

A Study of the Politics of Anti-Poverty Programmes in the Block of Laikera, Orissa

**Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled, "**A Study of the Politics of Anti-Poverty Programmes in the Block of Laikera, Orissa**", submitted by **Dinamani Bhim**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy (M.Phil)** of this university, is, to the best of our knowledge, his own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAGB	-	Bolangir Anchalik Gramya Bank
BDO	-	Block Development Officer
BPL	-	Below Poverty Line
DWCRA	-	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
IAY	-	Indira Awaas Yojna
IRDP	-	Integrated Rural Development Programme
ISB	-	Industry Small Business
JGSY	-	Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna
MADA	-	Modified Area Development Programme
MWS	-	Million Well Scheme
OSFDC	-	Orissa State Financial Development Corporation
PA	-	Progress Assistant
PD	-	Project Director
PNB	-	Punjab National Bank
RBI	-	Reserve Bank of India
SGSY	-	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna
SHG	-	Self Help Group
VLW	-	Village Level Worker
WEO	-	Welfare Extension Officer

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

More than fifty years of economic planning has still left more than 350 million people below the poverty line. Indian economic development of the last fifty two years has not been able to address the issues concerning regional and rural-urban imbalances. The government of India at the time of independence was aware of the enormity of poverty and underdevelopment present in the Indian society. Hence, economic development was one of the key issue the Indian state had to take up in order to address the problem of rural poverty in the country. In spite of all these efforts, the condition of the poor and particularly of people belonging to SCs and STs has not altered significantly.

Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze have argued that public intervention is an important step towards dealing with poverty in a democratic country.¹ Thus Sen and Dreze clearly tell us that politics plays an important role as far as the implementation of anti-poverty programmes is concerned. Atul Kohli in his book "State and Poverty in India" has also emphasized the role of politics while discussing the relationship between state and poverty.²

¹ Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya. Indian : Economic Development and Social Opportunity. New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1995.

² Kohli, Atul. The State and Poverty in India – The Politics of Reform, Bombay, Orient Longman, 1987.

If politics, political institutions, public bureaucracy, and elected bodies play significant role in connection with rural poverty, then it is important that the politics of anti-poverty programmes should be highlighted.

The central argument (which we refer to Kohli) is that it is the regime type which played a crucial role as far as the implementation of land reform was concerned in India. The communist parties in Kerala and West Bengal worked hard towards the implementation of land reforms in these provinces. In contrast, the lack of success of land reform in provinces such as UP, MP, Bihar and Orissa was due to the lack of commitment by the political parties such as Congress, Janata Dal and so on.

This study concentrates on the role of politics, elected local institutions, MLAs and local bureaucracy and special anti-poverty programmes and their implementation in one of the most backward area of Orissa.

Our work examines the issue of poverty and the anti-poverty programmes from the point of view of the most marginal section belonging to the Block of Laikera, of the district of Jharsuguda in Orissa. It also focuses on how dominant castes and classes in this area effectively control local power arrangements and appropriate the benefits of government sponsored programmes meant for the poor. The relations between the elite and the anti-poverty programme is examined by looking at the decision making process at the local level. The nature of budgetary allocation in actual terms can also help us understand the link

between class and caste dominance and rural development. Actual utilization of resources on different schemes meant for rural development can be an objective method of knowing the dominance of the powerful in this Block. Actual powers exercised by Dalit Panchayat members can also help us in identifying the asymmetric relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. In spite of Dalits being given formal institutional power, they exercise very little power. We have also tried to find out through our research the relevance of anti-poverty programmes to the life-world of the poor and downtrodden in the specified Block.

Our study does not focus on the formulation of the larger policies of the state; it throws light on the ways in which these policies get translated at the local level. The study attempts to understand this issue with the help of secondary as well as primary sources. Most of the primary sources were collected during the field work undertaken during the period of the 13 February to the 31 March 2000. During this period, I had also interviewed a large number of actors (from various social segments) involved in the implementation of anti-poverty programmes in this area. Besides the interview, government documents are also used to answer the questions raised in our work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

India is a home to majority of the world's poor and the rate of poverty

reduction in the country has dramatically slowed down in the current decade.³ Many of India's poor states suffer from slow progress in human development, low rates of growth, particularly in the agriculture sector, inadequate infrastructure and weak fragmented institutions. The humanitarian assistance of the World Bank is often way laid when channeled through corrupt state system. But the poor still greatly value government programmes and feel governments have important role to play in their lives.⁴

In India poverty is a deep rooted phenomenon. V. N. Despande analyses deprivation in structural terms in relation to the social, economic and political system as a whole.⁵ He stresses the need for class analysis in relation to the mode of production. He also takes into account of the reality of caste, specially in the rural contexts.

M.S.A Rao considers relation of production and alienation as an important dimension of poverty. Rao says that poverty is inherent in the capitalist mode of production which is by its nature exploitative.⁶ Stating about alienation, Rao says that in the tribal belt large chunks of land have been illegally occupied by farmers

³ World Bank Report, "Poverty Trends and Voices of the Poor" reported in the Indian Express" October 3, 1999, Daily Newspaper (New Delhi).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Despande, V. N., 'Poverty, class and caste : Some conceptual methodological issues in Singh, Tarlok (ed.). Social Science Research and Problem of Poverty. New Delhi, Concept Publishing company, 1990.

⁶ Rao, M.S.A Social Sciences and the study of poverty in Singh, Tarlok (ed.). Social Science Research and Problem of Poverty, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1990.

migrating from the plains. The tribals are being alienated from their land and the use of forest. And they have swelled the ranks of wage earners and bonded labourers. The rapacious money lenders and traders of liquor have also acquired tribal land and cause indebtedness of the tribals. Rao says that because of such extreme forms of alienation the tribals are forced to join the Naxalite camps.

Dandekar and Rath analyse the income inequality as the main cause of poverty. They attribute the prevailing inequalities in the distribution of income to the unequal distribution of the means of production (land and industrial capital) and to unemployment and under employment among the people.⁷ They think rural work programmes can bring an end to unemployment and underemployment. According to them, redistribution of the means of production is not feasible or desirable.

In this context, the role of the state is quite important. Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze have argued that India must not and can not forget the obligation to provide expanding opportunities to the great majority of those who have fallen off the economic ladder.⁸ They call for public action to complement state action.

Atul Kohli studied the nature of state intervention in reducing poverty in three states viz. West Bengal, Karanataka and Uttar Pradesh. He argues that

⁷ Dandekar, V. M. and Rath, Nclakantha. Poverty in India. Poona, Indian School of Political Economy, 1971.

⁸ Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, India : Economic Development and Social Opportunity, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.

performance of distributive policies varies from province to province. This diversity arises because of varying regime characteristics in the state. The implementation of such programmes are influenced by the factors such as the leadership, ideology and organisation.⁹ Kohli suggests that reforms of a distributive nature within India which is seriously constrained by the political economy, can only be possible by organised left-of-centre regimes. Regarding “growth and trickle down” Kohli writes, “There is little unambiguous data demonstrating that the growth in output in the “green revolution” areas of India had been accompanied by higher output per acre for the small farmers or increments in the availability of work or increments in the real wages for the landless. While real wages may well have undergone some improvement, the situation is unclear with regard to the overall availability of work over time.”¹⁰

B. K. Joshi sees that persistence of poverty in India as a consequence of the social and class structure and relations in which economic growth and development have taken place. Mr. Joshi’s conclusion is that without a radical shift in the distribution of power in Indian society and assertion by the poor for a due share of the economic product, it is highly unlikely that poverty can be eradicated.¹¹

⁹ Kohli, Atul. *The State and Poverty in India – The Politics of Reform*. Bombay, Orient Longman, 1987.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 243.

¹¹ Joshi, B. K. “Poverty, inequality and the social structure” in Singh, Tarlok (ed.) *Social Science Research and Problem of Poverty*. New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1990.

Regarding the unsatisfactory performance in eradicating poverty from India, John Echeverri Gent highlights two main reasons (a) an agrarian structure which allows the rural elite to pre-empt all the advantages (b) the incapacity or inappropriateness of the implementing agency i.e. bureaucracy, to manage the task.¹²

Let's now have a look at the literature that focusses specifically on the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes.

V. S. Vyas and Pradeep Bhargava summarise the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes in India.¹³ Vyas explains four ways for poverty alleviation in a developing economy (a) Trickle down (spread effect) (b) To create income earning opportunities for the target group of poor (c) Policy on relative price (providing essential commodities at lower than market price (d) Direct Income Transfers (virtually take place by dual pricing" for essential production).

Regarding the employment generation programmes Vyas says that because of the concentration on assets that require more capital (such as construction projects like Panchayat Ghar, housing etc.), the primary objective of employment generation is neglected. These works benefits the rich more than the poor.

¹² Gent, John Echeverri. *The State and the Poor : Public Policy and Political Development in India and the United States*. New Delhi, Vistaar Publication, 1995.

¹³ Byas, V. S. and Bhargava, Pradeep- "Public Intervention for Poverty Alleviation An Overview". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24-21 October 1995, vol. XXX, No. 41 & 42, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

Works like soil conservation, minor irrigation, watershed development and afforestation are neglected. These works create more employment presently and create opportunities for employment in the future as well.¹⁴

On the basis of the first concurrent evaluation on Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) conducted by the ministry of rural development through independent research institutions during January-December 1992, M.Neelakanthan provides an insight into the major findings. Neelakanthan says that participation by SC/ST or landless labourers in JRY in most of the states seems to be encouraging. In Orissa the share of the SC/ST in JRY employment is 62.32%. In states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu women were paid less than men. In state like Kerala unskilled workers were paid more than minimum wages as otherwise workers are not available. In Orissa a JRY worker got 12.32 days of employment on an average during the reference month. It is also noticed that non-poor family workers are selected for providing employment in the works taken up for execution. The JRY manual was not found available in about one-third of the surveyed Panchaayts.¹⁵

T.R. Ramaswamy studied the implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. He found that the Block functionaries did not make a through household survey. As a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Neelakantan, M. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana An assessment through concurrent evaluation. Economic and Political Weekly, 3 December 1994, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

consequence, eligible persons were not included in the scheme. The selection list was not placed before the Gram Sabha for its approval. The beneficiaries were pressurised to repay the loans much before the required period of repayment. So the beneficiaries were not able to maintain their assets properly. This was a clear violation of the rules of repayment. The bank officials were unhelpful to the beneficiaries. There were delays in adjustment of subsidy although the subsidy amount was already available to the bank. This resulted in unfairly charging the beneficiaries with interest burden. The bank also charged higher rates of interest for certain scheme. The study shows that the work load of the Block Development Officer (BDO) was very heavy. T.R. Ramaswamy recommended the creation of a post of an additional BDO to exclusively look after the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes.¹⁶

Nilakantha Rath studied the implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and suggested that the IRDP approach, which is based on distribution of assets to the poor for creating self-employment is not going to deliver goods. He again suggested that creation of massive wage employment, both private and public should be a major strategies for poverty eradication. Major grounds on which Rath criticises IRDP are as follows : The approach of IRDP which aims at giving self-employment to the poorest house

¹⁶ Ramaswamy, T. R. Implementation of Intergrated Rural Development Programme in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu. In Singh, Jaideep and Tiwari, R. K. (ed.) *Managing Poverty Alleviation insights from the field*. New Delhi, Indian Institute of Pubic Administration, 1988.

holds of rural society is not a realistic approach. This is because these households are least capable of taking self employment. There is corruption on the subsidy of IRDP and it has raised indebtedness of the poor in many cases. Quoting from the study of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Rath points out that hardly 18.7% of the total beneficiaries have crossed the poverty line. Rath says that many times assets with low productivity are given to the poor under the programme. This harms the poor. Rath therefore concludes that the IRDP strategy is largely misconceived.¹⁷

Indira Hirway contests the arguments of Nilakanth Rath. Hirway argues in support of the IRDP approach. Quoting the data of 32nd round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) Hirway writes that the role of IRDP approach can not be undermined. In an economy with 62.52% of the working force in self-employment the IRDP kind of approach has to be important.

Hirway writes, “The question is not whether IRDP approach will deliver goods or whether wage employment strategy will work. What is needed is a total approach that integrates the various strategies systematically.”¹⁸

Refuting the arguments of Rath, Hirway again writes, “In the present situation IRDP will breed corruption. But the relevant question here is : Are we

¹⁷ Rath, Nilakantha ‘Garibi Hatao’ : Can IRDP do it? Economic and Political Weekly, 9 February 1985, vol. XX, no. 6, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

¹⁸ Hirway, Indira. ‘Garibi Hatao’ : Can IRDP do it? Economic and Political Weekly, 30 March 1985, vol. XX, No. 13, p. 562, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

sure that wage employment programmes will not breed corruption?.. Corruption is in our system and unless suitable measures are taken, it will be there in all the programmes that we undertake, including NREP and IRDP. However, a step that can help considerably here is the removal of the role of the elected representatives of people (Panchayat leaders, MLAs, MPs etc.) in anti-poverty programmes, at least at the micro-level where the role is the most harmful. It is high time we got out of our illusion that representative participation reflects the felt needs of the poor.”¹⁹

Jean Dreze, after the case study of Palampura village situated in Moradabad district in western Uttar Pradesh found that Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is an unsuccessful programme. Dreze found out that (1) some of the most vulnerable groups (the landless and households without adult male) have practically no involvement in IRDP (2) the poorest of the poor are largely excluded (3) affluent households have been included in the programme (4) there is no discrimination in favour of the poor in the allocation of loans.²⁰

In Palanpura the Gram Sevak took a bribe of Rs. 200 from each IRDP beneficiary. This obviously plays an important role in deterring the poor.

Dreze suggested that (1) the government should have a serious programme

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 562.

²⁰ Dreze, Jean. Poverty in India and the IRDP delusion. Economic and Political Weekly, 29 September 1990, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

of employment generation with legal status. (2) There is an urgent need to expand public provisioning in the domain of health and education (3) There is also crying need for the introduction of effective social security measures to protect those who, due to disability or social restrictions, are not able to take up remunerative employment (Widow, handicapped, aged etc.).

M.L. Dantwala disputes the views of Dreze. Dantwala responded to Dreze with his own set of arguments.²¹ Dantwala criticises Dreze's support for wage employment programme on the ground that a single unique solution to the problems of all categories of poor will not be appropriate. Rather self-employment is appropriate. Dantwala referred to the artisans who have traditional skills of their own. Dantwala says that an idea or a programme should not be judged unsound simply on the basis of its immediate operational success or failure.

Dantwala again says that there is no justification for believing that the implementation of wage employment schemes will be free from corruption, political interference and bureaucratic caprices.²²

Kishor C. Samal studied the implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Modified Area Development Approach (MADA), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA),

²¹ Dantwala, M. L. Problem in critique of IRDP Economic and Political Weekly, 22 December 1990, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

²² Ibid.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) and Million Wells Scheme (MWS) in the Block of Laikera, Orissa. He concluded that all these programmes have resulted in failure. So Samal writes, "Thus all these rural development programmes in the Block have failed to achieve their primary objectives, viz. alleviation of poverty. The study observes that the extent and intensity of poverty have not decreased. Increasing poverty is also reflected through the number of families living below poverty line which has increased from 80.73% in 1992 to 83.82% in 1995-96 in the Block inspite of the implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes."²³

Now-a-days need for decentralization is emphasised for the successful implementation of anti-poverty programmes. Referring to anti-poverty programmes A. Vaidyanathan writes, "An essential precondition for the success of decentralisation is that these programmes should be transferred to the local bodies and the allocation used without interference from the state government. Once this is done, local self-government will acquire the necessary political creditability and become truly effective."²⁴

George Mathew considers that reservation of one-third seats and offices for women in Panchaayti Raj institutions will lead to a silent revolution. He

²³ Samal, Kishor C. Poverty Alleviation after post-liberalisation – Study of a Tribal Block in Orissa. *Economic and Political Weekly*, p. 1849. 11 July 1998, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

²⁴ Vaidyanathan, A. *The Political Economy of the Evolution of Anti-poverty Programmes*, Sathyamurthy, T. V. (ed.) *Industry and Agriculture in India since Independence*, vol. 2, p. 346, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.

firmly believed that a social transformation aimed at women could be achieved by Panchayati Raj institutions.²⁵ Sen and Dreze giving emphasis on the Panchayati Raj institution saw it from a different angle. For them decentralisation without social change is unlikely to work.²⁶

Now-a-days Gram Sabha (the general assembly of the villages) is authorised to select beneficiaries and location for different welfare programmes. Y. V. Rao studied the functioning of Gram Sabha in Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The study found the domination of Sarpanch, high caste group, economically forward people and Panchayat staff in the Gram Sabha. The Panchayat members were not interested to conduct gram Sabha so to avoid any discrepancy and different groups of people intended the opposite group remain absent.²⁷

Now-a-days globalisation has raised questions regarding the efficacy of the state in eradicating poverty. Privatisation and disinvestment in social sector have made the people suspicious that the state is withdrawing itself from its role to eradicate poverty. But Jagdish Bhagwati takes it differently. He says that pro-globalisation and pro-privatisation economic reforms must be treated as

²⁵ Mathew, George. Panchayati Raj in India, in Mathur, Kuldeep (ed.) Development Policy and Administration, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1996.

²⁶ Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya. India : Economic Development and Social Opportunity. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.

²⁷ Rao, Y. V. Functioning of Gram Sabha : A Study in Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Journal of Rural Development, October-December 1998, vol. 17 (4), Hyderabad, National Institute of Rural Development.

complementary and friendly to both the reduction of poverty and social agendas. Stressing upon the need of growth he says that growth would adopt a “pull-up” active strategy.²⁸ He writes, “without prosperity the government will fall short of the funds needed to advance literacy, secondary schooling, health, sanitation and a host of programmes aimed directly at the poor and conventionally described as “anti-poverty” programmes in donor agencies and recipient countries.”²⁹

Dreze and Sen Suggest that government must get out of the business of placing restraints on enterprise, but governments can not wither away. They have emphasized the positive role of the government.³⁰

S. P. Gupta illustrates the impact of economic reforms on poverty and inequality with the aid of revealing findings from the National Sample Survey (NSS) data. According to Gupta, rural unemployment has in general increased since 1990-91 against the trend of a declining rate of unemployment since 1977-78. The number of poor in both rural and urban areas has risen significantly. This increase in the number of poor has been largely in rural areas due to reduced agricultural subsidies. The social expenditure in general has shown a decline.³¹

²⁸ Bhagwati, Jagdish. Poverty and Reforms : Friends or Foes? Journal of International Affairs, Fall 1998, vol. 52, no. 1, New York, Columbia University.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 42

³⁰ Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya India : Economic Development and Social Opportunity, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.

³¹ Gupta, S. P. Recent economic reforms in India and their impact on the poor and vulnerable sections of society, in Hanumantha Rao, C./ H. and Linnemann, Hans (ed) Economic Reforms and Poverty alleviation in India. New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1996.

Analysing the NSS 53rd round (January-December 1977) data Gaurav Datt says that the NSS estimates present a mixed picture. There is a moderate decline in urban poverty rates, but level of rural poverty has remained relatively unchanged during the 1990s.³²

Discussing about the world trade, employment and poverty, M.S. Swaminathan writes, “The recipe for poverty alleviation now is “micro-enterprises organised by self-help groups supported by micro-credit”. This is also the pathway recommended by Mahatma Gandhi, who taught us that the most important duty of independent India is to enable every woman and man to earn his or her daily bread, through technologies based on the principle of production by masses. The World Trade Agreement, in contrast, is based on the principle of competitive efficiency and free trade. Free trade ceases to be fair trade when the products of mass production technologies compete with those produced by masses (i.e. micro-enterprises).”³³

Swaminathan suggests that the World Trade Agreement should ensure that trade helps to create and not destroy jobs/livelihoods.³⁴

All these conditioned can be ensured by the state. The state has to be

³² Datta, Gaurav. Has poverty declined since economic-reforms? Statistical data analysis. Economic and Political Weekly, 11 December 1999, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

³³ Swaminathan, M. S. World Trade, Employment & Poverty – I, the Hindu (editorial page), 21 April, 2000, New Delhi.

