

CHRONIC POVERTY IN REMOTE RURAL AREAS:
Evidence from Central Tribal Belt of India

A Project financially supported
By
Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi

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Preface

This monograph, analysing poverty from a non-economist perspective, tries to understand who and why people experience multi-dimensional unfreedom. In the process, the study documents experiences of people in the central tribal belt of India who have been poor for years and the forces that have trapped them into poverty. Viewing poverty in a multidimensional sense assumes significance for, it recognises that people can be trapped into poverty due to a variety of reasons; the economic unfreedom being only one of the important causes. We are grateful to Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi for accepting our research proposal and agreeing to financially support the research.

Three considerations were responsible for selecting Central Tribal belt of India for this study. First, earlier work (Sah and Shah: 2003 and Sah and Bhatt: 2004) in Southwestern region of Madhya Pradesh identified through qualitative & quantitative research correlates of tribal poverty. There was a need to validate these findings in a larger area. Secondly, initiatives undertaken in the belt under the umbrella of decentralised governance have significant implications for addressing the poverty issues; these efforts cut across hierarchies when it tries to reach the masses through programmes that are planned, executed and monitored by the community. This belt, nevertheless, has a varied experience of decentralised governance; Madhya Pradesh was the first state in the country to enact and implement the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act that created opportunities for self-governance by the community. On the other hand Jharkhand the Act was enacted as late as 2001 and even today there are no panchayats in the state. Development work is carried out without participation of the community. Poverty eradication has taken place within these variations it will be worth to decipher the role of decentralised governance in the process. And lastly, Planning Commission, Government of India insisted on a larger canvas when understanding on poverty-trap was premeditated.

The monograph has tried to capture the incidence of chronic poverty, its correlates and why despite Panchayati Raj, tribal poverty is pervasive in the Central tribal belt. Apart from other findings, the monograph uncovers:

Higher unpaid social debts rather than low increase the probability of a household to be chronic poor rather than not by 3 times. But higher debts in Under-developed villages increase the chances of being chronic poor 1.6 times more than in Developed villages. This is exceedingly constraining interaction between remoteness, access to credit and chronic poverty.

A household is 3.3 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not if it has lower health expenses than higher. When the control variable remoteness is introduced in this analysis, it is found that:

In Developed villages, higher allocations to health reduce the incidence of chronic poverty significantly more as compared to Under-developed villages.

Households without irrigation compared to irrigated are 1.2 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not. But in Developed villages, unirrigated households are 2 times more likely to be chronic poverty as compared to Under-developed villages.

Higher animal assets rather than lower reduce chronic poverty by 1.4 times but the phenomenon in relatively Developed villages is significantly more pronounced compared to Under-developed villages.

A chronic poor household is 2.4 times more likely to be migrant rather than not compared to non-chronic poor household. But chronic poverty in Under-developed villages increases the likelihood of inducing migration significantly more than in relatively developed villages.

Households with higher proportion of their illiterate members are 1.6 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not compared to high literacy rate households. But literacy, in developed villages breaks the poverty trap significantly more than Under-Developed villages.

Higher consumption expenditure, large possessions of consumer items, larger agricultural income, higher Organisational membership rather than lower reduce chronic poverty Significantly. But these factors, irrespective of the remoteness of the location, influences chronic poverty in the same manner in the two groups of villages.

On the other hand, higher agricultural borrowings and higher size of family, rather than lower increases chronic poverty Significantly. But these factors, irrespective of the remoteness of the location, influences chronic poverty in the same manner in the two groups of villages.

It was also argued in the research that chronic poor remains remote from policy makers rather than remoteness creates chronic poverty. Tentatively this remained our conclusion. But before accepting it, we also tried to understand how livelihood struggles, especially under failing agriculture, differ across developed and under-developed villages. Also relevant in establishing the implications of remoteness were the issues of governance, manifestation of social capital in development decision-making. Together, evidences from these processes enlightened us about the role the relative remoteness played in determining chronic poverty.

The study owes a great deal to several people who have provided intellectual foundation to this research, those who have supported in conducting the research and those who have had an opportunity to go through the draft and provided critical comments. Amita shah, Andrew Shepherd, David Hulme, Kate Bird and Karen Moore through their work as well as interactions and discussion during the conception of this study have facilitated us and clarified many of our misconceptions. Anand Kumar, Rohini Nayyar and Phil Amis whose remarks and comments on an earlier paper were valuable inputs for the study. Sandeep Joshi has critically commented on some of the chapters as they were developing. Comments by B.R. Purohit and Yatindra S. Sisodia have also helped us in revising some of the chapters especially chapters 7 and 8. Comments by a team of researchers from Planning Commission are gratefully acknowledged. We have tried to include their suggestions as much as possible but for interpretations, errors and omissions we only are responsible. Data collection in the remote central tribal belt of India was a challenge. Access to these villages during the rainy season, when we were in field, was extremely difficult. Moreover, apprehension of submergence due to dam in the region has made the some of the tribals suspicious to outsiders. Some of the areas have had serious law and order problems as well. But Uttam Panda, Arbind Songhre, Pramod Jhanolia, Bhagwan Singh, Manoj Verma and Uday Rajput, and their team of investigators have patiently helped us generate quantitative data. Professor R.S. Gautam, President, Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research was extremely encouraging and helpful in arranging all kind of support, despite severe financial constraints. We also like to thank L.P. Gautam, Sunil Chandel, Manu Gautam and Yatindra S. Sisodia for providing logistic as well intellectual support. We must mention the contribution of Sudeep Mishra, and Punit who have provided able word processing support and also saw that the monograph is brought out in this form. And last but not least the villagers of 40 study villages have supported us in completing our data collection work. This monograph would not have taken shape without their support.

MPISSR
March 7, 2008

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In order to address poverty in a comprehensive manner, the need to conceptualise what poverty is, who the poor are, what their characteristics are, and the appropriate ways that can reduce the incident of poverty cannot be overemphasised. This chapter attempts to debate these issues. Through a discussion in the first section, an attempt is made to understand how poverty in Indian planning circles has been conceptualised and measured, and the efficacy of such measures. The next section develops a tentative frame that explains poverty in its multidimensional form in a remote rural economy. Data and methods used in the study are presented in the third section. The last section presents the outline of this monograph.

1.1 Income Poverty

Concept and Incidence

Of the several ways to conceptualise and operationalise poverty¹, the Indian state has narrowly defined poverty as income poverty². A poverty line³ represented by an income that commands a minimum calorie intake to individuals⁴ is first defined and then estimates are made of all those people whose income falls below this line. The method is known as Head Count Ratio of poverty and is the commonly used measure in Indian planning and development. The official estimates are, however, based on consumption expenditure -- generated by National Sample Survey -- instead of income⁵ to estimate the number of poor⁶. Of late, such official estimates are under scrutiny; till 1993, the NSS consumption expenditure data were adjusted *arbitrarily* upwards so that they aggregate-up to consumption figures estimated by National Accounts Statistics (NAS). A serious debate⁷ resulted in discontinuing the arbitrary upward adjustment⁸. Aiyar (2000) has argued that it would be worth to replace average consumption series of NSS by consumption given by NAS. But a number of researchers find flaws in this argument for anchoring poverty measures to the NAS data. For, they have argued that the NAS consumption neither provides accurate measures for average household consumption nor its rate of growth (Ravallion: 2000). Of late the incompatibility in estimates of poverty owing to change in methods used by NSS from 30 days recall to 7 days recall is being debated⁹. Moreover, the structuralist perspective envisages poverty, especially in rural India, as a long duration phenomenon. The famous axiom that 'Indian farmers are born, live and die in indebtedness' is a classic description of the structural roots as well as the form of poverty engulfing a bulk of the rural poor in the country. Over time, most of the structural features of poverty have remained more or less intact, with little difference in

degree rather than in kind. As a result, a large proportion of the poor in India are also chronically poor in terms of duration as well as severity (Mehta and Shah: 2002).

Official figures reveal that between 1973-74 and 1999-2000, the head count ratio of poverty reduced from 66 per cent to 27 per cent. The major reduction in the incidence of poverty could be achieved only in 1980s and 1990s (Appendix 1.1). But this reduction in poverty varies significantly across states. Rajasthan could reduce its head count ratio of poverty from 45 per cent to 13 per cent between 1973-74 and 1999-2000 whereas in Bihar incidence of poverty reduced marginally from 63 per cent to 41 per cent during the period. Four states, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and Orissa had head count ratio of poverty between 37 per cent and 48 per cent even in 1999-2000. Incidence of poverty also varies significantly across regions within states (Appendix 1.1). For example, Madhya Pradesh, a state with high incidence of poverty in 1993-94, had only 17 per cent of its rural population poor in the Northern region whereas in Southwestern Madhya Pradesh the incidence of poverty was over 68 per cent. Notwithstanding variations in incidence of poverty across states and regions, these evidences clearly demonstrate that income poverty in India declined significantly in 1990s. Deaton (2003) has provided alternative estimates of poverty by bringing comparability in NSS estimates of consumption over time as well as by using improved price indexes to update the poverty line. What these estimates reveal is that there is evidence of continuing poverty decline in the 1990s and that a large part (over two thirds) of poverty decline claimed by the Planning Commission is real. But what is concerning according to Deaton and Dreze (2002) is the intensification of disparity across regions and between rural and urban India.

Efficacy of Income Poverty

Poverty issues have, nonetheless, moved a long way from earlier efforts of measuring poverty to explaining it. The past efforts to explain changes in rural poverty have used growth in agricultural production and changes in agricultural prices as explanatory variables. The negative relationship between economic growth and poverty has firmly been established (Ahluwalia: 1978). Also, well documented is the ill effect of inflation that erodes the purchasing power of poor, and hence aggravates poverty (Saith: 1981; Dharm Narain's research reported in Desai: 1985). In a traditional economy like that of India, a stagnant agriculture not only fails to generate the surplus for rapid growth in the non-agricultural sector but also results in increasing inequality¹⁰. Researchers have been critical of such an explanation for ignoring in these explanations non-farm employment as a source of rural income. Departing from growth-based explanation of rural poverty, Abhijit Sen (1966) suggested that a strategy of poverty alleviation is a better alternative to growth with social sector oriented policy. For, state expenditure on social sector comes out to be fairly a robust

factor explaining income poverty across time and space¹¹. It can, however, be argued that the strategy may work as long as the government expenditure is compatible with growth policies because growth has a complex relationship with poverty¹². Recent findings (Ravallion: 2000) reveal that higher farm yields, higher development spending, higher non-farm output and lower inflation are all poverty reducing processes. It is also been debated that growth in non-farm sector has not done enough in reducing poverty mainly because the growth in this sector has not been any higher in the states where it would have had the most impact on poverty. States that lagged in these areas faced limited long-term prospects of pro-poor growth from their non-farm economies.

The inability to capture various facets of poverty by using head count measure of income poverty is well documented (Chaubey: 1992). If poverty indexes are useful indicators of inadequate purchasing power, it is not surprising that the growth in income plays a key role in reducing it. The head count ratio, though, provides the actual extent of incidence of income poverty, the measure fails to take into account the depth of poverty; i.e. the gap among the poor¹³, despite such measures being available¹⁴. These problems apart, the development literature stresses the multidimensionality of the poverty concept. It has been argued that, apart from economic opportunities, well-being equally depends on individuals' access to education, health and other social infrastructure, environment quality, and social and political freedom. Unless poverty concept captures all these dimensions, institutional efforts for poverty alleviation will remain confined to reducing economic poverty.

1.2 Beyond Income Poverty

Sah and Shah (2003) argue that the inter-linkages between the natural endowment, social stratification, historical processes of power structure and agrarian relations, political ideology, and the choice of strategy for economic development are crucial for well being. Conceding that most of these forces were historically determined, the choice of developmental strategy also got determined in turn by the same set of forces that already existed at the dawn of India's independence. It is, therefore, imperative that a clearer understanding of the genesis of poverty, especially chronic poverty is evolved through a multidisciplinary approach. This is particularly important in the case of a region such as the Southwestern Madhya Pradesh, Southern Rajasthan, Eastern Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa, which is faced with a situation of multiple discriminations in terms of the resource base, social identity, geographical location, infrastructural development, political representation and developmental intervention. Together these factors place the region in a disadvantaged situation that can be characterized as remote tribal areas with high incidence of chronic poverty.

It is envisaged that the macro processes, especially those pertaining to the social and political marginalisation and alienation of people from resources of production like that in the forest based economies, have resulted into a kind of developmental strategy, which reinforces the historically existing discrimination in the disadvantaged regions. Three sets of forces may have played an important role in setting up a strategy that alienated local communities from the mainstream economic development. These are: (i) centrally planned economy with higher priorities accorded rapid industrialization and technology based agricultural growth in regions with better agricultural infrastructure; (ii) commercialisation of forest by bringing the resources under state monopoly since the colonial period; and (iii) encouraging non-tribal to undertake settled agriculture and thereby marginalizing the local tribals. In the process, the developmental strategy bypassed a large part of rural economies in (a) dry land and (b) forest based regions. To a large extent, these two regions constitute agriculturally remote rural areas, as they are alienated from the mainstream agricultural growth having a crucial bearing on poverty reduction. The tribals in Central belt of India have to face multiple discriminations under this kind of an input intensive and market-oriented agriculture growth strategy. This happens due to their low bargaining capacity emanating from the low information base and technology adoption, limited access to institutional support system including formal credit system; persisting indebtedness; low social capital; and socio-cultural discrimination due to language and other attributes of tribal identity.

Intense poverty in remote rural areas results from low endowments of physical, social and human capital. The remoteness from the state and markets in RRAs originates from the growth-potential of non-RRAs that induces a technological change and institutions supporting it that are not suited for the RRAs. Consequently, the livelihood in these areas becomes risky to weather induced changes. Shocks in the form of death and illness, natural calamity and crop-failure, and reduced access to land and employment can trigger a debt-migration trap that ultimately pulls households into economic poverty trap. The livelihood struggles and seasonal migration also brings social, political unfreedom and deprivation of rights resulting in multidimensional poverty. This multi-dimensional poverty is transferred to next generations. Remoteness from state and markets also results in social isolation, undeveloped civil society and poor governance. This in turn induces intense apathy towards political institutions. Participation of the community in governance shrinks to levels where inefficiency in governance, iniquitous distribution of gains, leakages and corrupt practices result in an unchallenged political leadership, and political unfreedom for masses. This also divides the homogenous society and forces the social capital remaining dormant and civil society conspicuously absent.

Prima facie, weakening the capital base due to shocks may lead to further stratification among the local tribal community. Ironically, the stratification might take place through some of the developmental processes or interventions like formal education, job-reservation, subsidies for ground water resources development and other farm inputs, legalisation of encroachment of common property resources, development of roads and modern means of transportation, migration, urbanization, and parallel institutions of local governance *et cetera*. While most of these interventions are essential for development of the marginalized areas and communities, the problem is that these initiatives are tuned to 'mainstreaming the marginalised', which implies superiority of the centrally planned, 'mainstream' growth processes. What is worse is that the mainstream growth processes are inherently iniquitous. Of course it is possible to correct, at least a part of this iniquitous growth process, if it is simultaneously supported by a strong institutional mechanism for policy implementation, local governance, and appropriate political representation up to the higher ladders of power.

Exit from these forces resulting into perpetual poverty among a large proportion of the rural community and increasing stratification therein, might require a multi-pronged approach, which could at least partly undo the historical processes of marginalisation of people through monopolization of the forest resources and subsequently through promotion of the market oriented agricultural growth. Probably, reformulating the strategy for agricultural development could make a beginning. This essentially could be achieved by reinstating people's stakes in and entitlement to the forest and other natural resources in the region. In turn it may lend the local community greater cultural and political space. Subsequently, it might pave a way for reshaping of the education and other support system essential for enhancing human capabilities as well as opportunities.

It may, however, be noted that the exit route described here is not the only and the most ideal policy option. Similarly, the exit from perpetual poverty conditions may not have a sequential and a linear path. Conceptually, it is possible to explore several other options. The next chapter tries to understand the entry and exit to chronic poverty in a conceptual frame that links economic deprivations with social exclusion and political unfreedom in remote tribal areas.

APPENDIX 1.1

Estimates of Income Poverty in India over time and across Regions

Appendix Table 1.1 presents official estimates of income poverty in major Indian states between 1973-74 and 1999-2000. While significant reduction in poverty has been achieved in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh continue to remain most poor states of the country.

Table 1.1: Official Estimates of Rural Head Count Ratio of Poverty in India

States	1973-74	1977-78	1983	1987-88	1993-94	1999-2000
Andhra Pradesh	48.4	38.1	26.5	20.9	15.9	10.5
Assam	52.7	59.8	42.6	39.3	45.0	40.3
Bihar	68.0	63.2	64.4	52.6	58.2	44.0
Gujarat	46.3	41.8	29.8	28.7	22.2	12.4
Haryana	34.2	27.7	20.6	16.2	28.0	7.4
Himachal Pradesh	27.4	33.5	17.0	16.3	30.3	7.5
Jammu & Kashmir	45.5	42.9	26.0	25.7	30.3	4.7
Karnataka	55.1	48.2	36.3	32.8	29.9	16.8
Kerala	59.2	51.5	39.0	29.1	25.8	9.4
Madhya Pradesh	62.7	62.5	48.9	41.9	40.6	37.2
Maharashtra	57.7	64.0	45.2	40.8	37.9	23.2
Orissa	77.3	72.4	67.5	57.6	49.7	47.8
Punjab	28.2	16.4	13.2	12.6	12.0	6.0
Rajasthan	44.8	35.9	33.5	33.2	26.5	13.5
Tamil Nadu	57.4	57.7	54.0	45.8	32.5	20.0
Uttar Pradesh	56.5	47.6	46.4	41.1	42.3	31.1
West Bangal	73.2	68.3	63.0	48.3	40.8	31.7
India	56.4	53.1	46.6	39.1	37.3	26.8

Source: NIRD (1999), Deator and Dreze (2002).

Analysing the variations in income poverty across regions, the National Institute of Rural Development has shown that except Bihar there is heterogeneity in each state (NIRD: 1999). Different regions of Bihar are uniformly poor (Appendix Table 1.2), whereas all other states demonstrate variations in the incidence of poverty across regions. Delhi, Goa, Daman and Diu, Northern Punjab, and Coastal Karnataka have low incidence of poverty. On the other hand, southern Orissa, southwestern Madhya Pradesh, southern Uttar Pradesh and southern Bihar are most poor regions of the country.

Appendix Table 1.2: Classification of rural poverty ratio Across Regions (1993-94)

Low Poverty Region (20 percent and below)	HCR	Medium Poverty Region (21-40 percent)	HCR	High Poverty Region (41-60 percent)	HCR	Very High Poverty Region (Above 60 percent)	HCR
AP Coastal	17.3	Assam Plains Eastern	34.4	Assam plains Western	49.9	Bihar Southern	62.4
AP Indian Northern	13.8					MP South-Western	68.2
AP South Western	20.4	Gujarat Eastern	25.9	Assam Hills	41.3	Orissa Southern	69.0
AP Inland Southern	12.9	Gujarat Plains (North)	22.7	Bihar Northern	58.7	UP Southern	66.7
Gujarat Saurashtra	11.8	Gujarat Plains (South)	28.7	Bihar Central	54.0		
Karnataka Coastal and Ghat	9.2	Gujarat dry areas	26.2	MP Chattisgarh	44.0		
		Haryana (East)	31.9	MP Central	50.1		
Karnataka Inland Eastern	13.7	Haryana (West)	22.3	MP South	46.1		
		H.P.	30.3	Maharashtra Inland Northern	47.2		
		J&K	30.3				
MP Northern	17.4	Karnataka Inland Southern	29.5				
Maharashtra Coastal	14.8	Karnataka Inland Northern	37.7	Maharashtra Inland Central	50.0		
Punjab Northern	7.6						
Punjab Southern	17.5	Kerala Northern	29.1	Maharashtra	49.1		
Rajasthan	17.8	Kerala southern	23.4	Inland Eastern			
North-Eastern							
		M.P. Vindhya	36.7	Orissa Coastal	45.4		
Tamil Nadu Coastal	19.8	M.P. Malawa	27.4	Orissa Northern	45.6		
Daman & Diu	5.3	Maharashtra Inland Western	25.1	Rajasthan Southern	45.9		
Goa	5.3			TN Coastal Northern	43.6		
Delhi	1.9	Rajasthan Western	25.5				
		Rajasthan south-Eastern	34.8	UP Central	52.2		
				UP Eastern	48.6		
		TN Southern	36.7	WB Himalayan	58.7		
		TN Inland	22.7	WB Eastern	47.1		
		UP Himalayan	25.0	Arunachal Pradesh	45.0		
		UP Western	29.6	Manipur	45.0		
		WB Central Plains	31.0	Meghalaya	45.0		
		WB Western Plains	40.3	Mizoram	45.0		
		ANI	32.5	Nagaland	45.0		
		Lakshadweep	25.8	Sikkim	45.0		
		Pondicherry	32.5	Trupura	45.0		
				Dadra & Nagar Haveli	51.9		

Source: NIRD (1999).

END NOTES

- ¹ State interventions in the form of Integrated Rural Development, Jawhar Yozgar Yojna and Public Distribution System were strategic programmes of employment generation and poverty alleviation in 1970s. Of late, the state has put faith in decentralised governance and higher expenditure in social sector for poverty alleviation. For details, see NIRD (1999); Chelliah and Sudarshan (1999).
- ² Two factors may be responsible for the seminal importance to income poverty measures than others. First, it is income that can easily be influenced by state intervention. Secondly, it is believed that if income can be influenced the other measures of well being can follow, for income has high correlations with other measures of poverty.
- ³ Following the recommendations of the Task Force on Projections of Minimum needs and Effective Consumption Demand (India: 1979) the Planning Commission has been estimating incidence of poverty in India in 1970s and 1980s.
- ⁴ Planning Commission had accepted the poverty line that would be necessary to provide an individual a minimum per day intake of 2400 calories in rural and 2100 calorie in urban areas. Converted in expenditure at the 1973-74 prices this was monthly expenditure of Rs 49.1 in rural and Rs 56.6 in urban India. In order to capture the inflationary implications over time, adjustments, using a price deflator, were made in the poverty line over time and space.
- ⁵ Consumption at any point of time rather than income is more likely to be an accurate measures of well being for income over seasons vary much more than consumption.
- ⁶ Although poverty is a multidimensional concept, researchers have measured individual consumption expenditure as a proxy of economic welfare in order to measure incidence of poverty. The database for such consumption expenditure is being published by the NSS in grouped form in 12 to 14 expenditure classes. Using this grouped data, researchers graduate the consumption expenditure distribution in terms of appropriate statistical distribution -- either employing a normal density function (Minhas, Sani, Kausal and Saluja: 1987) or by interpolating with the help of Lorenz function (Ahluwalia: 1978), or by using different density functions within each consumption class (Kakwani and Subbarao: 1990).
- ⁷ An upward revision results in lowering of poverty. The recent debates has brought to notice the underestimation made by the Planning Commission that helps the state proclaim that rural poverty had declined in early 1990s (Sen: 1996). The major problem with the Planning Commission approach had been the upward adjustments made in the household consumption expenditure to avoid mismatch between NSS and CSO consumption estimates. Now, the Planning Commission has abandoned this approach. It has also been shown that contrary to declining trends in the rural poverty as well as inequality among the poor, rural poverty in India has risen in early 1990s.
- ⁸ The Expert Group appointed by the Planning Commission (India: 1993) although endorsed the calorie intake norms adopted in identifying the poverty line, suggested following state specific inflation rate in order to capture inter-state variation, apart from asking Planning Commission to discontinue the arbitrary up ward adjustment in the NNS consumption.
- ⁹ It is found that 7 days recall estimates are about 30 per cent higher than the 30 days estimates. See, for details, EPW (2003).
- ¹⁰ The two-sector model.
- ¹¹ Abhijit Sen (1996) pooled time series and cross section data across states for explaining rural poverty by using variables output per capita, per capita state domestic product, relative food prices, inflation and per capita real development expenditure.

12 The impact of agricultural growth on rural poor does not occur in direct manner; the impact operate through a complicated network of relationship, especially in an economy that prefers replacing labour when wages go up (Bhalla S: 1993)

13 It has been argued that the gap between the minimum necessary intake and the intake of an individual below this minimum could be an appropriate measure of inequality; the larger this gap the larger is the misery suffered by the poor (Kakwani and Subbarao: 1990). The sum total of shortfall in intake from the minimum standard could be an adequate measure of the intensity of deprivation among the poor.

14 Using Sen (1976) and Chaubey (1992) for a sample of an ordered calorie intake distribution $c_1 c_2 \dots c_n$ with $c_i < c^*$ for $i = 1$ to q poor out of total n persons, with c^* being the minimum level of calorie intake necessary for survival. If c_p is the average calorie intake of q poor people, the head count ratio (H), the measure of incidence of poverty can be estimated as follows:

$$H = q/n$$

The calorie intake gap ratio I can be estimated as follows:

$$I = 1 - (c_p / c^*)$$

If there is no poor i.e. $c_p = c^*$, $I = 0$. If all the poor have 0 intake (extreme deprivation) $c_p = 0$ hence $I = 1$. Sen Index of poverty can be estimated if Gini Coefficient of inequality in intake for poor can be estimated. The Gini Coefficient of inequality (G) among the poor can be written as follows:

$$G = 1 + (1/q) - (2/q^2) \cdot c_p \sum_{i=1}^q c_i (q+1-i)$$

Sen Index of poverty (P_s) can be estimated using values of H, I and G as follows:

$$P_s = HI + HG - HIG$$

The Sen Index would range from 0 with no one as poor to 1 if every individual has 0 intake. The value will equal that of head-count ratio when the number of poor is less than the total population and every poor has zero level of intake.

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2.1 *The Issue and its Relevance*

Economic policies are not made in vacuum; serious investigations have guided the policy makers in formulating appropriate interventions. Poverty policies are also influenced by writings of social scientists. In fact, in last forty years, three important conclusions were instrumental in shaping Indian poverty-alleviation policies. It was Ahluwalia (1978) whose seminal work repositioned Indian poverty-debate from estimating poverty to explaining it. Ahluwalia tried to establish that years when growth in agricultural production slows down are also the years when rural poverty worsens. Saith (1981) and Narain (1985), independently, brought another important explanatory aspect in this debate - the agricultural prices. They tried to provide support to the thesis that years when agricultural prices are high, other things remaining same, are the years when incidence of poverty increases. These researchers argued that as a large section of rural population, including producers, are net purchasers of foodgrains, an increase in prices of agricultural commodities reduces their purchasing power and shrinks their consumption basket, thus, pushing people into poverty. Taking a clue from these findings, the Indian planners developed a two-pronged strategy for poverty alleviation: providing a favourable environment for rapid growth in agricultural production and creating low and stable prices of foodgrains. The strategy, during 1980s and early 1990s, saw no significant departure, till Sen (1996) tried to impel the hypothesis that apart from these two factors, state investment in social sector weakens forces that accentuate poverty. Thus, the three major planks of Indian poverty reducing interventions remained around rapid growth in agricultural sector, stable price environment for rural consumer and social sector investment. The strategy did significantly influence the Indian rural poverty; the poverty ratio reduced from around 57 per cent in 1970-71 to 26 per cent in 2000-01.

Still poverty in Remote Tribal Areas -- like Southwestern Madhya Pradesh, Eastern Gujarat, Southern Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa -- remained significantly higher compared to rest of rural India. While in the country as a whole, only one out of four people live in poverty, in these tribal areas two out of three persons live in abject poverty. The answers to why the strategy, which worked quite well in reducing poverty in larger part of rural India, has failed in doing so in remote tribal areas could be found in the processes that cause poverty in the remote tribal areas.

It can be argued that the cause of poverty in remote tribal areas is significantly different from the identified processes that cause poverty elsewhere; cause of chronic poverty in the remote area is the outcome of complex interactions among social, political and

economic forces that affect individuals, households, as well as groups. Poverty alleviation in remote tribal areas needs to be seen beyond narrow income poverty, for the complexities there have defied solutions that were initiated for alleviating income poverty. But before attempting any investigation, it would be worth exploring, theoretically, why people in remote tribal areas are trapped in poverty.

2.2 Conceptualising Chronic Poverty in Remote Tribal Areas

Hulme, Moore and Shepherd (2001) have identified three inter-linked conceptual issues that define well-being beyond income poverty. First, development is about pursuit of freedom; Dreze and Sen (1989) define these freedoms as economic opportunities, social opportunities, political freedom, transparency and trust in the community, and security¹. Second, ill being has an inbuilt time dimension; some people always remain poor, some are transitory poor and some are non-poor all through². Lastly, chronically poor are poor in several ways and that mobility viewed in terms of multi-dimensional ill being, is less dynamic than income mobility³. Chronic poverty, therefore, can be interpreted as continuous incapacity of individuals and households to govern their livelihood and life. Thus, it brings into play all those agencies that try to influence individual's livelihood and life. In order to construct a conceptual frame to understand poverty, interaction between individuals, community and state has to be placed within the context of the life pursuit of individuals.

Human beings as we are, are nothing but a bundle of desires, satisfaction of which constitutes the basis of our existence. But we need to be aware that wealth is not the good we seek for, wealth is merely a means to some other end; and the other end is to attain larger good of community⁴. However, when our means become our ends, argues Roy (1985), fulfilling our ordinary life needs of acquiring riches, power and prestige becomes an end in themselves⁵. This obscures the distinction of acquiring riches, by any means, even at the cost of equity. Community, in the process, emerges simply as an arena that is treated by individuals as a potential means of realising their self-interest. It results in individuals losing moral rationale for their actions. This moral disorder symbolises private morality taking paramount position superseding and eroding public morality. The erosion of public morality makes it necessary for the public realm to have a focal point that represents the collectivisation of individual wills. The state serves as the centre, and soon the state assumes omnipotent and sacrosanct authority that translates individuals' beliefs from the realm of idea to reality. Despite the rhetoric of equal opportunities and efforts to redistribute assets, the failure of state brings disappointment as well as increasing dependence on state. The growing dependence on state allows the state *suo motto* to infringe on individual's life. The civil society almost becomes the extended arm of the state, and development initiatives become

highly distorted; state treats the communities located at micro-level indistinguishable from each other denying them micro-variability.

Let us construct a micro-community situated in this scenario of economy and polity, located in a remote rural area. Its remoteness is absolute in terms of access to technology, markets, state, civil amenities and politics. Presence of state is only felt when it requires community's resources for involuntary resource transfer⁶. It is a self-sustaining economy where capital -- physical, natural, financial, human and social -- is unequally distributed, owing to historical⁷ exigencies as well as contemporary shocks⁸. Livelihood in this economy is agriculture-based with a section of population depending on labouring outside the local economy. More often, it is not the improved efficiency due to commercialisation that allows some of the workforce to seek employment outside; rather it is sheer survival needs that force some of the vulnerable sections to seek such an option. Those few with some skills and education would have access to service sector employment and be well-to-do in the economy. Technology adoption varies in the economy; those with some irrigation can adapt the seed-fertiliser technology available from outside. Agricultural income is assured on such farms and they also have a capacity to overcome shocks easily compared to the rest. But those who are resource poor have to develop a coping strategy to face these shocks⁹.

Shocks have a number of simultaneous and sequential repercussions that disrupt the economy of the affected households. A shock demands liquid cash to face the crisis at the cost of land resources and results in fall in crop production. A fall in crop production, however, directly reduces households' income and availability of food for consumption. While the current income is reduced, the need for cash to purchase food increases. The households in such situations make various adjustments to minimise the impact of the shock. These include reduction in the use of purchased inputs, selling of milch animals, reducing household expenditure, working as wage labour, borrowing for consumption, and migration of some family members. It is hypothesised that households with (a) higher agricultural income, (b) access to additional purchasing power through agricultural labour, service and casual labour work, (c) milk production, (d) creditworthiness, and (e) larger out-migration shall cope with the shock more easily without having severe impact on their consumption levels¹⁰. It can also be argued that seasonal migration of unskilled labour in tribal areas is the most striking form of adjustment mechanism to cope with land constraints¹¹.

Analysis of migration suggests that if a household's food intake during normal situation is met from the available food stock, migration as a strategy is voluntary. Seasonal migration is a group phenomenon, taken by the household as a whole, perhaps even by several households together. The cost of information relating to destination, movement of the group, type of work and wage contract, dwelling at the destination *et cetera* may be shared by

households who perceive seasonal migration inevitable for the larger interest of their families. The duration of seasonal migration is controlled by households' shortfall in consumption. As soon as this shortfall is overcome, the migrating members are free to rejoin the family. In fact, among the households in the village, those with some seasonal migration are the ones with relatively higher food intake. In a scarcity situation, it is highly probable that the food intake of the remaining members of migrating households would be higher than that of the members of non-migrating households in the village.

Two important implications of this coping mechanism need to be spelled out. First, an ever-increasing dependence on the mechanism adversely affects the households' access to social amenities, education, health and justice. For, members of the households are outside the community's social networks for a considerable time. As a result, their social, political, civil freedoms are restricted. Large-scale short-term land transactions¹² in the economy, large grown-up population with rudimentary education, poor health status of members of migrating households, violation of human rights at the destination point follow in the train of migrant's income poverty. This means that livelihood struggles under resource constraints not only result in income poverty but also poverty in multiple dimensions. Secondly, the above coping mechanism seems neither driven by an inclination to change -- the so called '*modernity drive*' -- nor driven by the difference in income between place of permanent dwelling and the migration destination¹³. Low wages notwithstanding at the destination, lack of opportunities in the economy also supports this mechanism. Economic surplus, nevertheless, develops if resourceful households resort to this mechanism as a livelihood strategy. Apart from wealth, the coping mechanism also results in giving necessary information on agricultural technology transfer¹⁴. Pattern of new technology adoption, in this remote economy where state as an extension agent is absent, would credit the arguments that migration for some households is in response to desire for change.

The seasonal migration, as a means of livelihood, is considered a necessary evil at least among the resourceless. This livelihood mechanism does provide sustenance but at the cost of freedom, in a multiple way, to the households. Their lack of freedom lies in their access failure to land and natural capital. But their livelihood struggles force unfreedom on their family members; they live in inhuman conditions at the destination, their access to education severed, their opportunity to develop skills adversely affected and health services and sanitation made poor by any standard; above all, they often have to face abuses. Cumulatively, all these affect adversely their self-esteem. Human development, in this economy, occurs through a process in which households are assisted to invest on development of their family members to achieve good health, education, skill, and quality environment.

The chronic nature of poverty in this economy is not only because the household suffers from multiplicity of unfreedom but also because of high population pressures in a

resource-constrained economy. Thus, one not only passes a culture of poverty to next generation but also passes to the next generation highly depleted physical and human resources. The remoteness of this rural economy -- in terms of technology, markets, healthcare and educational services, food security, state *et cetera* -- though put further constraints, it is not instrumental in creating chronic poverty directly. Geographical remoteness of the economy, however, results technology adaptation extremely difficult¹⁵. Output, credit and land markets remain underdeveloped and often interlocked; as a result, a shock or insufficient land resource becomes a cause of further depletion of economic assets. Conceptually, a shock or insufficient land resources or transmission of poverty from one generation to other create similar process that brings first income poverty to household followed by other dimensions of poverty. The only difference between the three processes is that in a remote area, multi-dimensional poverty triggers with shock, whereas in the case of resource poor or inter-generational transmission of poverty the process starts without a shock; they are trapped in multidimensional poverty.

In the remote rural areas, the newly acquired political freedom stratifies the community and the governance becomes highly centralised. Economically deprived also experience unfreedom to decide the pattern of development, thus, the cumulative unfreedoms intensify. Leakages increase and gains of development are distributed unevenly. Community's expectation remains unfulfilled and it loses faith in the village democracy or even in the system as a whole. On the other hand, state and market failures in the remote tribal areas encourage community participation in the form of informal institutions like land-man relations and norms governing dispute resolution *et cetera*. Consequently, the reserve of social capital remains high, though dormant (Sah: 2004). Catalytic support from civil society activates social capital, but only in remote areas where economic stratification is low. Transfer of the social capital to political sphere, nonetheless, does not take place, as gains of governance are low and iniquitous. Probability of the social capital to manifest in vicious pattern remains high. Virtuous manifestation of social capital in governance may only be possible if expectations of people and their role in development planning improve. Otherwise, political unfreedom increases and community remains incapacitated.

Conceptually, the livelihood struggles end up creating a vicious circle of multidimensional unfreedom. Disturbing it may appear but the process is difficult to break without massive drive to create new opportunities in the economy. As the representative democracy fails to prevent the creation of such opportunities, the macro processes subsume the micro-variability of the economy; most likely the participatory democracy is a feasible option to safeguard the interests of this closed economy. The participatory democracy has capabilities to convert cumulative unfreedoms to distributive unfreedom; households may remain economically poor but the political and decision-making power still rests, in the

process, with the community. The newly acquired political power has a potential to create situations that may prevent further concentration of unfreedom. Prerequisite for this process to succeed is closer interactions between civil society, community and the state. This interaction may not directly influence individuals' access to capital; it nonetheless brings attitudinal changes in the bureaucracy and elected representatives on the one hand, and developing better understanding of community's rights on the other. This engenders confidence and self-esteem among the marginalised, paving a way for improving the quality as well as their access to political, social and economic infrastructure.

