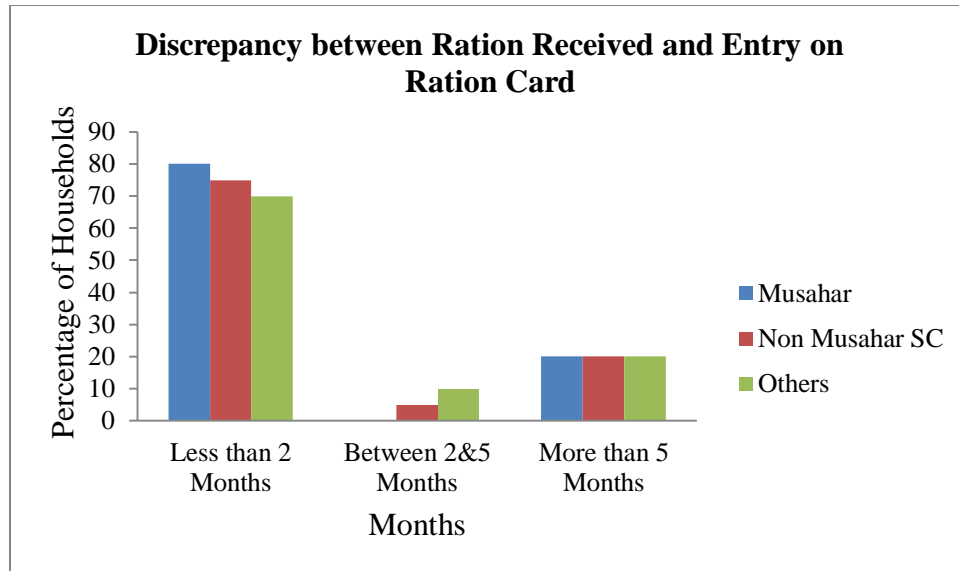
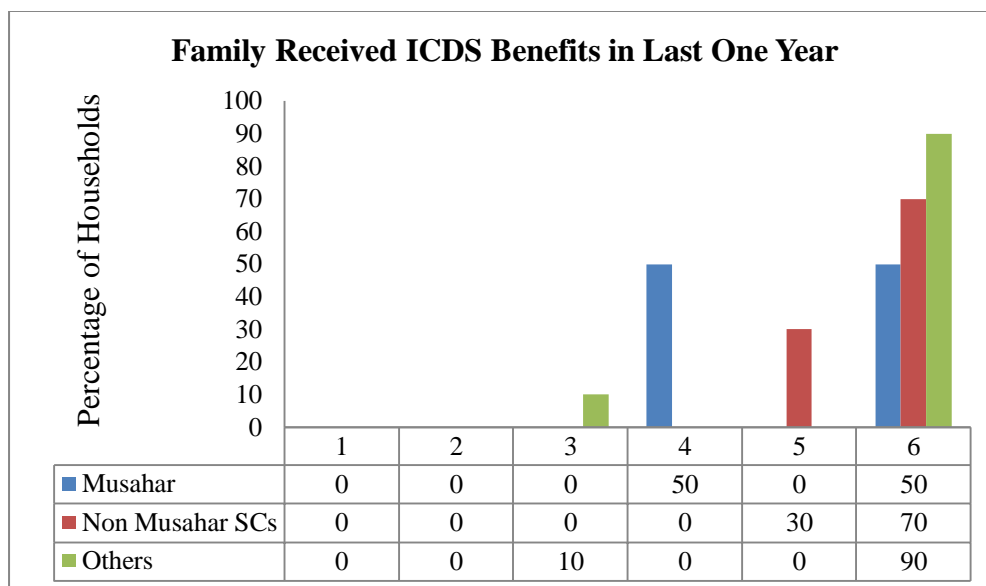


Figure 6.19: Discrepancy between Ration Received and Entry on Ration Card

Source: Field Work

Figure 6.18 shows that most of the households get only two months of ration except few general households. But figure 6.19 shows that there are more than 5 months of fake entries of twenty percent from each community. It clearly shows a mis-match between the actual amount of ration received during two months and the wrongful entry that has been made in the ration card. While it also points out that the main wrong entries were done in the case of musahars. Power and stability as a community and also education has a major role to play in this. As Musahars are not at all a powerful community rather they are the victims of the power structure and bonded labour, so the education is clearly not a priority for them. Their main focus is to earn as much as needed to feed their family on a daily basis. Moreover to fulfil the requirement to at least eat two meals a day, the entire family is engaged in some or the other form of work.



Note: 1: Regular, adequate and satisfactory, 2: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory, 3: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory, 4: Once in a while, 5: Never, 6: Not eligible

Figure 6.20: Families Received ICDS Benefits during Last Year

Source: Field Work

Integrated Child Development Services are provided from Aganwadi centres. There are three ICDS centre in Amwan village and one separate Aganwadi centre for Musahar tola. Musahar tola is situated one kilometre away from the main village. The worker of the aganwadi centre belongs to koeri caste (OBC community) and helper from pandit caste. Fifty percent musahar respondents said that aganwadi centre opens only once in a while, as shown in the table 6.20 and whenever it opens children get only biscuit and toffee. Aganwadi worker do not touch their children and she distributes biscuits and toffee from a distance. Children hardly get cooked food.

Rohni devi, a mushar women said that why will their children go to aganwadi centre, aganwadi worker neither teach the children nor distribute the food.

Another musahar women, Veena devi said that *“jis din biscuit aur toffee batta hai, us deen upper se giratahai, kabhi thali mein girta hai aur kabhi bahar, mere bache kutta thode hai. Sahaika pandit hai wah sabko hath mein biscuit aur toffee deti hai, sevika koeri jati ki hai par wah door se hi deta hai”* (Whenever Aganwadi worker distribute biscuit or toffee, they throw the biscuits from above in the thali. At times it falls into the thali while most of the time it falls outside, my children are not dogs. Aganwadi helper is

from pandit caste, she gives biscuit and toffee in the hand but Aganwadi worker is from Koeri (OBC) caste, she serves it from distance).

Not a single household from Ravidas community's (Non mushar SC) children are getting the benefit of ICDS. Most of the Ravidas community said that two years ago ICDS centres was near their tola and their children had received the ICDS benefit. But now it transferred to other ICDS centre, which is one kilometre away from our tola. ICDS worker told that seat is not availbale at that centre so they can not enroll their (Ravidas community) children.

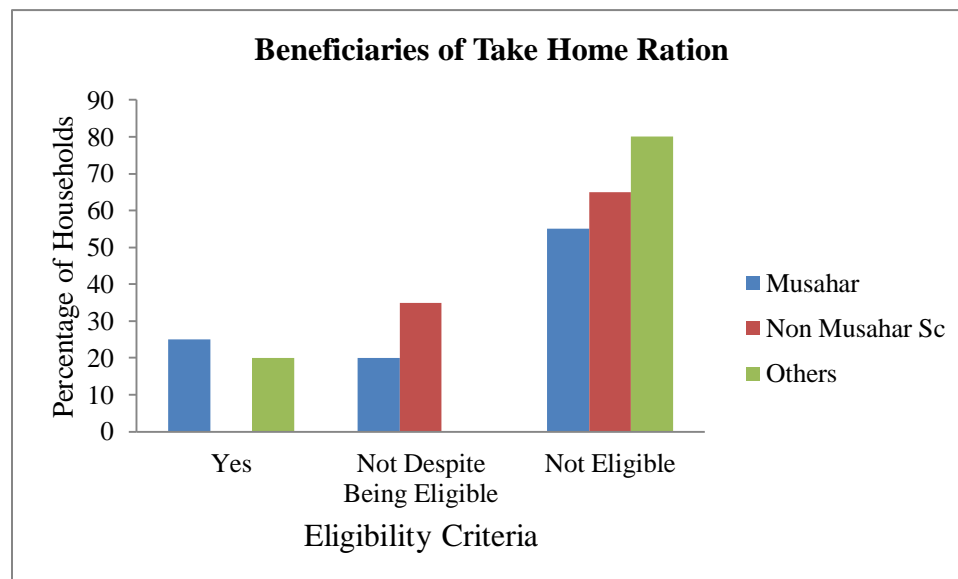


Figure 6.21: Beneficiaries of Take Home Ration
Source: Field Work

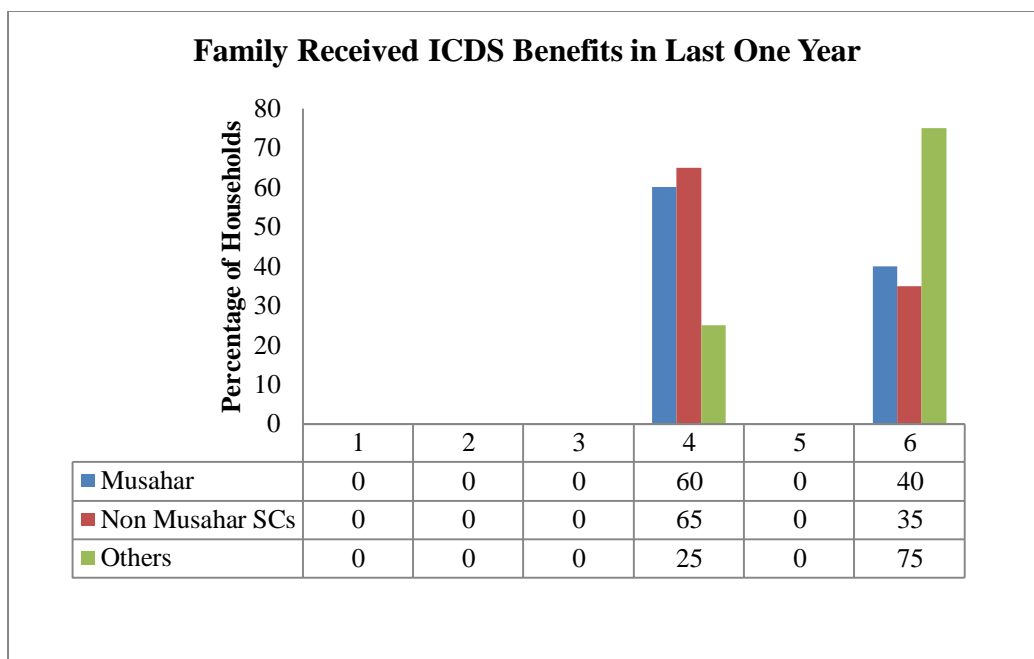
This particular figure explains the status of Take Home Ration. Twenty percent Musahar and thirty five percent non Mushar SCs are not at the receiving the benefit of take home ration (THR) despite being eligible. It is quite surprising that not a single household of general communities falls into this category. It shows that how the poorest communities of society are excluded from the government schemes. Twenty five percent of the musahar community and twenty percent of other communities are getting the benefit but non musahar SCs are excluded from this scheme despite being poor and marginalised section of the society. Those who are getting the benefit of THR said that they do not get full amount and the quality of the grain received is also of poor quality.

6.4c. Viilage: Gazipur

There are 226 households in Ghazipur village, in that 125 households are from scheduled castes. These scheduled castes are landless. They either work in agricultural field or migrate to other state in search of work. Most of these migrant workers work in brick kilin industry. Government has implemented numerous programmes for food security and poverty alleviation but all these schemes totally fail to keep up with their promises. Owing to widespread corruption, these programmes were unable to run and maintain their promises. As a result food becomes scarce and starvation is a common phenomenon and widespread, especially among Musahars.

Respondents said that we faced food crisis in September, October and June due to lack of work in agricultural field. National Food Security Act has been passed in September 2013 to provide grain at subsidised price to 75% in rural area and 50% in urban area. These poorest communities of society never get the ration in the course of an entire year (August 2014 to August 2015). Their ration card also remains in possession of PDS owner. Majority of the respondent said that ration was distributed in March 2015 but quality was so poor so we did not buy.

Ayodhya thakur, one of the respondants, said that the quality of grain was too poor that even animal were unable to eat them.



Note: 1: Regular, adequate and satisfactory, 2: Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory, 3: Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory, 4: Once in a while, 5: Never, 6: Not eligible

Figure 6.22: Families received ICDS benefits in last one year

Source: Field Work

The failure to properly run a scheme among the poorest of the section of population is very much common and in a way has taken the course of becoming a common phenomenon. Likewise the case is same also with the integrated child development service (ICDS). Anganwadi centre opens only once in a month during polio vaccination day. Whenever it opens children get only biscuit and toffee. Figure 22 shows that 60% musahar, 65% non musahar SCs and 25% general communities' households received ICDS benefit once in a while. Whenever they open Angadwadi, children get only biscuit and toffee. Take Home Ration is not provided either to Children (6-72 months), severely malnourished children (6-72 months), pregnant women or Nursing mothers.

6.5: Comparative Analysis of Food Security Schemes

Figure 6.23 shows the month wise explanation of ration received by the sample households. Village-wise segregation of PDS data suggests that performance of the PDS is better in Brew compared to other two villages.

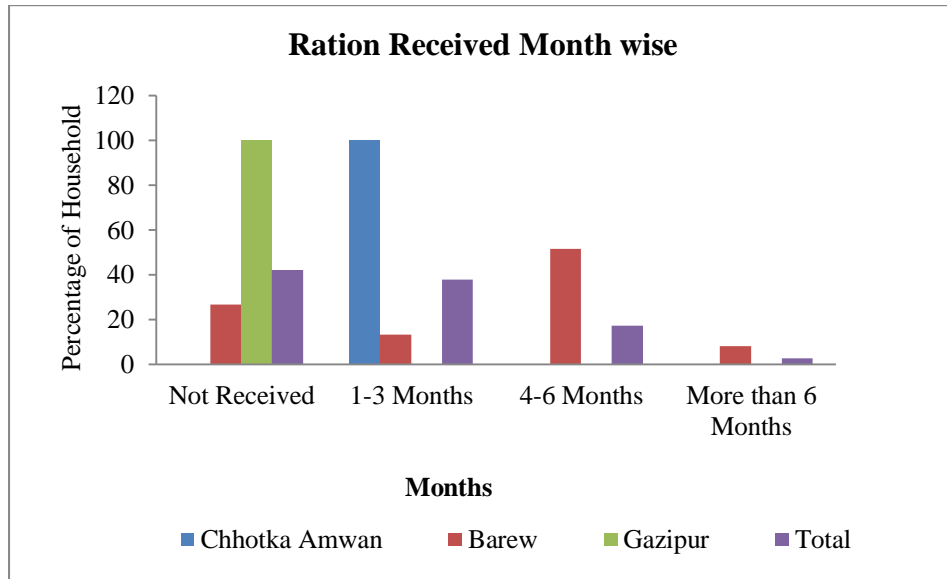


Figure 6.23: Ration Received Month wise
Source: Field Work

Out of 180 sample households, forty two percent households did not receive the ration due to lack of ration card or that they have received ration card very recently. Thirty eight percent households had received the ration less than four months. Seventeen percent households had received the ration between 4 to 6 months. Only two household had received more than 6 months ration. In other words, not a single household had received the full amount of ration in previous year. In Gazipur village, PDS beneficiary never received ration in last one year. PDS is better implemented in Barew as compared to other two villages. Most of the households received ration on every alternate month in Barew.