³⁴ Swaminathan, M. S. World Trade Employment and Poverty – II, The Hindu (editorial page), 22 April 2000, New Delhi.

responsive towards the demands of the vulnerable sections of the society. Role of politics is crucial to this process. Talking about the process of democracy and development Mark Robinson and Gordon white emphasise on the need for making the polity more democratic to ensure development. They write, "...greater mass participation and popular pressure, and increased political representation by women and other disadvantaged groups, can help to make democratic regimes more sensitive to issues of poverty, social welfare, and forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and the like and impel them to take appropriate remedial action through policy commitments."³⁵

The review of literature suggests that many authors point out several problems with the anti-poverty programmes in its present form. State still remains an important actor central to the project of social reforms.

The above mentioned arguments offer us a broad horizon to study the implementation of anti-poverty programmes in a concrete setting. The root causes of poverty, shortcomings of the strategies adopted to eradicate poverty, and the defects in the implementation process mentioned in these studies help us to pose the research problems of our study in a better way.

The major anti-poverty programmes which are/were being implemented in Laikera Block include the integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP),

³⁵ Robinson, Mark and Whitle, Gordon. Introduction, in the volume edited by them, *The Democratic Developmental state-Politics and Institutional Designs*, p. 5, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Orissa State Financial Development Corporation (ODFDC) assistance, Modified Area Development Approach (MADA), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Swarnjayati Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY), Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY). Out of these programmes it is only in JGSY where full responsibility of implementation lies with the Gram Panchayat. In IAY the selection of the beneficiaries is done entirely by the people of different villages and the Panchayat members.

Except JGSY and IAY, responsibility of implementing other programmes lies with the Block officials. The Block Development Officer (B.D.O) alongwith his sub-ordinates and the Bank functionaries, implements these programmes.

In our study, we have taken of the implementation of IRDP, SGSY, JGSY and IAY in Laikera Block. We have also examined the authenticity of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) census (1997) and its consequences.

Chapter 2 of this study gives a synoptic picture of Laikera Block and outlines the methodology followed for the study. The analysis of the findings of the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes, is discussed in chapter 3. This chapter consists of two parts: one section focuses on the programmes coordinated by the Block Office and the other one being supervised by the Panchayat.

Our study also investigates the role performed by the bureaucracy and the elected representatives in connection with these programmes. Those findings are

critically discussed in chapter 4. In the concluding chapter all the findings of the study are summarised and some explanations are offered in order to understand the implementation process of the anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block.

CHAPTER – 2

PROFILE OF THE BLOCK OF LAIKERA

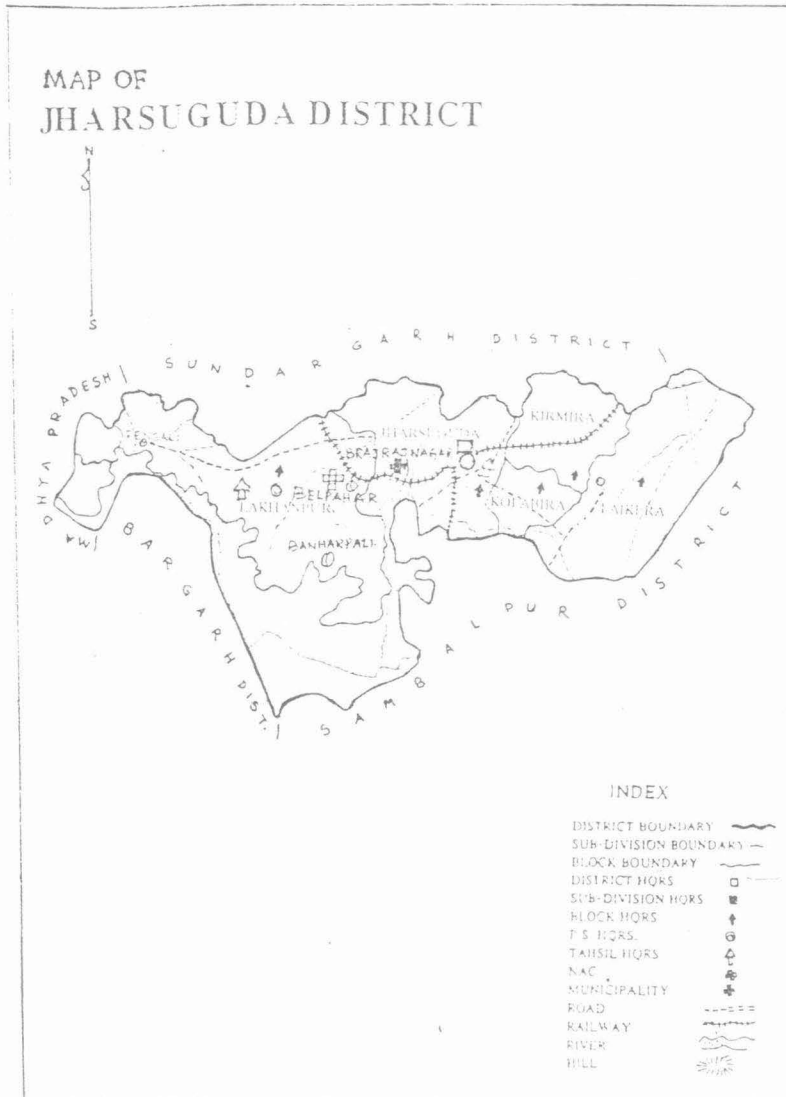
Laikera Block is situated in the eastern part of the district of Jharsuguda (formerly in the undivided Sambalpur district) in western Orissa. The Block headquarters, Laikera, is 26 kms away from the district headquarters Jharsuguda towards the north-east, and 399 kms from the state capital Bhubaneswar. The Block headquarters Laikera is on the Jharsuguda-Bamra district main road. Laikera Block has 256.01 square kms of geographical area. Most part of the north-east region of the Block is covered with forest.

Laikera is a very backward Block in the very backward region of western Orissa. According to the 1997 BPL census 59% of the rural families of Laikera Block are living below the poverty line (annual family income of less than Rs. 11000).

There are eight Gram Panchayats (GPs) in this Block consisting of 45 revenue villages. Regional disparity prevails within the Block. Three adjacent GPs viz. Tileimal, Pakelpada and Babuchipidihi are relatively more backward. The other five G.Ps namely Kulemura, Bhatlaida, Laikera, Sarangloi and Sahaspur are not as backward as the earlier three GPs. Around 68% of the total population of the former three GPs belong to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category



MAP OF JHARSUGUDA DISTRICT



SOURCE: DISTRICT STATISTICAL HAND BOOK
1993, JHARSUGUDA.

where as only around 42% of the total population of the later five GPs are Scheduled Tribes. The incidence of poverty is more severe in the earlier three GPs. An additional programme called Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) is being implemented in these three GPs.

DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES¹

The following table shows the distribution of population in Laikera Block.

TH-9013

Table 2.1
Population of Laikera Block (based on 1991 census)

SOCIAL GROUP	CATEGORY	TOTAL POPULATION
All Social Group	Male	20,393
	Female	20,871
	Total	41,264
Scheduled Castes	Male	3,585
	Female	3,767
	Total	7,361
Scheduled Tribes	Male	10,427
	Female	10,611
	Total	21,038

Table 2.1 shows that the female population is higher than the male population.

¹ Source : District Statistical Hand Book 1993 (Jharsuguda)



Percentage of SC population is 17.84% and that of ST population is 50.98% which is higher than in the average in the district and the state.

Total number of main workers of the Block is 22,206, out of which 12,143 are males and 10,063 are females. Out of these main workers 8,340 are classified as cultivators whereas 6,134 are agricultural labourers. The rest belong to other categories.

Literacy rate, according to 1991 census, in Laikera Block (excluding population of age group 0.6) is 40.21%. Literacy rate of males is 55.11% and that of females is 25.75%.

The literacy rate given above shows that though the population of the female is more than the male, their literacy rate is considerably lower than the male population. This is because of the neglect of girls in the field of education by their families.

The overall literacy rate is shown as 40.21% in the census report. But the actual rate is far below the above mentioned figure. During the field study, it was noted that those people who can only put their signature and can't read or write anything were also included as literate during the survey for the census.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Sambalpuri language is spoken by all the inhabitants of this region. However, in schools, the medium of instruction is Oriya.

Some tribes have their own dialects. But they communicate with others in Sambalpuri.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

CASTE AND TRIBE

The society in Laikera Block is highly stratified on the basis of caste hierarchy. Social relations are determined on caste lines. The concept of *Bhal lok* (higher caste) and *chhot lok* (lower caste) are associated with the social position of people according to the caste they are born in. Persons born in 'lower castes' are looked down upon by the members of the 'upper castes'. Here lies the root of caste-discrimination which affects the peoples' access to socio-economic facilities and resources.

There are no 'primitive tribes'² in this area.

The term *Jaet* is used for both tribe and caste in this area. Some tribes like "Gond" are considered to be higher castes whereas some tribes like "Kisan" are considered to be lower castes. Because of the *Zamindari* of the ancestors of Gond tribe, they enjoy a preeminent social position in this area.

Untouchability is practised towards some Scheduled Castes which further divorces them from the resources and opportunities of the social mainstream.

The first question that is mostly asked to a stranger who comes to

² the term is used by the Anthropologists, some prefer to call it "Pre-agrarian tribes" thinking the earlier term derogatory. Bonda tribe of Malkangiri area of Orissa comes in this category.

somebody's house is –“*Kaen lok a?*” (Which caste do you belong to?), which shows the predominance of the caste-system in the social consciousness.

List of Castes and Tribes

Higher Castes	Middle Type Castes	Lower castes (Untouchables)
Brahmin	Khati	Ganda (SC)
Teli	Luhura	Ghasia(SC)
Aghria	Sundhi	Chamar(SC)
Gaur	Bhandari	Dom(SC)
Mali	Sunari	Kandara(SC)
Gond (ST)	Keut (SC)	
Bhuyan (ST)	Khujria(SC)	
	Dhoba(SC)	
	Kisan(ST)	
	Kolha(ST)	
	Khadia(ST)	
	Oram(ST)	

Some Scheduled Castes such as Keut, Dhoba, Khujria etc. are the touchable Scheduled Castes, and Ganda, Ghasia Chamar etc. are the untouchable Scheduled Castes.

Residences of different castes and tribes are located mostly in clusters which are called as *Para*. It is noticed that in most of the villages the *Para* of the untouchable castes is situated at one end of the village which is away from the main road usually in an unhealthy area. The odd location of their *Para* deprives them of the opportunity of opening any shop. Even if they open any shop near

the main road, higher caste people don't come to that shop. Thus, it becomes difficult for the untouchables to carry on such type of business ventures.

Aghria, Teli, Gond etc. are the dominant castes/tribes in this area because of their place in the hierarchy of the caste system linked to their access to land and business activities.

One can count only a few Brahmin families in a very few villages of this area. However they are not the dominant caste in this area.

LAND HOLDINGS

Land holdings data available for the class wise number and area of operational holdings of the district Jharsuda for the year 1990-91³ shows that in the rural areas 789 households belonging to all social groups hold land below 0.02 hectares. Out of these households 202 belong to SC category and 350 belong to ST category.

The data regarding the large land holdings (more than 10 hectares) in the rural area of the district shows that 1460 households belonging to all social groups are in this category. Out of this only 25 are SC and 185 are ST.

The above figures show that most of the SC and ST are either landless or holding very small amount of land. The major chunk of land is owned by other castes. Though this data is for the whole district, the land holding profile of

³ Statistical hand book 1993 (Jharsuguda district)

Laikera Block is very similar to this.

Land records⁴ for different revenue villages of Laikera Block show that mostly the Aghria (other caste), Teli (other caste), Kisan (ST) and Gond (ST) are the main land holders in this areas. All people holding more than 40 acres of land, belong to these castes/tribes. There is not even a single SC person who belongs to this elite category.

Though some people belonging to Kisan and Gond tribes have large land holdings (as per the official records of the revenue Inspector), but in reality major parts of their land is sold to the Aghria caste people.⁵ There is a popular saying in this area – “*Gand Zamidar Chhatarpati, Zamin biki rahesan guti*” which means the Gond (ST) landlords sell their land and work as bonded labourers.

In the pre-independence period and just after the independence, majority of the landlords of this area belonged to Gond tribe. Some belonging to the Kisan tribe also had large chunks of land with them.

The Aghria caste people migrated to western Orissa from outside the district.⁶ Taking advantage of the innocence and difficulties of the tribals they bought land from them at cheaper rates. This process went on until the government made it illegal to buy land from the SC/ST. Even after this, the

⁴ Records from the office of the Revenue Inspector

⁵ Few Gond and Kisan tribe people are now also the large land holders

⁶ Senapati, Nilamani and Mahanti, Bhabakrushna (ed.), Orissa district gazettters (Sambalpur), Cuttack, Orissa govt, 1971

process of land alienation from the tribals continued in this area.

Most of the Aghria caste people are very rich according to the local standard and some even can be considered as capitalist farmers. Hardly any Aghria caste person is landless or poor. Their educational standard is the highest in this area. But they are included in the OBC list of the state and the central government. "This is due to politics" says one educated Aghria caste person.

CLASS CONFIGURATION

Class relations in this area are mostly based on land. During the field study the investigators asked about 100 poorest of the poor about why they were poor. 90 of them answered, "We don't have any land so we're poor." This is because agriculture is the main source of livelihoods in this area.

The terms *Mathbar* (wealthy) and *Kangal* (a destitute) are widely used to denote the rich and the poor respectively in this areas.

Though there is no clear cut division between the rich and the poor and many people of middle income category fall between the two, yet there is too much of differences in their living standards. Some poor people even do not have access to rice twice a day inspite of working for the whole day.

The popular saying, "*Dhain dhupi bara aur basi thei tera*" (Getting more by sitting and getting less by working) reflects the economic relations between the *Sahukar* (master) and the *Bhutiari* (wage labourer).

Most of the poor belong to the lower castes. The landless agricultural wage labourers and the bonded labourers mostly belong to Ganda, Ghasia, and Chamar castes and Gond or Kisan tribes.

OCCUPATIONS

Majority of the population of Laikera Block depends upon agriculture. Many people are landless agricultural labourers. Because of the lack of irrigation facilities, mostly one crop (paddy) is cultivated in a year in the monsoon season. The male agricultural labourers get 6 *tami* (about 4 kg) of paddy per day during the monsoons, which can be sold at Rs. 17 (per 4 kgs), and the women get 5 *tami* of paddy which can be sold at Rs. 15. In the off season for non-agricultural work, the wages vary from Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per day according to the work.

There are many bonded labourers in Laikera Block. There are mainly three kinds of bonded labourers (1) *Goti* (full time bonded labourer) (2) *Halia* (bonded labourer only in the monsoon period for ploughing the land) (3) *Gharkhia* (the person who works for the master only by eating and staying in the master's house – mostly children).

Indebtedness is the main cause for someone being a bonded labour. For taking an advance loan of Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000, bonded labourers have to work for their masters until they repay this money (no interest is charged over the loan) by getting about 2 kg of paddy (about Rs.8) per day. This rate varies from village to village. They are also paid some extra amount of paddy at the end of

the year. This process goes on for 10 years, 12 years or even for the entire lifetime of a bonded labourer until he repays the initial loan.

Most of the bonded labourers belong to the untouchable Scheduled Castes (Ganda, Ghasia, Chamar etc.) and scheduled tribes. In some cases, people of Gaur caste (other caste) are also bonded labourers. Almost all the bonded labourers work under the Aghria caste (other caste) big farmers.

There is no industry in this area. Business activities are very dull.

Now-a-days *bidi* making is being done by women (irrespective of their castes). There are also artisans in this Block. Other occupations prevail, but not on a large scale.

GENDER REALTIONS

Families are patriarchal in nature. But the relationship between husband and wife is not as unequal in case of scheduled tribes and Scheduled Castes as it is among the other castes. Wife beating is a common thing irrespective of castes/tribes in this area.

Now-a-days education of the girls is emphasised atleast upto middle school level.

POLITICAL SETTING

There exists a three-tier Panchayati Raj system in Orissa, so also in Laikera Block. There is Gram Panchayat at the village level; Panchayat Samiti at the

Block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level.

THE GRAM PANCHAYAT⁷

The head of the Gram Panchayat is called Sarpanch who is directly elected by the people. Ward members are also directly elected from different villages divided into different wards. Responsibility of implementing Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY) lies with the Gram Panchayat. It also selects beneficiaries for different government programmes. There are some other functions prescribed to the Gram Panchayat. Palli Sabhas are held in different villages, and Gram Sabhas at the Panchayat level. All the villagers are members of the Gram Sabha. These things are discussed in detail later on.

THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI

The head of the Panchayat Samiti is called the Panchayat Samiti Chairperson who is indirectly elected by the directly elected members from different Panchayats. The Sarpanchs of the Gram Panchayats situated within the Block are also members of the Panchayat Samiti. Panchayat Samiti is a powerful tier in the three-tier Panchayati Raj system in Orissa.

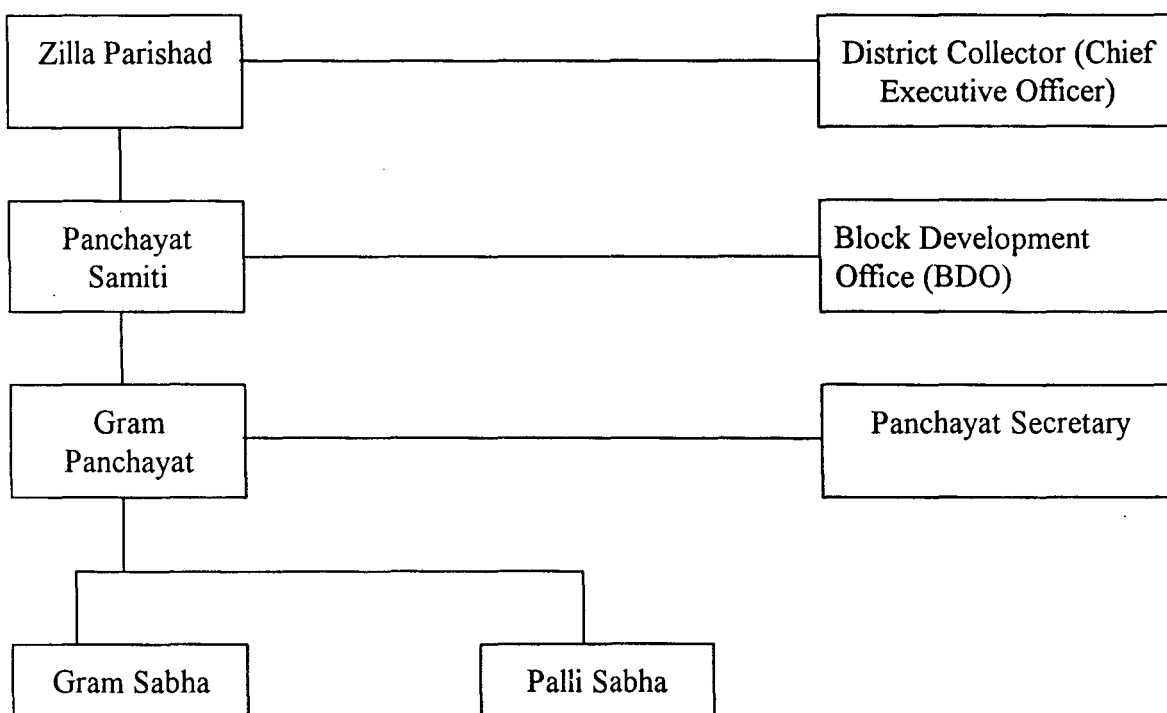
THE ZILLA PARISHAD

The head of the Zilla Parishad is called the Zilla Parishad President who is indirectly elected by the members directly elected on the basis of adult suffrage

⁷ Gram Panchayat Amendment Acts 1991, Government of Orissa, Bhubaneswar.

from every Block. There is also provision for the use of party symbols if elections to the Parishad are fought on party lines. Zilla Parishad is not so powerful.

Panchayati Raj System⁸



In all the three-tiers, one-third of the seats for different posts are reserved for women. There is also sub-reservation for the women of SC and ST category. Reservations for Scheduled Castes and scheduled tribes (including SC/ST women), according to the general provisions, prescribed on the basis of the proportions of their overall population also exist.

⁸ Bhargava B. S. and Samal Kashinath, Panchayati Raj system in Orissa : Problems and prospects, in Mahajan, V.S. (ed.), Agriculture Rural development and Panchayati Raj, vol. II.

MLA AND MP

The MLA seat for Laikera constituency is reserved for the ST category. Mr. Hemanand Biswal of Congress party won this seat for the fifth consecutive term in the recently concluded election for the Orissa state legislative assembly. Mr. Biswal has been the Deputy Chief Minister of Orissa for short periods. He has also been in charge of the portfolio of Panchayati Raj.