2.3 Implications of the Framework

The above discussion brings to the fore the importance of three processes that need to be addressed both at the level of research as well as action. (i) *Agriculture and livelihood* that need to be understood in an economy that is deprived of various capitals (Sah and Bhatt: 2004); (ii) the nature of *governance* that brings equity or otherwise in state interventions (Sah: 2003); and (iii) *coping mechanism* of individuals in shock that gives rise to a social process which engenders multi-dimensional poverty (Sah and Shah: 2003). First two processes assume importance because state is directly involved in them. The last process assumes importance because of the conspicuous absence of the state, burden of coping with shock falls on individuals. There is a need to investigate, in detail, irrigated technology transfer, which is highly risky. Through, role of civil society in transfer of irrigation technology has been documented (Sah: 2004), what needs to be researched and documented are the conditions that help replicate these efforts in larger areas. Empowering the community so that it may decide the pace and pattern of development has been accepted in principle. But financial and administrative control of state and its organs in decentralisation process have made the governance in the area highly centralised. The need is to take the benefits of decentralisation to the economically marginalised. How these processes can be institutionalised, needs more research. The important role of civil society notwithstanding, lower presence of the non-government sector in the area may constrain their active role in governance. Can this gap be filled up by informal social organisations is something that needs further investigation. The transfer of social capital, which is in abundance albeit dormant in the area, in governance may depend on bringing some amendments in the laws governing natural resources. Understanding has to be developed before initiation of any policy change.

Some of the critical implications emerging from the conceptual framework, which can be used in deriving research questions, are:

The demographic pressures create a shock-like situation in this tribal area. The economic hierarchy has tendency to reshuffle within a decade due to population pressures and land fragmentation. As economic poverty -- owing to access failure to capital -- manifests first in the form of multidimensional poverty and then chronic poverty, remoteness may not

directly affect the incidence of poverty but affects its intensity. One may also expect that access to education facility would vary across different levels of poverty and remoteness, owing to demand side constraints. On the other hand, as supply side constraints in health services are evenly felt, the health seeking behaviour may not vary significantly across locations and different poverty levels. But cost of treatment and the way households arrange to meet this cost may be instrumental in pulling households into chronic poverty.

In remote rural areas, households investing in irrigation may reap the benefits of higher productivity, diversified cropping pattern and higher income. Even those who had borrowed from non-institutional sources at high interest rate may be in the category of non-poor if the investment had succeeded. On the other hand, those with irrigation-well failure may have been pulled in chronic poverty. The difficult terrain may prove that irrigation in this tribal area is a fair-weather friend; during the years of poor rainfall, irrigation -- when it is most required -- is minimal. For those with poor resource base, consumption loans under shocks may be major cause of chronic poverty in the remote tribal areas. Repayment process of the loans first culminates in economic poverty, then multidimensional poverty and finally chronic poverty. Indebtedness interlocks different markets. As a result, a borrower may lose access to either land or labour or output markets.

State, by its absence, creates an environment that helps close interaction, trust and networking within community in remote tribal areas. With the help of civil society -- that mobilised the community around state led exploitation and development-induced displacement -- this trust results in developing social capital. The trust when applied within sub-groups, as the case is with Self-Help Groups, stratifies the society on economic lines in the short run. Moreover, owing to intense competition among social, political and economic elites, the social capital may not manifest in decentralised decision making. The process may further strengthened by the fact that the decentralised decision-making does not debate livelihood issues of marginalised. As a result, an iniquitous distribution of benefits of decentralised governance may continue.

Using the above framework, the study investigates the following research questions:

- Does the proportion of economically poor and chronically poor significantly vary across Remote Tribal Areas?
- How far the existing livelihood options, including labouring and migration, are able to support the consumption expenditure of the different categories of poor?
- How does agricultural production and food insecurity contribute to chronic poverty during abnormal agricultural years?
- Under what circumstances borrowings lead to chronic poverty?
- What are the correlates of migration in the remote tribal areas?
- Why decentralised governance is unable to enhance access to economic resources for chronic poor.
- How social associations create bridges with outsiders in order to reap economic benefits of PRI interventions?
- How does access failure to health and educational services contribute to chronic poverty?

2.4 Data and Methods

The Central Indian tribal belt spreads across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. If findings of our earlier study (Sah and Bhatt: 2004) has any suggestion on tribal poverty, it could be argued that with two thirds of

the population living in poverty in these remote areas, they not only represents very high incidence of income poverty but also faces a multiplicity of discriminations in terms of resource base, social inequality, geographical remoteness, infrastructure development and political representation. Together these factors place this tribal belt in a disadvantageous situation that is characterised as *Remote Tribal Area* with chronic poverty. Our study area is a subset of the Central tribal belt. The choice of the area was also guided by the homogeneity in terms of cultural similarity and livelihood structure of the inhabitants. Thus, the attempt was to study poverty dynamics in ten tribal districts of six states; Gujarat (Bharuch and Panchmahals), Rajasthan (Banswara), Madhya Pradesh (Jhabua and Badwani), Chhattisgarh (Bastar and Raigarh), Jharkhand (Ranchi and West Singhbun) and Orissa (Koraput). The selected districts represent high concentration of tribal population in the respective state. The important step was to select two *Janpad* representing relatively high and low level of development in each of these districts. Thus, two tribal dominated *Janpad* from each of the ten selected districts, one developed and other under-developed, were selected purposively. The selection of the villages was done on the basis of the following two criteria: high incidence of poverty represented by extent of dryness or lack of irrigation; and remoteness. Two villages, representing an average 'remoteness' in each of these twenty *Janpad* in the ten districts, were purposively selected for the detailed study. The names of selected *Janpads* and villages in the six states and their characteristics are given in Table 2.1.

The micro-study, thus, involves collection of primary and secondary data from the sample villages. This includes group discussions to get familiarised with villages and their people. This was followed by a survey of randomly selected sample of 50 households from each of the forty villages. The quantitative database thus was randomly selected sample of 2000 households from the six states.

The total per capita annual expenditure may be used to identify economic poor among the sample households. The official norm for identifying households that are below-poverty-line works out at Rs 426 per capita per month at 2005 prices. That means, any household that spends less than Rs 426 per capita per month can be termed as poor. Among these households, having lower than Rs 285 per capita per month expenditure could be identified as severely poor. The poverty categories can further be re-categorised by incorporating time dimension of poverty. One way to capture chronic dimension of poverty is comparing the consumption expenditure over time. The major problem in this method is non-availability of a panel of data that fixes chronic nature of poverty. Sah and Shah (2003) have used variations in cereal consumption from normal as an indicator of chronic poverty. But identification of chronic poor using variations in cereal consumption from normal may provide underestimation to chronic poverty. This is because experience shows that cereal consumption is relatively inelastic to shocks. Alternatively, Krishna (2003) has identified that in sequence

of changes, if there is deterioration in food intake or increase in leasing-in land in sharecropping or fall in clothing over time or instalments of accumulated debts are irregular or children remained illiterate or leaking roof has remained un-patched, it is sign of culturally rooted poverty. Since in tribal area the variations in quality of clothing over time are difficult to capture and the house repair has only labour component using local material, these two may not be included as indicators of identification of socially constructed process of poverty. It is also argued that short-term land transactions in the form of leasing land-in is more a function of market failure that brings agencies together than a pure indication of sequence of change that points a deterioration in the quality of life of either landlord or tenant (Sah: 1999). On the other hand, experiences show (Sah and Bhatt: 2004) that leasing-out land is a response of household in shock to optimising labour availability. As leasing-out land is a part of social process that culminate income poverty into multidimensional poverty, this indicator is better suited, along with other identified processes, for capturing chronic dimension of poverty. Thus, in this analysis we have proposed that if the household had lost silver in last 10 years or could not service its old debts or could not get even *rab* (cereal boiled in butter milk) or *mandi, kanji pej* – substitutes for major food -- to eat and hence missed both the meals or had to seasonally migrate after leasing-out his land, the household is a transitory household either chronic poor if it is economically poor or transitory non-poor if the household is economically non-poor. Thus, poor and non-poor households could further be divided in to following mutually exclusive categories: (i) always non-poor, (ii) transitory non-poor, (iii) poor but non-chronic, and (iv) chronic poor.

Using the framework developed above, the proposed research seeks to examine the status, correlates and causes of chronic poverty, implications of shocks and coping mechanism of people under shock in contiguous remote tribal area of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Apart from this, data shall also be generated to understand the impact of decentralisation on empowering communities especially with respect to health, education and their participation in decision-making in PRIs.

The Core Component in Data Collection

The following questions formed the core base of the survey tool (See Appendix 2.1 for the questionnaire):

1. Demographic details of household with education, labouring and migration
2. Assets of the household
3. Monthly food intake during the reference year
4. Consumption expenditure other than food of household
5. Stock of foodgrains from last *kharif* and *rabi* and probable period for which it would last. Actions when it does not last till new crop arrives.
6. Livelihood patterns of the household
Agriculture income during *kharif* 2005-06

- Wage rate, labour contracts, labour and other income of household during the year
 Migration patterns, income and savings from
 Implications and coping with shocks
 Impact of remoteness on technology, extension and markets
7. Access to and demand for education facilities, and reason for drop-out from school
 8. Sickness in last 12 month, treatment seeking behaviour and cost of treatment. Ways through which the expenses were met and its implications. Impact of remoteness on treatment seeking behaviour.
 9. Investment in agricultural technology especially irrigation, and access to markets. Impact of remoteness on risk in adopting irrigation
 10. Input use and credit linkages: Process, cost of borrowing and remoteness implications
 11. Consumption loan: Process, cost of borrowing and remoteness implications
 12. Remoteness, indebtedness and chronic poverty
 13. Social capital indicators and its manifestation in development efforts: Impact of remoteness on formation of social capital
 14. Decentralisation and marginalisation
 Food security and role of PDS
 PRIs in remote tribal areas and poverty alleviation schemes: Access to and problems faced by poor households.

2.5 *The Monograph*

The monograph presents its analysis in 9 chapters, including the introductory chapter. The design of the study and a theoretical construct for explaining chronic poverty are presented in this chapter. Chapter 3 presents the historical and contemporary struggles against the access failure to resources in the region, and captures the process of continuity and change in the society. Chapter 4 identifies the chronic poor and analyses their characteristics using the quantitative data from the sample villages. Chapter 5 presents the findings relating to livelihood struggles, indebtedness, food in-security and development as perceived by the tribals of Central belt of India. Chapter 6 gives an analytical understanding of migration as a livelihood strategy and correlates of migration. Chapter 7 evaluates the impact of political decentralisation on the tribal area and political unfreedom that community and individuals experience. Chapter 8 attempts to understand the interaction between governance, social capital and economic stratification. The last chapter tries to highlight major findings, rework on the emerging trends, and their policy implications.

END NOTES

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- 1 This is based on conceptualisation of capabilities by Dreze and Sen A (1989). They have also underlines that under-nourishment may depend not only on her intake of food, but also on her access to health, education, drinking water and sanitary facilities Dreze and Sen A (1995).
 - 2 Using panel data on rural China, Jalan and Ravallion (2000) have explored these issues in four-tier categorisation of income poverty.
 - 3 For those who want to understand extreme poverty, World Bank (2000) has suggested to conceptualise multi-dimensionality of poverty, which depicts the real picture of the poor. For lack of security is absence of one or more factors that enable individuals to assume basic responsibility and to enjoy fundamental rights.
 - 4 Quoting Aristotle, Dreze and Sen (1989) sees it in 'the good of human being'. Also, see Roy (1985).
 - 5 However, 'to attain the good of the community' is a value that can be embraced consciously; it is also a value that can be served unconsciously without being aware of the fact that one consciously selects it as a guide in life. Individuals do have needs – both ordinary life needs and those related with the pursuit of higher life purpose. When individuals seek to fulfil ordinary life needs to the total exclusion of the needs to pursue higher life purpose, the trouble of mismatch between the good of one individual and that of all individuals pervade the social order. One can plan for fulfilling the former by action, but one cannot plan for the latter. It depends on the world-view and patterns of thought-ways and work-ways grounded in it.
 - 6 Since the community has little voice, state interventions in the form of land acquisition for large dams is painful to the community, see Chapter 3 Sah and Shah (2004) for details.
 - 7 See Chapter 3, Sah and Shah (2003) for the historical process of resourcelessness.
 - 8 In the form of crop failure, sickness, son's marriage and death in the family or sudden cash needs. These shocks, more often than not, result in indebtedness and depletion of physical capital.
 - 9 Their remoteness to administration and media do create situations where their income poverty has little public glare and sympathy. As a result, their misery does not attract outside resources and support to meet the crisis.
 - 10 Studies on involuntary migration by Sah (1997; 1988; 1999) have shown that this mechanism is the only way the affected family fight shocks.
 - 11 Rapid population growth in a traditional technology driven economy increases fragmentation of holdings and force intensive but unsustainable land use pattern (Bilsborrow: 1992). Shocks like droughts and crop failure also result in land constraints (Bremen: 1985, Sah: 1999). These forms of land constraints usually result in seasonal migration.
 - 12 While compared to non-tribal Gujarat, incidence of leasing out land in relocated villages is three to four times higher. Preliminary findings of a study on short term land transaction reveal that 75 per cent of such leasing out on sharecropping basis thereby the tenant bears all the cost including labour and the produce is shared between the landlord and tenant on a 50:50 per cent to 67:33 per cent basis. Over 70 per cent of such contracts are due to constraints like inadequate availability of capital labour and bullocks whereas the rest are owing to land related problems like low productivity (Sah: 1999).
 - 13 The first argument proposes that migration may be motivated by a desire to seek skill and leads to development through a process of migration lead to urbanisation leading to socio-economic development which ultimately result in overall development of the area (Saxena et. al.: 1977). The second proposition put forward by Todaro (1980; 1969) argues that inclination to migrate is determined by the difference in the income between source and destination of migration, and may result in equating expected income.
 - 14 See Chapter 3, Sah and Shah (2003) for details.
 - 15 Available new seed-fertiliser technology has not been created for this economy for, situation in the mainstream agriculture are immensely different than this economy. Therefore, the technology transfer will be risky and adopted on selected farms (See, Sah: 2004, for details).

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CHAPTER 3
MARGINALISATION AND STRUGGLES

In order to place subsequent micro-findings on poverty in a perspective, it is desirable to locate these in the social and political milieu wherefrom they are emerging. This chapter attempts to appraise the readers about the historical as well as contemporary processes that marginalised the tribes of Central belt of India. The first section of the chapter presents the tribal scenario, followed by historical processes that marginalised them. Their social order and livelihood struggles are presented in the third section. The next two sections present the contemporary tribal struggles taking place in the Central tribal belt of India and the process of continuity and change in the tribal communities.

3.1 *Tribal Scenario in Central Belt of India*

Tribals have their own ways of life, cultural identities and customary modes of living. For centuries, they have lived in isolation, far away from the national main stream. They have worshipped their deity whom they identified with their landscape and nature. Their isolation has kept them socially, economically and politically alienated, with accompanying impediments of poverty, malnutrition, ignorance and exploitation. The colonial rulers looked to these social groups from the point of view of maintenance of law and order whereas the social scientists as objects of social antiquities to be preserved in isolation.

Scheduled Tribes are divided into a number of social groups. Many of the groups, with common real or imaginary origins are further divided into distinct groups in terms of their locations, dialects and social customs. In their life styles, belief systems, religious practices and social customs, some tribes are assimilated with caste Hindus in whose proximity they live. However, a great deal of variations exists in their economic activities. Many are settled agriculturists, a few practice shifting cultivation and fewer still depend on hunting and primitive ways of food gathering. In terms of land ownership, they are stratified - a few are rich and many are poor. Notwithstanding these social and economic differentiations among them, they are distinct social groups whose differentiations are not as marked as observed among urban or semi-urbanised caste Hindu peasants. Their interaction with the 'mainstream' society, dominated by upper caste-Hindus, is limited particularly to social sphere. Among those who are settled agriculturist, legal ownership of land is still an alien concept. Exchange of labour and agricultural implements is widespread which reinforces their independence. Their dependency on forest resources is high.

Table 3.1: Tribal Population in different Tribal Belts in India

State	1991	2001
<i>Central Indian belt</i>		
Bihar & Jharkhand	66.17	78.45
Gujarat	61.62	74.81
Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh	153.99	188.50
Maharashtra	73.18	85.77
Orissa	70.32	81.45
Rajasthan	54.75	70.98
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1.09	1.37
Goa, Daman & Diu	0.12	0.14
Andhra Pradesh	42.00	50.24
West Bengal	38.09	44.07
<i>North western Himalayan belt</i>		
Uttaranchal & Uttar Pradesh	2.88	3.64
Himachal Pradesh	2.18	2.45
<i>Peninsular South belt</i>		
Karnataka	19.16	34.64
Kerala	3.21	3.64
Tamil Nadu	5.74	6.51
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.27	0.30
Lakshadweep	0.48	0.57
<i>North eastern Belt</i>		
Manipur	6.32	6.32
Meghalaya	15.18	19.93
Mizoram	6.52	8.39
Nagaland	10.61	17.74
Assam	28.74	33.09
Sikkim	0.91	1.11
Tripura	8.53	9.93
Arunachal Pradesh	5.50	7.05

Source: Census 2001 and Mishra (1998).

India's tribal population, according to the 2001 census, is about 84.3 million, which is about 8.2 per cent of the country's total population. The tribal population is found in two major concentrations (Table 3.1): First, in the central or middle Indian mountainous tracts. Second, in the mountainous tracts of North-East India. Whereas the Northeast Indian region accounts for 12 per cent of the country's tribal population, the central Indian region accounts for as large as 81 per cent. The balance of 6 per cent is largely accountable to peninsular south. About one per cent of the tribal population is found in the Western Himalayas, covering the states of Himachal Pradesh and hills of Uttar Pradesh. The tribal population has been growing at a rate higher than that of the country's general population. Between 1991 and 2001, whereas the general population grew at 2.1 per cent a year, the tribal population grew at 2.5 per cent per year.

Amongst the Indian states, Central India mirrors forest, tribal and poverty. About a third of its geographical area of the region is under forest cover that is a rich treasure house of tribal communities. According to 2001 census the tribal population of Central tribal belt of India is 68 million. Out of 573 scheduled tribes of India, Central tribal belt alone has a share of 214 tribes¹. Anthropologists and Sociologists are of the view that tribal population is not evenly distributed in all the districts of the State. Seventy per cent of these Scheduled tribes are concentrated in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Orissa (Verma: 1996)².

Mishra (1998) argues that the central tribal belt has been like the frontier land of the country wherein immigrants have been moving in since ancient times. The stream of immigrants, made up of the so-called non-tribals, has not stopped even now. Mishra further argues that even today while it has become the nerve centre of India's upcoming industrial civilisation, side-by-side it continues to be the home of the vast majority of the people scheduled as tribes under the constitution. The tribes here have not remained as they were in ancient times. They have been changing over the ages, in culture, economy, and social organization, adopting means, modes, and methods of the immigrants³. Except in the inaccessible areas, they have been the subjects of kings and emperors. More than that, in the turmoil and confusion that followed the Muslim invasions some of the central Indian tribes taking advantage of their numerical strength rose to form kingdoms during the medieval period, the *Gond*, *Chero*, *Munda*, and the *Bhil* kingdoms being well known. These kingdoms, of course, were short-lived as they fell before the superior force of the *Mughals*, *Marathas*, and eventually the British.

3.2 Tribal Marginalisation

The Mughals and the Marathas had already reduced the tribal kingdoms of Central tribal belt into tribute paying principalities and land-revenue paying *Zamindaries* (Mishra: 1998). When the British took over during the later half of the 18th century, matters became worse. The British appetite for revenue collection knew no bounds. As their demand increased, there followed a flood of non-tribal cultivators⁴ both in the tribal areas under their direct control as well as in the areas under the *Zamindaries* and principalities, the so-called native princely states. Secondly, since the assessment had to be paid in money, it opened a field day for merchants and moneylenders, the *bania*. The result was that the tribal peasants, for the first time in the history of middle India began losing their cultivated lands to non-tribal cultivators, merchants and money-lenders, uprooting large sections from their ancestral lands and turning them into tenants and bonded labourers. The British

interest to extract surplus from the tribal areas resulted in access failure to their land and common property resources, many a time uprooting them from their natural habitat. The British, however, avoided taking measures that might disturb socio-cultural life of the tribals. Mishra (1998) argues that some British administrators extolled tribal culture and pleaded for its protection. Sympathy of British rulers for tribal culture was limited so long as it did not conflict with the state policy of extracting resources from tribal areas.

Within this marginalisation, another process of assimilation of the tribals with the mainstream did coexist. Assimilation of tribes within mainstream has been recorded by a number of scholars like Risley (1915, 1969), Russell and Hiralal (1916), Bose (1941), Srinivas (1962), Sinha (1980) and Sarkar (1986). Acceptance of other religious faiths with or without losing their tribal identity, and closer interaction of non-tribal institutions and ways are two important processes that have gradually transformed tribes. Srinivas (1962) argues that societies that were kept outside the caste based social hierarchy along with other societies that were placed in lower position in such a hierarchy, through their constant efforts, over generations, found a place in the *varn-jati* system.

A number of tribal states in Central tribal belt were established between 12th and 14th century and over time these small states with its barren soil and hilly surface escaped the coveted eyes of the Mughals, Marathas and the British Agents⁵. As a result of the Muslim invasion of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Malwa that occurred around 1200 AD, many Rajput warriors fled and came to settle in the fertile Valleys. Tribals, who had ruled this entire region till the eleventh century came to be gradually displaced, and could retain their rule only in the hills. The Rajput take-over reached its great heights in the fifteenth century. The tribal polity that existed before the Rajput influx was not centralised. Territory was divided into a large number of localities each under a hereditary chief. But there was no taxation, no system of surplus extraction to make the chief richer than his band. Later as the tribals were forced to accede to their subjugation, the Rajput selected some tribal chiefs to act as representatives of their authority in the villages, such that the chiefs came to be the link between their ruling political system and the traditional tribal polity. By the end of the eighteenth century, the tribal societies lived under the overarching authority of the Rajputs who were relatively more centralised in their kinship-based political organisation. While *Mughal* supremacy eclipsed by the growing power of *Marathas*, the latter ruthlessly suppressed all resistance, including of the tribals. However, the *Marathas* did not remain united for long⁶. A series of wars between the British and the *Maratha* -- with *British* playing off one *Maratha* faction against another --

culminated in November 1817 when the Peshwa, the Nagpur chief and Holkar rallied to form a united front against British. This alliance of the *Maratha* failed when Holkar's army was defeated in December 1817. After this defeat, Holkar ceded to the British all his territory south of Satpura. In 1918, the whole region south of Satpura hills came under direct British rule⁷.

Before the British established their supremacy in the central Indian region during the second half of the 18th century, the tribal land tenure systems (for settled agriculture) seems to have by and large remained intact, though modifications may have been introduced by their own chiefs and rulers (Molley: 1941). It took a century of conflict and turmoil and not before vast tracts of tribal land had been alienated to outsiders that the British recognized the tribal claim that the real and ultimate owner is the village community (Sinha: 1998). There were varying shades of the same customary land tenure systems in different tribes in this part of the region in which ownership of land rested with the village community, not with the tribal chief or the rulers. With the coming of the colonial rule along with its notions of property, laws, regulations, and the judicial system all of these broke down. Tribal of South-Bihar by their force of arms succeeded in rescuing and restoring their traditional tenurial systems on the lands, which still lay in their possession.

Between 1820s and 1860s, there were widespread tribal disorders all over Khandesh, Satpura and Nimar (Srivastav: 1970), Chota Nagpur (Ekka: 1972), Gujarat (Shah & Patel: 1998) and Rajasthan (Kothari: 1986). The *Bhil*, *Bhilala*, *Munda*, *Santhal*, *Rampa (Koya)*, *Naik*, and *Gond* revolts are well-known cases. The period between the late 18th century and early decades of the 20th century is replete with such explosions occurring in different parts of Central tribal belt (Singh: 1983). When military action failed to quell the tribals, the British chose to investigate *Bhil* disorders, in order to understand what caused them, through that knowledge, control them, and prevent their recurrence. Thus, a policy of pacification came to be implemented (Shrivastav: 1970). Despite British co-optation of some tribals into an indigenous force like the *Bhil corps*, and their deployment against other tribals, resistance continued unabated throughout the region even after 1860s. Economically, the things were a lot worse off for the tribals.

There are other reasons for tribal insurgency. First, the '*bania*', the trader moneylender, became ever present in tribal life, both as financier of agricultural operations and as a local agent for the collection of land tax (Baviskar: 1995). The *bania* became the instrument of worst process of tribal exploitation, in nexus with state, to extract surplus⁸. Second, with the colonial rule, the authority of the headman, *Patel*, to permit fresh clearings in the forest came to be abrogated and was

instead vested in state officials. In the process, property rights were sharply redefined. Tribals were increasingly excluded from the forest and their customary use rights restricted. Land was leased to contractors whose activities turned vast tracts of forest into semi-barren land. With the expansion of the railways (1870-1910) also resulted in the widespread destruction of forests and the beginning of the process of tribal land alienation⁹. Third, the British had tightened the system of taxation; both where they ruled directly as well as in areas managed through the Rajput rulers. This surplus extraction had added to the miseries of tribals. And lastly, collection of excise duties was given out on contract to the *bania* who would advance loans to the *Bhil* in exchange for first rights to their produce. The *bania* who were intermediaries between the administration and the people, encouraged taxpayers to grow market oriented cash crops that were more risk prone during scarcity¹⁰. The increasing burden of taxation, depletion of natural resources and land alienation, and extraction of *bania* made survival even more precarious than usual, necessitating seasonal migration to the far off places during the bad agricultural years.

The Nationalist struggle for independence, which mobilised people all over the country in the first half of this century, received little support from tribals (Baviskar: 1995). In many places the tribals gave support to British war efforts by recruiting tribals for the British army (Singh: 2002). For the tribals, people who were fighting the British, the traders, had an ideology emanating from groups whose interests were antagonistic to those of the tribals. The tribals who formed the bulk of the cultivating population had come out firmly in opposition to the local *bania* who favoured non co-operation despite the fact that a number of other movements in the region were successful¹¹.

On the eve of independence, various tribal groups in different parts of the country were up in arms against the dominant classes and demanded independence. Meaning of independence, however, varied. Some of them wanted to secede from the Indian Union while others demanded preservation of their separate identity under separate state within the Indian union. And for some who had no concept of nation state, freedom meant 'independence' from repression of dominant classes. Whatever their form of resistance, and understanding of freedom, they shared common fear that they would lose their identity and resources. The common factor across the central tribal belt of India is their inability to produce enough for their subsistence as a result, marginalisation, deprivation, poverty and seasonal migration has been widespread in the belt. In the post-Independence period the state has followed a similar course of protective policies. Every state, not only in this region but also in every other region having a scheduled tribe, has a law against alienation of tribal land to non-tribals. In

addition, in quite a few states laws also provide for restoration of tribal lands alienated in the past subsequent to a specified cut-off date. In the post-Independence period land reform laws and scheduled area regulations have been in force to protect tribal land, prevent its alienation to non-tribals, and restore the alienated lands. The result is not always successful. Studies in Central tribal belt (Fuchs: 1972) have shown significant land alienation. A good part has been alienated to *neo-rich* tribals themselves. When India became free a number of programmes such as *ashrams-shalas*, IRDP, Soil and Water conservation schemes, and minor-irrigation schemes were initiated. As shall be seen in the subsequent analysis, the process of development has not touched the tribal heartland.

3.3 *Social Order and Livelihood Struggles*

The way of life among tribal, like any other society, is passed from one generation to other through social institutions. These institutions help them not only preserve their culture but also preserve their social order. Unlike some tribes like Bhilala, Koli and Bhagat Tadvi located in the western part of the belt and their *sanskritisation*, the tribals have not yet entered in *varn-jati* system¹². This is also true in the case of tribals located in the eastern part of the belt, especially in Jharkhand, where spread of Christianity and a strong political movement could not dissipate their *tribalness*, which makes them different from others. Tribals have their own culture that is being preserved and have a distinct identity. Tribals in the region are simple, peace loving and hard working people. Modernity has introduced changed outlook between generations; both in appearance and more substantially in thinking. Older men wear traditional dhoti, *angarkha* and a shawl while the younger generation wears shirt and pant. The women wear *lugadi*, *kanchuli* and *lahanga*. The traditional staple diet of the region is maize, jowar, wheat and pulses. Among the poor, *Rab* is very popular which is made out of cereals, water and curds. Use of oil or ghee is limited in their food. Non-vegetarian food is also common and is accompanied by home brewed or purchased liquor, especially during festivals like *holi*, *diwali*, *idal*, *diwasa et cetera*. Tribals of the region are very fond of ornaments, especially of silver.

Tribals in the Central belt of India live in small houses made out of mud walls covered on top with baked tiles (*khaprail*). Well to do among the tribals use hand made brick and wooden roof structure covered on top with home baked tiles. The village is scattered in to 5-7 *falia* with some 20-30 houses in each *falia*. Houses even in a *falia* are not at one place but located on the agricultural fields of the individuals. Brothers with agricultural land at one place though live separately but have houses

near each other. *Sanskritised* tribal also display Hindu god, picture of Christ along with framed photographs of the family members.

Social Institutions

Tribal villages have three major social institutions that govern social interaction within and outside community. *Jati Panchayat* governs matters related to social justice and social interaction between communities. Each village has a traditional leader with a dynastic origin. The tribes of the central tribal belt of India have a well-developed pattern of traditional leadership. This leadership is secular-social as well as religious-sacerdotal. The traditional village panchayat is an important institution that performs many administrative, judicial and social tasks. The headman is known by different names in different tribes. They are known as *Gameti* or *Mukhi* by Bhil of Madhya Pradesh, *Patel* by Bhil of Gujarat and *Gameti* or *Bhanjgadia* by Bhil of Rajasthan; *Mukhia* by Gond and Bhoria tribes; *Mehto* by Oraon tribe and *Manki* by Ho tribe in Jharkhand; *Gomang* by Saora tribe, *Saonta* by Kandh tribe, *Manjhi* by Santhal tribe, *Sardar* by Juang, Bhunjia and Bhuijar tribes of Orissa.

The *headman* is the most influential person of the village and is treated with regard among the villagers. Often he is supported by 3-4 *falia wise-men* chosen by elders of the village. The main function of the *headman* is to settle social and financial disputes among villages -- like marriage and divorce, land disputes originating from lease of agricultural land *et cetera*. The other main job of this institution is to (a) manage the social and religious functions of the community and (b) settle disputes resulting from clash of interests between villages. *Headman* has a high social rank within the community and justice done by him along with the members of village security committee (of Panchayati Raj) is generally accepted by the parties as well as the community. Disputes those remain unresolved, because one of the parties does not accept the judgement, are referred to civil institutions like court and police. The *Jati Panchayat* also levy monetary penalty on the offending party. This institution is an important forum where actions that have a bearing on community like displacement, forest Mafia, outsiders in village *et cetera* are discussed and decided.

The second important social institution of tribals is '*clan*' organisations. These institutions govern the actions relating to social networking and marriage. '*clan*' organisations are federation of households from similar '*clan*'. Like the caste system of non-tribal society, the '*clan*' panchayat of tribal is a process of production and reproduction of a set of norms that distinguish different groups. But unlike non-

tribal caste system that creates social hierarchy positioning groups to have advantages in economic exchange, the *clan* Panchayats produce gradation without any hierarchy. The institution mainly helps to recognise legitimate groups for giving daughters and getting brides for their sons. Marriage between tribals from same *clan* is discouraged and has no social sanction. Apart from this, *clan* organisations also arrange clan feasts, festivals, meetings *et cetera*. These organisations are fair source of creating social capital within a closely-knit network of individuals for coping with shocks and crises.

The third important social institution of the tribals is family. In tribal terminology, family is defined as a group of sexually interacting individuals with an aim of progeny. Since progeny, child rearing and their education is the meaning of the family, bulk of the households are nucleus; joint family concept is rare in tribals of the region tribe. Family as an institution is oriented towards establishing the division of labour within family that starts from age five onwards and is a process to train individuals for their livelihood struggles based on gender and age¹³. Family, the basic institution among the tribal in general, also rests on monogamy relationship. But one can find cases of polygamy especially having more than one wife in the region. Over years polygamy, however, has become a costly affair amongst tribal. Majority of marriages take place through mutual agreement between families¹⁴. The newly married couples live separately as nucleus family.

Bride price among Central Indian tribes is an important institution that recognises the contribution of female to family income. Tribal women are very hard working and contribute to family income substantially from early age. As a result, loss of family income owing to marriage is compensated by grooms' family by paying a *bride price* that ranges around 12 thousand to 15 thousand rupees in 2002 price. Many young boys remain unmarried owing to high *bride prices*. The status of women in tribal households is significantly higher than that of the non-tribal society. Women participate in economic activities equally as men do. Married females generally accompany their husbands if the entire family or a few members have to migrate seasonally for their livelihood.

Despite a relatively higher status of women, there appear to be powerful processes of socio-cultural norming within the society with the sanctioning of rule breakers ensuring conformity. Sanctioning was noted in the form of the exclusion of unmarried, of women without children, of widows and the disabled from social functions, and the use of domestic violence as a mechanism of control. The treatment meted out to unmarried, childless women, who fail to maintain the expected submissive and acquiescent behaviour. Harassments, taunts and house being

regularly pelted with stones and liquor bottles are not uncommon. There is evidence of strongly patriarchal gender relations where the space for women's jurisdiction and control was severely circumscribed. Women had no power in farm-management decisions -- what crops to grow where; planting; weeding and harvesting times, were not permitted to sell agricultural output, and were not even in control of household decision-making down to the level of choosing what meals to cook. This is in the context of patrilocal youth marriages, where marrying at 15 is the norm and marrying younger not unusual. Young brides are expected to take on a disproportionate share of productive and reproductive tasks in her husband or parent's-in-law's house. Wives are commonly 'disciplined' through repeated and sometimes severe beatings delivered by her husband if she is regarded as not working hard enough or not completing tasks in the required way. Young women look back on their pre-marriage adolescence as a period of plenty -- they might occasionally be taken to the bazaar by their father's and bought clothes and snacks -- and leisure - they could sometimes refuse to work.

Livelihood Struggles

Around 1870 tribals were encouraged to stop shifting cultivation and settle down on forest land¹⁵. Most of land cultivated by tribal, even today, consists of a part of depleted forestland. Such encroached cultivation is essential to subsistence in land-starved economy. Encroachment though results in deforestation and soil erosion, it is the only way out when opportunities are none and resources are lacking. The necessity to encroach forestland need to be appreciated within the social frame that values agriculture and the autonomy it provides.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the tribals. But agriculture is difficult in the hilly terrain for, cultivation is practised without terracing the slopes. As a result, only a small part of the available land that is relatively plain has capability of retaining moisture and exploiting its yield potential. Market oriented high yielding crops like cotton, soybean and wheat are grown on these fertile plots. In rest of the slopes, that constitute bulk of the cropped area, traditional crops like maize, pulses, bajri, jowar, paddy and groundnut is grown. Agriculture is rainfed and energised wells serve a minuscule of the cropped area during *rabi* for paddy and wheat. Since land productivity is poor and monsoon failures are frequent, livestock and migration constitute major coping mechanism. The ownership of livestock varies. Yardstick of wealth is the number of cattle, goats and hens that a family possesses. Goats are important assets that can be converted into liquid money during

times of shocks. The forest by and large has depleted but wherever accessible is the source of fodder, fuel, fibre, fruit, house-building materials, medicines *et cetera*.

Demographic pressures amongst the tribals of Central India have resulted in rapid fragmentation of agricultural land. The fragmentation of land has become a source of chronic poverty in the community. With poor resource base, seasonal migration provides much needed stability to the tribal households. There has been a long tradition of tribal migration in search of employment from the region. While market mechanisms have become more dominant, agricultural productivity depends on the availability of fertile land and use of seed-fertiliser technology on it. Fertile lands in the tribal villages are scanty. Thus, seasonal migration becomes necessary for monetary supplement to the limited production base. During scarcity years, even well off tribals have to resort to migration. It is a necessity for about half of the households that have low access to land assets.

3.4 Contemporary Movements

Colonial marginalisation of tribal interests in the tribal areas has already been discussed in the preceding sections. After independence, the ways of administrative set-up did not change, though the rationale of development¹⁶ did. Independent India inherited an economy pervasive of intense poverty. Agricultural production was stagnating and productivity was falling (Blyn: 1966). Industrial sector was small and its traditional manufacturing and trade was stunted. Moreover, the trade and infrastructure were designed to feed its colonial interests. Modern industry was discouraged and the regime flooded the Indian market with low cost industrial goods that further depressed indigenous industry. The capability of the industry to absorb the work force was marginal. Reduced death rates and increased pressure from growing population fragmented the land and landless class increased rapidly. The system of collecting agricultural tax reinforced these tendencies. Consequently, agriculture -- the dominant sector of country -- was characterised by a large labour-force tilling small and fragmented plots with seed varieties just capable to feed its growing population.

Development Interventions

This scenario was responsible for a desire and hence choice of development strategy in India. Few pressing ideologies also influenced the choice. First, false optimism with respect to capabilities of agriculture originated due to good rainfall, and achievement of low targets fixed during 1951-56; Second, structural constraints of agriculture were wrongly identified as '*slack*' between average and higher levels of

yields that some farmers have achieved (India: 1959). It was wrongly presumed that the agricultural technology existed in the country and the 'slack' was due to inadequacy of supplies and the manner of its usage; and lastly, was the tendency to equate modernisation with industrialisation.

The debate over the development strategy after independence was guided by these considerations. The prime need before the country was to 'accelerate the rate of material capital formation'. The limiting factor in this regard was low saving. It was argued that shortage of saving was mirrored in the inadequacy of production of capital goods. And thus came forward theory behind Mahalanobis plan that considered source of growth was capital goods and the means of growth were allocation of resources for their acquisition. The more resources so allocated, the faster production capacity would grow (Mellor: 1976). The underlying assumption was that with a faster growth in production, benefits would trickle down to the masses and thereby ensuring distributive justice. But the growth remained too little to trickle down.

The situation further deteriorated with respect to distributive justice when second generation problems of new agricultural technology started emerging in mid 1970s. The new agricultural strategy created islands of prosperity amidst mass of poverty. Inequality across group of people and across locations got intensified. Tribals, marginal farmers and landless labourers were losers and so were the dry areas that remained outside the purview of new agricultural technology. The lopsided investment in Research and Development between irrigated and dry farming technology affected the tribal adversely who depended on dry farming. This capital-intensive approach resulted in inequality and concentration on the one hand and insensitivity and violent social disruption on the other. Alienation, deprivation and inequality, it can be argued, are inherent in the strategy of Indian development.