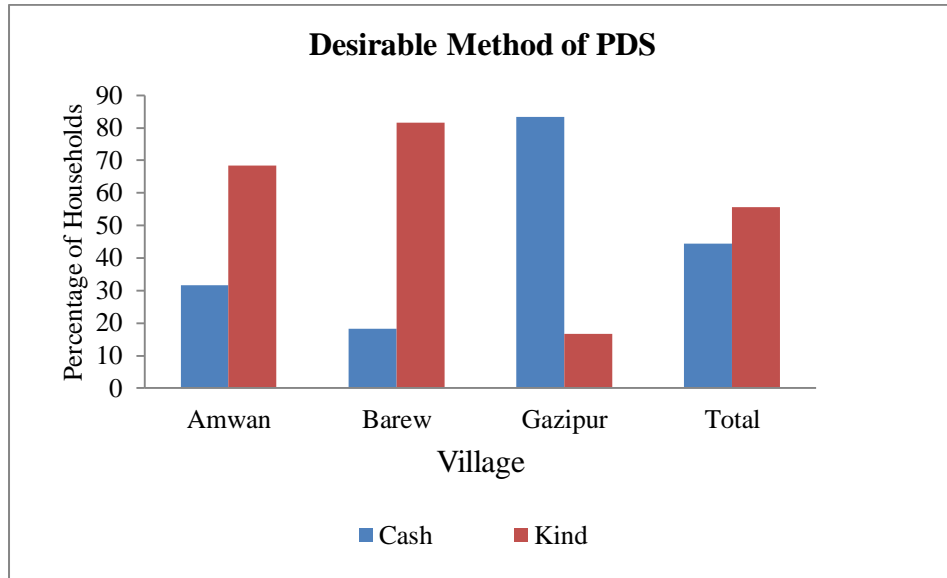


Figure 6.24: Desirable Method of PDS
Source: Field Work

This particular figure explains the desirable method of public distribution system. Fifty six percent of sample households said that they prefer grain compared to forty four percent in favour of cash transfer. In Barew village, more than eighty percent PDS beneficiary demanded grain because in this village people get their ration on every alternate month as above figure shows. In contrast to Barew, more than 80 percent demanded cash in Gazipur village because people never received ration in last one year. It shows that where PDS is functional, people preferred ration over cash.

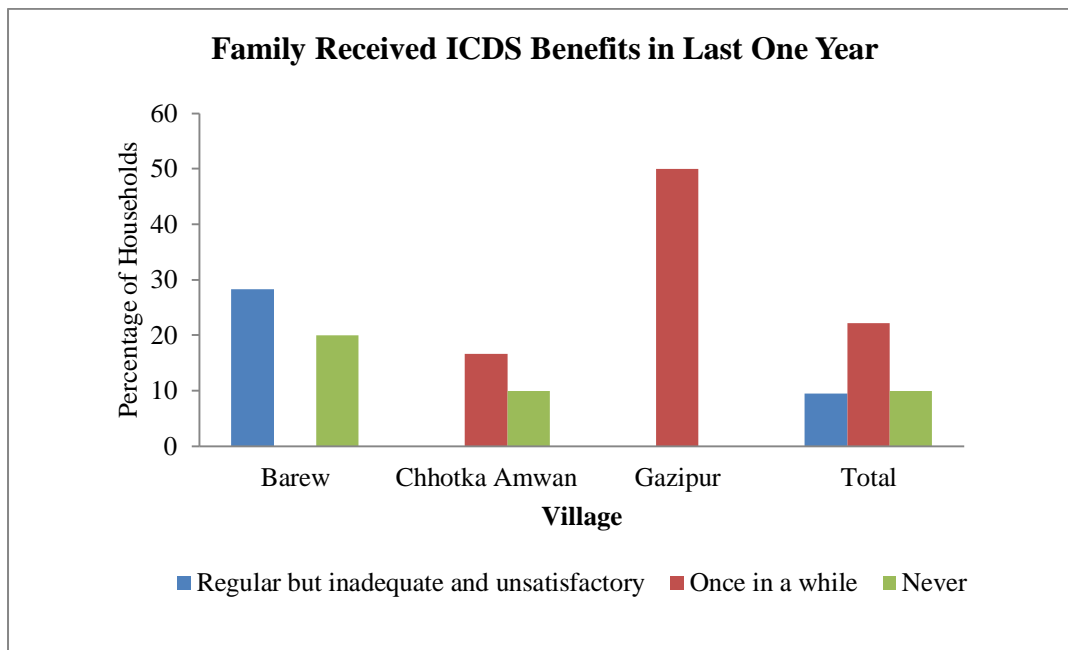


Figure 6.25: Family Received ICDS Benefits in Last One Year
Source: Field Work

Among 180 sample households, not a single household is getting the ICDS benefit on regular, adequate and satisfactorily basis. Nine percent households said that they are getting the benefit regularly but amount is not adequate. Twenty two percent households are getting the benefit once in a while. Ten percent households have never received the ICDS benefits. Fifty percent respondent in Gazipur village get the ICDS benefit once in a while and twenty percent respondent in Barew village never got any ICDS benefit.

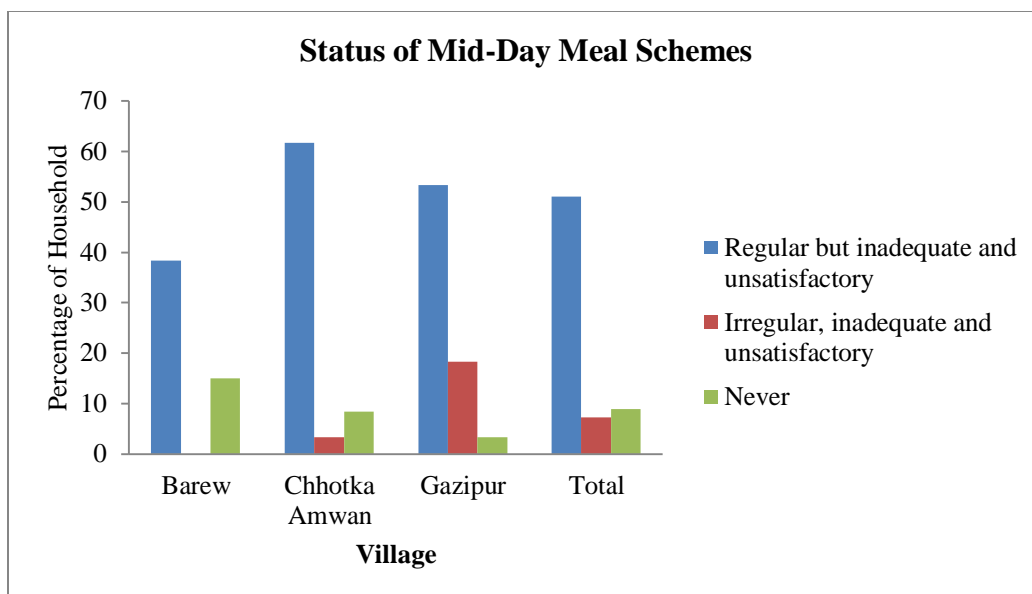


Figure 6.26: Status of Mid-Day Meal Schemes

Source: Field Work

Only one household said that their children are getting regular, adequate and satisfactory mid day meal in their school. Fifty one percent of the respondents said that their children are getting regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory meal in their school. Nine percent households never get the benefit of mid day meal due to migration.

From above detailed description of field data, it can be inferred that the musahars are the most marginalised and deprived section of the society. In Barew village, most of the musahar community live in the periphery of the village. Those households settled in the periphery are excluded from the ICDS because there is no ICDS centre. They are landless community so most of the households are migrant workers. Most of the musahars migrate with family so their children are not enrolled in schools and hence do not get the benefit of Mid-day meals. Being illiterate, they have absolutely no political participation in panchayati raj system and are easily manipulated. Their ration card is taken by the PDS owner and withdraw the ration in their names even when they are away for months together. But the scenario is little different with other community because they are more literate and politically active and more aware of their political rights. It shows that musahars are excluded from all the social security schemes.

All the scheduled castes are deprived from the government social security schemes in the Chhotka Amwan village. PDS distributor distributes less ration compared to other communities. Caste based discrimination still exist in this village. ICDS worker do not touch scheduled caste children. They distribute biscuit or toffee from distance. Many scheduled caste children live away from the ICDS centre because there are no seats available in all the three Aganwadi centre in Chhotka Amawn village.

Out of 226 households, 125 households are from scheduled caste in Ghazipur village. All scheduled castes are landless. About 70% scheduled caste migrate for work. These poorest sections of society are not getting any benefits of food security schemes. Ration has never been distributed in last one year. ICDS centre open only once in a while.

This data leads to a new understanding of economic life and development in India.

Chapter 7

FROM SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT TO SOCIOLOGY OF ECONOMIC LIFE: THEORISING FOOD INSECURITY AMONG THE MUSAHAR IN BIHAR

An attempt was made in chapter II on Sociology of Development in the preceding pages to point out the obvious limitations of development theorem as it is available to us today. One saw clearly as to how the excessive focus on a particular growth model measured purely in terms of quantifiable outcomes prevented us from recognising the underbelly of human poverty. The classical theorists, be it Adams Smith who championed the cause of free markets in the capitalist development or Karl Marx who was deeply suspicious of the capitalist development itself, were quick to identify the impending catastrophe. They, therefore, suggested in their own fashion the ways and means to tackle the problem at hand. Chapter II explores all these debates in detail and emphasises the need for alternative thinking on development with human progress — to be measured in qualitative terms — as the primary goal. But then, the chapter had to be paused artificially at some point, thanks to the constraints of space and time. One of the important aspects that was left untouched in the process of introducing an artificial pause was a discussion on economic life through sociological lens. So the present chapter is meant to fill that gap.

This chapter would make an attempt to look at briefly the major debates in economic sociology, or what is popularly known as the sociology of economics. The objective here is to present as far as practicable the dominant views on understanding econometrics of human life (not strictly in terms of technicalities but through various theoretical prisms). This is intended as an ideal exercise to know the food insecurity among Musahars in Bihar through the prism of development theories in conjuncture with economic practices. So the discussion in the following pages would lay emphasis on those theories/thinkers in economic sociology which are likely to be more relevant for understanding the chronic problem of food insecurity among the deprived groups such as Musahars in Bihar.

7.1: Culture and Food Security

Indians in the past have laid extraordinary emphasis on growing food in abundance and sharing it. In fact, Indians up to the present times seem to have always looked

upon abundance of food as the primary condition of civilisation, and sharing of food was for us the primary discipline of civilised living that we call dharma.

This attitude towards food and the sharing of food is enshrined in the most basic texts of Indian antiquity. A text like the *Taittiriyaopanisad*, a venerable *sruti* which even today continues to be compulsory reading for anyone with some regard for the *vaidika corpus*, gives expression to this Indian attitude towards food with unsurpassable intensity.

The *Taittiriyaopanisad* is a text on *brahmavidya*, its objective is to prepare the seeker for, and lead him towards, a *darsana*- immediate and direct vision- of *Brahman*, the creator who at the beginning manifests himself as the universe and retracts the whole of creation back into himself at the end, only to begin the process again at the beginning of another cycle of creation and dissolution. In this text of *brahmavidya*, *anna*, the food, and manifestations of *anna*, keep appearing at every step. *Anna*, in fact, forms the entrance of the edifice of *brahmavidya*, and what is enshrined at the centre of that edifice is also *anna*. The seeker, therefore, after going through the long path patiently shown almost step-by-step by the seer and achieving the *darsana*, bursts into a joyous celebration of having become one with *anna*, singing thus: '*ahamannam ahamannam ahamannam, I am anna, I am anna, I indeed am anna.*' (Bajaj and Srinivas, 2002: 443)

This discipline of growing abundance of food and sharing it in abundance that is taught in a *sruti* like the Rig Veda and the *Taittiriyaopanisad*, is of course emphasised again and again in the *smṛti* texts like the Mahabharata, Ramayana, the various *puranas*, and the *dharmasastras* of different times and communities.

The Mahabharata recalls the greatness of food and the giving of food in a particularly imposing manner. As is well known, in the Mahabharata, Bhisma Pitamaha, the grand wise old man of Kuruvamsa, gives a long discourse instructing Yudhishthira about all aspects of dharma. Bhisma himself during his long discourse, and also elsewhere in Mahabharata, reminds Yudhishthira again and again of the importance of feeding others in general, but especially of the duty of the king to ensure that within his domain, agriculture is well tended for, that peasants are not oppressed and that the irrigation of their fields is not left merely to the mercy of gods, so that there is always

an abundance of food around and nobody anywhere has to sleep on a hungry stomach. (Bajaj and Srinivas, 2002: 444-445)

Incidentally, all descriptions of ramrajya, the ideal times that the Indians always dream of, seem to essentially portray an abundance of crops and a complete absence of hunger and thirst, as also of disease and error over the whole earth. Thus describing the ramrajya that comes to prevail over the earth during the reign of Yudhishthira, the Mahabharata says:

Vavarsabhagvandevah kale dese yathepsitam

Niramayamjagadabhutksutpipasenakimcana

Adhimastimanusyanamvyasanenabhavanmatih

Devas granted rains, at the right place and the right time, to fulfil all wants. The world became free of all disease. There was no hunger or thirst anywhere. There was no mental suffering, and nobody was led astray by temptation. (Bajaj and Srinivas, 2002: 445-446)

The opposite of ramrajya is yugaksaya the end of times, and according to Indian understanding, the times begin to come to an end when food becomes so scarce that the people of the country are refused food, water and shelter and are thus forced to lie around hungry and thirsty on the roads. There perhaps cannot be a sin greater than that of the king during whose reign the times reach such a nether end. Bhisma, in fact, in a particularly intense yet short chapter in the *anusasanaparvan* of *Mahabharata*, warns Yudhishthira that the hunger of even one person in a kingdom renders the life of the king forfeit; and if there be a king in whose kingdom young children eagerly watch the delicious meals of others, and are not offered the same food with all ceremony and care, what indeed would be the fate of such king.

Zakat is an important form of religiously mandated charity under Islam. In Islam, poverty is an enemy that must be eradicated and prevented in order to preserve the sanctity of the religion and to uphold the dignity of the ummah. Poverty has adverse repercussions on mankind as it weakens the society. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has mentioned, "Hunger nearly leads to infidelity and all sorts of wrong doings". Thus, Islam rejects all forms of poverty, in line with Allah's command that Zakat being the third pillar of Islam enables the obligation of His servant to share their wealth. Without

a complete systematic institution of Zakat, our community will be disabled. As such, the collection of Zakat brings tremendous benefits to those who give and those who receive. (Dhar, 2013)

Zakat is divided into two main categories namely:

(i) Zakat Fitrah

Zakat Fitrah is an obligation upon all Muslims, which must be paid at the end of Ramadan before observing the Eid prayer. The required amount of Zakat is approximately 3 kg of staple food in the relevant country or an amount of money that is equivalent to the price of the food.

(ii) Zakat Al-Mal or Zakat for Wealth and Possessions

- The Zakat on wealth and possessions are classified into:
- Zakat for Income and Salary
- Zakat for Business
- Zakat for Savings
- Zakat for Stocks
- Zakat for Gold and Silver
- Zakat for Agriculture and Poultry

Zakat for agriculture is made on the agriculture produces that are the basic food for a country once it has reached the nisab and haul. In India, the citizen's basic food is rice, so the production of paddies becomes obligatory for Zakat. Islamic agents determine the rate or percentage of amount to be paid for Zakat where the agriculture product is produced. (Dhar, 2013) Zakat for poultry is obligatory once it reached the term and conditions for the owners, applicable on types of animals that are obligatory for Zakat. The types of animals are goat, sheep, cow, buffalo and camel.

Grurkalangar or the free community kitchen is an important institution among skikh. It was started by Guru Nanak and continued by his successors. It was used as a powerful institution for the uplift of the downtrodden who had been groaning under the yoke of socio-economic-cum-political inequities and religious discriminations prevalent in the society at that time. The Guru's langar was to open to all and there food was served to all when seated at one place, irrespective of caste or social status. The institution of

Guru-ka-langer spread equality among all and helped to remove untouchability and other evils born of the caste system. Guru-ka-langar, thus grew into an institution where lessons in social service and practical ethics were given and practised.