Earlier, Janata Dal was the main rival party of the Congress in this area. Now BJP has taken its place.

This area is a part of Deogarh Lok Sabha constituency. The MP from Deogarh is Mr. Debendra Pradhan from the BJP. This is his first term as an MP. Before him Mr. Sriballabh Panigrahi of the Congress party was representing Deogarh constituency.

METHODOLOGY

The aims and objectives of the study are already mentioned in the introduction to this study (first chapter).

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data.

Out of eight Panchayats of the Block, three Panchayats viz. Tileimal, Bhatlaiad and Kulemura were chosen for the study. This includes one of the most backward Panchayat (Tileimal), one comparatively developed Panchayat (Bhatlaida) and one in between the two(Kulemura).

Participatory observation along with interview method has been followed for this study.

As the investigator belongs to this Block so it was not very difficult to collect information from the people on several issues affecting their lives.

Two other persons (one is the elder brother and other is a friend of the investigator) both graduates, accompanied the investigator to different villages where they are known to the inhabitants. This helped in avoiding any suspicion on the part of the villagers.

To get access to the secret documents of different offices, the help of some influential persons having good relationship with the officials, was taken.

This field work was conducted from the 13 February to the 31 March 2000 for a period of 47 days. During the field study, Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha, election campaign meetings (election for the state legislative assembly) were attended. Passbooks and counter-foils of the loanee and the ledger folio of the banks were checked. Government assisted activities, assets, houses, occupations etc. of the beneficiaries were also checked. The investigator stayed both with poor and the rich of the area.

Developmental work sites and other work places of the poor were visited.

Assessment of the major anti-poverty programmes implemented by the Block office and the Gram Panchayat was done very carefully. List of

beneficiaries of the anti-poverty programmes of last 5 years i.e. 1995-96 to 2000 was obtained from the concerned levels. Sample beneficiaries were chosen out of these lists separately for different programmes. Technique of “stratified simple random sampling” and “purposive sampling” were followed for the selection of the sample beneficiaries.

The sample beneficiaries consists of about one-sixth of the total beneficiaries. Semi structured questionnaires were used for in-depth interview with both the beneficiaries and the poor who were left out in these programmes. Their statements were cross-checked by asking other people of the same village.

In-depth interviews of the elected representatives and different concerned officials were also taken but in a non-formal manner of having friendly chats so as to make them reveal the facts.

With the help of the above methodology we hope that better understanding of the research problem can be achieved.

CHAPTER-3

IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES IN LAIKERA BLOCK

In this chapter we focus on the actual implementation of the anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block. The first part of the chapter examines the programmes which are implemented by the Block officials. And the second part of the chapter deals with those programmes where Panchayats are directly and actively involved. In the second part we have included the discussion in connection with the BPL list and its consequences.

PART - I

Programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Swarnjayati Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY), Modified Area Development Approach (MADA), Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA), Orissa State Financial Development Corporation (OSFDC) assistance etc. are/were being implemented by the Block officials. But we have taken up only two major programmes viz. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojan (SGSY) for a detailed analysis.

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (IRDP)

IRDP is in no longer operation now. It is merged with the new programme namely Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna (SGSY) which was launched on the 1st April 1999. As IRDP was a major anti-poverty programme and some of ^{the} beneficiaries are still carrying on their activities, so it is fully relevant to study the implementation of the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Main objective of IRDP was to launch a direct attack on rural poverty. Target approach for rural poor was its strategy. A target group of rural poor who belongs to the families Below Poverty Line (BPL) were given assistance under IRDP. The assistance includes subsidy by the Government and term credit by Financial Institutions. To improve the assets base of the poor and to provide them self-employment were its main objectives.

The target group consists of families of Small and Marginal Farmers, Agricultural Labourers and Rural Artisans etc. whose per capita monthly expenditure does not exceed the poverty line (The BPL census is currently being carried out in all states at the beginning of each plan period). 50% of the benefits in IRDP is reserved for SCs /STs and 40% and 3% for women and the physically handicapped persons respectively. The Gram Sabha was to be involved for selecting the beneficiaries in IRDP. The Gram Sabha was to verify the BPL list and then the beneficiaries were to be selected. The final list was to be sent to the

Block and the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) after that.

Subsidy¹ in IRDP was in the following pattern -

- 25% for Small Farmers (SF);
- 33 1/3 % for Marginal Farmers (MF); and
- 50% for SCs/STs beneficiaries and physically Handicapped persons.

There was also prescribed ceiling on subsidy amount.

District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) was the implementing agency for IRDP. There was a Governing Body at the district level, which was to provide guidance to the DRDA. In this Governing Body the local MPs, MLAs and Chairman of Zilla Parishad, Heads of District Development Departments and representatives of SCs/STs, women and NGOs were included and their suggestions were supposed to be taken into consideration. In the Block level IRDP was being carried out by the Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO was being assisted for the above purpose by the Block staff and village level functionaries. IRDP was financed on a 50:50 cost-sharing basis by the centre and the states. Funds for this purpose were being released directly to the DRDA. DRDA was giving it to the banks as advance subsidy. The activities could be taken up in primary sectors, secondary sectors and tertiary sectors. But the needs of the beneficiaries and the local resource endowment were to be taken into account. In accordance with the guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India

¹ Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, Govt. of India. Annual Report 1998 –1999, New Delhi.

(RBI) the District Credit Plan and the Annual Action Plan and Annual Action Plan were to be formulated.

Assets (Block capital) and cash (working capital) were to be provided to the beneficiaries according to the requirements of the activities. From the year 1991-92 disbursement of assistance in cash was permitted under the cash disbursement scheme. It was done so that the beneficiaries can be given greater choice in purchasing assets. The assets procured should be of standard quality, at economic prices and to the satisfaction of the beneficiary.²

MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

For monitoring and supervision of IRDP, there were many committees starting from the central level to the grass roots level. Central Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) etc. were formed for this purpose. At the DRDA and Block level the District and Block functionaries were to carry on field visits for physical verification of assets.

In order to review the credit arrangements and to recommend changes, many committees had been constituted. Other than the representatives of both central and state governments, representatives of commercial banks, NABARD, RBI and other officials of different concerned levels were also included in these committees.

² These guidelines are from the "Annual Report 1998-1999" published by the ministry of Rural Area and Employment, government of India.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME (IRDP) IN THE BLOCK OF LAIKERA**

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Jharsuguda district had financed the following amount of subsidy to Laikera Block in the last 4 years under IRDP.

Table 3.1

Amount of Subsidy financed to Laikera Block in last four years under IRDP.

Year	Amount
1995-96	Rs.17.57 Lakhs
1996-97	Rs. 13.56 Lakhs
1997-98	No finance because of negative finance in the previous years.
1998-99	Rs.2.90 Lakhs

Source : Official subsidy utilization records of DRDA, Jharsuguda

Table 3.2

**Number of beneficiaries and family involved in last 4 years in
Laikera Block under IRDP**

Year	No.of beneficiaries	No.of families involved
1995-96	349	321
1996-97	206	158
1997-98	-----	-----
1998-99	38	36

Source : Officials beneficiaries list of DRDA Jharsuguda

The above figures show the downward trend of assistance under IRDP in Laikera Block. When the DRDA functionaries were asked about the cause of this declining trend they could not provide any answers. They said that they can only provide the figure but they don't know the cause. Later on the District Collector was contacted and he said that because of the negative finance in the previous years there came a decline of finance after 1996.

ACTIVITIES UNDER IRDP

In Laikera Block loans were provided for agriculture, industry (manually processed), and small business and animal husbandry activities. The main non-agricultural activities were piggery and Paddy and cereal Processing Industry (PCPI) known in the local language as *Dhankuchni*

For agricultural activities loans were provided for diesel (kerosene or electric also) pump set, dry land farming (groundnut cultivation), *Potal* cultivation etc. Bullocks were also provided for land ploughing.

AMOUNT OF LOAN SANCTIONED (SUBSIDY AND CREDIT) FOR SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES

Table 3.3

Loan Amount for different activities

Activity	Amount of loan sanctioned
Piggery	Around Rs.12780
PCPI(Dhankuchni)	Around Rs. 6000
Bullocks	Around Rs. 4600
Dry land farming	Around Rs. 4620
Diesel pump set	Around Rs.12000 to Rs.18000

Source-Subsidy utilisation certificates of Laikera Block office of the period 1995-1999.

INVESTIGATION OF THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF IRDP IN LAIKERA BLOCK.

A sample of 65 beneficiaries was chosen out of the beneficiaries of last 4 years i.e., 1995-1999 for detailed investigations. Beneficiaries lists were obtained from the Block office. During our field work we observed that the subsidy utilisation certificates or the lists of the beneficiaries are not available in proper order. Some of them are even missing. In fact, I have to rummage through the stacks of files in the Block office to get these information.

While selecting the sample of beneficiaries, care was taken to include the SC, ST, Other Caste (OC), women, relatively rich and poor, small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultural labourers etc. All most all varieties assisted activities were carefully included in the investigations.

Statements of the beneficiaries were cross-checked by asking other people of the same village and different concerned officials. Priority Sector Loan Passbooks and Savings Account Passbooks were checked, wherever those were given to the beneficiaries. Counter-foils of the repayment receipts were checked if available. Ledger Folio of the beneficiaries were also checked.

NON AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES UNDER IRDP

Table 3.4

**Findings from non-agricultural activities (PCPI and Piggery)
(Responses of 25 sample Beneficiaries)**

The case	No of cases out of 25 sample beneficiaries	Percentage (base=25)
Requested agricultural loan but the V.L.W refused	10	40%
Paid bribe to the V.L.W (minimum Rs.50 and or cock etc.)	13	52%
Delay in Block office and bank in getting the loan	25	100%
Ran to the bank for several times before getting the loan (at least 4 times or more)	20	80%
Not disbursed full amount of loan as sanctioned (only given half or less than half of the sanctioned amount)	25	100%
Disbursed in absence of Block representative	14	56%
Given both pass books	3	12%
Given only savings passbook	2	8%
Not given any passbooks	20	80%
Assisted activity started	10	40%
No supervision of the activity by any concerned functionaries	25	100%
Repaying the loan	18	72%

MALFUNCTION AND MISAPPROPRIATION BY THE BANKS.

Table 3.4 clearly shows that the beneficiaries of non-agricultural activities like PCPI (*Dhankuchni*) piggery etc. were not given the full amount of loan as sanctioned as a part of the IRDP programme. Actually to the people we interviewed the bank functionaries have refused to disburse the full amount of the loan. For the SC and ST beneficiaries, the subsidy amount is 50% of the loan. The banks have disbursed only half or less than half amount of the loan to the beneficiaries. In this way only the subsidy amount was disbursed and the rest amount i.e. the credit is locked up in the savings account of the loanee.

Generally two passbooks are opened in the name of the loanee for financial transaction. One is the Priority Sector Loan passbook and the other is the savings fund account passbook. Even if half amount of the loan was disbursed to the loanee, in the Priority Sector Loan Passbook full amount as sanctioned was mentioned as debited against the loanee. In the savings account entries were made as the rest amount deposited there. It was because the loan had to be deposited in the savings account (wherever necessary) of the loanee and the loanee would withdraw that amount from time to time. But in practice the bank did not permit any such withdrawal. Whenever the beneficiaries have gone to the banks for the rest amount they were completely refused of any further disbursement. During the time of disbursement, assets which may cost hardly half amount of the loan sanctioned, were given to the beneficiaries. Whenever the

beneficiaries protested this, the bank managers said to them, “You need not repay the loan. This is the help provided to you by the government. Go and be happy. If you will take the full amount then you can not repay it.”⁴

This matter was brought to the notice of the B.D.O from time to time, but no one looked into this matter. Some concerned Block officials took personal interest and went to the Punjab National Bank, Laikera Branch with the beneficiaries who were refused further withdrawal of money inspite of carrying on the activities. The Branch manager scolded the Block officials and drove them out of the bank. Some beneficiaries even could not start the activities because of insufficient amount of capital.

There are many banks operating in Laikera Block. The leading banks of this area includes Punjab National Bank, Bolangir Anchalin Gramya Bank, and the branches of sambalpur district co-operative central bank. These banks are assigned different areas of operation in these anti-poverty programmes. The concerned bank of that area of operation finances the beneficiaries of the area concerned.

Too many complaints regarding not disbursing the full amount of loan as sanctioned were heard by the investigator against the Punjab National Bank, Laikera Branch. Even many beneficiaries were not given the passbooks. From

⁴ As told by the Welfare Extension Officer of the Block office and some loanee to the investigator in March 2000.

table 3.4 it is known that 80% of the sample beneficiaries are not given either the priority Sector Loan passbook or the savings account passbook. Only 8% of the sample beneficiaries are given only savings account passbook.

The following cases reveal the ground reality of the banks in Laikera Block. These cases are neither isolated nor rare. These are quite common in this area.

**THE CASE OF MRS. BEDAMATI KUMRA - THE TRIBAL WOMAN
(GIST OF THE ACCOUNT WITH CHECKING OF PASSBOOK AND
ASSETS)**

Mrs. Bedamati Kumra of village Mudrajore had applied for a loan to carry on *Dhan Kuchni* (PCPI) activity in the year 1997. Actually the Village Level Worker (VLW) came to her village and called some people and asked them to opt for *Dhan Kuchni* (PCPI) loan informing that loan for *Dhan Kuchni* was being provided by the government to the women. The VLW wrote the names of the wives of some of the men gathered there. Later on these women were called to fulfill the formal procedures. Mrs. Bedamati's name was included in the list. Later on she was informed that she along with some other women of her village would to get the loan for *Dhan Kuchni*. The sanction amount was Rs. 6256/-.

All these women accompanied by their husbands had to run to Punjab National Bank, Laikera for more than four times as the Branch Manager was sending them back on this or that pretext. The women had opened savings fund

account giving Rs. 100/- each before getting the loan.

At last the beneficiaries were given some assets from the store of a dealer of Bamra town which is about 45 kms away from the villages of the beneficiaries. The assets included one bicycle, one big aluminum pot and one bucket. No Block representative was present during the disbursement. The total cost of these three things might have amounted to Rs.2000/- only. When the Branch Manager was asked about the rest amount by the beneficiaries, he did not respond but told his peon to inform the beneficiaries to come to the bank the next day. When the beneficiaries met the Branch Manager on the next day he did not see them till the afternoon. Later in the afternoon he scolded them saying, "Go back home. You can not repay the loan so no money will be given. You need not repay any amount for whatever is given to you." The next day the beneficiaries met the B.D.O in the Block office and told him every thing. He said to them, " O.K. I will talk to the Branch Manager." But in reality no action was taken.⁵

Many of the beneficiaries could not start the activity due to lack of working capital. Later on notices were served to the beneficiaries to repay the loan. The beneficiaries including Mrs. Bedamati repaid that amount by selling paddy out of their hard-earned wages.

During our field study the Priority Sector Loan passbook of Mrs.

⁵ As told by Mrs. Bedamati Kumar

Bedamati was checked. In that passbook Rs.6256/- is written as a loan against her while as she was given the above mentioned assets amounting to Rs. 2000/- only.

**THE CASE OF MRS. JASODA AND MR. CHAITAN- THE SC COUPLE
(GIST OF THEIR ACCOUNTS WITH CHECKINGS OF THE COUNTER-
FOILS AND ASSETS)**

Mrs. Jasoda was selected for piggery and Mr. Chaitan for a yoke of bullocks under IRDP in the year 1997. The sanction for piggery was Rs. 12,780/- (as mentioned in the subsidy utilisation certificates of the Block office) but pigs of Rs.4300/- was bought and given to Mrs. Jasoda. No amount as working capital was given to Mrs. Jasoda. For rearing the pigs she needed some financial resources. When the Branch Manager of the concerned bank i.e., Punjab National Bank, Laikera was approached for the rest of the amount, the manager scolded the beneficiary and drove her out of the bank. I had checked the Ledger Folio of the bank and found that entries have been made that Rs. 12780/- has been disbursed to Mrs. Jasoda.

The sanction of loan for Mr. Chaitan was Rs. 4600/- (as per the subsidy utilisation certificate). But bullocks of Rs. 4200/- were bought for him.

As the above couple was informed about the sanctioned amount so they approached the bank for time and again but were not given the total amount of the loan. The Branch Manager of Punjab National Bank told them, “ You can not

repay the loan. When we would go for repayment you would lock your doors and go away. So no more money will be given to you. You need not repay for whatever is given to you.”

Later on, the bank served notices to the couple to repay the loan. Notice was served to Mr. Chaitan to repay Rs. 2100/- and to Mrs. Jasoda to repay Rs. 8367/-.

Mr. Chaitan went to the bank and repaid Rs. 1400/- on dated 5.1.2000. In addition to the counter-foil of Rs. 1400/- paid for Mr. Chaitan's loan, one more counter-foil of Rs. 4105/- as repayment of Mrs. Jasoda's loan was given to Mr. Chaitan. Mr. Chaitan did not understand why two counter-foils were given to him. This clearly shows that the credit money of Mrs. Jasoda was deposited in her savings account and she was not informed regarding this. Later on the bank manager was recovering the loan out of the savings account. It means that the transactions were being carried not by Mrs. Jasoda but by the Branch Manager of the Punjab National Bank, Laikera in fake. Some concerned Block and DRDA functionaries revealed this fact to me.

The beneficiaries were not fully aware of the bureaucratic transaction involved in the process of getting the loan. Even if some beneficiaries knew, they were ^{not} allowed to withdraw their rest amount of loan. The savings account is just a formality by the bank in accordance with the procedure of the loan in IRDP. In this way the banks are giving no credit to the beneficiaries. Only the

subsidy amount or even less than that are being given. Even low quality and unnecessary assets are being given at the behest of the banks. This exposes the nexus between the bank and the dealers of different assets. The Branch Manager of the Punjab National Bank, Laikera, reveals this fact himself. (Details given in the account of his interview)

RESPONSE OF THE BRANCH MANAGER, PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK, LAIKERA (REGARDING THE DISBURSEMENT OF HALF OR LESS THAN HALF AMOUNT OF THE LOAN SANCTIONED)

During my field study I contacted the present Branch Manager of Punjab National Bank, Laikera- Mr. Narayan Das. During the course of the interview I asked to him, “Sir, why is your bank not disbursing the full amount of the loan to the beneficiaries? You are disbursing half of the amount or some assets, which you are calculating to be half of the loan amount. The working capital is not at all given to carry on the activities. If any beneficiary wants to withdraw money from his or her savings account then he or she is not permitted to do so. Even the passbooks are not being given to them.”

Mr. Narayan Das answered me, “So you have collected too much of information. It is for want of manpower that we are not giving the passbooks. But they are issued counter foils of the deposited receipt. Anybody can check it at anytime.”

About the disbursement of only the half or less than half amount Mr.

Narayan Das said, “The managers are liable to transfer every year. They have decided to do this for personal reasons. Instead of going to the field for many times for recovery of the loan it is better not to disburse any credit from the bank. In piggery activity, money for shed and fodder is deposited in the savings account of the person instead of giving it to him. In this area natural food is available to the pigs so there is no need of money for that. And giving half amount of loan sanctioned is not true. Only Rs. 1000/- is kept in the bank for the loan of Rs. 17000/-. And the beneficiaries only show the animals of somebody else to get money from the banks.”

The researcher later on found that whenever these types of fraud has occurred it has happened with the complete knowledge of the Bank manager and some Block and village level functionaries. The answers of the Bank Manager are full of blatant lies and contrary to the responses of the beneficiaries, counter-foils and the ledger-folio. It was noticed that he was just defending the activities of the Bank Managers by giving false answers.

RESPONSES OF BLOCK AND DRDA OFFICIALS.

The fact regarding the disbursement of half amount of loan sanctioned or less than that by the banks and also not giving any passbooks to the beneficiaries, are revealed by some of the officials of the Block and the DRDA office. They include the Block Development Officer (B.D.O), Welfare Extension Officer (W.E.O) and the Progress Assistant (P.A), of the Block office and the statistical

Investigator and the Assistant Project Director (Finance) of the DRDA office. (The details of their revelation are given in the chapter about the role of the bureaucracy)

Mr. Satish Ch.Naik , Statistical Investigator, DRDA, Jharsuguda says “Non-Progress Assets (NPA) are sometimes given to the beneficiaries at the behest of the banks.