The tribals have been the worst affected in the process that pushed them into the corner, advancing various dominant group interests. In contemporary India, the tribals continue to be so pushed in order to acquire land -- their land -- for large development projects. Of late, their displacement is supposed to be integrating them with mainstream. This process of integration is by no means free from insensitivity and socio-cultural disruption (Sah: 1999; Planning Commission: 1992).

The existing paradigm of development resulted in seriously disturbing the tribal rights over their common property resources. This was possible because tribals across the country were, and are, the least powerful interest groups. The demand for their resources -- land, forest and water -- is still forcing them out of their habitat. Of late, though the eroding resource base and socio-cultural heritage of is being

recognised, lack of effective legal protection to them and unimaginative incentives are unable to compensate their loss. The development process even today is unmindful of tribal plight (Planning Commission: 1990). Their economic integration with non-tribal institutions has also forced non-tribal perceptions of purity and pollution. This resulted in distortions in tribal social hierarchy on the one hand, and on the other such integration is achieved only by those who are aware of the benefits of these. The efforts to remould the tribal identity usually remained confined to the elite sections of the tribes.

But at the roots of the problem is the marginalisation of tribals and their access failure to natural resources, especially land, forest and water. Low productivity, dispersed habitation, shifting cultivation, weak cooperative and marketing infrastructure, continued tribal land alienation leading to their dispossession and exploitation, physical complications *et cetera* are some of the manifest features which characterise the tribal areas. All these and many other issues, which have been deeply rooted in the tribal areas, attracted the attention of the Government and various strategies have been adopted for tribal development since Independence. The tribal development approach attempted to remove disparities between tribal and other developed areas and also to improve the quality of their life. The twin approach aims at forcing area development with problem solving with greater emphasis on (i) increase in productivity and income, (ii) development of human resources, (iii) elimination of exploitation and (iv) infrastructure development. The homogeneous image of the tribes resulted in a planning process where their variability was neglected. Since tribal development ignored tribal worldview, non-tribal institutions, technology and skills were forced on them. Dube (1998) argues that any 'development strategy that skirts around poverty, speaks of social justice in low whisper and underplays an endogenous creativity cannot be sustained... The worst sufferers in the process will be the tribes, whose problems need sensitive handling. For them we need economically effective and culturally sensitive plans of participatory development. It would be suicidal to ride roughshod over tribal interests and ways of life in the name of national development'.

Dube (1998) further argues that it is sad to note that the process of development has resulted in substantial loss to tribal autonomy. Proud tribals, who once ruled the forest, had to surrender their freedom by stages. First came the forest officials and contractors. Then came the excise officials and liquor vendors. The police could never create a favourable image for itself in the tribal areas and generally symbolized extortion and abuse of authority. Between them these groups were responsible for the loss of tribal self-respect and dignity. When tribal developmental

activities gained momentum, limited curbs were put on their exploitative activities; but autonomy and dignity could not be restored to the tribes in full measure. They became increasingly dependent on doles and subsidies. In vital decision-making processes governing their own destinies they had very little say. The small tribal elite could do well by itself, but the weaker sections among the larger tribes and the weak tribes as a whole had to reconcile themselves to a subordinate status.

These planned efforts notwithstanding, tribal condition after independence did not improve. In the process, they further lost the control over their resources. It can be argued that though the approach may have been different, its implementation still remained technology-entered and had no congruence with their community-oriented approach. In fact, the area development approach has worked counterproductive because problems like land alienation, indebtedness and poor skills call for a different approach. Thus, the policy of market dominated development and tribal socio-cultural worldview have coexisted, albeit in contradiction.

It is this contradiction that needs sensitivity in handling plans, processes as well as institutions that identify and address disequilibria created by development. With the passage of time, it has widely been experienced that all the programmes and activities relating to the tribal development do not percolate to the grassroots level in a sensitive manner.

Dissent against Development

This pattern of development has fundamentally altered three crucial bases of production: water, land and forest¹⁷. Moreover, the tendency of the government to consolidate its power over resources is also shown in its support for large irrigation projects. These interventions have further affected tribal interests adversely. The critical relationship between the tribal, environment and development led to ideologically driven struggles that brought together concerns for conserving nature with issue of justice. The development or lack of it created fertile ground for deprivation, alienation, protest and struggles in contemporary India.

The tribal of Central tribal belt of India has a history of revolts (Sinha: 1972; Dubey: 1998). In contemporary Central Indian tribal belt, despite numerous interventions by state, movements against state policy have been quite successful. Sachchidananda (1998) has described tribal moments in Bihar and Orissa, Shah (1998) has reviewed moments in Gujarat and Rajasthan, and Dubey (1998) has provided a factual account of rebellions in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Although pan-tribal leadership did not exist in the Central tribal belt, in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh a number of charismatic leaders -- like Hul, Birsa, Tana (Jharkhand)

and Kangla Manjhi, Lal Shyam, Pravir Chandra, Bihari Das and Lakhmoo Ram (Chhattisgarh) -- could transcend the bounds of single tribe. In both these states tribals were politically conscious. Christian Missionary after early 1900s had strong presence in this tribal belt but their influence in developing political consciousness was intense in Bastar and Chota Nagpur area. These influences were ripe for the development of modern political movements after 1930s, which culminated in creation of separate states Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in November 2000. An intensely troubled period was witnessed in creation of these separate states, especially Jharkhand. But the movement were not ideologically driven on 'tribal identity' for, non-tribals in the region, especially Kurmi, and upcoming businessmen, the outsider *di-ku*, became active part of the movement (Singh: 1998).

Nonetheless, the contemporary movements for tribal rights to land and natural resources on the one hand, and political autonomy on the other have shown that either outsiders have hijacked the movement as the case was in Jharkhand or the movement could not be sustained only on tribal issues as is the case in Kerala. Analysing Jharkhand movement, Basu (2006) argues that outsider *di-ku* still control the economy of the state and tribal self-esteem is undermined, tribal social identity devalued and the path of their development restricted even after formation of Jharkhand. Chathukulam and John (2006), on the other hand, argue that the non-violent tribal protest in Kerala to gain right to land fizzled out after 2001 due to brutal state repression. The movement restructured their protest by broadening coalition, capable of taking-up issues of gender, environment, *Dalits* in addition to the tribal issue. These contemporary movements even after shifting their struggles from local to broader issues like political autonomy or reinforcing struggle by including other issues could not protect tribal interests. These movements, nevertheless, could create awareness and break the culture of silence so very embedded in tribal psyche. Within this broader frame, it is desirable to understand creation of social space that is inherent among tribes and which is a major cause, as shall be seen in chapter 8, of creation of social capital.

The movement in contemporary Madhya Pradesh against displacement and administration need a special mention for, it has provided the tribals of Western India a new identity; an identity that is constructed around development, environment and governance¹⁸. The immigrant *outsiders* are settled on the fertile alluvial lands in the plains whereas hilly unfertile dryland are left to the tribals. The rapidly increasing tribal population moved into the forests that, since Independence, have come to be fully under state control. Tribals who cleared forest areas for cultivation now face charges of encroachment¹⁹. Displacement due to large dams in the tribal regions has

rationalised the presence of the movements like *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (NBA), an NGO that has provided alternatives in existing development paradigm. On the other hand, control over forest is a major contention that has brought into play civil society institutions like the *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan* (AMS).

Development, environment and governance have been contested in these struggles in tribal South-western Madhya Pradesh. These concepts have different meanings for the tribals and the state. This mismatch in the definition is contested by everyday practices; violent sometimes but in more sublime way bring out the contradictions of state actions relating to access to natural resources. State as the authority of development, rationalises its action through projects of national interest and through interventions that rest on out-dated mode of land acquisition, makes the tribals powerless. The struggles against state are placed within the discourse of ecology and development as the case is with *Narmada Bachao Andolan* or are located against state's force and repression as in the case of *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan*. These struggles are able to mobilise tribals of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and have gained support from a number of institutions outside the region (Baviskar: 2001). The success of these initiatives is mixed in weakening of the repression and development induced displacement.

The *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan* attributes tribal oppression to their powerlessness before state and market. Corrupt revenue officials, brutal policemen and foresters, poor education facilities and failing health services make up a system that marginalises tribal. In the last three years, the political activities of AMS have brought it into direct confrontation with these power elite. The AMS has successfully compelled the government to retrieve tribal lands and other property that had been taken over by moneylenders. The campaigns of the AMS forced the government to suspend several corrupt revenue officers, policemen and forest officers.

To counter the AMS, the non-tribal deputy chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, Subhash Yadav, organised the *Adivasi Samaj Sudhar Shanti Sena* (ASSSS) in 1997. Commercialisation of country liquor replacing home made *Moudee*²⁰ has assumed notoriety in the tribal belt. The anti-liquor campaign of AMS had resulted in the closure of legal and illegal liquor vends in around 250 villages with considerable losses to both vendors and their protectors. One such 'injured party' was *bhanjadia Patel*, the hereditary adivasi headman, of Kabri village and the block Congress committee president. The AMS took the battle to *bhanjadia*'s own door when its members in Kabri declared that no liquor would be sold in the village during *Indal*, the most important adivasi festival. The campaign turned violent and had to face state repression. The incident was reported in media as rivalry between two tribal

groups. Unlike *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, the *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan* is declared by the state an armed struggle that is trying to misguide tribals (Baviskar: 2001).

The campaign of the Narmada Bachao Andolan started with Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat²¹ in late 1980s and took a decisive form in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra with the construction of hydroelectric plant at Maheshwar. This project would submerge 61 villages, about 5000 hectare of rich agricultural land in plains that would adversely affect livelihood of 2500 submerging households. The NBA started mobilising project affected persons (PAPs) in the submerging villages for futility of this unsustainable pattern of development that results environmental destruction as well as serious relocation and rehabilitation (R&R) problems from mid 1990s. The successful campaign around these issues forced the Madhya Pradesh government to review the project and suspend the work on the project in early 1998. The success of NBA campaign had three major factors. First, the Maheshwar campaign was an extension of a larger process against the state's unsustainable approach of development that brought together national and international NGOs, environmentalist and the PAPs. Second, it brought in forefront the issue of involuntary displacement, outdated mode of land acquisition, and human rights violation of the PAPs. Lastly, all through out the campaign was projected as non-violent struggle of tribals against environmental distraction.

The differences in these two struggles are acute. While Narmada Bachao Andolan campaign was instrumental in making the state realise its mistakes, the *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan* turned out as a violent campaign between fighting groups of tribals to gain supremacy over each other. Despite these differences, the effect of the two campaigns within the tribal community of *Nimar* has been binding. These campaigns did create social capital in the form of closer ties between the communities, despite serious economic differences. When it comes to non-tribal intervention in their affairs, no outsider would be able to create space, no matter how harmless it could be to their land and livelihood, if there is even an iota of misgiving. Notwithstanding the changes around them, this suspicion is neither unjustified nor detrimental to tribal livelihood.

3.5 Continuity and Change

After independence, three important processes have brought considerable change in constitutive ideas and behavioural expectations of tribal. Development interventions of state, political decentralisation and seasonal migration have influenced the tribal social and economic outlook. In order to appreciate the struggles between continuity and change, each of these processes have to be located within the

cultural construct that tribal employ to interpret them. Development for tribal brings images of large projects, displacement and associated hardship²². Otherwise, large sections of the tribals have missed the fruits of post-independence development interventions, which have been poor both in terms of coverage and quality. But except for elementary education and Public Distribution System, other amenities like access to electricity, all weather roads, health services, drinking water and sanitation, irrigation, agricultural extension, rural co-operatives *et cetera* are poor. In fact, their remoteness to administration and civil society institution is overriding enough to allow these facilities to reach the area. What has, however, reached them is the fear of displacement due to development projects with administrative insensitivity that accompany them. Presence of administration -- in the form of police, forest and revenue officials -- is synonymous to corruption, repression and exploitation²³. The experiences of development in tribal consciousness imprint mistrust towards non-tribals, caution and apathy towards state interventions and loss of land and natural resources.

The change in the form of technologically driven agriculture, though restricted to a small subset of area, is not entirely an outcome of state intervention either. It happened because of seasonal migration. Seasonal migration for tribal is not coping with scarcity alone²⁴ it is experiencing development that has by-passed them²⁵. What a migrating tribal learns during his stay as a labourer either on irrigated farms of irrigated plains or on the farms of irrigated HB cotton growers or on the fields of irrigated paddy and sugarcane growers is a main source of agriculture technology transfer. How to energise the well and distribute water; how to grow irrigated fertiliser-responsive cotton, soybean and wheat; utilisation of post-harvest technology of these market-oriented crops *et cetera* is learnt during seasonal migration. No matter how much the *Anti-Development activist* discredits it, this process of production of knowledge is creating space for non-tribal institutions that is inducing conversion of subsistence way of agriculture to a market driven agriculture²⁶. The process is, however, internalised without any state support. In irrigated areas, the *bania* is providing agricultural credit without any security. The tribal are also able to repay the loans promptly at least during good agricultural years. But in the process, tribal have started attaching a high degree of dependence on non-tribal institution they loathed the most, the *market*. This is an ideological contradiction that is the handiwork of modernity. This emerging consciousness towards technological change -- infused with conditions of larger tracks of poor quality of land -- produced ethos in which *bania* finds that land as a source of exploitation is

not as remunerative for their money-lending business as it used to be during pre-independence years.

The third important process that is imprinting the tribal consciousness is the process of decentralised governance. The logic of decentralised governance is to bring decision making nearer to the masses. In last twelve years of its working in the region, decentralisation has brought considerable transformation. Traditional leadership and its social dominance has given a way to elected leaderships; many of roles that tribal *headman* used to play have become redundant when identity of *Headman* is subsumed into *Sarpanch*. But when traditional tribal headmen are unable to establish themselves as elected leaders, especially in a multi-village panchayats, decentralisation has become a ground where traditional ideology would like to re-establish itself. This has resulted in divide and fractions in village polity. Social interests that used to be supreme are giving way to economic interests. Generation divide has sharpened with older people being sceptical to all economic changes, whereas the younger generation is receptive and adaptive to interventions and economic changes. Both sides with their experiences – marginalisation and exploitation versus modernity and economic affluence – have stood to their ideological stand. But the divide is apparent²⁷. Both the agents, the *Patel* with his social clout as well as the elected representative with his political clout and reach-up to high echelons of administration, are playing their respective roles. Changes are accepted slowly in tribal society with caution.

Images of modernity and changes are mirrored simultaneously with traditionalism and *status quo*. The process is a continuum of mistrust and trust at one level but at another, it only reflects diversity and stratification in an apparently homogenous society.

End Notes

- 1 Using 1991 Census, Verma (1996) provides distribution of important tribes in India and argue that from 212 communities in 1950 the aggregation of tribes or groups tribes notified together comes to 573.
- 2 Varma (1996) and Dubey (1972) have identified the following major tribes in Central tribal belt:
 - Rajasthan:
 - Bhil, Garasia, Dubla, Gond, Koli, Khatari, Varli, Pardhi, Saharia.
 - Gujarat:
 - Bhil, Tadvi, Vasava, Rathwa, Dubla, Dodia, Naika, Kunbi, Koil, Chaudhara, Kitwalia,
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Saharia, Bhil, Bhilala, Garala, Patelia, Neha, Gond, Panka, Nagesia, Manjhi, Sunar, Bhumia, Bagia, Bharia, Kol, Korku, Agria.
 - Chhattisgarh
 - Bhunja, Kamar, Halba, Muria, Dendami maria, Hill Maria, Dhurva, Doria, Bhattra, Gond.
 - Jharkhand:
 - Asura, Baiga, Banjara, Bishor, Gond, Oran, Santhal, Ho, Kharia, Khond, Korwa, Mundra, Mal paharia, Bhumij,
 - Orissa
 - Baiga, Banjara, Barhor, Gadaba, Gond, Ho, Jatapu, Jung, Kharia, Koya, Oraon, Santhal, Saora.
- 3 *Sanskritisation* mirrors the social mobility in the form of entering into caste fold, acceptance of religious faith, and gradual movement to Hinduism without losing the tribal identity (Sarkar: 1986). In mixed caste villages where *tribals* are in majority, social groups like *Bhangi*, *Balai* and *Chamar* -- all scheduled Castes -- are placed by the *tribal* in a lower social order.
- 4 For example, *Patidars* from Gujarat have settled in the *Nimar* plains a century back. This influx of *Patidar* displaced *Bhil*, *Bhilala* and *Barela* tribals from the plains to unfertile hills (Sah: 2003). The *di-ku*, in Chota Nagpur, is ethnic concept applicable to the categories of land grabbers and baniawho came from outside (Singh: 1972).
- 5 Shrivastav (1970) argues that the tribal influx in Madhya Pradesh started during the 12th century, mainly from Rajasthan and Gujarat. This was the time when *Parmar* dynasty in the region was disintegrating. The state was in anarchy and tribal chiefs emerged as landowners, recognised *Garasiay* or unrecognised *Bhumihar*. Muslim invaders, unfamiliar with the region, could not control the tribal and encouraged Rajputs to settle and control them.
- 6 The first *Maratha* intrusion in the region was in late 1699. By 1755, the whole region including parts of *Nimar* came under their control. The turbulent *Bhil* were subdued with drastic measures. The rebels were brought to Khargoan and ordered to behave. Those who complied were presented with collars of honour and those who did not were beheaded (Shrivastav: 1970).
- 7 Mishra (1998) argues that bulk of the tribal states fell apart to Mughals and British. But some tribal states, like Badwani, with its chequered history kept moving in and out of British rule (Shrivastav: 1970). In a sense the state neither accepted British dominance nor did it come under any other rulers, Holker or Sindhia. Till 1947, the *Sisodias* could manage personal powers and hereditary perpetuity to rule Badwani Rajput rulers of Badwani were treated with honour by *Mughals* and were given their original powers. These rulers in early 18th century, however, assisted *Maratha* invasion in the Malwa. British took over the state briefly in 1861 to 1873. From 1894 till 1910, the state was administered directly under the British Political Agent. During the First World War, the then Prince of the Badwani state, Ranjit Singh, served the forward line of France. In recognition, he was granted powers to rule again. In 1921 again, the prince received, with hereditary perpetuity, some more

criminal powers. After his death, his minor son Devi Singh, was invested with administrative powers. Till independence, the Sisodias ruled the state. In 1948, the state was merged in India. For details, see,.

- 8 The interest rate charged by the *bania* in the central tribal belt is as high as 50 per cent for four months. A shock in the form of death of bread earner, prolonged illness or failed crop result in the tribal debtor losing his assets; land, silver and animals. The riches and affluence of trading *bania* community in towns and trading centres can be traced to exploitation of tribal by them (see, for details, Fuchs: 1972; Sah and Shah: 2003).
- 9 In hills a large part of cultivation is on encroached forestland. Tribals do not want to talk about when they settled on these upper hill lands. It is, however, recalled that the most recent tribal influx in the hills of Southwestern Madhya Pradesh has been in last 75 to 100 years. A significant proportion of the resettled households have acquired land rights by 1970s. But about 10 per cent of encroaches are still fighting for their rights. Vast tracks of the *Nimar* hills are still uninhabited. Population pressures may encourage tribals to settlers on these tracks for survival, fuelling a new confrontation with state.
- 10 *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan* activist Madhuri identifies the cash crops grown for the market in these hilly regions as one of the critical reason of tribal indebtedness. The seeds for these crops are sold at an exuberant price. A crop failure brings a shock that puts the tribals in debt for at least 3 to 4 years if he has some fertile land. In case the farmer has poor quality land, asset depletion is a certainty. The situation may not have been significantly different a century back.
- 11 It has been argued that Quit India Movement left the tribal of the *Central India* rather untouched; the rebellions were against *di-ku* non-tribals, native or British. Nonetheless, the urban areas had significant Congress following and political awakening (Shrivastav: 1970). The term Dacoit had been an ominous connotation that British often used for the Freedom Fighter of 1850s in Nimar Hills (Dubey: 1998).
- 12 *Sulia Gotra* of Barela tribe is claiming themselves as Solanki by suffixing Singh to their names in the Pati hilly tracks. This is a sign of social mobility and *sanskritisation*.
- 13 The training of child starts from age around five onwards. The first education to boys is to take cattle for grazing, by nine the boys are ready to be introduced to agriculture. By fourteen boys can cultivate traditionally grown crops. Generally, Girls between five and seven years have burden of caring for their younger sibling and gathering fuel-wood. Girls between nine and thirteen are generally engaged in fetching water-collecting fuel, helping their younger sibling. From fourteen onwards girls take up all the household chores including cooking.
- 14 Marriage could take place by selecting one of the following process: In-service: Where the groom starts living in bride's family where he can not pay bride price; Exchange: Wherein brother and sister of family are married to sister and Brother of the other family; Settled: Marriage fixed by parents; *Bagodia*: Unmarried young couples chose their partners in a festival; Rajibhaji Abduction: Many a times bride is abducted by groom's family and marriage is solemnised after paying a price to bride's family known as '*Jagda*'.
- 15 The British made shifting cultivation illegal, reserved the forests and established sources of revenue there (Morse and Berger: 1992).
- 16 The economic critique of colonial past legitimised the option to govern the new nation state; in order to legitimise their political authority, the Congress assumed the role of central allocator with an aim to remove inequality by a process that resulted in

rapid economic growth. The process required efforts and sacrifice by citizens. The *dalits*, the small and marginal farmers, the landless labourers and the tribals were the groups that made the sacrifices.

- 17 This is how Ms. Madhavi, the *Adivasi Mukti Sagathan* activist, rationalises the tribal movement against state repression.
- 18 The other important movement that led formation of Jharkhand as a separate state is not reviewed for, though the oppression of its inhabitants by outsiders was compounded by the over-exploitation of mineral, forest and human resources of the region, Jharkhand Movement was, by force of circumstances, transformed into a regional movement. Those who started with 'Jharkhand *abua*, *Di-ku senoa*' (Jharkhand is ours, *Di-ku* quit), accepted non-tribals to be a part of the movement to be separate from Bihar (Sachchidananda: 1998). When *Di-ku* themselves became part of movement, it lost the *locus standi* to make over exploitation of resources and environment a cause.
- 19 The scale of problem is reflected in the fact that in the *Nimar* hills many villages are identified as forest villages, i.e., lying outside the revenue system. In Pati taluka of Badwani district out of 106 villages, 46 are identified as forest villages. Rights of tribals in the forest villages are highly restricted by Forest department (for detail, see Sah and Shah: 2003).
- 20 Parsi outsiders, as commercial liquor vendors, were major exploiters, like *bania*, in tribal areas of South Gujarat (Hardiman: 1998). But commercialisation of liquor elsewhere is a recent phenomenon. As forests have dwindled and opportunity cost of fuel wood increased many folds, *Moudee* – the home made brew made out of *Mouda* flowers -- making has become costly affair. Consequently, purchase of country liquor has replaced *Moudee* brewing. *Bania* has also started liquor supply. A section of Tribal population, about 5 to 7 percent, is alcoholic. Country liquor is cheap but is a cause of indebtedness for these households.
- 21 Sardar Sarovar Project, a large irrigation project costing the state Rs 80 thousand Million in 1986-87 prices, is one of 30 major, 135 medium and 3000 minor dams planned on Narmada river. These projects will displace a large number of families from Madhya Pradesh. Resettlement and rehabilitation of state of the project affected persons has been, casual, to put it mildly (Sah: 1977 and 2002).
- 22 The Indian experience with R&R of large project affected PAPs lacks completeness and had been apathetic to local needs, resources. The R&R policy in forced and its implementation creates visible and invisible ruptures in the social fabric in the short run and impoverishment in the long run (see Sah: 1999).
- 23 Revenue officials are remembered for their extortion in land sales which cost the seller about Rs four thousand per acre or for Land Transfer to a son that could be registered only after a bribe of Rs two thousand per entry. The police have dual images. First as an institution of settling disputes in such a way that each affected party has to bribe in order to resolve the dispute in his favour. Its second image is of a state apparatus that is used in intimidating involuntary relocation of PAPs. The forest officials connote a bureaucratic set-up that has denied tribals access to natural resources. But if one can bribe them, limited access may be granted.
- 24 Rehabilitation of involuntary migration begins with shifting of PAPs and ends with reconstructing their broken socio-economic fabric in new environment. It is prolonged and complex socio economics and political process (Sah: 1998).
- 25 In drought prone areas, migration also works as asset formation device. Successive droughts render agriculture as unsustainable livelihood option and forces even large farmers join the queue for doles. The marginal farmers and landless labourers accumulate assets due to their access to labouring options owing to migration.

- 26 This may also break the distrust syndrome with respect to non-tribals as noted above.
- 27 Tribal belt is an economically divided lot in the Central belt. For example, groups of young tribal farmers in Southwestern tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh are ready to take risk and associate themselves with schemes like *group financing* and *self help group* activities. But the older generation want no outside especially state intervention on schemes like *social forestry* and soil & water conservation activities on common property land that farther constrains their already constrained access to natural resources (see for details, Sah and Shah: 2003).

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CHAPTER 4

MAPPING CHRONIC POVERTY IN CENTRAL TRIBAL BELT OF INDIA

This chapter examines incidence as well as typology of chronic poverty in study villages located in central tribal belt of India. The three specific questions addressed in the chapter are as follows: first, estimate the incidence of economic-poverty and chronic poverty in the sample households located in Developed and Under-developed villages. Secondly, examine the extent poverty is associated with social variables like size of family, social indebtedness, education and health; economic variables like agricultural performance, employment, access to food, indebtedness and migration; and political factors like state's intervention to eradicate poverty and resource transfer in the form of PDS. And lastly, to understand the role relative remoteness plays in the associations between chronic poverty and its correlates, especially private investment in agriculture.

4.1 Incidence of Poverty

Based on randomly selected 1614 households, this section presents incidence of poverty in Developed and Under-developed villages. The two groups of villages are significantly varying (Table 4.1) in terms of the demographic pattern, social composition, amenities and dynamics of agricultural production. But the most striking feature of this difference is the remoteness of Under-developed villages as compared to Developed. Located 20 to 25 Kms from Janpad headquarter, Under-developed villages are 4 to 6 Kms inside the main road. To reach these villages, the un-metallic link road cutting across hills, needs to be travelled either on foot, bullock cart or two-wheeler. The village has 6-10 *falia* (hamlets), except in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa where settlements are relatively compact. *Falia*, except the *falia* where village headmen stay, generally are remotely located and are difficult to access. On the other hand, Developed villages are relatively less remote and well connected to main road from where regular buses are available to Janpad headquarters and nearby markets. The remoteness of Under-developed villages is absolute because the nearest primary markets, are relatively underdeveloped. Major agricultural inputs, especially yield increasing irrigation equipments and machinery, are not available in these markets. Inhabitants of Under-developed villages need to travel to Janpad headquarter for these purchases. The primary market for developed, villages are well developed where inputs and agricultural equipments can be purchased and output can be sold. Despite these variations, the two groups of villages are comparable as poverty is pervasive in both (Table 4.3).

Being tribal dominated, it has been argued that access failure to production resources, specifically land and irrigation triggers, a pattern in which casual labouring and migration constitute a significant component of livelihood strategy. This is relevant to recognise for,

despite the fact that land has been acquired through settlement in this area, the population pressure and droughts have triggered access failure to land resources. Though growth of agriculture may explain a part of variations in expenditure, the social process triggered by shocks like serious illness, son's marriage, social spending, crop failure *et cetera* explains a large part in variations in expenditure. In this formulation, relative remoteness seems to influence poverty significantly. But this association may be an interaction of remoteness with dynamics of agriculture, access to resources and market, and access to state support during a shock.

Table 4.1: Basic Indicators of Sample Villages

	Developed	Undeveloped
Km. from Janpad Headquarter	8-10	20-25
Surveyed Households	778	836
% Tribal Population	100	100
Average Family Size	5.4	5.6
% Households feel village Educational needs unfulfilled	95	94
% Households feel that the Health Facilities are poor	97	98
Nearest Market (km)	5-7	15-20
% Households with Domestic Electrification	72	50
% Consumption through PDS		
Cereals	16	16
Sugar	15	16
Gross Cropped Area (Acre)	3.04	3.05
Irrigated Area (Acre)	1.08	0.50
% Irrigated area	33	16
Migration Income (Rs per annum)	1968	4472
% Migration Income to Total Income	7.8	18.2
Total Income (Rs per annum)	25112	24544
Source: All the Tables in this chapter are based on primary data.		

Economic Poverty:

The reference year 2005-06 was a drought year in the case of about 30 per cent of the households. As a result, a significant proportion of agricultural activities especially during *rabi* season had been adversely affected. Droughts also significantly and adversely affect food security of households. It can be argued that food consumption and calorie intake in a low-income economy may not be appropriate indicators of economic poverty for, shocks do adversely affect food consumption but its elasticity may be significant more for non-food expenditure than food expenditure. Hence, instead of calorie intake, incidence of poverty has been estimated and examined based on per capita expenditure.

Table 4.2 gives average expenditure on food and non-food items by households in the sample villages for the reference year. Per capita annual expenditure of all the households taken together is Rs 4910. This includes rupee equivalent on food consumption (cereal, pulses, oil, gur, sugar, vegetables, meat, fish, eggs, spices, milk, tea and fuel) plus consumption of consumer items like clothing, soap & toiletry, transportation, expenditure on

health & schooling and entertainment, plus rupee equivalent of consumption derived from common property resources. In Developed villages annual per capita consumption expenditure (Rs 5000) is slightly higher than the expenditure in Under-developed villages (Rs 4827). The variation in total per capita expenditure is owing to both relative affluence of the location as well as impact of drought on consumption pattern. Households located in Under-developed have experienced relatively more adverse impact of shocks compared to households located in Developed villages. This observation is supported by the fact that relatively larger proportion of total expenditure is allocated to food items in Under-developed villages (81 per cent) than Developed villages (77 per cent).

Table 4.2: Expenditure on Different Items in Developed and Underdeveloped Villages (2005-06)

	Food ^a	Consumer Items ^b	Natural Resource	Total
<i>All</i>	Rupee per capita per annum			
All Households	3878	981	51	4910
In Underdeveloped Village	3894	889	44	4827
In Developed Village	3861	1080	58	5000
<i>All across per capita expenditure class</i>				
Severe Poor	2335	509	8	2853
Moderate Poor	3504	755	20	4279
Non Poor	4706	1191	61	5959
<i>In Underdeveloped Village</i>				4827
Severe Poor	2325	506	12	2842
Moderate Poor	3539	722	39	4286
Non Poor	5615	1432	95	7142
<i>In Developed Village</i>				4999
Severe Poor	2349	512	5	2867
Moderate Poor	3462	795	14	4270
Non Poor	5071	1674	131	6877
Note:	Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total expenditure.			
a	Food expenditure includes Rupee equivalent to the following items: cereal, pulses, oil, gur, sugar, vegetables, meat, fish, eggs, spices, milk, tea and fuel.			
b	The expenditure includes the following items: clothing, soap & toiletry, transportation, expenditure on health & schooling and entertainment.			
Source: See Table 4.1				

The total per capita annual expenditure has been used to identify poor among the sample households. The official norm for identifying households that are below-poverty-line works out at Rs 426 per capita per month in 2005-06 prices. That means any household that spends less than Rs 426 per capita per month can be termed as poor. Among these households, having lower than Rs 286 per capita per month expenditure (below 67 per cent of poverty line) could be identified as severely poor. Table 4.3 gives distribution of household across different poverty incidence in the sample villages for the reference year. Although the incidence of economic poverty in sample as a whole is 58 per cent, among households located in Developed villages the incidence of economic poverty at 44 per cent seem to be numerically lower than that of households located in Under-developed villages where

proportion of poor households is 61 per cent. A statistical investigation -- in the form of Chi-square and its signification -- indicates that there is indeed significant difference in the pattern of poverty in the two groups of villages. The evidence -- a significant chi-square and a negative and significant correlation -- from Table 4.3 reveal that as one moves from developed to under-developed village there is significant increase in the incidence of economic poverty, though proportion of severely poor households in the two groups of villages is not different.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Households in Economic Poverty Profile

	Developed	Under Developed	Total
Severe Poor	120 (15)	138 (16)	258 (16)
Moderate Poor	298 (38)	374 (45)	672 (42)
Non Poor	357 (46)	322 (39)	679 (42)
All	775	834	1609
Figures in parentheses are percentage of households in each group. $\chi^2 = 9.5$ *** and $r = -0.06$ ** Source: As in Table 4.1			

Chronic Poverty:

The poverty categories can further be re-categorised by incorporating time dimension of poverty. One way to reach chronic dimension of poverty is comparing the consumption expenditure over time. The major problem in employing this method is non-availability of a panel of data that fixes chronic nature of poverty. Sah and Shah (2003) have used variations in cereal consumption from normal as an indicator of chronic poverty. But identification of chronic poor using fall in cereal consumption from normal may lead to underestimation of chronic poverty. This is because experience shows that cereal consumption is relatively inelastic to shocks. Alternatively, Krishna (2003) has identified that in sequence of changes, if there is deterioration in land asset and increase in short-term land transaction, fall in food intake and clothing over time or if debts have remained un-serviced or leaking roof has not been repaired, it is sign of chronic poverty. Since the variations in quality of clothing over time from our sample are not caught properly and the house repair has only labour component using local material, it is not desirable to include these two indicators of identification of chronic poverty. It was also found that short-term land transactions in the form of land leasing is more a function of market failure and brings agencies together than a pure indication of sequence of change that points a deterioration in the quality of life of either landlord or tenant (Sah: 1999). Thus, in our analysis we have proposed that if the household had lost silver or land or mortgaged silver and land in the last 5 years, or could not service its old debts or did missed both the meals, the household is a transitory household either chronic poor or transitory non-poor. Using this method, the two categories of income-poverty -- poor and

non-poor -- thus can further be categorised (Table 4.4) as Chronic Poor (poor with chronic tendency) Non-chronic Poor (poor without chronic tendency), transitory non-poor and always non-poor.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Households in Chronic Poverty Profile

	Developed Villages	Under Developed Villages	All
Chronic Poor	99 (13)	144 (17)	243 (15)
Non-Chronic Poor	322 (41)	370 (44)	692 (43)
Transitory Non-Poor	78 (10)	85 (10)	163 (10)
Always Non-Poor	279 (36)	237 (29)	516 (32)
	778 (100)	836 (100)	1614 (100)
$\chi^2 = 13.3 (***)$, $r = -0.1 (***)$ Source: See Table 4.1.			

Table 4.4 reveals that the incidence of chronic poverty significantly varies across the two groups of villages; the intensity of chronic poverty is significantly more among households located in Under-developed than Developed villages. In the sample as a whole about a 26 per cent poor are chronic poor. Chronic poverty is 1.5 times more likely among severe poor household compared to moderately poor households (Table 4.5). But this proportion is less than a fourth in Developed villages whereas in Under-developed villages 28 per cent of the poor are chronic poor. Nevertheless, it is not always true that all those who are severely poor shall be chronic poor also. This is because the method of identifying transitory behaviour of households, apart from being economic, also takes into account the social processes like missing the meals, mortgage and asset loss, and inability to service the debt. One may, however, question why the method of identification of sequence of change that indicates transitory behaviour rests on both the meals missed rather than a meal missed. As large proportions of households reported that in peak agricultural season, missing a meal is quite frequent owing to work pressures rather than access failure to food. It is, therefore, considered appropriate to use missing both the meals for identifying transitory behaviour.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Households Across Economic Poverty and Chronic Poverty Profile

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
Number of Households					
Severe Poor	83	175			258
Moderate Poor	160	512			672
Non Poor			163	516	679
$\chi^2 = 1620 (***)$, $r = .82 (***)$ Source: See Table 4.1					

Table 4.6 provide evidences relating to chronic poverty among tribals in different state. Incidence of economic and chronic poverty is high in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan;

in these two states economic poverty is 76 per cent and 58 per cent respectively, whereas about 36 to 40 per cent of poor are also chronic poor. Among tribals of Jharkhand, though economic poverty is about 50 per cent, over 30 per cent of poor are chronic poor as well. While among tribals of Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and Gujarat the incidence of economic poverty is between 52 and 59 per cent, only 15 to 17 per cent of poor are chronic poor.

Table 4.6: Chronic Poverty Across States

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
Madhya Pradesh	98 (30)	150 (46)	54 (7)	58 (18)	(100)
Chhattisgarh	31 (8)	177 (44)	44 (11)	148 (37)	(100)
Orissa	19 (10)	99 (49)	24 (12)	58 (29)	(100)
Jharkhand	61 (15)	141 (35)	50 (12)	148 (37)	(100)
Gujarat	17 (8)	95 (47)	16 (8)	74 (37)	(100)
Rajasthan	17 (21)	30 (37)	5 (6)	30 (37)	(100)
Source: See Table 4.1.					

To sum up, about 58 per cent of the sample households are poor. There is significant difference in incidence of economic poverty between the two groups of villages; while among households located in developed villages about 63 per cent are economically poor, in developed villages incidence of economical poverty is only 53 per cent. Chronic poverty, on the one hand, is significantly associated with severity of poverty, if remoteness is controlled. The likelihood that a household that is severe poor may also be chronic poor is 1.5 times more likely than moderate poor household. On the other hand, chronic poverty is also significantly associated with remoteness; in Under-developed villages a household is 1.4 times more likely be chronic poor than not compared to a households located in relatively Developed villages.

If remoteness, as the evidences show, does influence the incidence of chronic poverty as well as the nature of economic poverty, the relevant question is whether the association between remoteness and poverty is a true relation of cause and effect or some characteristics that are associated with remoteness influence the typology of chronic poverty.