The institution of *langer* became an integrated and regular feature of Sikhism during Guru Amar Das. It is said that he insisted even on the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, when he came to see Guru Amar Das at Goindwal, to take meal in the *langar*. Akbar was so much impressed that he showed his desire to contribute to the success of the *langar* institution by making a grant of revenue free land to the Guru. The Raja of Haripur, likewise, had to sit in the *langar*, and eat with others, before he could be admitted to the presence of the Guru. (Dhillon, 1988:204)

The langar becoming an essential feature of the Sikhism in the closing years of the sixteenth century posed the problem of finances which resulted in Guru Arjan laying the foundation of a new institution. He appointed a few masands to collect money in well-defined areas on behalf of the Guru and laid the foundation of the masand system. All Sikh were asked to devote a tenth of their income (dasvandh) in the name of the Guru. There was no forceful collection of money, it was all voluntary. Guru Arjan worked hard and with the help of the devotees langar at the newly established Sikh centres at Tarn Taran near Amritsar, Kartarpur in Jullundur Doab and Hargobindpura. "Guru Arjan organized the system of contribution to the common pool by lying down that every Sikh should contribute one-tenth of his income for the common welfare. The money, thus collected was to be spent for running the free kitchen".(Singh, 1979:97-98) The institution of langar towards the end of the sixteenth century became a well developed religious institution of the Sikhs based on the ethical code. (Dhillon, 1988:205)

Guru Angad followed his predecessor in underlining the importance of service for others by directing that it should be done voluntarily. In one of his compositions, he said: "service done with compulsion is of no avail." To provide langar to the devotees became a matter of sacred duty for the Sikhs. The success of the langar in the sixteenth century in spite of great hardship and financial difficulties indicates the development of strong love for commonhood that was at the bottom of the langar system. Bhai Gurudas, a Sikh writer of sixteenth century, linked up the sharing one's food with others with service rendered to others. He did that in the following words:

“The Sikhs should serve one another.

Only by serving others, one can attain happiness.

One should cultivate selfless devotion and share one’s food with others”. (Dhillon, 1988:207)

According to Fauja Singh, this system has performed four major functions in the Sikh society. “First, it imparted a secular dimension to the sangat. Secondly, it added to the functional efficiency of the Sikh organisation. Thirdly, it translated the principle of equality into practice, making it obligatory for all people, whatever their status in life, to sit on the ground and eat together. Fourthly, it served as a cementing force among the followers of Sikhism.” (Singh, 1969:6) Lauding the institution of langar, Puran Singh observes, “what is a home but a hospitable feasting of children with bread and love and faith? What is spiritual life in the temple of flesh, without a full meal first? The very first temple made by Guru Nanak, therefore, was the temple of Bread, or Guru’s Langar. In one common Temple of Bread, the bread of God was made free to the children of man. Let none be hungry where the spirit of God prevails. The Guru’s people and the Guru were one home and one family; but it was no utopian idea, as of modern socialism or the democracy of labour; it was the democracy of soul, so gloriously invoked in the temple of the human heart by the genius of the Guru.” (Singh, 1977:73)

With the rise in philanthropic forms of benevolence, Christian preachers increasingly described charity as a meritorious act. As a virtue, charity was an expression of love and dedication to Christ's gospel. To be charitable was to show mercy like God himself. Christians were both coaxed to contribute and threatened if they did not. Disciples were promised that God would reward their gifts by forgiving their sins after death and that he would punish them by denying eternal life if they refused. In relation to the ultimate end or telos of the Christian life, namely, seeking God's good favor, whether or not one was charitable was a matter of great import. In making their donations, Christians often were encouraged not to make themselves poor but to contribute their superfluous wealth. Augustine declared to his parishioners: "All that God has given us beyond what is necessary, He has not properly speaking given to us. He has entrusted it to us, that it may by our means come into the hands of the poor". (Bird, 1982:163)

Jewish communities redefined charity in ways that pictured it as an individual and meritorious activity rather than as a whole series of communal obligations and norms. These shifts were never complete, so that charity continued to be understood primarily in relation to a broad spectrum of communal observances and rules related, for example, to tithing and the status of widows, defended as collective obligations. But at the same time, there was an increasing appeal to individuals, particularly to those who were economically successful, to seek personal merit and honor. Along with this, there was also a tendency to associate being charitable with being righteous and to focus more on the motives and virtues of the donor than on charitable institutions and their effects. (Bird, 1982:161-162)

After a study of the ancient religion of India, the religion of the Veda, Max Muller argues that Buddhism has always seemed to be, not a new religion, but a natural development of the Indian mind in its various manifestations, religious, philosophical, social, and political. I purpose now to consider Buddhist charity, which is, as it were, the full bloom of that more ancient charity that was preached in the Veda, and practiced during the Vedic age. The Hindus from the times of the Veda to the present day have always complained of poverty, and always praised liberality or charity as one of the first duties, and one of the highest virtues. Among the hymns of the Big Veda there is one (x. 117) ascribed to Bhikshu. Bhikshu means a beggar, and is the name assumed in later times by the Buddha himself, and by every member of his brotherhood. In that hymn it is said that the gods do not wish that men should die of hunger, but that the rich should give to the poor. He who is charitable, the poet says, will never know want. (Muller, 1885:224-225)

Buddhism and charity are synonymous terms. The Buddhist brother lives on the charity of his brotherhood, or of the monastery or college to which he belongs. The brotherhood lives on the charity of what we may call the laity, the Upasakas, those who, though they do not join the brotherhood, support it as a religious duty by their alms. Charity, therefore, is the very life and soul of Buddhism; or, as it has been expressed by a Buddhist, "Charity, courtesy, benevolence, unselfishness, are to the world what the linchpin is to the rolling chariot." But charity with the Buddhists is not confined to giving alms ; charity with them is one of the six, or ten, highest perfections, what they call paramitas, and then becomes complete self-surrender, carried to such an extreme that to our western minds it is unreal and almost grotesque.

The paramitas are: charity, morality, long-suffering, earnestness, concentration, wisdom, and prudence. (Muller, 1885:229-230)

Jajmani System

Jajmani system is another institution which provides the social security to villagers. The various castes of a Hindu village in North India are interrelated in a service capacity. Each serves the others. Each in turn is master. Each in turn is servant. Each has his own clientele comprising members of different castes which is his "jajmani" or "birt." This system of interrelatedness in service within the Hindu community is called the Hindu "Jajmani system." (Wiser, 1969: xxiii)

The Hindu Jajmani System represents an interrelationship built up on clearly defined function. It represents the organization of a community based on the Hindu belief that God "assigned separate duties and occupations to each individual from birth," these duties being as fixed as the functions of a father and mother in a family. Its strength in giving stability and psychical integration to Indian village communities through centuries is undisputed. (Wiser, 1969: 158)

In return for the various services rendered, there are payments in cash and in kind made daily, monthly, bi-yearly, per piece of work, and on special occasions, depending on the type of service rendered and in part on the goodwill of the jajman. The strength of the system depends, however, not on the actual payments made but on the concessions granted to the different occupational groups. These may be listed as: free residence site, free food for family, free clothing, free food for animals, free timber, rent-free land, credit facilities, and opportunities for supplementary employment and so on. (Wiser, 1969: xxvi)

"*Kam Karne-walas*" (those who serve) who have no special rights, if in need of food, can come *hath jhorke* and be certain of receiving some grain. Such people go to the fields for crops harvested in the spring and to the threshing floors for crops harvested in the autumn. In the subconscious mind of the good Hindu there is always the thought "a giver of grain (receives) Eternal bliss." In the same manner a "*kamkarnewala*" is certain of getting cooked food or raw sugar when it is available in any quantity. (Wiser, 1969:86-87)It shows that jajmani system provide food security during scarcity time.

“The village unit is a subsistence unit into which the people can retreat when want or scarcity is felt, and within which the social bonds, drawn ever tighter, bind up in obligations and secure against want each member of the village community.” “There is something in the Indian rural economy that makes poverty and hard work bearable. I cannot help but think that poverty sheltered by society is different from the poverty of those exploited by economic organization of mankind.” “To the Indian villager economy is not the way of life, but the social organization and the inherited toil on their overpopulated land”. The villages are – except for the effect of natural disasters-immortal. (Wiser, 1969:136)

The Hindu Jajmani System gives “a satisfactory life of the local group (which) is possible only when there is a certain unity of purpose among its institutions representing the different interests of its people.” (Sanderson, 1932:475) “‘The will to will the common will’ is the core of the community.” (Ibid, p. 594) The Hindu Jajmani System has an integration which is an embryonic form of what Sanderson considers essential to the modern rural community. “Physical, economic, psychological and social forces are all bringing about the integration of the rural community around a common centre of the interests of those living within an area which can support the institutions desired. If civilization is to advance and the increasing desires of humanity are to be satisfied, such an integration is inevitable.” (Ibid, p. 476), and the proper emphasis “Business will not be so largely the centre of the field of attention as it now is, but will take its rightful place as a means to an end, the end being the highest welfare of the community.” (Ibid, p. 567)

“It was the village community which developed those social attitudes of mutual aid, equity, and obligation for the common welfare which form the basis of the moral code and are the dynamic element of the social heritage of most of mankind. The village community has conserved the human values secured through the mutual aid of those who learned how to feed man-kind by agriculture- without the village community man would have been unable to perfect the art of agriculture; he would have been unable to perfect the art of agriculture; he would have been unable to produce and store a surplus of food, which made all other progress possible. The history of the village community exemplifies the strength of the locality group as a means of insuring the common welfare in a relatively isolated environment.” (Sanderson, 1932:433-434)

7.2: Economic Sociology in India

Economic sociology is one of the major subfields of Sociology. As such, it is as old as the discipline of Sociology itself. Despite this pedigree, it is far more difficult, if not impossible, to offer any one single definition as to what constitutes economic sociology and what exactly is its scope. There are, however, two broad general descriptions which are nevertheless accepted as the ideal outlines of economic sociology: 1) economic sociology deals primarily with a particular dimension of economic phenomena, namely the social dimension, and 2) that economic sociology is the study of social structures and organizations in the economy. Going forward, the understanding is that economic sociology addresses issues not only at the periphery of the economy (such as, the influence of religious values on the economy or of ethnicity on entrepreneurship) but also at its core (such as the way markets operate or investment decisions are made).

Economic sociology has a rich intellectual tradition. The first attempt was made in the early twentieth century by a group of German scholars, and Max Weber (1864-1920) stands tall in that list. A simultaneous effort was also being made almost during the same time by Emile Durkheim and his followers in France. The third phase of contribution to economic sociology came from a group of American sociologists, such as Talcott Parsons and Neil Smelser, roughly in the 1950s.

Weber, Sombart, and Schumpeter dug deep into the forays of economic life, providing the much needed leeway to economic sociology at its foundational phase. For one thing, most of these scholars produced major studies on capitalism: Weber's *Economy and Society* (1978), Sombart's *Der modern kapitalismus* (1987) and Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1976), for example, are still regarded as the cornerstone writings in economic sociology, with particular reference to their explications of modern capitalism. Though their focus was on capitalism, the scientific analyses they brought to light are multifarious in their scope and predictability. Weber went on to emphasize that capitalism was becoming increasingly rationalized; Sombart was particularly interested in looking at the different historical stages of capitalism; and Schumpeter argued that modern capitalism was digging its own grave and soon to be replaced by socialism. These visions of capitalism still dominate our thinking and are therefore of great interest.

The only one to make a sustained effort to lay a theoretical foundation for economic sociology was, however, Max Weber. In *Economy and Society* Weber carefully constructs various analytical categories that are needed for economic sociology to sustain itself as a distinct, scientific inquiry. He starts with “the concept of economic action” at the micro level and ends with macroeconomic phenomena such as “market economies and planned economies”. He also defines and discusses such basic concepts as trade, money, and the market—all from a sociological perspective.

In the *Protestant Ethic* (2002), Weber saw in Protestantism a religious ideology that was compatible with capitalism and wondered why Protestantism, alone among the world religions, developed such an ideology. Early Calvinism preached predestination, an idea that one’s destiny in the afterlife was fixed at birth. In essence, the Calvinist doctrine invited its believers to an introspective proposition that While one could not earn a place in heaven, God gave everyone an earthly calling, and for the anxious, working hard and achieving success in business might at least signal divine approval. Calvin’s God in effect demanded self-denial and asceticism. The idea of God’s calling led Protestants to devote themselves to their work, and the idea of asceticism led them to save. Some argue that Catholicism prompted the same kinds of behaviour (e.g., Novak 1993), and others argue that Protestantism’s main effect was to promote bureaucratization of the state (Gorski 1993), but what is novel about Weber is not so much this particular argument as his vision of how economy and society were intertwined.

The two most important studies in the French school of economic sociology are *The Division of Labour in Society* by Durkheim (1964) and *the Gift* by Marcel Mauss (1969). Mauss’s work not only covers gift giving but also contains a series of brilliant remarks on credit, interest, and consumption. In *The Division of Labour in Society* Durkheim Deals with the question of bringing about solidarity in industrial societies. His answer, which is further elaborated in other works (Durkheim 1962), is that no society in which the economic element predominates can survive long enough. Economic life has to be restrained by a moral element; without a common morality, all persons would be at war with one another.

Talcott Parsons and Nel Smelser argued, for example, that the economy is part of society, or, in their terminology, “the economic sub-system” is part of “the social

system”. In this sense they assigned a certain priority to society, thereby placing a considerable premium on sociology — a discipline well poised to conduct scientific inquiry into the norms and functioning of the social system. They proposed further that economic theory was essentially correct- even if it needed to be complemented by a sociological approach.

Mark Granovetter is the first one to discuss the new economic sociology (ES) in *Economic Action and Social Structure* (1985). Granovetter pointed out that all economic action and phenomena are embedded in concrete networks of social relations, social structures, normative arrangements, and institutions that constrain and channel them in particular ways. His own work that looked into the question of how people seek employment and get jobs at the local level demonstrates the early application of the social embeddedness idea. He argues that getting a job, or accessing the labour market, is a social process intrinsically linked to the job seeker’s social ties set in a specific social milieu, ties are in turn shaped and distributed under the over determining impact of social class. Popularly known as the “strength-of-weak-ties thesis”, this explanation has found corroboration in a wide range of social contexts in the United States and elsewhere —Greece and Russia are the evident example. Recent U.S. research with respect to other social cleavages such as gender, race and ethnicity, with particular reference to employment and work, has identified the prevalence of continuities in the transmittance of social inequalities rather than of discontinuities, clearly implying the multifaceted nature of social dimensions in the labour markets.

Another key concept in economic sociology is that of the social construction of economic phenomena, which draws from the theory of constructivism advanced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966. Social construction implies that economic arrangements, institutions and regulations do not have a priori independent existence of their own. Instead, they are formulated as a result of human social interaction and purposeful intervention taking place in a specific social context. Once an economic structure comes into being, however, it is usually assumed to have an objectivity that constrains and impacts economic actions and practices.

In a review of economic anthropology in South Asia, John Harriss traced the preoccupation with moral economy —especially the jajmani system in India —to the

influence of the substantivist school (see Harris, 2007). In the same wane, Walter Neale (1957) argued that the village economy in India was better explained through concepts of reciprocity and redistribution than through market-oriented concepts of rational maximization of utility. Walter (1957) further goes on to add, “The centrality accorded to the jajmani system in anthropological writings on India show the influence of Wiser’s book, which had focused on the image of the ‘grain heap’ that was collected after the harvest, and from which distribution of grains was undertaken for various village servants as payment for their economic and ritual services in accordance with customarily determined shares”. The discussion on the jajmani system was anchored to the wider question of the characteristics of the caste system, and its relevance for understanding the operation of a moral economy as distinct from a market economy in India. Thus, for instance, Louis Dumont, the foremost interpreter of the caste system for western, especially French, audiences, argued that the relations between different castes were hierarchical but non-antagonistic, since the system was holistic (Dumont, 2004). The focus on the jajmani system led to debates about whether the system was exploitative or otherwise; While Marxist interpreters of Indian society were much more likely to think of feudal or semi-feudal elements of agrarian relations as necessarily exploitative, the ‘culturalist’ or ‘structuralist’ interpretations emphasized the importance of the jajmani system in offering some protection to those who were lower in the social hierarchy, since customary practices assured that members of these castes would not be deprived of their subsistence needs. As an example of the former stance, Beidelman (1959) argued that the source of the jajman’s power was not ritual superiority but landownership, while the foremost proponent of the latter view was Louis Dumont. We should point out, though, that even anthropologist such as Kathleen Gough, who was otherwise inclined to emphasize the feudal elements in rural social relations, thought that subsistence rights of the poor were assured in the traditional moral economy, which had been disrupted subsequently by forces of modernization in general and colonialism in particular (see Kathleen Gough, 1960).