Mr.Satish Ch.Naik again said, “The banks, disbursing only half amount of the loan sanctioned to the beneficiary is known to all. The banks want to adjust the loan from the DRDA advance subsidy amount. They do not want to fall in recovery problems. So they give half of the amount i.e. only subsidy amount is given to the beneficiary. The rest amount, which should be given by the bank as credit to the beneficiaries, is made entry in the savings fund account of the beneficiaries as if it is deposited there by the beneficiaries themselves. And passbooks are not given to the beneficiaries. Even if passbooks are given then those are completely blank without any entry.

The beneficiaries are unknown about the savings account. Even if somebody knows it and approaches the bank, he or she is not permitted to withdraw that amount. Later on the bank carries on fake transaction and make entry in the ledger folio that the loan is being repaid. The amount from the savings account is transferred as repayment of the loan. But there is a provision that beneficiary can't repay the loan before a stipulated period i.e., the grace

period. ~~without giving the credit.~~ There are different grace periods for different activities. After the grace period the repayment is to be started. If any beneficiary repays the loan before the grace period then the subsidy to him or her would be forfeited.

So the bank has to calculate the interest of the credit amount in the grace period ~~without giving the credit.~~ Then the banks send notices to the beneficiaries after the grace period to repay that calculated amount only. And the amount of credit is transferred from the savings account of the beneficiaries to the recovery account. Sometimes the banks even calculate interest upon the subsidy amount inspite of repeated instructions of the DRDA to the banks not to do so. Interest must not be charged over the subsidy amount. The Banks and the Blocks give false subsidy utilisation certificates to the DRDA. Though the authorities of the DRDA are well known of these facts still then they are silent about it”.

MANIPULATION OF THE PROGRAMME BY THE V.L.W.S

Table 3.4 shows that the role of the V.L.W. is quite important as far as the IRDP programme is concern. It is because they act as a bridge between the people and the Block office. Out of 25 sample beneficiaries, 10 (40%) of them said that they had requested the V.L.W. for agricultural loan (something like diesel pump set or bullocks), but the V.L.W refused them these loans and motivated to apply for loans for non-agricultural activities.

The Welfare Extension Officer, Laikera Block, said to the researcher that

in the non-agricultural activities alongwith assets (block capital) about half of the loan amount (including expenses) is to be given as working capital. But the banks don't disburse this amount to the beneficiaries, as they want to adjust the loan out of the subsidy only. So sub-standard assets are given and the cost of those things is manipulated together with the dealer. Hence the V.L.W. is instructed by the banks to motivate people to opt for these types of small industry or small business activities, which involves more working capital. The V.L.W might be getting some commission in these dealings-But in diesel pump set or Bullocks the assets are to be purchased out of the total amount of money sanctioned. So there is less chance of misappropriation. Hence the V.L.W. motivates the people to take these loans at the behest of the banks.

One can notice from table 3.4 that 52% of the sample beneficiaries had to bribe the V.L.W. to be selected for the loan. The V.L.Ws demanded cash as well as kind from the people in connection with writing the application form and selecting them for the loan.

DELAY IN THE BLOCK OFFICE AND BANK

The Block office delays the procedure of forwarding the applications to the upper levels for the sanction of the loan. 100% of the sample beneficiaries (Table 3.4) complained delay in getting the loan. The Banks make the loanee to run to the Bank for many times under different pretexts.

NO SUPERVISION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Table 3.4 shows that there is absolutely no supervision of the activities. This is one of the major causes of the failure of the programme. Even the banks disburse the assets in absence of any Block representatives. In PCPI all the disbursements are done in the absence of the Block representatives.

DRY LAND FARMING (GROUND NUT CULTIVATION) AND *POTAL* CULTIVATION UNDER IRDP

Table 3.5

Findings from dry land farming activity (groundnut cultivation) (Responses of 10 sample beneficiaries)

The Case	No.of cases out of 10 sample beneficiaries	Percentage (base=10)
Bribe paid to the VLW	8	80%
No money only seed, fertilizer etc. given	10	100%
No account was given for the things provided	10	100%
No any passbook given	10	100%
Ground nut cultivation was in loss due to bad weather and unknown method of cultivation	10	100%
Supervision (once) by the Agricultural officer	10	100%
Activity started	10	100%
Repaying the loan	10	100%

In the Dry land Farming (loan was given for groundnut cultivation and in the subsidy utilisation certificate it was named as Dry Land Farming) groundnut seed and fertilizer was given. There is no account regarding the total cost of the seed and fertilizer. The sanctioned amount was Rs. 5775/- and subsidy for SC and ST was Rs. 2887/-. According to the respondents the total cost of the seed and fertilizer given may come around Rs. 2000/-. But no working capital was given. Passbooks were also not given. Table 3.5 shows that 100% of the sample beneficiaries started groundnut cultivation as per the little guidance given by the agriculture officer. But the agriculture officer did not turn off for the second time. 100% of the sample beneficiaries said that because of bad weather and unknown and faulty method of cultivation the crop was resulted in loss. No one started the activity for the second time next year. All the beneficiaries were served notices later on by the bank to repay some specified dues. They had to repay the loan by selling their paddy.

Table 3.6

Findings from *Potal* cultivation activity (Responses of 10 sample beneficiaries)

The case	No. of cases out of 10 sample beneficiaries	Percentage(base=10)
Paid bribe to V.L.W	10	100%
About ¼ of the sanctioned amount was disbursed	10	100%
Passbooks given	10	100%
Entries made in Loan passbook as full amount of the loan disbursed	10	100%
No entry in savings passbook (except that of the opening deposit of Rs. 100)	10	100%
<i>Potal</i> cultivation started	3	30%
Repaying the loan	7	70%
No supervision of the activity	10	100%

Table 3.6 shows that in *Potal* cultivation 100% of the sample Beneficiaries were given only about ¼ of the sanctioned amount. No seed or fertilizer was given to them. Only some amount of cash was disbursed. The sanctioned amount was Rs.11300/-. All the loan passbooks given to the beneficiaries of *Potal* cultivation contains fake writings as if full amount was disbursed. All the savings fund account passbooks are blank. In this activity also

the V.L.W. informed those people whom he liked and took bribe (atleast Rs. 50) to write for the loan (i.e., to write the application) and to select them for the loan. Table 3.6 shows that 70% of the sample beneficiaries are repaying the loan. In *Potal* cultivation very less number of beneficiaries started the same activity. Most of them invested the money in the cultivation of other vegetables, which they thought suitable for them. There was no supervision of the activity by any functionaries.

The case of Mr. Dillip Dhurua (gist of his accounts with checking of pass books)

Mr. Dillip (Scheduled Tribe poor peasant) applied for a loan for *potal* cultivation as per the information of the VLW. The VLW wrote his name and all other information required for the loan and took Rs.50/- from him. The VLW. (Mr. Choudhary) belongs to Agharia caste (other caste category). Mr.Dillip had to pay that bribe in fear of not being selected if the VLW. was not paid the amount he demands.

Mr. Dillip and some other villagers of the same village were informed that they were selected for the loan for *Potal* cultivation. They got the information from the Block office that Rs. 11300/- was sanctioned for each of them.

Mr. Dillip says, "The Bank Manager of Punjab National Bank, Laikera gave me only Rs. 1000/-. Same amount was given to others also. We were not given any seed or fertilizer. I started the cultivation. Later on money was

required for fertiliser and fencing of the vegetable garden. I went to the bank and asked for the rest of the money. They gave me only Rs. 2000/-. They didn't give the rest amount inspite of my repeated requests. The Bank Manager said to me that my money was being adjusted in the repayment of my mother's loan for ground nut cultivation.”⁶

The case of other villagers of the same loan is similar to that of Mr.Dillip except the fact that Mr. Dillip's loan amount was said to have been adjusted against his mother's repayment where as the other villagers were simply not paid the remainder amount.

False entries in the Priority Sector Loan passbook of Mr. Dillip Dhurua.⁷

Entries made in the loan passbook of Mr. Dillip Dhurva		Actual amount given to Mr. Dillip Dhurua by Punjab National Bank, Laikera
Date	Amount of loan debited	
13.1.97	Rs.3000	Rs. 1000
4.2.97	Rs. 8300	Rs. 2000
Amount outstanding Rs. 11300		Actually disbursed Rs.3000

⁶ As told to the investigator in March 2000.

⁷ Information by checking the priority sector loan pass book of Mr. Dhurua alongwith his statements.

ASSISTANCE FOR DIESEL/KEROSENE PUMP SET UNDER IRDP

Table 3.7

Findings from the assistance for diesel pump set (Responses from 20 sample beneficiaries with checking of assets and activities)

The case	No. of cases out of 20 sample beneficiaries	Percentage (base=20)
Paid bribe to different functionaries	10	50%
Using the pump set for irrigation to cultivate vegetables, chilly etc.	17	85%
Getting profit because of the pump set (including the hire out of the pump set)	18	90%
Repaying the loan	17	85%
Rich according to local standard (Irrespective of Caste/Tribe) indicators of being rich peasant having big houses with patch of land attached to it and big heaps of straw indicating cultivation of more then 4 acres of land a dove of cattle, well etc.)	15	75%
No supervision of the activity /asset	20	100%

Table 3.7 shows that assistance for diesel/Kerosene pump set has become successful. It's because it has helped in vegetable and profitable chilly and oil seed cultivation. Lack of irrigation facilities in Laikera Block keep the land of the peasant dry and uncultivated after the monsoon. So the pump set have helped in irrigating the land from wells or other small water reservoirs. 85% of the sample beneficiaries are cultivating different vegetables, chilly and different oil seeds. If somebody has a well near his home and a patch of land then the cultivation goes

on round the year.

The beneficiaries are even hiring out the pump sets and are able to earn some money. Most of the beneficiaries repay the loan regularly out of the profit generated from hiring the pump sets to others. The pump sets were bought out of the full amount of loan sanctioned. So there was little chance for foul play by the bank functionaries over the working capital. However it is alleged that the bank functionaries have nexus with the dealers and sometimes the cost of the asset is manipulated.

Table 3.7 shows that 75% of the sample beneficiaries are rich farmers by the local standard. Irrespective of their caste (SC,ST, or other caste) they are the rich farmers who are selected for getting the pump set under IRDP. They are cultivating more than 5 acres of land which includes *Bahal* land (high quality land where high yielding variety of crops can be grown).

The Aghria caste (other caste) people are the main beneficiaries of diesel pump sets . They are all rich farmers. But they are either categorised as small Farmer or Marginal Farmer in the records of the Block office. in the other caste category only Aghria caste rich farmers are provided assistance by the Block office. Their names are also included in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) list because of their influence over the surveyors. This issue is discussed later on in the context of BPL census.

ASSISTANCE FOR BULLOCKS

Assistance for bullocks to the people of Laikera Block is also a success story. Bullocks are bought by the bank at a lower cost of about Rs. 400/- to Rs. 600/- of the total amount sanctioned (as per the responses of the Beneficiaries). Still then there is less foul play, as there is no working capital involved in this assistance. Bullocks are of much use for the peasants and they are benefited a great deal from this assistance.

During the field work in Laikera Block I was told that the beneficiaries themselves cheat the system. I was told that some of them had taken the loan for buying bullocks and pigs. But in reality they had not bought them. Instead they had shown the animals of somebody else and got the loan amount. However, during my field work I did not come across many instances of this kind. In these cases it is found that the VLW and the Veterinary Assistance Surgeon (VAS) had taken big amount of bribe from the beneficiaries.

SWARNJAYANTI GRAM SWAROZGAR YOJANA (SGSY)

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was launched on the 1st of April 1999 replacing the earlier programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), and Million Well Schemes (MWS). These programmes are no longer in operation now. They are merged into the new programme SGSY. But the modus operandi of SGSY is

almost similar to IRDP.

In SGSY, Self -Help Groups (SHG) will be given importance. And care would be taken so that women could be involved in each Self Help Group . According to the manual published by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, the persons assisted will be described as 'Swarojgaris' and not 'beneficiaries'. By newly describing the term the government intends to treat the people not as passive beneficiaries but as active participants in the welfare programme of the state.

OBJECTIVES OF SGSY

SGSY aims to establish a large number of micro -enterprises so that sustainable income can be provided to the rural poor. It aims to bring the assisted family above poverty line in a period of three years. Income generating activity clusters are given emphasis in SGSY. Some key activities are selected for each block and the Self Help Groups are provided with subsidy-cum-credit to carry on the specified activity. At least half of the groups in each Panchayat Samiti will be exclusively women groups. According to the guidelines of the programme, training will be provided to the groups and marketing network will be established. According to the programme, the welfare of the vulnerable section is given priority. According to the reservations atleast 50% of the Swarozgaris will be from the community of SCs/STs, 40% will be women and 3% will be the disabled.

SUBSIDY⁸

The SGSY manual (2000) of Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India mentions that SGSY seeks to promote multiple credit rather than a one-time credit 'injection'. Subsidy under Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana would be uniform at 30% of the project cost subject to ceiling of Rs. 7,500 (for SC/ST it would be 50% and Rs. 10000 respectively. For SHGs, subsidy would be 50% of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.25 lakh. There will be no limit on the subsidy under irrigation projects.

SELECTION PROCEDURE OF SWAROJGARIS IN SGSY.⁹

According to the guide lines of SGSY selection of the Swarajgais is participatory in nature. The Swarojgaris will be selected in Gram Sabha with maximum number of the poor present there.

Often the poor villagers are unable to attend the Gram Sabha meeting. So to increase the participation of the poor in SGSY a 3 member committee consisting of the BDO or his representative, the Sarpanch and the Bank officers will visit each habitation of the Panchayat with a prior schedule drawn up for this purpose and duly published. Then out of the BPL families the team must then ascertain the persons who can be covered for the designated key

⁸ This and the earlier related information are collected from "SGSY a brief overview "and catalysing rural change programme of the Ministry of Rural Development" published by Ministry of Rural Development Govt. of India.

⁹ Informations from "Guide Lines SGSY published by Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi, 1999.

activity. All these procedures must be conducted in a transparent manner.

The clause 3.23 of the "Guide Lines" says " ...it is possible that number of such potential Swarozgaris would be more than the programme available to the bank/B.D.O. In such a case the fact may be made known and the best of the potential entrepreneurs can be taken up for final say. While SGSY is not a programme that targets only the poorest of the poor, it should be the endeavour of the committee to cover the relatively poorer among the BPL families provided however they are otherwise eligible."

After the selection procedure is completed, the BDO shall arrange to have the applications filled by the selected persons themselves. The proforma prescribed by the bank should be simple and in local language. The bank should sanction the loan in 15 days and at any rate not later than one month, suddenly after it receives the applications. Those IRDP beneficiaries who did not cross the poverty line can also be provided credit in SGSY by either the same bank which disbursed the initial loan or any other bank. Selection of Group in SGSY would be made in accordance with the potential of that group. The activities of the group and their team work will be noticed at first then if it is found satisfactory then the group would be selected for SGSY. Successful earlier DWCRA group can also be selected for SGSY.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SGSY IN LAIKERA BLOCK

Subsidy disbursement records of District Rural Development Agency

(DRDA), Jharsuguda shows that it has sanctioned Rs. 6.43 Lakhs subsidy to Laikera Block under SGSY by February 2000, out of which Rs. 5.73 Lakhs has been already disbursed.

SGSY is a new programme. So inspite of some training given to the Block officials they expressed their inability to understand the nature of the programme and its main focus. SGSY needs a greater co-ordination among the Swarozgaris, Panchayat, Block office and the bank. In case of individual swarozgaris they must be selected in a transparent manner. The Self Help Groups must be formed genuinely with the right persons.

In Laikera Block SGSY has not taken its full fledged form of implementation. Some individuals and some Self Help Groups are sanctioned assistance. The key activities selected under SGSY for Laikera Block are lift irrigation, dug well with pump set for multiple crops; goatery unit; piggery unit and tractor/ commander jeep.

SELF HELP GROUPS IN LAIKERA BLOCK

Two self Help Groups which are sanctioned loan under SGSY for irrigation of land and cultivation, were investigated during the field work .

SHIVSHAKTI SELF HELP GROUP, VILLAGE -KHAIRDIHI

This group has been selected for land irrigation and cultivation. Dugwell, pump set, plough bullocks, field channel, input cost, and pump set shed will be

provided for each individual. It is the over all assistance for cultivation. Investigation revealed that this group is a fake group. In reality members are included just to fulfill the requisite provisions. A rich and influential middle man named Mr. Pradeep Patel (son of a rich farmer who is an Ex-sarpanch and a political manipulator) who is not a member of this group is engaged in each and every level to get the loan. He was the mediator of this transaction. He was seen running to the Block and Bank (Punjab National Bank, Laikera) almost every working day by his motor bike. He has influence over the Block officials as well as the Bank Manager. The concern V.L.W is one of his relatives.

Actually the information I have gathered no Gram Sabha was conducted to select this group. Nobody in the village knew anything about this group. According to a teacher of that village, "Mr. Pradeep Patel (Aghria caste) who is my friend is the middle man in these dealings and he is arranging everything to get the loan. If you check the list you can find that one women member is the wife of Mr. Pradeep's brother. Their whole family is the richest family in this village.¹⁰ They have bought land of the tribal people and major chonk of land in this village is cultivated by them. Another woman member is their Aghria caste relative from a rich family. There are only two poor persons in this list. One (ST) is genuinely poor and the other one is also poor but he is working as an obidient *Goti* in Mr. Pradeep's house and he is cultivating their land. He is

¹⁰ The investigator checked the assets of the families of Mr. Pradeep and his kin. And found that they hve large brick houses and a drove of cattle.

staying in Mr. Pradeep's house. He might have been included in this list because it would be extremely easier in the part of Mr. Pradeep to misappropriate the loan sanctioned to him."¹¹

It is found that out of the 15 names included in the list of the group, only 6 are of families included in official BPL list available in the Block Office. The investigator himself found Mr. Pradeep in Punjab National Bank, Laikera, having funny chats with the Branch Manager for hours together and taking the manager (Mr. Narayan Das) to the near by hotel for tiffin. The investigator saw the Branch Manger (PNB, Laikera) Mr. Nareyan Das filling up the application forms of SGSY in the bank itself just asking the information (regarding the Swarozgaris of the Self Help Group of village Khairdih) to Mr. Pradeep Patel. Not even a single member of that Self Help Group was present there. Where as according to clause 3.25 of the "Guide Lines" the BDO should arrange to have the applications filled by the selected persons itself.

Later on when Mr. Pradeep Patel was asked by the investigator about how all these things are happening . He answered, "The Bank manager and all the officials of the Block Office are in my hand. So every thing is possible."

In the documents of the Block office it is found that the BDO has given favourable comments in his report about the group of village Khairdih. The gist of whatever the BDO has written is like this - " I investigated and found that the

¹¹ As said to the investigator in March 2000.

members of Shivshakti Self Help Group of village Khairdihi are meeting regularly. They elect the President , Secretary and other office bearers of the group democratically. They have a savings fund account and the members are saving some amount regularly in that account."

It is found by consulting the members of the group that the savings account is just a formality to get the loan in SGSY according to the provisions prescribed.

SELF HELP GROUP OF VILLAGE DUMERDIHI

This is a DWCRA group selected for SGSY. This Group is dominated by the women belonging to Aghria caste big farmer families. Out of the 14 members in this group 9 of them belong to Aghria caste. Their family are not even included in the official BPL list. This group has been selected for the activity of irrigation, land development oriented integrated agriculture. As many members of this group are not in the BPL families list so the functionary in charge of SGSY in the Block office (Progress Assistant) is forwarding their names as individual Swarozgaris in compact area scheme.

The Progress Assistant of the Block was seen filling applications of the Swarozgris by categorising them as Small Farmer, Marginal Farmer etc. just asking the information to the concerned VLW only.

The Branch manager of PNB, Laikera (the financing bank of the above

two groups) was contacted and asked about the inclusion of the rich in SGSY who are not the right persons for these assistance. The Branch Manger said, "we're considering only those people who have the potential to repay the loan." This shows that the poor people are not given priority by the Bank to get assistance in SGSY.

THE CASE OF INDIVIDUAL SWAROZGARIS

Some individual Swarozgaris are also selected for assistance under SGSY in compact area scheme. The VLW of Kulemura Gram Panchayat provided a list of 12 such individuals who will be disbursed diesel Pump set (in official documents it is mentioned as composite farming). In that list all the selected persons have been categorised as marginal farmers even if some are small Farmers. Not even a single poor is included in this list. One among them is the husband of the present woman Sarpanch and the other one is a Ward member.