4.2 Correlates of Poverty

The tribal belt of central India is characterised by resource poor, technologically stagnant, and remote from state and market where depletion of resources like land, forest and water has a history. In this situation, the livelihood struggles and coping with resourcelessness contribute to high incidence of chronic poverty. Apart from access to land, silver, livestock and irrigation in this hilly and remote area, consumption expenditure reflects major indicator for resourcelessness, fall in it may push households into a social process of borrowing and

repayment that trap households into chronic poverty. Table 4.7 gives the distribution of households with typology of chronic poverty across different expenditure class. The pattern of distribution reveals -- $\chi^2 = 101$ significance level .07; and $r = 0.21$, significance level .01 -- that chronic poverty is significantly associated with consumption expenditure; higher the level of expenditure, lower is the incidence of chronic poverty.

Table 4.7: Chronic Poverty Across Different Expenditure Group

	Household Expenditure Rs.		
	Up to 17,462	17,463 to 23,993	Over 23,993
Chronic Poor	96 (18)	82 (15)	62 (12)
Non-Chronic Poor	287 (54)	240 (44)	160 (30)
Transitory Poor	26 (5)	57 (10)	80 (15)
Always Non-Poor	122 (23)	168 (31)	228 (43)
	531 (100)	547 (100)	531 (100)
$\chi^2 = 101$ (**), $r = 0.21$ (***) Source: See Table 4.1			

A similar exercise is done using agricultural production, irrigation, size of family, literacy rate in the household, unpaid debt of household, migration, and benefits from *Panchayat* and Government schemes, PDS support available and organisational membership of the household *et cetera* as explanatory factors influencing chronic poverty. Table 4.8 gives result of this exercise. But before interpreting these results, it is worthwhile to appreciate the dynamics of livelihood struggles that the inhabitants of these two groups of villages are engaged.

The difference between the two groups of villages does not end at their relative remoteness. The basic infrastructure and production resources in relatively developed villages are significantly superior compared to remote Under-developed villages. Adverse implication of drought, which is a function of quality and quantity of natural endowments, is relatively more severe in Under-developed villages compared to Developed. Households with irrigation also grow some *rabi* crops. About a third of cropped area with irrigation, well and energizing facilities reflected in better economic conditions of farmers in developed villages compared to under-developed villages. Households located in developed villages marginally depend on migration compared to Under-developed villages (Table 4.1). Well to do households in developed villages do not prefer to seasonally migrate; they, in shocks, would rather labour around nearby villages. About 50 percent of households having marginal holdings without production resources -- less land and unirrigated holdings -- depend on labouring and seasonal migration.

Although in both the two groups of villages agricultural dynamism is concentrated in irrigated areas, developed villages have 3 times more area under irrigation than Under-

developed villages. Agricultural technology transfer and use of improved varieties in irrigated area has resulted in wider economic stability in Developed villages compared to Under-developed. But in both the group of villages, farmers with poor soils and undulating topography (about 80 per cent of the cropped area) face poor agricultural income, as bulk of the undulating fields have serious soil erosion problems. Introduction of mechanisation has also reduced employment opportunities in and around the villages. As the natural resources, especially forest and commons, have been depleted, there is very little surplus generation and employment opportunities in collection of forest produce except in Jharkhand.

Table 4.8: Correlates of Chronic Poverty in Central Tribal Belt

	Chi-square	Correlation	Odds Ratio ^a	Interaction with Remoteness ^b
Total Expenditure.	101 (***)	0.2 (***)	1.4	Same
Animal Assets	14.2 (**)	0.04 (NS)	1.4	1.5 times more in developed villages
Consumer Items	28.0 (***)	0.1 (***)	1.4	Same
Land Value	7.4 (NS)	0.02 (NS)	-	-
Silver Rupees	6.6 (NS)	0.0 (NS)	.76	-
Total Assets	6.9 (NS)	0.03 (NS)	-	-
Labour Income	18.7 (***)	0.020 (NS)	1.4	1.3 times more in Developed villages
Agricultural Income	9.8 (***)	0.06 (**)	1.4	Same
Migration Income	57.5 (***)	-0.2 (***)	0.5	1.6 time more in Under-developed
Total Income	4.3 (NS)	0.0 (NS)	-	1.7 times in Under-developed
Service Income	16.1 (***)	.08 (***)	-	-
Other Income	3.0 (NS)	0.0 (NS)	-	2 times more in Under-developed
Gross Cropped Area	12.5 (*)	0.0 (NS)	-	-
Gross Irrigated Area	10.7 (*)	0.04 (*)	-	2 times more in developed villages
Family Size	151.2 (***)	-0.28 (***)	0.5	Same
Dependency %	20.5 (***)	0.06 (***)	1.6	2 times more in Under-developed
Literacy %	18.5 (***)	0.07 (***)	1.5	1.4 times more in developed villages
Outstanding Debt	139.3 (***)	-0.10 (***)	.33	1.6 times more in developed villages
Agricultural Credit	14.6 (**)	-0.03 (NS)	.71	same
Panchayat Benefits	12.2 (*)	0.06 (**)	1.5	same
Migration Intensity	60.3 (***)	-0.18 (***)	.41	
Home Produce Lasts	29.5 (***)	0.09 (***)	1.2	1.5 times more in under-developed
PDS support	NS	NS	-	-
Health Expenses	50.1 (***)	0.06 (**)	3.3	1.5 times more in developed Villages
Organisational membership	20.4 (***)	0.07 (***)	2.1	Same
The findings of correlates of Chronic poverty are given in Appendices I through VI.				
^a Odds ratio of being chronic poor rather than not due to change in a factor = (Frequency of Chronic poor / Frequency of non-chronic poor) in low factor class / (Frequency of Chronic poor / Frequency of non-chronic poor) in high factor class				
^b = (Odds ratio of being chronic poor for a factor) in Underdeveloped villages / = (Odds ratio of being chronic poor for a factor) in Developed villages				
Source: See Table 4.1				

In Jharkhand, as shall be seen in chapter 6, access to commons and their contribution to gross income is significantly higher than other states. Consequently, a high rate of population growth in this tribal region reshuffles the economic hierarchy within a generation;

even a large farmer with four children, in a generation is converted into six marginal farm households. This creates a shock like situation to some households that have come in existence relatively recently. This, given a general lack of adaptability to seed-fertiliser technology, forces an occupational diversity that is driven by poor agriculture. Occupational diversity in normal situation is associated with dynamics in agriculture. But in resource constrained economy of the Central tribal belt of India, labouring on construction avenues and migration as farm hand provide employment and income for survival (more on it in next chapter).

Size of family does significantly affect chronic poverty; a household with larger size of family than low is 2 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not (Table 4.8). Thus, larger family size has potential to trap people in poverty. On the other hand, literacy in the family does influence chronic poverty. Findings also reveal that a household is 1.6 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not, if larger proportion of its members are illiterate than literate. The finding that non-poor are able to bear 3.3 times more health expenses than chronic poor, indicates that when un-well, the tendency to ignore sickness is significantly more among chronic poor households than rest. For health facilities, households of Under-developed villages are totally dependent on near by developed villages (7 to 10 Kms away) or on health service providers of Janpad headquarter. Healthcare services for both the groups of villages are provided by a sub-primary health centre as well as by few private practitioners located in these primary markets. But, being remote, Under-developed villages have to face serious problems of accessibility; a sick person has to be taken on foot or on bullock cart to near by health service provider. Well-to-do households are more cautious about sickness.

About 30 per cent households have faced drought in the reference year and bulk have faced poor rains during last five years. Agricultural production has suffered in these years. Poor rains also adversely affects the animal stocks, especially the milch animals. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that higher assets, higher irrigation and higher agricultural production significantly affect well-being (Table 4.8). What we find from the Table is that it is 1.4 times more likely that the household would be chronic poor rather than not if it has low assets rather than high. Similarly, household is 1.4 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not if agricultural production and labour income is low than high. This association implies the livelihood struggles the poor and chronic poor have to undergo, in order to survive in this harsh tribal belt. As a result, chronic poor are two times more likely to be migrant rather than not compared to rest. This last fact needs some reflection:

If failing agricultural production leads to chronic poverty, why food security measures like public distribution system (PDS) fails to influence chronic poverty? On average, three fourth of agricultural produce is consumed in the region, and farm produce lasts for less than 8 months. For over a fourth of the households the food produce lasts only 5

months and over half of the households in the central tribal belt do not have enough food for whole year. PDS supplies wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene to cardholders. The PDS outlets are located around a radius of about 5 Kms in the study villages. The supplies are irregular as well as time and day of availability of commodities from PDS are not fixed. As a result, information about supplies does not reach the cardholders and a significant proportion of consumers do not avail PDS services. The well to do households in the villages willingly purchases their supplies from open market. But poor and chronic poor households are forced to supplement their food purchase from open market. Less than 16 per cent of total food consumption is supported by PDS. With ones' own production lasting less than seven month, the financial support for sustaining the food consumption levels for over five months from open market rests primarily on borrowing-migration vicious circle. But when households are perpetually under shock, like of marginal farmers, their dependence on migration increases significantly. The evidences show that migrating households are two times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not compared to households that do not migrate.

State support in form of benefits from PRI interventions and government schemes do not help in reducing either poverty or chronic poverty. In other words, benefits of various schemes implemented through *Panchayat* and other programmes are reaching inequitably and chronic poor do not get a fair share in these benefits in comparison to rest. A larger section of potential beneficiaries, for whom these schemes and programmes are meant, are deprived. Those who have been benefited from these schemes, at times may be poor, are households that have significantly larger benefits of the panchayat are non-poor. A full discussion on this is presented in chapter 7.

If locational advantage has manifested as significantly as the analysis reveals, it will be worth understanding the interaction between these explanatory factors and remoteness in explaining chronic poverty. There is a need to debate what happens when control variable remoteness, in the form of Under-developed and Developed villages, is introduced in the analysis. Whether the factors, those are significantly influencing chronic poverty lose their relevance once remoteness is introduced or remoteness further intensifies the process or in both Under-developed as well as Developed villages the influence of the explanatory factor is the same? Table 4.8 also provides evidences for the effect of remoteness along with each of the factor, on the chronic poverty. It is worth noting that all the factors that are closely associated with chronic poverty are having significant interaction with remoteness, except literacy. If one terms this effect of remoteness as interaction, what is the relevance of interaction in explaining chronic poverty?

While examining the effect of higher health expenses on chronic poverty, it was observed that a household is 3.3 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not if it has

lower health expenses than higher. When the control variable remoteness is introduced in this analysis, it is found that:

In Developed villages, higher allocations to health reduce the incidence of chronic poverty significantly more as compared to Under-developed.

Findings of remoteness on other correlates of chronic poverty are as follows:

Households without irrigation compared to irrigated are 1.2 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not. But in Developed villages, unirrigated households are 2 times more likely to be chronic poverty as compared to Under-developed villages where irrigation is extremely low.

Higher animal assets rather than lower reduce chronic poverty by 1.4 times but the phenomenon in relatively Developed villages is significantly more pronounced compared to Under-developed villages.

Higher unpaid social debts rather than low increase the probability of a household to be chronic poor rather than not by only 3 times. But higher debts in Under-developed villages increase the chances of being chronic poor 1.6 times more than in Developed villages. This is exceedingly constraining interaction between remoteness and access to credit.

A chronic poor household is 2.4 times more likely to be migrant rather than not compared to non-chronic poor household. But chronic poverty in Under-developed villages increases the likelihood of inducing migration significantly more than in relatively developed villages.

Households with higher proportion of their illiterate members are 1.6 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not compared to high literacy rate households. But literacy, in developed villages breaks the poverty trap significantly more than Under-Developed villages.

Higher consumption expenditure, large possessions of consumer items, larger agricultural income, higher Organisational membership rather than lower reduce chronic poverty Significantly. But these factors, irrespective of the remoteness of the location, influences chronic poverty in the same manner in the two groups of villages.

On the other hand, higher agricultural borrowings and higher size of family, rather than lower increases chronic poverty Significantly. But these factors, irrespective of the remoteness of the location, influences chronic poverty in the same manner in the two groups of villages.

It can be argued, based on above evidences, that chronic poor remains remote from policy makers rather than remoteness creates chronic poverty. Tentatively this remains our conclusion. But before accepting it, we need to understand how livelihood struggles, especially under failing agriculture, differs across developed and under-developed villages. Also relevant in establishing the implications of remoteness are the issues of governance, manifestation of social capital in development decision-making. Together, evidences from

these processes shall enlighten us about the role the relative remoteness plays in determining chronic poverty.

4.3 *Summing Up*

About 6 out of 10 persons in the Central tribal belt are poor and over a fourth of poor are chronic poor. In developed villages both poverty and chronic poverty is relatively lower than Under-developed villages. Amongst the six states, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan has higher incidence of poverty as well as chronic poverty. Chronic poverty is a complex process where many socio-economic and political factors interact and influence the process. Our findings, not surprisingly, show that economic variables like assets, irrigation and agricultural growth reduce the incidence of chronic poverty but state's effort to reduce it through its programmes either food security intervention, PRIs or other government schemes interventions do not necessarily reach the most needy, the chronic poor. Nevertheless, state sponsored programme for universal education has a positive influence in reducing chronic poverty; put other way, the best benefactor of education-for-all programme is non poor. As state interventions have failed in influencing poverty as well as chronic poverty, the coping mechanism to fight these rests on individuals' own efforts. The coping mechanism engenders a social process that brings multidimensionality to economic poverty. But the most disturbing fact of chronic poverty is the interaction of these explanatory factors with remoteness. Relative remoteness plays a significant intervening role in accentuating the play of forces that sets-up chronic poverty. The social process of borrowing-migration-repayment is controlled by access to credit market in the backdrop of remoteness. On the one hand, agricultural technology transfer is constrained by remoteness; the social process of coping with shocks is dominated by relative remoteness, on the other.

How does a stagnating agriculture and food insecurity in Under-developed villages manifest in a process that culminates in chronic poverty? How a shock, credit market failure and indebtedness result in a coping strategy that has social implications? Why decentralised governance is unable to reach the most needy and why the social networking is unable to influence political decision making at the grassroots level and hence chronic poverty? These important issues and unfolding processes relating to livelihood struggles, food security and coping the shocks, decentralisation and community participation, social capital and dissent shall help us understand how and why people are pushed in or pulled out of chronic poverty. These processes are analysed, in detail, in subsequent chapters.

Appendix I: Correlates of Chronic Poverty (Madhya Pradesh)

	χ^2	r
Total Exp.	9.8 (NS)	18 (**)
Animal Assets	10.5 (*)	13 (**)
Consumer Items	26.6 (***)	0.15 (***)
Land Value	10.2 (NS)	0.09 (*)
Silver Rupees	14.8 (**)	0.07 (NS)
Total Assets	8.1 (NS)	0.08 (NS)
Labour Income	6.0 (NS)	0.0 (NS)
Agri Income	9.4 (NS)	0.12 (**)
Migration Income	10.5 (*)	-0.12 (**)
Total Income	4.0 (NS)	0.04 (NS)
Service Income	2.0 (NS)	(NS)
Other Income	5.2 (NS)	(NS)
GCA	8.0 (NS)	(NS)
GIA	17.7 (***)	0.0 (NS)
Family Size	43.2 (***)	-0.3 (**)
Dependency %	(NS)	0.11 (**)
Literacy %	10.6 (*)	0.01 (NS)
Outstanding Debt	43.5 (***)	-0.12 (**)
Agricultural Credit	14.4 (**)	-0.10 (*)
Panchayat Benefits	40 (NS)	0 (NS)
Migration Intensity	10.5 (*)	0.14 (***)
Produce Last	12.3 (NS)	0.1 (*)
Organisational Membership	9.8 (NS)	0.1 (NS)

Appendix II: Correlates of Chronic Poverty (Chhattisgarh)

	χ^2	r
Total Exp.	39.2 (***)	0.28 (**)
Animal Assets	22.1 (***)	.13 (**)
Consumer Items	4.6 (NS)	0.03 (NS)
Land Value	205.0 (***)	0.07 (NS)
Silver Rupees	18.2 (***)	0.09 (*)
Total Assets	23.4 (***)	0.06 (NS)
Labour Income	15.8 (**)	-0.13 (***)
Agri Income	15.5 (**)	-0.06 (NS)
Migration Income	3.7 (NS)	(NS)
Total Income	8.5 (NS)	-0.0 (**)
Service Income	5.2 (NS)	.11 (NS)
Other Income	.3 (NS)	(NS)
GCA	20.5 (***)	.10 (**)
GIA	20.5 (***)	0.14 (***)
Family Size	47.5 (***)	-.26 (**)
Dependency %	9.2 (NS)	0.0 (NS)
Literacy %	9.1 (NS)	0 (NS)
Outstanding Debt	32.3 (***)	0.2 (NS)
Agricultural Credit	(NS)	(NS)
Panchayat Benefits	4.3 (NS)	0 (NS)
Migration Intensity	3.7 (NS)	0.0 (NS)
Produce Last	34.3 (***)	12 (**)
Organisational Membership	6.2 (NS)	.03 (NS)

Appendix III: Correlates of Chronic Poverty (Orissa)

	χ^2	r
Total Exp.	40.9 (***)	0.36 (**)
Animal Assets	2.8 (NS)	-.03 (*)
Consumer Items	20.5 (***)	0.11 (NS)
Land Value	2.2 (NS)	-0.0 (NS)
Silver Rupees	16.7 (***)	-0.02 (NS)
Total Assets	4.2 (NS)	-0.02 (NS)
Labour Income	8.2 (NS)	0.10 (NS)
Agri Income	9.6 (NS)	0.14 (**)
Migration Income	7.7 (NS)	(NS)
Total Income	14.0 (**)	0.14 (**)
Service Income	1.9 (NS)	(NS)
Other Income	0.3 (NS)	(NS)
GCA	7.6 (NS)	.12 (*)
GIA	12.8 (**)	0.17 (**)
Family Size	3.1 (NS)	-.07 (*)
Dependency %	4.3 (NS)	(NS)
Literacy %	11.0 (*)	0.11 (*)
Outstanding Debt	43.4 (***)	0.05 (NS)
Agricultural Credit	24.6 (***)	(NS)
Panchayat Benefits	18.8 (***)	0.25 (***)
Migration Intensity	7.7 (NS)	.02 (NS)
Produce Last	12.5 (NS)	(NS)
Organisational Membership	21.3 (**)	.01 (NS)

Appendix IV: Correlates of Chronic Poverty (Jharkhand)

	χ^2	r
Total Exp.	70.9 (***)	0.37 (**)
Animal Assets	20.1 (***)	0.04 (*)
Consumer Items	5.3 (NS)	-0.05 (NS)
Land Value	9.6 (NS)	-0.07 (NS)
Silver Rupees	10.4 (*)	-0.08 (NS)
Total Assets	8.1 (NS)	0.05 (NS)
Labour Income	13.1 (**)	0.10 (NS)
Agri Income	5.9 (NS)	0.04 (NS)
Migration Income	8.1 (NS)	(NS)
Total Income	12.7 (**)	0.103 (**)
Service Income	12.3 (***)	.18 (**)
Other Income	6.2 (*)	0.0 (NS)
GCA	7.8 (NS)	(NS)
GIA	13.1 (**)	0 (NS)
Family Size	19.0 (**)	-0.20 (**)
Dependency %	12.4 (**)	(NS)
Literacy %	8.9 (NS)	(NS)
Outstanding Debt	33.8 (***)	0.03 (NS)
Agricultural Credit	4.5 (*)	(NS)
Panchayat Benefits	7.2 (NS)	0.10 (*)
Migration Intensity	9.0 (NS)	0.01 (NS)
Produce Last	15.6 (*)	-0.1 (NS)
Organisational Membership	7.1 (NS)	0 (NS)

Appendix V: Correlates of Chronic Poverty (Gujarat)

	χ^2	r
Total Exp.	9.0 (NS)	0.05 (*)
Animal Assets	2.8 (NS)	0.06 (*)
Consumer Items	9.0 (NS)	0.16 (**)
Land Value	7.0 (NS)	0.04 (NS)
Silver Rupees	6.5 (NS)	0.11 (NS)
Total Assets	6.9 (NS)	0.11 (NS)
Labour Income	5.3 (NS)	0.06 (NS)
Agri Income	10.0 (NS)	0.010 (NS)
Migration Income	20.0 (***)	-0.24 (***)
Total Income	5.2 (NS)	-0.01 (NS)
Service Income	1.1 (NS)	(NS)
Other Income	4.8 (NS)	(NS)
GCA	21.6 (***)	.00 (NS)
GIA	(NS)	(NS)
Family Size	52.0 (***)	-.47 (*)
Dependency %	11.2 (**)	(NS)
Literacy %	(NS)	0.11 (*)
Outstanding Debt	15.5 (**)	0.04 (NS)
Agricultural Credit	(NS)	(NS)
Panchayat Benefits	6.1 (NS)	-.23 (***)
Migration Intensity	20 (***)	-.16 (**)
Produce Last	14.5 (*)	.14 (**)
Organisational Membership	15.2 (**)	.02 (NS)

Appendix VI: Correlates of Chronic Poverty (Rajasthan)

	χ^2	r
Total Exp.	10.4 (NS)	0.120 (NS)
Animal Assets	3.3 (NS)	0.04 (NS)
Consumer Items	2.6 (NS)	0.13 (NS)
Land Value	5.8 (NS)	0.21 (**)
Silver Rupees	8.7 (NS)	0.08 (NS)
Total Assets	4.4 (NS)	0.07 (NS)
Labour Income	3.0 (NS)	0.03 (NS)
Agri Income	3.9 (NS)	0.13 (NS)
Migration Income	8.3 (NS)	-0.19 (*)
Total Income	0.8 (NS)	0.02 (NS)
Service Income	1.8 (NS)	(NS)
Other Income	1.7 (NS)	(NS)
GCA	2.6 (NS)	(NS)
GIA	(NS)	0.21 (*)
Family Size	15.8 (**)	-0.40 (*)
Dependency %	6.7 (NS)	(NS)
Literacy %	59 (NS)	(NS)
Outstanding Debt	11.1 (*)	-0.2 (**)
Agricultural Credit	4.7 (*)	.04 (*)
Panchayat Benefits	8.1 (NS)	.25 (*)
Migration Intensity	8.3 (NS)	0.26 (**)
Produce Last	14.1 (*)	0.29 (***)

Reference

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CHAPTER 5

INCOME AND FOOD IN-SECURITY IN CENTRAL TRIBAL BELT

Findings of Chapter 4 establish that chronic poverty is significantly associated with agricultural income whereas state intervention for income transfers to poor in the form of public distribution system (PDS) and benefits from panchayat and other government schemes could not help the poor significantly. Households, in this Central tribal belt of India, have also experienced shocks in the form of droughts, population growth and land fragmentation, sickness, death, social ceremonies *et cetera*. This adversely affects their agriculture and access to food, forcing them to either deplete their resources or supplement their income from borrowing, labouring and migration. In this chapter, an attempt is made to understand the implications of food insecurity and coping mechanism under shock. The objectives of this chapter are as follows: (i) examine the struggles for survival and dynamics of employment and income among a sample of 1614 households from Developed and Under-developed groups of villages; (ii) understand the effects of scarcity on asset-holdings over a period of time; (iii) interpret the coping mechanisms that households adopt in response to death, conflict and drought; and (iv) infer the continuity and changes the tribals face in their economy, polity and society over time.

5.1 *Livelihood and Income*

Despite being near the forest, natural resources do not provide substantive economic support to the tribals. Less than 2 per cent of gross income originates from natural resources (Table 5.1). Depletion of commons and forest resources over the years has made the forest cover thin and un-sustaining for economic activities like gathering of minor forest produce and picking wood for sale in any significant way. Though agriculture is the major economic activity of the households that contributing over 38 per cent to the gross income, agriculture in this undulating topography has serious limitations in the form of technology transfer. A large part of agricultural land falls under slopes that have thin soil cover and do not support intensive agriculture. Households located in relatively remote Under-developed villages face this problem significantly more than the Developed villages. The availability of irrigated land per household for cultivation in remote Underdeveloped is nearly half of the average in relatively Developed villages. This result in production of inferior cereal, and pulse in former, whereas in Developed villages, jowar, bajra, cotton, soybean, and irrigated paddy and wheat dominate. On an average, the annual income from various sources of sample household is about Rs. 24,818. About 38 per cent of this income originates from own cultivation and another 34 per cent originates due to labouring in and around villages (Table 5.1).

Households also depend on non-agricultural activities for survival; this occupational diversity seems to be forced by failure of agriculture. Among the chronic poor, deteriorating access to land and income from agriculture forces the households to rely significantly upon migration and labouring, while among always non-poor about 42 per cent of the households' income accrues from own cultivation but their dependence on other sources of income, especially labouring, is not affected by their superior agriculture. Increasing expenditure of household forces even the well to do to supplement their income from other sources? This is evident in the case of transitory non-poor who expenditure is even higher than their gross income, may be the borrowing makes them sustain.

Table 5.1: Income, its Sources and Expenditure among Tribal of Central Indian Belt

Income	Chronic Poor	Poor Non-Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
	<i>Rs per Household</i>				
Agriculture	8305 (36)	8629 (36)	8740 (37)	11389 (42)	9474 (38)
Labouring	7276 (31)	8747 (37)	9498 (40)	8169 (30)	8417 (34)
Service	1423 (6)	1688 (7)	773 (3)	4020 (15)	2301 (9)
Migration	5355 (23)	3561 (15)	3240 (14)	1893 (7)	3266 (13)
Other income	475 (2)	740 (3)	843 (3)	1229 (5)	867 (4)
Common Resources	323 (1)	455 (2)	468 (2)	632 (2)	493 (2)
Total Income	23157 (100)	23820 (100)	23562 (100)	27333 (100)	24818 (100)
Expenditure	21029	19615	26529	26949	22881

The pattern of income and its sources vary significantly across states. Tribals in Orissa have relatively low income (Rs. 14596 per household) while Madhya Pradesh has relatively higher level of income (Rs 28036 per household). Total expenditure is also higher than gross income in Orissa. Common property resources supplement the income significantly only in Chhattisgarh and Orissa, in other states dependence on forest is marginal. It is worth noting that migration as a major source of income is confined to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, while in Chhattisgarh and Orissa migration as a source of income is insignificant. Labouring in and around the villages constitutes an important source of income in all the states, except where migration is high (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh).

Table 5.2: Income rupees per household and its Sources across States

	M P	Chhattisgarh	Orissa	Jharkhand	Gujarat	Rajasthan
Agriculture	12406 (43)	11747 (47)	5953 (41)	8343 (30)	7092 (29)	8003 (33)
Labouring	6079 (22)	9549 (38)	6475 (44)	10061 (37)	9799 (40)	5602 (23)
Migration	8098 (29)	170 (1)	347 (2)	2118 (8)	4029 (17)	9751 (41)
Service	1484 (5)	1465 (6)	851 (6)	5030 (18)	1577 (7)	219 (1)
Common Resources	144 (1)	1385 (6)	648 (5)	156 (1)	- (0)	31 (a)
Other	183 (1)	705 (3)	322 (2)	1446 (5)	1861 (8)	457 (2)
Total Income	28036 (100)	25022 (100)	14596 (100)	27456 (100)	24358 (100)	24065 (100)
Total Expenditure	25037	23038	18113	23248	22914	23233

Figures in brackets are percentage of total income

^a less than 0.5

Although the proportion of migration income significantly varies across chronic poverty profile, absolute migration income does not significantly vary across poverty profile. This means that on an average, income from migration is almost the same across chronic poverty profile, about 15 per cent. But the chronic poor household rely on migration significantly more; migration in their gross income contributes to an extent of 23 per cent. As total income of poor and chronic poor is significantly lower compared to non-poor, the proportion of income originating from migration and labour around the villages turns out to be significantly higher for poor compared to non-poor. On the other hand, relative remoteness does significantly influence the income from labouring and migration, across groups of developed and under-developed villages (Table 5.3). Agriculture is though more paying in developed villages compared to relatively remote Under-developed villages, its statistical significance is low. On the other hand, intensity of migration and income from labouring is about 2 times higher in Under-developed villages compared to Developed villages. The inability of local economy to sustain the livelihood forces a social process that engenders large borrowing for survival. The findings on borrowing when juxtaposed with poverty profile at a glance seem to be contradictory; a household would be 1.4 times more likely to be chronic poor rather than not if located in underdeveloped village than in Developed village. But borrowing both for agricultural and social purposes are not significantly different in the two groups of villages.

Table 5.3: Effect of Poverty and Remoteness on Income

Income	Variations Across	
	Poverty Profile ^a	Remoteness ^b
Agriculture	4.32 **	NS
Labour	3.74 ***	2.0 times more likely to be high in Under-developed villages **
Migration	13.14 ***	1.9 times more likely to be high in underdeveloped villages **
Service	5.99 ***	NS
forest Resources	3.42 **	NS
Other Income	2.31 **	1.6 times more likely to be high in Underdeveloped villages *
Unpaid debts	94.2 *	NS
Farm loans	NS	NS
Chronic poverty		1.4 times more likely to be chronic poor in Underdeveloped villages *

^a F statistics across Chronic Poverty Profile
^b Odd ratio of income sources across Developed and Under-developed villages
Significant at 1: ***, ** 5% and * 10%, NS: Not Significantly different

In this resource poor economy under shocks, total income is much lower than the expenditure for households under transitory behaviour, either chronic poor or transitory non-poor. This negative income balance is prevalent in Orissa than the other states (Table 5.1). Borrowings sustain the households' economy in such crisis. Nonetheless, all borrowings need

not be exploitative; borrowing when remains un-serviced from agricultural income -- given highly unsustainable labouring avenues -- creates social processes of borrowing that results in multidimensional poverty. With between 70 and 63 per cent labour remaining unutilised annually, unemployment remains as a serious problem in with chronic and non-chronic poor (Table 5.4). Unemployment for resource poor households, with marginal holdings and low irrigation, is a matter of serious concern. On the other hand, with less than 22 percent surplus labour, unemployment is not a serious concern for households that are always non-poor and transitory non-poor. For the non-poor, ones' own agriculture and labouring is enough for employment for their work force. But over 50 per cent workforce remaining unutilised in labour market, perpetual unemployment remains a serious concern in livelihood struggle of chronic poor and poor.

Table 5.4: Labour Absorption and Unemployment in Central Tribal Belt

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non-Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
Total family size	6.53	3.87	2.89	1.89	3.54
Work forces	3.76	3.63	2.96	2.81	3.37
Available labour days ^a	1090	1053	858	815	977
Area Unirrigated	2.40	2.23	2.46	2.66	2.38
Area Irrigated	0.31	0.48	0.86	0.72	0.56
Labour in Agriculture ^b					
Irrigated	77	120	215	180	140
Unirrigated	360	334	369	402	357
Total	438	454	584	582	497
Available for labouring	653	599	274	233	480
Labour absorbed locally	187	221	214	200	210
Per cent surplus labour	70	63	22	14	56
^a @ 290 days per annum					
^b @ 250 days in irrigated and 150 days in unirrigated area.					

Female participation in labour market is equal to male in this tribal area. Females are, however, burdened with cultivation as well as collection of fuel, fodder and animal care. As female work participation is over burdened, it may be assumed that surplus labour among female workers may be lower. But among the male, surplus labour could still be larger. For resource poor households, with income level a third of average and over 50 per cent labour remaining unutilised, even a small amount of borrowing during a shock could be an economic pressure on household that pushes it into chronic poverty. In this situation, a household faces access failure to food, remains unable to service its debt and, in the process, loses its assets, especially animal herds and silver. This process of getting trapped in perpetual poverty could be triggered among severely poor even without a shock. To be a marginal farmer is bound to be under a perpetual shock. For this category of households, even a small borrowing triggers a process of mortgage, income generation from labour and migration and repayment that pushes the household in chronic poverty significantly more than others.

5.2 Depletion of Asset

Around eighteen seventy A.D., tribals in the central belt of India were encouraged by British to stop shifting cultivations and settle down on forestland. Most of the land cultivated by tribal households, even today, consists of a significant part of depleted forestland. Such encroachment of forestland for self-cultivation is essential to subsistence in this land-starved economy. Although such encroachment results in deforestation and soil erosion, it is the only way out for them when employment opportunities are few and financial resources are lacking. The necessity to encroach on forestland needs to be appreciated within the social frame that values agriculture and the autonomy it provides to individuals. As income levels and opportunities are seriously constrained in this tribal economy, wealth and assets are relatively easy to measure. The task becomes further easy owing to the fact that savings as liquid money has remained confined to a minuscule. In fact, concept of saving and banking is alien to the tribal community. In this situation, land, animals and silver become major counts of wealth. In the last few years, another asset, well, has been added to this list.

Average possession of agricultural land is about 3.1 acre. Population pressure and thus fragmentation in holdings has resulted in depletion of about a third of land per household during the last 5 years. Despite agriculture being the major source of income, cultivation is practised without terracing the slopes. Consequently, less than 10 per cent of land is plane that is capable of retaining moisture. Market-oriented crops are cultivated on this patch. Irrigation has emerged as a prime mover of agriculture in this otherwise stagnant agricultural economy. But irrigation is a difficult and risky proposition in the central tribal belt; only about 26 per cent of gross cropped area is irrigated bulk of which is in developed villages.

Table 5.6: Depletion of Assets in last 5 years

	Animal	Silver	Land	Consumer Items	Tube well
<i>Asset Today</i>	<i>Rs per household</i>				<i>Total</i>
Chronic Poor	7587	2908	109167	2889	7
Non Chronic Poor	8720	2178	108992	2475	12
Transitory Non Poor	7636	1943	103869	3685	7
Always Non Poor	8560	2778	127584	3846	23
Total	8392	2456	114444	3098	49
F	NS	*	*	**	*
<i>Depletion of Assets[@]</i>					
Chronic Poor	1326	1685	40607	-1877	- 2
Non Chronic Poor	1171	121	34326	-1133	- 7
Transitory Non Poor	2739	1497	58743	-2536	- 4
Always Non Poor	1450	179	47391	-1595	- 11
F	NS	***	*	*	*
All	1442	514	41915	-1534	- 24
[@] negative sign implies an increase in consumer items ^b Loss in last 5 years; a negative sign imply an increase ^a F across chronic poverty profile					

Livestock are considered a major asset in this economy that has low agricultural productivity and experienced frequent and consecutive monsoon failures. The stock of livestock depletes frequently because of the shocks. Yardstick of wealth is number of cattle, goats and poultry a family possesses. Goats are important assets that can be converted into liquid money during times of shocks. Depleted forest, wherever accessible, is the only source of fuel and house-building material. Over the last five years, a few households have acquired assets like wells for irrigation, electric pump and diesel engines. This made possible double cropping on these farms significantly more than others. As Table 5.4 shows, there is significant difference in possession of land across poverty profile; always non-poor possess relatively larger holdings than rest. Added irrigation with non-poor category of households has resulted significantly higher gross cultivated area with these households in comparison to chronic poor and poor households. There has also been another addition to family possessions in the form of consumer items like radio, tape-recorder, television, cycle and motorcycle (Table 5.6). But these consumer items are possessed only by a miniscule of the population. Not surprisingly, though only 50 per cent of households in Under-developed villages have domestic electricity while in Developed villages this proportion is over 70 per cent.

As indicated earlier, depleted forest resources do not allow households in this region to depend on forest during shocks. As a result, depletion of livestock constitutes easy source of much required liquidity. Consequently, a third of milch and draught-power animals, half of goat possessions and a fourth of poultry have depleted over time. On the other hand, new consumer gadgets have been added to households in the last 5 years. The addition of consumer goods as well as depletion in land, silver, animal and poultry has taken place across chronic poverty profile (Table 5.6). The always non-poor and transitory non-poor alone have neither added the consumer goods nor the poor alone have depleted their silver, land and animals. The process has taken place across all groups of poverty profile, though chronic poor have lost significantly more silver. Demographic pressure, in this region, has resulted in reduction of land resource to above two-thirds of what was a generation back. This has become a source of chronic poverty in this region. With resource base already depleted and with lack of employment opportunities around the villages, food security has been significantly threatened for newly formed households with marginal holdings, even in normal agricultural years.

5.3 *Food Insecurity and PDS*

As agricultural production significantly varies across chronic poverty profile (Table 5.3), it is observed that proportion of the agricultural output consumed also significantly varies across poverty profile. Although always non-poor households have higher agricultural production as compared to chronic poor, the poor consumes significantly higher proportion of

their agricultural produce as compared to the non-poor. Moreover, despite consuming only a small proportion of agricultural produce, the home produced food of transitory non-poor and always non-poor lasts for significantly longer duration (273 days) in a year compared to chronic poor (230 days). Thus, food insecurity is significantly and positively associated with chronic poverty. Usually, when normal staple food is not available, the households in this tribal region consume *rab* a liquid diet made of maize and buttermilk (in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh), *mandia* and *kanji* (in Chhattisgarh) and a fermented liquid from rice, *handia* (in Jharkhand). This preparation has relatively low nutrition value but provides a filling meal. There are days for some households in distress, when even *rab* is not available. *Rab*, in situation of access failure to food provides coping mechanisms to fight hunger but going without *rab* and missing both the meals is not uncommon (Table 5.5). As public distribution system supports only 16 per cent of cereal consumption of poor and chronic poor households, relevant question is why PDS is unable to influence their consumption behaviour.

Table 5.5: Food Insecurity and Role of PDS in Central Tribal Belt

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non-Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
Cereal production (Quintal)	8.85	11.31	10.11	14.49	11.84
Produce consumed (%)	81	81	75	67	75
Produce lasts (days)	230	259	244	273	260
% Respondents lasts less than 146 days	39	23	29	19	24
% Responding not enough	58	47	54	41	48
Steps when food is not enough	Rab & kanji	- Do-	- Do -	-	-
Missed both meals % households	34		30		8
PDS card used last year	7	7	8	8	7
Per cent sugar from PDS	14.5	15.5	15.7	16.5	15.6
Per cent cereals from PDS	14.0	16.2	17.8	15.2	15.7

*** Significantly different across poverty profile.

^a *Rab* is a liquid diet, barely giving required nutrition made out of maize and buttermilk.