In his book on trade and market in early empires, Polanyi wrote:

“There is no starvation in societies living on subsistence margin. The principle of freedom from want was equally acknowledged in the Indian village community and we might add, under almost every and any type of social organization up to about the beginning of sixteenth century

Europe...it is the absence of the threat of individual starvation that makes primitive society in a sense, more human than market economy and at the same time less economic” (Polanyi, 1957:164).

Polyani here refers to traditional rights to life under the feudal system in Europe which, while tying the serfs to the village of the feudal lord, also gave them rights to cultivate their own food and access to certain commons for meeting their subsistence needs. Polanyi has been criticised for suggesting that the poor laws enacted in England at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution posed obstacles for the development of a free labour market, because they did not force the peasant to leave their villages in search of work in the cities where labour was needed for new industries (Bell, 2002:119-34). In this particular picture, the peasant has a natural attachment to the village, and will leave the village only if there is a threat of pauperization. The frequently evoked idea of rural proletariat that emerges after the erosion of customary rights over village resources is based on quite a similar conception of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and has exercised considerable influence over many scholars of Indian Society (Chakrabarti, 2003).

7.3: Economic History of India: A Sociological Critique

7.3a. Thesis: Modernisation Theory or Development Theory

In his work entitled, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960) Walt Rostow wrote mainly about ‘economic growth’ rather than ‘development’ per se, but he did make distinctions between ‘more developed’ and ‘less developed’ areas (ibid:2), and his ‘stages of economic growth’ were the route to ‘more developed’ status. Rostow thinks that he is departing from, and proposing an alternative to, Marx’s theory of history. He proposes that all societies pass through five stages: traditional society, precondition for take-off, take-off, road to maturity and the age of high mass consumption.

One can safely suggest that the work of Talcott Parsons could have served as a key resource for Rostow in formulating his approach. Parsons offered a very complex theory of social action comprising of four major aspects: the analysis of the fundamental logic of social action; the scheme of the pattern variables which govern the orientation of action; the identification of the functional requisites of systems of

action which allow the system to be maintained; then finally the idea of equilibrium as the endpoint to which all systems tend when disturbed.

The pattern variables were first developed by Parsons to understand the social relationship that was effectively altered during the transition from non-industrial to industrial societies. In his view, such approaches presented an over-simplified picture of social change, focusing as they did on two major variables. For Parsons and Shils, the pattern variables were basic dichotomies in role orientations. Every actor 'should necessarily make five specific dichotomous choices before any situation can have a determinate meaning' (Parsons and Shils, 1962:76). These five choices, constituting a system, are the only ones possible. They are necessary, habitual, and internalized aspects of the wider value system. Actors have to decide whether to gratify and impulse or practise self-discipline (affect or affective neutrality); private or collective interest will be given priority (self-orientation or collective orientation); social objects, including other actors, will be treated in accordance with general principles or according to their standing vis-à-vis the actor (universalism or particularism) and it has to be decided how far the actions of other individuals are to determine our sense of their worth (ascription or achievement). Finally, actors must decide which characteristics of other actors are deemed to be the most important when interacting with them (functional specificity or functional diffuseness).

At one stage, Parsons proposed that, depending on how some of the pattern variables were grouped, it was possible to envisage four distinct kinds of social structure (Parsons, 1951: 180–200). Firstly, societies with open stratification systems, where status is closely correlated with occupational roles, where universalistic criteria predominates in a system of free exchange, and where individualism and high levels of consumer choice are found, are characterized based on a universalistic-achievement pattern, considered to be favourable to Western industrialization. Secondly, and slightly less favourable (for example, pre-Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia), are classified as universalistic-ascriptive. Here, status is based more on group membership and less on individual achievement, and there is a corresponding decline in social mobility. Thirdly, societies based on a particularist-achievement pattern place little emphasis on generalized ideals. Instead, kinship dominates the occupational system and achievement is reduced to obtaining a position on a status hierarchy. As an example of this kind of society, Parsons cited Classical China. Finally, in a

particularistic-ascriptive system there is no stress, whatsoever, on achievement. All positions are clearly ascribed, and stability and tradition highly valued. For Parsons, 'the Spanish-American seems to be a good example of this social type' (Parsons, 1951:199).

Getting back to the Indian context in particular, M. N. Srinivas is among the first influential scholars to have written extensively on the process of modernisation in the Asian subcontinent (see his major text, *Social Change in Modern India* 1966). For Srinivas, change assumes two major forms: first, the various forms of mobility within the caste system (captured by the concepts of Sanskritization and dominant caste); and second, the wide-ranging process of westernization.

As is well known, Sanskritization refers to a process that 'seems to have occurred throughout Indian history and still continues to occur' (Srinivas 1971a:1), by which 'a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or "other" group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste' (ibid:6) with a view to claiming a higher position in the caste hierarchy. Such claims may, over 'a generation or two' (ibid.), result in some upward mobility, But mobility may also occur without Sanskritization and vice versa. However, the mobility associated with Sanskritization results only in positional change in the system and does not lead to any structural change. That is, a caste moves up, above its neighbours, and another comes down, but all this takes place in an essentially stable hierarchical order. The system itself does not change (Srinivas 1971a:7).

Westernization refers to the 'change introduced into Indian society during British rule and which continues, in some cases with added momentum, in independent India' (Srinivas 1971a:1). Despite being a relatively recent influence, westernization is recognized as 'an inclusive, complex, and many-layered concept' ranging 'from Western technology at one end to the experimental method of modern science and modern historiography at the other', and its different aspects 'sometimes combine to strengthen a particular process, sometimes work at cross-purposes, and are occasionally mutually discrete' (ibid.:53). Though the upper castes have been particularly active in mediating it, all castes are affected by westernization, which brings about 'radical and lasting changes in Indian society and culture' based on a very wide range of causal factors, including 'new technology, institution, knowledge, belief

and values' (ibid.:46). The changes it effects can often be counter-intuitive, as indicated by the fact that it 'has given birth not only to nationalism but also to revivalism, communalism, "casteism", heightened linguistic consciousness, and regionalism' (ibid.:55), or that it is linked to Sanskritization in a 'complex and intricate interrelation' (ibid.:1).

Among various attempts to synthesize different perspectives on modernization in India, the most comprehensive and best known is Yogendra Singh's *Modernization of Indian Tradition*. Singh's ambitious theoretical project is to overcome the 'partial focus on social process' and the 'limitations of the analytical categories used' in previous treatments of change in India, which have rendered them 'narrow and inadequate' (Singh 1973:1). He identifies commonalities in the earlier perspectives and uses them to fashion his own overarching taxonomic synthesis based on 'unilinear evolutionism in the long run' (ibid.:23) which distinguishes: a) the micro and macro contexts in which change-producing processes begin and materialize; b) the internal and external sources of change; and c) the structural and cultural substantive domain within which phenomena are undergoing change. This is said to yield a 'comprehensive as well as theoretically consistent' synthetic theory into which social change in India from the Vedic times to the present can be fitted, including such major epochal changes as the advent of Muslim rule, British colonialism, or Independence.

S.C.Dube's general survey is notable for bringing together the literatures on modernization and development, and also for the fact that it was written well after disillusionment with modernization had set in (Dube 1988). Dube's emphasis is on 'the search for alternative paradigms' (the subtitle of his book), among which he includes 'consientization'¹, 'affermative action', and 'institution building'. His survey is oriented towards the practical issues of social policy, as were his two earlier works relevant here, namely the famous book *Indian Village* (Dube 1955), although it does not explicitly address modernization, and the latter edition collection *India's Changing Village* (Dube 1958), are both significant studies of social change in rural India.

¹Consientization may be understood as a process of cognitive and evaluative transformation, especially in the poor of the world. It enables the individual to contemplate the environment and the human condition and gain an understanding of the forces that are shaping the contemporary world. (Dube, 1988:88)

According to S. C. Dube, modernity may be understood as the common behavioural system historically associated with urban, industrial, literate and participant societies of Western Europe and North America. This system is characterized by a rational and scientific world view, growth and the ever increasing application of science and technology, together with the continuous adaption of the institutions of society to the imperatives of the new world view and the emerging technological ethos. These societies have registered impressive economic growth and continue to do so. (Dube, 1988:17)

Three assumptions are basic to the concept of modernization:

- 1) Inanimate sources of power must be increasingly tapped with a view to solving human problems and ensuring minimum acceptable standards of living, the ceiling of which should rise progressively.
- 2) Towards this end there should be both individual and collective effort. The collective dimension is important because associational capability to operate complex organization is a prerequisite of at least the middle and higher reaches of modernization.
- 3) To create and run complex organizations radical personality change and attendant changes in the social structure and values are necessary.

The objectives of modernization must relate directly to individuals and their families, to their well-being and prosperity. They should be able to visualize, in concrete terms, that working for increasing the national wealth also brings some tangible rewards for themselves and those close to them. Such a realization generates new attitudes to work and imparts a sense of dedication and discipline. With the understanding of the instrumental worth of wealth and its relationship to work, well-defined criteria for the uses of wealth should develop. The realization that wealth can produce more wealth will develop a capacity to put off immediate gratification, encourage saving and promote entrepreneurship. (Dube, 1988: 19-20)

Changes in individual personality and thought processes lead to changes in the social system, its orientations and emphases. These, in turn, facilitate and stimulate further modifications in personality. Following Parson's well known pattern variables, modernization assumes major shift in at least three of these. First, status is determined by achievemental rather than by ascriptive criteria. Second, pattern of interaction are

governed by universalistic rather than particularistic norms. Universalistic considerations, in other words, provide the normative bases for relationships. Thirds, expectations and obligations in the system of role relationships acquire greater specificity and replace the diffuse system that characterized the traditional order. The character of a modern society is rational in cognitive aspects, universalistic in membership aspects, functionally specific in substantive definitional aspects, neutral in affective aspects, individualistic in the goal orientation aspect and hierarchical in stratification aspects. Units of society tend to be more specialized and self-sufficient, there is a combination of centralization and decentralization, and a noticeable growth of centralized media of exchange and markets. (Dube, 1988:20)

Modernized societies operate through institutional structures that are capable of continuously absorbing the changes that are inherent in the process of modernization. The consensual mass society, to which a reference has been made, encompasses a large proportion of the population and assumes its participation in the vital processes of decision-making. A series of complex organizations-specialized and differentiated, relatively self sufficient and functionally specific- undertake to discharge functions in diverse and disparate fields: production of new knowledge and its application to human situations and problems, adapting old knowledge to new situations and problems, diffusion of knowledge and its applications, planning (including mobilization and allocation of resources) and management of change (including handling of obstacles and breakdowns as well as anticipation of trends and likely problems and formulation of strategies to deal with them), crisis resolution and dealing with anomic disturbances, capital formation and making of critical inputs and so forth. The organizational context of life undergoes parallel significant changes. The roles of family and kinship-based organizations get more narrowly defined; government and associated units such as bureaucracy, economic and financial institutions, armed forces and organizations dealing with specific functional areas such as education, health, housing, public transport and recreation, assume increasingly important role. (Dube, 1988:21-21)

Development of modern means of communication (especially railways), urban contacts, modern education, and movements of social reform, such as the Arya Samaj and Gandhi's campaigns against untouchability, are important among the factors affecting the caste system. It is now common to hear sharp criticism of the caste

system in the villages of this area. Representatives of the urban elite working in the rural areas, and even some village leaders, make point of voicing the opinion that caste as a social institution is man made rather than divinely ordained. The system is still characterized by vertical gradation of castes, and by recognizable social distance between the different castes, but the modes through which this hierarchy and distance are expressed have undergone a definite change. (Dube, 1958:27)

Alongside of 'open occupations' and 'caste monopolies', a number of new occupations, such as government service, have grown up during recent decades and these have been accessible to all irrespective of their caste. Even aside from this some of the caste monopolies are breaking down: untouchable castes have started working as masons, and some higher castes have taken to tailoring as a means of gaining a livelihood. Reference has already been made to the practical non-existence of any established regional organizations of individual castes to act with authority for their members, but conventions and conferences of individual castes to discuss social, economic, and political questions are held periodically, and are indeed very fashionable. (Dube, 1958:28)

Influence of the city has brought about adjustment and modification in several spheres, but the need of balancing different extremes in the organization of the community has so far prevented any drastic structural change in village communities. Under the impact of the new socio-economic factors the family ties have weakened, the kin-group has lost some of its characteristic strength and in the system of status evaluation achieved status is competing with traditionally ascribed status; but the society still continues to be caste-structured as caste plays a vital role in its social, economic and ritual organization. Democracy has brought in its wake party organization and election which demand group formation and group allegiance: in several rural areas no new groups have emerged, the loyalties of the people have only been re-affirmed to the pre-existing caste groups. (Dube, 1961:229)

7.3b. Antithesis

Political economy and Marxism would be next in importance from sociological perspective. But their work here is very diverse, ranging from (for example) the historical emphasis of Danial Thorner (1980) and A. R. Desai (1959) on the social background of Indian nationalism, through the economic-oriented overview by Parnab

Bardhan (1984). But the most important Marxist work on the theme of Modernization-theorized, however in terms of the transition from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist mode of production- is that stimulated by the 'mode of production' debate, which tried to ascertain whether and to what extent Indian agrarian relations were capitalist in nature. The decade-long debate produced very sophisticated discussion on the conceptual categorization of 'aberrant' social formations such as India- neither capitalist nor feudal, but with the strong presence of both (Thorner 1982; Patnaik 1990).

Pre-British Indian society almost completely subordinated the individual to the caste, the family and the village panchyat, throughout its centuries-old existence. 'Even at the end of the eighteenth century, the Indian social order was, for the most part, equivalent to the discharge of obligations to the family, to the caste and the village panchyats working on the basis of an economic self-sufficiency in the rural units, and in addition, to the guilds and corporations on the basis of trade and commerce between urban areas'. (Desai, 1959:13)

There were three land revenue systems in colonial India, namely: *Zamindar*, *Mahalwari* and *Ryotwari* system. All the three, landlord-based Zamindari, individual-cultivator-based ryotwari, and village-based mahalwari land tenure system superseded the traditional land rights of the village community and a legally protected landholding class was created. The stability of tenure, rise in the price of agricultural produce and the social status attached to land ownership increased the fondness for land investment. As a form of private property land became increasingly a saleable commodity and a regular land market effectively took shape (Stoke 1978: 24).

The agricultural policy was designed to feed Britain's industry. The demand for raw materials, as demanded in England following the Industrial Revolution, had severe impact on village economy. Emphasis was given on the cultivation of commercial crops like cotton and sugarcane. The colonialism marked the beginning of a most crucial phase in the process of commercialisation of agriculture. While one group of economic historians argued that the commercialisation of agriculture was a direct consequence of the colonial policy of extraction of high revenue from agriculture and converting India into a producer and supplier for British trade and industry, the other group attributes it to the 'profit motive' of the Indian peasants, in conformity with the

standard economic theory of the responsiveness of the supplier. (Mohanty, 2012:xxxiii)

As a result of extensive cultivation of commercial crops, the area under food grains and its output came down and this coupled with growing population led to widespread and recurring famines (Kumar 1983). Besides, the rise in the wages of the agricultural labourer did not keep in pace with the increased cost of food grains (Dhanagare 1983:38). The greater the intensity of crop failure, the higher was the price of foodgrains and lower wage rates. As a result, agricultural labourers and marginal farmers were affected severely. On the other hand, the situation provided the privileged large landowners a congenial base for their prosperity as they sold their surplus foodgrains at a higher price and cultivated their land by employing the cheap labour force. The commercialisation of agriculture along with the demand for higher land revenue expanded the need for working funds, as a result of which the needy peasants naturally turned to the money-lenders, who exploited him by charging exorbitant interest rates on loans and thus pocketed the vast economic surplus generated in the countryside (Dhanagare 1983:37). While the poor peasants borrowed money, keeping their land in mortgage, the labourers took loan against their future commitment of labour. The main change in the rural social structure under the British impact, as noted by Moore (1967:368), was an increase in the size of the rural proletariat.