No Gram Sabha was called for the above selection. The VLW revealed this fact. He said , "If a Gram Sabha will be called then everybody will demand his name to be included in the selection list. So I informed the Naib-Sarpanch to call some people who do not have any pending loan against them. The Naib-Sarpanch called some people to the Panchayat office. According to the criteria I prepare a list of some names out of the people present there. I asked those concerned to bring "no objection" certification from different banks, as

anybody having any loan pending against him would not be selected for new loan."¹²

This clearly states about the arbitrary selection of the Swarozgaris as per the wish of the VLW and the concerned Panchayat member. The Naib-Sarpanch also didn't inform all but just called a very few people whom he liked.

The "Guide Lines" of the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India clearly says in page 32 "Such second and subsequent doses of credit can be extended to IRDP beneficiaries if they have failed to cross the poverty line because of no fault of theirs. The second and subsequent loans may be granted by the same bank that gave the initial loan or any other bank."

Many poor are trapped in the IRDP misappropriation and irregularities by the banks. They could not even start the activities. Hence some of them could not repay all the pending amount against them. But now they are not being selected for SGSY. In the above case the VLW is rejecting them from the initial stage of selection itself. The VLW or the Block officials are not following the above clause.

As the bank is actively involved in the selection procedure in SGSY, so it is giving emphasis on the selection of those people whom it considers of having repaying potential. According to the bank functionaries it is only the rich farmers who have the repaying potential even before the loan is

¹² As said by the VLW of Kulemura G.P. to the Investigator.

disbursed. So they give emphasis to select the rich and not the poor.

In this way the poorest of the poor like the agricultural /non-agricultural labourers and small artisans will be completely left out in SGSY.

The "Guide Lines" (SGSY) of the Ministry of Rural Development says, "...while SGSY is not a programme that targets only the poorest of the poor, it should be the endeavour of the committee to cover the relatively poorer among the BPL families provided however they are other wise eligible"¹³

When the "Guide Lines" mentions little about SGSY that it does not target only the poorest of the poor, then the implementing functionaries work in such a manner that the poorest are totally left out. They don't even take into account the subsequent lines of the said provisions.

The BPL list itself is highly manipulated and some rich people of the area are included in BPL families list and many poorest are excluded. So it is easier to pick up the rich from the BPL list for SGSY.

The officials also don't follow the formal guide lines properly while selecting the Swarozgaris. The Progress Assistant (P.A) in charge of SGSY in the Block Office says, "We were not given sufficient training about SGSY. Actually we don't know what to do. We are just maintaining the files and accounts. The Block (Block Office) also does not do anything for months

¹³ Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, Guide line SGSY, pp. 26 clause 3.23, New Delhi, 1999.

together. When the funds come, we start the procedures in^a haste just to achieve the targets as per the instructions from the upper levels."¹⁴

The P.A. admitted that the poorest will be left out in SGSY.

CONCLUSION

The above findings show that the concerned officials are implementing the programmes haphazardly. The provisions mentioned in the guidelines are violated time and again. The officials are moulding the provisions arbitrarily. The village level functionaries are involved in bribe taking. Ineligible persons are being selected for assistance and the poorest are excluded. Because of the inefficiency of the Block officials the assistance procedures are being delayed. The Banks also digging the grave for the anti-poverty programmes by just giving the subsidy and not disbursing the credit amount to the beneficiaries. The activities of the beneficiaries are not at all being supervised. This means, there is gross negligence of the implementation of these programmes by the officials. They are trying only to achieve the physical target but don't care for the actual implementation. There is no record available in the Block office about how many of the beneficiaries crossed the poverty line. Many irrelevant activities are also selected for assistance under IRDP in Laikera Block. The Bank and Block officials have made a mess of the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block.

¹⁴ As said to the investigator.

PART - II

In the second part of chapter 3 we analyse the implementation of those anti-poverty programmes (viz. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna, Indira Awaas Yojna) in which the Panchayats are directly involved. As people living below the poverty line (BPL) are the target group for the anti-poverty programmes, so analysis of the BPL list is also too much important. Hence alongwith the study of Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY) and Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY) we will analyse the BPL families census 1997 and its consequences.

BELOW POVERTY LINE (BPL) FAMILIES CENSUS 1997

In order to provide assistance to the poor families, BPL census is conducted at the beginning of each plan period by the states at the behest of the Central Government.

In many welfare schemes of the government priority is given to the families below the poverty line. If someone is not included in the list, then it is difficult to obtain any assistance. Serial number in the BPL list for a beneficiary is required to be mentioned when assistance is sought under SGSY or any other target oriented government assistance programmes.

Because of the link between the BPL list and the welfare assistance, even the rich and the influential people including the dominant castes and rich farmers

try hard to be included in this list.

The following is the over all figure of the BPL families list of Laikera Block.

BPL Census of Laikera Block (1997)

No. of rural families	10575
No. of BPL families	6293
Percentage of BPL families	59%
No. of BPL SC families	1414
No. of BPL ST families	3582
No. of women BPL	483
No. of Physical handicapped BPL	31
No. of small farmers BPL	1213
No. of marginal farmers BPL	3319
No. of Agricultural labourers BPL	913

Source: BPL families record of DRDA, Jharuguda District

BPL SURVEY AND LOCAL TEACHERS

The DRDA through the Block conducted this survey in this area. In this activity the Panchayats of the area did not play any role.

Unlike the survey of the year 1992 by the village level functionaries of the Block office, the survey of 1997 was conducted by the local teachers. This change was introduced because many poorest of this area were excluded in the

BPL survey of 1992. And it was also assumed that local teachers were knowledgeable about the sources of the income of the local people, so their estimation would be closer to the reality. One teacher was given charge for the survey of one village or a cluster of small villages. However, the result of the survey was a repetition of the earlier one. Once again, many poor families were excluded from the list.

Families having an annual income of less than Rs.11000/- are included in the BPL list. But only the families having an annual income of less than Rs. 6000/- are provided with Public Distribution System (PDS) special BPL ration card to get 10 kgs of rice per month at the subsidised rate of Rs. 4 per kg.¹

Interviews with the people and checking their income sources, assets, fooding and clothing etc. during the field visits show that the BPL families survey conducted by the teachers is biased. Rich people have inveigled the teachers and got their names included as people below the poverty line. At the same time poor families are not included in the BPL list.

VIOLATION OF THE GUIDELINES

The format of the BPL families survey form consists of two parts. The first part enlists the name of some specified assets and some other required informations. If any of these things is possessed by the family then the second part of the form is not to be filled for that family.

¹ Information from the block office

The assets mentioned are - concrete house, T.V., freeze, ceiling fan, motor cycle, scooter, three wheeler motor vehicle, tractor, ploughing machine etc.

If anybody is cultivating more than two hectares of land or any member of the family has a monthly income of more than Rs. 1700/- then also the second part of the form will not be filled for that family.

The second part take note of the occupation, land, monthly expenditure on food, cloths, education, health, recreation, travelling, migration for employment etc.

According to the information I have collected, the teachers responsible for this survey have violated these norms. Many people having the assets mentioned in the first part of the form and otherwise not fulfilling the required criteria are included in BPL families list. Even many rich farmers are included in the BPL families list and poorest of the poor are left out. Even some of the labourers (Goti, Halia etc.) were not included in this list.

Some examples of the rich included and the poorest excluded in BPL families list are given below.

RICHEST INLCUED IN BPL LIST² :

NAME	CATEGORY	OCCUPATION	VILLAGE
Mr. Sadanand Choudhry	Other Caste	Big farmer	Sandhudriam
Mr. Hemant Choudhry	Other Caste	Big farmer	Sandhudriam
Mr. Tejraj Choudhry	Other Caste	Farming (Son of big farmer)	Sandhudriam
Mr. Munihar Choudhry	Other Caste	Big farmer	Tileimal
Mr. Sribatsa Choudhry	Other Caste	Big farmer	Tileimal
Mr. Jayaram Choudhry	Other Caste	Big farmer	Tileimal
Mr. Dhruvasing Naik	Scheduled Tribe	Big farmer	Tileimal
Mr. Gane Pradhan	Scheduled Tribe	Big farmer	Niktimal

POOREST EXCLUDED FROM BPL LIST³

NAME	CATEGORY	OCCUPATION	VILLAGE
Mr. Purnach Kua	SC	Bonded Labourer	Sandhudriam
Mr. Srisach Kua	SC	Rickshaw Pullar	Sandhudriam
Mr. Bhikari Kua	SC	Bonded Labourer	Sandhudriam
Mr. Guna Sagar	ST	Landless Agricultural Wage labourer	Mudrajore
Mr. Thunu Pruseth	OC	Landless Agricultural Wage labourer	Bhatlaida
Mr. Shasi Marei	ST	Landless Agricultural Wage labourer	Kankkumar
Mr. Bhamar Kamar	OC	Blaksmith	Kankkumar

² BPL list of Laikera block from Panchayat and bloc office

³ Names are from the BPL list of Laikera Block available in the Bloc office and Panchayat Office

These are only a few names listed here. A long list can be easily prepared covering so many pages for each village of the Block.

CASTE AND CLASS DISCRIMINATIONS

All most all the teachers who were conducting the survey belong to other caste (OC) i.e. they don't belong to SC or ST category. One or two teachers from a school were given this responsibility. There are very few SC or ST teachers in the schools. It is noticed that most of the teachers who conducted the survey belong to Aghria caste (OC) or Sundhi Caste (OC). They have both caste and class prejudices against the lower castes and the poor of that area. It is alleged by the poor that these people think that if the poor will develop then there will be scarcity of labourer to work for them. Hence maintaining the number of poor in this area goes in favour of their economic interest.

One teacher belonging to Aghria caste and an inhabitant of Sandhudriam village informed, "I usually give less marks to the students belonging to lower castes even if they perform very well. Because if they will get educated who will work in our land?"

This shows the discrimination of the higher castes teachers towards the lower castes students. From this, one can easily assess the prejudices of the teachers towards the poor belonging to the 'lower castes'.

The teachers who surveyed in the villages of Sandhudrian and Tileimal

belong to Aghria caste. We can see from the list mentioned earlier that all the people having surname "Choudhury" belong to Aghria caste and all are big farmers. Even to avoid any criticism the teachers have included the name of the sons of big farmers in the list.

The poorest excluded from the BPL list given above belong mostly to Ganda caste (SC) and are working as bonded labourers under the big farmers of this area.

What is important is that while the big farmers are included in the BPL families list, the bonded labourers working under them are excluded from the list. Even the small artisans (such as the basket weavers), rickshaw pullers, landless agricultural wage labourers are not included in the BPL families list.

Even these poor people do not have sufficient amount of food to eat for twice a day. There is in fact a specific place in the survey form to mention whether the family members are getting food twice a day or not. The teachers have manipulated these informations.

By any calculation the annual income of these poor will not exceed the specified Rs. 11000/- mark. The male agricultural wage labourers get about 4 kgs of low variety paddy per day in the monsoon season. It comes around Rs. 17/- only. Even the female get less than this. In off season these labourers remain unemployed for most of the days of the month. In this way the annual income of such a person will not be more than Rs. 3000/- per annum. If both husband and

wife are working then it may reach to a maximum of Rs. 5000/- only. So the annual income of that family will not touch the Rs. 6000/- mark stipulated for below poverty line to get BPL ration card. It is told by some people that the teachers who were conducting the survey did not even visit the houses of the untouchable castes (castes like Ganda, Ghasia, Chamar etc.). They even did not visit those *Para* (cluster of dwellings) and instead filled up the forms on the basis of the information supplied by the Aghria or Sundhi castes people.

The poor are vulnerable and ignorant of the government programmes whereas the rich have access to the up-to-date information regarding different welfare programmes. The influential people in this area persuaded the teachers to include their names in the BPL families list. As in many loan assistance programmes of the government priority is given to the families below the poverty line, so they want their names to be included in the BPL list to avail these assistance. The annual income of these rich people from all sources in no case will be less than Rs. 60,000/-. There are also other rich included in BPL list who are the big farmers and having an annual income of not less than Rs. 30000/-.⁴

The above description in no way suggests that all the poor people belonging to this area are excluded and only the rich are included in the BPL families list. But the point is that many poor were excluded from the BPL list and some of the rich and undeserving got themselves included in it.

⁴ These calculations are based on their production from agriculture and income from other business activities.

Inspite of people's protest against this, no action has been taken so far. No cross-checking or further verification of the list is being done by the Block office.

SUBSIDISED RICE GRAIN THROUGH PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS) TO THE BPL FAMILIES

In Laikera Block the special BPL ration card holder people are provided 10 kgs of rice grain per month at the subsidised rate of Rs. 4 per kg. through the Public Distribution System (PDS). This is a great help to the poor.

But the poor whose names are not included in the BPL families list don't have access to this foodgrains.

The rich people who are the BPL card holder, after getting subsidised rice grain, sell the rice at higher rates either in their own house or in the weekly market. This is because they don't like to eat that type of sub-standard quality of rice. The poorest of the poor who are in urgent need of this rice, buy it from the rich persons at higher rates which is little less than the current market rate.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF PDS SUBSIDISED RICE GRAIN BY THE DEALERS

The PDS dealers of different villages don't inform the people properly regarding the date of providing the PDS rice. The dealers provide the rice only one or two days in a month. Even in those days the dealers remain absent so to make people return empty handed.

The prescribed 10 kgs of rice per card is also not given to the people but the dealers make entries in the card that 10 kgs of rice is given to the card holder. In some villages 8 or 9 kgs of rice is given. If people protest against this, dealers do not hesitate to start a fight.

During the field work I enquired about this problem from a PDS dealer of village Rangiatikra. According to him, "The bags which should contain 100 kgs of rice, contain only 98 kgs in reality. So who will pay for that loss?"

Even this reduced quantity of 8 or 9 kgs of rice is also not given to the people in every month. Sometimes it is stopped for two or three consecutive months.

The PDS rice is openly available in the retail shops of the villages at current market rate indicating the selling of PDS rice in the black market by the concerned dealers.

People informed me that the main supplier of the sub-centre (which is in the village Chandnimal) who provides the rice bags to all the PDS dealers of the Block, sometimes sells the whole of the supplied rice in black market. So rice is not provided to the BPL families for months together. Even it is alleged that the shortage of 2 kgs of rice per bag of 100 kgs is the handy work of that supplier.

That supplier of village Chandnimal is allegedly having political patronage to carry on these heinous anti-poor activities. It is alleged that the officers of the

civil supply department are also involved in these activities. In this way corruption comes on the way of proper implementation of welfare programmes for the poor.

INDIRA AWAAS YOJNA (IAY)

The objective of Indira Awaas Yojna is to provide dwelling units free of cost to the members of Scheduled Castes, scheduled tribes and freed bonded labourers living below the poverty line in rural areas. Its scope has been extended to cover any rural poor of any castes/tribes subject to the conditions that the benefits of the scheme have also been extended to families of servicemen of the armed and paramilitary forces killed in action. 3% of the houses are reserved for the below poverty line disabled persons living in rural areas.⁶

IAY is a centrally sponsored programme. It is a 100% subsidised programme. The cost is shared in the proportion of 80:20 between the centre and the states.

The beneficiaries are to be involved from the very beginning in construction work. They have to make their own arrangements for construction so to suit their requirements. The permissible construction assistance per house is Rs. 20000 in plain areas and Rs. 22000 in hilly or difficult areas.

The DRDA fixes a target of the number of houses to be constructed in

⁶ Annual Report 1998-1999, Ministry of Rural Areas and employment

each Panchayat in a particular financial year. This is conveyed to the Panchayats.

The Gram Panchayat in Palli Sabhas and Gram Sabha select the beneficiaries for IAY. The list of the selected persons is sent to the DRDA and other concerned levels for further action. No approval of the Panchayat Samiti is needed for this.

DRDA is the implementing agency of IAY. At the field level Block functionaries are entrusted with the responsibility of its implementation.

The construction of the house starts after the work order is given. Financial assistance is given by the Block office and not by the Panchayat. The assistance is given directly to the beneficiaries in different instalments after the construction works starts.

IMPLEMENTATION OF IAY IN LAIKERA BLOCK

Now let us see the ways in which IAY is implemented in Laikera Block and whether it is done according to the prescribed guidelines. As beneficiaries are selected in the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha so let us examine the reality of these Sabhas in Laikera Block.

PALLI SABHA AND GRAM SABHA

Neither Palli Sabha nor Gram Sabha is an elected body. All the villagers are the members of these Sabhas. Palli Sabha is organised in every village or in the revenue village and Gram Sabha is organised at the Panchayat Office.

In Palli Sabha, villagers of a particular village or some small villages gather together according to the prior information given by the Gram Panchayat. The ward members of those concerned wards, the Panchayat secretary and the villagers assembled at a particular place. The discussions to whom to select for IAY takes place there. The Panchayat secretary (appointed by the govt.) informs the number of houses to be allotted and it is decided whether to select beneficiaries as per the ward wise share or on some other basis. Beneficiaries are selected from each ward accordingly.

In the Palli Sabha the ward members recommend some names for IAY. The persons who want houses also place their demands individually. The villagers (present there) also recommend names of different people for selection for IAY. All these opinions and recommendations are discussed and beneficiaries are selected on the spot as per the target.

As the society is highly fragmented on caste lines and power relations in villages are related to caste hierarchy, so the acceptability of recommendations or the demands mostly depends upon the caste of the persons who recommend and who need the houses.

People having landed property are respected in the villages. There are also traditional village head man and other socio-economic elites. The opinions of these people prevail in the Palli Sabha regarding whom to select for IAY.

If the ward member is courageous enough to say something against the

opinion expressed by the influential persons then he or she may put forth his/her recommendations. Even the ward members are instructed by these influential persons before hand to recommend certain names in the Palli Sabha.

This situation is not uniform in all the villages. Power relations differ from village to village according to the socio-economic and political settings and spread of education among the different strata of the society. So also the nature of the Palli Sabha differs from place to place.

There are some villages (like the village Niktimal) where dominance on caste line or class line is not as strong as in some other villages. In the Palli Sabha of these villages the ward member (or their husbands)⁷ feel comfortable to put their recommendations. The persons who want houses also don't step back to argue if their names are not included in the selection list.

But in almost all cases when ever there is absence of unanimity in the selection process then the recommendations of the ward members (or her husband-whenever applicable) are accepted.

The Panchayat secretary is to remain present in every Palli Sabha and collect the names. Other then selecting beneficiaries for IAY, the Palli Sabha decides the work to be taken for the village under Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY) and it makes recommendations related to old age pensions, tube wells etc. In this way a small proposal is prepared in the Palli Sabha and then it's

⁷ Some husbands represent their wives who are the ward members

handed over to the Panchayat office.

Gram Sabha is organised after the Palli Sabhas are finished in different villages. The Gram Sabha is held at the Panchayat office. Villagers of the villages of the Panchayat are informed to assemble there on a particular date and time. The proposals received from different Palli Sabhas are once again discussed and rectified or accepted.

An action plan is prepared in the Gram Sabha for the forth coming financial year as per the fund allocated and target given to the Panchayats by the DRDA through the Block for JGSY and IAY. In the Gram Sabha mainly the works to be taken under JGSY is discussed. As it involves different villages so the discussions take a new form of village vs. village.

The Sarpanch, all the ward members, the Panchayat Secretary, representatives of the Block office, all the villagers of the Panchayat are to remain present in the Gram Sabha. Quorum for the Gram Sabha is one-tenth of its members.

OBSERVATIONS OF SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES FOR IAY IN PALLI SABHA AND GRAM SABHA

In four Palli Sabha viz. Niktimal, Bhatlaida, Tilemal and Kankmal in February 2000 the selection of beneficiaries for IAY was observed. These villages belong to the study area of the three Panchayats viz. Kulemura, Bhatlaida and Tileimal. In the Gram Sabhas of these three Panchayats the

process of verifications of the selected list from Palli Sabhas were observed.

A small number of people were present in each of these Palli Sabha because the information about the meeting was properly not conveyed to the people by the Panchayat.

As the social settings, economic status and occupations of people differ from Panchayat to Panchayat so also the determinant factors acting as the probability of being selected for IAY. If role of caste is important in one Palli Sabha (Bhatlaida, Kankmal), class factor influences the outcome in another (Tileimal). There is no uniformity of factors in all these villages. The only common factor is the prevailing of the bribe and corruption in the process of implementation of IAY. To be selected for IAY one has to approach the ward member before hand.