Eight out of ten households have ration cards meant either for below poverty line, *Annapura* or above poverty line. But on an average only about 16 per cent of monthly cereal consumption is supported by PDS. In this tribal economy, where socio-economic environment is characterised by wide spread poverty, vulnerability owing to variation in own production, lack of purchasing power has not been protected by subsidised supply of cereals through PDS. This small proportion of cereal needs, being met by PDS needs to be appreciated along with the fact that on an average the card is being used about 7 out of maximum 12 times that a cardholder can use it per year. What unfolds from qualitative research is that most of the households used the PDS cards for getting kerosene rather than supplementing the cereal consumption. The availability of wheat and rice rather than maize from PDS was identified as a major constraint that affects adversely the lifting of the cereals. Even in critical periods of recurring droughts during the last 4 years, a miniscule dependence on PDS is an indication of

inefficient functioning of the public distribution system. About three-fourths of those who use PDS complained that either information about the availability of supplies was not available to them or they had to make many trips to adjoining villages located about 5 km away, on foot, in order to get their supplies. Cardholders also have serious problems either in calculating their entitlements or cost of their purchase from the PDS.

Marginal farmers are the most vulnerable section of tribal society. They are farmers only for 4 months. They work as labourers around the villages for some time and work as either casual labour in informal sector or as agricultural labour in irrigated areas within or outside the state. For this vulnerable section, food insecurity is most vulnerable. The food consumption habits of tribals are different from non-poor groups in other part of the country because coarse cereals like maize and jowar constitute a major portion of tribal staple food. The evidences show that PDS is not only targeting both poor and non-poor but also the cereals of their choice are not available from PDS. Moreover, moving to a targeted PDS system from universal entitlement one in tribal areas has not helped in protecting the interests of most vulnerable section of society. The interventions have not influenced the problem of scarcity and rising prices during drought. Such interventions in the food economy were achieved with an operational cost that are 3 to 7 times to procurement price of wheat and rice respectively (Tyagi: 1990). The state in its foodgrains marketing intervention through PDS, thus, is subsidising the consumers to a tune of Rs. 10,0000 million and this bill is expending rapidly without its benefits reaching the most needy. On the other hand, the operations are achieved some times with negative price differentials compared to open market (Acharya: 2001).

As there is no evidence to prove that operations of PDS have contributed significantly to managing food economy, there is a need for bringing a change in the system. Given the coverage and level of food security PDS has achieved in this vulnerable remote areas, asking the question whether to continue with PDS operation as it is, is not only justified but also relevant. For, in order to increase the purchasing power of poor there are a number of other measures that have been successfully adopted by other developing countries. Two of the most viable options are cash transfer to needy and food stamps. Kumar (1978) and (Dreze: 2003) have, independently, shown that cash transfer rather than food subsidy contributes to substitution of food by non-food items. Moreover, implementing cash transfer effectively in a large country like India is difficult. On the other hand, countries like Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Trinidad have successfully attempted subsidisation of poor consumers through food stamps with a friction of subsidy that is involved in PDS and FCI operations.

Notwithstanding the failure of state in protecting the consumption through subsidized food distribution, the implications of shock may significantly differ across poverty profile.

The implications of shock in its turn engender the notion of well-being and its persistence. Some of these issues are explored in the next section.

5.4 Crisis and Well-being

There are a number of socio-economic and political reasons that adversely affects life of a household in central tribal of India (Table 5.7). Although the events could take place in any household across poverty profile, its implications are disastrous for poor. Not only access failure to food is significantly more in Under-developed villages than in Developed, the incidence is significantly more among chronic poor households than others; missing a meal among poor households than non-poor is two times more likely for households located in Underdeveloped villages than in Developed. Borrowing for meeting household expenses is common phenomenon during rainy season when food stocks are low or exhausted and new harvest has yet to reach the hearth. Repayment of these loans as well as any other borrowing forces a household to migrate. Response to shock situations -- death, drought and conflicts -- was examined in terms of people's coping mechanism in tribal community (Table 5.8).

Table 5.7: Event that Adversely Affect the life in Central Tribal Belt

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non-Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
<i>Socio-Economic Events</i>		<i>Number of households</i>			
Marriage	20	42	7	21	90
Drought	18	48	18	34	118
Sickness	18	24	16	12	70
Depletion of Animals	0	4	1	5	10
Land mortgage	5	4	0	2	11
Death in family	6	13	5	8	32
Accidents	2	3	2	6	13
<i>Political Events</i>					
Bad blood	14	16	18	15	16
Loosing election	0	1	1	2	4
Winning election	2	9	0	6	7

Looking for fresh loan stands out as a major coping strategy when households face death in the family. Such borrowings are a necessary condition, even among well-to-do to meet social obligation arising due to the unfortunate event; additional cash has to be arranged to meet expenditure on rituals and feasts. But if the main breadwinner from a marginal farm family dies, more severe is the effect on income, access to food and well-being. In conflict situation, households rely on social network and debt in settling the dispute. There is no significant difference in this process across poverty profile. This brings clearly the role that social network could play in tribal society. Social capital, as shall be seen in subsequent chapters, manifests when economic stratification is low and poverty is intense. What emerged from our analysis that households depend on social network irrespective of chronic poverty

profile. Coping with drought reveals a peculiar pattern; chronic poor households rely more on labour and migration where as always non-poor rely on labour, migration and borrowing. But coping mechanism notwithstanding, access failure to food has physiological impact on capabilities of the poor as well as psychological implications for peoples' perceptions about well-being; waiting for state to start doles is relevant in this context

Table 5.8: Managing Major Crisis by Tribal Household

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non-Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
Drought	<i>Number of Households</i>				
Labouring	133	359	81	234	807
Debt from bania	31	133	22	82	268
Loan from friends	1	6	1	5	13
Depletion of Assets	1	1	2	2	6
Jati Panchayat	5	10	4	7	26
Migration	57	121	40	130	348
Rely on saving	-	-	2	1	3
Wait for State Dole	7	36	8	39	90
Others	4	13	-	14	34
	239	679	163	514	1595
Sickness					
Debt from bania	206	591	144	442	1383
Loan from friends	10	48	9	39	106
	238	678	163	513	1592
Conflict					
Jati Panchayat	87	296	64	222	669
Community	52	137	40	92	321
Debt from bania	71	157	37	112	377
	236	674	163	513	1586
Death					
Debt from bania	124	314	80	237	755
Rely on savings	52	175	26	105	358
Loan from friends	34	120	39	107	300
	237	674	163	512	1586

About 60 per cent of the households believe that the economic well-being they have experienced can be sustained in future as well (Table 5.8). This proportion is significantly large among those who have always remained non-poor, as over 70 per cent from this category believe so. On the other hand, among other poverty profile groups, including transitory non-poor, only about 54 to 62 per cent believe that economic well-being can be sustained. This feeling of well-being is a product of many forces. After independence, three important processes have brought considerable change in ideas and behavioural expectations of the tribals. Development interventions of state, political decentralisation and seasonal migration have influenced the social and economic outlook of them. In order to appreciate the struggles between continuity and change, each of these processes has to be located within the cultural constructs that tribals employ to interpret them. Development for tribals brings images

of large projects, displacement and associated hardship¹. Otherwise, large sections of the tribals have missed the fruits of post-independence development interventions and remained poor both in terms of coverage and quality. But except for elementary education and availability of subsidised grains from public distribution system, other amenities like access to electricity, all weather roads, health services, drinking water and sanitation, irrigation, agricultural extension, rural co-operatives *et cetera* are poor. In fact, their remoteness to administration and civil society institutions is overriding enough to allow these facilities to reach the area. What has, however, reached them is the fear of displacement due to development projects with administrative insensitivity that accompanies them. Presence of administration -- in the form of police, forest and revenue officials -- is synonymous with corruption, repression and exploitation². The experiences of development in tribal consciousness imprint mistrust towards non-tribals, caution and apathy towards state interventions and bitter memories of loss of land and natural resources.

Table 5.9: Ways of Sustaining the Economic Well-being

	Chronic Poor	Poor Non-Chronic	Transitory Non-Poor	Always Non-Poor	All
Can well-being sustain					
Yes	151	375	100	349	975
No	74	261	55	137	527
Can't say	18	56	8	29	111
If yes, how					
Hard work	33	62	24	75	194
Employment opportunity	60	129	44	126	359
Investment in agriculture	27	81	15	73	196
State interventions	14	49	11	41	115
All	151	375	100	349	974

The change in the form of technologically driven agriculture, though restricted to a small subset of area, is not entirely an outcome of state intervention either. It happened because of seasonal migration. Seasonal migration for tribals is not only coping measure to meet scarcity and its social implications³, it is also experiencing development that has by-passed them⁴. What a migrating tribal learns during his stay as a labourer either on irrigated farms of fertile plains (in the Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand) or on the farms of irrigated HB cotton growers of *Khandesh* or on the fields of irrigated paddy and sugarcane growers in South Gujarat (in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) is a main source of his knowledge about agriculture technology transfer. How to energise the well and distribute water; how to grow fertiliser-responsive cotton, soybean and wheat; utilisation of post-harvest technology of these market-oriented crops *et cetera* is learnt during seasonal migration. No matter how much the left-oriented civil society organisation discredits it, this process of acquisition of

knowledge creates space for non-tribal institutions that induce conversion of subsistence way of agriculture to a market driven agriculture⁵. The process is, however, internalised without any state support. In irrigated areas, the *bania* provides agricultural credit without any security. The tribal also repay the loans promptly at least during good agricultural years. But in the process, they have started attaching a high degree of dependence on non-tribal institution they loathed the most, the *market*. This is an ideological contradiction that is the handiwork of modernity. This emerging consciousness about technological change -- infused with conditions of larger tracks of poor quality of land -- produced ethos in which *bania* finds that land as a source of exploitation is not as remunerative for their money-lending business as it used to be during pre-independence years.

The third important process that is impinging on the tribal consciousness is the process of decentralised governance. The essence and logic of decentralised governance is to bring decision making nearer to the masses. In the last ten years of its working in the region, as shall be analysed in chapter 7, decentralisation has brought considerable transformation. Traditional leadership and its social dominance have given way to elected leaders; many a role that traditional leadership used to play has become redundant when identity of traditional leader is subsumed into *Sarpanch*. But when traditional leader is unable to establish himself as elected leader, decentralisation has become a ground where traditional ideology would like to re-establish itself (Sah and Bhatt: 2006). This results in divisions and fractions in village polity. Nonetheless, social interests that used to be supreme are giving way to economic interests. Generation divide has sharpened with older people being sceptical to all economic changes, whereas the younger generation is receptive and adaptive to interventions and economic changes. Both sides with their experiences – marginalisation and exploitation versus modernity and economic affluence – have stood to their ideological stands. But the divide is apparent. Both the agents, the *Patel* with his social clout as well as the elected representative with his political clout and reach-up to high echelons of administration, are playing their respective roles. Changes are accepted slowly and with caution in tribal society.

Images of modernity and change are mirrored simultaneously with traditionalism and *status quo*. The process is a continuum of mistrust and trust at one level but on the other, it only reflects diversity and stratification in an apparently homogenous society.

5.5 Summing Up

On an average, tribal households earn annually about rupees twenty-four thousand eight hundred. Not only the total income of chronic poor is lower than always non-poor, among chronic poor the proportion of the income originating from agriculture is about seventy per cent in comparison to those who remained always non-poor. Consequently, the chronic poor households rely significantly upon labouring, migration and gathering. Relative

remoteness significantly influences households' dependence on labouring and migration. Agriculture is 1.4 times more paying in relatively Developed villages whereas migration intensity and income from labouring is 2 times more in relatively Under-developed villages. What has emerged strongly from the study is that borrowing need not always contributes to chronic poverty; borrowing when remains un-serviced, creates social processes that force chronic poverty. Over 63 per cent labour time after performing their agriculture and labouring around village remains unutilised among households that are poor and chronic poor. As a result, even a small borrowing by the tribals under shock makes an economic pressure that traps them in chronic poverty. Demographic pressures and shocks have resulted in depletion of land, silver and animal wealth. There is, however, some addition to irrigation and consumer products like tape recorder, radio, cycle and motorcycle as well. But this depletion and addition has taken place across all groups in poverty profile; no group has lost or added assets significantly more than others. As addition in irrigation has taken place more among Under-developed villages, though possession of land does not vary significantly across poverty profile, the gross cultivated area due to irrigation is significantly higher among always non-poor category more so in the Developed villages. The agricultural produce of chronic poor is sufficient for consumption only for 230 days against 280 days for non-poor. As a result, missing a meal is 2 times more among poor located in relatively Under-developed villages than those located in Developed villages. The social implications of the process varies across chronic poverty profile: poor households rely more on debt and social network to meet crises where non-poor households rely on economic process and do not believe much in social networking. The optimism of sustaining the economic well-being is significantly high among always non-poor compared to poor and chronic poor. The optimism of non-poor as well as pessimism among poor and chronic poor is a product of many forces that created environment for income generation for non-poor or marginalisation for chronic poor and poor. This creates images of modernity and change that mirror simultaneously with traditionalism and *status quo* in this society. These processes are continuum of trust at one level; at the other level, they reflect stratification in an apparently homogenous society.

END NOTES

- 1 The Indian experience with R&R of large project affected PAPs lacks completeness and had been apathetic to local needs, resources. The R&R policy is forced and its implementation creates visible and invisible ruptures in the social fabric in the short run and impoverishment in the long run (for details, see, Sah: 1999).
- 2 Revenue officials are remembered for their extortion in land sales which cost the seller about Rs four thousand per acre or for Land Transfer to a son that could be registered only after a bribe of Rs two thousand per entry. The police have dual images. First as an institution of settling disputes in such a way that each affected party has to bribe in order to resolve the dispute in his favour. Its second image is of a state apparatus that is used in intimidating involuntary relocation of PAPs. The forest officials connote a bureaucratic set-up that has denied tribal access to natural resources. But if one can bribe them, limited access may be granted.
- 3 Rehabilitation of involuntary migration begins with shifting of PAPs and ends with reconstructing their broken socio-economic fabric in new environment. It is prolonged and complex socio economic and political process (for details, see, Sah: 1998).
- 4 In drought prone areas, migration also works as asset formation device. Successive droughts render agriculture as unsustainable livelihood option and forces even large farmers join the queue for doles. The marginal farmers and landless labourers accumulate assets due to their access to labouring options owing to migration.
- 5 This may also break the distrust syndrome with respect to non-tribals as noted above.

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Findings of chapter 4 reveal that incidence of chronic poverty in Central tribal belt of India is alarmingly high. About half of the households in this tribal belt are categorised as poor. A fourth of poor are chronic poor. A large part of chronic poverty is due to access failure to production resources, population pressure and declined landholdings, recurring droughts and access failure to land-based livelihood and lack of off-farm employment avenues and consumption loan from moneylender that result in a debt-trap that pushes people into chronic poverty. Seasonal migration in this tribal belt is regarded as an essential coping mechanism especially in response to a shock, including crop failure, son's marriage, serious sickness *et cetera*.

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the observations relating to seasonal migration from the central tribal belt of India¹. We have tried to establish in this chapter, that (i) a shock can induce a complex socio-economic processes like access failure to food, debt-trap and depletion of assets, repayment, short-term land transactions, and migration; (ii) all locations and households do not respond in the same pattern: for some, migration means livelihood option, for others it means savings, asset formation and technology transfer; (iii) locational disadvantage in a shock can be overcome by investment in agriculture. We have used both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection. The quantitative data were generated for 1614 sample households that provided information relating to incidence and intensity of seasonal migration, income and saving from migration and the correlates of migration.

6.1 Conceptualising Migration

A voluminous literature is available explaining migration that mirrors the discipline and ideological underpinnings of the researcher. Although sociologist like Lee (1966) conceptualised migration as the play of negative and positive forces that respectively push a migrant from the place of origin to migrate and pulls him to the place of destination, neoclassical economists constructs dominated the explanations. Locating migration decisions at the household level and arguing that such decisions are based on opportunities and constraints that the households face, the neoclassical theorists propagated human capital theory (Sjaastad: 1962; Todaro: 1969, 1980). This construct argued that inclination to migrate is determined by difference in income between source and destination of migration, and may result in equating expected income. Given their skills, decisions about where to live are based on where individuals can optimise the present value of their discounted stream of expected future earnings. Migration according to Saxena (1977) may be motivated by a desire to seek

skill and leads to development, urbanisation and socio-economic transformation. In the same vein, Stark (1980) identifies transaction cost, imperfect information and imperfect credit, land and labour markets as main determinants of migration. On the other hand, researches driven by Marxist ideology (Breman: 1985; Olsen & Murthy: 2000) identified structural constraints of capitalist system as main source of exploitation of migrant labours. In absence of alternatives, in extreme cases, monopoly creditor also becomes a monopsony buyer of migrant's labour (Olsen & Murthy: 2000). But the recognition that seasonal migration also provides a respite from interlocked credit, land and labour transactions was never missing. Breman (1985) also shows that while for resource poor, migration is a coping mechanism that provides means for debt servicing, for the well endowed it increases households' earnings, creditworthiness and ability to manage crisis. Breaking away from the neoclassical interpretations of determinants of migration, Mosse *et. al.* (2002) argue that 'migration is not an external factor impinging upon or undermining agrarian society. Existing social relations and inequalities, which define differential opportunities, constraining experiences and social outcome, profoundly shape it. Moreover, migration contributes to continuation and intensification of agriculture and social networks on which it depends. Insufficient land, larger dependency within family and poor are more likely to seasonally migrate than others. Sah (1999) argues that access failure to resources as well as constraints on markets influence seasonal migration.

In a resource poor economy, the existing economic hierarchy collapses during a shock like crop failure, drought, sickness, death, son's marriage, *Notra* (gifts in social ceremonies), *Jhagda* (dispute settlement), population pressure², *et cetera*. In this situation, heads of even larger landholding households also have to borrow to meet the eventualities. In order to repay such loans some of the family members of the household have to migrate. In what follows, we try to establish that during a shock depletion of assets and related borrowings have strong positive influences on intensity of migration. Postulate a village consisting 'n' households with per capita calorie intake of the i^{th} household c_i such that during normal situation the available food stock with the households G_i is able to support the intake at the minimum per capita per day acceptable level c^* for all M_i of its members for rest of the d_i days till the new harvest arrives. During a shock there are, however, households whose per capita intake falls short of c^* by an amount s_i for remaining D_i days. Under such circumstances, in order to maintain the minimum level of intake, m_i out of M_i members of household migrate for D_i days in such a way that:

$$c^* \cdot (M_i - m_i) D_i + c^* \cdot M_i \cdot (d_i - D_i) < G_i$$

The following implications relating to seasonal migration may be noted. First, the decision to migrate is not taken by any individual in isolation; seasonal migration is a group decision taken by the household as a whole, perhaps even by several households together. The cost of information relating to destination, movement of the group, type of work and wage contract, dwelling at the destination and payment to middlemen *et cetera* may be shared by households that perceive seasonal migration inevitable for the larger interest of their families. During a shock existing food stock are augmented to s_i by taking a loan from the local *bania*. Second, the duration of seasonal migration is controlled by households' perception about the shortfall in consumption s_i . As soon as the shortfall is overcome and borrowed loan repaid, the migrating members are free to rejoin the family; i.e. no sooner $m_i < c^*$. $D_i = s_i$ in such a manner that savings from migration are enough to repay the loan, the time to return is opportune. Third, after the decision to seasonally migrate has been taken, there may not be many households whose intake falls below c^* . In fact, among the 'n' households in the village, those opting for seasonal migration may be the ones with relatively higher intake levels. It can be seen from the above construct that if the migrating members from a household choose to stay for more than the required days at their destination the per capita intake of the remaining members of household may be maintained at higher levels than c^* . In a scarcity situation, it is highly probable that the calorie intake of the remaining members of migrating households is higher than of the members of non-migrating households in the village. These households may also have some savings and assets. Lastly, the decision to migrate could confer larger societal benefit provided: (a) the consumption levels of migrant is maintained at least at c^* level at the destination without adversely affecting the wage rate; or (b) the state intervenes to support the minimum consumption of the migrant through (i) food for work, or (ii) Public Distribution System support, or (iii) creating investment climate for additional employment. None of these options is closed in an economy where policy makers are sensitive to the emerging crisis of displaced households. But in remote rural areas, such public actions are too diluted and too delayed. Although it is difficult to establish fully the above construct, evidence provided by our research indicates the operation of the process.

6.2 Extent and Pattern of Migration

There has been a long tradition of tribal migration in search of employment from the region (Baviskar: 1997). There are evidences that even in early 1970s, up to 40 per cent of total working populations of the Eastern tribal belt of Gujarat migrated seasonally in search of livelihood (Bureau: 1974). Breman (1985) describes such seasonal migration as marginal tribal farmers' efforts to prevent a slide down in the agrarian ladder. Evidences that are more recent reveal that over a period of time, intensity of migration in terms of number, duration and distance has increased (Patel: 2001). This increase in migration can be attributed to both

push and pull forces operating in the tribal economy; access failure to food in the village pushes the tribal out to seasonally migrate whereas the expansion of labour demand in irrigated agriculture as well as in the urban-industrial sectors in Gujarat and Maharashtra pull them to migrate in search of higher wages. But such explanations will be partial, for at societal level a complex process operates that governs migration.

Agriculture is the main economic activity in both in this tribal during normal years. But agriculture does not provide sustenance for whole year for a sizeable number of households even during normal years. Poor quality of land, insufficient landholdings and low productivity are the main reasons that force households to resort to labouring in and around the villages. This also forces some households to work in brick-clins and labourer in industrial near by township and in neighbouring states as seasonal migrants. In abnormal situations, about 33 per cent of households from underdeveloped villages and about 20 per cent of households from developed villages have reported seasonal migration of some of their family members. The major reasons for larger migration from Underdeveloped in comparison to developed villages are remoteness, its difficult and undulating terrain, poor soil and indifferent agricultural productivity, access failure to commons, lack of employment opportunities and larger borrowings to meet the current consumption. Relative remoteness of Under-developed villages in terms of its physical distance from agro-processing and industrial markets has resulted in significantly higher reliance on seasonal migration of households. But migration in under-developed villages is not in one stretch; migrants like to return to the village after some time and migrate again after staying in the village for a few days. In contrast, seasonal migration in Developed villages, which are relatively less remote, is highly spread starting from non-farm employment opportunities to industrial Gujarat, Maharashtra and mines in Orissa and Jharkhand. About 86 per cent of migration is reported as rural-to-urban migration, 62 per cent of the migration is out side the state. Land owning class in the village considers seasonal migration a degrading option in a shock; medium size landowning households have reported that they would rather do labour around the village than migrate. Extent of migration is significantly different in different states (Appendix 6.1); while Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Jharkhand have reported sizeable migration, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have relatively low migration. About 48 per cent of tribal households in 1990s in Jhabua (West Madhya Pradesh), Banswara (South Rajasthan) and Panchmahals (East Gujarat) had to opt for seasonal migration for their livelihood (Mosse *et. al.*: 2002).

Drought not only has repercussions that disrupts the economy but also has socio-cultural implications. Apart from depletion of milch animals, reduction in availability of food and fodder increased, the households also faced serious non-economic problems like withdrawing children from school, doing work that in normal situation they would not have preferred, sending out old members of the family to relatives, inability to settle hospitalisation

bills *et cetera* (Sah and Shah: 2003). Migration owing to drought, with whole family and taking care of siblings, were main reasons for withdrawal of children from schools. Significantly, drought affected families opted for larger out migration both in terms of number of members migrating and duration of migration. Some migrants, in distress, remained outside the village even during festivals like *diwali* and *holi*. Food availability alarmingly reduces during monsoon when food stock depletes and current harvest would reach the hearth after nearly four months. For a large number of poor households, boiled cereals, called *rab*, becomes staple food. Non-availability of fodder and malnutrition resulted in loss of milch animals whereas goat and sheep herds deplete because of additional demand for cash. Borrowings from *bania* located in markets increase. In order to repay the loans, the intensity of migration -- duration of migration and number of family members who would migrate -- increases. Sah and Shah (2003) also observed that the effects of drought were significantly harsh on migrant in remote tribal areas than non-remote. Although both remoteness and bad agriculture superimpose each other, subsequent analysis would establish that unsustainable agriculture is relatively more important than remoteness in explaining the migration³.

Table 6.1: Drought and its implication

	Per cent household Reported	Odd Ratio Across villages^a	Odd ratio Across migrant^b
Withdrawn children from school	6.8	NS	*** 5.80
Started degrading work	42.6	*** 1.4	*** 0.59
Sent elders to relatives	1.4	NS	** 3.60
Mortgaged land	7.4	NS	* 1.60
Severe food shortage	72.6	*** 1.5	*** 0.67
Livestock depleted	12.2	NS	*** 3.10
Borrowing increased	32.5	NS	*** 3.50
Migration rate increased	18.0	NS	*** 28.0
Could not pay hospital bills	4.7	NS	*** 3.4
Fodder shortage increased	35.2	** 1.4	** 1.4
Sold land	1.3	NS	NS
Sold trees	8.9	* .59	*** 0.25

^a Odd ration across developed and underdeveloped village
^b Odd ration across migrant and non-migrant households
Significance *10%, **5% and ***1%, NS: Not Significant

The effects of drought were significantly harsh in under-developed villages than developed (Table 6.1). For example, the odd-ratios for shortage of food and fodder are 1.4 times more in under-developed than Developed villages. Similarly, the incidence resorting to degrading works, which a household would not take in normal situation, is 1.4 times higher in under-developed villages than developed villages. The adverse effects of drought on migrant families were much harsher than non-migrating families; as withdrawal of child from school, increased debt, increased intensity of migration, mortgaged land and have sent their elders to relative relatively were significant more in the case of households that had resorted to

migration than those that did not migrate. On the other hand, those who have not migrated in the reference year have faced more food shortages than migrants.

The seasonal migration forced about a third of the family members remaining out of village for 43 and 132 person days in developed and under-developed villages (Table 6.2). Female usually migrate along with the male in the area; the percentage of female migration was about 33 per cent of total migration in developed villages and 40 per cent of total migration from under-developed villages respectively. But the high female migration is not abnormal; studies (Mosse *et. al*: 2002; Sah: 1999; Breman: 1996) have also found that migration of family groups in order to maximize the productivity of their labour is quite common in the Western tribal belt ⁴. What is revealing from Table 6.2 is the fact that households that have resorted to migration have relatively poor resource base. Their silver possessions depleted 3 times more, their land holdings are smaller, irrigation investments, agricultural production is two thirds of non-migrants, expenditure and consumption behavior is significantly constrained in comparison to households that have not migrated and their food stock lasts 40 days less than that of non-migrants, their consumption expenditure is lower and unpaid social debts are 3 times more than non-migrants. To top the deprivation, the size of the family of migrant households is significantly larger than non-migrant households. The implication of this resourcelessness is forcing upon the households.

Table 6.2: Migration, migrant and their Resource base

	Developed village	Under-developed villages	Difference between	
			Villages F	Migrant F
Total family size	5.42	5.66	**	Migrate larger
Workers	2.49	2.25	***	NS
Land in acres	2.67	3.03	NS	Migrate less
Gross Cropped Acre	3.04	3.05	NS	NS
Irrigated acre	1.08	0.50	*	NS
Silver possession Rs	2169	2723	**	More among migration
Depletion of Silver	316	698	***	3 times more among migration
Animals	7993	8758	*	NS
Depletion in animals	1178	1689	NS	NS
Consumer Assets	3536	2689	**	Less with migrant
Depletion of land Rs.	43186	40732	NS	NS
Migration intensity	43	132	***	-
Male migrants	0.24	0.46	***	-
Female migrants	0.12	0.29	***	-
Agricultural income	10415	8598	**	70% of non
Produce lasts (days)	257	258	NS	Intensity less by 40 days
Per capita expenditure	445	436	NS	Migration smaller
Unpaid debt	5127	4880	NS	Migrant 3 times more
Agricultural credit	1521	4739	NS	NS

Consequently, a large majority of migration is reported to have taken place every year irrespective of shocks; over a half who have migrated reported that land fragmentation is the cause and about forty per cent migrated because their income could not sustain their consumption levels. Exigency of additional funds to meet the shock forces the number of migrants from a family. As coming back from migration depends on their need in farms and with the advent of monsoon bulk of migrants return home. Those who come back early, do so owing to either adequate earnings or because of work contract was over or on information that local labour opportunities exist in the village. About 20 per cent of the migration is around the district vary within 40 km to 80 km from the village. About 20 per cent of total migrants had moved outside the district. For about 86 per cent of migrants the main economic activity is labouring in mines and industrial belts; only 14 per cent of migrants in the study villages reported that they were employed as agricultural labour (Table 6.3). The non-farm opportunities are generally created through middlemen (*Mukadam*)⁵.

Findings relating to pattern of migration can be summed up as follows: (a) seasonal migration in the study villages is forced by access failure to food and unsustainable agriculture: the more the un-sustainability in agriculture, the more is seasonal migration; (b) average migration is about 3 members per household, and such households that resorted to migrate, remain out for about 13 to 18 man-months per household; (c) the remoteness of the area creates paucity of off-farm employment in the nearby areas, forcing the migrants to move to agriculturally vibrant areas and for labouring in mines and industry; (d) migration in the last few years is more for survival rather than for supporting capital formation; (e) female migration is about half of male migration; (f) migration is a group activity which attracts households in distress taking certain decisions relating to such matters like choice of destination, movement, stay and coming back between to look after remaining family members in the village.

Table 6.3: Some Characteristics of Migrant households in different States

	Madhya Pradesh	Chhattis Garh	Orissa	Jharkhand	Gujarat	Rajasthan	Total
Migrant Households	202	12	19	60	64	73	430
% Migration							
Within district	17	75	21	20	35	10	21
Outside district	3	17	63	25	59	16	20
Outside State	80	8	15	55	5	74	59
% Urban Migration	89	33	84	78	83	96	86
Migration to Same place	56	45	65	68	62	66	62

The movement generally is organised not as individual migrants but is in the form of a close kin-network of families. A close relative, like brother or cousin,

provides information about labour demand, wage rate and living conditions prevailing at the destination. The migrants, in order to find work especially in distant locations, form a group of 5 to 6 families that stay together. One member, more often the one who had no family members in the village, would come back to village to look after the remaining family members of the group. He replenishes the food grain stocks and other supplies and repays to the *bania* from migration earnings. The accumulated savings are remitted once a month, at least, in this way. This person, who brings the savings back to respective families of the group, has also an important task of meeting the sharecroppers who manage their land in their absence.

The remittance back home depends on the extent of migration in man-months a family has, the number of days the migrants could find employment, and cost of stay at the destination. Household income and savings from migration are significantly higher if total number of migrants was more. However, the income and saving across different size class of holding is not significantly different (Table 6.4). On an average, a migrant family earns an additional sum of Rs 3265 per year from migration. After meeting the day-to-day expenditure at the destination, replenish food supply for remaining members and some purchases (clothes, shoes, transportation expenses *et cetera*) while returning, the net savings accrued due to migration was about Rs 1926 per family ⁶. Migration income of Under-developed villages is two times higher than developed villages. The migration income significantly varies across poverty profile, remoteness and in different states (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Income and Saving from Migration

	Income	Savings	Migration intensity
	Rs per Household		Person days
Poverty profile			
Chronic poor	5355	3242	143
Non-Chronic Poor	3561	2091	104
Transitory Non-Poor	3240	1749	83
Always Non-Poor	1893	1145	45
Remoteness			
Developed Village	1968	1181	42
Under Developed	4473	2622	132
Across States			
Madhya Pradesh	8098	4721	234
Chhattisgarh	170	92	3
Orissa	347	205	7
Jharkhand	2118	1186	47
Gujarat	4029	2360	135
Rajasthan	9751	6377	214
Total	3265	1927	189
F across poverty profile	12***	14***	8***
F across villages	42***	46***	44***
F across states	65***	87***	40***
Significance ***: at 1%			

Those migrants who opted to stay within district earn much less, as wage rates are depressed in there. But those who had moved to out side state earn more, for wage rate are significantly higher. The savings from migration are usually created in harsh environment like humiliation by land and factory owners, unhealthy and inhospitable staying many times under open sky, poor health facilities, isolated living and lack of educational facilities for children *et cetera*. Given the hostile and insecure environment outside, the migrant finds it difficult to break away from the social lineage with the rest of the communities back home, which is the only dependable capital they have in the event of a major disaster. Besides these, opportunities for getting employment for longer period of time are also doubtful. Hence most of the households do not prefer to migrate for a longer time if the option for borrowing is still open.

Table 6.5 gives borrowing for social purpose for the reference year. Expenditure on dowry and consumption are two important purposes that bring together the *bania* and the tribal most often. But *bania* also supports expenditure on feast in marriage, death and *Jhagda* (conflicts) *et cetera*. *Bania* has first access to earnings from migration; as migrants repay consumption loan directly from the migration earnings when some one comes to replenish the food stocks of the households. Finding on borrowing for different purpose shows that marriage and sickness as a purpose of borrowing was significant. But a shock in the form of death, drought (borrowing for food) and conflict could force household in to debt-trap. Occasions for borrowing under shock are random hence there could be significant variations in these across poverty profile.

Table 6.5: Distribution of Debt per household for Social Purpose (Last five years)

	Marriage		Notra	Birth	Death	Sickness	Food	Conflict	Others
	Son	Daughter							
Poverty Profile	<i>Rs per household</i>								
Chronic Poor	6564	1263	218	460	445	882	633	90	455
Non Chronic Poor	2815	426	0	129	207	496	432	2	30
Transitory Non Poor	2619	1650	0	342	975	1899	406	286	209
Always Non Poor	1384	815	2	93	327	1054	393	10	72
F across poverty profile	***	***	*	***	***	***	**	*	NS
Remoteness									
Developed Villages	2791	913	4	145	352	1008	543	89	95
Under-developed	3005	694	61	229	366	750	359	8	153
All	2902	800	33	188	359	874	447	47	125
F across remoteness	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	*	***	NS	NS
Significance level *** at 1 %, ** 5 %, * 10 %; NS: not significant									

Credit and migration work as supplements as well as substitutes to each other. Absence of 'good' credit support is seen to be the major cause of migration, at least of distress type. However, in the case of the resource-poor (i.e. those with limited land as well as

irrigation resources), migration is clearly a more effective option because of the limited 'credit worthiness' of the migrant. In fact, migration in a dynamic context might help enhancing the credit worthiness, especially by improving the repayment schedule among these households. This would imply that given the limited land base and the uncertainty associated with the stream of income flowing from the land based activities, migration becomes inevitable for most of the poor households. A 'good' credit support could reduce the burden of migration, whereas a 'bad credit' system might increase it. But credit support *per se* can hardly be a substitute for migration unless both the household's resource base and the corresponding 'credit worthiness' are enhanced. Occurrence of a shock or lumpy borrowing for social events like death, son's marriage and at times sickness may further turn the equation against the poor borrowers.

6.3 Correlates of Migration

Table 6.6 presents the findings of linear regression analysis taking intensity of migration (total person-days of migration from the household) as dependent variable. The variations in intensity of migration across household is explained by variations in the following explanatory variables: family size, days the home produce lasts, borrowings for non-agricultural purposes, asset depletion, leasing land, Income other than migration, Benefits from schemes, consumption expenditure, investment in agriculture, poverty and relative remoteness of location. The regression analysis is done for all the 1614 households irrespective of the status of migration, dependent variable taking value zero for non-migrant households. About 19 per cent of total variations of dependent variable are explained by the explanatory variables when all households were considered in the analysis. The analysis had considered dependency ratio, landholding, loss of animals, agricultural borrowings, land leasing by the households as explanatory variables. But the variations in these variables do not explain the variations in migration intensity. This indicates that during an abnormal year, larger agricultural land and depletion of assets could contain seasonal migration for some but for others migration was a major coping mechanism. What these findings, however, reconfirm is that unless a critical minimum area is available in dry land conditions, many of the households even with relatively larger cropped area but without enough creditworthiness or savings to meet implications of a shock like crop failure, may have to resort to other measures.

Table 6.6 reveals that in distress situations, family with larger members resorts to large out-migration for more months than smaller families. Other factors remaining the same, as silver assets of the household depleted, the intensity of migration increases. But asset losses could work as coping mechanism only in initial phase of successive scarcity years. Once the households in the tribal belt face consecutive droughts, there remains hardly any

valuable that could be mortgaged or sold. This is a negative imperative of a complex process of additional cash need under few livelihood opportunities during a shock. The consumption behaviour during a shock is revealing; households that have food stocks for longer period, resort relatively less to migration compared to households whose food stocks last for shorter period. On the other hand, households that resorted to seasonal migration had higher consumption expenditure compared to non-migrants. A shock reduces food consumption of the affected household but those who stay put in the village and do not resort to migration had to suffer a welfare loss in terms of consumption; more migrants from a family and migration for longer duration tend to help in making the household's consumption in distress period towards normal. On the other hand, factors like reduction in milch, draught power and poultry, fall in operated land have no direct impact on intensity of migration.

Table 6.6: Factor Explaining intensity of Migration ^a (All households)

Factor ^b	Coefficient	Significant	β^c
X ₁ Family size	24.5	***	I
X ₂ Depletion of silver	.003	*	
X ₃ Panchayat benefits	-27.7	***	
X ₄ Unpaid debt	26.2	***	VI
X ₅ Total Income (- migration)	- 0.003	***	II
X ₆ Cereal produce lasts	-- 10.2	***	
X ₇ Debt owing to death	-.0.02	***	III
X ₈ Total Expenditure	37.8	***	IV
X ₉ Literacy	- 35.1	***	
X ₁₀ Poverty	- 23.5	*	
Constant	11.8	NS	
D1	10.1	NS	
D2	-59.9	***	V
D3	-55.9	***	
R bar ²	18		
F	29.3	***	
Number of observations	1609		

^a Based on linear regression analysis where:

Dependent variable is migration intensity in person-days.