It was, however, after 1870 that large-scale political and economic discontent developed culminating in the rise of the premier political organization of the Indian nation, the Indian National Congress established in 1885. In the post-Mutiny period, the discontent of the agrarian population began to grow steadily due to their progressive impoverishment under the British rule. The increasing burden of land revenue and rents was intensely felt by the peasant population. The crippling of handicraft and artisan industries had reached serious dimensions by 1870 resulting in a disastrous over-pressure on agriculture. The agricultural depression of 1870 seriously affected the farmers and led to an alarming growth of indebtedness among them. A number of disastrous famines broke out between 1867 and 1880. The famine of 1877 was exceptionally severe affecting an area of '200,000 square miles and a population of thirty millions', in Bombay, Madras and other parts of the country. (Thompson and Garratt, 1935:492)

The group of famines which occurred between 1865 and 1880 are important, not only for the suffering and loss of life involved, but because they happened at a transitional period when India was gradually changing on to a cash basis...most ryots were forced to go to their moneylenders, and the famine following the slump meant the final degradation and enslavement of the producer. (Ibid., p. 493)

The discontent of the peasantry born of the economic distress broke out in the form of a number of peasant riots, the Deccan Peasant Rising of 1875 being the most serious among them. The government recognized the gravity of the situation and appointed the Deccan Rayots Commission in the same year to investigate into the whole agrarian situation. Due to the havoc worked by frequently occurring famines, it also appointed the Famine Commission of 1878. (Desai, 1959:291)

The shortage of food in 1946 was partly the construction of extensive railway network connected the rural economy with the wider economy both at the level of product as well as labour and the erstwhile isolated segments of rural India came under the net of British free trade. Unlike Western Europe and America, where railway served as catalyst of the industrial revolutions, in India they served as the catalyst of complete colonisation (Habib 1995). The exports of agricultural goods increased and the cultivation of cash crops became widespread. The agricultural produce of the deep interior was drawn into the world market. As observed by Thorner and Thorner (1962/2005:69), 'wheat poured out of the Punjab, cotton out of Bombay, and jute out of Bengal. As commercial agriculture and money economy spread, the older practices associated with self-subsisting economy declined.' The chain of merchants-cum-financiers from urban centres reached up to the village level and devised numerous means to siphon the agricultural produce in the rural areas. The same railroads which carried away the commercial crops brought back machine-made industrial products to the rural areas (Thorner and Thorner 1962/2005:70). Silk goods, wool manufactures and especially the heavier products of British industry such as metal manufactures and appliances and tools began to be imported in large quantities which in turn destroyed a large section of native handicrafts (Moore 1967:347).

On the whole, the cumulative consequence of land revenue administration, land tenures, cropping pattern and the consequent infrastructure and institutional arrangement of the British government resulted in the commoditisation of land and

labour. As observed by Scott (1976), the two major transformations occurred during this colonial period were the imposition of capitalism and the development of modern state under colonialism. The first disrupted the agrarian order by transforming land and labour into commodities for sale, the second by enforcing the imposition of market economy and by laying new conditions on peasant income.

After independence, the agrarian society entered into a new phase of socio-economic order under the impact of development planning. The main thrust of agricultural planning was to create a progressive and egalitarian rural society on the one hand and to maximise agricultural production in the other. As necessitated by the peasant struggle, land reform measures became the foremost priority of the government (Radhakrishna 1989:268). Each state without exception formulated measures for abolition of intermediaries, tenancy reforms, fixation of ceiling laws and redistribution of ceiling surplus land, protection and prevention of land from scheduled caste and tribes to non-scheduled groups, etc. It is rightly commented that in the post-independence period India was subjected to the largest body of land reform legislation ever to have been passed in so short a period in any country (Thorner 1956:14). The taking over of the estates of Zamindars and absentee landlords was carried out on the basis of payment of compensation to the landlords by the tenants before they could secure ownership rights to the land they were tilling. This constituted a basic limitation on the possibility of transfer of land from non-cultivating to cultivating classes. Only those rich tenants who could pay the compensation could acquire ownership rights. The poorer sections of cultivating tenants, who could not afford to pay compensation, were either forced to borrow money for acquiring ownership or were denied ownership. At the same time, they lost tenurial security and became non-owning proletariat or back-door tenants, operating under conditions of increasing insecurity, various obligations and subordination to the proprietors of the land they rented. The measures also created host of problems around title-deeds, amount of compensation, transfer of ownership, type and quality of land to be retained by landowners for 'personal' cultivation, etc. They also generated a process of poorer tenants and sub-tenants being hurled into the bottomless pit of proletarianization, and, in the context of over-pressure on agriculture and lack of alternative occupations, being forced to undertake new kinds of bonded labour rooted, not in the feudal form of subsistence

production, but in the emerging profit oriented market and monetized commodity production a ----with the growing capitalist economy in India. (Desai, 1986:21-22)

Most studies on the impact of land reforms and land legislation have drawn attention to this regrouping of class, very small number of very large landowners (absentee zamindar, absentee money-lenders, and the top layers of the landlords) has been dispossessed with payment of compensation. A class relatively smaller landlords, rich farmers emerging out of rich—sections of the tenants, and a small section of upper-middle peasants, who also became traders and creditors, has emerged, thus broadening the base of the rural proprietary classes actively connected with agriculture. On the other hand, a vast number of tenants and small farmers have been transformed into either proprietors of uneconomic holdings, becoming more and more dependent on the richer classes as time passes and ultimately being forced to lease their land to them.

For D. P. Mukerji the history of India was not the history of her particular form of class struggle because she had experienced none worth the name. The place of philosophy and religion was dominant in his history, and it was fundamentally a long-drawn exercise in cultural synthesis. For him, “Indian history was Indian culture” (Mukerji, 1958: 123). India’s recent woes, namely, hatred and partition, had been the result of arrested assimilation of Islamic values (ibid.: 163); he believed that history halts until it is pushed (ibid.: 39).

The national movement had generated much moral fervour but D. P. Mukerji complained, it had been anti-intellectual. Not only had there been much unthinking borrowing from the west, there had also emerged a hiatus between theory and practice as a result of which thought had become impoverished and action ineffectual. Given his concern for intellectual and artistic creativity, it is not surprising that he should have concluded: “politics ruined our culture” (Mukerji, 1958: 190).

What was worse, there were no signs of this schism being healed in the years immediately after independence. When planning arrived as state policy in the early 1950s, D. P. Mukerji expressed his concern, for instance, in an important 1953 paper on ‘Man and Plan in India’ (1958: 30-76), that a clear concept of the new man to formulate a negative judgment about the endeavours to build a new India, and also diagnosed the cause of the rampant intellectual sloth. He said in 1955: “I have seen how our progressive groups have failed in the field of intellect, and hence also in

economic and political action, chiefly on account of their ignorance of and unrootedness in India's social reality" (Mukerji, 1958: 240).

The issue at stake was India's modernization. D. P. Mukerji's essential stand on this was that there could not be genuine modernization through imitation. A people could not abandon their own cultural heritage and yet succeeded in internalizing the historical experience of other peoples; they could only be ready to be taken over. He feared cultural imperialisms more than any other.

The only valid approach, according to him, was that which characterized the efforts of men like Ram Mohan Roy and Rabindranath Tagore, who tried to make "the main currents of western thought and action ... run through the Indian bed to remove its choking weeds in order that the ancient stream might flow" (Mukerji, 1958: 33).

D. P. Mukerji formulated this view of the dialectics between tradition and modernity several years before independence, in his study of Tagore published in 1943. D. P. Mukerji views the nature and dynamics of modernization. It emerges as a historical process which is at once an expansion, an elevation, a deepening and revitalization – in short, a larger investment – of traditional values and cultural patterns, and not a total departure from them, resulting from the interplay of the traditional and the modern.

From this perspective, tradition is a condition of rather than obstacle to modernization; it gives us the freedom to choose between alternatives and evolve a cultural pattern which cannot but be a synthesis of the old and the new. New values and institutions must have a soil in which to take root and from which to imbibe character. Modernity must, therefore, be defined in relation to and not in denial of tradition. (Mukerji, 1958: 39-40)

Pranab Bardhan's (1984) book on *Indian political economy* attempts to explain the factors leading to the slow growth of India's national output over the past 2 decades and to the continued widespread poverty. The percentage of India's population below the poverty level has remained about the same since 1960, which means that the absolute numbers below that line have increased greatly. The very high rates of infant mortality and the continued low levels of literacy remain as major indicators of that poverty. Even with the Green Revolution, the overall growth rate of value added in agriculture has changed very little (and that downward) when the earlier period, 1950-

65, is compared with the period 1967-82. He considers that the public investment in agriculture and its effective management are the crucial variables for agricultural growth, in this respect disagreeing with both the "liberal" emphasis on correct price policy and the "radical" emphasis on further land reform as the major variable for accelerated agricultural growth.

There are conflicts of interests among these groups-the rich farmers pay little or no direct taxes and want and get higher prices for their products from the farm; the privately employed urban middle classes want and get lower prices of farm products in the city, as well as greater subsidies/protection for industries that they own or in which they work; the urban professional classes want and get more jobs at higher salaries, with greater security in the bureaucracy. The conflicting demands of those three groups and the need to compromise those demands within limited public revenues have led to a waste of government resources on such current nonproductive expenditures as subsidies for agriculture and industry and a growing and higher-salaried bureaucracy. "The Indian public economy has become an elaborate network of patronage and subsidies" (Bardhan, 1984:65) characterized by corruption and inefficiency, leading to the slow rates of output growth noted earlier.

The high growth rate of recent years has brought about a significant rise in inequality in a country where the disparities in the distribution of land, education and social status were already high. At a time when, in spite of a great deal of government expenditure on anti-poverty programmes, the social safety net is still very patchy in largely informal and rural society (and in remote areas often completely absent), the exigencies of ruthless market competition raise the level of anxiety for workers and peasants. Lack of education gives them very little flexibility in adapting to rapid change in technology and markets. (Even among western countries, resistance to global market competition is stronger among worker in the US, where the social safety net is weaker, than in the contrasting case of the social democracies of Germany or Scandinavia.) National Election Studies data have shown that the majority of a large sample of respondents believes that reforms help mainly or only the rich. Accordingly, at election time, most political parties play down any commitment to reforms. A ruling party that introduces some reforms is quick to block them when in opposition. In Indian politics, inequality often leads to a kind of reactive, short-term populism which ultimately hurts both capitalist growth and pro-poor investment. (Bradhan, 2015:55)

Capitalism in both rich and poor countries has been afflicted by problems of rising inequality and environmental degradation. Globalisation has increased anxiety everywhere about job security. This underlines the value of social safety nets- and retraining facilities, portable health insurance and environmental safeguards- in coping with adjustments to market competition. The considerable opposition to globalisation, dismissed by most economists as populism, may be more symptom of widespread disenchantment with the libertarian capitalism propagated since the Thatcher- Regan era. (Bradhan, 2015:37-38)

Frank's book *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* is concerned to establish a world history view of the period from the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth and, in the process, to undermine Eurocentric social theory and economic history. The underlying approach advocated by Frank is that 'we need a holistic global world perspective to grasp the past, present, and future history of the world and of any part of it' (Frank, 1998:29). He goes on to claim that 'there was a single world economy with a worldwide division of labor and multilateral trade from 1500 onward' (Frank, 1998:52) and that within 'that single world economy and system, "the Decline of the East" and "the Rise of the West" must have been related' (Frank, 1998:297). The traditional emphasis on European exceptionalism is derided as Eurocentric ideology which suffers from 'the misplaced concreteness of looking for the explanandum with ... a microscope but only under the European street light' (Frank, 1998:327).

For Frank, the heart of the world's economy has been Asia, richer and busier than the rest of the world. Within Asia, the leaders have been China, whose huge population testified to the productivity and wealth of the society, and India, home of the world's largest cotton manufacture. Both countries were great exporters of their wares, accumulating in the process huge stocks of precious metals from buyers who could not pay with their own products for all that they wanted.

To be sure, the rise of Europe to competitive parity and then superiority spoils this picture. Indeed, Europe comes in as the skunk at the Asian picnic. Europe was poor and backward. It had nothing it could sell to the vastly superior Asians. How did Europe do it, then? Frank's answer: Europe did it largely by extracting the treasure of the New World (actually, by forcing labor to do the extracting) and using it to buy cottons, silks, porcelains, and other Asian products. The income derived from slave

labor on colonial plantations also helped. These imports from Asia yielded huge profits; they also saved Europe the cost of substitutes. Even so, Europe was a poor relation. The Europeans could do no better than buy themselves a third-class seat (Frank, 1998:277) on the Asian economic train.

Frank cites Smith, who also recognized Asia as being economically far more advanced and richer than Europe. "The improvements in agriculture and manufactures seem likewise to have been of very great antiquity in the provinces of Bengal in the East Indies, and in some of the eastern provinces of China. . . Even those three countries [China, Egypt, and Indostan], the wealthiest, according to all accounts, that ever were in the world, are chiefly renowned for their superiority in agriculture and manufactures. . . . [Now, in 1776] China is a much richer country than any part of Europe" (Smith [1776]1937: 20, 348, 169).

Moreover, Smith also understood how the poor Europeans were able to use their new money and increased wealth to buy themselves tickets on the Asian train. Continuing with the third point in his discussion excerpted above, Smith writes:

“Thirdly, the East Indies [Asia] is another market for the produce of the silver mines of America, and a market which, from the time of the discovery of those mines, has been continually taking off a greater and greater quantity of silver. Upon all these accounts, the precious metals are a commodity which it always has been, and still continues to be, extremely advantageous to carry from Europe to India. There is scarce any commodity which brings a better price there [and it is even more advantageous to carry silver to China]. . The silver of the new continent seems in this manner to be one of the principal commodities by which the commerce between the two extremities of the old one is carried on, and it is by means of it, in great measure, that those distant parts of the world are connected with one another The trade to the East Indies, by opening a market to the commodities of Europe, or, what comes to the same thing, the gold and silver which is purchased with those commodities, must necessarily tend to increase the annual production of European commodities. . . Europe, instead of being the manufacturers and carriers for but a small part of the world.... have now [1776] become the manufacturers for the numerous and thriving cultivators of America, and the carriers, and in some respect the manufacturers too, for

almost all the different nations of Asia and America.” (Smith [1776]1937: 206, 207, 417, 591)

The Asian market for the Europeans was the same thing as silver, as Smith remarked, for two related reasons: One is that silver was their only means of payment. The other is that therefore the Europeans' main business was the production and trade of silver as a commodity itself. That was the main source of the profits Europeans derived from their trade both within Asia and between Asia and Europe. (Frank: 1998: 280)

Precisely that is also the explanation of Blaut (1977, 1992, 1993a), who in all these regards seems to be the modern alter ego of Adam Smith. Both understand and explain the first two answers to the question of how the poor Europeans managed access to the thriving Asian market: (1) they used their American money, and (2) they used the profits of both their production/imports from and their exports to America and Africa, and their investment of the proceeds of all of these in Europe itself.