When some poor and houseless people requested in the meetings that they be given colony houses⁸ as they are houseless, their requests are either ignored or suppressed by the influential persons⁹ and other vocal persons present there.

The Panchayat secretary who notes down the names prefer to listen to the influential persons and the ward members.

⁸ Calani Ghar (colony house) is the word popularly used by the people for these houses as per the earlier system of govt. assisted houses constructed in one colony.

⁹ The word influential persons refer to the person having influential capacity because of their socio-economic political or any other advantageous position.

OPINIONS OF THE HOUSELESS POOR

Following is the opinion of 20 persons who are not selected for IAY though they are poor and houseless.

Table 3.8

Opinions of 20 houseless persons regarding why they are not selected for IAY

OPINION	NO. OF PERSONS GIVE THE OPINION	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION
Could not pay bride so not recommended	3	15%
Paid bribe, ward member recommended but headman/ influential persons protested in Palli Sabha	5	25%
Paid bribe but ward member didn't recommend	10	50%
Paid bribe, name accepted in Palli Sabha but later on vanished (or rejected in Gram Sabha)	2	10%

Following is the opinion of the above mentioned same 20 persons regarding the selected person for IAY from their own wards.

Table 3.9

Opinions of 20 poor houseless not selected for IAY, regarding the selected ones

OPINION	NO. OF PERSONS OPINED OUT OF 20	PERCENTAGE (BASE=20)
Richer than me and have house	15	75%
Rich and sons are in govt. service and himself earning a lot	3	15%
The head man/influential persons supported (including influence by family members)	10	50%
The Panchayat secretary helped	7	35%
Selected person belong to upper caste	6	30%

Table 3.8 shows that paying bribe is the pre-condition for being considered in the selection process in Palli Sabha/Gram Sabha. The ward member (and if the ward member is an inactive woman then her husband) take bribe as if that is normal. The word P.C. (percentage) is very famous in this area. In each government assistance one has to pay some “dues’ to the ward member or Sarpanch or the panchayat Secretary or all of them. It is considered as an usual and accepted trend. The poor houseless persons have no other alternative but to pay bribe to the Panchayat members or to the Panchayat secretary who notes down the names in Palli Sabha or Gram Sabha.

The Panchayat Secretary also alters, accepts or rejects these names taking

advantage of the ignorance of the Panchayat members.

So to be selected for IAY one has to pay bribe to the concerned Panchayat secretary otherwise the secretary may not include his or her name while sending the list to the upper level for approval.

From table 3.8 it is clear that many times the influential persons oppose the selection of the real houseless people to be selected for IAY. They do it for various reasons. If the houseless person is not obedient to them, then they oppose his name to be included. And also if there is someone else of the same ward whom they want to be selected then also they oppose the other one.

Table 3.9 shows that caste and class factors play an important role in the process of selection for IAY.

If the person belongs to touchable Scheduled Castes like Khujria, Keut etc. then there is greater possibility of being selected. The Palli Sabha itself shows the discrimination in the society as the higher castes people sit there on mats and the lower castes people simply on the ground.

BYPASSING THE WOMAN WARD MEMBER

The woman ward member of Kulemura village Mrs. Jasobanti Pruseth was not even informed about the Palli Sabha held in February 2000. Beneficiaries of her ward were chosen by the powerful persons of the village and those were noted down by the Panchayat secretary in that Palli Sabha. As Mrs. Pruseth is a

woman and her husband is not active in this field so the elites of the village and the other ward members didn't think it necessary to call her to the Palli Sabha. She was just bypassed in the entire process.

Let's now look at some particular cases where the poor people were discriminated.

CASE OF KANSA BHOI (THE TRIBAL WOMAN OF VILLAGE NIKTIMAL)

Kansa Bhoi was not given access to her parents' landed property inspite of the court's judgement in her favour. Her brothers threatened her to kill if she entered the land.

Since then Kansa Bhoi (staying in the parental village) is homeless and taking shelter in the houses of different people in the village. No government assistance has been provided to her inspite of her repeated requests to the concerned functionaries in the Panchayat and the Block. In the past she has also repeatedly requested the Panchayat members, other officials and local powerful persons for a house. But each of them had refused her saying, "You are like a guest in this village." In the Palli Sabha her requests are rejected with laughter. Once her name was selected in the Palli Sabha but was rejected in the Gram Sabha.

This time some women members of the local women organisation called "Nari Kirti Samaj" intervened in the Palli Sabha and she has been selected for a house in IAY.

This type of protest is very rare in this area. The poor are not organised. Required level of consciousness to protest against the discrimination or injustice, is lacking with them. They are also economically depended upon the landed elite. There is also no any organisation in this area to organise the poor for this purpose. Only the “Nari Kiṛti Samaj” is uniting the women of this area and it has given a forum to discuss the problems faced by the women. This organisation is in its initial stage now.

THE CASE OF MR. INDRA DILA OF VILLAGE THAKURPADA

Mr. Indra Dila is living with his family in a state of abject poverty. He is a houseless person. This time ignoring his request for a house, the ward member Mr. Karunakar Bariha recommended a rich person’s name for IAY. When Mr. Indra Dila went to the Palli Sabha the ward member threatened him not to speak anything there other wise he would be beaten. Both Mr. Indra Dila and the person who was selected from his ward belong to Gaur caste (Other caste).

THE CASE OF SUDARSAN SOHALA (SC) OF VILLAGE KANKMAL

Mr. Sudarsan Sohala is living in abject poverty with his family at the backyard of some body’s house.

Mr. Sohala’s request for a house was opposed in the Palli Sabha by a powerful man Mr. Yudhistir Patel (Aghria caste) and hence his name was rejected.

MANIPULATION OF THE PROGRAMME BY THE PANCHAYAT SECRETARY IN KULEMURA G.P.

There is a provision in JGSY that 22.5% of its money will be spent on SC/ST individual beneficiary scheme . The SC/ST individual beneficiary will be assisted for any benefit he or she wants. Land development, digging of pond, construction of houses – anything can be done according to the wish of the concerned beneficiary.

But taking advantage of the ignorance of the Panchayat members of Kulemura G.P., the Panchayat secretary is just picking up some names out of the SC/ST beneficiaries for Indira Awaas Yojna and including them in JGSY for house construction in individual beneficiary scheme. No other work is being taken under JGSY for the SC/ST beneficiary other than house construction. No any separate selection of beneficiary is being done for JGSY individual beneficiary scheme. The secretary takes some bribe from some SC/ST beneficiaries and includes them in JGSY. He also makes arrangements in the Gram Sabha so to select more beneficiaries beyond target of IAY so to take some names for JGSY.

In JGSY the bills etc. are prepared by the G.P. Secretary and money is given to the beneficiary by him on behalf of the Panchayat. In IAY, money is given by the Block. As people have bitter experience of running to the Block office unnecessarily time and again because of negligence and delay of the Block

officials, so they think it better to pay bribe to the secretary and get the financial assistance from the Panchayat.

The secretary some times bring such hurdles that work orders are not given to the selected beneficiaries of IAY, unless they pay him bribe.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF IAY MONEY BY THE CONTRACTORS AND BLOCK OFFICIALS

Houses under IAY are supposed to be constructed by the beneficiaries themselves. The beneficiary gets the amount in different instalments after the work begins. As because many beneficiaries are so poor that they can not construct the house spending the initial money from their own pockets, so they take the help of the contractors.

Taking advantage of the ignorance of the beneficiaries and knowing their inability to do anything against them the contractors often misappropriate the money without even constructing the houses. The contractors having nexus with some Block functionaries, sometimes do not complete the constructions and take the money by forging the documents.

Almost 20 such cases came to my notice during my field work.

The village level workers (V.L.W.s) who prepare the bills alongwith some Block officials also make those beneficiaries run to the Block for several times, who are constructing the house under IAY by themselves. At last those beneficiaries have no any other way but to pay bribe or leave the construction in

the half way.

All these discussions show that there is apathy towards the poor at each and every level. In the selection process by the Panchayat, class and caste bias have left many houseless excluded from IAY. And in the process of implementation, corruption is rampant. The concerned functionaries and the contractors are trying their best to take share out of the money given to the poor for house construction in IAY. These observations do not mean to say that no poor houseless has got a house under IAY. There are many poor and houseless people who have received houses under IAY. But majority of the poor houseless are excluded. This shows the anti-poor attitude of these functionaries and other local contractors which comes on the way of proper implementation of these welfare programmes.

JAWAHAR GRAM SAMRIDHI YOJNA (JGSY)

Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) is a programme aimed at providing wage employment by creating mandays of work for the unemployed rural poor. It also aims at creation of demand driven community village infrastructure. This include durable assets at the village level and assets to enable the rural poor to increase the opportunities for sustained employment.⁵

The earlier Jawahar Rozgar Yojna was renamed as Jawahar Gram

⁵ Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, Govt. of India, Manual on JGSY 2000, New Delhi.

Samridhi Yojna with certain restructuring, JGSY was launched on 1st April 1999. JGSY is implemented at the Gram Panchayat level. Annual action plan is prepared and also the programme is implemented by the Gram Panchayats.

This is a centrally sponsored scheme on cost sharing basis between the centre and the state in the ratio of 75:25. But for union territories 100% expenditure is met by the centre.

STRATEGY

The action plan for the programme is prepared by the Panchayat itself and with the approval of the DRDA the Panchayat implements the programme. For works or scheme costing more than Rs. 50000/-, after taking the approval of the Gram Sabha, the Gram Panchayat shall seek the technical or administrative approval of appropriate authorities.

22.5% of JGSY funds have been ear marked for individual beneficiary schemes for SCs/STs. 3% of annual allocation would be utilised for creation of barrier free infrastructure for the disabled.⁶

In JGSY man and woman must be given equal wages. Food grain is also to be given as wages but at the same rate of food grain supplied by PDS.

30% of the benefits is to be reserved for women.

⁶ Ibid.

PRIORITIES⁷

Priorities will be given for the following works

- a) Development of SC/ST dwellings
- b) SGSY base/infrastructure development
- c) Infrastructure building for agricultural programmes of the Gram Panchayat
- d) Overall development of education, health and communication
- e) Infrastructure building for other social, economic and material development.

WORK PROHIBITED IN JGSY⁸

The following works can't be done under JGSY

- a) Construction of temple, mosque, Gurudwara, Church and other religious institutions
- b) Construction of souvenir, statue, gate etc.
- c) Construction of bridge (culvert is permitted)
- d) High school building
- e) College building
- f) Roads not to be made concrete

Let's now examine how far JGSY is being implemented according to the

⁷ Guidelines JGSY

⁸ ibid

guidelines and how far has it been able to achieve its goal in the Block of Laikera.

IMPLEMENTATION OF JGSY IN THE BLOCK OF LAIKERA

Proposals for different developmental works are prepared in the Palli Sabhas held in different villages. These proposals are put together and once again discussed in the Gram Sabha held at the Panchayat office. Then this proposal is scrutinised and some new works are also added according to the target of funds given by the DRDA.

An annual action plan is prepared in the Gram Sabha about the works to be done under JGSY for the next financial year. This action plan is sent to the DRDA and to other appropriate offices.

VIOLATION OF GUIDELINES AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS THE POOR AND SC/ST

We have already discussed about the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha and found that these Sabhas are dominated by people belonging to upper castes and economically powerful section of the rural society. These people exercise a great deal of influence over the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha.

The role of Panchayat secretaries are quite important as far as the implementation of the welfare schemes are concerned. However, some Panchayat secretaries get involved in the misappropriation of JGSY money and neglect the

welfare of the vulnerable sections. They usually take notes of the proposal of the influential people. This is a conventional way of avoiding any displeasure of the influential people.

Even the ward members are of no threat to the secretaries. So almost all the demands of the influential people are accepted in the annual action plan. These people usually demand those works which are directly beneficial to them. Even they warn the ward members to suggest the same thing in the Gram Sabha.

In the Gram Sabha (3rd March 2000) of Kulemura Gram Panchayat one ST ward member who is also the Naib Sarpanch requested to include in JGSY the construction work of the road leading to the tribal *Para* (cluster of dwellings) which is in his ward. The Panchayat secretary became furious listening this and said, “You are telling about that road as it is in your *own Para*. Why don’t you tell about the other roads?” This resulted in hot exchanges of words between the two. The strategy of the secretary to isolate the Naib-Sarpanch became successful when one another ward member (who was a contestant for the post of Naib-Sarpanch and was defeated) also scolded the Naib-Sarpanch in the Gram Sabha itself. At last the demand of the ST Naib-Sarpanch was rejected.

The works selected under JGSY in different Gram Panchayats are mostly construction and development of roads, school buildings, *Chaupal*, club buildings, *Mandap*, digging of ponds etc.

Construction and development of roads taken under JGSY are mostly

roads leading to the high castes *Para*.

Some of the rejected demands for roads in Gram Sabhas, in the areas where there is no roads are given below.

1	Village Rangiatikra	Most of the inhabitants are SC and ST wage labourer. There is no road and no tube well in this village
2	Village Niktimal Gond (ST) <i>Para</i>	No road, No tube well
3)	Village Bhatlaida Ganda (SC) <i>Para</i> and Ghasia (SC) <i>Para</i>	No Road
4	Village Kannkumar Gond (ST) <i>Para</i>	No road

There are many more examples of this nature (for which, demands for roads or other works were rejected) which can be added to this list.

A long list can be prepared regarding the selection of the construction of roads which directly link the higher castes *Para*, by rejecting the demands for roads linking to lower castes *Para*.

The club houses are usually located in the higher castes *para*. In the village Sandhudriam the request of the Scheduled caste for a road to their *Para* was rejected but a club house was built in the middle of a locality inhabited by the rich peasants belonging to the middle castes.

A *Chaupal* has been built in front of the house of the present Sarpanch of

Bhatlaida G.P. who is a rich farmer belonging to Aghria Caste.

We've noticed in the guidelines that JGSY prohibits the construction of temple and any other construction for religious institutions. However, in this area Mandap in front of the temple is built utilizing JGSY money. In these cases, the guidelines of the JGSY is openly flouted by the powerful interests of the villages.

The Panchayat secretary of Kulemura G.P. says, "*Mandir* can't be constructed but *Mandap* can be. As nothing is mentioned about Mandap in the guidelines."⁹

This is the politics of "words" nothing else. *Mandap* for what purpose and at which place is not being considered by these people.

Sometimes the budgetary allocations for same type of works vary depending on who is benefiting out of these activities. We can cite here the example of Tileimal Gram Panchayat where Rs.40,000/- was allocated for digging a pond in the village Kukerama where most of the inhabitants are the poor tribals. Whereas Rs. 50,000/- was allotted for the digging of a pond in the village of Tileimal where rich Aghria caste people are residing. This incident happened only last year.¹⁰

IGNORANT WARD MEMBES AND SARPANCHS

The guidelines JGSY is not available in the Panchayat offices and most of the ward members and Sarpanchs have neither read it nor are they aware of the

⁹ Interview with the Panchayat secretary of Kulemura Panchayat.

¹⁰ Source : Records of Tileimal Gram Panchayat Office.

provisions. The only source of information and interpreter is the Gram Panchayat (G.P.) secretary. Of course the Sarpach of Laikera and Bhatlaida G.P. are well aware of these provisions as they are highly educated and they have read the provisions of the guidelines.

GENERATING MANDAYS AND PROVIDING WAGE EMPLOYMENT UNDER JGSY

JGSY is the best targeted programme as the poorest are supposed to be provided with employment opportunities by it. But according to the poor people of this area they hardly get employment for 20 days in a year as a part of JGSY.¹¹ Building works are being taken more and more under JGSY so less mandays are being generated as these works involve more expenditure on buying cement, iron rods, bricks etc. and less labourers unlike road construction works. The G.P. secretary of Kulemura G.P. says, "In construction of buildings there is no profit for the person in charge of the construction and also for the labourers. But in construction of roads the person in charge of the construction can get some profit by manipulation of the bills as well as the labourers also get profit both by getting more days of work."¹² Minimum daily wages of Rs. 40/- is also not given to the labourers. Male labourers get Rs. 25/- to Rs. 30/- per day while as women are given Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- per day. This is a clear violation of the guidelines.

¹¹ Interview with the wage labourers of Laikera block – in February and March 2000.

¹² Interviews with the Panchayat secretary of Kulemura Panchayat in March 2000.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF JGSY MONEY

JGSY money is being widely misappropriated by the Sarpanchs and the G.P. secretaries in Laikera Block. Very low quality of construction works are being done in this area under JGSY. Rs. 30000/- is being allocated for construction of small distance roads and the real expenditure of the work done will be hardly of Rs. 20000/-. Same thing is observed with other works as well.

The Panchayat secretary of Kulemura G.P. works as a professional contractor and does all these works by himself in the name of departmental construction on behalf of the Panchayat. It is because the Panchayat members of Kulemura Panchayat are either ignorant or helpless. These works should be done by the Panchayat itself. But the secretary undertakes it by himself in the name of the Panchayat without further intimation to the Panchayat members regarding the actual expenditure of the work. He is getting the expenditure approved just by bribing the Panchayat members. He is allegedly giving 3% of the profit money to the women Sarpanch.¹³ He allegedly offered to give 1% of the profit amount of the Naib Sarpanch also. The respective ward members whose wards come in the work site are paid Rs. 200/- to Rs. 500/- each.¹⁴

In Bhatlaida G.P. it is the Sarpanch who is involved in the misappropriation of JGSY money.¹⁵ He is a rich farmer as well as an anti-social

¹³ Information collected by interview with the Naib-Sarpanch of Kulemura G.P.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Information from the interview with the G.P. secretary of Bhatlaida G.P.

element. He has a record of beating people who does not obey his words. Many bonded labourers are working under him. The G.P. Secretary is frightened of him. No body dares to go against him.

In Tileimal G.P. the brother of the women Sarpanch Mr. Brundabati Bagh is involved in the misappropriation of funds. Rs. 75000/- is the pending recovery on her. This is the handy work of her brother.

From all these above findings we can say that there is large scale misappropriation of JGSY money in Laikera Block.

As we observed earlier that there is caste and class discrimination in selecting the developmental works for different villages and *Para*. So it is the poorest of the poor and the vulnerable SC and ST who are at the receiving end.

CONCLUSION

All the above description show that the traditional social powers are blocking the benefits of the anti-poverty programmes from reaching to the poor. Caste and class has been the basis of dominance in the rural society. This dominance is also clearly visible in the Panchayats. The people of dominant castes and high class are using their advantageous positions to discriminate against the vulnerable sections so to make them deprive of the government assistance. Rampant corruption by the Panchayat secretaries and some Panchayat members, has further made the situation worst.

CHAPTER – 4

ROLE OF THE BUREAUCRACY AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES IN LAIKERA BLOCK

This chapter focuses on the role of bureaucracy and the elected representatives in implementing the anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block. We intend to examine how far they have been able to perform their role effectively to make the programmes successful.

Except Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JGSY), in all the other programmes responsibility of implementation of the programmes lies with the Block and the district level functionaries. Responsibility of implementation of JGSY lies with the Gram Panchayat. In Indira Awaas Yojna, full responsibility of selecting the beneficiaries lies with the Gram Panchayat.¹

ROLE OF THE BUREAUCRACY IN IMPLEMENTATING ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES IN LAIKERA BLOCK

Bureaucracy is the organ through which the government implements different developmental programmes. The anti-poverty programmes are also directly or indirectly implemented through the bureaucracy. At the ground level the

¹ Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India Report 2000 on programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development

officers and their staffs are supposed to carry out these programmes effectively by following the guidelines in order to achieve the prescribed targets. Training programmes and meetings are arranged for them from time to time to prepare them for undertaking the task of translating the welfare schemes into a concrete reality.

Successful implementation of these programmes depends upon the effectiveness of the bureaucracy.

The rural development programmes are implemented through the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) at the district level. At the Block level, the Block Development Officer (BDO) along with his staff, implements these programmes with the help of village level functionaries.²

We have seen in the earlier chapters that the anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block have not been implemented successfully upto atleast a minimum level of satisfaction. A large number of poor people have been left out of these programmes, and those who got assistance through these programmes, are still not able to recover themselves from the trap of poverty and destitution.

Our field work made it very clear that there is an absence of professionalism among the functionaries in charge of implementing the welfare schemes. For instance, it is very rarely that Block functionaries supervise the activities of the beneficiaries of the welfare programmes.

² Government of India, Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, Annual Report, 1998-1999

Taking advantage of this situation the village level functionaries like the Village Level Workers (VLWs) often indulge in taking bribes from the people and selecting only those people (not necessarily poor) for the anti-poverty programmes. Hence, the people who deserve to be a part of the welfare programmes are ignored.