X1: 1 = up to 4; 2= 5 to 6, 3= more than 6

X2: Depletion of silver in Rs. in last 5 years

X3: Rs. per household 1 = nil, 2= up to Rs 1600, 3= more than rs 1600

X4: Outstanding social debt 1 = nil, 2= up to Rs 4000., 3 = more than Rs 4000

X5: 0 = poor, 1 = non poor

X6: Produce lasts 1= up to 90 days; 2= 91 to 150 days, 3= 151 to 310 days, 4= more than 310 days

X7: Number of times missed both the meals

D1, D2 and D3 are intercept dummies

D1 = 1 for households located in underdeveloped villages but had invested in irrigation, 0 for rest

D2 = 1 for households located in Developed villages but not invested in irrigation, 0 for rest

D3 = 1 for households located in developed villages and with private investment in irrigation, 0 for rest

^b The correlation between explanatory factor is low

^c β is standardised coefficients that provide relative importance of different factors in the R bar ².

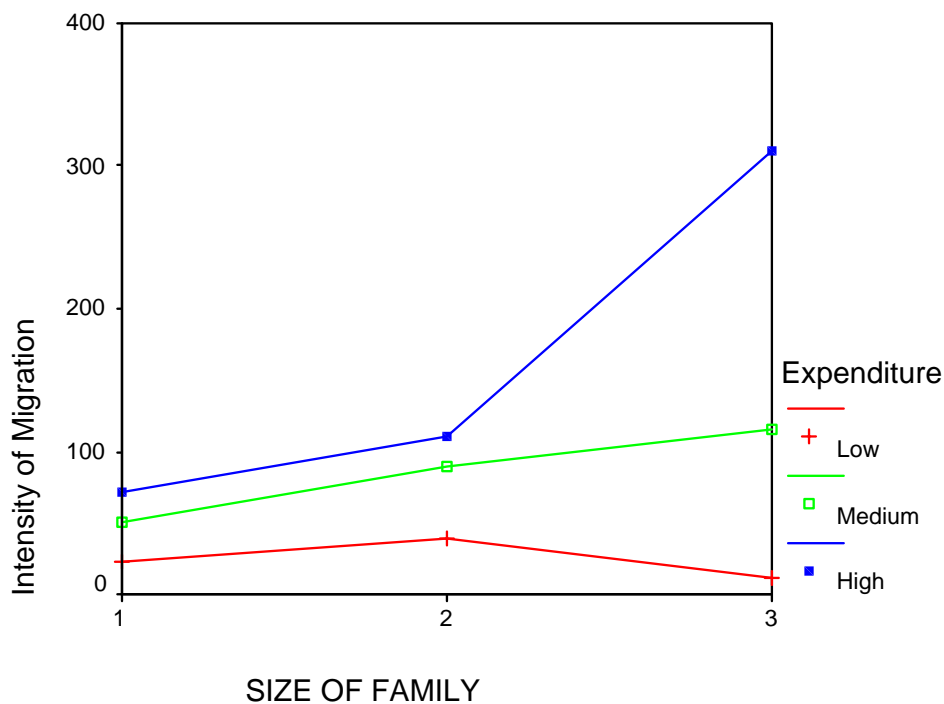
The relative importance of remoteness vis-à-vis investment in agriculture in explaining migration intensity is caught by intercept dummy variables D1, D2 and D3. Although weakening in effect of remoteness and improvement in private investment in agriculture both significantly reduce migration, the reduction due to investment in agriculture is far more significant than that of weakening the effects of remoteness. The constant represents the average intensity of migration in remote area with no private investment in agriculture. The sign and the significance level of dummy D1 reveals that intensity of migration does not reduce significantly from the level that is in remote villages with households with no investment situation, if the households are the one that have invested in agriculture even in relatively remote areas. On the other hand, a reduction in intensity of migration is higher when the household is one that is located in relatively developed villages but with no investment in agriculture; the negative and significance of D2 imply this fact. In other words, intensity of migration would have been higher but for the weakening of the effect of remoteness. The size of D3, though significant, has reduced, indicating that compared to developed villages with no investment in agriculture, the intensity of migration does reduce significantly if the households have invested in irrigation. But the effect of the process of weakening of remoteness reduces migration to larger extent compared to investment alone. This is so because investment in agriculture in remote areas only supports an individual's agriculture and his capability to circumvent the debt-trap during a shock but the process of weakening of remoteness through infrastructure and market development influences many. The beta coefficients reveal that though four most important factors in explaining are size of the family, income other than migration, social debt, the importance of weakening of remoteness is more important than individuals' investment in agriculture.

The above analysis identifies the individual factors that have influenced the migration. However, it is interesting to note that it is the shared play of factors, rather than individual factors, that influences intensity of migration. Results of Analysis of Variance (Appendix 6.1) reveal that interaction between (a) family size * consumption expenditure; (b) income * Family Size; (c) income * consumption expenditure, have significantly influenced the migration intensity. The significance of the interactions also means that individual factors like the size of family, consumption expenditure, income *et cetera*, though may be significant, have no impact in governing the migration. What matters are the combined effects of the two. For example, it is neither size of family nor the expenditure alone that has significance in governing the migration pattern but if large families also have higher consumption expenditure then the intensity of migration increases dramatically (Figure 6.1).

Two different processes influence the well-being of the households, one supporting the intensity of migration and the other restraining it. Seasonal migration becomes inevitable during a shock in order to have command on resources to improve food consumption and to

meet non-food expenditure of the remaining members in the village; in the process it is inevitable that some members of the affected household to migrate. While the income generating processes like operational area, access to employment in nearby areas, improved access to food, benefits of government schemes are able to restrain intensity of seasonal migration, but these processes during a consecutive period of drought create market failure for individuals both as producers as well as consumers. The extent of migration that takes place during a normal year is not always a distress migration. It provides access to additional capital and knowledge for investment in irrigation, new inputs and agricultural technology. Although sale and mortgage of silver and bullocks may provide necessary cash in hand, it also brings into operation the much-defamed *bania* who provides them cash or would do so for replenishing the depleted assets and draught power, or fresh agricultural loans for next season. Consequently, the *bania* has first access to migration savings.

Figure 6.1: Interaction between Factors



There are also some households that have relatively lower income. As a result, their resourceless forces them in perpetual web of debt, inability to service their debt and distress migration. The process is particularly severe for 50 per cent of households that have less land with no irrigation. For these households, access to cash for preparing for migration, especially for purchasing some food grains for remaining members, is a process where the silver depletion is the only way to have access to some cash. On the other hand, access to

cash, even during a shock for a large landowner with some irrigation is much easier. The *bania* does not necessarily demand a mortgage-deed from them in anticipation of a good crop next season. But for both the above groups, resource poor and resource rich, the access to output market is restricted because of the credit provided by the *bania*. This interlocked market becomes severely exploitative. The *bania* not only charges high interest but also restricts free sale of output.

Seasonal migration also results in short term land transactions like sharecropping, fixed rent and land mortgage. Some market institutions like labour and credit markets are well developed in the region. But in absence of land market, the land related institutions -- working for bringing tenant and owner together -- have developed. These institutions have come up to minimise the cost of negotiating agriculture under resource constraints. *Dhans*, a sort of exchange of bullock and labour between kin-groups, has also developed in response to market failure of the two important resources. The main role of short term land transactions is not only to share risk of farming but it also optimises labour use under a shock; poor quality of land and need to move out and engage the family in some economic activity other than agriculture, forces such land transactions. While these institutions are likely to have existed over a long period of time, the recent changes in the functioning of these institutions due to increased incidence of droughts need to be probed further. Similarly, importance of such land transactions in making the migrant family's representation in social hierarchy would be worth discussing

An important facet of migration relates to a process of maintaining individuals' position in the social hierarchy ⁷. This is one of the important investments in a society where social networking, rather than quantum physical assets, decides the worth of individuals in the society. What, however, is relevant to note is the fact that if the society is traditional, social relations and investment on maintaining social relations become important for the survival of the individual. In the process, leasing out land by migrant engenders his symbolic presence in the village and his representation in social hierarchy without his being physically present. The power to till land of a migrant protects economic interest of both the migrant and the tenant but in the exchange, the migrant also obtains control over his social interests. The most preferred arrangement is crop sharing because it makes migrant's links with the community preserved. In order to force the contract in terms of labour use and sharing output, the migrant has to make a number of trips to village, especially during peak harvest season ⁸. That reinforces his severed interests in the social set up in his absence.

The expansion of cultivated land in the village after a shock is also not uncommon. In order to repay accumulated loans, migrants often start cultivating wasteland that had not been under cultivation. The untapped land resources in this tribal belt come under pressure because the debt-trap forces the migrants to supplement their land resources. This additional

land has low productivity and can sustain only traditional crops like *kodai*, *kudki* and pulses on the one hand and often have serious environmental implications. Generally, the outer slopes are the only available areas but bringing such areas under cultivation creates favourable setting for soil erosion. Once under cultivation, the steep slopes deplete the natural grass cover that binds the soil and the expansion in cultivable area leads to washing off top-soil. Population pressures and land fragmentation owing to succession also create pressures on land. Migration and expansion of cultivated area in this remote tribal region often trigger an environmental crisis. But migration for a few is a source of saving, investment and agricultural transfer.

The change in the form of technologically driven agriculture, though restricted to about 25 per cent of cultivated area, is not entirely an outcome of state intervention. It happened because of seasonal migration. Seasonal migration for the tribal is not coping with shocks alone⁹; it is experiencing development that has by-passed them¹⁰. What a tribal learns during his stay as a migrant labourer -- either on irrigated farms of plains of Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh or on the farms of irrigated HB cotton growers of Khandesh or on the fields of irrigated paddy and sugarcane growers in south Gujarat -- is a main source of agriculture technology transfer. How to energise the well and distribute water, how to grow irrigated fertiliser-responsive cotton, soybean and wheat, and utilisation of post-harvest technology of these market-oriented crops *et cetera* are learnt during seasonal migration. No matter how much the left-oriented non-governmental organisation¹¹ discredits it, this process of production of knowledge has created space for non-tribal institutions, that is, inducing conversion of subsistence way of agriculture to a market driven agriculture. The process is, however, internalised without any state support. In irrigated areas, the *bania* provides agricultural credit without any security. The tribals are also able to repay the loans promptly at least during good agricultural years. But in the process, they have started attaching a high degree of dependence on non-tribal institution they loathed the most, the *market*.

In unsustainable agriculture where population pressures have reduced wages, improving agricultural productivity by investing on soil and water conservation could be an important way of checking seasonal migration. Next section presents a successful experiment that has influence on seasonal migration during normal years. While the state has also made some interventions in the form of check dams in the study villages, outcome of these has been indifferent due to factors that are generally associated with low performance of such interventions. Against these, there are success stories of watershed programmes in the region that have reduced migration.

6.4 Migration and Investment in Agriculture

Despite consistent efforts of state to improve tribal agriculture, problems like uncertainty of agricultural production and access failure to food have forced a large population of the tribals to adopt alternative avenues of livelihood¹². It can be argued that these efforts are not only target-oriented and top heavy but also lack people's participation¹³. Not only benefits of these projects have reached a few but also the structures have short life owing to poor construction and maintenance problems. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a paradigm shift in the process. Unlike the state, an influential non-government organisation always acts with communities with understanding and satisfies their most felt needs. Sadguru Water and Development Foundation (SWD Foundation) is actively involved in creating alternatives through sustainable development of common property resources in tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat¹⁴. The SWD Foundation, in these tribal areas, intervenes with a design to improve carrying capacity of land so that agriculture becomes capable of providing sustenance to the needy.

The inevitability of making groundwater available to agriculture in a sustainable manner has been recognised by SWD Foundation. It has also recognised that only small water harvesting devices, such as check dams, would be able to harness water in these difficult areas. These devices harness surface and groundwater resources that flow through as run off. Thus, obstructing this run off and diverting it to enter into pitches of soil rocks through gravity is the major strategy of the Foundation for harnessing water for irrigation. Eventually, this underground water is lifted through tube wells for irrigation. Theoretically, this source of irrigation is renewable as long as groundwater recharge is in excess of its depletion. The Foundation forces this equilibrium to be in favour of water recharge by institutionalising water lifting and its use, and maintenance of the physical structure through farmers' irrigation co-operatives. Each co-operative, organised by the Foundation, comprises of 35 to 45 tribal farmers. The executive committee of the co-operative has main task of providing irrigation to its members in equitable and sustainable manner. This is done by putting community pressure for (i) optimising water use by extending irrigation only to low water using crops like cereals, pulses and short duration vegetables; (ii) maintaining irrigation infrastructure so that water availability in the command area is uninterrupted to all of its members; and (iii) maintaining water distribution, water lifting cost and revenue proceeds from sale of water at levels that are conducive for sustainable use.

The impact of such a water-harvesting programme in tribal areas is seen from two angles. The first is on macro economic aspects of the region, and second at the micro level on socio-economic conditions of tribal beneficiaries. The macro impact is felt on (Shah: 2000) increased groundwater table, changes in land use pattern, and increase in area under irrigation

by various sources, improvement in soil quality and crop productivity. At the micro level, impact of SWD Foundation's water harvesting programme is observed (Shylendra and Umarani: 1999) in the following areas: first, (a) disappearance of mixed cropping, increase in cropping intensity and area cultivated in *rabi* and summer; (b) cropping pattern changes and increase in productivity; (c) increase in farm income and profits; (d) strong forward and backward market linkages; (e) increased access to farm residual for fuel and fodder. Secondly, there is significant reduction in distress migration, especially female migration. Lastly, there is significant improvement in food consumption and access to social infrastructure of the villagers. All these changes initiated by the SWD Foundation have improved the quality of life of the beneficiaries with a strategy that is also highly viable¹⁵.

Such positive interventions have raised expectations that replication of such experiments in tribal areas would be a panacea for the ills of the tribal society¹⁶. But such positive impact is also accompanied with counter productive processes when physical structures are created without people's participation (Sah: 1994; Patil D: 2000). When such physical structures do not accompany an institutional structure, they often prove beneficial for a few influential that take advantage of the system by extending irrigation beyond the command area and cultivate high water using commercial crops at the cost of the other tribal farmers. Consequently, ground water depletion is faster than its recharge. In the process, both equity and ecological considerations are at stake. Nevertheless, replicating the SWD Foundation intervention can ensure equity as well as sustainability of such development efforts. The important question, however, is: can a programme developed by intensive understanding of local conditions and needs be replicated by state through its NWDPR approach in other tribal areas?

Equally important is sustainability of water harvesting technology, especially in the remote tribal areas when such structure depends on rainwater. Consecutive droughts render such structures useless and the economy of the region owing to failing agriculture resorts to migration¹⁷. Evidences from SWDF command area, that witnessed consecutive droughts, have shown the efficacy of such structures in severe drought years. And hence, the policy implications of these water-harvesting experiments need to be understood and used in greater details.

6.5 Summing Up

Tribal migration in search of employment has a long tradition. Recent evidences reveal that the intensity of migration has increased over the years. Migration from tribal areas is not uniform; some locations have large seasonal migration whereas some locations have relatively less migration. Both remoteness and unsustainable agriculture superimpose each

other in forcing migration. Unsustainable and stagnant agriculture is relatively more imposing than remoteness in explaining the migration. Although, in recent past migration has been caused by harvest failure, a shock can activate a complex socio-economic process leading to migration. Apart from population pressure, reduction in availability of food and, increased debts and increased intensity of seasonal migration, the households under shock also face serious non-economic problems like doing work that in normal situation they would not have preferred; other problems that emerge in the process are inability to service their debt and missing meals *et cetera*. Borrowings from *bania* located in markets increase. The intensity of migration seems to have strong links with borrowings for meeting current consumption needs; to repay the loan, the migration increases. Seasonal migration does supplement investable surplus when cash needs are more and sources of institutional borrowings are few. In fact, credit and migration work as supplement as well as substitute in the remote tribal society. On an average, a migrant family saves rupees five thousand per year from migration. But a large part of the savings goes for servicing the debt.

Evidently, in abnormal years larger agricultural holding is unable to neutralise the risk of harvest loss. Unless a critical minimum area is available, a household with relatively large cropped area but without enough savings needs to resort to migration. Interactions of factors like large family, higher expenditure, low income (other than migration), depletion of silver and thus borrowings at exuberant interest, lower access to state schemes result in increasing the intensity of migration. More migrants for longer duration from a family help in pushing food consumption of the remaining members to normal during bad agricultural years. Consequently, households that do not resort to migration have lower in food consumption and more days without meals. Migration along with short-term land transactions like sharecropping, fixed rent and land mortgage has played an important role in the tribal society. This not only reduces the risk of farming but also optimises the efficiency of family labour. Some of these land transactions also strengthen social links that maintain individuals' position in social hierarchy even in their absence. But for some resourceful, migration has become the major source of agricultural technology transfer, savings and investment in this remote tribal area.

Migration in absence of a sustainable livelihood has become unavoidable in remote rural areas. A way of reducing the incidence of migration is to intensify investment that conserves the soil-moisture and makes agriculture sustainable. Evidences reveal that civil society initiatives in tribal areas have reduced seasonal migration significantly. Replicating such efforts may be helpful for the hapless migrants. Our findings have demonstrated that a shock can push even a well-to-do tribal household into a debt-trap and has to resort to migration as a coping mechanism. But for a large section of households that are resourceless owing to population pressures, migration is the only coping mechanism. Migration in tribal

areas is a coping strategy that -- under the harsh tribal environment -- becomes inevitable. Therefore, the processes that facilitate migrants in the course of migration are as important as reducing migration. How to make the lives of migrants at the place of destination less stressful, provide them with amenities there, and make their position stronger in the labour market, is as important as improving agriculture and increasing borrowing capacity of migrants at the place of origin. Breaking the debt-trap that triggers migration and strengthening agriculture of the area are two important interventions that may result in reducing migration.

Appendix 6.1; ANOVA Results Explaining Variations* in Migration Intensity

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	7013269	1	7013269	109	
Family size	12245529	2	612276	9	.000
Expenditure	2354396	2	1177198	18	.000
Income	8107425	2	4053712	63	.000
Family Size* Income	2215861	4	553965	9	.000
Expenditure * Family Size	2722501	4	680625	10	.000
Expenditure * Income	1063835		265959	4	.000
Error	136236	53	64192		
Total	134505174	94			

* R Squared = .16 (Adjusted R Squared = .015)

End Notes

- 1 This analysis is based on data generated from randomly selected 1614 household from Central tribal belt comprising Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. For details, see, Chapter 2.
- 2 In tribal society, agriculture is the way of life and also its major economic activity. Population pressures result in depletion of agriculture land due to marriage of children and thus division of family. The newly formed households are relatively resource deficient and rely not only on social networks but also on migration for survival.
- 3 The remoteness of Under-developed villages and poor agricultural base has resulted in relatively large population to rely on migration as a coping mechanism compared to Developed villages.
- 4 This society has relatively high female work participation rate than that of nontribal. Moreover, those who have paid dowry price of Rs 20 to 25 thousand, in 2006 prices, would like to get the money back through migration.
- 5 Unlike rural to rural migration, where destinations are known to the groups as, some of the members have past experiences of working there, rural to urban migration depend on middlemen, known as *mukadam*, who guides movements towards city. A *mukadam* is a middleman-cum-supervisor who has well developed network in the areas from where migration originates. He provides some advance to migrant groups, arranges for basic facilities at the destinations and negotiates with prospective employer.
- 6 There could be an over reporting in migration savings, as the qualitative investigation reveals that on average migration brings clothing, footwear and consumer items from this income.
- 7 Moral hazards are involved in sharecropping: The tribal who is leasing out land would like to ensure that the tenant, as agreed, has applied labour and inputs on the field for he has to share the out-of-pocket cost. Similar is the case when the crop would be harvested and shared for, the landowner has to ensure that he receives the portion of crop output as agreed earlier. For enforcing these, the landowner migrant has to either make a number of visits to the village or leave all these monitoring in trust on the other party. In this area the first option is more prevalent, not because of lack of trust but because it re-establishes his ties with the community.
- 8 Tribal economy is based on reciprocity. Apart from performing economic transaction under market failure conditions, the short-term land transaction, especially share cropping and fixed rent create social trust that works as metaphor for social return in exchange of economic gains. This latter (social) function of this exchange is an important as its formal (economic) function of exchange.
- 9 A number of villages in this tribal belt have come under submergence of Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. This is equally true in other states of the central tribal belt where mining, industrial projects and big dams have displaced large tribal population. The scars of relocation and play of civil society institution have made the inhabitant weary of outsiders on the one hand and created trust and solidarity amongst them on the other hand (Sah: 2003).
- 10 In drought prone areas, migration also works as asset formation device. Successive droughts render agriculture as unsustainable livelihood option and forces even large farmers to join the queue for doles. Rains have failed in the last four years in this area. Land less labourers and marginal farmers do save some money owing to migration. But such savings are major source of repayment to *Bania* on consumption loans taken to meet the scarcity. The debt trap and dependence on non-institutional sources for consumption loan creates a socio-economic process in which migration becomes a major livelihood option.
- 11 Civil society movements have strong presence in this tribal belt. Control over forest is a major contention that has brought into play institutions like the *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan* (AMS). Displacement due to large dams in the region has rationalised the presence of the movements like *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (NBA), an NGO that has provided alternatives to the existing development paradigm. Both these movements have created a strong social capital base in the area. For details, see, Sah (2003).
- 12 Working as wage labour and seasonal migration are the most widely adopted livelihood strategies in tribal areas.
- 13 These official irrigation schemes are carried as if their creation is an end in itself. These official programmes are operating without institutional arrangements necessary to enforce equity and ecological considerations. Consequently, the checks and balances needed for water use efficiency are missing.

Planning for these programmes are not only target oriented but also lack understanding on various constraints, which resulted in past failures of the programmes.

- 14 Sadguru Water Development Foundation is working in about 375 tribal villages of Gujarat (Panchmahals and Dahod), Madhya Pradesh (Jhabua) and Rajasthan (Banswara). By the end of 2000-01 195 lift irrigation projects and 187 check dams were operational in the project area irrigating about 37000 acre land; for detail see Foundation (2001).
- 15 A Study by Kumar *et al.* (2000) has estimated that the economic Benefit-Cost Ratio of check dam-lift irrigation schemes turns out to be highly viable in tribal regions. The economic cost in the project included construction cost of 6 check dams on Mahhan River located in Dahod (Gujarat) Banswara (Rajasthan) and Jhabua (Madhya Pradesh), plus capital cost of 6 lift irrigation schemes and operation & maintenance cost. The benefits from the project included increase in agricultural income owing to irrigation and income earned from water charges. The capital cost of check dams and lift irrigation schemes put together was Rs. 17.37 million. The scheme irrigates about 690 acre of land per year. Increase in agricultural income owing to irrigation net of maintenance & operation cost, plus the water charges received by the project were estimated at Rs. 3.12 million per year for next 20 years. The present value of this income stream at 12 per cent discount of was Rs. 23.25 million. When compared against the capital investment, the benefit cost ratio turns out to be 1.33, which, for irrigation project, is very high economic rate of return. If social benefit of drought proofing is added to it, the benefit-cost ratio would go further up.
- 16 The strategy, however, is not a solution for all situations. Drought proofing in recurring monsoons failure has its own problems. During least three years dry farming in Madhya Pradesh, including its tribal belt, saw three consecutive crop failures, not only food security has adversely been affected but also seen a prolonged drinking water crises, especially in the tribal region including areas covered under water harvesting structures.
- 17 Mr Harnath Jagawat, Director SWD Foundation, has emphatically said that under sever rainfall deficit years though the watershed interventions do provide drinking water to the inhabitants in the command area, the structures are unable to sustain normal agriculture

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CHAPTER 7
GOVERNANCE AND CHRONIC POVERTY

Chapter 4 has established that the quanta of public expenditure, in the form of benefits to individuals from Panchayats and government programme are not directed equitably and the group that does not necessarily deserve, the always-non-poor, receive the benefits that should have gone to poor and chronic poor. Poverty, in this sense, is a product of unequal power relations in the community. Powerful political elites control the public resources and govern the manner in which these resources will be utilised. Poor are not only unable to participate in this process but also ill-equipped to influence the wasteful distribution of public resources. *The Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA)* Act of 1996 empowers the tribal community to take hold of its land, water and forest resources and empowers the community by involving it directly in all the decision-making processes - a power that was earlier enjoyed by the bureaucracy and *Sarpanch*¹. The Act extends Panchayats to tribal areas of eight States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan; it will enable tribal society to assume control of its own destiny to preserve and conserve the traditional rights over natural resources.

These political reforms have thrown up a new dominant group that controls financial resources and challenge the existing hierarchy. This may disturb the apparent homogeneity of the tribal society. The emerging heterogeneity may curtail the participation of the community in governance. On the other hand, the provisions of the *PESA* have come in direct confrontation with the earlier Acts and the then existing state departmental rules that governed the natural resources in the tribal regions. This has made the Act redundant in relation to management of the natural resources of the region. The objective of this chapter is to understand the impact of these changes. More specifically, the chapter addresses to the following three sets of propositions. First, if villages were socially, politically and economically divided, dominance of any one of the groups in decentralised governance would influence the distribution of the development gains as well as participation of the community. Second, political reforms that give management of natural resources to community would create expectations that would be frustrated by the existing departmental laws. Consequently, the community may resist state development programmes that curtail

their access to natural resources. Lastly, decentralized governance, as a process, may not necessarily be an infallible mechanism to tackle political unfreedom of the community.

These changes in governance are postulated on three basic premises. First, traditional ways of tribal society could be integrated with decentralised governance. Second, the community would get an institutional space to govern its affairs in an accountable and meaningful manner. This means that the provisions would be able to level and homogenise the differences, leading to an informed decision-making by the people at the grassroots level. Lastly, the new system would usher in a regime of people's participation, where governance would be more responsible and fruits of development distributed more equitably. Did this happen? This chapter examine this pertinent question in the context of developed and under-developed villages of our sample.

7.1 Panchayat Raj in Central Tribal Belt

The experience, argues Upadhyay (2004), reveals that even after eight years of its enactment, PESA has not had an impact on the ground. All the States with tribal areas were to adopt this law within one year after it came into being. Almost all these States have done that but without internalising the spirit of the law. *First*, there are critical omissions of some of the fundamental principles behind PESA, *Secondly*, the States have invariably twisted certain words in the Central PESA, which has resulted in powers being taken away from the Gram Sabha. *Thirdly*, even while affirming some provisions of the law in principle, the States have made their applicability subject to framing of rules/ orders. Such enabling rules are not yet in place in most cases.

In order to make the Central Act effective, it is necessary for the State Governments to make appropriate amendments in their State Laws which impinge on specific provisions contained in the Central Act namely (i) Land Acquisition Act; (ii) Excise Act; (iii) State Irrigation Act; (iv) Minor Forest Produce Act; (v) Mines and Minerals Acts; (vi) Land Revenue Code / Act; (vii) SC/ST Land Alienation Act; (viii) Money Lenders Act; and (ix) Regulated Market Act. No doubt, some State Governments (like Madhya Pradesh) have already amended some of the relevant Acts; others are yet to follow suit.

Table 7.1: Review of the state Acts

Components	Mandatory Provision	Status
<i>Definition of Village</i>	A village consists of a habitation or a group of habitations or a hamlet or a group of hamlets, comprising a community and managing its affairs in accordance with traditions and customs	All States adopted this definition
<i>Status and Functions of Gram Sabha</i>	Every village will have a Gram Sabha which will be competent to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity.	All State Acts follow the Central Act. The Orissa Act adds that it should be consistent with the relevant laws in force and in harmony with tenets of the Constitution and Human Right.
<i>Acquisition of land for development projects and resettlement of displaced persons</i>	Prior consultation with Gram Sabha or Panchayats at the appropriate level shall be made mandatory.	MP, CG and Rajasthan State Acts follow the Central Act. Gujarat assigned this power to Taluka Panchayat, however, no provision relating to coordination of such projects at state level. Orissa assigned the power to Zilla Panchayat with no role for the Gram Sabha/ Gram Panchayat
<i>Planning and Management of Minor Water Bodies</i>	Entrusted to Panchayats at the appropriate level	MP, CG and Rajasthan State Acts follow the Central Act. Orissa assigned power to Zilla Parishad instead of Gram Sabha/Gram Panchayat
<i>Grant of Prospecting licence or mining lease for minor minerals</i>	Prior recommendation of Gram Sabha or Panchayats at appropriate level shall be made mandatory.	Gujarat-does not make mention of it. Madhya Pradesh – No mention in the Madhya Pradesh and CG Panchayat Act but the relevant subject act Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development Act) 1957 amended to assign powers to Gram Sabha and Panchayats at appropriate level. Orissa gives powers to Zilla Parishad.
<i>Grant of concession for exploitation of minor minerals by auction.</i>	Prior recommendation of Gram Sabha or Panchayats at appropriate level shall be made mandatory.	Gujarat - No mention of it. Madhya Pradesh - Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Act does not make mention of it but the subject Act mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1987 amended to assign the power to Panchayat at appropriate level. Orissa-assigned the power to Zilla Parishad.
<i>Enforce prohibition /regulate or restrict sale & consumption of any intoxicant</i>	Panchayats at the appropriate level and the Gram Sabha to be endowed with the powers	All State Acts followed the Central Act except Madhya Pradesh which does not make provision for it in its PR Amendment Act. However, the Subject Act Madhya Pradesh Excise Act 1915 has been amended to give powers to Gram Sabha.
<i>Ownership of Minor Forest Produce (MFP)</i>	Panchayats at the appropriate level and the Gram Sabha endowed with the powers of ownership	All State Acts follow Central Act by assigning this power either to Gram Sabha or to the Gram Panchayats.
<i>Prevention & Restoration of Tribal Alienated Land</i>	Panchayats at appropriate level and the Gram Sabha to be endowed with this power.	Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Amendment Acts do not make provision for this. However, in case of Madhya Pradesh, the Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code, 1959 has been amended to give power to Gram Sabha.
<i>Manage Village Markets</i>	Panchayats at appropriate level and the Gram Sabha to be endowed with this power.	MP, Rajasthan, CG and Orissa follow Central Act. Gujarat Amendment Acts is silent on this matter.
<i>Money lending to the Scheduled Tribes</i>	Panchayats at appropriate level and the Gram Sabha to be endowed with this power.	Madhya Pradesh Amendment Act does not make a mention of this subject.
<i>Exercise control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors.</i>	Panchayats at appropriate level or the Gram Sabha to be endowed with this power.	All State Acts except Madhya Pradesh assign this power either to Gram Panchayat or Panchayat Samiti / Mandal Parishad. The Madhya Pradesh Amendment Act has given this power to the Gram Sabha and the Janpad Panchayat or the Zilla Parishad.
<i>Control over Local Plans and Resources including Tribal Sub Plans</i>	Panchayats at appropriate level and the Gram Sabha to be endowed with this power.	State Acts of Gujarat, Orissa have assigned the power to Panchayat Samiti / Taluka Panchayat / Mandal Parishad while the Madhya Pradesh and CG Acts assign this power to Gram Sabha.

Source: Planning commission (2005)

A review of the state Acts (Table 7.1) shows that most states have assigned a less prominent role to gram Sabhas/panchayats in the Scheduled Areas than was intended by PESA. In Orissa, gram Sabhas or panchayats have been given very few powers. In many states like Gujarat and Rajasthan, powers earmarked for gram Sabha/panchayats have been entrusted to Janpad and zilla parishads. In Madhya Pradesh Chhattisgarh, Grams Sabhas have been given powers of control only on forests located within the revenue boundaries of the village and not on all forests (including reserved forests) in the vicinity of the village. Forest products such as cane, bamboo and *mahua* seeds have been excluded from the category of minor forest produce in order to keep them under the control of the Forest Department. The brief description brings out the dismal impact of PESA on empowering Gram Sabha ².

Representation and Participation in Panchayat

The present political leadership is the third generation PRI leadership that has emerged after Panchayat elections. Community participation in Panchayats starts from elections of PRI representatives. Discussions with villagers in tribal area reveal that people participation in these elections were large. Election process, whether for state assembly or for parliament, has its own importance in tribal areas. In order to encourage people to come out and exercise their franchise, distribution of money, in cash or kind, by candidates is common in this area. The same malpractice was seen in Panchayat elections, especially in the election of *Sarpanch* in the area. Consequently, the community participation in the PRI elections was high.

About 5 per cent of the households have some representatives in Panchayat either as *Sarpanch*, *Up-Sarpanch*, *Panch* or committee members. Such representation among always non-poor households is about 8 per cent whereas among chronic poor it is only 4 per cent. In tribal areas, *Panch* and such inclusions are generally in consultation with socially influential people of *falia*. Economic condition is an important criterion for identification of a potential political elite. Election of *Panch*, *Sarpanch* and *Committee members* in the village is generally unopposed; selected by social hierarchy.

Although required quorum for the meetings of *Gram Sabha* is one-third of all adults in the village, at least a third of them should be female members. The quorum in the *Gram Sabha* meetings was never present, except on the first meeting when various committees were constituted. Villagers believe that *Gram Sabha* meetings are irregular, informal and information of such meetings is never given to them. The community does not cooperate fully with Panchayat and its operations, as it feels that programmes and developmental works are undertaken to favour the people belonging

to the *Sarpanch* group. People are also critical of the fact that discussions in the earlier meetings did not get any place in the programmes of the Panchayat. The first two meetings of newly constituted *Gram Sabha*, recall villagers, did take place with large participation. All the committees under the *Gram Sabha* were formed. But after that, neither the *Gram Sabha* nor any of its committees met. According to the villagers, *Gram Sabha*, the most potent social institution of the panchayat system in tribal areas, is ineffective so far as development of village is concerned. It seems that decentralised governance and people's participation remained only on paper; the political elites of the village control the activities of the *Panchayat*. Thus during the last year, as a matter of protest, community members have reduced their participation in *Gram Sabha* meetings.

Community by and large (92 per cent) is aware about *Gram Sabha* but is unaware about how often the *Gram Sabha* meets. As high as two third of the respondents did not know how often *Gram Sabha* meets. Only 28 per cent respondents have attended *Gram Sabha* meetings in last one year. Lack of participation in *Gram Sabha* meetings is a problem faced since its inception. About 92 per cent of respondents who did not participate in *Gram Sabha* did so because of their preoccupation, agriculture and labouring, or owing to lack of knowledge about the meeting. Lack of quorum is a problem faced by *Gram Sabha* even after a decade of its functioning. In study villages, about 56 per cent of chronic poor and 43 per cent always non-poor never participated in *Gram Sabha* meetings.

Community and Polity

Villages in this tribal belt have a close network of clans living in hamlets. They are governed by informal but traditional social norms and are led by hereditary leaders. These traditional leaders are chosen ones, whom the community considers well acquainted with their problems and capable of solving them. These traditional leaders receive support from old and wise men from each of the hamlets. In the study villages, the traditional leaders have strong hold on the community, especially with respect to social and religious affairs of the village.

Decentralised governance has created another set of elites in the village, which is strongly challenging the existing power structure in the village. The emerging political leadership has economic superiority, understands well the tribal as well as non-tribal customary practices and is fully conversant with government programmes. They are also skilled public speakers. This new class of political leaders has posed strong challenge to the traditional leaders. A third set of emerging leaders is a group of young educated (up to class 10) tribals who have some understanding of

laws that govern the Panchayat, know weaknesses of the existing system of decentralised governance, and the pattern of fund flow to Panchayats.

But villages have internal contradictions; social power is still with traditional leaders whereas economic power is with political leaders. In Under-developed villages, this divide is not very apparent, for villagers are not intensely fermented owing to relative homogeneity of agricultural income. Income in these villages is not only low but is less varying across households (Rs 8598 with standardised SD 135 per cent). In developed villages with relatively higher irrigation not only the agricultural income is high (Rs 10415) but the variations in income are high (Standardised SD 168 per cent); indicating an intensely segregated village on economic lines. In developed village, political elites have created a buffer that absorbs criticism and discontent of the community. This coterie of *Sarpanch* also corners a sizeable part of development benefits. Political leadership operates uncontrolled when it comes to development intervention. They are neither answerable to the community nor to the social leaders in relatively Developed villages.

People's Participation and Accountability

Efficiency and impact of PRI intervention largely depends on people's participation. A meaningful participation in local affairs, it could be argued, would improve quality and reach of services, especially meant for chronic poor. But the evidences from study villages reveal that participation is confined to participating in election and registering their presence in *Gram Sabha*. In this tribal community, social networking and dependency on economic and social elites is still an important mechanism of meeting crisis. Disgruntled with the machinations and politicking of the social elites the poor prefer to remain away from participation in *Gram Sabha* and from free discussions about development issues. However, because of the overriding presence of secretary (*Sachiv*) and his knowledge of rules and regulations, many of the decisions taken by *Gram Sabha* or by *Sarpanch* are forced to be changed. Although, *Sarpanch* takes the final decision, the secretary is generally overpowering. In fact, the *Sachiv* has usurped the powers that belong to the community. Moreover, the client-protégée relationship and economic stratification have created a negative environment where people's participation is not feasible and accountability of people's representatives towards *Gram Sabha* is eroded. The net result is that corrupt practices continue to thrive in the local panchayat system.

In order to improve accountability of political elites and increase transparency in the affairs of Panchayat, the *Gram Sabha* is the appropriate forum. The scrutiny of accounts and monitoring of the progress made in implementing

schemes and programmes by the community could check the ways of Sarpanch and make them accountable. But in the absence of community participation, the planning, execution and monitoring of the activities of the Panchayat are controlled by a small coterie. The community under the burden of client-protégée relationship does not demand explanations. On the other hand, due to a nexus between the bureaucracy, the political elites and the middleman, corruption has become systemic. Neither the provision to recall nor the provisions to recourse to higher authorities has any relevance here.