However, the third answer alluded to above is that Europeans also used both the American silver money and their profits to buy into the wealth of Asia itself. As Smith noted, and all the evidence reviewed above shows, Europe used its commodities, or what comes to the same thing, the only commodities it could sell in Asia, that is its American gold and silver, to buy Asian products. Moreover, as also documented above, Europe used its silver purchasing power to muscle in on the intra-Asian trade, which the Europeans called "country trade." As noted above, it was the silver- and gold-trade itself that was really the mainstay of the European companies. (Frank, 1998:281)

Without that silver-and, secondarily, without the division of labor and profits it generated in Europe itself-the Europeans would not have had a leg, or even a single toe, to stand on with which to compete in the Asian market. Only their American money, and not any "exceptional" European "qualities," which, as Smith realized even in 1776, had not been even remotely up to Asian standards, permitted the Europeans to buy their ticket on the Asian economic train and/or to take a third class seat on it. That is looking at this European "business" in Asia from the demand side. The concomitant supply side, emphasized by Pomeranz (1997), is of course that their American money permitted the Europeans to buy real goods, produced with real labor and resources in Asia. These goods not only increased consumption and investment beyond what it

otherwise could and would have been in Europe; they also diminished the pressure on resources in Europe itself. (Frank,1998:282)

The question remains, however, why and how Western Europeans and Americans then bested the Asians at their own game through recourse to the technological advances of the industrial revolution. How and why were these made then and there? A fully satisfactory answer may be still beyond us-but certainly no more than it is beyond all the erroneous ideological Eurocentric answers that others from Marx to Weber and their latter-day followers have proffered. A world economic analysis can certainly and easily do better than that even with the still. limited elements, hypotheses, and evidence offered in an only very preliminary way below. (Frank, 1998: 285-286)

Technological progress through the invention and application of labor-saving machinery has frequently been attributed to the profitability of the same in a high-wage economy, particularly in North America. High wages create an incentive to reduce costs of production. by replacing this high-wage labor with labor-saving machinery. And wages in North America were relatively high from early on, as so many observers including Marx pointed out, because the population/land: resource ratio was low and the expanding frontier offered an escape from low-wage drudgery. Therefore, it has been argued that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the incentive to invent, innovate, and use labor-saving machinery increasingly shifted across the Atlantic from Europe to America-in the world market competition to reduce costs of production and maintain or gain market share. (Frank, 1998:286)

Global asymmetry of demand, established over two centuries ago, continues: the world's rich countries which account for over 80% of global income although they have hardly 16% of world population, cannot produce in their own countries anything but a small fraction of the highly diversified consumption basket on which their populations have come to depend, and they want access to our more productive, bio-diverse but limited lands on the one hand, and on the other hand access to our markets for the few primary goods they can succeed in producing (notably food and feed grains), and for their manufactures. Their high living standards are crucially dependent on the physical availability of our products. A typical Northern supermarket in W. Europe or USA carries on average 12,000 items of food alone in raw and processed form (Friedman 1990) and at least 60-70 percent of the items have a wholly or partly

tropical to subtropical import content. If these goods were to disappear from the supermarket shelves the standard of life of Northern populations would plunge to a near medieval, that prevalent three hundred year ago.

The solution developed under colonial and imperial systems where there was direct political control was simple: first, protect metropolitan industry through trade barriers to the inflow of cheaper manufactures based on ample supply of raw materials from countries like ours; second, promote in the colonies the export of the raw materials, wage goods and luxuries required for running metropolitan industries and sustaining an improving standard of life; third, keep the colonial market completely open to the flooding in of manufactures from the metropolis; and fourth, monopolize invisible incomes (at that time, from shipping and financial services). This remains the basic agenda of the advanced imperialist countries today as well, although the economic mechanism has changed to debt-conditional policies and a trade discipline operating through international organizations (while invisible incomes have changed to modern forms of financial and communication services, the electronic entertainment industry, and returns to research in pirated bio-resources). Advanced countries continue to protect their own producers, continue to demand that we export tropical primary products or at most simple labour intensive manufactures and continue to seek market access for their manufactures, their surplus temperate crops and continue to try to monopolise invisible incomes. (Patnaik, 2008: 25-26)

As Britain's first colony, from the mid-18th century Ireland was obliged to export grain and livestock products to an increasingly food-deficit Britain, at the expense of the local population's own consumption. After the ruthless 17th century Williamite conquest the local Irish had been turned into rack-rented tenants of English settler landlords. These Irish tenants, who were "pauperized beyond belief" (Hobsbawn, 1969:96), were obliged to pay high rents to their English landlords, while they themselves lived on cheaper potatoes, introduced from the New World and developed as a staple food crops for the labouring poor. In the great 1846-7 potato blight famine one million Irish died out of the 8 million total populations. (Patnaik, 2008: 26-27)

Regarding India, Habib (1963a: 351) explains how "the Mughal Empire had been its own grave-digger." Its governing class got much of its great wealth through the expropriation of the surplus produced by the peasantry. Habib (1963a: 320) quotes two

contemporaries who observed that seldom if ever had the contrast been greater between "the rich in their great superfluity and the utter subjection and poverty of the common people" and "the country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the enormous charges required to maintain the splendour of a numerous court, and to pay a large army for keeping the people in subjection." That must have reduced income and effective domestic mass demand and made for a low supply price of wage labor. Indeed, Habib (1963a: 324--9) testifies both to increasing exploitation over time of the peasants and to their resulting flight from the land, which increased the urban and other supply of labor, presumably at lower wages. This condition also contributed importantly to the downfall of the Mughals and their replacement by the Marahatas, who not only continued but even increased the exploitation of the peasantry. Ali (1975) also cites Habib as arguing precisely that there was intensified exploitation in agriculture and that this led to both the peasant and zamindar rebellion. (Increased earning opportunities would also increase exploitation of workers in British industry during the industrial revolution, as Friedrich Engels and Eric Hobsbawm later noted).

Domestic textile production in India and exports from its previously most productive are declined after 1760 and suffered tremendously in particular through "The Rape of Bengal" and the famine of 1770, which left villages littered with the whitening bones of their inhabitants, as Marx put it. However, textile production had apparently already begun to decline from 1730 onward (Frank 1998) and continued to do so at the turn of the nineteenth century. Moreover, urbanization and commercialization also declined. Nonetheless, it would take another seven decades until the 1830s for Britain to be able to establish colonial control over the rest of the Indian subcontinent. (Frank, 2014:106)

Whatever that drain may have been, it is established beyond doubt that it represented a historic turnaround in British-Indian and indeed worldwide relation. One of Clive's lieutenants, Scrafton, had already reported in 1763 that the company and its servants "have been enabled to carry the whole trade of India (China excepted) for three years together, without sending out one ounce of bullion". Nor did the British pay for Indian goods with their own merchandise during this period, as is evident from the important and export figures quoted above. Equally established is that British policy led to the Bengal famine of 1770 in which an estimated 10 million people or one-third of the population died and one-third of the cultivated land reverted to jungle. (Frank, 2014: 109).

The Cambridge History of India (CEHI) reviews the debate, beginning with indications of decline well before Plassey in 1757, as did ReOrient (1998); then, however, it says that “cotton textiles, the major manufacturing industry, flourished despite the negative consequences of the Company’s monopoly.... [and]... the real decline in Bengal’s economy was largely a post-Plassey and even post- 1813 phenomenon.” In Bengal, sugar “unaffected,” as were Patna and Benares, and of course so was most of India that was not yet under EIC rule. Indeed, the CEHI claims that other areas saw the emergence of new centers of trade and industry and

“All-in-all the evidence does not confirm a dismal picture of economic ruin throughout the sub-continent nor even suggest that things were significantly different from earlier times for the greater part of the population... the traditional system of rural manufactures was evidently not in decline, it co-existed... catering to an extensive (domestic) market.” (Raychaudhuri, 1983:7)

Since the publication of Volume 2 of the CEHI in 1983, ever more revisionist history of India is now challenging the extent to which “the Decline” of and “Drain” from India damaged its economy and society. Several authors, for example, Roy (1999), argue that artisan production for the domestic market survived the competition of British industrial goods and by adapting was able to continue to supply most of the domestic market. On the other, as Wong (1997) observes, allowing the British to manipulate production in India would once again introduce political factors and still not include any goods produced in Europe, but rather continue to take advantage of production in Asia itself.

In the preface to the first volume of his Economic History of India, R. C. Dutt also made this point quite distinctly. After protesting that ‘taxation raised by a king, says the Indian poet, is like the moisture of the earth sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilising rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilising rain largely on other lands not on India’, he averred that this had not happened even under the worst of Afgan and Mughal emperors. On the other hand, he claimed, ‘the gorgeous palaces and monuments they built, as well as the luxuries and displays in which they indulged, fed and encouraged the manufacturers and artisans of India’. (Dutt, 1905: xi-xii)

Dadabhai Naoroji extended the definition of the drain and complained against even that part of the foreigners' salaries and incomes which they spent within India. What foreigners consumed in India, he claimed, caused a partial loss to the people of India because it represented the 'eating up' of goods and services which Indians would have otherwise consumed. (Naoroji, 1906: 286-7)

R. C. Dutt, who was a very vocal advocate of both the drain theory and the theory that the heavy land revenue impoverished the country, made an attempt to establish a direct relationship between these two theories and to show that the drain was mainly paid out of land revenue and therefore represented the impoverishment of the peasantry. Financially, he remarked, the drain was met directly from the public revenues, whose largest constituent was land revenue, and, economically, the drain had to take the form of excess exports. The financial and the economic aspects of the drain got related in the following manner: cultivators had to sell a large part of their produce to pay land revenue or rent, this produce was exported because the country had to create the requisite export surplus and because the agricultural products exported from the village by the harsh land revenue system had to be marketed. Thus through the mechanism of land revenue the peasant was forced both to pay for the drain and to provide the agricultural products through which it was remitted abroad. The result was that he was, on the one hand, impoverished by the heavy and harsh land revenue and, on the other, starved of food grains which he was compelled to sell and the country to export because of the dual pressure of land revenue and the drain. (Dutt, 1905: xiv, 348-49, 534-536)

Bipan Chandra and others argue that commercialisation of agriculture in colonial India facilitated the extraction of surplus from the peasantry (through land revenue demand in cash) and the transfer of this surplus from India to Britain by bringing agricultural produce to the export market. The 'unrequited' export surplus being the size of the surplus extraction or 'drain' from India. (Bipan, 2007: 508)

The typical features that emerged in Indian agriculture under colonialism put an unbearable burden on the bulk of the Indian peasantry. First, the colonial state made a very high tax demand on agriculture. In the early colonial period the state made permanent settlements with zamindars (the zamindari or Permanent Settlement) fixing the land revenue rates at a very high level. Second, under colonialism Indian

agriculture experienced the growth of landlordism and rack renting on a very wide scale. In the zamindari areas absentee landlordism and subinfeudation was rampant. So high were the rents and other exactions from the peasant that the gap between what was collected from the peasant and the land revenue paid to the state was in some areas able to sustain scores of layers of intermediaries between the state and the direct cultivator. Third major feature of colonial agriculture: extreme indebtedness of the peasantry. Bonded labour or debt bondage became a common feature in large parts of the country. The overwhelming bulk of the peasants' debt was contracted at usurious rates from private moneylenders. (Bipin, 2007: 509-512)

Given the above conditions where the bulk of the Indian peasantry was drained of any resources, living close to or below subsistence level, and where the upper sections of rural society found rent and usury more profitable than capitalist agriculture as a source of income, very little agricultural investment and improvement actually took place. The colonial state too did not put back a fraction of what it extorted from agriculture. Indian agriculture therefore remained at a very backward level. Nearly 97 per cent of the ploughs used in India as late as 1951 were still wooden ploughs; only 3 percent were iron plough. Use of improved seed, artificial fertilizers, etc. remained extremely low and scanty. (Bipan, 2007: 512)

The challenge before the independent regime in 1947 was to try to reverse the long-term distortions in Indian agriculture which had emerged during the colonial period and to put Indian agriculture on a high-growth path. A multi-pronged attempt was made to reduce the various kinds of legal and illegal burdens on the peasant producers, remove the large 'semi-feudal' intermediaries, improve the terms of tenancy, provide cheap credit, step up investment in agriculture and necessary infrastructure, and generate scientific agricultural research so on.

In the early stages of the Green Revolution, particularly the early 1970s, a considerable opinion emerged that the Green Revolution was leading to class polarization in the countryside. It was argued that rich peasants and capitalist farmers were getting strengthened partly at the expense of the small peasants, tenants, etc., who, unable to access the modern inputs, were being pushed into the rank of the landless, that is, a process of de-peasantization was in progress. Further, the mechanization of agriculture was displacing labour, leading to increasing unemployment and a fall in wages of

agricultural labour. (Bipan, 2007:577) The research of scholars like G. S. Bhalla (1997) show that instead of promoting further inequality, the Green Revolution has over time actually spread to large parts of the country bringing prosperity to these regions.

The Green Revolution, therefore, has not spawned any 'Red Revolution' in the countryside. Peasant protest and even peasant militancy has been on the rise but then these are not movements of the lowest strata demanding a systemic overthrow but of small medium and large peasants who are beneficiaries of the system and want more via higher prices for their produce and lower input costs through state subsidy. In fact, over the years the political clout of these sections has increased and the governments of the day have felt compelled, to a greater or lesser degree, to make concessions to them, which were often not economically viable. Most states, for example, provide electrical power for agricultural purposes at prices far below the cost of production, with some states like Punjab providing it free. Such developments have in the long run adversely affected the overall health of the Indian economy including that of agriculture. (Bipan, 2007:582)

A major and pressing issue that has surfaced in recent years relates to the question of environmental degradation and the long term sustainability of agricultural growth. The negative environmental impact of excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, as well as the plateauing of the growth rates in areas using such technology over long period, such as Punjab, has been well-documented. The excessive withdrawal of groundwater for irrigation, which is taking place in many Green Revolution areas without adequate recharging of the subsoil aquifers, is also environmentally unsustainable. However, there are no easy answers to this problem.

7.3c.Synthesis

Tyagore new society was basically rural, self-growing, decentralised and cooperative. He believed that in the process of self-growth India would easily take in all the communities that lived in India, and the universe (*Visva*) too. He saw no basic difficulty in a liberated and dynamic India's assimilating western culture. For him neither science nor technology, neither secularism nor democracy was an indigestible substance. He wanted all of them to come, but not in the protean shape of power. His

politics were social. People called his ideas utopian, but he built no literary utopia. (Mukerji, 1958:34-35)

It is this which abolishes all other distinctions between him and Gandhi. Both knew that India lives in the villages, both wanted villages to be the growth-cones of India, both believed in decentralised economy, and both wanted self-mastery, 'self-kingdom' (Swaraj) before exchange took place. Negatively, too, they were similar- they both failed to point out the way of absorbing the new social forces which the west had released through science and its application to large-scale production. Tagore saw them as power uncontrolled by social sense and morality, while Gandhiji saw them as evil, even when he considered some machines as necessary. To the sociologist the mutual admiration of the two is not strange; nor is the fact that Tagore uncannily forecast the character and technique of Gandhi in *Vairagee Dhananjaya* amazing. (Mukerji, 1958:35)

Let us begin with technology, for technology is the key to the understanding of modern man and his civilization- it represents not only his most valued achievement, but also his highest aspirations for a better social order. Prof. Mukerji's view on this are contained in a number of essays in the present collection, but "Mahatma Gandhi's view on Machines and Technology" and "Man and Plan in India" are especially useful in this connection. From Prof. Mukerji's extraordinarily able survey, which is a rare combination of historical precision and penetrating analysis- it is clear that there are two aspects of Mahatma Gandhi's opposition to a technological civilization. In the first place, he was convinced that the increasing and large-scale use of machinery was an engine of exploitation. And, in the second place, he was opposed to technology because it represented the negation of normal social order, which in Gandhiji's view, was one based on the principle of wantlessness, nonpossessiveness. It should not be difficult to see that Gandhiji's argument from exploitation is really an aspect of his theory of *Aparigraha* Nonetheless a whole school of thought denies this. Marxist are utterly opposed to exploitation; their most fundamental objection against the capitalist system is that it is based on nearly the worst form of exploitation; and their main argument for revolution is the promise that the communist social order will abolish forever all exploitation. But the Marxist rejects that spiritual norm of non possessiveness which is based on wantlessness. Nor would he accept the Gandhian code of social conduct founded on self-control and prayer. (Saran, 1965: 121)

Prof. Mukerji is quite clear that Gandhiji's basic objection to technology is not the possibility of its misuse, but its incompatibility with a social system worthy of human beings. Whatever place Gandhiji allowed to machines was nothing more than a concession to the realities of the situation and the imperfections of human nature- in the last analysis a deviation from the norm. As Prof. Mukerji put it, "despite many concessions to the proper use of machines, his values were definitely opposed to those that make for technological civilization and are made by it". (Saran, 1965: 121-122)