For each Panchayat there is one VLW and according to the provisions the VLW should stay in a village belonging to that Panchayat. Residential quarters are also built for them in each Panchayat. But no VLW stays in those villages. All of them stay either in the Laikera Block colony (residential quarters for Block functionaries) or in villages outside the concerned Panchayat.

Mr. Sanatan Patel says, a VLW in Kulemura G.P. says, “Who will like to stay in a remote village? It’s better to stay in the Block. We visit the field whenever it is required.”³

Let us now examine the role of some of the officials in charge of the implementation of the anti-poverty programme in the Laikera Block.

THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (BDO) OF LAIKERA BLOCK

THE BDO of Laikera remains absent for most of the days in a week. According to the BDO, “Land is necessary for the poor. Those people who have assets became successful in the government assisted programmes. But those

³ As said to the investigator during the field study.

without assets couldn't achieve success in these programmes. Agricultural activities are successful but ISB (Industry Small Business) sector i.e. industry (manual processed) and small business sector is a total failure.⁴ In the ISB sector, the bank thinks that the loanee may not repay the credit amount. So they don't disburse the full sanctioned amount. Only subsidy amount is disbursed. The Banks should supervise the activities but they do not do so. They do not follow the guidelines given to them by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

We are also supposed to supervise the activities and carry on concurrent evaluation of the programmes. But due to lack of sufficient number of staffs we are not able to do so.”

The above account of the BDO reveals that the Block functionaries are aware of the fact that only subsidy amount is being disbursed to the beneficiaries and no credit amount is being disbursed by the banks.

Lack of supervision of the assisted activities by the Block officials is one of the major causes of the failure of the anti-poverty programmes. The BDO revealed the fact that because of the lack of sufficient staff it is not possible to supervise the activities.

ACCOUNTS OF SOME OTHER BLOCK OFFICIALS

The account of the Welfare Extension Officer (WEO) of the Block office

⁴ As said to the investigator during the field study.

gives a picture of the Block office in relation to the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes.

THE WEO says, “No records are properly available in the Block office. The Block is implementing the programmes just to achieve the targets. The Block suddenly starts the process of implementation when instructions come from above. Otherwise the Block remains inactive for months altogether.

There is also bureaucratic delay which affects the efficacy of these programmes. There is reluctance on the part of the officials in implementing the programmes by taking the pending applications.

There is a nexus between the bank functionaries with the VLWs. The VLWs influence the beneficiaries to opt for small business loans where the working capital can be easily misappropriated. Whenever such complaints come to the BDO, no action is taken against the guilty.

No supervision of the assisted activities is being carried out in these programmes.”⁵

The above account of the WEO of the Block office points to the ineffectiveness of the bureaucracy in implementing the anti-poverty programmes.

ACCOUNT OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR

The District Collector of Jharsuguda district was asked many questions

⁵ As said to the investigator during the field study.

regarding the implementation of anti-poverty programmes in the district with special reference to Laikera Block.

The District Collector said, "Every programme is insitutionalised. Sometimes I call meetings with the officials of different levels and the progress of different programmes is discussed. If any complaint comes to me then I order investigation into the matter. But so far no complaint has come to me in connection with the anti-poverty programmes in this Bloc."⁶

When the District Collector was asked about the banks not disbursing the full amount as sanctioned and also not giving the passbooks to the beneficiaries in different anti-poverty programmes, he said, "The beneficiaries are supposed to take the amount from the bank in different instalments. As they are unable to carry on the activities, they do not come back to take the remaining amount. This is what the Branch Manager of Punjab National Bank, Laikera, told me."

During the interview, the District Collector was told that inspite of carrying on the activities some of the beneficiaries were not permitted to withdraw the credit amount and pass books were also not given to them. Then the district collector said, "OK. I'll ask the Branch Manager about this."

The above account of the District Collector shows that he has been provided with the information only from the Bank officials and not from the beneficiaries themselves.

⁶ As said the investigator during the field study.

Often the officials blame the beneficiaries for the lack of success of the welfare programmes in the district. This is like blaming the victim for being a victim. The poorest are the target of the anti-poverty programmes and the bureaucracy has to make the assistance reach them. But the bureaucracy has failed to perform its role in implementing the anti-poverty programmes.

CONCLUSION

It is commonly assumed that the bureaucrats are indifferent towards the poor. Most of them are not interested in helping the poor. If any poor man comes to the Block office with some problems, the response of the officials towards him is often not helpful. They don't want to listen to the problems of the poor.⁷

The BDO of Laikera Block and the Project Director of the DRDA, Jharsuguda district, belong to Scheduled Castes. Even then they have failed to implement the anti-poverty programmes successfully in this area and to help the poor and the vulnerable SCs and STs to come out of poverty.

ROLE OF THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES IN LAIKERA BLOCK

The constitution (73rd amendment) Act, 1992 provides constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions in the country. Provisions are also there

⁷ As observed by the investigator during the field study.

for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population and no less than 1/3 seats for women in the Panchayati Raj institutions.⁸ These provisions aim to ensure the representation of the most vulnerable sections of the society in these grass root level democratic institutions.

Devolution of power to the Panchayati Raj institutions was to ensure the participation of the people in the process of development.⁹ Day to day more and more power and responsibilities are being given to these institutions. Responsibility of implementation of the anti-poverty programmes like Jawahar Gram Swarozgar Yojna (JGSY) lies with the Panchayats. Selection of beneficiaries for Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY) is done by the Gram Panchayats through the Gram Sabha (The general assembly of villagers).¹⁰ The Panchayats are supposed to prepare plan for economic development and social justice.¹¹ In this way the role of the elected representatives to these bodies has increased in recent times.

Let's now examine the role of the elected representatives to the Panchayati Raj institutions of Laikera Block with special reference to the implementation of anti-poverty programmes like Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna

⁸ Manual of the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India on "Programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development" (2000).

⁹ Govt. of India, Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, Annual Report 1998-1999.

¹⁰ Manual Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India on "Programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development" (2000).

¹¹ *ibid.*

(JGSY) and Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY). We'll also see whether the SC/ST and the women members of the Panchayats are able to exercise their power or not.

The following description presents the account of the Panchayat members expressed to me during the in-depth interviews with them. These interviews were taken during the field study conducted during the period of 13th February to 31st March 2000. The activities of these Panchayat members were also observed and the perceptions of other members and people regarding these members were noted down. All these account will help us to understand the actual role performed by the Panchayat members in relation to the implementation of anti-poverty programmes.

WOMEN (SC) SARPANCH OF KULEMURA GRAM PANCHAYAT

Name	Kautuka Pandey
Educational Qualification	5th Class
Age	40 years
Occupation	Housewife
Why contested for the post	Her husband was advised by the villagers to let her wife contest for the post of Sarpanch as the seat was reserved for SC women. So her husband told her to contest and she contested accordingly and won. ¹²

During the interview Mrs. Pandey provided the informations regarding her age, education, occupation why she contested etc. to me. But when she was

¹² As said by Mrs. Pandey during the interview.

asked some questions in connection with the Panchayat activities she could not answer anything and just called her husband who was standing near by.

Her husband told me, “Don’t ask these questions to her. She does not know anything regarding the Panchayat. Even she doesn’t put her signature on the papers of the Panchayat without my permission.”

At that moment the gesture of Mrs. Pandey showed that she was frightened of her husband.

Mrs. Pandey was seen walking here and there in the Gram Sabha of Kulemura Panchayat while people were engaged in hot discussions regarding the construction works to be taken under JGSY.¹³

It’s alleged that taking advantage of the ignorance of the women Sarpanch the Panchayat Secretary (appointed by the government) is alleged to have been involved in misappropriation of JGSY money. The secretary allegedly gives 3% of the profit money in JGSY to the Sarpanch.¹⁴

¹³ Observation in the Gram Sabha of Kulemura GP on dated 3-3-2000

¹⁴ Opinion of the Naib-Sarpanch of Kulemura G.P. during his interview with the investigator during the field study.

WOMEN (ST) SARPANCH OF TILEIMAL GRAM PANCHAYAT

Name	Mrs. Brundabati Bagh
Educational Qualifications	6 th class
Age	35 years
Occupation	Housewife
Why contested for the post	Her brother told her to contest as the post was reserved for ST woman. ¹⁵

During the interview with Mrs. Bagh she only provided the informations regarding her age, educational qualifications etc. like the woman Sarpanch of Kulemura Panchayat. But when she was asked some questions related to the Panchayat activities she said, “My brother can tell all these things.”

Mrs. Bagh is represented by her brother. In the Gram Sabha meeting of Tileimal Gram Panchayat, Mrs. Bagh sits silently and her brother suggests different works under JGSY.¹⁶ A recovery of Rs. 75000/- is pending against her in relation to misappropriation of JGSY money. It appeared that the misappropriation is the handy work of the Sarpanch’s brother.¹⁷

¹⁵ As said by Mrs. Bagh in her interview during the field study

¹⁶ Observation in the Gram Sabha of Tileimal G.P. on dated 27-3-2000

¹⁷ Opinion of a ward member of village Nvangaon of Talimal G.P. expressed during the interview during the field study.

MALE SARPACH (OTHER CASTE) OF BHATLAIDA GRAM PANCHAYAT

Name	Mr. Gupta Charan Patel
Educational Qualifications	B.A., B.Ed.
Occupation	Capitalist farmer
Why contest for the post	He wished to be the Sarpanch. ¹⁸ So he contested for the post (He is the local level mobiliser of voters for Congress party.

Mr. Patel belongs to Aghria caste (other caste). He is a rich farmer. Almost four bonded labourers are working for him. He has a record of beating people who defies his orders. It was said that Mr. Patel won the election by bribing the voters.¹⁹ Mr. Patel has built a *Chaupal* in front of his own big building out of JGSY money.

Mr. Patel says, "It is the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha which decide the works to be taken under JGSY. So if there is any fault in the selection of the works then that is the fault of all the people present in these Sabhas. What can I do for that?"

We are always helping the SC and ST. but they are unable to develop. They lack the quality required for development. Their blood is like that. That is why they are born in those castes. Why has God made them Ganda²⁰ and

¹⁸ Views expressed by Mr. Patel in his interview to the investigator during the field study.

¹⁹ As told to the investigator by the local people during the field study.

²⁰ Name of Untouchable Castes

Ghasia²¹?

The BPL rice not being given regularly is not my duty to check. The BDO himself belongs to Scheduled Caste. What is he doing when BPL rice is not being given to the people in some months and the dealers sell it in black market? Sarpanch has no power to look into this matter.

The reservation of seats for SCs/STs is a useless thing. Leave the case of women-they are considered as mother. But do the SCs and STs know how to rule? After all high caste is high caste and low caste is low caste. Each caste is meant for specific duties.

Is Kautuka²² Pandey the wife of honourable Dom suitable for the post of Sarpanch? What is Sabitri Chhatria the Kisan²³ woman doing after she became the chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti of Laikera? All of them are stupid. They are not born to rule.²⁴

Other Sarpanchs of this Block have hardly studied upto class 3^r^d or 4th. They are all stupid.

Our country is not suitable for democracy. Dictatorship is the best thing for us. All of us should be kept standing under the hot sun and should be beaten

²¹ Name of Untouchable Castes

²² Mrs Kautuka Pande is the women (SC) Sarpanch of Kulamura G.P.

²³ Name of a tribe Mrs. Sabitri Chhatria belongs to this tribe.

²⁴ This view of Mr. Gupta Charan Patel was suddenly supported by his wife who was standing nearby. She said, "that's true, what can these Kisan do?"

with 'hunter'.

The Gram Panchayat secretary of our Gram Panchayat is not like that of Kulemura. I'll kneel down him if he does not do what I say. But look at the secretary of Kulemura Panchayat. He is working arbitrarily and misappropriating the money of JGSY. What can Mrs. Kautuka Pandey. – the Keut²⁵ Sarpanch do against the secretary?"

Mr. Patel's views clearly show his prejudice against the SCs/STs. On the one hand he didn't comment on the issue of reservation for women in Panchayats saying that they are considered as mother. On the other hand he gave very derogatory remarks on caste lines regarding the women Panchayat members. This clearly shows his anti-lower caste attitudes.

He hold the people present in the Gram Sabha responsible for the faulty selection of works under JGSY. And he expressed his inability to do anything in this regard. But he has built a *Chaupal* in front of his own house (situated in a rich locality) out of JGSY money. This shows him as a double-dealer.

In the Gram Sabha of Bhatlaida gram Panchayat it is noticed that Mr. Patel's opinions were not at all questioned either by the ward members or by the people. His opinions were being accepted as final. The villagers were fearful of him.²⁶

²⁵ Caste name of Mrs. Kautuka Pandey

²⁶ As observed by the investigation in the Gram Sabh of Bhatlaida G.P. on dated 29-2-2000.

ACCOUNT OF THE NAIB-SARPANCH OF KULEMURA GRAM PANCHAYAT

The Naib-Sarpanch of Kulemura Gram Panchayat Mr. Mahi Pradhan belongs to ST category. He is an active Panchayat member.²⁷ According to him, “The Panchayat secretary is all in all in our Panchayat. We are less educated and ignorant of the provision of the programmes. No manual is also given to us. The Panchayat secretary takes away the manuals which come to the Panchayat office from the upper level. I requested him time and again to give me the manuals so that I would atleast listen and understand the provisions if some body would read and explain it to me. But the secretary didn’t give me the manuals.

Construction works under JGSY are being conducted by the secretary without any further information to the Panchayat members. He is doing all these things just like a private contractor. He is making huge profits out of the JGSY money by not spending the whole amount as allocated for a particular work. He submits fake bills to the Panchayat. But any how he gets the expenditure approved by the Panchayat by influencing or bribing the Sarpanch and the ward members.

He gives 3% of the profit money to the Sarpanch and Rs. 200/- to Rs. 400/- to those ward members whose wards come in the work sites of JGSY.

²⁷ As observed in the Palli Sabha and gram Sabha of Kulemuna Panchayat by the investigator during the field study.

Even if the list of beneficiaries for IAY is prepared in the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha, the secretary changes the names before sending it to the upper levels as per the instructions of the powerful men like Mr. Nalin Naik and Mr. Sadanand Bhoi.²⁸ A complaint was lodged before the Chief-Minister²⁹ against the Panchayat secretary for his irregularities. But no action was taken in this respect.³⁰ The account of the Naib-Sarpanch gives a clear picture of the Panchayat in relation to the misappropriation of JGSY fund.

WOMEN WARD MEMBERS

It was noticed that after the reservation for women in the Panchayati Raj institutions, the earlier male ward members let their wives contest for the same post. And if the wives won, they represent their wives in the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha. Even people accept their opinions as the opinions of the ward members.³¹

When some women members were approached for interview, their husbands intervened and answered on behalf of their wives.

Mr. Hurde Karlia – the husband of the ward member. Mrs. Phula Kurali

²⁸ Mr. Nalin Naik (ST) is a landlord and Mr. Sadanand Bhoi is a rich farmer and the ex-Sarpanch of Kulemura G.P.

²⁹ Mr. Hemanand Biswal was the Chief-Minister who is also the local MLA

³⁰ As told by the Naib - Sarpanch of Kulemura GP.

³¹ Mrs. Malti Kisan of village Kukerama, Mrs. Labanga Pradhan of village Khairdihi and many other are of this category. This fact was gathered by interview with these ward members and their husband.

(SC woman ward member of village Niktimal) says, “My wife is like a doll. I just take her to the Panchayat meetings and let her sit there silently. But in Pallia Sabha and Gram Sabha I alone am sufficient. My recommendations are accepted in these meetings whenever required. Even I have learnt the signature of my wife. I give her signature wherever required and it is accepted in the Panchayat.”³²

There are also some SC/ST women ward members who had to contest for the posts as per the order of the local powerful men after the posts were reserved for women of SC/ST category. These women are either obedient to them or work under them as wage labourers. These ward members are mostly bypassed in Palli Sabha and gram Sabha by the local people. Mrs. Sagtuli Samartha of village Ampada and Mrs. Ghicha Ghasi of village Mudrajore belong to this category.³³

But it will be wrong to suggest that all ward members play a subordinate role in the Panchayat. There are some women ward members who are very active and take part in the meetings and activities of the Panchayat without any fear. Ms. Juniha Tapno (ST) village – Girja Pada, Ms. Yasosanti Choudhury (other caste) village – Sandhudriam, Mrs. Gyana Luha (SC) Village – Sandhudriam and many others belong to this category. They suggest names of beneficiaries for IAY and also different works under JGSY. They also actively take part in Palli Sabha,

³² As said to the investigator during the field study.

³³ As they told and also observed by the investigator in the Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha

Gram Sabha and other Panchayat meetings. They don't hesitate to argue with the male folk whenever required.³⁴

The significant features of these women are that their parental homes are in the same Panchayat and most of them are unmarried. They have also studied at least upto class VII level.

And the inactive women ward members about whom we have discussed earlier are mostly illiterate and their parental homes are outside of these Panchayats. So the social values attached with the concept of *Bohu* (daughter-in-law) might be pulling them back so to remain subjugated to the male folk.

SC/ST MALE WARD MEMBERS

Reservations for SC/ST for different posts in the Panchayati Raj institutions have helped in changing the equation of power relations in the rural areas. Earlier in Laikera Block the dominant castes/tribes were the speakers in the Panchayat or village meetings and the lower castes/tribes were the mute listeners. But due to power given to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe in the Panchayati Raj institutions this dominance is being gradually weakened.

But this situation is not uniform in all the Panchayats of the Block. In Kulemura Panchayat the SC/ST ward members were heard arguing in loud voice

³⁴ As observed in the Gram Sabha of Kulemura and Tileimal G.P. by the investigator during the field study.

in the Gram Sabha in selecting different works under JGSY.³⁵ In Tileimal only ST ward members were arguing but the SC ward members were silent.³⁶ But the ward members belonging to general castes were seen arguing in both these Gram Sabhas. However, in Gram Sabha of Bhatlaida G.P. both SC and ST ward members were silent and there was full dominance of the ward members belonging to higher castes.³⁷

It was also observed that in the selection of beneficiaries for IAY, the suggestions of the ward members were being accepted in the Palli Sabha or Gram Sabha.³⁸ But in JGSY the proposals of work given by the influential persons of the locality are mostly accepted. Some times these influential person instruct the ward members beforehand to give some particular proposals for JGSY in the Gram Sabha.

Mr. Bhikari Oram (ST ward member) of village Naikdihi (Kulemura Panchayat) says, "I am a daily wage labourer. I mostly work under Mr. Sadanand Bhoi.³⁹ He gives me instructions prior to the Palli Sabha or Gram Sabha regarding what I should propose there. I work under him so I have no way out but to obey his orders."⁴⁰

³⁵ As observed in the Gram Sabha of Kulemura G.P. on dated 3-3-2000.

³⁶ As observed in the Gram Sabha of Tillimal G.P. on dated 27-2-2000

³⁷ As observed in the Gram Sabha of Bhatlaida G.P. on dated 29-2-2000

³⁸ Earlier mentioned Gram Sabha

³⁹ Mr. Sadanand Bhoi is the ex-Sarpanch of Kulemura G.P.

⁴⁰ As said to the investigator

Mr. Pulin Dhuraa (ST ward member) of village Nuagaon Tileimal G.P. says, "The brother of our woman Sarpanch is involved in misappropriating the money of JGSY. He is able to do all these misappropriation by the help of his sister. An amount of Rs. 75000/- is pending as recovery against our Sarpanch. The Panchayat secretary takes Rs. 200 from each beneficiary of IAY and JGSY. There is no road in our village where most of the inhabitants are poor and belong to scheduled tribes. In the Gram Sabha I gave a proposal for the construction of a road in this village. But Mr. Tikeswar Patel (other caste rich farmer and a contractor) opposed this without showing any reasons. His proposal for the development of a road in his village Kankumar was accepted and my proposal was rejected. I don't want to contest for any post of the Panchayat next time if this Panchayat secretary is there and if this Sarpanch will contest once again. I have lost interest in the Panchayat activities because of all these things."⁴¹

This account shows that the influential persons of the area undermine the SC/ST ward members.

ACCOUNT OF A WOMEN (SC) SAMITI MEMBER OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI

Samiti members are elected from each Panchayat for the Panchayat Samiti at the Block level. The Samiti members are supposed to represent their respective Panchayats in the Panchayat Samiti.