Perception of the Community

The community has expressed that *Gram Sabha* meetings are not organised on regular basis and consequently their participation in *Gram Sabha* has significantly reduced in the last few years. Unfulfilled expectations and livelihood struggles (migration) also do not create conducive environment for larger participation of the community in Panchayat affairs. The community feels that programmes and developmental works are unequally distributed. General perception is that benefits accrue mostly to that group of the people of the village to which the *Sarpanch* belongs. Local demands and needs are thus ignored in the interests of the powerful persons of the Panchayat. According to the villagers, *Jati Panchayat*, the most potent social institution in tribal areas, has been rendered ineffective so far as development issues of the village are concerned.

If nothing, political decentralisation has at least given rise to a new set of political elites, some of whom are corrupt and self-serving. On the other hand, as the local bureaucracy has been replaced by local political elites, the expectations of community participation in decision-making have remained a distant dream. Community openly points out to the irregularities committed in the allotment of benefits under welfare schemes like *Indira Awas Yojana*, prioritising the asset transfer beneficiaries, *Jeevan Dhara* loan, and *Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana*. Coterie of *Sarpanch*, and not the genuine persons, is the beneficiaries. These are the village people of the *Sarpanch* who get lion's share in building link roads, school buildings, hand pumps and construction of houses under *Indira Awas Yojana*; these are the reserved benefits for the people living in *Sarpanch's falia*. The only benefit the community has received is ration cards from Panchayat for subsidised food. *Sarpanch*, say the villagers, would never say 'no' to their requests, but would never fulfil any. The lame excuse given by the *Sarpanch* is that his hands are tied as prioritisation is done under instructions of the government officials. Moreover, a

large part of fund flow is predetermined by state run schemes and *untied* allocation to meet local needs is inadequate to meet the expectations of the community.

7.2 State Interventions and Development

Decentralisation has redefined the scope of development by transferring 29 items directly to be implemented by Panchayat. Community does acknowledge the programmes implemented by Panchayat under the new dispensation (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Main Work Done by Panchayat as Reported by the Community

	Chronic Poor	Non chronic Poor	Transitory Non-poor	Always Non-poor
	<i>Percentage</i>			
Approach Road	65	61	61	65
Water Harvesting	14	17	9	12
School	4	3	3	3
Electricity line	4	-	-	-
Health	4	1	-	1
Building and construction	1	2	1	3
No work undertaken	20	14	26	16

Apart from creating physical infrastructures like link-roads, Panchayat building, schools, *Anganwadi et cetera*, the two most important programmes are disbursement of loan for asset transfer to the vulnerable sections, and employment generation. While the target group for asset transfer programme -- known as *Swarn Jayanti Gram Sawrojgar Yojana* -- are economically poor households, the beneficiaries of the employment generation schemes are marginal farmers and labouring households. The employment generation schemes usually take up works that add to tribal infrastructure especially relating to digging wells, small check dams, water harvesting devices, construction and deepening of tanks and link roads *et cetera*.

Discussions with the villagers reveal that Panchayats have done precisely little in order to fulfil the needs of the Community. According to the villagers, the major benefits of assets transfer have accrued to only the influential families of the village. *Gram Sabha* has played no role in identifying the beneficiaries. Over 85 per cent of the respondent either do not know how the beneficiary are selected or believe that it is *Sarpanch* who selects them. The *Sarpanch* decides who would get what, when and how the benefits of the asset transfer programmes. In the last few years this support is in the form of different schemes like irrigation asset transfer to a few well-to-do households, intensification of investment in their farms after some time, and then meeting their replacement demands. Important loans given are for (a) diesel and

electric pumps; (b) water distribution pipes, in undulating topography; and (c) Crop productivity enhancement schemes and (d) loan for animal purchase. *Sarpanch* plays a critical role in the identification of beneficiaries and loan disbursement process. In both Developed (74 per cent) as well Under-developed villages (77 per cent) significant proportion of respondents believe so.

An analysis of the priorities of the community and work undertaken by Panchayat reveals that there is serious mismatch between need of the community and programmes undertaken by Panchayat (Table 7.3). Overemphasis by Panchayat in developing the infrastructure and agriculture at the cost of employment and services like health and education is evident.

Table 7.3: Mismatch of Community Needs and Panchayat Work

Work desired by Community	Infrastructure	Water Harvest	School and Health	No Work	All
<i>Number of Households</i>					
Infrastructure ^a	392 (24)	64 (4)	9 (1)	103 (7)	568 (36)
Water Harvesting and agriculture	252 (16)	73 (5)	15 (1)	67 (4)	407 (26)
School, Health and Other services	381 (24)	91 (6)	14 (1)	87 (55)	573 (36)
Employment	26 (2)	3 (0)	-	3 (0)	32 (2)
All	1051 (66)	231 (15)	38 (3)	260(16)	1580(100)
^a Includes Construction and electrification Figures in parentheses are percentage of total respondents.					

Principal causes for the mismatch between the demand of the community and supply of programmes by Panchayat are poor representation of chronic poor and poor in the PRIs, their lack of participation in decision-making and lack of accountability of elected representatives. What is worth noting is the fact that corruption is rampant at all levels, public as well as private, of panchayat system: for illustration, to receive these loans, the common belief in the tribal areas is, one needs to grease the palms of the concerned officials, without which loan is not possible. Clearly, the asset transfer programme of Panchayat has not only failed to reach the poorest, for the well-connected rich tribals corner bulk of the benefits.

Villagers in general are unaware of when and where any public works programme would be taken up by the Panchayat. These decisions are never openly taken in *Gram Sabha* but are always taken by the *Sarpanch*. The only employment the villagers get is from deforestation, that too mainly for seedling transplanting. This is the only time when a large number of villagers are employed. In severe drought years, *Janpad / taluka* Panchayat, stopping all other programmes, diverts large part of

its resources in creating community water conserving structures in the area. Villagers, however, complained that they did not know about work progress schedule. The unfortunate result was that they were deprived of much needed employment.

Table 7.4: Number of Beneficiary of different Schemes

	Chronic Poor	Non chronic Poor	Transitory Non-poor	Always Non-poor
	Number of Households			
Pension	6 (2075) ^a	16 (2340)	3 (2559)	11 (2754)
Indira Awas Yojana	21 (19571)	50 (19145)	10 (17850)	38 (19806)
SJGSY	1 (2)	3 (4550)		10 (5159)
SGRY	5 (960)	12 (993)	3 (1271)	7 (1371)
Food for work	30 (980)	104 (759)	30 (839)	84 (2754)
Crop Improvement		3 (22000)		1 (25000)
Livestock	1 (10000)	4 (20000)		5 (1001)
Irrigation	4 (17750)	5 (8900)	3 (17333)	5 (2754)
Other Schemes	15 (7328)	96 (9411)	16 (10394)	75 (11837)

^a Figures in parentheses are benefit per beneficiary

The other complaint of the villagers is that employment and agricultural programmes have benefited the *falia* or the village where Sarpanch lives. The beneficiaries of employment generation schemes did confess that they received stipulated wages in the food for work programme -- Rs 15 plus 5 kg wheat -- but the total quantum of work provided by Panchayat (per annum 15 days work per family) was inadequate. The food for work programme although did not provide adequate employment to the villagers, it did manage to establish new power relations and reinforce economic exchange to perpetuate these power relations. Villagers complain by way of an example that while only a few villagers received some employment in the construction of water conservation structure, friends of *Sarpanch* and his close relatives were employed in these programmes.

Table 7.5: Benefit of Accruing to Community across Groups

	Number of Beneficiary	Benefits Rs per beneficiary
All	559 (35)	6631
Across villages		
Developed villages	331 (40)	7426
Under-developed villages	248 (29)	5633
Across Poverty Profile		
Chronic Poor	64 (26)	9327
Non-chronic poor	242 (35)	6191
Transitory non-poor	56 (40)	5641
Always No poor	197 (38)	6576

^a figures in bracket are percentage beneficiaries in the group

The above discussion should not give an impression that marginalised group were totally ignored in receiving benefits of employment-oriented schemes like SGRY and drought relief work. What is evident from our analysis is that it was not the chronic poor and poor who benefited alone, the always non-poor also equally benefited from such schemes (Table 7.4). Evidence shows that in programs like pension scheme, Indira Awas Yojana, SJGSY, SGRY and Food for work programme, the benefits to always non-poor were significantly more compared to chronic poor. In poverty-ridden areas, welfare schemes like pension, *Indira Awas Yojna*, irrigation development are meant to transfer public resources to most vulnerable sections. Resources redistribution did take place but, as evidences show, such redistribution was not done equitably; the always non-poor received more resources from redistribution and a larger section of this community benefited from this (Table 7.5). While the average sum transferred was Rs 6631 Rs per beneficiary to about 35 per cent of the community, in developed villages and in the case of always non-poor such resource transfers were twice as much in comparison to Under-developed villages and chronic-poor.

Table 7.6: Benefits to the community across Poverty Profile in States

	Chronic Poor		Non Chronic Poor		Transitory Non Poor		Always Non Poor	
<u>Rupees per beneficiary</u>								
Madhya Pradesh	(16)	3807	(19)	7993	(6)	5700	(22)	11623
Chhattisgarh	(55)	8170	(65)	2252	(61)	3499	(63)	3195
Orissa	(37)	5142	(27)	2085	(50)	4562	(57)	4328
Jharkhand	(33)	16538	(34)	14049	(18)	11588	(24)	15437
Gujarat	(12)	14000	(19)	14757	(19)	14116	(12)	14013
Rajasthan	(12)	1160	(23)	5617	(40)	1460	(43)	1732
^a Figures in brackets are percentage of beneficiary in each group								

Evidences further reveal that Jharkhand has done relatively much better in terms of resource transfer to poor (Table 7.6). While on an average 35 per cent of households were benefited from various programmes to a tune of Rs 6631 per beneficiary, in Jharkhand chronic poor as a group was benefited to a tune of Rs 16,538 and over 33 per cent households among chronic poor received these benefits. In other states, the intensity of support was poor either in terms of proportion of households covered (Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan were 12 to 16 per cent of the chronic poor received benefits or the amount was much lower (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan where the amount was ranging from Rs 1160 to Rs 8170). Clearly without a representative democracy in Jharkhand, the poor were a gainers while in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Orissa despite

a so called vibrant decentralisation, the interest of the most deserving, the chronic poor could not be protected. This is not to imply that one should do away with Panchayati Raj. It only indicates that there is some thing very wrong with the decentralisation process.

It seems that Decentralisation has become an end in itself. Whether the process is able to bring decision-making near to people or whether the fruits of decentralisation are equitably distributed, no one in the bureaucracy and policy circles is concerned. The process of decision-making is still highly centralised and the fruits of development interventions are highly iniquitous. Unless all the programmes and schemes are rooted through *Gram Sabha*, the decentralisation as a panacea has little future.

7.3 Commons and Community

Depletion of tribal resources -- land, forest and water -- has a history. After independence, tribals lost control over forest because of the Forest Laws. The *PESA* transferred back the power to manage natural resources, including land, water and forest, to the community in accordance with its traditions in harmony with the provisions of the constitution and with due regard to the spirit of other relevant laws for the time being in force. This section argues that even after reforming political governance, the existing forest laws have not allowed the control of forest to pass to the community.

The whole tribal belt had dense forest about 100 years back. Today a large part of it is a depleted thin forest. Depleted though, the remains are still sufficient for meeting the timber, fodder and fuel needs of the villages around the forest. As the forest falls under control of forest department, the administration of the forest does not fall within the purview of Gram Panchayat. Entry to forest has been restricted and any use -- in the form of wood, minor forest produce, fuel and fodder -- is deemed as illegal by the forest department. The forest department is trying to rejuvenate this forest by creating undisturbed natural rooting environment and also by sapling plantation. The upper hills and a part of the villages are under the administration of forest department, whereas the lower reaches, including the valley, are administered through Panchayat. The lower reaches are the only land that can be brought under agriculture. The community in a number of villages, a few years back, had access to upper reaches of the hills for grazing animals as well as for wood but now the entry to the upper hills has been restricted. This was, according to officials, done mainly to restrict the entry of the cattle that destroyed forestation, as unrestricted movements helped gully formations and erosion of thin topsoil that holds the vegetative growth.

In these villages, the institutional forest and watershed committees, as a part of *Gram Panchayat*, are in place. But the committees are not empowered to control the structure created by different departments. These resources, though being within the villages, are out of the reach of the community. Though the control of these resources should have been with the *Gram Panchayat* and its committees, forest laws govern their management. The community is, nonetheless, using the forest resources, illegally. The villagers are not too resentful of this access loss to forests. Community, however, is agitated about the restrictions and more aware about its rights. The process of converting the administration from *Van Gram* to *Panchayat* was initiated over 25 years back. The measurement and demarcation of individual holdings and settlement was also done. Individual agricultural land rights, *Patta*, were prepared but were not distributed. But the villagers in *van gram* often face wrath of forest officials on issues like quanta of land they could cultivate, their rights to land, tress passing and access to commons, and forest protection. Often the community has to bribe the forest officials in such disputes. The distress also provided support to protest against access failure to natural resources. Their inability to manage their resources is, however, neither because of their illiteracy nor lack of awareness about the laws. In a sense, *PESA* is as an Act that has no *locus standi* of its own; the overlapping power of the various departments is a crucial impediment in passing control of forestland to the community; without reforming it the grassroots situation may not change.

Environment and Sustainability

A large number of villages in the tribal area are forest villages. For example, about half of hundred-two villages falling in the *Pati Janpad* in Badwani district of Madhya Pradesh are outside the control of decentralised governance. These type of villages are also present in other states. These villages, called *Van Gram*, are administered by the forest department and should have been converted to usual administrative Panchayat villages long back. Still the state Forest Department is controlling these *Van Grams*. Unlike *Panchayat* administered villages that get a life long lease of the land, agricultural land in a *Van Gram* is allocated to individual households for 15 years and the lease is renewed afresh by the forest department. The forest officer of the range manages land, water and forest in these *Van Grams*. Community's access to forest for timber, fodder and fuel is much better in *Van Gram* than forests falling under Panchayat administered villages. Community is aware about the denial to control their resources and the consequent hardships caused by it. But it accepts the superiority of laws of the Forest Department.

The access failure to natural resources needs to be viewed within the context of the efforts of PESA to empower the community as well as in relation to the discredit the state receives due to its repressive ways. Discrediting of the state originated due to a flux of tribal migration into these virgin hills, even as late as during early 1950s, in search of arable land that has put the community as well as the commons into an impasse. Both the questions of livelihood and the commons have transformed over the years into a new politics of environment. Tribals who cleared areas under the control of the Forest Department for cultivation now face the charge of being encroachers and destroyers of forests. Control over land, especially forestland, is highly challenged by the left oriented civil society organisations (Sah: 2004). On the other hand, the process of empowering community was a new approach of managing the commons; it was meant for changing laws to accommodate community participation in governance of the commons. The theoretical strength to these steps has been provided by the seminal work of Gadgil and Guha (1992):

That (a) the use of natural resources with a monopolistic command by a few influential castes in the society was in fact a prudent way of natural resource use for, it provided checks against over exploitation by others; (b) the traditional societies had non-exploitative and harmonious relationship with nature whereas modern society has subordinating relationship with it; (c) the fissures in a traditional society are naturalised by non-competitive nature of their interests; (d) any violation in the traditional use of nature is an aberration rather than the traditions; and (e) an opportunistic behaviour by traditional communities is an infection of modernity. Implicit in the formulation are first, variations of uses and abuses of commons arising from the binary nature of local, traditional, women and tribal versus outsider, global, state and market. The traditional amounts to sustainable use of commons, whereas commercial exploitation by state is implicit in the arguments (Agrawal and Sivaramakrishnan: 2001). Secondly, the naturalising non-competitive behaviour of the society reflects that conflicts over the resources were actually conflicts over sustainability of resources. The dichotomy, thus, provided strength in two differing ways. The civil society took a leaf out of the ecological history of India and attributed powerlessness of tribals before state and market as the cause of tribal access failure to natural resources. This resulted in the left oriented NGOs mobilisation of tribals against repressive markets and the state. The other process influenced by the construct was the appealing aspect of traditional communities with conservation; and so started joint management where communities have become equal partners in management of natural resources like forest and water or in areas that *PESA* gave control of commons to the community.

The above frame, however, de-links the environmental politics from communities' livelihood struggles. The uniform tribal character as protector of nature artificially homogenises and hides the social identities and conflicts. On the other hand, treating livelihood and environment simultaneously could provide understanding on how both apply to each other, so that one can ask what do we mean by sustainable, sustainability of livelihood or environment!

It can be argued that economic growth adversely affects the natural resources because of critical interactions between livelihood, technology and nature. But the implications of environmental degradation are conceptually different in Central tribal belt than in the dynamic rural areas. In the former situation (tribal belt), the livelihood processes influence nature not because of over-use *per se* but because of sheer survival of different participants. Stagnation and low level of economic activities are, thus, the cause of degradation. This calls for developing new opportunities that create *interest* for protecting nature. In the latter situation (rural areas), nature degrades owing to uncertainty of availability of natural resources to various segments of the society. Over-use of nature is not because of availability of resources *per se* but owing to mistrust and uncertainty about their availability. In order to maximise his or her returns in this uncertainty, everyone over-uses the nature. Regeneration rests on sharing information with trust between community, classes and social groups that have varying perceptions about the access to commons. Sustainability of both environment and livelihood is possible then.

7.4 Political Unfreedom

Adverse Incorporation and Political Exclusion:

Positive discrimination in the form of retained places in public office like universities, the civil service and the legislature, appears to provide opportunities for individuals rather than for the systematic advancement of *Adivasi* as a whole. There is a widespread belief in the majority Hindu population that the Indian nation building measures have attempted tribal integration through a culturally imperialist form of co-option and assimilation.

Non-tribal populations cling to a set of beliefs concerning *Adivasi*, which justify their income poverty, low literacy rates, and socio-political exclusion. Non-tribals, particularly in the (non-tribal majority) towns in majority tribal areas are fearful of the tribals. They fear what might happen to their own dominance if tribals become educated and demand their rights. Even amongst the educated upper class and amongst government officials, tribals are regarded as unruly, ignorant, dirty and

drunken. They are dismissed as polygamous, and having too many children; as not having a savings culture; as desiring to live hand to mouth, being lazy and stopping work when they have enough money to buy food for the day; as retaining 'backward' agricultural practices; and as having no idea of society and so living in widely spread nuclear families rather than tightly clustered joint families. Tribals who 'make good' and become political or administrative leaders are seen as being 'the worst', as they treat 'their own kind' badly and threaten non-tribal colleagues with legal action for discrimination and defamation.

Within tribal communities, there is evidence of both political exclusion and adverse incorporation. In terms of adverse incorporation, villagers are incorporated into local political interactions, but in a set of feudal relationships with the traditional leaders, *Sarpanch* and asymmetric, extractive, not so transparent and unpredictable relationships with the local police and forest officials.

Tribal communities are strongly heterogeneous, with economic stratification reinforced by patriarchal and political differentiation. Patron-client relationships are strong with non-tribal moneylender *bania* who engages tribals in highly extractive interlocked market relationships; with widespread sharecropping and leasing relationships; and with the potential for power asymmetries in the forward contracting of agricultural produce, as part of debt payments and for cash-crop produce. Perhaps the most notable example of patron-client relationships is between the *Sarpanch* and villagers.

In terms of exclusion, poor households and women from all households are excluded from decision-making and negotiations. Men from poor tribal households and from the *harijan* households in the village will not attend public meetings. Women are largely absent from all such meetings; we assume that widows and the socially excluded -- e.g. the mentally handicapped -- have no access either directly or through male representation to village governance structures.

Political Economy of Panchayat:

Decentralisation in this tribal area has neither brought decision-making closer to the community nor equity in delivering the benefits. It has, nevertheless, replaced the traditional bureaucracy by a new class of political elites who have control on decision-making as well as resources. People's participation has not yet undergone the stages of critical evaluation of local priorities and strategies to meet them. The work done by *Panchayat* is not congruent with what the community needs. The work done by *Panchayat* also helps in sustaining the well-being of non-poor. The political economy of decentralisation has engendered a nexus between the political elites, the

bureaucracy and the contractor for furthering their own interests. This nexus has defied the basic objective of decentralisation, empowering the chronic poor and poor. It is true that Panchayats are implementing all those schemes and programmes that earlier were done by the bureaucracy. But the financial control of upper echelons of the elected representatives and bureaucracy keeps the village *Sarpanch* under their dependence. A substantial part of time of the Sarpanch is spent in meeting and entertaining the officials and the elected representatives at the *Janpad*. Despite *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sabha* being introduced as the agencies for implementing the development programmes, these agencies have become an add-on to the old chain of corruption. Sarpanch has become a medium in this chain of corruption. Redistribution of resources do take place but with considerable leakage and misdirection.

Unfreedom:

Sen (1999) has conceptualised that unfreedom -- economic, political, social, transparency and security -- can pull people into poverty. Sen's proposals of unfreedom include both inability of the community to exercise its rights freely as well as opportunities of individuals to operate freely, for poverty can manifest by unavailability of services at the macro level as well as access denial at the micro level. Political unfreedom can surface by micro processes of lack of freedom to choose who governs as well as macro principles of how to govern. Political freedom, it can be argued, could create an environment that helps community to participate freely in the process of governance, choose the leaders who are committed, plan and manage their resources for local development and criticise the approach and monitor the functions of those who are governing. If the political process is free, it can help fulfil the expectations of the community. Political freedom, thus, can be operationalised as freedom to individuals to (a) choose who governs them; (b) be governed in a participatory process; (c) plan and manage their natural resources; and (d) be able to criticise and organise protests against uniformed decisions so that gains are equitably distributed within the community. One can use the findings of this chapter to evaluate the extent to which each of these freedoms has successfully been attained.

Findings of the chapter reveal that the process to choose those whom the individuals want them to govern is free and fair. People have used their franchise in deciding who would govern them freely. But the process created fissures in a homogenous community with social, political and economic interests. Once the political leaders took over their responsibility, the process of decentralised

governance, instead becoming participatory, became highly centralised. The gains of the decentralised governance have been too few and highly iniquitous. Community's expectations remained unfulfilled and participation slowly dwindled. The role of Sarpanch, and the exclusive group of his people sharing interest, has made people lose their faith on Panchayat. Political decentralisation has not only fractured the homogeneity of the tribal society but has also made governance highly centralised.

The community does monitor how the governance is neglecting it. But it, however, does not get enough opportunity to register its protest about this governance. There are provisions of recall a corrupt *Sarpanch* but the tribal community is unaware of these remedial measures. It is only once in five year that they get the freedom to punish bad governance by rejecting those involved in the governance. Nevertheless, the community has no freedom in the process of planning programmes it needs. The blame for this unfreedom to decide what and how the local development should take place falls at various levels. First, the process of centralisation at the Panchayat level is too overpowering for community to exert pressures for participatory process to begin. Secondly, the quantum of financial allocation is too thin to meet the demands of the community. Third, the desire of the bureaucracy and the elected representatives, at higher echelons, to control the activities and finances of the *Gram Panchayat*, does not allow independence to the *Panchayat*. Lastly, existing laws that govern the natural resources obstruct the process of giving their control to the community.

7.5 *Summing Up*

The findings of this chapter indicate towards the following two major conclusions: First, in one stroke, PESA promised to give control of resources and decision making to tribals. This has proved to be a false promise. Owing to the fact that rules of the line departments of states impinge upon the specific provisions of PESA, community never got a chance to decide. Consequently, decision-making powers relating to land, water, forest and development still rest on bureaucracy. Secondly, decentralisation, it seems, has become an end in itself; this is true when we analyse the process of decision making, which is still highly centralised, or with respect to fruits of development interventions, which are still highly iniquitous.

End Notes

1 PESA is a unique legislation; it gives radical self-governance powers to the tribal community and recognizes its traditional community rights over natural resources. Prior to passage of this Act, laws passed by central and state governments were applied mechanically to tribal areas even when these contravened traditional tribal practices and institutions. However, under PESA the law focuses on settlements, which the tribal people themselves perceive to be traditional and organic entities. In fact this is the first law that empowers people to redefine their own administrative boundaries. PESA provides that the tribal *Gram Sabha* so defined would be empowered to approve all development plans, control all functionaries and institutions of all social sectors as well as control all minor water bodies, minor minerals and non-timber forest resources. It would also have the authority to control land alienation, impose prohibition, manage village markets and resolve internal conflicts by traditional modes.

2. State specific development in empowering gram Sabha are as follows:

Rajasthan

In Rajasthan though knowledge of the details of PESA has been minimal, a serious concern is that the elected representatives and officials of various departments of scheduled areas do not seem to be aware of the state's adoption of the PESA or at least they considered that such a law would not be really beneficial for them. PESA does not talk about a hamlet-based village. One panchayat includes average 3 to 4 village and a village includes 1.5 to 2 ward Sabha. Ward Sabhas power and functions overlap with the Gramsabha and create conflicts. A parallel jurisdiction with no clear definition of responsibilities aggravates these differences in perceptions. Sometime, even the lack of awareness has resulted in not exerting vital powers that have been granted under PESA as applicable in the state.

There have been several reasons why the process of implementation has not been. It ranges from political will to the attitudes of line functionaries, to clear lack of awareness. Besides, one of the key problem areas is the fact that powers of the Gramsabha envisaged under the state PESA is not recognised by different line agencies such as Forest, Land and Revenue Department *et cetera*.

Madhya Pradesh

An important feature of PESA in Madhya Pradesh is that the Gram Panchayat would act under the direct supervision of the Gram Sabha. This is significant because it at least places the hierarchy of the power structure at the village level and in that sense it is perhaps a very significant move in the empowerment of Gram Sabha. But because of lack of awareness as well as lack of legislative activism, community had very little information of the specific law under PESA. Moreover, as the

Laws on Forest Produce in MP have still not been amended to grant ownership rights to the Gram Sabha especially in Scheduled Areas. While there is a JFM scheme in the state of MP, the role of Gram Sabha in relation to the Forest Protection Committee under the JFM is still unclear at the local level Gram Swaraj Act of 2001 has taken up a number of provisions that were specially enacted for scheduled areas and made it applicable in the entire state the distinction between Gram Sabha in non-scheduled areas and scheduled areas are now blurred and the political will to implement PESA is lacking.

Gujarat

Various amendment of the Act in Gujarat has significantly reduces the role of Gram Sabha. Most of the powers that were originally intended to be given to Gram Sabha or the panchayat have been given to the various tiers of the Panchayat rather than the Gram Sabha. PESA is just a mechanism of the state to retain control by introducing these it in blurred legal terms, which are used in accordance with convenience.

Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh did not enact any new legislation after it became a separate State. Not only that, even the implementation of the laws enacted after PESA leaves a lot to be desired. However due to its association with Madhya Pradesh, it has some devolution of power to the village level functionaries. In Chhattisgarh the new poverty eradication programme funded by World Bank has some positive upon the livelihood of the tribals.

Orissa

The new act come to existence in 1997, but so far only Orissa Excise Act and Land Alienation Act has been amended. The rule regarding the Gram Sabha control own forest produce and the

rule about money lending are awaiting approval. In the case of acquisition land, mining lease, management of water bodies in place of Gram Sabha it is assigned to Zilla Parishad. True devolution of power is not percolated in to village due to lack of awareness among the functioning. Most of the implementation work are handled by panchayat secretaries who are also unaware about the real power of panchayat assigned to them under PESA.

Jharkhand

The most unfortunate fact is that in Jharkhand, Panchayat elections are not held since 1978. In the absence of panchayat, the act provides for a Aam Sabha (similar to Palli Sabha of Orissa) to implement development programmes in the state. In the Palli Sabha, villagers assemble to decide development strategies of the concerned village, which is presided over by the Block Development Officer. In absence of PRI institutions, practically all the development work has been implemented by a panchayat Sewak, who has more than one panchayat under his jurisdiction. Therefore, it is very difficult for him to supervise the works efficiently. However, Weekly meetings are held in village where only development contractors and influential people of the village participate. However development work are carried out without participation of the villagers.

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CHAPTER 8
DISSENT, TRUST AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Findings of preceding chapters show that notwithstanding a number of programmes, the Central Indian tribal belt has remained one of the poorest in the country¹. It is argued in this chapter that lack of formal institutional structure and lack of progress have not discouraged formation of social capital² in this region. The recently acquired awareness -- with the help of civil society -- relating to loss of natural resources has strengthened the social network's capabilities in terms of associational activities, trust among the social groups and individuals, and collective actions for shared goals. The objective of this chapter is to understand how social capital manifests itself. It is also argued that social capital in this tribal region manifests itself through social hierarchy and moves to political domain, though with varying intensity. This has serious implications for collective action in development decision-making. In relatively less remote area, the stratifications created by political and economic processes have displaced the social hierarchy. If the economic hierarchy in the region is fragile and reshuffles itself within a short span³, it is only the political elite of the village that would be negotiated by the social hierarchy. The dominance of social hierarchy in decision-making would, however, not be due to the weakness of political elite; it is rather lack of efficiency in local governance that would give a space to social norms and informal institutions in non-social affairs of the community. However, given the economic stratification, lack of confidence on state apparatus would result in either withdrawal of community or increased community consultations, virtuous or otherwise.

After the seminal work of Putnam (1993), social capital has become an important analytical concept that explains community's behaviour towards social, economic and political decision-making. If social capital is conceptualised as individual's interactions in informal network, the concept can be defined as network, norms, institutions and organisations that promote trust and cooperation in the community. Durston (1998) argues that following five attribute of social capital helps and brings transparency in decision making: In economic exchange, social capital reduces transaction cost arising when dealing with outsiders in unregulated environment; it helps in honest and efficient governance. Social capital strengthens each time it is activated; social capital, like culture, is perpetuated and it could take a virtuous or a vicious path. Repeated social interaction virtuous or otherwise strengthens civic participation or non-participation; and social capital developed in culture or religious spheres is transferable to political or economic spheres. Sah (2005) has argued that social capital in tribal context is omnipresent. Its utilisation in development decision-making and more importantly its pattern of manifestation would be contextual to the milieu where it is operational. Sah's analysis reveals that (i) factors like the pattern of settlement, importance of

social norms, and failure of state have helped perpetuate the trust and cooperation in the community, (ii) civil society has played a significant role in making this capital available for wider use, and (iii) complexities of economic stratification and efficiency of decentralised governance are contextual for social capital to manifest.

Sah (2005) argues that three different types of elites have emerged in this tribal society: the traditional, the emerging economic elites and the political elites. All the three have created their own spaces in the community. But their relevance is contextual to their ability to deliver. The efficiency and working of political decentralisation is not different in different tribal areas and the political leadership is unable to use social capital for the betterment of condition of people. Not so much because of the nature of the leadership but because the policy and programmes it has introduced are inappropriate and non-effective. What, however, is different across villages is the individualistic economic efforts in some areas (less-remote villages) have created sizeable benefits as compared to remote villages. The dormant social capital in development decision-making in former areas is significantly influenced by intense economic segregation that has given a strong message to community that well-being is a function of individual efforts. In contrast, in economically homogenous remote villages, the social capital is much more vibrant.

But the trust and concerns for fellow members, argues Sah, is in perpetual conflict with political hierarchy which is self-serving. In remote villages, this conflict has vibrant expression of vicious as well as virtuous pattern of social capital. On the other hand, in relatively less remote areas the social capital has remained un-invested and dormant. Despite the fact that the social capital has positively influenced non-social events since early 1990s, its manifestations in governance have been marginal. One wonders as to why the social capital could not be transferred in the sphere of governance. Answer to this question could be found in an analysis of (a) the nature of benefits that decentralised governance could potentially give to the community; and (b) is it worthwhile to put so much faith in a process that can never address the livelihood problems of the marginalised. Community at large finds the benefits not worth wasting their days' labour.

Sah further argues that economic stratification also affects trust in institutions, agencies and individuals. By and large, trust and faith in relative, tribals, and people from *Gram Panchayat* or belonging to *Jati Panchayat* is still high. On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents do not trust Panchayati Raj institutions. Teachers and health workers are trustworthy but government organisations like forester, police and outsiders like MLA, MPs have failed to gain trust of tribals. If we try to establish association between chronic poverty profile and level of trust, we find that there is no significant difference in the level of trust between chronic poverty groups when it comes to trust within the community. This bond within the community does not vary owing to social, political and economic

stratification. But the trust on outsiders like police, forester Janpad CEO is significantly high (revealed by significant and positive correlation coefficient) in the case of always non-poor whereas chronic poor do not trust the outsiders. It can, thus, be argued that socially, economically and politically well off are trying to reach significantly more to outsiders. Their increasing trust on these agencies is a product of their desire to economically benefit from the newfound association. On the basis of such bridges, the always non-poor and transitory non-poor receive benefits of government schemes. But chronic poor, owing to their inability to bridge, have failed to get economic benefits. It will now be easy to understand why it was found that the always non-poor and the transitory non-poor was receiving significantly more proportion in the resource redistribution in the area (Sah: 2005) than what they actually should.

Sah's evidence indicates that social relations are central to governance outcome. Rejecting the idea of *cultural determinism*, which rationalises that some communities are encumbered with cultures that restrict them from progressing, Sah argues that culture in our construct is, thus, a form of relationship that is influencing and being influenced by socio-political and economic features. Two important issues in the context need some elaboration. First, despite dissent within the community against repressions and strong bond within, there are relational forces in the form of bridges outside community that lead towards a fractured conformity. This conformity redefines the power relationship within the community. Secondly, some people use social relations to enhance their position and also reproduce the processes that influence governance outcome. In a sense, the bridging social capital of the group engenders ability to exert and fulfil their aspirations, disregarding all the dissents. These two contesting forces coexist and help in redistributing the opportunities created by development. Those who are influential in exploring bridging relations could fulfil their aspirations whereas those who are less fortunate remain so despite having strong bond within. The ray of hope for equity lies in the capability of bonding social capital's capability to dissent. A conferment between the two may result in bonding social capital to dominate over the bridging social capital.

Then why a confrontation between the two is not taking place? We need to answer if there is a sort of modality between bonding and bridging social capital that indicates if one type of trust increases, the other shall reduce. Evidence from an earlier research in Southwestern Tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh (Sah: 2005) shows that it is not necessary that bond within members of one's own community reduces trust in people from outside. On the contrary, the poor provide support to the fact that it is possible to trust outsiders without losing or reducing trust within the community. Trust within, however, is clearly important as cooping the remoteness by creating bond. But bridging the distance with outsiders provides economic opportunities; those who are well off, benefit from governance by dictating

development decision-making, disregarding all the equity norms. What it, however, implies is participation is subordinate to bridging relational outcome. Unless, these social realities are recognised, community participation in decentralised governance may remain a distant dream.

Sah, however, implies that participation in development decision-making is subordinate to bridging relational outcome (Sah: 2005). Unless, these social realities are recognised, community participation in development–decision making may remain a distant dream. Moreover, cultural capital need not always bring efficiency in governance; it could work viciously, obstructing options that are virtuous in nature. In economically homogeneous and relatively remote rural areas, the bonding cultural capital is much more vibrant. Transfer of this capital from social sphere to political sphere is possible only if gains of governance are large and equitable. This also indicates that, like rest of the country, in remote tribal areas community is stratified in economic, social and political lines. The trust and concerns for fellow members is in perpetual conflict with political and economical hierarchy which is self-serving. These stratifications also create variance in the ways people see the world around them. A grand unified policy intervention towards their welfare will, therefore, not work. The ambiguity in use of ‘community participation’ in development decision-making only reflects naive acceptance of homogeneity in community located in remote rural areas. This perception, in its turn, helps the state to design a blanket intervention for development. The cultural capital and its varied manifestations make policy interventions by-pass a large section of community.

Is the same process of manifestation of social capital also evident in the central Tribal belt of India? The objective of this chapter is to analyse the issue of dissent, trust and manifestation of social capital in the sample.

8.1 Community, Polity and Dissent

Before understanding the extent of solidarity among different section of society of Central tribal of India, two important findings of preceding chapters need to be recalled. First, benefits accruing to different section of tribal society are not same; there are substantive evidences to believe that principles guiding these schemes were riddled with area specific well as poor specific biases. In Under-developed villages while only 40 per cent of the households received benefits (Rs 5633 per beneficiary) of government schemes, in Developed villages this proportion was 40 per cent with a support of Rs 7425. Secondly, while only 26 per cent of chronic poor received these benefits from state, about 38 per cent of Always non-poor received these.

What is more intriguing is to find only 5 per cent of the respondents reported that the have disagreement with the way these decisions are taken. While a sizeable proportion does not agree that benefits were equitably distribute, majority of the households believe that

dissent will improve this situation (Table 8.1). Over 83 per cent respondents believe that dissent will not only divide the community but also shall create situations that will rebuke and hurt the village power centres.

Table 8.1: Perceptions about Effect of Opposing Panchayat

Opposing Panchayat	Fully agree	Partially agree	Partially disagree	Fully disagree	All
<i>Percentage</i>					
Will Divide the community	51	32	5	12	100 (1214)
Will Rebuke and hurt the power centres	42	40	8	10	100 (1214)
Not help for, poor also receive benefits	7	23	35	34	100 (1214)
Is of no use, I agree with the decision	9	23	26	42	100 (1214)
Will bring changes in the situation	21	44	8	28	100 (1214)
Figures in the bracket are total number of households who have answered to these issues. Respondents from Jharkhand have not responded as Panchayats are not functional in the State.					

In a way this reflects on the trust and support the tribals have for each other in the community. The main support for this trust in tribal region comes from the pattern of settlement of villages. Each of the hamlets comprises of close relatives who easily forge their social solidarity and norms of *Jati Panchayat*⁴. This form of settlement pattern, where social relationship converts into association, is capable of debating issues at community level. This apart, following processes is instrumental in creating social capital and its varied manifestations. First, presence of left-oriented civil society that helped easing economic repression; second, dependence on informal community legal structure that binds together people; lastly, lack of development in the region and livelihood struggles that gave space to social hierarchy to oversee emerging political and economic leadership.