It is clear from this that logically Gandhiji's views on technology ultimately lead to a total rejection of western civilization. It is true that Mahatma Gandhi could not be as uncompromising and absolute in his attitude to technology as logic would demand. That modern India, too, has rejected Mahatma Gandhi's view is true, but not much relevant. What is important is the belief that a non-exploitative social order and a high degree of technological progress can be and ought to be combined. (Saran, 1965:122)

The Gandhian theory of development can be called the *stage of theory of development or the evolutionary theory of development*. Gandhi conceived of three distinct stages of development. The three distinct stages of development are as follows: the stage of rural development (reformation of the sector through constructive programs), development under swaraj, and sarvodaya (development for all). In each one of these stages, the purpose and aim of development differed. For instances, in the first stage, the aim was to reconstruct the villages through the development of village industries and handicrafts (*khadi*) to generate more employment and income and to reduce the level of overall poverty. The basic idea was to make villages self-sufficient and self-reliant. Gandhi wanted self-reliance in everything. In the second stage of development, it would be necessary to eliminate the colonial structure and attain swaraj. This stage also aimed at eliminating the city-village dichotomy through decentralization. The workers would own the means of production in this stage. In the last stage, there would be sarvodaya for benefits of all classes of people; there basic physical needs would be provided for, and there would be enough scope for the development of body, mind and spirit. Gandhi's development paradigm follows the principle of balanced development. It would be a stage of holistic balanced development. Note however that the stages cannot be segregated clearly in apple-pie order; there may be possible overlapping of some stages. (Ghosh, 2007:212-213)

In the Gandhian scheme of development, “there is no room for machines that displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hand”. Gandhi is, however, in favour of those machines that are helpful to the workers for their work. What he did not like was the craze for machinery, as Gandhi said: “I hold that the machinery method is harmful when the same thing can be done easily by millions of hands not otherwise occupied”. (Ghosh, 2007:222)

Indian handicrafts were destroyed by the use of machinery. Machinery makes labour slave. It produces horrible working conditions. It displaces human labor and increases unemployment. Gandhi states that it is criminal to displace labor by the introduction of power-driven machinery. It is wrong to think that machinery save labor. Machinery improves the lot of a few persons only but it deteriorates the conditions of the common people who are unemployed and exploited. Small scale family industries help in increase employment and output more than the large-scale industries do. The employment differences between these two types of industries show that large-scale industries have the possibility of generating more unemployment. Gandhi was perhaps influenced by the better labor absorptive power of cottage and village industries. This thinking was rational in the perspective of the existence of a large number of surplus labor in India (Ghosh, 1988:322-323). But unfortunately, postcolonial planner including Jawaharlal Nehru rejected the endogenous development alternatives proposed by Gandhi, and depended on the western model of capital intensive technology (Mehmet, 2001:211)

The problem of the daily supply of basic necessities of life to everyone was indeed a genuine problem in Gandhi’s India. He requested business people to not undertake speculative activities in food grains and suggested a number of measures for solving the food problem in the country, such as the extension of cultivation, reduction in the demand for food, removal of black-marketing, spread of irrigation facilities, and so on. In 1947, Gandhi requested the government to introduce decontrol on food grains. He was of the opinion that controls on food grains would lead to corruption and inflation. Gandhi knew very well that one of the serious causes of food problems in India was its rapidly growing population. He advised the natural way of controlling population through self-control or *brahmacharya*. He did not advocate the artificial method of birth control through the use of contraceptives. However, according to him, up until 1947, India was not overpopulated, because there was the possibility of increasing the

food supply of the growing population. The artificial scarcity of food grain more often than not was created by unscrupulous business people with a view to amassing more wealth by taking advantage of general economic instability and uncertainty in the country. (Ghosh, 2007:16)

The development of handicrafts and swadeshi (indigenous) goods could lead to a number of advantages. These included several main benefits. First, these industries involve a short fruition lag or gestation period. Second, Gandhi's India contained a huge amount of surplus labor with zero opportunity cost (labor of zero value). The shifting of surplus labor to more productive occupations provided by village industries did not entail any opportunity cost. The development of village of village industries would decrease the dependency on the urban sector and its exploitation. Third, Gandhi said that the immediate advantage of the development of these industries is that these would bring about self-sufficiency and a self-reliant method of development. Finally, development through the spirit of swadeshi will help to prepare the ground for the attainment of economic independence out of the clutches of alien rule. (Ghosh, 2007:220)

What was really needed in agriculture was a suitable land reform policy encouraging an owner-cultivator system along with labor-intensive methods of production, as Gandhi seems to have suggested in his trusteeship program. Gandhi suggested non-violent land reforms. He assures that "it is possible, without a violent redistribution of land to secure for tenants rights which virtually amount to ownership". (Ghosh, 2007:221)

Gandhi also talked about decentralization and give four basic reason: first, for better administration, control and supervision; second, for eradicating the possibility of violence as centralized organization or institutions are generally prone to violence-centralization cannot be fully defended and protected without adequate force; third, centralization leads to concentration of power and authority that can be misused by the possessor of such power in the name of settling socio-economic problems; fourth, decentralization stands for maximization of individual freedom. However, Gandhi was prepared to give more power to people's organization like *panchayats*.(Ghosh, 2007: 226)

The Gandhian pattern of decentralization is to correct the evils of a centralized economy. The decentralization of economic power through the development of cottage and village industries was a means to eradicate the concentration of economic power in a few hands in India. During his times, some large-scale capitalist industries had been concentrating wealth and monopoly power, while the poverty of the masses was increasing. He was against the growing income and wealth disparities arising out of the growth of large-scale industries. Capitalistic industrialization was castigated by Gandhi because it does not help the growth of personality: it simply favors material progress. The goal of life, after all, is not material progress. (Ghosh, 2007: 226)

Gandhi chose the charkha in preference to modern mills and machinery. By its very nature the charkha was labour intensive and capital saving, that is, capable of generating employment on a large scale at a relatively low cost. It induced a production by the masses rather than mass production. It was the single, most sustainable tool by which millions of poor villagers could be optimally employed despite their being scattered, neglected and isolated from the conveniences of the city:

“I would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India’s pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided. I have suggested hand-spinning as the only ready means of driving away penury and making famine of work and wealth impossible.... The only question therefore that a lover of India and humanity has to address himself to is how best to devise practical means of alleviating India’s wretchedness.” (CWMG, vol. 21:390-391)

“Why must India become industrial in the western sense?... what is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good for another differently situated. One man’s food is often another man’s poison. Mechanisation is good when hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil where there are more hands than required for the works as is the case in India.” (Pyarelal, 1959:150)

Gandhi first thought of cotton-spinning in 1908, but it did not become an official program of the Congress until 1921. He conceived it as a way to provide work, and therefore food, for India’s semi-starved millions. Most of them were agricultural smallholders or labourers who had no work for four to six months a year. Spinning was a logical choice for a make-work program because India grew its own cotton; because

spinning was easy to learn; because it required very little capital; because it could be done at odd hours in between household chores and farm chores; because it could help liberate India from dependence on British cloth and drive out the British by cutting their profits; and because it was a tradition which, although it had vanished, had left traces. For hundreds of years before the British came, villagers had earned a livelihood by combining agriculture with spinning and other crafts. Modernisation destroyed the crafts by producing cheaper and often better goods in factories. Without cottage industries to supplement earnings from agriculture, the masses were reduced to semi-starvation and to despair. (Coelho, 2013:162)

Gandhi opposed the industrialization of agriculture, that is, the replacement of the plough by the tractor and the spread of chemical fertilizers, measures which undeniably increased productivity in the short term but which created unemployment and depleted the soil of its nutrients. He warned that ‘trading in soil fertility for the sake of quick returns would prove to be a disastrous, short-sighted policy’. He promoted instead the use of organic manure, which enriched the soil, improved village hygiene through the effective disposal of waste, and saved valuable foreign exchange. But the revitalization of the rural economy also depended on the revival of craft industry. India’s once vibrant traditions of weaving and other handicrafts had been largely destroyed under British rule, and to restore them Gandhi created two organizations: an All India Village Industries Association and an All India Spinners’ Association. (Guha, 2000:22)

These organizations were run by one of Gandhi’s close followers, J. C. Kumarappa, an economist to whom he entrusted the work of village reconstruction. Working with Gandhi, Kumarappa explored the relation between peasant agriculture and the natural world. For Indian peasants the cultivation of the soil was made possible only by the flow of nutrients from outside: water from ponds and rivers, and manure from cattle dung and from the forest. This meant that the careful management of common property resources, such as irrigation tanks and grazing grounds, was as important to agricultural production as the management of privately owned plots of farmland. There had once existed vigorous village level institutions for this purpose, which had decayed under British rule. Water and pasture were gifts of nature that were central to peasant farming in India: and in Kumarappa’s view, the revival of collective institutions for

their management was an important task for economic policy in free India. (Guha, 2000:22-23)

Trusteeship

Gandhi used the terms “trust,” “trusteeship” for a concept applicable to the rich, of his concept of voluntary moderate poverty:

“Earn your crores [i.e. heaps of money] by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society.

I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence. Let it be remembered that the power acquired by physical force is transitory...but the power of the spirit is permanent.” (GCW LXXV, 259)

Economic localization within India was an important theme for Gandhi as well as for Kumarappa. Gandhi said:

“If we follow the swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find our neighbours who can supply our wants, and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation.” (GCW XIII, 222-23)

“Village will be swept away if they are not self-sufficient as to their primary wants.... self-sufficiency... means all the cotton processes and growing of seasonal food crops and fodder for cattle. Unless this is done, there will be starvation. And self-reliance means corporate organization ensuring adjustment if internal differences through arbitration by the wise men of villages, and (ensuring) cleanliness by corporate attention to sanitation and common diseases... and above all, villagers must be taught to feel their own strength by combined efforts to make their villages proof against thieves and dacoits (bandits).” (GCW LXXV:434)

Kumarappa’s first book (1930) mentions that before the British took over, there had been local famines in India due to mainly to “shortage of grain following a drought” and to “inadequate facilities of transport...making relief work an almost insuperable

difficulty,” but that the larger famines under British hegemony were due instead to “lack of purchasing power”. Further analysis and his proposed remedy are described in a letter sent (by someone else) to Gandhi in 1947:

“Under the present trading system the grain produced in the villages is being sent out. Therefore in many parts of the country the villages are left with no stocks of grains. As a result the poor have to face hardships and there is a steep rise in prices during the monsoon. To save the poor from such a plight... some grain should be stocked in villages under the care of (the village government), and only the surplus should be sent out.... Mr. Kumarappa has.... acknowledged the need for such a scheme in his plan.” (GCW XC, 275)

Sen believes that people in democracies will see to it that food-entitlements are adjusted to prevent a famine occurring in their midst, and thus “famines occur only under authoritarian rule.”² He comes perhaps closest to a Gandhian assertion when he says:

“Space does not have to be artificially created in the human mind for the idea of justice or fairness... That space already exists.” (Sen,1999:262)

Gandhi’s approach to trusteeship was comprehensive, based on his approach to life and society. He derived inspiration from the spiritual foundation of Indian culture, which alone help in uplifting man. Trusteeship is not a make-shift formula to give concessions to capitalists. It is a philosophy of life and organisation. It is a method of management, a method to bring about inter-personal relationship, where status symbolised by authority, riches or heredity merges itself with the common man. It envisages a new structure and a system of organisation based on non-violence, the welfare of all and sharing of responsibility, fruits of production as well as decision making. (Sarkar, 1974:xxv-xxvi)

Trusteeship is based on the idea that “what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community.”

²Times, European edition, 29 May 2000, p. 62. (in this mini-article Sen says that modern China, “which did much better than India in several respects such as the spread of basic education and health care, had the largest famine in recorded history in 1959-62, with a death toll that has been estimated at thirty million.”)

(Diwan: 1985:100) Gandhi's concept of trusteeship is built on the difference between an individual and the resources he commands. This distinction is easily recognised in the case of the capitalist and his capital. But it is possible to extend this distinction to other inputs. A similar distinction can be made in the case of labour as well. Labour, for Gandhi, was 'as much capital as mental' (Gandhi, 1958-93, Vol. 59, p. 140). In other words, Gandhi was making a distinction similar to the one that Marxists make between labour and labour power. Where Gandhi went a step further was in insisting that this conceptual distinction could be translated into practice, if the owner of each factor of production acted as no more than a trustee of that factor of production. As he saw it, a 'a trustee is one who discharges the obligations of his trust faithfully and in the best interests of his wards' (Gandhi, 1958-93, Vol. 90, p. 521). And the labourer could be the trustee of his labour just as much as the capitalist could be the trustee of his capital. Gandhi argued that 'worker instead of regarding themselves as enemies of the rich, or regarding the rich as their natural enemies, should hold their labour in trust for those who are in need of it' (Ibid., Vol. 59, p. 140).

Gandhi has not left on record any elaborate account of his thoughts on this new expedient of trusteeship. All that he left is a brief six-point statement which nevertheless contains his basic ideas on the subject. I quote (Rao, 1986:27):

- 1) Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
- 2) It does not recognise any right of private ownership of property, except inasmuch as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
- 3) It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
- 4) Thus, under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society.
- 5) Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable, equitable and variable from time to time, so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

- 6) Under the Gandhian economic order, the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

The important points to note about this statement are its acceptance of the principle of private ownership of property, the limit imposed upon its use for sustaining minimum living standards, the major constraint it imposes by prohibiting its use merely for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the social interest, and the inclusion of legislative regulation for determining its ownership and use in the desired direction of non-exploitative purposes. He has not defined the social interest except in terms of an alleviation of poverty, reduction in inequality and production for social necessities in place of personal interest or whim or greed. The notable omissions are with regard to regulation in the ecological interest, harmonisation with nature, and regard for the future.

The main issues of crises of the prevailing modern system are unemployment, concentration of economic power, alienation, exploitation and militarisation. Gandhi claimed Trusteeship was an answer to these problems. He did not elaborate upon employment, but he went into the other issues in great detail. Both the capitalist and the communist nations are examples of heavy concentration of economic power by which a small minority exploits a vast majority, though the two have different and even opposing relations of production which have the same objectives of promoting material growth. Trusteeship can, by dispossessing both of their hold on economic resources, break up the base of the old or new systems of concentration of economic power. With this also would be thrown out the exploitation, because no one would be allowed or need have more than what is needed. Needs are socially determined and hence generally not given to greed and this would be the central economic principle of production under trusteeship. In this way, those who participate in production without any sense of greed for wealth or income are unlikely to suffer from alienation. (Sethi, 1986:xi)

Bhoodan-Gramdan

Though the Bhoodan- Gramdan Movement was initiated only in 1951, three years after the death of Gandhi, the ideology of the movement may be traced back to him. Gandhi pursued two major objectives: Swaraj, broadly understood as independence, and Sarvodaya (literally, 'uplift of all') the ideal society, the non-violent social order,

which Gandhi wanted to evolve. After independence, Sarvodaya became the primary Gandhian objective, and it was towards this ideal that he and other leading Gandhian disciples, continued to work.

The initial objective of the Bhoodan movement when it started in 1951 was to secure voluntary donations of land and distribute it to the landless with a view to remove the bitterness existing between the land-owners and the landless. However, the movement soon came out with a demand for one-sixth share of land from all landowners. In 1952, the movement had widened into Gramdan (literally, village-in-gift) and had started advocating the collective ownership of land.

Gramdan essentially means forming a Gramsabha as the highest community institution as the instrument and that every one strengthens the sabha by contributing his mite. The demon of famine that baulks the country would be killed only when all in a village community came together and offered all that they possess to the village goddess that is Gramsabha, just as all the gods had surrendered their weapons to the goddess Durga to meet the threat of Mahishasura. Many people think that there are two classes of people- the 'have' and the 'have-nots'. I have always held that this division is wrong. Everybody belongs to the category of 'haves'. Some people have money, some have intelligence and some have labour. (VinobaBhave, 1978:29)

The first village to come under Gramdan was Mangroth in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh. It took more than three years to get another village as a gift. The second and third Gramdan took place in Orissa and the movement started spreading with emphasis on securing villages in gift.