The women (SC) Samiti member from Kulemura Gram Panchayat Mrs.

⁴¹ As said to the investigator during the field study

Chandrima Karali (wife of the ex-Samiti member) says, “I don’t demand anything for our Panchayat in the meetings of the Panchayat Samiti. Should I press demands and get allocation of funds for the Panchayat so that the Sarpanch (SC women) and the Panchayat secretary would eat away (misappropriate) the money?”⁴²

Mrs. Karali (untouchable SC woman) narrated an incident in connection with the caste feeling of the women Sarpanch (touchable SC) of Kulemura Panchayat towards her. As per the narration of Mrs. Karali both of them had attended a feast in the occasion of inauguration of a college. At the time of eating food, Mrs. Karali requested the Sarpanch to have a sit which was nearer to her. But the Sarpanch went away in the pretext of eating later on. But she (the Sarpanch) sat near some higher castes women and ate her food. Mrs. Karali felt offended in this type of behaviour of the Sarpanch.

This account shows that the women Panchayat members have failed to be united because of their caste identity. And hence they have failed to press any demand in favour of the women folk as a whole.

ACCOUNT OF THE ZILLA PARISHAD PRESIDENT

The Zilla Parishad (Jharsuguda district) President Mr. Bhabani Naik said, “the Zilla Parishad only decides the work to be done under the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). Other than this we have no power at all. The District

⁴² As said to the investigator during the field study.

Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is doing all the other things. No file of the DRDA comes to us for any purpose. We have absolutely no control over the DRDA.”⁴³

This account indicates the powerlessness of the Zilla Parishad in the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes.

ACCOUNT OF THE LOCAL MLA

The local MLA Mr. Hemanand Biswal is a popular tribal leader of the state and a reputed figure in the Congress party. He was the Chief Minister of Orissa twice for short periods. He was elected as the MLA from Laikera constituency in 1974 for the first time. Since 1980 he is representing this constituency in the state legislative assembly.

Mr. Biswal said, “Considering the socio-economic and political condition earlier Laikera was very backward. But since 1974 the situation has changed. We have provided cows, bullocks, pump sets, business loans and many other things to the people. For better cultivation we have provided assistance for irrigation through dug wells. Hatia Nala irrigation project was established due to my efforts.”⁴⁴

The banks not disbursing the full amount of loan in different anti-poverty programmes is not known to me. Still then if any complaint comes inquiry is

⁴³ As said to the investigator during the field study

⁴⁴ A new medium irrigation project covering a little area in the north west part of Laikera block.

started by the Vigilance department.

Migration of labourers from Laikera area to other areas is not due to poverty. In off seasons usually cross migration occurs. The labourers of Madhya Pradesh also come to Orissa for cultivation in the irrigated areas of Bargarh district.

Every MLA gets Rs. 15 lakhs to spend for the development of his/her constituency. We spend it mainly in discretionary heads where no other assistance is given by the government. We give assistance to the local recognised colleges, Youth clubs etc. out of this money. We also spend the money in electrification. We don't spend this money for the poor as there are other government programmes for them.⁴⁵

The account of Mr. Biswal shows that he is fully aware of the assets given to the people in different government programmes. But he expressed his ignorance regarding the banks not giving the full amount of loan to the beneficiaries. This means he is not fully knowledgeable regarding the actual implantation of the welfare programmes in his constituency.

For him, the out migration of labourers is not a problem. Mr. Biswal also doesn't think it is necessary to spend the money allotted to him as the MLA, in the welfare schemes for the poor.

⁴⁵ As said by Mr. Biswal to the investigation during the field study.

The Hatia Nala irrigation project (mentioned by Mr. Biswal) is really a useful project. Those farmers who have land near the small canal of this project are growing crops in the off season also. Mr. Biswal's effort in this regard is really praiseworthy. But it covers only a small area in the north-western part of Laikera Block.

If Mr. Biswal's over-all performance is unsatisfactory, question arises as to how does he manage to win the elections from this constituency again and again. In addition to the nature of social settings, the larger logic of politics in the state, his ability to establish a network for electoral purposes, even money-power have contributed to his good political fortune for decades.⁴⁶

During the last assembly election, I had got the opportunity to attend several election meetings of various political parties in Laikera Block. Disappointedly issue of poverty was rarely raised in these meetings.⁴⁷

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND THE BUREAUCRACY IN LAIKERA BLOCK.

There is no clash between the bureaucracy and the elected representatives on any issue in the Block of Laikera. The officials are not worry about decentralisation and the devolution of power. They are worry about their work

⁴⁶ Distribution of cash among the voters in the recently concluded election for the Orissa state legislative assembly (February 2000) is seen by the investigator himself during the field study.

⁴⁷ Observed by the investigator by attending election meeting in February 2000 in the village Sandhudram, Niktimal and Saletikra during the field study. And also the responses of the people of other villages supported this fact.

load. So when responsibility of the implementation of some programmes are given to the Panchayats, they considered it as a respite from their work load. Most of the elected representatives of the Panchayats are illiterate or have less formal education. They find it difficult to understand the procedures of different programmes. So they can't even question any action of the bureaucracy. Everything is going on in its own way. Even the officials facilitate the Panchayat secretaries and some elected representatives to misappropriate government funds. The officials and the elected representatives are allegedly misappropriating some percentage of money from the government funds coming under different heads, as their share.

CONCLUSION

All the above descriptions show that the performance of the Panchayat members are not satisfactory and they have failed to make the government assistance under IAY and JGSY reach to the poor and the vulnerable sections of the society.

Even some Panchayat members have taken their posts as a source of income and they are involved in misappropriation of the government resources. Some Panchayat members are caught taking bribes from the people, and selecting the names of the rich for government assistance under different programmes. In this way, corruption has allowed the Panchayat to become the instrument of the rich and powerful in this area.

Inspite of the fact that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are given special representation in the Panchayati Raj institutions they are unable to exercise their power because of the dominance of the upper caste and class in this area. The societal inequality in many ways have undermined the efficacy of the Panchayati Raj institution in Laikera Block.

Because of the patriarchal nature of the society and lack of education the women Panchayat members are not able to exercise their power effectively.

Inspite of holding the top most post of the state (Chief Ministership) the local MLA had failed to do anything remarkable to eradicate poverty from this area. Lack of political will and deliberate apathy towards the poor are responsible for this dismal situation in this area.

In this way the elected representatives have failed to perform their role effectively to make the anti-poverty programmes successful.

CHAPTER - 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarises the findings of the study, and tries to offer some explanations for understanding the process of implementation of anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block of Orissa.

As we have mentioned earlier, programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY) etc. which involve subsidy with term credit for micro-enterprises to provide the beneficiaries self-employment, are implemented by the Block functionaries. The programmes such as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY) involving wage employment is implemented by the Gram Panchayats. In addition to this, beneficiaries for Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY) are selected by the Gram Panchayats through Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha. For the assistance based anti-poverty programmes, people living below the poverty line are considered as the target group. At the beginning of each plan period, the state conducts the survey for Below Poverty Line (BPL) census.

After analysing the authenticity of the BPL census and the implementation of the above mentioned anti-poverty programmes in the Block of Laikera of Jharsusuda district in Orissa, it is observed that these programmes are not implemented well enough to achieve at least the minimum level of success.

Many-a-times the guidelines are violated and these programmes are being implemented in a haphazard manner. As a result the benefits of the programmes have failed to reach the target group. Because of the faulty implementation, many rich and non-eligible people also get the benefits from these programmes. In Laikera Block, even the assisted poor beneficiaries could not cross the poverty line.¹

BUREAUCRATIC MALFUNCTION

One of the major causes of the failure of these programmes is the malfunctioning of the bureaucracy. Administrative irregularities have made the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes lopsided. The local level bureaucracies is only interested in maintaining the files and accounts, or at best try to achieve the target given by the upper level in a mechanical manner. There is no supervision of the assisted activities. This means post-loan problems of the beneficiaries are rarely attended to. This makes the credit delivery institutions (Banks) comfortable in not disbursing the advance term credit and just giving the subsidy amount to the beneficiaries.

Hence the beneficiaries are unable to start the activities due to lack of required capital. Sub-standard and useless assets are also given to the beneficiaries by dealers at the behest of the Banks. Whenever these problems

¹ Samal, Kishore C. Poverty alleviation after post-liberalisation-study of a tribal block in Orissa. Economic and Political Weekly, 11 July 1998, vol. XXX 111 no. 28, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

were reported to the Block functionaries they did not take any further steps. This lack of responsiveness has led to the failure of these programmes. There is also lack of accountability at every level of bureaucracies. The Block functionaries are either unaware of the nature of the programmes or they are molding the process to include the ineligible persons. It was also found during our field work that they are more responsive to the middle men than to the poor. Because of the unnecessary bureaucratic delay and the insensitive manner of the functionaries, the beneficiaries have to run to the Block office and banks repeatedly and in the process feel harassed and dejected.

At the village level, functionaries take bribe from the beneficiaries and include the rich in the anti-poverty programmes. It was found during the field work that the higher authorities are aware of the irregularities and they also receive complaints from the people regarding this. However, there is very little done to make the officials accountable.

How does one explain such bureaucratic negligence and apathy ? Why has the bureaucracy become indifferent to the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes?

We have to analyse the bureaucratic failure in implementing the anti-poverty programmes by placing the bureaucracy in the larger socio-political context of the society. These contexts play a significant role as far as the performance of the bureaucracy is concerned. The process of development during

the last five decades has attended the social structure of this area. This leads to social conflict and discontent. So effective law and order machinery is as much necessary as development administration.² The fortunes of the administrators are also influenced by the way conflict resolution mechanisms are adopted in a given context. While the administrators come forward to resolve the crisis, their actions often help the dominant interests to strengthen their grip over the political arena. So the bureaucracy uses its power and plays a key role in influencing policy outputs.³

The required infrastructure and appropriate political condition are not always available for the effective implementation of the policies. Adequate support is not provided to the local level officials by the upper level bureaucracy. "In this sense, policy making and implementation are truly fractured and schizophrenic."⁴

The condition has become so worse that even the SC/ST administrators are also being co-opted to the system.

The poor in the Laikera Block are not organised and mostly illiterate. So they failed to make the officials listen to their problems. The officials also see

² Mathur, Kuldeep. Introduction : The emerging Concern in Public Administration. In the volume edited by him – Development Policy and Administration, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1996

³ ibid

⁴ Mathur, Kuldeep. Designing Poverty Alleviation Programme : International Agencies and Indian Politics. In the volume edited by him – Development Policy and Administration, pp. 193, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1996.

little hope of any personal gain at present or in future in helping the poor. So they are not interested to respond to them. The officials also loose interest in their work because of the corruption by political leaders. Even if any functionary becomes interested^{to} work with commitment, the necessary support from the colleagues are not forthcoming. Then automatically that functionary looses interest.

CASTE AND CLASS DISCRIMINATIONS

Discrimination on the basis of class and caste also plays an important role in shaping the nature of policies implementation in Laikera Block. The bias of the upper caste were responsible for the exclusion of many poor families from the BPL list. In the Below Poverty Line (BPL) census 1997, it is found that many of the poor and untouchables were not included in this list. On the other hand many rich of this area got themselves included in the BPL list. Thus, poor families of Laikera Block do not have access to the subsidised good grain supplied through the Public Distribution System (PDS).

In the selection of beneficiaries and location of work, the caste and class discrimination has play a major role. The traditional dominant castes and agrarian upper class tend to manipulate the Panchayats. In the Gram Sabha and Palli Sabha they exercise their dominance. They mostly favour the economically affluent and the touchable castes or at best the obedient untouchables. But in Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY), we found that those schemes/works are

selected which are directly beneficial to the dominant castes/class. The location of these developmental works are mostly in their *Para* (colony).

Schemes to build rural infrastructure which could provide income generation opportunities to the poor are not being undertaken under JGSY. Even in this, there is open and widespread caste and class discrimination in the implementation of these programmes.

Caste is an institution of great significance in rural Orissa. It still serves to regulate economic activities to an appreciable extent.⁵ Laikera Block is no exception to this rule.

The norm of the society itself is based on inequality and injustice which is determined from the time of birth. There is a superior-inferior feeling attached to caste identities. "Caste is so tacitly and so completely accepted by all, including those who are most vocal in condemning it, that it is everywhere the unit of social action."⁶ One can change his or her class position but mobility in caste is limited. But it is also difficult to change the class position in the rural areas. "The free mobility which is, in principle, permitted within the class system, is, in reality, limited by various factors. thus, the son of the rentier has much greater

⁵ Pattnaik, Nityanand. A study of the Economic and Social condition of the Chamars of Bar Pali in Orissa. The Economic Weekly, 12 September 1953, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation. As quoted by Bose, Nirmal Kumar. Data on Caste : Orissa, Anthropological Survey of India (ASI), Memoir, No. 7 1960.

⁶ Srinivas, M. N. Caste in Modern India and Other Essay. Bombay, Media Promoter and Publishers, p. 41, 1970.

chances of himself becoming a rentier than the son of an agricultural labour.”⁷

The dominant rural forces are blocking the benefits to the poor and the vulnerable section of the society. They are also trying to appropriate the benefits meant for the poor. This is one of the ways in which they maintain their hegemony in the rural areas.

EMPOWERMENT OF SCHEUDLED CASTES, SCHEDULED TRIBES AND WOMEN

To make the process of development participatory in nature and to encourage local level planning for economic development and social justice, Panchayati Raj institution were given constitutional status. Provisions were made to reserve seats for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women in these bodies to make them more representative.

But because of the pressure of the dominant castes and class in the rural areas, the formal institutional power given to the SC and ST has remain more or less abstract. In Laikera Block, in Palli Sabha the high caste people sit on mats while the lower caste people sit on the ground. The Panchayat secretary (appointed by the government) who usually belongs to the upper caste sits among the high caste people and prefers to records mostly what they propose. The SC and ST Panchayat members are not able to express their opinions freely and

⁷ Beteille, Andve. Caste, Class, and Power Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore village. P. 190, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1969.

frankly because of caste constraints. Rural power structure is determining the decision making of the Panchayats. There is monopoly of the landed elite over the Panchayati Raj institutions. The poor, marginal farmers and the untouchables in reality are not allowed to have any effective voice in village affairs. "Merely providing reservations for weaker sections and women will not usher in an effective participatory grass root democracy. The fact that economic empowerment is the essential precursor of political empowerment must be realised. Further, the notion that a meaningful political democracy should be preceded by economic enrichment can only be realised through land reforms."⁸

Of course the case of all the SC/ST Panchayat members is not similar and equally depressing. Few of them are able to play an active role in the decision making process of the Panchayats. But that depends upon their level of education and the caste and class configuration of those concerned villages.

The case of women Panchayat members is entirely different. Except a few, all the others are being used as the proxy either for their husbands or their kin. The unruly atmosphere in the Gram Sabha often compels the women members to remain silent in those meetings. Taking advantage of the patriarchal nature of the society the male folk dominates the Panchayats.

In this way these vulnerable section of the society have failed to benefit

⁸ Kumar, Rajesh. Can Panchayati Raj succeed without land reforms ? Mainstream, 4 March 1995, p. 8, New Delhi, Perspective Publications Private Limited.

from the different programmes.

However, situation in Laikera Block is slowly changing. There are more people belonging to the marginal section of the society, are asserting their rights in the representative bodies in the Block.

OMNIPRESENT CORRUPTION

As in most cases bribe taking and misappropriation of funds have also seriously undermined the anti-poverty programmes in Laikera Block. The Village Level Workers (VLWs), Block staff, Bank functionaries and many other officials are allegedly involved in corruption. In the Panchayat level the Panchayat secretary, ward members, Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti chairperson etc. etc. are also involved in corruption. Even recovery of money is pending against some functionaries and elected representatives. They are frittering away the resources and indulged in financial indiscipline. In this way, they are hampering the interests of the weaker sections in the Block. In this situation the relatively affluent people of the area appropriating the benefits meant for the poor. Even some Panchayat members treat their posts as a source of income.

However, there are some officials and Panchayat member who are relatively honest.

POLICY CONTRADICTIONS

Under the impact of globalization and liberalisation, governments are in

favour of reducing the expenditure in the social sector. Even if the election manifestoes of different political parties mention about poverty eradication from the rural areas and land reforms, in actual practice these promises are never kept. The government supports the strategy of higher growth through mass production and free enterprises. On the other hand the strategy adopted for poverty eradication is assistance to micro-enterprises for self-employment. Infrastructural facilities are hardly provided to create the appropriate environment for self-employment. Initiatives are also not to bring structural change in the society. Steps are not taken to clear the blockades and loopholes in the path of implementation of the policies. "Removing poverty, though high on the political agenda, was not the core theme around which development strategy was conceived, and initiating such programmes allowed it to remain so. Thus, poverty alleviation schemes did not threaten either the strategy of development or the structural relationships in society. Political acceptance of these schemes appears to be because of their innocuous nature and not due to an expectation that they would create a more equal society."⁹

The findings of the study reveals that poverty is structural in the Laikera Block. Without breaking the backbone of this structure, no anti-poverty programme will ever deliver benefits to the actual poor. The assetless poor are

⁹ Mathur, Kuldeep Politics and implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme. Economic and Political Weekly, 14 October 1995, pp. 2404, Bombay, EPW Research Foundation.

not able to continue the self-employment activities. Agriculture is the major occupation of the people in the rural areas. Hence land reform is the prerequisite for eradicating poverty. Then only other anti-poverty programmes can be successful.

The Panchayati Raj system has to be strengthened. It will help in changing the power relations in the rural areas. When more and more power and responsibilities will be given to the Panchayats to implement different welfare programmes, debureaucratization will slowly occur. This will certainly bring change in the functioning of the bureaucracy. Side by side corruption has to be checked.

In this process the role of education should not be undermined. Gradually the vulnerable section of the society will question the hegemony of the dominant classes and castes in the rural areas. This will pave the way for an egalitarian society. Alongwith this, the commitment of the government is also needed to implement the anti-poverty programmes effectively in order to root out poverty from the rural areas.

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APPENDIX – I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LOANEE OF DIFFERENT ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES

1. Any loan ? Specify the year of sanction and the activities for which it was sanctioned.
2. How/where did your approach for the loan?
3. Why did you opt for that loan?
4. Who helped you to get the loan?
5. Who brought obstacles?
6. Any problem faced during/in connection with the sanction of that loan?
7. Nature of disbursement (including the presence of Bloc officials etc.)
8. Did anybody come to supervise/inspect after that ?
9. Any other assistance get from government or any other institution?
10. What is the progress?
11. If loss what is the nature of loss and why?
12. Have you repaid the loan or re-paying it?
13. Are you carrying on those activities?
14. How do you manage to live nowadays ?
15. Do you want any other help from government/any other institution?
(specify the kind of help)
16. Have you approached anybody for this ? (specify)
17. Anything else you want to say regarding the above?
18. Do you know about any misappropriation/corruption/partiality etc. in these programmes/any other programmes?
19. What about the developmental works/activities in your locality?
20. (Other question will be asked according to necessity)

APPENDIX - II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONS WITHOUT LOAN/ASSISTANCE

1. How do you manage to live?
2. Are you getting/received any assistance/loan etc. from the government or any other institutions?
3. Do you think any assistance/loan/assets will help you to come out of poverty? (specify)
4. Do you know about different government programmes to help the poor? (specify)
5. Have you ever applied/approached for any assistance? And to whom?
6. Is there any assistance/loan blocked by anybody/any group in the path of coming it to you? (specify)
7. Do you know anybody who is richer than you but getting the assistance/loan after you approached? (Specify)
8. How could he/they be able to do so? And who helped him/them?
9. What is the reason for your poverty?
10. How is the anti-poverty programmes working in this area?
11. What about the developmental works/activities in your locality?
12. Do you know any misappropriation etc. in the government programmes for the poor? (specify)
13. (Other questions will be asked according to the necessity).

APPENDIX-III

BASIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENT AND HIS/HER FAMILY

01. Name of the respondent
02. Address
03. Age
04. Sex
05. Educational qualification
06. Religion
07. Caste
08. Influential capacity over state machinery and social institutions :
- 09.a) Occupation/income sources :
- 09.b) Total earnings (monthly/annually) :
10. Assets/wealth/land etc. in detail
11. Indebtedness status :
12. Family details:

NAME	AGE	SEX	INCOME SOURCES	TOTAL EARNINGS (MONTHLY / ANNUALLY	RELATION WITH THE RESPONDENT	REMARK