The space available to social hierarchy in non-social decisions has emerged not because of enactment of *Gram Swaraj* or *PESA*, for these processes had marginal impact on community involvement in development decisions. State inaction in this region has helped the practise of informal community consultation. The informal community consultation in development is a more recent phenomenon forced by civil society mobilisation in the area. This mobilisation was the result of development-induced displacement, awareness campaign on depletion of natural resources, and repression of tribal rights by the state⁵. State failures made the contemporary movements succeed in mobilising community to protest against the access failure to natural resources on the one hand and tribal exploitation on the other. The influence of Left oriented NGOs in mid 1990s has changed the political course of the region significantly. Earlier, the newly emerged political hierarchy, through state apparatus, would take every decision without even consulting the individuals that were affected. Such changes came first in the form of agitation activities of social activists for redressal for tribal

grievances. In late 1990s, the situation improved further; individuals themselves started going to concerned officials in *Janpad Panchayat*⁶ for all decisions that affected them.

The consequences of development initiatives are rooted in the tribal psyche; the fear of displacement due to large irrigation projects is widespread in the region. Also, imprinted in their psyche are the state repressions on the issue of natural resource management. Both of these experiences -- former contemporary and the latter historical -- are painful. Response to outsiders is cautiously guarded. Although in both the situations social hierarchy -- forced by the community at large and also because of pressures of a few influential -- resists outsiders⁷, the nature and extent of economic stratification guides their behaviour. Apprehensions about outsiders in the tribal belt are well known. Notwithstanding the catalytic role of civil society in creating social capital, the relationship between civil society and governance could be vicious as well as virtuous, as would be seen later. The question is under what conditions the social capital manifests itself in the political domain in a virtuous pattern?

The second process that helped social capital formation is weak institutional arrangements like constitutional and legal framework and administrative structure in the region. These institutions in a tribal society have both formal as well as informal features. Experiences with these formal institutions⁸ have also resulted in lack of faith of the community in these institutions. Moreover, remoteness to state in terms of non-availability of legal agencies and their fairness has resulted in dispute resolution by communities' own informal structures. The community institutions control decision on petty crimes, land disputes originating from short-term land transitions, divorce and socially unaccepted relations. This is partly because the legal apparatuses in the area are lacking and partly because traditionally the effective ways of settling these disputes are customary. The village social justice committee⁹ created under decentralised governance has recognised this role of the community. This kind of dependence on informal structure that exercises its power through social hierarchy also strengthens the social bond within the community.

Though the informal legal and institutional arrangements exist in both Under-developed and Developed villages, the role of economic and political leadership has been different in these two groups of villages. Consequently, the local community has become overpowering in under-developed villages where the community is not divided on economic lines. In developed villages, where state presence is regarded necessary in providing electricity to energise wells¹⁰ and where community is stratified on economic lines, economic leadership dominates. The individualistic approach towards economic prosperity, which consolidates productivity gains, is regarded more important than social processes. The community initiatives do not pose any challenge to economic leadership. In short, social capital exists in the tribal areas, albeit in a dormant stage in developed areas.

Lastly, the state and market failures have influenced differently life and livelihood of tribals. As compared to Developed villages, the remoteness of Under-developed villages and its poor agriculture have resulted in relatively more trust and cooperation within the community for survival. This hardship is also a cause of the process of developing trust and cooperation. Migration pushes agricultural land into short-term institutional arrangement like leasing, renting or mortgage. These short-term land transactions are between trusted close groups. Short-term land transitions are economic arrangements between the migrant family and the family that manages his land in migrant's absence. But it also provides necessary representation to the migrant in social spheres; it acts as *social exchange*¹¹.

The non-market institution that governs the land transitions significantly varies across households. The urgency to come to a contractual relationship between the two parties -- the migrant and the tiller -- decides the arrangements that would guide the economic exchange. In last few years, the short-term land transitions have increased fivefold. Crop failure is one reason for this development but equally pressing is fragmentation of land when family divides. Small land holdings during droughts are not only uneconomical to operate but also have a cost that makes alternative livelihood options difficult to negotiate. Consequently, the owner enters into an agreement with a prospective tenant so that he earns some rent as well as uses his family labour properly. Short-term land transactions, however, are negotiated not only within village but also within closely related families. Thus, the owner is free to move out of village with his family in search of some employment opportunities. Such movements help the small landholder optimise returns to his family labour. The economic gains to a tenant, apart from sharing the output, is in the form of claiming rental value for his bullock use and interest on capital used to purchase out of pocket inputs. During the absence of the landowner, the tenant is morally bound to inform the owner about important events that affect him; such events are sickness of aged parents, social events, and situations that have employment implications. During a crisis, close relatives do provide support to the remaining members of the owners' family as a matter of custom. On the other hand, the custodian of land spends money, when necessary, on behalf of the migrant¹². In the process, land in exchange engenders a symbolic presence of the migrant household in the village and his representation in social hierarchy without his being physically present. The power to till land of a migrant protects economic interest of both the migrant and the tenant but in the exchange, the migrant also obtains control over his social interests. The most preferred arrangement¹³ is crop sharing because it makes migrant's links with the community preserved. In order to force the contract in terms of labour use and sharing output¹⁴, the migrant has to make a number of trips to village, especially during peak harvest season. That re-establishes his severed interests in the social set up in his absence.

8.2 *Expressions of Social Capital*

The social capital in this tribal belt seems to be developing and providing dominant support to traditional social hierarchy to exert its primacy on political hierarchy. In the process, programmes that could have positive economic implications to the well-being of the community are opposed. The relationship between community and the society in the village did provide impetus to dormant social capital to mobilise but in local development affairs, the social capital could only manifest in the form of resistance to development. This is something to admire as well as to criticise. Does it not mean that the social capital, in its negative facets, puts people aloof from outside world and development? This seems to be keeping the community frozen in time and deny the social capital a space in development. The criticism seems to be partially true. Inasmuch as the state repression and access failure to common resources are the basic constraints in well-being, the importance of emerging social capital cannot be overemphasised as an important force behind their united struggle.

The social capital as it manifests in Under-developed villages may not be operationalised by indicators like community engagements with organisations and associations like religious *bhajan mandalies*, farmers' organisation and *self-help groups*. It has to be observed in day-to-day involvement of community in the affairs of the village. As noted earlier, the homogeneous social hierarchy has a potential to create space for community involvement in politicising a debate. But it does not ensure participation in the decision-making. For, a vibrant social structure is present in the tribal belt but it is only in Under-developed villages that one witnesses the manifestations of social capital.

These findings are in variations with what Pai (2001) has tried to establish. She observes that social segmentation emerges as a significant context determining development of trust and social capital between groups. Findings of this study reveal that trust and social capital within tribal context is omnipresent. Economic segregation and its intensity play a dominant role in manifestation of social capital. It remains unutilised under some conditions, and can manifest in both virtuous and vicious patterns. These findings, however, corroborate observations of Rudolph (2000) that not all associations are likely to create trust and cooperation with positive implications.

Social capital in tribal context is omnipresent. Its utilisation in development decision-making and more importantly its pattern of manifestation would be contextual to the milieu where it is operational. Findings of this study reveal that (i) factors like the pattern of settlement, importance of social norms, and failure of state have helped to perpetuate the trust and cooperation in the community, (ii) civil society has played a significant role in making this capital available for wider use, and (iii) complexities of economic stratification and efficiency of decentralised governance are contextual for social capital to manifest. Three different types of elites have emerged in this tribal society: the traditional, the emerging

economic elites and the political elites. All the three have created their own spaces in the community. But their relevance is contextual to their ability to deliver. The efficiency of working of political decentralisation is not different in both the villages but the political leadership is unable to use social capital for the betterment of condition of people in both Under-developed and Developed villages. Not so much because of the nature of the leadership but because the policy and programmes it has introduced are inappropriate and non-effective. What, however, is different in the two group of villages is the individualistic economic efforts in Developed villages that have paid sizeable benefits as compared to Under-developed villages.

But the trust and concerns for fellow members in both the villages is in perpetual conflict with political hierarchy which is self-serving. In Under-developed villages, this conflict has vibrant expression of vicious as well as virtuous pattern of social capital. On the other hand, in relatively less remote areas the social capital has remained un-invested and dormant. Despite the fact that the social capital has positively influenced non-social events since early 1990s, its manifestations in governance have been marginal. One wonders as to why the social capital could not be transferred in the sphere of governance. Answer to this question could be found in an analysis of (a) the nature of benefits that decentralised governance could potentially give to the community; and (b) is it worthwhile to put so much faith in a process that can never address the livelihood problems of the marginalised. Community at large finds the benefits not worth wasting their days' labour.

Table 8.2: Proportion of Respondent showing Trust on different Agencies

Agency	Chronic Poor	Non Chronic Poor	Transitory Non Poor	Always Non Poor
	<i>Percentage of Households</i>			
Jati Panchayat	89	91	93	92
Gram Panchayat	69	75	68	77
Villagers	90	90	92	90
Panchayat-wise	71	79	78	74
Tribals	92	89	93	89
Panch	79	79	76	78
Sarpanch	62	76	58	66
Panchayat secretary	44	45	36	42
Janpad Panchayat president	34	51	35	35
Zilla Panchayat President	22	24	24	23
MLA	22	20	20	22
MP	18	16	16	17
Village Revenue officials	26	35	32	37
CEO Janpad	14	18	13	15
CEO Zilla Panchayat	12	12	10	11
Police	19	22	11	25
Forester	18	23	27	25
Health Officials	53	61	55	60
Bank officials	25	35	29	32
Teacher	80	86	79	86
Bania	37	33	26	32
NGOs	12	12	13	14

Economic stratification also affects trust in institutions, agencies and individuals. By and large, trust and faith in relative, tribals, and people from *Gram Panchayat* or belonging to *Jati Panchayat* is still high. On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents (Table 8.2) do not trust Panchayati Raj institutions. Teachers and health workers are trustworthy but government organisations like forester, police and outsiders like MLA, MPs have failed to gain trust of tribals

Table 8.3: Correlation between Trust ¹ on Agency and Chronic Poverty Profile ²

Agency	Level of Trust a	Correlation
<i>Bond within Community</i>		
Jati Panchayat	High	-.075***
Gram Panchayat	High	Same across poverty profile
Villagers	High	-.087***
Panchayat-wasi	High	-.055***
Tribals	High	Same across poverty profile
Panch	High	Same across poverty profile
Sarpanch	Moderate	Same across poverty profile
<i>Bridges outside community</i>		
Teacher	High	+.067***
Health worker	Moderate	Same across poverty profile
CEO Janpad	Low	+.05*
Forester	Low	+.05**
Panchayat Secretary	Low	-.04*
Bania	Low	+.05
Village Revenue Officials	Low	Same across poverty profile
Zilla Panchayat CEO	Low	Same across poverty profile
Janpad President	Low	Same across poverty profile
Zilla Panchayat President	Low	Same across poverty profile
MLA	Low	Same across poverty profile
MP	Low	Same across poverty profile
Bankers	Low	Same across poverty profile
Police	Low	Same across poverty profile
NGOs	Low	Same across poverty profile
¹ Trust is operationalised in 4 point scale with 1 fully trustworthy to 4 never trustworthy. ² Chronic poverty profile is as follows: 1 - Chronic poor, 2 = Non chronic poor, 3 = Transitory non-poor, and 4 = Always non-poor.		

If we try to establish association between chronic poverty profile and level of trust (Table 8.3), we find that there is no significant difference in the level of trust between chronic poverty groups when it comes to trust within the community ¹⁵. This bond within the community does not vary owing to social, political and economic stratification. But the trust on outsiders like police, forester Janpad CEO is significantly high (revealed by significant and positive correlation coefficient) in the case of always non-poor whereas chronic poor do not trust the outsiders. The only exception of this is the panchayat secretary. In his case, the well to do have certainly not trust on him but the mistrust of the chronic poor towards secretary is relatively less. It can, thus, be argued that socially, economically and politically well off are

trying to reach significantly more to outsiders. Their increasing trust on these agencies is a product of their desire to economically benefit from the newfound association. On the basis of such bridges, the always non-poor and transitory non-poor receive benefits of government schemes. But chronic poor, owing to their inability to bridge, have failed to get economic benefits. It will now be easy to understand why it was found that always non-poor and transitory non-poor was receiving significantly more proportion in the resource redistribution in the area (see, Chapter 7) than what they actually should.

Can we then establish that there is a sort of modality between bonding and bridging trust that indicates if one type of trust increases, the other shall reduce? Findings of Table 8.3 reveal that it is not necessary that bond within members of one's own community reduces trust in people from outside. On the contrary, the always non-poor provide clear evidence that it is possible to trust outsiders without losing or reducing trust within the community. Trust within, however, is clearly important as cooping the remoteness by creating bond but bridging the distance with outsider provides economic opportunities.

8.4 *Summing Up*

In this remote rural area, market and state failures have invited intense community participation in informal institutions governing land-man relations, law and dispute resolution. This has helped in developing and perpetuating social capital; the informal institutional arrangements that replace markets and formal legal institutions, more often than not, result in mutually beneficial exchanges that helps creation and perpetuation of social capital. Added to it, the civil society has given the community the needed support for trust and cooperation to be visible in different spheres. The inability of the community to invest its social capital for local development has its roots within the weaknesses of economic and political elites that are individualistic and brings heterogeneity. Given this milieu, if the economic inequality is marginal, the community is more likely to invest its social capital. But if the economic inequality is intense, the social capital remains dormant and under-utilised. Evidences from relatively remote areas also establish that virtuous and vicious investment of social capital can take place simultaneously. The non-poor has started trusting outsiders without losing the bound within. Findings have shown that it is possible to trust outsiders without losing or reducing trust within the community. Trust within is clearly important as cooping the remoteness by creating bonds but bridging the distance with outsider provides opportunities. Following features of social capital are discerned from the study:

Social capital in a traditional society is omnipresent but remains dormant. Once activated by the catalytic action of civil society, complexities of economic stratification guide its manifestation.

Social capital not only enhances the efficiency of institutional arrangements that have emerged due to market failures but also strengthens the trust and cooperation between groups.

Social capital need not always bring efficiency in governance; it could work in a vicious pattern, obstructing options that are virtuous in nature.

Virtuous and vicious patterns of social capital can manifest simultaneously in one place.

Bonds within are necessary to meet crisis but bridges between community and outsiders bring economic opportunities.

Bridging distance with outsiders does not necessarily reduce bond within community.

Transfer of social capital from social sphere to political sphere is possible only if gains of decentralised governance are large and equitable. This process can take place once the bond with in the community start questioning the bridging with outsiders.

End Notes

1. In terms of development, the tribal concentrated pockets of central Indian belt fall at the bottom. The Tribal Development Department of different states intervene in the area through its tribal sub-plans and the centrally sponsored schemes.
2. Social capital comprises of systems of norms, institutions and organisations that promote trust and cooperation in a community. It is considered a form of capital because it helps in accelerating the process of well being and healthy decision making in the community. Putnam (1993) is the best-known exponent of the concept, though both neo-institutional economists like North and sociologist like Bourdieu were early proponents of this concept. Durston (1998) propounds five important features of social capital:
In economic exchange, social capital reduces transaction cost arising when dealing with outsiders in unregulated environment; it helps in honest and efficient governance. Social capital strengthens each time it is activated; social capital, like culture, is perpetuated and it could take a virtuous or a vicious path. Repeated social interaction, virtuous or otherwise, strengthens civic participation or non-participation; and social capital developed in culture or religious spheres is transferable to political or economic spheres.
3. Agriculture being the main economic activity, division of family due to marriage of a son, leads to weakening of economic hierarchy. The newly formed households are relatively resource deficient and rely on social network for support not only in social interactions but also for economic survival (also see, Sah and Shah (2003), chapter 6 for details).
4. In fact, *Jati Panchayats* along with *traditional village Panchayats* are the two tribal institutions that promote community participation in all social decision-making. See, Sah and Shah (2003), chapter 3, for details on functioning of these institutions.
5. Conflicts over natural resources between the state and the community in this tribal belt have a long history. However, the exploitation of natural resources is also from within. But the solidarity created by *outside* (state and *bania*) agencies of exploitation did bind together the society. A number of civil society organisation operate in bringing awareness about tribal rights in the central tribal belt of India. *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, *Adivasi Mukti Sangathan*, *Agaragami*, *Pradhan*, *debate* are a few to name. While some like NBA is mobilising the tribals around issues of failures of development paradigm adopted by the state, the AMS is organising them against natural resource depletion, state repression and usurpation of their rights. And while some others like *Pradhan* are working for livelihood and watershed..
6. A discussion with the Chief Executive Officer of Pati *Janpad*, where the Advasi Mukti Sangathan is active, brings out the fact that awareness about tribal rights has grown in the area significantly over last 7-8 years. Earlier a tribal would come to the *Janpad* Panchayat always accompanied by the activists of AMS, now they come for any work of their own.
7. Even during the fieldwork of the study, because of the nature of the investigation where land, assets, livelihood *et cetera* were discussed, we noted that the community was apprehensive of outsiders' presence. There was a perception that such investigation is part of state activities to understand pre-project situation so that resettlement package can be identified for individual households.
8. This is especially true for forest guards and the police. What is commonly discussed in the village is that traditional local conflict resolution methods are far more just but the police will settle the dispute by taking money from both the parties and would be biased against the group that has given fewer bribes.

9. Eight committees deal with decisions relating to agriculture; health; infrastructure; education; social justice; defence; development; and assets. Political decentralisation has accepted the role of traditional leaders in. Traditional leaders are a crucial part of Village Security Committee that deals with all disputes arising in the village.
10. In developed villages individuals invest over Rs 20,000 for digging wells in rocky terrain with high risk of failure and in drawing electricity line from the nearest Distribution Point. There are over thirty individuals who have such connections. Though such developments have brought economic success to individuals, they have stratified the society on economic lines. Remoteness of under-developed villages, its difficult terrain, high risk and initial failures in such investments have helped the village to remain economically homogenous.
11. Tribal economy is based on reciprocity. Apart from performing economic transaction under market failure conditions, the short-term land transaction, especially share cropping and fixed rent, also create social trust along with economic gains. This latter (social) function of this exchange is as important as its formal (economic) function of exchange.
12. A sharecropper reported that he will have to look after the aged parents of his close relatives in his absence in any case, but as he will have to bring a doctor and spend Rs 30-50 for an injection in case he has leased-in their land.
13. A large number of variations exist when the contracts are agreed upon. With share cropping at one end and mortgage of land at the other, a large number of fixed rent contracts fall in the middle. Depending upon bargaining power of different participants, urgency of the deal to materialise, and perception of cost of enforcing the contract, terms and conditions vary even in a village.
14. Moral hazards are involved in sharecropping: A tribal who is leasing out land would like to ensure that the tenant, as agreed, has applied labour and inputs on the field for he has to share the out-of-pocket cost. Similar is the case when the crop would be harvested and shared because the landowner has to ensure that he receives the crop output portion as agreed. For enforcing these, the landowner migrant has to either make a number of visits to the village or leave all monitoring in trust to the other party. In this area the first option is more prevalent, not because of lack of trust but because it re-establishes his ties with the community.
15. Widmalam (2003) identifies the trust within as bound and trust on outsiders as bridges.

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It has been argued in this research that the cause of poverty in remote tribal areas is significantly different from the identified processes that cause poverty elsewhere. It is also argued that people are trapped in poverty in the tribal areas as an outcome of complex interactions among social, political and economic forces that affect individuals, households, as well as groups. Poverty alleviation in these areas needs to be seen beyond narrow income poverty, for this complexity of the region has defied solutions that were initiated for alleviating income poverty elsewhere.

The Central Indian tribal belt spreads across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. Our study area is a subset of this belt. The study attempts to understand poverty dynamics in ten tribal districts of Gujarat (Bharuch and Panchmahals), Rajasthan (Banswara), Madhya Pradesh (Jhabua and Badwani), Chhattisgarh (Bastar and Raigarh), Jharkhand (Ranchi and West Singhbhum) and Orissa (Koraput). Two tribal dominated *Janpad* from each of the ten selected districts, one developed and other backward, were selected purposively. Two villages, representing an average 'remoteness' in each of these twenty *Janpad* in the ten districts, were purposively selected for the detailed study. The quantitative database was randomly selected sample of 2000 households from the 40 selected villages from six states.

The households were first categorised as poor and non-poor based on consumption expenditure and then each of the two groups were categorised in four based on social process of that resulted in mortgage and depletion silver and land in last 5 years or could not service its old debts or missed both the meals. These household are transitory household either chronic poor if it is economically poor or transitory non-poor if the household is economically non-poor. Thus, poor and non-poor households were further divided in to following mutually exclusive categories: (i) always non-poor, (ii) transitory non-poor, (iii) poor but non-chronic, and (iv) chronic poor. Using the framework developed in chapter 1, this research seeks to examine the status, correlates and causes of chronic poverty, implications of shocks and coping mechanism of the people, dissent governance, and social capital as it manifests in Central tribal belt of India.

The findings of the research though presented for aggregated central tribal belt as well as for individual states, this chapter relies on aggregated analysis for, the total sample size is appropriate for aggregated data. This aggregation, though hides variations across state, helps in developing policy oriented chronic poverty research.

9.1 *Summary of Findings*

About fifty-eight per cent of the population in the Central tribal belt of India lives in economic poverty and twenty six per cent of poor are chronic poor. Chronic poverty is not a product of economic forces alone; it manifests through social processes created by shocks or resourcelessness. Livelihood struggles under shocks prompt a social process of mortgage and asset losses, borrowing and inability to service debt, hunger and migration. The findings of the research indicate that three different sets of forces influence chronic poverty. First, the forces that push people into chronic poverty; second, the forces that pull them out from this trap; and lastly, forces that are expected to pull people out of the trap but had failed to do so (Table 9.1). Economic variables like dynamic agricultural, private investment in irrigation, and opportunities for education and health pull people out of chronic poverty. Population pressure, borrowings on exorbitant interest rates for *Dahej* (bride price), depletion of silver, larger unpaid debts and migration push people into chronic poverty. On the other hand, efforts by the state to pull people out of chronic poverty through its programmes -- either through price stabilisation-cum-food security intervention (PDS) or through resource redistribution such as PRI and government schemes -- do not necessarily reach the most needy sections. Hence, these interventions are unable to remedy chronic poverty. Nevertheless, state sponsored programme for universal education has a positive influence and the non-poor are taking advantage of educating their children.

As state intervention has failed in influencing chronic poverty, the coping mechanism to survive rests on individuals' own efforts like labour, depletion of assets, exploitative borrowing and migration. This coping mechanism forces a social process of borrowing and repayment and livelihood struggle that engenders multiple unfreedom to economic poverty. A disturbing facet of chronic poverty is the interaction of these explanatory forces with remoteness. Remoteness plays a significant intervening role in accentuating the play of forces that set-up chronic poverty. On the one hand, the social process of borrowing-migration-repayment is constrained by access failure to formal credit market in the remote areas, on the other, agricultural technology transfer is constrained by remoteness. Consequently, in relatively Under-developed villages, forces that pull people out from chronic poverty are weakened and the forces that push people in chronic poverty are intensified.

Not only agricultural income of chronic poor is 73 per cent of the income of always non-poor but also the proportion of the income of chronic poor originating from agriculture is significantly lower than that of always non-poor. Consequently, the chronic poor households rely significantly more on labouring, migration and gathering. Underdevelopment significantly influences the households' dependence on agriculture and migration. Agriculture is not significantly paying across poverty profile but migration intensity and income from labouring is about 2 times more in Underdeveloped villages. A sizeable proportion of labour-

time, after working on their own farms and labouring around village, remains unutilised in the case of households that are poor and chronic poor. Unsustainable agriculture and high unemployment, in the case of chronic poor, keep them always short of cash. Consequently, even an insignificant additional requirement of cash forces these households to borrow. But borrowing need not always contribute to chronic poverty, for borrowing when remains un-serviced, creates social processes that force multidimensionality to income poverty.

Table 9.1: Factors Explaining Poverty ¹

	Coefficient	Significance	Rank
<i>Factors that pulls people out of poverty</i>			
X ₄ Consumption Expenditure	0.670	***	II
X ₂ Agricultural Income	0.082	**	
D ₁ Investment in irrigation	0.044	*	
X ₇ Literacy	0.068	**	
X ₉ Health Care	.00002	**	
<i>Factors that Push people in poverty</i>			
X ₅ Migration	- 0.233	***	V
X ₁ Population Pressures	- 0.709	***	I
X ₆ Depletion of Silver	- .00003	***	
X ₃ Unpaid debt	- 0.110	***	III
X ₈ Sons' marriage	-0.00001	***	IV
<i>Failed Interventions</i>			
Food security	NS		
Panchayat benefits	NS		
Constant	2.808	***	
F	76	***	
R-bar Square percentage	30.2		
Number of observations	1609		

¹ The analysis is based on linear regression with dependent variable taking values as follows

1 = Chronic poor, 2 = Non-chronic poor, 3 = Transitory non-poor, 4 = Always non-poor.

Explanatory variables as

X₁: 1= up to 4, 2= 5 to 6, 3= > 6 members

X₂: 1= up to Rs 3590, 2= 3591 to 8950, 3= > Rs 8950

X₃: 1= nil 2= up to Rs 4000, 3= > Rs 4001

X₄: 1= up to 17462 Rs, 2= 17463 to 23993 3= >.Rs 23993

X₅: 1= nil, 2= up to Rs 7500, 3 => Rs 7500

X₆: Depletion of silver in Rs in last 5 years

X₇: 1= up to 25 literate, 2= 26 to 56 , 3= more than 56 % members literate

X₈ Rs debt due to son's marriage

X₉: 1= up to 300 Rs, 2= 301 to 1000, 3= >1000 Rs

b Significance level *** 1 %, ** 5 % , d * 10 % and NA; not significant

c based on beta coefficient.

Demographic pressures and shocks have resulted in depletion of land, silver and animal wealth. There is, however, some addition to irrigation and consumer products -- like tape recorder, radio, cycle and motorcycle -- as well. But except irrigation, the depletion and addition in the assets have taken place across all groups of chronic poverty profile; no group has lost or added assets significantly more than others. As electrification for irrigation has taken place more among non-poor groups significantly in developed villages, even if their

landholdings are not significantly higher than poor, their agriculture in normal situation is significantly higher than poor households. The agricultural produce of chronic poor households lasts just for seven and a half months in a year against nine months for non-poor. Since remoteness adds a negative nuance to agriculture, the misery of poor agriculture is significantly more in relatively remote areas; missing meals is about 2 times more intense for households located in Under-developed villages than located in Developed villages. The social implications of the process of meeting a shock varies across chronic poverty profile; poor households rely more on social network to settle a conflict whereas non-poor household rely more on economic process like debt and do not believe much on local networking. In the case of scarcity, the chronic poor and poor rely on labouring and migration but the always non-poor rely more on borrowing. Livelihood struggles, thus, engender a psychological feeling of well-being or lack of it; the optimism of sustaining the economic well-being is significantly more among always non-poor than poor and chronic poor. The optimism of non-poor as well as pessimism among chronic poor is a product of many forces that have either created environment for income prosperity for non-poor or marginalisation for chronic poor. The benefits of technology transfer -- owing to either PRI's interventions or private initiative - - and anguish of coping with shocks create images of modernity and changes that mirror simultaneously with traditionalism and *status quo*. These processes are continuum of trust at one level; at the other level, they reflect severe economic and political stratification in an apparently homogenous society.

Although in recent past, migration has been caused by harvest failure, a shock can activate a complex of socio-economic process leading to migration. Apart from population pressure, depletion of silver, increased unpaid debts and hence increased intensity of seasonal migration, the households under shock also face serious non-economic problems like doing work that in normal situation they would not have preferred, inability to service their debt, withdrawing children from school and missing meals *et cetera*. This misery is significantly higher among migrant households. Borrowings from *bania*, located in markets, also significantly increase. This borrowing for consumption and meeting the social obligation like bride price is usually managed by mortgaging silver. The usury charged by the *bania* is too high, ranging from 50 to 75 per cent for a period of 4 months. Repayment of this debt and getting back mortgaged valuable like silver and gold creates economic drain that encourages migration. Seasonal migration does supplement investable surplus when cash needs are high and sources of institutional borrowings are few. In fact, credit and migration work as supplement as well as substitute in the remote tribal society. A migrant family earns approximately an amount of rupees three thousand per year from migration. A large part of such earnings goes for servicing the unpaid debts.

Interactions of factors like large family, higher expenditure gap, higher dependency ratio, lower asset, borrowings at high cost, and remoteness result in increasing the intensity of migration. More migrants from a family for longer duration help in pushing food consumption of the remaining members up during bad agricultural years. Consequently, households that do not resort to migration have larger gaps in consumption expenditure. Both remoteness and investment in agriculture superimpose each other in forcing migration. But remoteness is relatively more imposing than investment agriculture in explaining the migration. Compared to developed villages with no investment in agriculture, the intensity of migration does reduce significantly if the households have invested in irrigation. But the effect of the process of weakening of remoteness reduces migration to larger extent compared to private investment alone. This is so because private investment in agriculture in remote areas only supports an individuals' agriculture and his capability to circumvent the debt-trap during a shock but the process of weakening of remoteness through public investment in infrastructure, watersheds and market influences many. Migration also induces short-term land transactions like sharecropping, fixed rent and land mortgage. This not only reduces the risk of farming but also optimises the efficiency of family labour. Some of these land transactions also strengthen social links that maintain individuals' position in social hierarchy even in their absence. But for some resourceful, migration has indirectly become a major source of agricultural technology transfer, savings and investment in this remote tribal area.

The state, in this tribal belt, has pinned its hope on decentralised governance (PESA) for equitable resource transfer. But decentralisation has neither brought decision-making closer to people nor equity in delivering the benefits. It has, nevertheless, replaced the bureaucracy by a new class of political elites who have control on decision-making as well as public resources. The work done by *Panchayat* is not congruent to what the community needs. The work done by *Panchayat* also helps in sustaining the well being of non-poor. Although a few employment-generating programmes were taken up by the *Panchayat*, the benefits of these programmes were either inadequate to meet the needs of most needy or were equally received by non-poor. If decentralisation has not resulted in further marginalisation of poor, it certainly helped non-poor receive larger benefits from government interventions. Moreover, the political economy of decentralisation has engendered a nexus between the political elites, the bureaucracy and the contractor for furthering their own interests. This nexus has defied the basic objective of decentralisation, empowering the chronic poor. It has also adversely affected people's participation. People's participation has not yet undergone the stages of critical evaluation of local priorities and strategises to meet them. Although the community has capabilities to perform these tasks, the elitists control over resources and decision-making do not allow these processes to manifest. The community only participate by registering their presence in *Gram Sabha* but does not participate in decision-making. The

community does monitor how the governance is neglecting it, but it does not get enough opportunity to register its protest. There are provisions of recall a corrupt *Sarpanch* but the tribal community is unaware of these. It is only once in the five year that they get the freedom to punish bad governance by rejecting those involved in the governance. The community has, therefore, no freedom to participate in the process of identification and planning programmes that it needs. In a sense, decentralisation has failed to evoke the community participation in the process of planning, execution and monitoring development.

Economic stratification also affects trust in institution, agencies and individuals. By and large, trust, faith and bonds within community are high. On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents do not trust *Panchayati Raj* institution and also the outsiders like forester, police, MLA, *Janpad* CEO *et cetera*. There is no significant difference in the level of trust between chronic poverty groups when it comes to trust and bond within the community. But the trust on outsiders is significantly high in the case of always non-poor whereas chronic poor do not trust the outsiders. It can, thus, be argued that socially, economically and politically well-off try to reach significantly more to outsiders. Their increasing trust on these agencies is a product of their desire to economically benefit from the newfound association. On the basis of such bridges, the always non-poor and transitory non-poor receive benefits of government schemes. But chronic poor, owing to their inability to bridge, have failed to get adequate economic benefits from PRIs. This is also a cause as to why always non-poor and transitory non-poor was receiving significantly higher proportion in the resource redistribution than what they actually should. It is not necessary that bond within members of one's own community reduce trust in people from outside. On the contrary, the always non-poor provide clear evidence that it is possible to trust outsiders without losing or reducing trust within the community. Trust within, however, is clearly important as coping the remoteness by creating bounds. But bridging the distance with outsider has provided economic opportunities.

9.2 Conclusions

Based on evidences, it can be concluded that chronic poor remains remote from policy makers rather than remoteness creating chronic poverty. Private investment by poor in both Under-developed as well as developed villages has ability to pull them out of poverty trap. Moreover, chronic poverty in Central tribal of India is not a product of economic phenomena alone; the transitory non-poor and the people trapped in poverty are victims of a socio-political process. Therefore, no matter how hard the economic policy interventions try to influence these groups, the end result shall be far from desired. As chronic poverty forces individuals into social processes that are dominated by debt-trap, repayment, short-term land transaction and seasonal migration, in relatively remote areas, likelihood of being migrant

increases significantly compared to less-remote areas. Poverty trap, nonetheless, reduces significantly if private investment in irrigation takes place. As individuals make such investment, its capacity to circumvent poverty-trap, for a few, cannot be over emphasised. But public investment in infrastructure and development of credit, input and output markets decreases risk of chronic poverty for a large section of society. As these investments are taken up by the state, it can be safely concluded that, at present, chronic poor remains remote from policy makers rather remoteness creating poverty.

Migration in absence of a sustainable livelihood has become unavoidable in remote rural areas. A shock can push even a well to do tribal household into a debt-trap and has to resort to migration as a coping mechanism. But for a large section of households that are resourceless owing to population pressures, migration is *the* coping mechanism. A way of reducing the incidence of migration is to intensify investment that conserves the soil-moisture and makes agriculture sustainable. Evidences reveal that civil society initiatives in tribal areas have reduced seasonal migration significantly. As migration in remote tribal areas as a coping strategy is inevitable, the processes that facilitate migrants in the course of migration are as important as reducing migration. How to make the lives of migrants at the place of destination less stressful, provide them with amenities and make their position stronger in the labour market is as important as improving agriculture and increasing borrowing capacity of migrants at the place of origin. Access to institutional consumption credit, at low interest, is a soothing proposition compared to informal credit, at an exorbitant interest rate. Bringing such a institutional change may not reduce migration but shall certainly increase savings from migration. Breaking the debt-trap that triggers migration, which pushes people into chronic poverty, and strengthening agriculture of the area are two important interventions that may result in pulling people out of chronic poverty.

The foregoing discussion is point towards following policy interventions for improving the production capabilities in remote tribal areas as well as protecting the interests of chronic poor.

9.3 Policy Implications

The first step in this direction is to replicate successful water harvesting interventions in remote tribal areas to make the agriculture sustainable in normal years. The cushions provided by good agriculture may be able to sustain a few shocks. The second step is to strengthen the borrowing capacity of the tribals through group financing for ground water exploitation, creating production-oriented as well as consumption supporting self-help groups that augment institutional finance. The third task is to facilitate process of migration by reducing the cost of transaction and strengthening support that is traditionally provided by middlemen, like where to go, type of work, wage negotiations *et cetera*. And lastly,

providing support to migrants at the destination in terms of childcare, educational facilities, healthcare, drinking water and sanitation, and subsidised food supply would make the migrants' life less stressful. If these are the few important tasks that are obvious in remote tribal areas to strengthen the coping mechanism of the tribals, evidences show that the state is ill equipped to undertake them. The role of civil society to facilitate the migration as well as restricting it cannot be overemphasised.

Chronic poverty is a complex interaction of resourcelessness, livelihood struggles and dishonest use of public funds. The nexus of political elites, bureaucracy and contractor disconnects the poor from development affairs of the village. Access failure to healthcare and education services to the marginalised section perpetually keeps them poor in terms of human capabilities. Chronic poverty is also a manifestation of asymmetrical command of resource and decision of their use in the village. Decentralised governance has failed to influence poverty owing to the nefarious nexus that encourages corruption and wasteful use of resources. The socially, economically and politically well-off vigorously try to reach significantly more to outside agencies. Their increasing trust on these agencies is a product of their desire to economically benefit from the new found association. On the basis of such bridges, the always non-poor and transitory non-poor receive benefits of government schemes. But chronic poor, owing to their inability to bridge, have failed to get economic benefits. It will now be easy to understand why it was that the always non-poor and transitory non-poor was receiving significantly more proportion in the resource redistribution in the area than what they actually should. The political unfreedom in the community is evident in the remote areas. The blame for this unfreedom to decide what and how the local development should take place may be surmounted by: (a) initiating a new set of reforms that empower the community to exert pressures for participatory process to begin at the grassroots level; (b) augmenting the quanta of financial allocation in order to meet the demands of the community; (c) introducing second generation of reforms to curb bureaucracy and the elected representatives, at higher echelons, to control the activities and finances of the *Gram Panchayat*; (d) replacing the existing forest laws that obstruct control of commons to be passed to community.

If community participation is that crucial for PRIs' performance, how to induce participation is worth debating. Indian development experiences have demonstrated that as long as *Panchayats* do not ask community to pay tax -- house tax, electricity charges, business cess, water charges, livestock tax, charge for maintenance of commons *et cetera* -- the community does not ask uncomfortable questions. Therefore, as a strategy, in order to encourage community participation, development should make people stakeholders and create a sense of ownership by asking community to contribute a token cost equitably. This shall force community participation in development.

Alternatively, in order to alleviate poverty, it can be argued that a negative income tax should replace the PRIs investment all together. Such a strategy needs to be seen as a safety net for those unfortunate who are trapped in chronic poverty. Negative income tax would transfer resources to most needy at much lower cost compared to the way it is being transferred at present. The strategy is worth pursuing despite the fact that in the era of liberalisation and globalisation, state egalitarian redistribution may be economically inefficient and self-defeating. But the faith that it can break the nefarious nexus and curb corruption provides strength to a policy shift from PRIs to negative income tax.