A village should take three interlinked steps before it can earn its title, Gramdan village: (a) the villagers who opt for Gramdan should agree to transfer the title deeds of all their land in favour of a legally constituted village assembly (Gram Sabha); (b) a pre-condition for this being that the village assembly should be constituted beforehand; and (c) creation of a village fund (Gram Kosh) meant for social welfare measures and economic development (Oommen, 2010:91).

It is clear that the immediate objective of the movement is economic and ameliorative in character. To this extent the charismatic colour of the movement is faded. However, it is significant to note here that Vinoba insists that the objective of the movement is

moral. He asserts: 'Mine is not so much to provide food to the hungry as is to bring it home to the people that before they take their food they must share it with others. I want to create an atmosphere of giving in this age of taking so that non-possession and co-operation in place of ownership and competition may be the basis of life'. Essentially, then, the movement is a 'mission' and not a mere economic or ameliorative programme. (Oommen, 2010:98)

The basis of Bhoodan-Gramdan movement is Sarvodaya ideology. Sarvodaya attempts to re-define Indian society in terms of Varna, Ashrama and Dharma, the three basic tenets of Hindu social organization. The value pattern of Sarvodaya is based on certain cardinal principles such as Ahimsa (non-violent), Satya (truth), Asteya (non-accumulation), Sarir-Srama (physical labour), Award (regulation of taste), SarvatraBhayavarjan (total fearlessness), Sarva-Dharma-Samanatve (equal reverence for all religions), Swadeshi (using indigenous products), SaprshBhavana (complete touchability orientation). These values are sought to be inculcated through the institution of dan, defined as equal sharing (SamaVibhagh). The nations of Bhoodan, Gramdan, Sampati Dan, Budhi Dan and Jeevan Dan are already developed and in operation. Those subscribing to the Sarvodaya ethic must keep a pot (Sarvodayapatra) at home to keep contributions in the form of cash or kind to be handed over for the maintenance of Sarvodaya workers, who pledge to offer their life in service of the people. The movement bases itself on the basic ideas of Sarvodaya namely trusteeship, collective ownership and basic democracy (Gram Swaraj). (Oommen, 2010: 99)

Sarvodaya aims to evolve a society keeping in line with the genius of India on the one hand and on the other it is referred to as the 'third way', an attempt to manufacture a VishwaManav, a man with world loyalty. It is a synthetic ideology, which partakes universalistic and humanistic principles and in a limited sense parochial, for, the social laboratory in which the man with world loyalty is to be manufactured is village republic, thus oriented to a limited locale in its vital aspects. It disapproves the revolution of unbridled rising expectations and ceaselessly emphasizes the need for voluntary restriction of wants. Its commitment to industrialization is not unqualified; nay it approves only a minimally industrialized society. It does not vote for an economy of abundance but advocates an economy of self-restraint and frugality. Modernization is not rejected totally while tradition is accepted partially. It purports to avoid the 'evils' of mass society and strives for the retention of primary group

relations: it hopes to evolve a communitarian society, a society in which the group has primacy over the individual. It visualizes a polity where all adult members of the society are incorporated into the decision making process, which is designated as a participatory democracy. In order to realize the world of its conception it prefers village republics which plan for themselves while having tangential dependence on wider territorial units encircling it: Districts, States, nations. The social system visualized through Sarvodaya ideology is neither traditional nor modern: its acceptance of the modern or the rejection of the tradition is not total. For want of a better term we call the Sarvodaya social order a Civic Society. Thus the Sarvodaya ideology is distinctly different from the prevalent ideologies in the new nations. The simultaneous slant given both to tradition and modernity attracts both revivalists and moderns to its fold (Oommen, 2010:99-100).

While sarvodaya aims to ‘manufacture’ an altruistic individual, the ‘factory’ in which this process will, it is hoped, take place is the small village. Man is a product of both nature and culture and the blending of the two is possible only in comparatively small communities. Narayan states it very clearly: “self-government, self-management, mutual co-operation and sharing, equality, freedom, brotherhood- all could be practised and developed far better if man lived in small communities... it is undoubted that life in small communities, permitting and promoting personal relationships, will be more suited to the realisation of sarvodaya ideals (Narayan, 1958:38).” The related goals of communitarian society and participating democracy alike are more easily secured when the community is small.

Unlike other social movements the ideals of Bhoodan-Gramdan movement can be actualized only if men with diverse, in fact, opposing interests simultaneously ‘participate’ in the movement. So far as the entire accent of the movement is on voluntary donations (of land, wealth, labour, skill and life) by the people, the ‘haves’ should ‘participate’ in it for the success of the movement. In, fact, it is frequently alleged that many donors donate only uncultivable land and many are motivated to donate, in order to escape the legal measures brought forth to prune the size of their holdings. To this extent the haves develop a vested interest in the continuance of the movement, for, it helps to perpetuate their interests. The danger of the movement becoming a system-maintaining device and the possibility of its revolutionary vitality being sapped looms large in this context.

Trying to improve the character of people through human development plan is an important contemporary problem, and the guidance of Gandhian political economy (GPE) is immensely helpful. To Gandhi, human development of a person as a moral social being having dignity, freedom and equality. The development of a human personality pattern needs moral education based on ethical principles that will prepare humanity to limit its worldly desires and meta-needs, and will guide all its actions through truth and non-violence. Such human beings will be the source of real social capital in a country. Human actions have to be guided by the deontic consideration of duties but should also take into account the consequences of such action. People should have moral courage to protest and fight against all form of injustice. Gandhi believed, like Rabindranath Tagor, that those who commit injustice and the victims who tolerate it without protest are equally guilty. Much of conflict and exploitation could have been reduced in society, as Gandhi observed, had the victims been strong and protective enough of their rights and freedom. The modern world of injustice, exploitation and inequalities needs such people who are alert, aware and active in their quest for justice, equality, rights and freedom. In sense, GPE can be regarded as an example of humanitarian political economy, if such a brand of political economy can ever be thought of.

It is, then, apt for us to ask in conclusion: what implications can these debates have in our understanding of food insecurity among Musahars? Do these discussions, and our knowledge of them in particular, in anyway help us make better sense of the problem at hand? Are we, at the end of this exercise, in anyway better placed to develop an alternative thinking over the problem of food insecurity among Musahars in Bihar? Are there sociological solutions for the crisis? And, in the final analysis is there a refined approach to the timely understanding and resolution of food insecurity?

While addressing each of the questions above might involve a separate discussion in itself, it is nevertheless prudent to suggest that the theoretical debates discussed briefly in the preceding pages certainly arm us with a nuanced understanding of the problem. It can now be stated with enough evidence that a problem like food insecurity, which is currently under discussion, requires a different approach. Measuring the extent of food insecurity merely in quantifiable terms, for example, would not suffice. One should be able to deploy a wholesome index covering both the quantitative and qualitative aspects. One of the factors responsible for sustained poverty and hunger among

Musahars stems from their inability to participate in the new job market, which in turn requires a set of skills these backward class of citizens don't possess. The irony, however, is that the government policies look at the problem only at its surface, leaving out the root cause of the crisis to itself. This is exactly where the preceding theoretical discussion would be useful for us to think through alternative development models.

Conclusion

There is welcome recognition, globally and nationally, that the persistence of malnourishment on an unacceptably large scale in developing countries demands that more determined efforts be made to address the problem. In developing countries', efforts have been stepped up in the recent past to achieve faster and more equitable growth, especially in their domestic food production, and to ensure that the poor have incomes to acquire adequate and nutritious food.

Expansion of programmes for increased employment and incomes for the poor, implementation of social protection schemes for the disadvantaged and improving health and nutrition of children and women are important for uplifting the poor and the marginalised. Although such initiatives have been increasing in number in the recent past, the expected outcomes are less satisfactory. Despite the budgetary allocations on the programmes/schemes intended for the betterment of the poor are increasing year after year in the same vane, their systemic deficiencies continue unabated. The irony, however, is that there is hardly any sincere attempt on the part of the government missionary/implementing agencies to address the deficiencies. The strategy of subsidised supply of food grains through Public Distribution System (PDS), for example, has not worked well. The extraordinary complexities of organising and managing procurement and distribution to reach all parts of the country is well-known problem.

The study found out that lack of political will to implement land reforms and effective food security schemes is the main reason for food insecurity in Bihar in general and in musahar community in particular. 90 per cent of Bihar's population live in rural areas. Despite this, Agriculture in the State has never reached its full potential, thanks to poor irrigation system, inadequate institutional funding to the farmers, insignificant infrastructural facilities such as cold storages, roads, regular supply of electricity, etc. The non-availability of agricultural loans, for example, compel the farmers to depend on the money lenders who lavishly charge 5-to10 per cent interest rate per month. Unlike in several other parts of the country, farmers here never get a chance to sell their produce at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) usually announced by the Government, as no procurement agencies on behalf of the State are functional in the region.

Various food security schemes implemented by the State and the Central Governments hardly reach the intended beneficiaries in Bihar. Not even a single household covered by the study reported to have received the subsidised ration in the previous year, clearly reflecting a dismal failure of the existing schemes and programmes intended to help the poor. The disappointing scenario is hardly any different in the case of other social security schemes such as ICDS, MDM, NOAPS, MGNREGA is also the same. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA), which holds a legal promise for a minimum of 100 days work in a year for every adult member in a household, too does not seem to have seen the light. Respondent after respondent who participated in the study went on to say they were never offered the work as part of the MNREGA. In a very few cases where the villagers got a chance to be employed as part of the MNREGA, they were either offered work for a time much less than 100 days in a year or paid only 30-to-45 per cent of the daily wage actually mandated by the law. The poor implementation of MNREGA and negligible presence of the industries in Bihar often meant a large scale migration of the labour force to far off places in the country.

Much talked about development initiatives in Bihar are unfortunately designed and implemented in isolation from the dire state of food insecurity in the region. Above all, Musahars in particular remain untouched either by the new wave of developmental programmes of the State Government or by the benefits of globalisation. Anyone closely involved in looking at the problem of food insecurity in Bihar would inevitably recommend, first and foremost, the introduction of an effective delivery mechanism in such a way as to minimise diversions and leakages. The other measure which can pay high dividence in the long-run would be to provide educational facilities to the youth, so that at least the coming generations can find suitable job market outside the non-formal economy. The findings of current research make it abundantly clear that there is a long way to go before one could fully grasp the humanitarian crisis on hand — food insecurity among Musahars of Bihar. It is at the above backdrop that the following recommendations are made with regard to the potential areas for future research on the subject.

Recommendations:

First and foremost, one of the major lacunae in the effective implementation of various social security schemes/programmes is lack of transparency. Transparency, howsoever rhetorical it might sound, is the cornerstone for accountability. The social security schemes in vast country like India are to cross multiple stages before they could reach their final stage of implementation, and civic participation is the only crucible that can ensure this process to run smoothly and effectively. As suggested before, transparency allows the intended beneficiaries and other interested citizenry to have full control over the information critical to their participation in the formulation and implementation of Government programmes. Government should, therefore, Launch a National Campaign to bring about Transparency and Accountability in the delivery of all food security and social security schemes.

Indian democracy took a longer than usual time to realise the Right To Information, which finally culminated in the enactment of Right To Information Act of 2005 (RTI Act). The underlying Act makes it mandatory for all the Government Departments and public sector utilities (with a few exceptions here and there, though) to proactively disclose the maximum information for the benefit of the citizens. The actual implementation of the provisions of the RTI is easier said than done. Findings of the current study reveal that the ready availability of the right information can make a huge difference. More often than not, it is the ignorance of the citizenry that provides enough leeway for the corrupt officials and contractors to divert the public resources away from reaching the intended beneficiaries. It is, therefore, recommended that section 4 of RTI is implemented in letter and spirit, and to further ensure the pro-active disclosure of all information related to all food security and social security schemes.

Many State Governments in India today have started using the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for better governance. As part of the E-Governance initiative, these States mandate all the District authorities to set up their own web-pages and proactively disclose all the relevant information on those pages. The State of Bihar still lacks behind in this regard. The District Websites can indeed be used as platform for the wider dissemination of information related to food

security programmes, social security schemes and poverty alleviation initiatives of the Government.

While the free flow of information can make a difference, it would be erroneous to assume that this alone is the remedy for all public ills. In fact, the next logical step, after the wider dissemination of information, is to evolve norms for the strict implementation of various social security programmes. The study, therefore, recommends that enforcement rules, along with penalty clauses for any failure, should be made part of social security programmes/schemes.

Besides transparency, information dissemination and enforcement, awareness plays a major role in the effective implementation of social security schemes in general and food security initiatives in particular. Governments, civil society organisations, media outlets and other stakeholders closely involved in the welfare activities of the common citizenry should conduct awareness campaigns on the entitlements legally promised to the people at large. Such awareness events should be planned at the village, block and District levels.

It has been realised in the recent past that social auditing can be a great tool for an effective implementation of various social sector schemes. Social auditing is substantially different from other accountability measures in the sense that it directly involves the concerned citizenry into the evaluation of the programmes targeted at peoples' welfare and livelihood concerns. Governments — both at the State and the Central levels — should incorporate social auditing as an essential component in social security programmes and food security measures. At the moment social auditing is undertaken selectively on ad hoc basis, and there is a dire need to make this practice a policy prescription.

One of the major problems of modern governance today is lack of effective grievance redressal mechanisms. Even when there is a grievance redressal mechanism built into the system, the penalty against the erring officials is quite negligible. One should, therefore, plan for a new grievance redressal regime where finding gaps and fixing solutions can happen simultaneously through a single window mechanism.

The research found out that community participation in the day-to-day processes of programme implementation remains a paramount predicament. This becomes all the

more important for the success of social security schemes and food security initiatives. The ICDS services, for example, were found more effective wherever the workers from the same location and same community were involved. The present research, therefore, does not hesitate to recommend for the active recruitment of Dalits as ICDS workers, at particularly in those areas where the dalit population is highly concentrated.

The timely notification of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers, greater devolution of powers to the elected bodies at the local level, proactive land distribution for the landless communities (particularly the marginalised communities like Musahars), decentralisation of planning and special measures for the recruitment of none other than targeted beneficiaries themselves as active agents of implementing various social security schemes intended for their own upliftment are the other major recommendations which are clearly identified by the present study.

Given the social milieu in which the present research is set, and the potential areas of research the field set under reference offers for future researchers, it would be useful to look at the potential for social science research intervention in the days to come.

Further research:

Sociologically speaking, there are enormous deficiencies in understanding, explaining and attempting to provide answers to the crisis of food insecurity in India. The first and foremost initiative to be taken in this direction is to subject the economic connotation to a rigorous scrutiny and examine the whole crisis from a different angle altogether. The most important methodological shift required to contribute to the solution of crisis posed by food insecurity lies in recognising the sociological significance of the problem. Food habits of every population depend largely on the social customs and cultural practices of a society. Sociology as a discipline, therefore, has a major role in deciphering the structures of the crisis of food insecurity.

The study of such a nuanced issue as food insecurity, however, may not completely be readily amenable to the traditional principles of sociology. One of the key findings of the present research is that there is an immediate need to look at food insecurity in India as a discourse and to subject it to sociological investigation. Both

the government and the civil society should make a concerted effort to understand this crisis by interacting closely with the real victims of this crisis.

Finally, there is also a pressing need for substantive research in the field of sociology of poverty in India in general and food security in particular. The impending research on the latter should find ways and means to identify the crisis in the ways in which the real victims wish to identify it. Such an approach seems to be the only acceptable way to mitigate, theoretically at least, the problem of food insecurity in India. In the interim, currently existing levers, including the strict implementation of Central Government legislation on food security, can be pulled more firmly if a vigorous public campaign for food security for all were to take off.

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